Autobiography

John Stuart Mill

1873

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis . . . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type. —Unnumbered section-headings are not in the original.

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Glossary

amanuensis: Bentham's amanuensis was the person to whom Bentham dictated his works.

the ballot: The system under which only the individual voter knows which way he has voted.

borné: 'Limited in scope, intellect, outlook, etc.' (OED)

casual: As used on page 50 it means something like 'non-essential'; a casual association of idea x with thing y is one that has been brought about by education, indoctrination etc., and doesn't involve any intrinsic link between x and y.

centralisation: The concentration of executive power in some central authority.

Coercion bill: Legislation authorising the government to use extra-judicial force in a (supposed) emergency.

connive: Mill uses this word in its original sense (from Latin *connivere* = 'to wink'), in which to 'connive at' bad conduct is to pretend not to see it, to turn a blind eye to it. Since we have no other word with this meaning, it is sad that illiterate journalists have abolished it and made 'connive' mean 'conspire or plot'.

the Continent: Europe minus the UK.

demoralising: In Mill's usage to demoralise someone is to corrupt his morals, not (as in our sense) to lower his morale.

entail: A legal restriction preventing an item of property from being bequeathed to anyone but a designated class of descendants.

evidence: On page 83 the 'evidence of mathematics' is the *evidentness*, the obvious truth, of mathematical truths.

fact: On page 102 Mill (twice) uses this word in its old sense of 'a thing assumed or alleged as a basis of argument'.

Fenians: Irish revolutionaries aiming to end, if necessary by violence, British rule in Ireland.

Girondist: A moderate participant in the French Revolution, eventually overthrown by the more radical Jacobins.

the Holy Alliance: 'An alliance formed between Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1815 on the basis of proposed Christian principles of government' (OED).

inimacy: Nowhere in this work do 'intimate' or 'intimacy' imply anything sexual. This is important on page 84.

jejune: Thin, unnourishing. Neither the word nor its meaning has anything to do with the French word *jeune*.

jobbing: 'Using a public office for private or party advantage' (OED).

Malthus's population principle: The thesis that unchecked increases in population inevitably outstrip increases in food, making it essential for mankind to find some way of holding down population.

Owenites: Followers of Robert Owen's utopian socialist philosophy.

political economy: Economics.

popular: Having to do with *the people*; not necessarily being liked by them.

primogeniture: Legal requirement that an item of property be bequeathed to the present owner's oldest child (or oldest son).

reticence: Mill uses the word in its proper sense of 'reluctance to speak'.

sentiment: This can mean 'belief' or 'feeling'; it is for you to decide which in each case.

sympathy: Fellow-feeling; you can sympathise with my joy as well as with my sorrow.

Thirty-nine articles: Doctrinal statement of the position of the Church of England in relation to Calvinism (on one side) and Roman Catholicism (on the other).

vulgar: Pertaining to people who are not much educated and (the suggestion often is) not very intelligent.

Part 1
Childhood and early education

It seems proper that before embarking on the following biographical sketch I should explain why I think it desirable that I should leave behind me such a memorial of a life as uneventful as mine. I do not for a moment imagine that any part of it can be interesting to the public as a narrative, or as being connected with myself. But I have thought that in an age in which education, and its improvement, are subjected to more (if not deeper) study than at any former period of English history, it may be useful to have some record of an education which was unusual and remarkable, and which—whatever else it may have done—has proved how much more than is commonly supposed may be taught, and well taught, in those early years, years that are little better than wasted in the common modes of what is called instruction. It has also seemed to me that in an age of transition in opinions there may be some interest and some benefit in noting the successive phases of any mind that was always pressing forward, equally ready to learn and to unlearn either from its own thoughts or from those of others. But a motive that weighs more with me than either of these is a desire to acknowledge the debts that my intellectual and moral development owes to other persons; •some of recognised eminence, •others less known than they deserve to be, and •the one to whom most of all is due, one whom the world had no opportunity of knowing. The reader whom these things do not interest has only himself to blame if he reads on; I ask him to do me the kindness of bearing in mind that these pages were not written for him.

* * * * * *

My father

I was born in London on 20.v.1806, and was the oldest son of James Mill, the author of the *History of British India*. My father, the son of a petty tradesman and (I believe) small farmer at Northwater Bridge in the county of Angus was, when a boy, recommended by his abilities to the notice of Sir John Stuart of Fettercairn, one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Scotland, and was in consequence sent to the University of Edinburgh at the expense of a fund established by Lady Jane Stuart (the wife of Sir John Stuart) and some other ladies for educating young men for the Scottish Church. He there went through the usual course of study and was licensed as a preacher; but he never followed the profession, having satisfied himself that he could not believe the doctrines of that or any other Church. For a few years he was a private tutor in various families in Scotland, including that of the Marquis of Tweeddale; but ended by taking up his residence in London, and devoting himself to authorship. That was his only means of support until 1819 when he obtained an appointment in the India House.

In this period of my father's life there are two things that one must be struck with: one unfortunately a very common circumstance, the other a most uncommon one. The first is that in his position, with no resource but the precarious one of writing in periodicals, he married and had a large family—conduct that was utterly opposed, as a matter of good sense and of duty, to the opinions that he strenuously upheld at least at a later period of life. The other circumstance is the extraordinary energy that was required to lead the life he led, with the disadvantages he laboured under from the first and the ones he brought on himself by his marriage. Given

> •that his opinions in politics and in religion were more odious to all persons of influence and to the common run of prosperous Englishmen in that generation than either before or since; •that he was a man whom nothing would have induced to write against his convictions, and who invariably threw into everything he wrote as much of his convictions as he thought the circumstances would in any way permit; and •that he never did anything negligently, never undertook any literary or other task without conscientiously bestowing on it all the labour necessary for performing it adequately,

it would have been no small thing if he had done no more than to support himself and his family during so many years by writing, without ever being in debt or in any financial difficulty. But with these burdens on him he planned, started, and completed the *History of India*, doing this in the course of about ten years, a shorter time than has been needed (even by writers with no other employment) to produce almost any other historical work of equal size or as much reading and research. And during this whole period a considerable part of almost every day was employed in the instruction of his children. In the case of one of these, myself, he exerted an amount of labour, care, and perseverance rarely if ever employed for a similar purpose, trying to give the highest order of intellectual education according to his own conception of this.

Starting Greek at the age of 3

A man who in his own conduct so vigorously acted up to the principle of *losing no time* was likely to adhere to the same rule in the instruction of his pupil. I have no memory of the time when I began to learn Greek. I have been told that it was when I was three years old. My earliest recollection on the subject is of committing to memory what my father termed 'vocables'—lists of common Greek words with their meanings in English, which he wrote out for me on cards. Until some years later the only ·Greek· grammar that I learned was the inflexions of the nouns and verbs, but after a course of vocables I proceeded at once to translation; and I faintly remember going through Aesop's *Fables*, the first Greek book I read. The *Anabasis* ·of Xenophon·, which I remember better, was the second. I learned no Latin until my eighth year. At that time I had under my father's tuition read a number of Greek prose authors, among whom I remember the whole of Herodotus, and of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Memorials of Socrates; some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius; part of Lucian, and Isocrates' *ad Demonicum* and *ad Nicoclem*. I also read, in 1813, the first six dialogues (in the common arrangement) of Plato, from *Euthyphro* to *Theaetetus* inclusive. I venture to think that that last dialogue would have been better omitted, as it was totally impossible that I should understand it. But in all his teaching my father demanded of me not only the utmost that I could do but much that I could not possibly have done. What he was himself willing to undergo for the sake of my instruction may be judged from the fact that I went through the whole process of preparing my Greek lessons at the same table at which he was writing: and as in those days Greek-English dictionaries did not exist and I could make no use of a Greek-Latin dictionary because I had not yet begun to learn Latin, I had to appeal to him for the meaning of every word that I did not know. Though one of the most impatient of men, he submitted to this incessant interruption, and wrote under that interruption several volumes of his *History* and everything else that he had to write during those years.

History etc.

The only thing besides Greek that I learned as a lesson in this part of my childhood was arithmetic. This also my father taught me; it was the task of the evenings, and I well remember its disagreeableness. But the *lessons* were only a part of the daily instruction I received. Much of it consisted in the books I read by myself, and my father's discourses to me, chiefly during our walks. From 1810 to the end of 1813 we were living in Newington Green, then an almost rustic neighbourhood. My father's health required considerable and constant exercise, and he walked habitually before breakfast, generally in the green lanes towards Hornsey. In these walks I always accompanied him, and my earliest recollections of green fields and wild flowers are mingled with memories of the account I daily gave him of what I had read the day before. To the best of my recollection this was a voluntary rather than a prescribed exercise. I made notes on slips of paper while reading, and from these in the morning walks I told the story to him. The books were chiefly histories, of which I read a great number in this manner: Robertson's histories, Hume, Gibbon; but my greatest delight, then and for long afterwards, was Watson's *The Reign of Philip II* and *The Reign of Phillip III*. The heroic defence of the Knights of Malta against the Turks, and of the revolted provinces of the Netherlands against Spain, aroused in me an intense and lasting interest. Next to Watson, my favourite historical reading was Hooke's *History of Rome*. At that time I had seen no regular history of Greece except school abridgments and the first two or three volumes of a translation of Rollin's *Ancient History*, beginning with Philip of Macedon. But I read with great delight Langhorne's translation of Plutarch. In English history, beyond the time at which Hume leaves off, I remember reading Burnet's *History of my own Time*, though I cared little for anything in it except the wars and battles; and the historical part of the *Annual Register* from the beginning to about 1788, when the volumes my father borrowed for me from Mr Bentham left off. I felt a lively interest in Frederick of Prussia during his difficulties, and in the Corsican patriot Paoli; but when I came to the American war ·of independence·, until I was set right by my father I took my part—like the child that I was—on the wrong side, because it was called the English side. As opportunity offered in these frequent talks about the books I read, he gave me explanations and ideas concerning civilisation, government, morality, mental cultivation, which he required me afterwards to state back to him in my own words. He also made me read and give him a verbal account of many books that would not have interested me enough for me to read them of myself: among others Millar's *Historical View of the English Government*, a book of great merit for its time, which he highly valued; Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, McCrie's *Life of John Knox*, and even Sewel's and Rutty's histories of the Quakers. He was fond of putting into my hands books that showed men of energy and resource in unusual circumstances, struggling against difficulties and overcoming them: of such works I remember Beaver's *African Memoranda* and Collins's account of the first settlement of New South Wales. Two books that I never wearied of reading were Anson's *Voyage around the World*, so delightful to most young persons, and a collection (Hawkesworth's, I believe) of voyages around the world, in four volumes, beginning with Drake and ending with Cook and Bougainville. I had scarcely any children's books (any more than I had toys) except an occasional gift from a relation or acquaintance; *Robinson Crusoe* was preeminent among those gifts, and continued to delight me through all my boyhood. It was no part of my father's system to *exclude* books of amusement, though he allowed them very sparingly. At that time he

possessed almost no such books, but he borrowed several for me; the ones I remember are the *Arabian Nights*, Cazotte's *Arabian Tales*, *Don Quixote*, Miss Edgeworth's *Popular Tales* and Brooke's *Fool of Quality*, a book of some reputation in its day.

In my eighth year I began learning Latin, along with a younger sister to whom I taught it as I went on, and who afterwards repeated the lessons to my father; and from this time, other sisters and brothers being successively added as pupils, a considerable part of my day's work consisted of this preparatory teaching. It was a part that I greatly disliked, especially because I was held responsible for the lessons of my pupils in almost as full a sense as for my own. However, I derived from this discipline the great advantage of learning more thoroughly, and retaining more lastingly, the things I was set to teach; and the practice it gave me in explaining difficulties to others may even at that age have been useful. In other respects the experience of my boyhood is not favourable to the plan of teaching children by means of one another. I am sure that the teaching is very inefficient as teaching, and I well knew that the relation between teacher and taught is not a good moral discipline for either. I went in this way through the Latin grammar, and a considerable part of Cornelius Nepos and Caesar's *Commentaries*, but afterwards added to the superintendence of these lessons much longer ones of my own.

In the same year in which I began Latin I made my start on the Greek poets with the *Iliad*. After I had made some progress in this, my father put Pope's translation into my hands. It was the first English verse I had cared to read, and it became one of the books in which for many years I most delighted: I think I must have read it through from twenty to thirty times. I would not have thought it worthwhile to mention a taste apparently so natural to boyhood if I had not observed that the keen enjoyment of this brilliant specimen of narrative and versification is *not* as universal with boys as I would have expected both *a priori* and from my individual experience. Soon after this time I commenced Euclid, and somewhat later algebra, still under my father's tuition.

Latin, Greek poets

From my eighth to my twelfth year the Latin books I remember reading were the *Bucolics* of Virgil and the first six books of the *Aeneid*; all of Horace except the *Epodes*; the *Fables* of Phaedrus; the first five books of Livy (to which from my love of the subject I voluntarily added, in my hours of leisure, the next five); all of Sallust; a considerable part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; some plays of Terence; two or three books by Lucretius; several of Cicero's Orations and of his writings on oratory; also his letters to Atticus, my father taking the trouble to translate to me from the French the historical explanations in Mongault's notes. In Greek I read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* through; one or two plays of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, though by these I profited little; all of Thucydides; the *Hellenics* of Xenophon; a great part of Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Lysias; Theocritus; Anacreon; part of the *Greek Anthology*; a little of Dionysius; several books of Polybius; and lastly Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which my father made me study with special care, organising its content into synoptic tables, because it was the first expressly scientific treatise on any moral or psychological subject that I had read, and contained many of the best observations of the ancients on human nature and life. During the same years I learned elementary geometry and algebra thoroughly, and the differential calculus and other parts of higher mathematics far from thoroughly. That is because my father, not having kept up this part of his own

early-acquired knowledge, could not spare time to equip himself to remove my difficulties, and left me to deal with them with little help except from books; while I continually incurred his displeasure by my inability to solve difficult problems for which he did not see that I lacked the necessary previous knowledge.

As for my private reading, I can only speak of what I remember. History continued to be my strongest predilection, and most of all ancient history. I read Mitford's *Greece* continually; my father had put me on my guard against •the Tory prejudices of this writer and •his perversions of facts for the white-washing of despots and the blackening of popular institutions. He talked to me on these points—exemplifying them from the Greek orators and historians—so effectively that in reading Mitford my sympathies [see Glossary] were always on the opposite side to the author's, and I could to some extent have argued the point against him; but this did not diminish the always new pleasure with which I read the book. Roman history continued to delight me—both in my old favourite, Hooke, and in Ferguson. A book I took great pleasure in, despite its reputed 'dryness' of style, was the *Ancient Universal History*, through the incessant reading of which I had my head full of historical details concerning the most obscure ancient people, while I knew and cared comparatively little about modern history except for detached episodes such as the Dutch war of independence. A voluntary exercise to which I was much addicted throughout my boyhood was what I called 'writing histories'. I successively composed a Roman history, picked out of Hooke; an abridgment of the *Ancient Universal History*; a History of Holland, from my favourite Watson and from an anonymous compilation; and in my eleventh and twelfth year I occupied myself with writing what I flattered myself was something serious. This was no less than a history of the Roman Government, compiled (with the assistance of Hooke) from Livy and Dionysius: of which I wrote as much as would have made an octavo volume, extending to the epoch of the Licinian Laws. It was in fact an account of the struggles between the patricians and plebeians that now attracted all the interest I had previously felt in the Romans' mere wars and conquests. I discussed all the institutional points as they arose; although quite ignorant of Niebuhr's researches, I (by such lights as my father had given me) vindicated the agrarian laws on the evidence of Livy, and upheld to the best of my ability the Roman democratic party. A few years later, in my disregard of my childish efforts, I destroyed all these papers, not then expecting that I would ever be curious about my first attempt at writing and reasoning. My father encouraged me in this useful pastime, though (judiciously, I think) he never asked to see what I wrote; so that I did not feel that in writing it I was accountable to anyone, nor had the chilling sensation of being under a critical eye.

Poetry

But though these exercises in history were never a compulsory lesson, there was another kind of composition which was so, namely writing verses, and it was one of the most disagreeable of my tasks. I did not write Greek and Latin verses or learn the prosody [= the laws of metre] of those languages. My father thought this was not worth the time it required, and contented himself with making me read aloud to him, and correcting false quantities. I never composed at all in Greek, even in prose, and not much in Latin. It wasn't that my father was indifferent to the value of this practice in giving a thorough knowledge of those languages, but there really was not time for it. The verses I was required to write were English. When I first read Pope's Homer, I ambitiously

tried to compose something of the same kind, and achieved as much as one book of a continuation of the *Iliad*. The spontaneous promptings of my poetical ambition would have stopped there; but the exercise, begun from choice, was continued by command. In line with my father's usual practice of explaining to me, as far as possible, the reasons for what he required me to do, he gave me two reasons for this that were highly characteristic of him. One was that some things could be better and more forcibly expressed in verse than in prose; this, he said, was a real advantage. The other was that people in general attached more value to verse than it deserved, and the power of writing it was therefore worth acquiring. He generally left me to choose my own subjects, which (as far as I remember) were mostly addresses to some mythological personage or allegorical abstraction; but he made me translate into English verse many of Horace's shorter poems; I also remember his giving me Thomson's *Winter* to read, and afterwards making me attempt (without book) to write something on the same subject. The verses I wrote were of course mere rubbish, and I never achieved any skill in versification; but the practice may have been useful in making it easier for me in later years to acquire readiness of expression.[1] Up to this time I had read very little English poetry. My father had put Shakespeare into my hands, chiefly for the sake of the historical plays, from which I went on to the others. My father never was a great admirer of Shakespeare, the English idolatry of whom he used to attack with some severity. He cared little for any English poetry except Milton (for whom he had the highest admiration), Goldsmith, Burns, and Gray's *Bard*, which he preferred to his *Elegy*; perhaps I may add Cowper and Beattie. He had some value for Spenser, and I remember his reading to me (unlike his usual practice of making me read to him) the first book of the *Fairie Queene*, but I took little pleasure in it. He saw scarcely any merit in the poetry of the present century, and I hardly became acquainted with any of it until my adult years, except the metrical romances of Walter Scott which I read at his recommendation and was intensely delighted with, as I always was with any lively narrative. Dryden's poems were among my father's books, and many of these he made me read, but I never cared for any of them except 'Alexander's Feast', which I used to sing internally to a music of my own. I did the same with many of the songs in Walter Scott, for some of which I went so far as to compose tunes which I still remember. I read Cowper's short poems with some pleasure, but never got far into the longer ones; and nothing in the two volumes interested me like the prose account of his three hares. In my thirteenth year I met with Campbell's poems, some of which gave me sensations I had never before experienced from poetry. I made nothing of the longer poems, except the opening of 'Gertrude of Wyoming', which long kept its place in my feelings as the perfection of pathos.

One of my greatest amusements during this part of my childhood was experimental science, in the theoretical sense of the word, however, not the practical one. I did not try experiments—a kind of discipline that I have often regretted not having had—and did not even see any, but merely read about them. I never remember being so wrapped up in any book as I was in Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues*; and I was

[1] In a subsequent stage of boyhood when these exercises had ceased to be compulsory, like most youthful writers I wrote tragedies; under the inspiration not so much of Shakespeare as of Joanna Baillie, whose *Constantine Paleologus* in particular appeared to me one of the most glorious human compositions. I still think it one of the best dramas of the last two centuries.

rather reluctant to accept my father's criticisms of the bad reasoning about the first principles of physics that abounds in the early part of that work. I devoured treatises on chemistry, especially that of my father's early friend and schoolfellow, Dr Thomson, for years before I attended a lecture or saw an experiment.

Logic

From about the age of twelve I entered into a more advanced stage in my course of instruction, in which the main object was no longer the aids and appliances of thought but the thoughts themselves. This started with logic, in which I began at once with the Organon ·of Aristotle· and read it up to and including the Analytics, but profited little from the Posterior Analytics, which belongs to a branch of speculation I was not yet ripe for. Along with the Organon my father made me read the whole or parts of several of the Latin treatises on the scholastic logic; giving him each day on our walks a minute account of what I had read, and answering his numerous and searching questions. After this I went in a similar way through the *Computatio sive Logica* of Hobbes, a work of a much higher order of thought than the books of the scholastic logicians, and which he estimated very highly—in my opinion beyond its merits, great as these are. It was his invariable practice, whatever studies he required from me, to make me as far as possible understand and feel the utility of them; and he regarded this as especially fitting in the case of the syllogistic logic, the usefulness of which had been challenged by so many writers of authority. I well remember how, and in what particular walk in the neighbourhood of Bagshot Heath (where we were on a visit to his old friend Mr Wallace, then one of the mathematical professors at Sandhurst), he first tried by questions to make me think about this subject and develop some conception of what made syllogistic logic useful, and (when I had failed in this) to make me understand it by explanations. The explanations did not make the matter at all clear to me at the time, but they were not useless; they remained as a nucleus for my observations and reflections to crystallise on, because the import of his general remarks was later interpreted to me by the particular instances that came under my notice. My own consciousness and experience eventually led me to appreciate—quite as highly as he did—the value of an early practical familiarity with scholastic logic. I know nothing in my education to which I think myself more indebted for whatever capacity of thinking I have attained. The first intellectual operation in which I arrived at any proficiency was dissecting a bad argument and finding where in it the fallacy lay; and though whatever ability of this sort I achieved was due to its being an intellectual exercise in which I was perseveringly drilled by my father, it is also true that the scholastic logic, and the mental habits acquired in studying it, were among the principal instruments of this drilling. I am persuaded that nothing in modern education tends so much, when properly used, to form exact thinkers who attach a precise meaning to words and propositions and are not imposed on by vague, loose, or ambiguous terms. The boasted influence of mathematical studies is nothing to it; for in mathematical processes none of the real difficulties of correct reasoning occur. It is also a suitable study for an early stage in the education of philosophical students, because it does not involve the students in the slow process of acquiring by experience and reflection valuable thoughts of their own. They may become capable of disentangling the intricacies of confused and self-contradictory thought before their own thinking faculties are much advanced; a capability that many otherwise able men altogether lack because they

were never subjected to some such discipline. When such men have to answer opponents they try by such argument as they can command to support their own side, scarcely even trying to confute the reasonings of their antagonists; so that at best they leave the question, as far as it depends on argument, a balanced one.

Most of the Latin and Greek books that I continued to read with my father at this time were worth studying not merely for the language but also for the thoughts. This included much of the orators, and especially Demosthenes, some of whose principal orations I read several times over and wrote out (by way of exercise) a full analysis of them. My father's comments on these orations when I read them to him were very instructive to me. He not only drew my attention to the insight they afforded into Athenian institutions, and the principles of legislation and government they often illustrated, but pointed out the skill and art of the orator—how everything important to his purpose was said at the exact moment when he had brought his audience's minds into the state most fitted to receive it; how he made steal into their minds, gradually and by insinuation, thoughts that would have aroused their opposition if expressed more directly. I could not fully grasp many of these reflections at the time, but they left seed which germinated in due season. At this time I also read the whole of Tacitus, Juvenal, and Quintilian. The latter, owing to his obscure style and to the scholarly details of which many parts of his treatise are made up, is little read and seldom sufficiently appreciated. His book is a kind of encyclopedia of the thoughts of the ancients on the whole field of education and culture; and I have retained through life many valuable ideas which I can distinctly trace to my reading of him, even at that early age. This was when I read for the first time some of Plato's most important dialogues, in particular the Gorgias, the Protagoras, and the Republic. There is no author to whom my father thought himself more indebted for his own mental culture than Plato, or whom he more frequently recommended to young students. I can bear similar testimony in regard to myself. The Socratic method of which the Platonic dialogues are the chief example is unsurpassed as a discipline for correcting the errors and clearing up the confusions created by the intellect left to itself, i.e. by the understanding that has made up all its bundles of associations under the guidance of popular phraseology.

- The searching question-and-answer procedure by which the man of vague generalities is made to express his meaning to himself in definite terms or else admit that he doesn't know what he is talking about;
- the perpetual testing of all general statements by particular instances;
- the formal attack on the meaning of a large abstract term M by fixing on some even broader class-name that includes M and more, and *dividing* down to M, marking out its limits and definition by a series careful distinctions between it and each of the cognate objects that are successively cut away from it

—all this is an inestimable education for precise thinking, and it took such a hold of me even at that age that it became part of my own mind. Ever since then I have felt that the label 'Platonist' belongs by far better right to •those who have been nourished in and tried to practise Plato's mode of investigation than to •those who are distinguished only by having adopted certain dogmatic conclusions, drawn mostly from the least intelligible of his works—ones that Plato himself may (the character of his mind and writings makes it uncertain) have regarded as mere poetic fancies or philosophical conjectures.

Elocution

In going through Plato and Demosthenes, since I could now read these authors (as far as the language was concerned) with perfect ease, I was not required to construe them sentence by sentence, but to read them aloud to my father, answering questions when asked. But his particular attention to elocution (in which his own excellence was remarkable) made this reading aloud to him a most painful task. Of all the things he required me to do there was none that I so constantly did badly or in which he so perpetually lost his temper with me. He had thought much about the principles of the art of reading, especially the most neglected part of it, namely the inflections of the voice—what writers on elocution call *modulation* (in contrast with *articulation* on one side and *expression* on the other)—and had reduced it to rules based on the logical analysis of a sentence. He strongly impressed these rules upon me, and took me severely to task for every violation of them; but even then I noticed (though I did not venture to say so to him) that though he reproached me when I read a sentence badly and *told* me how I ought to have read it, he never by reading it himself *showed* me how it ought to be read. A defect running through his otherwise admirable modes of instruction, as through all his modes of thought, was that of trusting too much to the intelligibleness of the abstract when not embodied in the concrete. It was much later in my youth, when practising elocution by myself or with companions of my own age, that I eventually understood the purpose of his rules and saw the psychological grounds of them. At that time I and others followed out the subject into its ramifications and could have composed a very useful treatise based on my father's principles. He himself left those principles and rules unwritten. I regret that when systematic practice had filled my mind with the subject I did not put them, and our improvements of them, into a formal shape.

The *History of India*

A book that contributed largely to my education, in the best sense of the term, was my father's *History of India*. It was published at the beginning of 1818. During the preceding year when it was passing through the press I used to read the proof-sheets to him; or rather I read the manuscript to him while he corrected the proofs. The number of new ideas I received from this remarkable book, and the impulse and stimulus as well as guidance given to my thoughts by its criticisms and discussions of society and civilisation in the Hindu part, on institutions and the acts of governments in the English part, made my early familiarity with it enormously useful to my subsequent progress. And though I can now see deficiencies in it as compared with a perfect standard, I still think it one of the most instructive histories ever written—if not *the* most—and one of the books from which most benefit can be derived by a mind engaged in making up its opinions.

The Preface, one of my father's most characteristic writings as well as the richest in materials of thought, gives a picture that can be entirely depended on of the beliefs and expectations with which he wrote the *History*. Saturated as the book is with the opinions and modes of judgment of a democratic radicalism then regarded as extreme; and treating English constitution, English law, and all parties and classes with any considerable influence in the country with a severity that was at that time most unusual; he may have expected reputation, but certainly not advancement in life, from its publication. Nor could he have supposed that it would raise up anything but enemies for him in powerful quarters; least of all could he have expected favour from

the East India Company, to whose commercial privileges he was absolutely hostile and on the acts of whose government he had made so many severe comments; though in various parts of his book he testified in their favour (as he felt to be their just due) that no government had on the whole given so much proof of good intention towards its subjects, and that if the light of publicity were focused on the acts of any other government they would probably look even worse.

However, when my father learned—in the spring of 1819, about a year after the publication of the *History*—that the East India directors wanted to strengthen the part of their home establishment that was employed in carrying on the correspondence with India, he declared himself a candidate for that employment and, to the credit of the directors, he succeeded. He was appointed one of the assistants of the Examiner of India Correspondence—officers whose duty it was to prepare drafts of despatches to India, for consideration by the directors, in the principal departments of administration. In this office, and in that of Examiner which he subsequently attained, the influence which his talents, his reputation, and his decision of character gave him with superiors who really desired the good government of India, enabled him to a great extent to throw his real opinions on Indian subjects into his drafts of despatches, and to carry through the ordeal of the Court of Directors and Board of Control without having the opinions' force much weakened. In his *History* he had set forth for the first time many of the true principles of Indian administration; and his despatches, following his *History*, did more than had ever been done before to promote the improvement of India and teach Indian officials to understand their business. If a selection of them were published, they would, I am convinced, place his character as a practical statesman fully on a level with his eminence as a speculative writer.

Economics

This new employment of his time did not make him relax his attention to my education. It was in this same year, 1819, that he took me through a complete course of political economy [see Glossary]. His loved and intimate friend ·David· Ricardo [1773–1823] had shortly before published the book that created so great an epoch in political economy. This book would never have been written but for the entreaty and strong encouragement of my father; for Ricardo, the most modest of men, though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrines, shrank from the idea of publicity because he regarded himself as so little capable of doing them justice in exposition and expression. The same friendly encouragement induced Ricardo to become a member of the House of Commons a year or two later. There, during the few remaining years of his life (unhappily cut short in the full vigour of his intellect) he rendered much service to his and my father's opinions on political economy and on other subjects.

Though Ricardo's great work was already in print, there was no textbook presenting its doctrines in a manner fit for learners. So my father started instructing me in the science ·of economics· by a sort of lectures that he delivered to me during our walks. He expounded a portion of the subject each day, and I gave him next day a written account of it, which he made me rewrite over and over again until it was clear, precise, and tolerably complete. I went through the whole extent of the science in this way; and the written outline of it that resulted from my daily reports served him afterwards as notes from which to write his *Elements of Political Economy*. After this I read Ricardo, giving an account daily of what I read, and discussing as best I could the collateral points that came up in our progress.

On *money*, as the most intricate part of the subject, he

made me read in the same manner Ricardo's admirable pamphlets written during the so-called 'bullion controversy'. These were followed by Adam Smith; and one of my father's main objects in this reading was to make me apply to Smith's more superficial view of political economy the superior lights of Ricardo, and to detect what was fallacious in Smith's arguments or erroneous in any of his conclusions. Such a method of instruction was excellently calculated to form a thinker; but it had to be done by a thinker as close and vigorous as my father. The path was a thorny one, even to him, and I am sure it was so to me despite my strong interest in the subject. He was often unreasonably annoyed by my failures in cases where success could not have been expected; but in the main his method was right, and it succeeded. I do not believe that any scientific teaching ever was more thorough, or better fitted for training the faculties, than the mode in which logic and political economy were taught to me by my father. Trying (perhaps too hard) to call forth the activity of my faculties by making me find out everything for myself, he gave his explanations only *after* I had felt the full force of the difficulties; and he not only gave me an accurate knowledge of these two great subjects, as far as they were then understood, but made me a thinker in both. I thought for myself almost from the first, and occasionally thought differently from him, though for a long time only on minor points and making his opinion the ultimate standard. At a later period I occasionally even *altered* his opinion on points of detail, which I state to his honour, not my own. It shows both his perfect candour and the real worth of his method of teaching.

At this point concluded my *lessons*, strictly so-called; when I was about 14 I left England for more than a year; and after my return, though my studies went on under my father's general direction, he was no longer my schoolmaster. So I shall pause here and turn back to matters of a more general nature connected with the part of my life and education I have been talking about.

General points about early education

The most obvious feature of the course of instruction that I have partly retraced is the great effort to give during the years of childhood an amount of knowledge in what are considered the higher branches of education—knowledge that is seldom acquired until the age of manhood, if then. The result of the experiment is to show how easily this can be done, and shines a strong light on the wretched waste of the precious years that are spent in acquiring the modicum of Latin and Greek commonly taught to schoolboys; a waste that has led so many educational reformers to entertain the ill-judged proposal of discarding these languages altogether from general education. If by nature

- I had been extremely quick of apprehension, or
- had had a very accurate and retentive memory, or
- were of a remarkably active and energetic character,

the trial would not be conclusive; but in all these natural gifts I am below rather than above par—what I could do could assuredly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution. If I have accomplished anything ·in my life· I owe it, among other fortunate circumstances, to the fact that because of the early training my father gave me I started, I may fairly say, with an advantage of a quarter of a century over my contemporaries.

Whatever good this training achieved was due to something of which I have already given some indication. Most boys or youths who have had much knowledge drilled into them have their mental capacities not •strengthened but •over-laid by it. They are crammed with mere facts and

with the opinions or phrases of other people, and these are accepted as a substitute for the power to form opinions of their own: and thus the sons of eminent fathers who have spared no pains in their education so often grow up mere parroters of what they have learned, incapable of using their minds except along the grooves prepared for them. Mine was not an education of *cram*. My father never permitted anything that I learned to degenerate into a mere exercise of memory. He tried to make the understanding not only go along with every step of the teaching but if possible to *precede* it. If something could be found out by thinking, I never was told it until I had exhausted my efforts to find it out for myself. As far as I can trust my memory I acquitted myself very lamely in this; my recollection of such matters is almost wholly of failures, hardly ever of success. The failures were indeed often in things in which success was almost impossible at that early stage in my progress. At some time in my thirteenth year I happened to use the word 'idea'; and he asked me what an idea was, and expressed some displeasure at my ineffectual efforts to define the word. I remember also his indignation at my using the common expression that something was true 'in theory' but required correction 'in practice'; and how—after making me vainly try to define the word 'theory'—he explained its meaning and showed the fallacy of the vulgar [see Glossary] form of speech I had used; leaving me fully convinced that I had shown unparalleled ignorance in being unable define 'theory' correctly while speaking of theory as something that might be at variance with practice. In this he seems very unreasonable; I think that perhaps he was, but only in being angry at my failure. A pupil from whom nothing is ever demanded that he cannot do never does all he can.

Self-conceit

My father anxiously guarded against one of the evils most likely to accompany any sort of early proficiency, an evil that often fatally blights its promise. This was *self-conceit*. He vigilantly kept me out of the way of hearing myself praised, or of being led to make self-flattering comparisons between myself and others. From his own conversations with me I could derive only a very humble opinion of myself; and the standard of comparison he always held up to me was not •what other people did but •what a man could and ought to do. He completely succeeded in preserving me from the sort of influences he so much dreaded. I was not at all aware that my attainments were anything unusual at my age. If I accidentally had my attention drawn to the fact that some other boy knew less than I did—which happened less often than might be imagined—I concluded not that I knew much but that he for some reason knew little, or that his knowledge was of a different kind from mine. My state of mind was not humility, but neither was it arrogance. I never thought of saying to myself 'I am such and such' or 'I can do so and so'. I did not estimate myself highly or lowly; I did not estimate myself at all. If I thought anything about myself it was that I was rather backward in my studies, since I always found myself to be so in comparison with what my father expected from me. I say this with confidence, though it was not the impression of various persons who saw me in my childhood. They, as I have since found, thought me greatly and disagreeably self-conceited; probably because I was argumentative and did not hesitate to flatly contradict things I heard said. I suppose I acquired this bad habit from having been greatly encouraged to talk with grown persons on matters beyond my age, and never having inculcated in me the usual respect for them. My father did not correct

this ill-breeding and impertinence, probably from not being aware of it, for I was always too much in awe of him to be otherwise than extremely subdued and quiet in his presence. Yet with all this I had no notion of any superiority in myself; and it was just as well for me that I had not. I remember the very place in Hyde Park where in my fourteenth year, on the eve of leaving my father's house for a long absence, he told me that I would find that I had been taught many things that youths of my age did not commonly know; and that many persons would talk to me about this and compliment me on it. I do not well remember what other things he said about this, but he wound up by saying that whatever I knew more than others could not be ascribed to any merit in me, but to my unusual advantage of having a father who was able to teach me, and willing to give the necessary trouble and time; that it was no matter of praise to me if I knew more than those who had not had a similar advantage, but the deepest disgrace to me if I did not. I distinctly remember that the information (learned on that occasion) that I knew more than other youths who were considered well educated did not at all impress me as a personal matter. I felt no disposition to glorify myself on the fact that there were other persons who did not know what I knew; nor had I ever flattered myself that my acquirements, whatever they might be, were any merit of mine. Now that my attention was called to the subject, I felt that what my father had said about my special advantages was exactly the truth and common sense of the matter, and it fixed my opinion and feeling from that time forward.

My solitary childhood

This could not have been accomplished if my father had not carefully kept me from having much interaction with other boys (and the same is true of many of the other purposes of his scheme of education). He was earnestly bent upon my escaping not only •the ordinary corrupting influence that boys exercise over boys, but also •the contagion of vulgar modes of thought and feeling; and he was willing that for this I should pay the price of inferiority in the accomplishments which schoolboys in all countries chiefly cultivate. The deficiencies in my education were principally in the things that boys learn through being turned out to shift for themselves, and through being brought together in large numbers. From temperance and much walking, I grew up healthy and hardy though not muscular; but I could perform no feats of skill or physical strength, and knew none of the ordinary bodily exercises. I was not denied play or time for it. Though no holidays were allowed, lest the habit of work should be broken and a taste for idleness acquired, I had ample leisure in every day to amuse myself; but as I had no boy companions and the animal need of physical activity was satisfied by walking, my (mostly solitary) amusements were in general of a quiet kind that gave little stimulus to any kind of activity—even mental activity—other than what was already called forth by my studies. So for a long time I was inexpert in anything requiring manual dexterity, and have always been somewhat so. Not only my hands but also my mind did its work very lamely when it was or ought to have been applied to the practical details which, being the chief interest of life to the majority of men, are also the things in which their mental capacity chiefly shows itself. I was constantly meriting reproof for my inattention and general slackness of mind in matters of daily life. My father was the extreme opposite in these respects; his senses and mental faculties were always on the alert; he carried decision and energy of character in his whole manner and into every action of life; and this contributed as much as his talents did to the strong impression he made on all those with

whom he came into personal contact. But the children of energetic parents frequently grow up unenergetic, because they lean on their parents, and the parents are energetic for them. The education my father gave me was in itself much more fitted for training me to *know* than to *do*. Not that he was unaware of my deficiencies; both as a boy and as a youth I was incessantly smarting under his severe scoldings on the subject. He was anything but unaware of such shortcomings, or tolerant of them; but, while he saved me from the demoralising [see Glossary] effects of school life he made no effort to provide me with an adequate substitute for its practicalising influences. Whatever qualities he himself had probably acquired without difficulty or special training, he seems to have supposed that I ought to acquire equally easily. He had not, I think, given as much thought and attention to this as to most other branches of education; and here, as well as in some other points of my tuition, he seems to have expected effects without causes.

Part 2
Moral influences in early youth. My father's character and opinions

In my education, as in everyone's, the moral influences that are so much more important than all others are also the most complicated and the most difficult to specify with any approach to completeness. Without attempting the hopeless task of *detailing* the circumstances by which my early character may have been shaped in this respect, I shall confine myself to a few leading points that form an indispensable part of any true account of my education.

My father and religion

I was brought up from the first without any *religious belief*, in the ordinary meaning of that phrase. My father, educated in the creed of Scotch presbyterianism, had by his own studies and reflections been early led to reject not only the belief in revelation but the foundations of what is commonly called *natural religion*. I have heard him say that the turning point of his mind on the subject was reading Butler's ·*The· Analogy ·of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*·. That work, which he always spoke of with respect, kept him (he said) for some considerable time a believer in the divine authority of Christianity. It did this by proving to him that whatever are the difficulties in believing

- that the Old and New Testaments proceed from, or record the acts of, a perfectly wise and good being,

the same and still greater difficulties stand in the way of the belief

- that a being of such a character can have been the maker of the universe.

He considered Butler's argument as conclusive against the only opponents for whom it was intended. Those who admit an omnipotent as well as perfectly just and benevolent maker and ruler of such a world as this, ·namely deists·, can say little against Christianity except what can with at least equal force be retorted against themselves. Finding therefore no halting place in deism, he remained in a state of perplexity until (doubtless after many struggles) he yielded to the conviction that nothing whatever can be known concerning the origin of things. This is the only correct statement of his opinion; for he looked on dogmatic atheism as absurd; as most of those whom the world has considered atheists have always done. These details are important because they show that my father's rejection of all that is called religious

belief was not, as many might suppose, primarily a matter of logic and evidence; the grounds of it were moral more than intellectual. He found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness. His intellect spurned the subtleties [here = 'logical tricks'] by which men attempt to blind themselves to this open contradiction. He would not have equally condemned the Manichaean theory of good and evil forces struggling against each other for the government of the universe, and I have heard him express surprise that no one revived it in our time. He would have regarded it as a mere hypothesis, but would not have ascribed to it any depraving influence. As it was, his aversion to *religion* (in the usual sense of the word) was like that of Lucretius: he regarded it with the feelings appropriate not to a mere mental delusion but to a great moral evil. He looked on it as the greatest enemy of morality by

- setting up factitious excellencies, belief in creeds, devotional feelings, and ceremonies not connected with the good of human kind; by
- causing these to be accepted as substitutes for genuine virtues; and and above all by
- radically spoiling the standard of morals, making it consist in doing the will of a being on whom it lavishes all the phrases of adulation but whom in sober truth it depicts as utterly dreadful.

I have a hundred times heard him say that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness that the human mind can devise, and have called this *God* and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity. Think (he used to say) of a being who would make a hell—who would create the human race with the infallible foreknowledge (and therefore with the intention) that the great majority of them were to be consigned to horrible and everlasting torment. The time, I believe, is drawing near when this dreadful conception of an object of worship will be no longer identified with Christianity, and when everyone with *any* sense of moral good and evil will look on it with the same indignation as my father did. He knew as well as anyone that Christians do not in general undergo, in the manner or to the extent that might have been expected, the demoralising consequences that seem inherent in such a creed. The same slovenliness of thought and subjection of reason to fears, wishes, and affections that •enable them to accept a theory involving a contradiction in terms also •prevent them from perceiving the logical consequences of the theory. So easy it is for mankind to believe at one and the same time things inconsistent with one another, and so few are those who draw from what they receive as truths any consequences but those recommended to them by their feelings, that multitudes have held the undoubting belief in an **omnipotent author of hell**, and have nevertheless identified that being with the best conception they could form of **perfect goodness**. Their worship was addressed not to the demon that such a being as they imagined would really be, but to their own idea of excellence. The evil is that such a belief keeps the ideal wretchedly low, and creates the most obstinate resistance to any thought that has a tendency to raise it higher. Believers shrink from every line of thought that would lead the mind to a clear conception and an elevated standard of excellence, because they *feel* (even when they do not clearly *see*) that such a standard would conflict with many of the dispensations of nature and with much of what they are accustomed to consider as the

Christian creed. Thus morality continues to be a matter of blind tradition, with no consistent principle or even any consistent feeling to guide it.

Myself and religion

It would have been wholly inconsistent with my father's ideas of duty to allow me to acquire impressions regarding religion that were contrary to his own convictions and feelings; and he impressed upon me from the first that how the world came into existence was a subject on which nothing was known; that the question 'Who made me?' cannot be answered because we have no experience or authentic information on which to base an answer, and that any answer only throws the difficulty a step further back, since the question 'Who made God?' immediately arises. At the same time he took care that I should be acquainted with what had been thought by mankind on these impenetrable problems. I have mentioned that at an early age he made me read ecclesiastical history, and he taught me to take the strongest interest in the Reformation, as the great and decisive contest against priestly tyranny for liberty of thought.

I am thus one of the very few examples in this country of one who has not thrown off religious belief but never had it; I grew up in a negative state with regard to it. I looked upon the modern religion exactly as I did on the ancient ones, as something that in no way concerned me. It did not seem to me more strange that English people should believe what I did not than that the men I read of in Herodotus should have done so. History had made the variety of opinions among mankind a fact familiar to me, and this was merely a prolongation of that fact. This aspect of my early education did however have one bad consequence that I ought to mention. In giving me an opinion contrary to that of the world, my father thought it necessary to give it as something that could not prudently be avowed to the world. This early lesson of keeping my thoughts to myself brought some moral disadvantages, though my limited contact with strangers—especially ones who were likely to speak to me about religion—prevented me from being confronted by the choice between avowal and hypocrisy. I remember two boyhood occasions when I felt myself faced with this choice, and each time I avowed my disbelief and defended it. My opponents were boys considerably older than myself; one of them I certainly staggered at the time, but the subject was never renewed between us; the other did his best to convince me for some time, without effect.

The silence of 'unbelievers'

The great advance in liberty of discussion that is one of the most important differences between the present time and that of my childhood has greatly altered the moralities of this question; and I think that few men of my father's intellect and public spirit, holding with such intensity of moral conviction as he did unpopular opinions on religion or on any other of the great subjects of thought, would now practise or recommend withholding them from the world; except in cases (becoming fewer every day) where frankness on these subjects would •risk the loss of livelihood or •amount to exclusion from some sphere of usefulness especially suitable to the person's capacities. On religion in particular the time appears to me to have come when all those who are qualified in point of knowledge, and have on mature consideration concluded that the current opinions are not only false but harmful, have a duty to make their dissent known; at least if they are among those whose standing or reputation gives their opinion a chance of being attended to. Such an avowal

would *finally* put an end to the vulgar prejudice that what is very improperly called 'unbelief' is connected with any bad qualities of mind or heart. The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments—of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue—are complete sceptics in religion. Many of them refrain from openly avowing this not so much from personal considerations as from a conscientious fear (*now*, I think, a most mistaken one) that they would do harm instead of good by saying things that would tend to weaken existing beliefs and thus (they think) weaken existing restraints.

Of unbelievers (so-called) as well as of believers there are many species, including almost every variety of moral type. But the best among them, as anyone who has had (as believers rarely do) opportunities of really knowing them will agree, are more genuinely *religious* in the best sense of that word than those who claim the title as exclusively belonging to them. The liberality of the age—i.e. the weakening of the obstinate prejudice that makes men unable to see what is before their eyes because it is contrary to their expectations—has caused it to be very commonly admitted that a deist may be truly religious; but if 'religion' stands for any graces of character and not for mere dogma, the assertion may equally be made of many whose belief is far short of deism. Though they may think the proof incomplete that the universe is a work of design, and though they assuredly *disbelieve* that it can have an author and governor who is absolute in power as well as perfect in goodness, they have something that constitutes the principal worth of all religions whatever, namely an ideal conception of a Perfect Being, to which they habitually refer as the guide of their conscience; and this ideal of Good is usually far nearer to perfection than the fictional Deity of those who think themselves obliged to find absolute goodness in the author of a world as crowded with suffering and as deformed by injustice as ours is.

My father and the Greeks

My father's moral convictions, wholly separated from religion, were very like those of the Greek philosophers, and were delivered with the force and decision that characterised all that came from him. Even at the very early age at which I read with him the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, I imbibed from that work and from his comments a deep respect for the character of Socrates, who stood in my mind as a model of ideal excellence; and I well remember how my father at that time impressed upon me the lesson of the 'Choice of Hercules' ·between virtue and vice·. At a somewhat later period the lofty moral standard exhibited in the writings of Plato operated on me with great force. My father's moral inculcations were at all times mainly those of Socrates' followers, namely

- justice,
- temperance (to which he gave a very extended application),
- veracity,
- perseverance,
- readiness to encounter pain and especially labour;
- regard for the public good;
- estimation of persons according to their merits, and of things according to their intrinsic usefulness;
- a life of exertion in contradiction to one of self-indulgent sloth.

These and other moralities he conveyed in brief sentences, uttered as grave exhortation or stern reprobation and contempt, as occasion arose.

But though direct moral teaching does much, indirect does more; and the effect my father produced on my

character depended less on what he said or did with that direct purpose than on what manner of man he was.

In his views of life he partook of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and—not in the modern but the ancient sense of the word—the Cynic. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated. His standard of morals was Epicurean in that it was utilitarian, taking as the exclusive test of right and wrong the tendency of actions to produce pleasure or pain. But he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure—at least in his later years, the only ones about which I can speak confidently on this topic. He was not insensible to pleasures, but he regarded few of them as worth the price that must be paid for them, at least in the present state of society. Most things that go wrong in life he considered to be due to the overvaluing of pleasures. Accordingly, temperance—in the broad sense intended by the Greek philosophers, stretching out to moderation in *all* indulgences—was for him almost the central point of educational precept, as it was for them. His inculcations of this virtue fill a large place in my memories of childhood. He thought that human life, after the freshness of youth and of unsatisfied curiosity had gone by, is a poor thing at best. He did not often speak about this, especially (it may be supposed) in the presence of young persons; but when he did, it was with an air of settled and profound conviction. He would sometimes say that life would be worth having if good government and good education made it what it *could* be; but he never spoke of that possibility with anything like enthusiasm. He always rated intellectual enjoyments above all others—even in their value as pleasures—independently of their ulterior benefits. The pleasures of the benevolent affections he placed high in the scale; and he used to say that he had never known a happy old man except those who were able to re-live the pleasures of the young.

Feelings and morality

For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. Calling something 'intense' was for him a by-word of scornful disapproval. He regarded the great stress laid on *feeling* as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients. He considered feelings as such to be no proper subjects of praise or blame. Right and wrong, good and bad, he regarded as qualities solely of conduct, of acts and omissions; because any feeling may lead either to good or to bad actions, and even conscience itself—the very desire to act rightly—often leads people to act wrongly. Consistently with the doctrine that the purpose of praise and blame should be to discourage wrong conduct and encourage right, he refused to let his praise or blame be influenced by the agent's motive. If he thought an action to be bad he blamed it as severely when the motive was a feeling of duty as if the agents had been consciously evil-doers. He would not have accepted as a plea in mitigation for inquisitors that they sincerely believed burning heretics to be an obligation of conscience. But though he did not allow honesty of purpose to soften his disapproval of •actions, it had its full effect on his estimation of •characters. No-one prized conscientiousness and rightness of intention more highly, or was more incapable of valuing any person in whom he did not feel assurance of it. But he disliked people quite as much for any other deficiency—·i.e. any lack of something other than conscientiousness·—if he thought it equally likely to make them act badly. For example, he disliked a fanatic in a bad cause even more than one who adopted the same cause from self-interest, because he thought him even more likely to be practically harmful. So his aversion to many intellectual

errors, or what he regarded as such, had something of the character of a moral feeling. This is merely to say that he, to a degree once common but now unusual, threw his feelings into his opinions; and it really is hard to understand how anyone who possesses much of both can fail to do this. Only those who do not care about opinions will confuse it with intolerance. Those who have a deep regard for the general good, and have opinions that they hold to be immensely important and their contraries to be prodigiously harmful, will inevitably dislike as a class those who think wrong what they think right, and right what they think wrong. But they need not be—and my father was not—unaware of an opponent's good qualities, or governed in their estimation of individuals by one general presumption instead of by their whole character. I admit that an earnest person (being fallible like everyone else) is liable to dislike people on account of opinions that do not merit dislike; but if he doesn't himself do them any harm or connive [see Glossary] at his being harmed by others, he is not intolerant. The only tolerance that is commendable, or to the highest moral order of minds *possible*, is the forbearance that flows from a conscientious sense of the importance to mankind of the equal freedom of all opinions.

Tenderness

It will be admitted that a man with the opinions and the character I have described my father as having was likely to leave a strong moral impression on any mind principally formed by him, and that his moral teaching was not likely to err on the side of laxity or indulgence! The element that was chiefly lacking in his moral relation with his children was *tenderness*. I do not believe that this deficiency lay in his own nature. I believe him to have had much more feeling than he habitually showed, and much greater capacities of feeling than were ever developed. He resembled most Englishmen in being ashamed of the signs of feeling, and starving the feelings themselves by not demonstrating them. Given that he was in the demanding position of sole teacher, and that his temperament was constitutionally irritable, one must feel true pity for a father who did—and worked to do—so much for his children, who would have so valued their affection, yet who must have constantly felt that fear of him was drying it up at its source. This was no longer the case later in life, and with his younger children. They loved him tenderly, and if I cannot say so much of myself I was always loyally devoted to him. As regards my own education, I hesitate to pronounce whether I was more a loser or gainer by his severity. It did not prevent me from having a happy childhood. And I do not believe that boys can be induced to apply themselves with vigour and (much more difficult) perseverance to dry and irksome studies solely by persuasion and soft words. There is much that children must do, and much that they must learn, that they will not do and learn without rigid discipline and known liability to punishment. No doubt it is a very laudable effort in modern teaching to make easy and interesting to the young as much as possible of what they are required to learn. But when this principle is pushed to the length of not requiring them to learn anything but what has been made easy and interesting, one of the chief aims of education is sacrificed. I rejoice in the decline of the old brutal and tyrannical system of teaching, though it did succeed in enforcing habits of application; but the new system seems to me to be training a race of men who will be incapable of doing anything that is disagreeable to them. So I do not believe that fear can be dispensed with as an element in education; but I am sure that it ought not to be the main element; and when it predominates so much as

to •preclude love and confidence on the part of the child to those who should be the unreservedly trusted advisers in later years, and perhaps to •seal up the fountains of frank and spontaneous communicativeness in the child's nature, it is an evil that constitutes a large deduction from the moral and intellectual benefits that may flow from any other part of the education.

Jeremy Bentham and others

During this first period of my life the habitual visitors to my father's house were limited to a very few persons, most of them little known to the world, but whom personal worth, and some congeniality with at least his political opinions (not so common then as since) inclined him to cultivate; and I listened with interest and instruction to his conversations with them. My being an habitual occupant of my father's study made me acquainted with the dearest of his friends, David **Ricardo**, whose benevolent countenance and kindliness of manner made him very attractive to young persons, and who (after I became a student of political economy) invited me to his house and to walk with him in order to have conversations on that subject. I was a more frequent visitor (from about 1817 or 1818) to Mr ·Joseph· **Hume**. He was born in the same part of Scotland as my father and was (I think) a younger schoolfellow or college companion of his; on returning from India he renewed their youthful acquaintance, and (like many others) came to be much influenced by my father's intellect and energy of character. That was a part of what induced him to go into Parliament, and there adopt the line of conduct that has given him an honourable place in the history of his country. I saw much more of Mr **Bentham**, because of his close intimacy with my father. I do not know how soon after my father's first arrival in England they became acquainted. But my father was the earliest Englishman of any great mark who thoroughly understood and mainly adopted Bentham's general views of ethics, government and law; and this was a natural basis for sympathy between them, and made them familiar companions at a time in Bentham's life when which he admitted far fewer visitors than he did subsequently. At this time Mr Bentham passed some part of every year at Barrow Green House, in a beautiful part of the Surrey hills, where each summer I accompanied my father in a long visit. In 1813 I went with Mr Bentham and my father on an excursion that included Oxford, Bath and Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, and Portsmouth. On this journey I saw many things that were instructive to me, and acquired my first taste for natural scenery in the elementary form of fondness for a 'view'. In the succeeding winter we moved into a house very near Mr Bentham's, which my father rented from him, in Queen Square, Westminster. From 1814 to 1817 Mr Bentham lived during half of each year at Ford Abbey in a part of Devonshire surrounded by Somersetshire, and I had the advantage of spending those times at that place. This was, I think, an important factor in my education. Nothing contributes more to encourage elevation of sentiments [see Glossary] in a people than the large and free character of their homes. This fine old place's medieval architecture, baronial hall, and spacious and lofty rooms—so unlike the mean and cramped externals of English middle class life—gave one the feeling of a larger and freer existence, and were to me a sort of poetic cultivation, aided also by the character of the grounds in which the Abbey stood. These were cheerful, shady, and full of the sound of falling waters.

Another fortunate factor in my education was a year's residence in France, which I owed to Mr Bentham's brother, General Sir Samuel Bentham. I had seen him and his family at their house near Gosport in the course of the tour already

mentioned (he being then Superintendent of the Dockyard at Portsmouth), and during a stay of a few days which they made at Ford Abbey shortly after the peace ·of 1815·, before going to live on the Continent [see Glossary]. In 1820 they invited me for a six months' visit to them in the south of France, which their kindness eventually prolonged to nearly a year. Sir Samuel Bentham, though of a character of mind different from that of his illustrious brother, was a man of very considerable attainments and general powers, with a decided genius for mechanical art. His wife, a daughter of the celebrated chemist Dr Fordyce, was a woman of strong will and decided character, much general knowledge, and great practical good sense of the Edgeworth kind, [i.e. of the kind emphasised and encouraged by the writings of Maria Edgeworth]. She was the ruling spirit of the household, as she deserved to be and was well qualified to be. Their family consisted of one son (the eminent botanist) and three daughters, the youngest about two years my senior [JSM was 14 at this time]. I am indebted to them for much and various instruction, and for an almost parental interest in my welfare. When I first joined them, in May 1820, they occupied the Château of Pompignan (still belonging to a descendant of Voltaire's enemy ·Jean-Jacques Lefranc, Marquis de Pompignan·) on the heights overlooking the plain of the Garonne between Montauban and Toulouse. I accompanied them in an excursion to the Pyrenees, including a stay at Bagnères de Bigorre, a journey to Pau, Bayonne, and Bagnères de Luchon, and an ascent of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre.

Notes on France

This first introduction to the highest order of mountain scenery made the deepest impression on me, and gave a colour to my tastes through life. In October we proceeded by the beautiful mountain route of Castres and St Pons, from Toulouse to Montpellier, in which last neighbourhood Sir Samuel had just bought the estate of Restinclière, near the foot of the singular mountain of St Loup. During this residence in France I acquired a familiar knowledge of the French language, and acquaintance with the ordinary French literature; I took lessons in various bodily exercises, without becoming proficient in any of them; and at Montpellier I attended the excellent winter courses of lectures at the Faculté des Sciences, those of M. Anglada on chemistry, of M. Provençal on zoology, and of a very accomplished representative of 18th century metaphysics, M. Gergonne, on logic, under the name of 'philosophy of the sciences'. I also went through a course of higher mathematics under the private tuition of M. Lenthéric, a professor at the Lycée of Montpellier. But perhaps the greatest of the many advantages I owed to this episode in my education was that of having for a whole year breathed the free and genial atmosphere of Continental life. I could not then estimate this advantage, or even consciously feel it, but it was nonetheless real. Having so little experience of English life, and the few people I knew being mostly ones who had at heart public objectives of a large and personally disinterested kind, I was ignorant of the low moral tone of 'society', as it is called in England: •the habit of taking for granted—implying it in every possible way without actually saying it—that conduct is of course always directed towards low and trivial goals; •the absence of high feelings, which shows itself by sneering depreciation of all demonstrations of them and by general abstinence (except among a few of the stricter religionists) from professing any high principles of action at all—except in the preordained cases where such profession is put on as part of the costume and formalities of the occasion. I could not then know or estimate the difference between this manner of existence

and that of a people like the French, whose faults, if equally real, are *different*. Among them, elevated sentiments (or at least comparatively elevated ones) are the current coin of human conversation, both in books and in private life; and, though often turning gassy when they are *announced*, they are kept alive in the nation at large by constant exercise, and stimulated by sympathy [see Glossary], so as to form a living and active part of the existence of very many persons and to be recognised and understood by all. Nor could I then appreciate the general development of the understanding that results from the habitual exercise of the feelings, and is thus carried down into the most uneducated classes in several European countries in a degree not equalled in England among the so-called educated, except where an unusual sensitivity of conscience leads to an habitual exercise of the intellect on questions of right and wrong. I did not know the way in which, among the ordinary English,

> •the absence of interest in things of an unselfish kind except occasionally in a special thing here and there, and •the habit of not speaking to others (nor much even to themselves) about the things in which they *do* feel interest,

causes their feelings and their intellectual faculties to remain undeveloped, or to develop only in some single and very limited direction—reducing them, considered as spiritual beings, to a kind of negative existence. I did not perceive these things till long afterwards; but even back then I felt, though without stating it clearly to myself, the contrast between the frank sociability and amiability of French personal conversation and the English mode of existence in which everybody acts as if almost everybody else was either an enemy or a bore. In France, it is true, the bad as well as the good points of individual and of national character come more to the surface, and break out more fearlessly in ordinary conversation, than in England; but the general habit of the people is to show, as well as to expect, friendly feeling in everyone towards everyone except where there is some positive cause for the opposite. In England nothing like this can be said except about the best bred people in the upper or upper-middle ranks.

In my way through Paris, both going and returning, I passed some time in the house of M. Say, the eminent political economist, who was a friend and correspondent of my father, having become acquainted with him on a visit to England a year or two after the peace. He was a man of the later period of the French Revolution, a fine specimen of the best kind of French Republican, one of those who had never bent the knee to Bonaparte though courted by him to do so; a truly upright, brave, and enlightened man. He lived a quiet and studious life, made happy by warm public and private affections. He was acquainted with many of the chiefs of the Liberal party, and I saw various noteworthy persons while staying at his house. I enjoy the memory of having once seen Saint-Simon, not yet the founder of a philosophy or of a religion, and considered only as a clever eccentric. What I mainly carried away from the society I saw was a strong and permanent interest in Continental Liberalism, on which I ever afterwards kept myself up to date as much as on English politics, a very unusual thing with Englishmen in those days. It had a very salutary influence on my development, keeping me free from the error—always prevalent in England, even my father being guilty of it—of judging universal questions by a merely English standard. After passing a few weeks at Caen with an old friend of my father's I returned to England in July 1821; and my education resumed its ordinary course.

Part 3
Last stage of education and first of self-education

For the first year or two after my visit to France I continued my old studies, with the addition of some new ones. When I returned, my father was just finishing for the press his *Elements of Political Economy*, and he made me perform on the manuscript an exercise that Mr Bentham practised on all his own writings, making what he called 'marginal contents', namely a short abstract of every paragraph, to enable the writer more easily to evaluate and improve the order of the ideas and the general character of the exposition. Soon after that my father put into my hands Condillac's *Traité des Sensations*, and the logical and metaphysical volumes of his *Cours d'études*. Despite the superficial resemblance between Condillac's psychological system and my father's, the *Traité* was given to me quite as much for a warning as for an example. I am not sure whether it was in this winter or the next that I first read a history of the French Revolution. I learned with astonishment that the principles of democracy, then apparently in so insignificant and hopeless a minority everywhere in Europe, had carried all before them in France thirty years earlier, and had been the creed of the nation. I had previously had only a very vague idea of that great commotion. I knew only that the French had thrown off the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV and XV, had put the King and Queen to death, guillotined many persons including Lavoisier, and had eventually fallen under the despotism of Bonaparte. From this time, naturally, the subject took an immense hold of my feelings. It allied itself with all my juvenile aspirations to the character of a democratic champion. What had happened so recently seemed as if it might easily happen again: and the most transcendent glory I could conceive was that of figuring—whether or not with success—as a Girondist[see Glossary] in an English ·revolutionary· Convention.

Absorbing Benthamism

During the winter of 1821–2 Mr John Austin kindly allowed me to read Roman law with him. (My father had become acquainted with him at the time of my visit to France.) Despite my father's abhorrence of the chaos of barbarism called English Law, he had turned his thoughts towards the bar as on the whole less ineligible for me than any other profession; and these readings with Mr Austin—who had made Bentham's best ideas his own, and added much to them from other sources and from his own mind—were a valuable introduction to legal studies as well as an important portion of general education. With Mr Austin I read Heineccius on the Institutes, his Roman Antiquities, and part of his exposition of the Pandects; to which was added a considerable portion of Blackstone. It was at the start of these studies that my father put into my hands, as a needed accompaniment to them, Bentham's principal speculations as interpreted to the Continent (and indeed to all the world) by Dumont in his *Traité de Législation*. The reading of this book was an epoch in my life, one of the turning points in my mental history.

My previous education had already been in a certain sense a course of Benthamism. The Benthamic standard of 'the greatest happiness' was what I had always been taught to apply; I was even familiar with an abstract discussion of it, namely an episode in an unpublished dialogue on government, written by my father on the Platonic model. Yet in the first pages of Bentham it burst on me with all the

force of novelty. What thus impressed me was the chapter in which Bentham passed judgment on

> the common modes of reasoning in morals and legislation, deduced from phrases like 'law of nature', 'right reason', 'the moral sense', 'natural rectitude' and the like,

and characterised them as dogmatism in disguise, imposing its sentiments on others under cover of high-sounding expressions that convey no reason for the sentiment but set up the sentiment as its own reason. It had not struck me before that Bentham's principle put an end to all this. The feeling rushed upon me that all previous moralists were superseded, and that here indeed was the start of a new era in thought. This impression was strengthened by Bentham's way of putting into scientific form the application of the happiness principle to the morality of actions, by analysing the various classes and orders of their consequences. But what struck me at the time most of all, was the Classification of Offences, which is much more clear, compact and imposing in Dumont's edition than in the original work of Bentham from which it was taken. Logic and the dialectics of Plato, which had formed so large a part of my previous training, had given me a strong liking for accurate classification. This taste had been strengthened and enlightened by the study of botany on the principles of the so-called 'natural method', which I had taken up with great zeal (though only as an amusement) during my stay in France; and when I found scientific classification applied to the great and complex subject of *punishable acts* under the guidance of the ethical principle of *pleasurable and painful consequences*, followed out into the level of detail introduced into these subjects by Bentham, I felt taken up to a height from which I could survey a vast mental domain and see stretching out into the distance intellectual results beyond all computation. As I went further there seemed to be added to this •intellectual clearness the most inspiring prospects of •practical improvements in human affairs. I was not altogether a stranger to Bentham's general view of the construction of a body of law, having read with attention my father's article 'Jurisprudence', which is an admirable compendium of it; but I had read it with little profit and scarcely any interest, no doubt because of its extremely general and abstract character, and also because it concerned the form more than the substance of the body of the law, the •logic rather than the •ethics of law. But Bentham's subject was legislation, of which jurisprudence is only the formal part; and on every page he seemed to open a clearer and broader conception of what human opinions and institutions ought to be, how they might be made what they ought to be, and how far removed from it they now are. When I laid down the last volume of the *Traité* I had become a different being. The 'principle of utility', understood as Bentham understood it and applied as he applied it through these three volumes, fell exactly into its place as the keystone that held together the detached and fragmentary component parts of my knowledge and beliefs. It gave unity to my conceptions of things. I now had opinions—a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy, in one of the best senses of the word a *religion*—the teaching and spreading of which could be made the principal outward purpose of a life. And I had a grand conception laid before me of how that doctrine would change the condition of mankind. The *Traité de Législation* wound up with a picture—to me a most impressive one—of human life as it would be made by opinions and laws such as were recommended in the treatise. Its predictions of practicable improvement were carefully moderate, writing off as day-dreams of vague enthusiasm many things that will one day seem so natural to human beings that injustice will probably be done to those who

once thought them chimerical. But in my state of mind this appearance of *superiority to illusion* added to the effect that Bentham's doctrines produced on me by heightening the impression of mental power; and the vista of improvement which he did open was sufficiently large and brilliant to light up my life and to give a definite shape to my aspirations.

Psychology

From time to time after this I read the most important of Bentham's other works that had then appeared, either as written by himself or as edited by Dumont. This was my private reading; while under my father's direction my studies were carried into the higher branches of analytic psychology. I now read Locke's *Essay* and wrote out an account of it, consisting of a complete abstract of every chapter together with such remarks as occurred to me; this was read by or (I think) *to* my father, and discussed throughout. I did the same thing with Helvetius' *De l'Esprit*, which I read of my own choice. This preparation of abstracts subject to my father's censorship was of great service to me, by compelling precision in conceiving and expressing psychological doctrines, whether accepted as truths or only regarded as the opinion of others. After Helvetius my father made me study what he regarded as the really master-production in the philosophy of mind, Hartley's *Observations on Man*. This book did not give a new colour to my existence as the *Traité de Législation* did, but it made a very similar impression on me in regard to its immediate subject. Hartley's use of the law of association to explain the more complex mental phenomena, though incomplete, commended itself to me at once as a •real analysis, and made me feel by contrast the inadequacy of the merely •verbal generalisations of Condillac, and even of Locke's instructive gropings for psychological explanations. It was at this very time that my father started writing his *Analysis of the Mind*, which carried Hartley's way of explaining mental phenomena to so much greater length and depth. The concentration of thought necessary for this work was something he could manage only during the complete leisure of his annnual holiday of a month or six weeks; and he started it in the summer of 1822 in his first holiday at Dorking—a neighbourhood in which he lived, as far as his official duties permitted, for six months of every year but two for the rest of his life. He worked at the *Analysis* during several successive vacations up to 1829 when it was published, and allowed me to read the manuscript piecemeal as it advanced. The other principal English writers on mental philosophy I read as I felt inclined, particularly Berkeley, Hume's Essays, Reid, Dugald Stewart and Brown on cause and effect. I did not read Brown's Lectures until two or three years later, nor at that time had my father himself read them.

The usefulness of religion

Among the works that I read during this year, and that contributed materially to my development, I ought to mention a book (written on the basis of some of Bentham's manuscripts and published under the pseudonym Philip Beauchamp) entitled *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*. This was an examination not of the •truth but of the •usefulness of *religious belief*, in the most general sense of that phrase, apart from the details of any special revelation. In all the discussion concerning religion the question of its usefulness is the most important in this age, •when real belief in any religious doctrine is feeble and precarious but the opinion of its necessity for moral and social purposes almost universal; and •when those who reject revelation usually take refuge

in an optimistic deism—a worship of the order of nature and of the supposed course of providence—which, when it is worked out in detail, is at least as full of contradictions and as perverting to the moral sentiments as any of the forms of Christianity. Yet very little with any claim to a philosophical character has been written by sceptics against the usefulness of this form of belief. The volume by 'Philip Beauchamp' had this as its special topic. Having been shown it in manuscript, my father put it into my hands, and I made a marginal analysis of it as I had done of the *Elements of Political Economy*. Next to the *Traité de Législation*, it was one of the books that produced the greatest effect on me by the searching character of its analysis. On reading it recently after an interval of many years, I find it to have some of the defects as well as the merits of the Benthamic modes of thought, and to contain (I now think) many weak arguments, but with a great overbalance of sound ones and much good material for a more completely philosophical and conclusive treatment of the subject.

Writing essays

I have now, I believe, mentioned all the books that had any considerable effect on my early mental development. From this point I began to carry on my intellectual cultivation by writing even more than by reading. In the summer of 1822 ·at the age of 16· I wrote my first argumentative essay. I remember very little about it except that it was an attack on what I regarded as the *aristocratic prejudice* that the rich were likely to be superior in moral qualities to the poor. My performance was entirely argumentative, without any of the declamation that the subject •would admit of and •might be expected to suggest to a young writer. But in that department ·of rhetoric· I was incompetent, and remain so. Dry argument was the only thing I could manage, or willingly tried, though passively I was very susceptible to the effect of all composition—whether poetry or oratory—which appealed to the feelings on any basis of reason. My father knew nothing of this essay until it was finished. He was well satisfied with it and (as I learned from others) even pleased with it; but, perhaps from a desire to promote the exercise of mental faculties other than the purely logical one, he advised me to make my next exercise in composition one of the oratorical kind. On that suggestion, availing myself of my familiarity with Greek history and ideas and with the Athenian orators, I wrote two speeches, one an accusation of Pericles and the other a defence of him, on a supposed impeachment for not fighting the Lacedaemonians when they invaded Attica. After this I continued to write papers on subjects that were often far beyond my capacity, but with great benefit from the exercise itself and from the discussions with my father that it led to.

Three important contacts

I had now also begun to converse on general subjects with the educated men with whom I came in contact, and the opportunities for such contact naturally became more numerous. The two friends of my father from whom I derived most, and with whom I most associated, were Mr **George Grote** and Mr John Austin. The acquaintance of both with my father was recent, but had ripened rapidly into intimacy. Mr Grote was introduced to my father by Mr Ricardo, I think in 1819 (when Grote was about 25 years old), and sought assiduously his society and conversation. Already a highly educated man, he was by comparison with my father a mere beginner on the great subjects of human opinion; but he rapidly seized on my father's best ideas; and in political-opinion circles he made

himself known as early as 1820 by a pamphlet in defence of Radical Reform, in reply to a celebrated article by Sir James Mackintosh recently published in the *Edinburgh Review*. Mr Grote's banker father was a thorough Tory, I believe, and his mother was intensely evangelical; so that he was in no way indebted to home influences for his liberal opinions. But, unlike most persons who have the prospect of being rich by inheritance, he had while actively engaged in the business of banking also devoted much time to philosophical studies; and his intimacy with my father did much to decide the character of the next stage in his mental progress. I often visited him, and my conversations with him on political, moral, and philosophical subjects gave me, in addition to much valuable instruction, all the pleasure and benefit of sympathetic communion with a man of the high intellectual and moral eminence that his life and writings have since shown to the world.

John Austin, who was four or five years older than Mr Grote, was the eldest son of a retired Suffolk miller who had made money by contracts during the war, and who must have been a man of remarkable qualities, as I infer from the fact that all his sons were of more than common ability and all eminently gentlemen. The one with whom we are now concerned, and whose writings on jurisprudence have made him celebrated, was for some time in the army, and served in Sicily under Lord William Bentinck. After the peace he sold his commission and studied for the bar, to which he had been called for some time before my father knew him. Unlike Mr Grote, he was not to any extent a pupil of my father, but his own reading and thought had brought him to many of the same opinions, modified by his own decided individuality of character. He was a man of great intellectual powers which appeared at their very best in conversation; •from the vigour and richness of expression with which, under the excitement of discussion, he was accustomed to maintain some view of most general subjects; and •from an appearance of strong, deliberate and collected *will* mixed with a certain bitterness derived partly from temperament and partly from the general cast of his feelings and reflections. The dissatisfaction with life and the world that is, in the present state of society and intellect, somewhat felt by every discerning and highly conscientious mind gave in his case a rather melancholy tinge to the character, this being very natural to someone whose passive moral susceptibilities are more vigorous than his active energies. For it must be said that the strength of will of which his manner seemed to give such strong assurance expended itself principally in *manner*. With great zeal for human improvement, a strong sense of duty, and capacities and acquirements the extent of which is proved by the writings he has left, he hardly ever completed any sizeable intellectual task. He had

- •such a high standard of what ought to be done,
- •such an exaggerated a sense of deficiencies in his own works, and
- •so little ability to content himself with the amount of detail sufficient for the occasion and for the ·immediate· purpose,

that he not only spoilt much of his work for ordinary use by over-working it, but spent so much time and exertion in superfluous study and thought that when his task ought to have been completed he had generally worked himself into an illness without having half finished what he undertook. He is not the sole example of this mental infirmity among the accomplished and able men I have known. In John Austin's case it was combined with a liability to frequent attacks of disabling though not dangerous ill-health, so that throughout his life he accomplished little in comparison with what he seemed capable of; but what he did produce

is greatly admired by the most competent judges; and like Coleridge he could plead in extenuation that through his conversation he had been to many persons a source of much instruction and of great elevation of character. His influence on me was most salutary. It was *moral* in the best sense. He took a sincere and kind interest in me, far beyond what could have been expected towards a mere youth from a man of his age, standing, and apparent austerity of character. His conversation and demeanour had a tone of high-mindedness that did not show itself so much—if indeed the quality existed as much—in anyone else I associated with at that time. My contacts with him were the more beneficial because he was of a different mental type from all other intellectual men whom I met often, and from the first set he himself decidedly against the prejudices and narrownesses that are almost sure to be found in a young man formed by a particular mode of thought or a particular social circle.

His younger brother **Charles Austin**, whom I saw much of at this time and for the next year or two, also had a great effect on me, though of a very different kind. He was only a few years older than myself, and had just left the University, where he had shone with great éclat as a man of intellect and a brilliant orator and converser. The effect he produced on his Cambridge contemporaries deserves to counted as an historical event, because it is one cause of the tendency towards liberalism in general, and the Benthamic and politico-economic form of it in particular, that appeared in some of the more active-minded young men of the higher classes from this time to 1830. The Union Debating Society, at that time at the height of its reputation, was an arena where political and philosophical opinions that were then thought extreme were weekly asserted, face to face with their opposites, before audiences consisting of the élite of the Cambridge youth: and though many noteworthy persons (of whom Lord Macaulay is the most celebrated) later gained their first oratorical laurels in those debates, the really influential mind among these intellectual gladiators was Charles Austin. After he left the University his conversation and personal ascendancy continued to make him a leader among the same class of young men who had been his associates there; and he attached me among others to his chariot. Through him I became acquainted with Macaulay, Hyde and Charles Villiers, Strutt (now Lord Belper), Romilly (now Lord Romilly and Master of the Rolls), and various others who subsequently figured in literature or politics, and among whom I heard discussions on many topics that were still somewhat new to me. The influence of Charles Austin over me differed from that of the other persons I have mentioned in being the influence of an older contemporary rather than of a man over a boy. It was through him that I first felt myself to be not a pupil under teachers but a man among men. He was the first person of intellect whom I met on a ground of equality, though still much his inferior on that common ground. He always greatly impressed those he came in contact with, even when their opinions were the opposite of his. The impression he gave was that of boundless strength, together with talents which—combined with such apparent force of will and character—seemed capable of dominating the world. Those who knew him, whether friendly to him or not, always expected him to play a conspicuous part in public life. It is seldom that men produce such an immediate effect by speech unless they in some degree prepare to do so; and he did this in no ordinary degree. He loved to strike, and even to startle. He knew that decision is the greatest element of effect, and he uttered his opinions with all the decision he could throw into them, never so well pleased as when he astonished anyone by their audacity. Very unlike his brother, who made war against the narrower interpretations

and applications of the principles they both professed, he presented the Benthamic doctrines in the most startling possible form, exaggerating everything in them that tended to consequences offensive to anyone's preconceived feelings. All of which he defended with such verve and vivacity, and carried off by a manner so agreeable as well as forcible, that he always either came off victor or divided the honours of the field. I believe that much of the notion popularly entertained of the tenets and sentiments of 'Benthamites' or 'utilitarians' had its origin in paradoxes thrown out by Charles Austin. It must be said, however, that his example was followed in an inferior way by younger converts, and that to parade anything that anyone considered offensive in the doctrines and maxims of Benthanism became at one time the badge of a small coterie of youths. All of these who had anything in them, myself among others, quickly outgrew this boyish vanity; and those who didn't outgrow it became tired of differing from other people and gave up both the good and the bad part of the heterodox opinions they had professed.

The Utilitarian Society

In the winter of 1822–3, ·at the age of 17·, I formed the plan of a little society, to be composed of young men agreeing in fundamental principles—acknowledging *utility* as their standard in ethics and politics, and a certain number of the principal corollaries drawn from it in the philosophy I had accepted—and meeting once a fortnight to read essays and discuss questions in line with the premises thus agreed on. The fact would hardly be worth mentioning if it weren't for the fact that the name I gave to the society I had planned was the 'Utilitarian Society'. It was the first time anyone had taken the title 'utilitarian', and the word made its way into the language from this humble source. I did not invent the word, but found it in Galt's novel *Annals of the Parish*, in which the Scotch clergyman of whom the book is a supposed autobiography warns his parishioners not to leave the Gospel and become utilitarians. With a boy's fondness for a name and a banner I seized on the word, and for some years called myself and others by it as a sectarian label; and it came to be occasionally used by some others holding the opinions it was intended to designate. As those opinions attracted more notice the term was repeated by strangers and opponents, and came into rather common use just about the time when those who had originally taken it up laid it down, along with other sectarian characteristics. The so-called 'Society' consisted at first of no more than three members, one of whom, being Mr Bentham's amanuensis [see Glossary], obtained for us permission to hold our meetings in his [Bentham's] house. The number of members never reached ten, and the society was broken up in 1826. It had thus an existence of about three and a half years. Its chief effect on me, apart from the benefit of practice in oral discussion, was bringing me into contact with several young men who were at that time less advanced than myself. As they professed the same opinions as I had, I was for some time a sort of leader among them, and had considerable influence on their mental progress. I tried to press into its service any young man of education whose path crossed mine and whose opinions were compatible with those of the Society; and there were others whom I probably would never have known if they had not joined it. Those of the members who became my intimate companions—not one of whom was in any sense a *disciple*, all of them standing on their own feet as independent thinkers—were William Eyton Tooke [1806–1830], son of the eminent political economist, a young man of singular worth both moral and intellectual, lost to the world by an early death; his friend William Ellis, an original

thinker in the field of political economy, now honourably known by his apostolic exertions for the improvement of education; George Graham, afterwards an official assignee of the Bankruptcy Court, a thinker of originality and power on most abstract subjects; and (from when he came first to England to study for the bar in 1824 or 1825) a man who has made more noise in the world than any of these, John Arthur Roebuck.

Earning a living

In May 1823 my professional occupation and status for the next 35 years of my life were decided by my father's obtaining for me an appointment from the East India Company, immediately under himself in the office of the Examiner of India Correspondence. I was appointed in the usual manner at the bottom of the list of clerks, to rise at first by seniority; but with the understanding that I would be employed from the beginning in preparing drafts of despatches, thus being trained as a successor to those who then filled the higher departments of the office. For some time my drafts of course required much revision from my immediate superiors, but I soon became well acquainted with the business, and by my father's instructions and the general growth of my own powers I was in a few years qualified to be—and practically *was*—the chief conductor of the correspondence with India in one of the leading departments, that of the Native States. This continued to be my official duty until I was appointed Examiner, only two years before my retirement was brought about by the abolition of the East India Company as a political body. Of all the occupations by which one can now earn a living, I do not know any more suitable than this for someone who does not have an independent income and wants to devote a part of each 24 hours to private intellectual pursuits. Writing for the press cannot be recommended as a permanent resource to anyone qualified to accomplish anything in the higher reaches of literature or thought, because of

- the uncertainty of this means of livelihood, especially if the writer has a conscience, and will not consent to serve any opinions except his own, and also because
- the writings by which one can live are not the writings which themselves live, and are never those in which the writer does his best.

Books destined to form future thinkers take too much time to write, and usually when written come too slowly into notice and repute, to be relied on for a livelihood. Those who have to support themselves by their pen must depend on literary drudgery, or at best on writings addressed to the multitude; and they can employ in the pursuits •of their own choice only such time as they can spare from those •of necessity; which is generally less than the leisure allowed by office occupations, while the effect on the mind is far more enervating and fatiguing. For my own part I have always found office duties an actual rest from the other mental occupations that I have carried on simultaneously with them. They were sufficiently intellectual not to be a distasteful drudgery, without being such as to cause any strain on the mental powers of a person used to abstract thought or careful literary composition. Every mode of life has its drawbacks, and I was conscious of some of the drawbacks of mine. I cared little for the loss of the chances of riches and honours held out by some of the professions, particularly the bar, which had been the profession thought of for me. But I was not indifferent to exclusion from Parliament and public life: and I felt very strongly the more immediate unpleasantness of confinement to London. My India-house employment allowed at most a month's holiday each year, while my taste

was strong for a country life, and my time in France had given me an ardent desire to travel. But though these tastes could not be freely indulged, they were never entirely sacrificed. I passed most Sundays in the country, taking long rural walks on that day even when residing in London. For a few years the month's holiday was spent at my father's house in the country; afterwards some or all of each holiday was spent in tours, chiefly on foot, with one or more of the young men who were my chosen companions; and at a later period in longer journeys or excursions, alone or with other friends. France, Belgium, and Rhenish Germany were within easy reach of the annual holiday; and two longer absences under medical advice—one of three months, one of six—added Switzerland, the Tyrol, and Italy to my list. Both these journeys occurred rather early, so as to give the benefit and charm of the remembrance to a large portion of life.

I am inclined to agree with what has been surmised by others, that the opportunity my official position gave me of learning by personal observation the necessary conditions of the •practical conduct of public affairs has been of considerable value to me as a •theoretical reformer of the opinions and institutions of my time. Not that public business transacted on paper, to take effect on the other side of the globe, was in itself apt to give much practical knowledge of life! But the occupation accustomed me to see and hear the difficulties of every course and the means of meeting them stated and discussed deliberately with a view to *action*; it gave me opportunities to see when public measures and other political facts did not produce the effects that had been expected of them, and from what causes; above all, it was valuable to me by making me in this activity merely one wheel in a machine that had to work together as a whole. As a purely theoretical writer I would have had no-one to consult but myself, and my thinking would not have presented any of the obstacles that would have started up whenever my theories came to be applied in practice. But as a Secretary conducting political correspondence, I could not issue an order or express an opinion without satisfying various persons very unlike myself that the thing was fit to be done. I was thus in a good position for finding out by practice the formulation of a thought that gives it easiest admittance into minds not prepared for it by habit; while I became practically familiar with the difficulties of moving bodies of men, the need for compromise, the art of sacrificing the non-essential to preserve the essential. I learned, when I could not obtain everything, **(i)** how to obtain the best I could; **(ii)** to be pleased and encouraged when I could have the smallest part of what I wanted, instead of being indignant or dispirited because I could not have it all; and **(iii)** to bear with complete equanimity being overruled altogether when that happened. Throughout my life I have found these acquisitions to be of the greatest possible importance for personal happiness, and they are also needed for anyone to bring about, either as theorist or as practical man, the greatest amount of good compatible with his opportunities.

Part 4
Youthful propagandism.
The *Westminster Review*

The *Morning Chronicle*

The occupation of so much of my time by office work did not relax my attention to my own pursuits, which were never carried on more vigorously. It was about this time that I began to write in newspapers. The first writings of mine that went into print were two letters published towards

the end of 1822, in the *Traveller* evening newspaper (which afterwards grew into the *Globe and Traveller* by the purchase and incorporation of the *Globe*). It was then the property of the well-known political economist Colonel Torrens. Under the editorship of the able Mr Walter Coulson (who was an amanuensis of Mr Bentham, then a reporter, then an editor, then a barrister and conveyancer, and died Counsel to the Home Office) it had become one of the most important newspaper organs of liberal politics. Colonel Torrens himself wrote much of the political economy of his paper; and had at this time attacked some opinion of Ricardo and my father, to which (at my father's instigation) I attempted an answer; and Coulson, out of consideration for my father and goodwill to me, published it. There was a reply by Torrens, to which I responded. Soon after that I attempted something considerably more ambitious. The prosecutions of Richard Carlile and his wife and sister for publications hostile to Christianity were then exciting much attention, and nowhere more than among the people in my circle. Back then freedom of discussion in religion or even in politics was far from being the conceded point that it seems to be now, at least in theory; and the holders of obnoxious opinions had to be always ready to argue and re-argue for the liberty of expressing them. I wrote a series of five letters, signed 'Wickliffe', going over the whole length and breadth of the question of free publication of all opinions on religion, and offered them to the *Morning Chronicle*. Three of them were published early in 1823; the other two, containing things too outspoken for that journal, never appeared at all. But a paper that I wrote soon after on the same subject, apropos of a debate in the House of Commons, was published as a leading article; and during the whole of 1823 a good number of my contributions were printed in the *Chronicle* and *Traveller*—sometimes notices of books, but more often letters commenting on some nonsense talked in Parliament or some defect of the law or misdoings of the magistracy or the courts of justice. In this last department the *Chronicle* was now doing important service. After the death of Mr Perry, the editorship and management of the paper had come to Mr John Black, long a reporter on the paper, a man of most extensive reading and information, great honesty and simplicity of mind, a particular friend of my father's, imbued with many of his and Bentham's ideas, which he reproduced in his articles—among other valuable thoughts—with great facility and skill. From this time the *Chronicle* ceased to be the merely Whig organ it had been, and during the next ten years became to a considerable extent a vehicle of the opinions of the utilitarian radicals. This was mainly through what Black himself wrote, with some assistance from Fonblanque, who first showed his eminent qualities as a writer by articles and *jeux d'esprit* in the *Chronicle*. That paper rendered most service to improvement in connection with the defects of •the law and of •the administration of justice. Up to that time hardly a word had been said, except by Bentham and my father, against that most defective part of English institutions and of their administration. It was the almost universal creed of Englishmen that the law of England, the judicature of England, the unpaid magistracy of England, were models of excellence. After Bentham, who supplied the principal materials, the greatest share of the merit of breaking down this wretched superstition belongs to Black as editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. He kept up an incessant fire against it, exposing the absurdities and vices of the law and the courts of justice, paid and unpaid, until he forced some sense of them into people's minds. On many other questions he became the organ of opinions that were much in advance of any that had ever before been regularly advocated in the newspaper press. Black was a

frequent visitor of my father, and Mr Grote used to say that he always knew by the Monday morning's article whether Black had been with my father on the Sunday! Black was one of the most influential of the many channels through which my father's conversation and personal influence made his opinions tell on the world, cooperating with the effect of his writings in making him a power in the country such as an individual in a private station has seldom managed to be through the mere force of intellect and character—a power that was often acting the most efficiently where it was least seen and suspected. I have already noted how much of what was done by Ricardo, Hume, and Grote resulted partly from his prompting and persuasion. He was the good genius by the side of Brougham in most of what he did for the public on education, law reform, or any other subject. And his influence flowed in minor streams too numerous to be specified. This influence was now about to receive a great extension by the foundation of the *Westminster Review*.

The Westminster Review

Contrary to what may have been supposed, my father played no part in setting up the *Westminster Review*. The need for a Radical organ to make head against the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* (then in the period of their greatest reputation and influence) had been a topic of conversation between him and Mr Bentham many years earlier, and it had been a part of their 'castles in the air' that my father should be the editor; but the idea had never taken any practical shape. In 1823 Mr Bentham decided to establish the review at his own cost, and offered the editorship to my father, who declined it as incompatible with his India House appointment. It was then entrusted to Mr (now Sir John) Bowring, at that time a merchant in the City. For two or three years Mr Bowring had been an assiduous frequenter of Mr Bentham, who was drawn to him by •many personal good qualities, •an ardent admiration for Bentham, •a zealous adoption of many, though not all, of his opinions, and •an extensive acquaintanceship and correspondence with liberals of all countries, which seemed to qualify him for being a powerful agent in spreading Bentham's fame and doctrines throughout the world. My father had seen little of Bowring, but knew enough of him to have formed a strong opinion that he was not at all what my father considered suitable for running a political and philosophical review; and he was so pessimistic about the enterprise that he regretted it altogether, feeling convinced that Mr Bentham would lose his money *and* that discredit would probably be brought on radical principles. But he could not desert Mr Bentham, and he consented to write an article for the first number. As it had been a favourite part of the original scheme that part of the work should be devoted to reviewing the other Reviews, this article of my father's was to be a general criticism of the *Edinburgh Review* from its commencement. Before writing it he made me read through all the volumes of the *Review*, or as much of each as seemed of any importance (which was an easier task in 1823 than it would be now), and make notes for him on the articles I thought he would want to examine, whether because of their good or their bad qualities.

My father's attack on the Whigs

This paper of my father's was the chief cause of the sensation that the *Westminster Review* produced at its first appearance, and is in conception and execution one of the most striking of all his writings. He began with an analysis of the tendencies of periodical literature in general; pointing out that it cannot wait for success, as books can, but must

succeed immediately or not at all, so that it is almost certain to profess and inculcate opinions already held by the public to which it addresses itself, instead of attempting to rectify or improve those opinions. Next, in order to characterise the position of the *Edinburgh Review* as a political organ he entered into a complete analysis, from the radical point of view, of the British constitution. He called attention to its thoroughly aristocratic character:

- the nomination of a majority of the House of Commons by a few hundred families;
- the entire identification of the more independent part, the county members, with the great landholders;
- the different classes whom this narrow oligarchy found it convenient to admit to a share of power; and finally,
- what he called the constitution's two props, the Church, and the legal profession.

He pointed out the natural tendency of an aristocratic body of this type to group itself into two parties, one possessing the executive, the other trying to supplant the former and become the predominant section with the aid of public opinion, without any essential sacrifice of the aristocratic predominance. He described the course likely to be pursued, and the political ground occupied, by an aristocratic party in opposition, coquetting with popular principles for the sake of popular support. He showed how this idea was put to work in the conduct of the Whig party and of the *Edinburgh Review* as its chief literary organ. He described as their main characteristic what he termed 'seesaw', writing alternately on both sides of every question which touched the power or interest of the governing classes—sometimes in different articles, sometimes in different parts of the same article—and he illustrated this with many examples. Such a formidable attack on the Whig party and policy had never before been made; and in this country such a great blow had never been struck for radicalism; and I don't think there was any living person other than my father who could have written that article.[1]

Other doings of the *Westminster Review*

In the meantime the newborn *Review* had joined with a project for a purely literary periodical, to be edited by Mr Henry Southern, a literary man by profession and afterwards a diplomat. The two editors agreed to unite their forces and divide the editorship, Bowring taking the political department and Southern the literary one. Southern's review was to have been published by Longman, and that firm, though part proprietors of the *Edinburgh Review*, were willing to be the publishers of the new journal. But when all the arrangements had been made and the prospectuses sent out, the Longmans saw my father's attack on the *Edinburgh*, and withdrew. My father was now appealed to for his influence on his own publisher, Baldwin, which was exerted with a successful result. And so in April 1824, amidst anything but hope on the part of my father and of most of those who afterwards aided in carrying on the review, the first number made its appearance.

That number was an agreeable surprise to most of us. The average of the articles was of much better quality than had been expected. The literary and artistic department had rested chiefly on Mr Bingham, a barrister (subsequently a

[1] The continuation of this article in the second number of the review was written by me under my father's eye, and it was of little or no value except as practice in composition, in which respect I found it more useful than anything else I ever wrote .

police magistrate), who had been for some years a frequenter of Bentham, was a friend of both the Austins, and had adopted Mr Bentham's philosophical opinions with great ardour. Partly from accident, there were in the first number as many as five articles by Bingham; and we were extremely pleased with them. I well remember the mixed feeling I myself had about the *Review*; •the joy at finding—as we did not at all expect—that it was good enough to be capable of being made a creditable organ of those who held the opinions it professed; and •extreme vexation, since it was so good on the whole, at what we thought to be its blemishes. But when in addition to our generally favourable opinion of it we learned that it had an extraordinarily large sale for a first number, and found that the appearance of a radical review with claims equal to those of the established organs of parties had aroused much attention, there could be no room for hesitation, and we all became eager to do everything we could to strengthen and improve it.

My father continued to write occasional articles. The *Quarterly Review* received its exposure, as a sequel to that of the *Edinburgh*. The most important of his other contributions were an attack on Southey's *Book of the Church* in the fifth number, and a political article in the twelfth. Mr Austin contributed only one paper, but one of great merit, an argument against primogeniture, in reply to an article recently published in the *Edinburgh Review* by McCulloch. Grote also was a contributor only once; all the time he could spare being already taken up with his *History of Greece*. The article he wrote was on his own subject, and was a very complete exposure and castigation of ·the *History of Greece* by William· Mitford. Bingham and Charles Austin continued to write for some time; Fonblanque was a frequent contributor from the third number. Of my particular associates, Ellis was a regular writer up to the ninth number; and at about the time when he left off, others of the set began—Eyton Tooke, Graham, and Roebuck. I was myself the most frequent writer of all, having contributed, from the second number to the eighteenth, thirteen articles; reviews of books on history and political economy, or discussions on special political topics, such as corn laws, game laws, laws of libel. Occasional articles of merit came in from other acquaintances of my father's and later on of mine; and some of Mr Bowring's writers turned out well. On the whole, however, the conduct of the *Westminster Review* was never satisfactory to any of the persons strongly interested in its principles with whom I came in contact. Almost every number contained several things extremely offensive to us, either in point of opinion, of taste, or by mere want lack ability. The unfavourable judgments passed by my father, Grote, the two Austins, and others, were re-echoed with exaggeration by us younger people; and as our youthful zeal made us by no means backward in making complaints, we led the two editors a sad life. From my knowledge of what I then was, I have no doubt that we were at least as often wrong as right; and I am certain that if the *Review* had been carried on according to our notions (I mean those of the juniors) it would have been no better than it was and perhaps worse. But it is worth noting as a fact in the history of Benthamism that the periodical by which it was best known was from the first extremely unsatisfactory to those whose opinions on all subjects it was supposed specially to represent.

The spread of Benthamism

Meanwhile, however, the *Westminster Review* made considerable noise in the world and gave to the Benthamic type of radicalism a recognised status out of all proportion to the number of its adherents and to the personal merits

and abilities, at that time, of most of them. It was a time, as is known, of rapidly rising liberalism. When the fears and animosities accompanying the war with France had been brought to an end, and people again had a place in their thoughts for home politics, the tide began to set towards reform. The renewed oppression of the Continent [see Glossary] by the old reigning families, the English Government's apparent acceptance of the conspiracy against liberty called the Holy Alliance [see Glossary], and the enormous weight of the national debt and taxation caused by that long and costly war, made the government and parliament very unpopular. Radicalism, under the leadership of the Burdetts and Cobbetts, had acquired a character and importance that seriously alarmed the administration; and no sooner had their alarm been temporarily assuaged by the celebrated Six Acts [which in effect equated radicalism with treason] than the trial of Queen Caroline ·for adultery· aroused a still wider and deeper feeling of hatred. The outward signs of this hatred passed away with its cause, but there arose on all sides a spirit that had never appeared before, of *detailed* opposition to abuses. Mr Hume's persevering scrutiny of the public expenditure, forcing the House of Commons to a division on every objectionable item in the estimates, had begun to have a great effect on public opinion and had extorted many minor retrenchments from an unwilling administration. Political economy had asserted itself with great vigour in public affairs by the Petition of the Merchants of London for free trade, drawn up in 1820 by Mr Tooke and presented by Mr Alexander Baring; and by the noble exertions of Ricardo during the few years of his parliamentary life. His writings. . . .had drawn general attention to the subject, making at least partial converts in the Cabinet itself; and Huskisson, supported by Canning, had started that gradual demolition of the protective system that one of their colleagues virtually completed in 1846, though the last vestiges were not swept away until Mr Gladstone did it in 1860. Mr Peel, then Home Secretary, was entering cautiously into the untrodden and especially Benthamic path of *law reform*. At this period, when

- liberalism seemed to be becoming the tone of the time,
- improvement of institutions was preached from the highest places, and
- a complete change of the constitution of Parliament was loudly demanded in the lowest,

it is not surprising that attention should have been aroused by the regular appearance in controversy of what seemed to be a new school of writers claiming to be the legislators and theorists of this new tendency. Because of

- the air of strong conviction with which they wrote, when scarcely anyone else seemed to have an equally strong faith in any creed as definite as theirs;
- the boldness of their head-on assaults on both the existing political parties;
- their uncompromising announcement of opposition to many of the generally accepted opinions, and the general suspicion that they held others still more heterodox than the ones they announced;
- the talent and verve of (at least) my father's articles, and the appearance of a corps behind him sufficient to carry on a review; and finally
- the fact that the *Westminster Review* was bought and read,

the so-called Bentham school in philosophy and politics came to fill a greater place in the public mind than it had held before, or has ever held again since other equally earnest schools of thought have arisen in England. As I was in the headquarters of it, knew what it was composed of, and as one of the most active of its very small number might fairly

claim that I was a great part of it, it belongs to me more than to most others to give some account of it.

My father's role in the life of Benthamism

This supposed school had no other existence than what was constituted by the fact that my father's writings and conversation drew round him a certain number of young men who had already imbibed, or who imbibed from him, some portion of his very decided political and philosophical opinions. The notion that Bentham was surrounded by a band of disciples who received their opinions from his lips is a fable to which my father did justice in his 'Fragment on Mackintosh', and which is simply ridiculous to all who knew Mr Bentham's habits of life and manner of conversation. The influence Bentham exercised was through his writings. Through them he has produced, and is producing, effects on the condition of mankind that are doubtless wider and deeper than any that can be attributed to my father. He is a much greater name in history. But my father exercised a far greater personal ascendancy. He was sought for the vigour and instructiveness of his conversation, and did use that largely as an instrument for the diffusion of his opinions. I have never known any man who could do such ample justice to his best thoughts in colloquial discussion. His perfect command over his great mental resources, the terseness and expressiveness of his language, and the moral earnestness as well as intellectual force of his delivery, made him one of the most striking of all argumentative talkers; and he was full of anecdote, a hearty laugher, and a most lively and amusing companion when he was with people whom he liked. His power did not show itself solely, or even chiefly, in the spread of his merely intellectual convictions; it operated still more through the influence of

- his exalted public spirit and concern above all things for the good of the whole, which warmed into life and activity every germ of similar virtue that existed in the minds he came in contact with;
- the desire he made them feel for his approval, the shame at his disapproval;
- the moral support that his conversation and his very existence gave to those who were aiming at the same goals, and
- the encouragement he gave to the fainthearted or gloomy among them, by the firm confidence he always felt in the power of reason, the general progress of improvement, and the good that individuals could do by judicious effort (though he was pessimistic about the results to be expected in any one particular case).

I have only since learned to appreciate the extreme rarity of this ·four-part· quality.

It was my father's *opinions* that gave the Benthamic or utilitarian propagandism of that time its distinguishing character. They fell singly, scattered from him in many directions, but they flowed from him in a continuous stream principally in three channels. •One was through me, the only mind directly formed by his instructions, and through whom considerable influence was exercised over various young men who became propagandists in their turn. •A second was through some of Charles Austin's Cambridge contemporaries, who—initiated by him or under the general mental impulse he gave—had adopted many opinions allied to my father's. (Some of the more considerable of these later sought my father's acquaintance and frequently visited his house. They included Strutt, afterwards Lord Belper, and the present Lord Romilly, whose eminent father, Sir Samuel, was a long-term friend of my father's.) •The third channel was that of a younger generation of Cambridge undergraduates,

contemporary not with Austin but with Eyton Tooke, who were drawn to that estimable person by affinity of opinions, and introduced by him to my father; the most notable of these was Charles Buller. Various other persons individually received and passed on a considerable amount of my father's influence—for example, Black (as before mentioned) and Fonblanque. But we regarded most of these as only partial allies; Fonblanque, for instance, always diverged from us on many important points. But there was in fact by no means complete unanimity among any sub-group of us, nor had any of us confidently adopted all my father's opinions. For example, although his *Essay on Government* was regarded probably by all of us as a masterpiece of political wisdom, our acceptance did not extend to the paragraph in which he maintains that consistently with good government women can be excluded from the suffrage because their interests are the same as men's. I most positively dissented from this doctrine, as did all my chosen associates. To be fair to my father: he denied having intended to affirm that women should be excluded, any more than should men under the age of 40, concerning whom he said the same thing in the next paragraph. He was, as he truly said, not discussing whether the suffrage ought to be restricted, but only (assuming that it is to be restricted) how much it could be restricted without interfering with the requirements for good government. But I thought then (and still do) that the opinion that he acknowledged, just as much as the one he disclaimed, is as great an error as any of those against which the *Essay* was directed; that the interests of •women are included in those of •men exactly as much as the interests of •subjects are included in those of •kings; and that every reason for giving the suffrage to anyone demands that it not be withheld from women. This was also the general opinion of the younger converts, and it is pleasant to be able to say that Mr Bentham was wholly on our side on this important point.

Philosophic radicalism

But though none of us agreed in every respect with my father, his opinions were the principal element that gave colour and character to the little group of young men who were the first propagators of what was afterwards called 'philosophic radicalism'. Their way of thinking was not characterised by *Benthamism* in any sense implying that Bentham was their chief or guide, but rather by a combination of

- •Bentham's point of view,
- •the point of view of modern political economy, and
- •Hartley's metaphysics.

Malthus's population principle [see Glossary] was quite as much a banner and point of union among us as any opinion specially belonging to Bentham. This great doctrine was originally advanced as an argument against the indefinite improvability of human affairs; but we took it up with ardent zeal in the opposite direction, as showing the sole means of realising that improvability, namely by securing full employment at high wages to the whole labouring population through a voluntary restriction in the increase of their numbers. The other leading characteristics of the creed that we held in common with my father may be stated as follows. **[1]** In politics, an almost unbounded confidence in the efficacy of two things: representative government, and complete freedom of discussion. So complete was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind, whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt that all would be gained if

- •the whole population were taught to read,
- •all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to

them by orally and in writing, and

- by means of the suffrage they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted.

He thought that when the legislature no longer represented a class interest it would aim at the general interest, honestly and with adequate wisdom, because the people would be sufficiently guided by educated intelligence to make generally good choices of persons to represent them and then to leave their chosen representatives a liberal discretion. He held that aristocratic rule—government of *the Few* in any of its shapes—was the only thing that stood between mankind and an administration of their affairs by the best wisdom to be found among them; and it was the object of his sternest disapproval. The principal article of his political creed was *democratic suffrage*, not on the grounds of liberty, 'rights of man', or any of the more or less meaningful phrases by which democracy had usually been defended, but as the most essential of 'securities for good government'. In this too he held fast only to what he regarded as essentials; he was comparatively indifferent to monarchical or republican forms of government (far more so than Bentham, to whom a king—a 'corrupter-general'—appeared necessarily very noxious). Second only to aristocracy, he detested an established church or corporation of priests, as being by position the great depravers of religion and interested in opposing the progress of the human mind. But he did not personally dislike any clergyman who did not deserve it, and was on terms of sincere friendship with several. **[2]** In ethics, his moral feelings were energetic and rigid on everything that he thought important to human well being, while he was supremely indifferent to all the doctrines of common morality that he thought were based solely on asceticism and priest-craft. (This indifference was theoretical; it did not show itself in his personal conduct.) He looked forward, for example, to a considerable increase of freedom in the relations between the sexes, though without claiming to define exactly what would or should be the precise conditions of that freedom. This opinion was not connected in him with sensuality of either a theoretical or a practical kind. On the contrary, he expected that one of the beneficial effects of increased freedom would be that the imagination would no longer dwell on the physical relation ·between the sexes· and swell this into one of the principal objects of life; a perversion of the imagination and feelings that he regarded as one of the deepest seated and most pervading evils in the human mind. **[3]** In psychology, his basic doctrine was the formation of all human character by circumstances through the universal Principle of Association, and the consequent unlimited possibility of improving the moral and intellectual condition of mankind by education. Of all his doctrines none was more important than this, or needs more to be insisted on: unfortunately there is none more contradictory to the dominant theoretical tendencies in his time and since.

These various opinions were seized on with youthful fanaticism by the little knot of young men of whom I was one; and we put into them a sectarian spirit from which my father was, in intention at least, wholly free. It was a ridiculous exaggeration when we (or rather a phantom substitute for us) were sometimes called by others a 'school', but that is what some of us for a time really hoped to become. The French *philosophes* of the 18th century were the example we sought to imitate, and we hoped to accomplish no less results. No-one in the set went to such great excesses in this boyish ambition as I did. . . .

What I was as a human being

But all this is really only the outside of our existence, or at least it is only the intellectual part, and only one side of that. In trying to penetrate inward and give some indication of what we were as human beings, I must be understood to be speaking only of myself, the only one I can speak about from sufficient knowledge. The picture would have to be greatly modified, I believe, to fit any of my companions.

The description so often given of a 'Benthamite' as a *mere reasoning machine* was extremely inapplicable to most of those who have borne that label, but for two or three years of my life it was not altogether untrue of me. It was perhaps as applicable to me as it can be to anyone just entering into life, to whom the ordinary objects of desire must in general have at least the attraction of novelty. There is nothing very extraordinary in this fact: no youth of the age I then was can be expected to be more than *one thing*, and this was the thing I happened to be. I had plenty of ambition and desire for distinction, and zeal for what I thought the good of mankind was my strongest sentiment, mixing with and colouring all others. But at that period of my life my zeal was nothing much but zeal for theoretical opinions. It was not rooted in genuine •benevolence or •sympathy [see Glossary] with mankind, though these qualities had their due place in my ·theoretical· ethical standard. Nor was it connected with any high enthusiasm for ideal nobleness. I was imaginatively very susceptible to this feeling; but there was ·in my life· at that time a shortage of

- •its natural food, poetical culture,

while there was a superabundance of

- •the discipline antagonistic to it, that of mere logic and analysis.

Add to this that my father's teachings tended to under-value feeling. It was not that he was himself cold-hearted or insensible; I believe it was rather from the contrary quality: he thought that •feeling could take care of itself, that there was sure to be enough of it if •actions were properly cared about. Offended by how often in ethical and philosophical controversy

- •feeling is made the ultimate reason and justification of conduct, instead of being itself called on for a justification,

while, in practice

- •actions that are harmful to human happiness are defended as being required by feeling, and the •character of a person of feeling is regarded as meritorious in a way that my father thought appropriate only for •actions,

he had a real impatience with •attributing praise to feeling or •any but the most sparing reference to it in the estimation of persons or in the discussion of things. In addition to the influence this characteristic of his had on me and others, we found all the opinions to which we attached most importance being constantly attacked on the ground of feeling. Utility was denounced as cold calculation; political economy as hard-hearted; anti-population doctrines as repulsive to the natural feelings of mankind. We retorted by the word 'sentimentality' which, along with 'declamation' and 'vague generalities', served us as common terms of opprobrium. Although we were generally in the right, as against those who were opposed to us, the effect was that the cultivation of feeling (except the feelings of public and private duty) was not in much esteem among us and had very little place in the thoughts of most of us, myself in particular. What we principally thought about was altering people's opinions—making them believe according to evidence, and know what was their real interest. Once they knew *that*, we

thought, they would enforce a regard for it on one another through the instrument of opinion. While fully recognising the superior excellence of unselfish benevolence and love of justice, we did not expect the regeneration of mankind from any direct action on those sentiments, but from the effect of educated intellect, enlightening the selfish feelings. Although this last is prodigiously important as a means of improvement in the hands of those who are themselves impelled by nobler principles of action, I do not believe that any of the survivors of the Benthamites or utilitarians of that day now relies mainly on it for the general amendment of human conduct.

Poetry

This neglect in theory and in practice of the cultivation of feeling naturally led to, among other things, an under-valuing of poetry and of imagination generally as an element of human nature. It is or was part of the common notion of Benthamites that they are enemies of poetry: this was partly true of Bentham himself; he used to say that 'all poetry is misrepresentation'; but in the sense in which he said it, the same might have been said of all impressive speech, all representation or inculcation more oratorical in its character than a sum in arithmetic. An article of Bingham's in the first number of the *Westminster Review*, in which he offered as an explanation of something he disliked in Moore that 'Mr Moore is a poet, and therefore is not a reasoner', did a good deal to attach the notion of hating poetry to the writers in the *Review*. But the truth was that many of us were great readers of poetry; Bingham himself had been a writer of it; and the correct statement about me (as about my father) would be not that I disliked poetry but that I was *theoretically* indifferent to it. I disliked any sentiments in poetry that I would have disliked in prose; and that included a great deal. And I was wholly blind to its place in human culture as a means of educating the feelings. But I was always personally very susceptible to some kinds of it. In the most sectarian period of my Benthamism I happened to look into Pope's *Essay on Man*, and though every opinion in it was contrary to mine, I well remember how powerfully it acted on my imagination. Perhaps at that time poetical composition of any higher type than *eloquent discussion in verse* might not have produced a similar effect on me; anyway I seldom gave it an opportunity. But this was a mere passive state. Long before I had enlarged much the basis of my intellectual creed, I had obtained—in the natural course of my mental progress—poetic culture of the most valuable kind through reverential admiration for the lives and characters of heroic persons, especially the heroes of philosophy. The same inspiring effect that so many of mankind's benefactors reported experiencing from Plutarch's *Lives* was produced on me by Plato's pictures of Socrates, and by some modern biographies, above all by Condorcet's *Vie de M. Turgot*, a book well calculated to rouse the best sort of enthusiasm because it contains one of the wisest and noblest of lives depicted by one of the wisest and noblest of men. The heroic virtue of these glorious representatives of the opinions with which I sympathised deeply affected me, and I perpetually recurred to them as others do to a favourite poet when needing to be carried up into the more elevated regions of feeling and thought. I may observe by the way that this book cured me of my sectarian follies. The two or three pages beginning *Il regardait toute secte comme nuisible. . .*', and explaining why Turgot always kept himself perfectly distinct from the Encyclopedists, sank deeply into my mind. I left off designating myself and others as 'utilitarians', and stopped exhibiting sectarianism by the pronoun 'we' or any

other collective designation. My real inward sectarianism I did not get rid of till later, and much more gradually.

Preparing the *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*

About the end of 1824 or beginning of 1825, Mr Bentham, having recently got back his papers on Evidence from M. Dumont (whose *Traité des Preuves Judiciaires*, based on them, had just been completed and published), decided to have them printed in the original ·language·, and thought of me as capable of preparing them for the press; just as his *Book of Fallacies* had recently been edited by Bingham. I gladly undertook this task, and it occupied nearly all my spare time for about a year, and then there was the time afterwards spent in seeing the five large volumes through the press. Mr Bentham had begun this treatise three times, at considerable intervals, each time in a different manner and without reference to what had gone before. Two of the three times he had gone over nearly the whole subject. It was my business to condense these three masses of manuscript into a single treatise; adopting the third as the groundwork, and incorporating with it as much of the other two as it had not completely superseded. I had also to unroll such of Bentham's involved and parenthetical sentences as seemed too complex for readers to be likely to take the trouble to understand. Mr Bentham also wanted me to try by my own efforts to fill any gaps he had left; and for this purpose I read the most authoritative treatises on the English law of evidence, and commented on a few of the objectionable features of the English rules that had escaped Bentham's notice. I also •replied to the objections to some of his doctrines that had been made by reviewers of Dumont's book, and •added a few supplementary remarks on some of the more abstract parts of the subject, such as the theory of improbability and impossibility. The controversial part of these editorial additions was written in a more arrogant tone than was becoming in one so young and inexperienced as I was [he was 18 years old]; but indeed I had never contemplated coming forward in my own person; and as an anonymous editor of Bentham I fell into the tone of my author, not thinking it unsuitable to him or to the subject, however unsuitable it might be to me. My name as editor was put to the book after it was printed, at Mr Bentham's positive desire, which I tried and failed to persuade him to forgo.

So far as my own improvement was concerned, the time occupied in this editorial work was extremely well spent. The *Rationale of Judicial Evidence* is one of the richest in matter of all Bentham's productions. The theory of evidence being in itself one of the most important of his subjects and ramifying into most of the others, the book contains a great proportion of all his best thoughts, very fully developed; while also including the most elaborate exposure of the vices and defects of English law (as it then was) that is to be found in his works. . . . So the direct knowledge I obtained from the book, imprinted on me much more thoroughly than it could have been by mere reading, was itself no small acquisition. But this occupation also did for me something that might seem less to be expected, namely giving a great start to my powers of composition. Everything I wrote after this editorial employment was markedly superior to anything I had written before it. Bentham's later style, as the world knows, was heavy and cumbersome, from the excess of a good quality, the love of precision, which made him introduce clause within clause into the heart of every sentence, so that the reader might receive into his mind all the modifications and qualifications along with the main proposition; and the habit grew on him until his sentences became most laborious reading for those not accustomed to them. But his

earlier style, that of the 'Fragment on Government', 'Plan of a Judicial Establishment' etc. is a model of liveliness and ease combined with fulness of matter, scarcely ever surpassed: and there were many striking specimens of this earlier style in the manuscripts for *Evidence*, all of which I tried to preserve. Such a long course of this admirable writing had a considerable effect on my own; and I added to it by the assiduous reading of other writers, both French and English, who combined ease with force, such as Goldsmith, Fielding, Pascal, Voltaire, and Courier. Through these influences my writing lost the jejuneness[see Glossary] of my early works; the bones and cartilages began to clothe themselves with flesh, and the style became sometimes lively and almost light.

This improvement was first exhibited in a new field. Mr Marshall of Leeds—

- the father of the present generation of Marshalls,
- the same who was brought into Parliament for Yorkshire when the representation forfeited by Grampound ·because of corruption· was transferred to it,
- an earnest parliamentary reformer and
- a man of large fortune of which he made a liberal use,

had been much struck with Bentham's *Book of Fallacies*; and he thought it would be useful to publish annually the Parliamentary Debates, not in the chronological order of Hansard but classified according to subjects, and accompanied by a commentary pointing out the speakers' fallacies. With this intention he naturally addressed himself to the editor of the *Book of Fallacies*; and Bingham, with the assistance of Charles Austin, undertook the editorship. The work was called *Parliamentary History and Review*. Its sale was not sufficient to keep it in existence, and it only lasted three years; but it aroused some attention among parliamentary and political people. The best strength of the party was put forth in it; and its execution did them much more credit than that of the *Westminster Review* had ever done. Bingham and Charles Austin wrote much in it; as did Strutt, Romilly, and several other liberal lawyers. My father wrote one article in his best style; the elder Austin another. Coulson wrote one of great merit. It fell to me to lead off the first number with an article on the principal topic of the session (that of 1825), the Catholic Association and the Catholic disabilities. In the second number I wrote an elaborate essay on the commercial crisis of 1825 and the Currency Debates. In the third I had two articles, one on a minor subject, the other on the Reciprocity principle in commerce, apropos of a celebrated diplomatic correspondence between Canning and Gallatin. These writings were no longer mere reproductions and applications of the doctrines I had been taught; they were original thinking, as far as 'original' can be applied to old ideas in new forms and connections; and I can truthfully say that they had a maturity and a well-digested character that none of my previous performances had had. So they were not at all juvenile in execution; but their subjects have either gone by or have been so much better treated since that they are entirely superseded, and should remain buried in the same oblivion with my contributions to the first dynasty of the *Westminster Review*.

Further learning

While thus engaged in writing for the public, I did not neglect other modes of self-cultivation. It was at this time that I learned **German**; beginning it on the Hamiltonian method—·focusing on translation, ignoring grammar·—for which purpose I and several of my companions formed a class. For several years from this period, our social studies took a form that contributed greatly to my mental progress. The idea occurred to us of carrying on, by reading and

conversation, a joint study of several of the branches of science we wanted to be masters of. We assembled to the number of a dozen or more. Mr Grote lent a room of his house in Threadneedle Street for the purpose, and his partner Prescott—one of the three original members of the Utilitarian Society—made one of our number. We met two mornings in every week, from 8.30 till 10, at which hour most of us were called off to our daily occupations. Our first subject was **political economy**. We chose some systematic treatise as our text-book, my father's *Elements* being our first choice. One of us read aloud a chapter or some smaller portion of the book. The discussion was then opened, and anyone who had an objection or other remark to make made it. Our rule was to discuss thoroughly every point raised, whether great or small, prolonging the discussion until all who took part were satisfied with the conclusion they had individually arrived at; and to follow up every side-issue that the chapter or the conversation suggested, never leaving it until we had untied every knot we found. We repeatedly kept up the discussion of some one point for several weeks, thinking intently on it during the intervals of our meetings, and contriving solutions of the new difficulties that had arisen in the last morning's discussion. When we had finished in this way my father's *Elements*, we went in the same manner through Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy* and Bailey's *Dissertation on Value*. These close and vigorous discussions were not only highly improving for those who took part in them but brought out new views of some topics in abstract political economy. The theory of international values that I afterwards published came from these conversations, as did also the modified form of Ricardo's theory of profits laid down in my 'Essay on Profits and Interest'. New theorisings from us mainly originated with Ellis, Graham, and myself; though others gave valuable aid to the discussions, especially Prescott (by his knowledge) and Roebuck (by his dialectical acuteness). The theories of international values and of profits were thought up and worked out in about equal proportions by myself and Graham; and if our original project had been carried out my *Essays on some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy* would have been published along with some papers of his under our joint names. But when my exposition came to be written, I found that I had so much over-estimated my agreement with him, and he dissented so much from the most original of the two Essays—the one on international values—that I had to consider the theory as now exclusively mine, and it came out as such when published many years later. I may mention that among the alterations my father made in revising his *Elements* for the third edition, several were based on criticisms arising from these conversations; and in particular he modified his opinions (though not to the extent of our new theories) on both the points I have mentioned.

When we had enough of political economy, we took up **syllogistic logic** in the same manner, Grote now joining us. Our first text-book was Aldrich, but being disgusted with its superficiality we reprinted the *Manuductio ad Logicam* of the Jesuit Du Trieu, one of the most finished among the many manuals of scholastic logic that my father, a great collector of such books, possessed. After finishing this we took up Whately's *Logic*. . . .and finally the *Computatio sive Logica* of Hobbes. When dealt with in our manner, these books provided a wide range for original metaphysical speculation; and most of what has been done in Book I of my *System of Logic* to rationalise and correct the principles and distinctions of the scholastic logicians, and to improve the theory of the import of propositions, had its origin in these discussions; Graham and I originating most of the novelties while Grote and others served as an excellent tribunal or

test. From this time I formed the project of writing a book on logic, though on a much humbler scale than the one I eventually wrote.

Having done with logic, we launched into **analytic psychology**, and having chosen Hartley's *Observations on Man* for our text-book we raised Priestley's edition of it to an extravagant price by searching through London to furnish each of us with a copy. When we had finished Hartley, we suspended our meetings; but when my father's *Analysis of the Mind* was published soon after, we reassembled for the purpose of reading it. With this our exercises ended. I have always dated from these conversations my own real inauguration as an original and independent thinker. It was also through them that I acquired, or very much strengthened, a mental habit to which I attribute all that I ever did or ever shall do in theoretical matters, namely

- never accepting half-solutions of difficulties as complete,
- never abandoning a puzzle, but returning to it again and again until it was cleared up,
- never allowing obscure corners of a subject to remain unexplored because they did not appear important,
- never thinking that I perfectly understood any part of a subject until I understood the whole.

Our doings from 1825 to 1830 in the way of public speaking filled a considerable place in my life during those years, and as they had important effects on my development I ought to say something about them.

Battling the Owenites

There was for some time a society of Owenites [see Glossary] called the Co-operative Society, which met for weekly public discussions in Chancery Lane. Roebuck happened to be in contact with several of its members early in 1825, and attended one or two of the meetings and joined in the debate in opposition to Owenism. Some of us started the notion of going there in a body and having a general battle; and Charles Austin and some of his friends who did not usually take part in our joint exercises entered into the project. It was carried out in collaboration with the principal members of the Society, who naturally preferred a controversy with opponents to a tame discussion among their own members. The question of population was proposed as the subject of debate: Charles Austin led the case on our side with a brilliant speech, and the fight was kept up by adjournment through five or six weekly meetings before crowded audiences including—along with the members of the Society and their friends—many hearers and some speakers from the legal profession. When this debate was ended, another was started on the general merits of Owen's system; and the contest altogether lasted about three months. It was a *lutte corps-à-corps* [= 'a head-on battle'] between Owenites and political economists, whom the Owenites regarded as their most inveterate opponents; but it was a perfectly friendly dispute. We who represented political economy had the same objectives as they had, and took trouble to show it; and the principal champion on their side was a very estimable man with whom I was well acquainted, Mr William Thompson of Cork, author of a book on the distribution of wealth, and of an 'Appeal' on behalf of women against the passage relating to them in my father's *Essay on Government*. Ellis, Roebuck, and I took an active part in the debate, and among those from the legal profession who joined in it I remember Charles Villiers. On the population question the other side also obtained very efficient support from outside. The well-known Gale Jones, then an elderly man, made one of his florid speeches; but the speaker who struck me most, though I

dissented from nearly every word he said, was the historian Thirlwall, since Bishop of St. David's, then a Chancery barrister, unknown except by a high reputation for eloquence acquired at the Cambridge Union before the era of Austin and Macaulay. His speech was in answer to one of mine. Before he had uttered ten sentences I rated him as the best speaker I had ever heard, and I have never heard anyone whom I placed above him.

The new Society

The great interest of these debates predisposed some of those who took part in them to take up a suggestion thrown out by the political economist McCulloch that a society was wanted in London similar to the Speculative Society at Edinburgh, in which Brougham, Horner, and others first cultivated public speaking. Our experience at the Co-operative Society seemed to give cause for optimism about the sort of men who might be brought together in London for such a purpose. McCulloch mentioned the matter to several young men of influence to whom he was then giving private lessons in political economy. Some of these entered warmly into the project, particularly George Villiers (afterwards Earl of Clarendon). He and his brothers Hyde and Charles, Romilly, Charles Austin and I, with some others, met and agreed on a plan. We determined to meet once a fortnight from November to June, at the Freemasons' Tavern, and we had soon a splendid list of members, containing several members of parliament and nearly all the most noted speakers of the Cambridge Union and of the Oxford United Debating Society. It is curiously illustrative of the tendencies of the time that our main difficulty in recruiting for the Society was to find enough Tory speakers. Almost all the people we could press into the service were Liberals of different orders and degrees. Besides those already named, we had Macaulay, Thirlwall, Praed, Lord Howick, Samuel Wilberforce (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), Charles Poulett Thomson (afterwards Lord Sydenham), Edward and Henry Lytton Bulwer, Fonblanque, and many others whom I cannot now recollect but who later made themselves more or less conspicuous in public or literary life. Nothing could seem more promising. But when the time for action drew near and we had to choose a President and find someone to open the first debate, none of our celebrities would consent to perform either office. Of the many who were pressed on the subject the only one who could be prevailed on was a man of whom I knew very little, but who had taken high honours at Oxford and was said to have acquired a great oratorical reputation there; who some time later became a Tory member of parliament. He accordingly was fixed on, both for filling the President's chair *and* for making the first speech. The important day arrived; the benches were crowded; all our great speakers were present, to judge our efforts but not to help them. The Oxford orator's speech was a complete failure. This threw a damp on the whole concern: the speakers who followed were few, and none of them did their best. The affair was a complete fiasco, and the oratorical celebrities we had counted on went away never to return, giving to me at least a lesson in knowledge of the world. This unexpected breakdown altered my whole relation to the project. I had not expected to take a prominent part or to speak much or often, particularly at first, but I now saw that the success of the scheme depended on the new men, and I put my shoulder to the wheel. I opened the second question, and from that time spoke in nearly every debate. It was very uphill work for some time. The three Villiers and Romilly stuck to us for some time longer, but the patience of all the founders of the Society was at last exhausted, except for myself and Roebuck. In the following

season (1826–7) things began to mend. We had acquired two excellent Tory speakers, Hayward and Shee (afterwards Sergeant Shee [i.e. a high-ranking barrister]); the radical side was reinforced by Charles Buller, Cockburn, and others of the second generation of Cambridge Benthamites; and with their help and occasional help from others, and with the two Tories as well as Roebuck and me as regular speakers, almost every debate was a *bataille rangée* between the 'philosophic radicals' and the Tory lawyers; until our conflicts were talked about, and several notable and considerable persons came to hear us. This happened still more in the subsequent seasons (1828 and 1829) when the *Coleridgians*, in the persons of Maurice and Sterling, made their appearance in the Society as a second Liberal and even Radical party, on totally different grounds from Benthamism and vehemently opposed to it; bringing into these discussions the general doctrines and modes of thought of the European reaction against the philosophy of the eighteenth century; and adding a third and very important belligerent party to our contests, which were now a pretty good display of the movement of opinion among the most cultivated part of the new generation. Our debates were very different from those of common debating societies, for they habitually consisted of the strongest arguments and most philosophical principles that either side could produce, often thrown into close confutations of one another. The practice was necessarily very useful to us, especially to me. I never acquired real fluency, and always had a bad and ungraceful delivery, but I could make myself listened to. Also, whenever expression seemed important for a given speech—from the feelings involved, or the nature of the ideas to be developed—I wrote the speech in advance; so I greatly increased my power of effective writing, acquiring not only an ear for smoothness and rhythm but a practical sense for effective sentences and an immediate criterion of their effectiveness by their effect on a mixed audience.

End of connection with the *Westminster Review*

The Society, and the preparation for it, together with the preparation for the morning conversations that were going on at the same time, •took up most of my spare time and •made me feel it a relief when (in the spring of 1828) I stopped writing for the *Westminster Review*. This had fallen into difficulties. Though the sale of the first number had been very encouraging, I don't think the permanent sale was ever enough to pay the expenses on the scale on which the *Review* was carried on. Those expenses had been considerably reduced, but not enough. One of the editors, Southern, had resigned; and several of the writers, including my father and me, who had been paid like other contributors for our earlier articles, had recently written without payment. Nevertheless, the original funds were nearly or quite exhausted, and if the *Review* was to be continued there had to be some new arrangement of its affairs. My father and I had several conferences with Bowring on the subject. We were willing to do our utmost for maintaining the *Review* as an organ of our opinions, but not under Bowring's editorship; while the impossibility of its any longer supporting a paid editor provided a basis on which we could without offence to him propose to dispense with his services. We and some of our friends were prepared to carry on the *Review* as unpaid writers, either finding among ourselves an unpaid editor or sharing the editorship among us. But while this negotiation was proceeding with Bowring's apparent acceptance, he was carrying on another negotiation in a different quarter (with Colonel Perronet Thompson). The first we heard of it was in a letter from Bowring as editor, informing us merely that an arrangement had been made, and proposing to us to

write for the next number with promise of payment. We did not dispute Bowring's right to bring about, if he could, an arrangement more favourable to himself than the one we had proposed; but we thought his concealing it from us while seemingly entering into our own project was an insult; and even had we not thought so, we were not inclined to spend any more time and trouble attempting to preserve the *Review* under his management. So my father excused himself from writing, though two or three years later he was pressured into writing one more political article. As for me, I positively refused. And thus ended my connection with the original *Westminster Review*. The last article I wrote in it had taken more work than any previous one; but it was a labour of love, being a defence of the early French Revolutionists against the Tory misrepresentations of Sir Walter Scott in the introduction to his *Life of Napoleon*. The number of books I read for this purpose, making notes and extracts—even the number I had to buy (for in those days there was no public or subscription library from which books of reference could be taken home)—far exceeded the worth of the immediate purpose; but I had at that time a half-formed intention of writing a history of the French Revolution; and though I never wrote it, my collections afterwards were very useful to Carlyle for a similar purpose.

Part 5
A crisis in my mental history. One stage onward

For some years after this I wrote very little for publication, and nothing regularly; and I got great advantages from this intermission. It was of considerable importance to me at this period to be able to digest and mature my thoughts for my own mind only, without any immediate call for giving them out in print. If I had gone on writing, that would have disturbed the important transformation in my opinions and character that occurred during those years. The origin of this transformation, or at least the process by which I was prepared for it, can only be explained by turning some distance back.

Crucial question, disturbing answer

From the winter of 1821 when I first read Bentham, and especially from the start of the *Westminster Review*, I had what might truly be called an objective in life—to be a reformer of the world. My conception of my own happiness was entirely identified with this objective. The personal sympathies I wished for were those of fellow labourers in this enterprise. I tried to pick up as many flowers as I could along the way; but *this* was all I relied on for serious and permanent personal satisfaction; and I often congratulated myself on how certain I could be of having a happy life by placing my happiness in something •durable and •distant—something in which •some progress might be always making while •it could never be exhausted by complete attainment. This did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others in struggling to promote it seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. It was in the autumn of 1826 ·when I was 20 years old·. I was in a dull state of nerves of the sort that everyone is occasionally liable to; incapable of enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times becomes insipid or indifferent; the state (I should think) that converts to Methodism are usually in when they are smitten by their

first 'conviction of sin'. In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself:

> Suppose that all your objectives in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions that you are looking forward to were completely effected at this very instant; would this be a great joy and happiness to you?

And there was no way of blocking the clear answer 'No!' At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, so how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

The cloud lingers and thickens

At first I hoped that the cloud would pass away of itself, but it did not. A night's sleep, the sovereign remedy for the smaller vexations of life, had no effect on it. I awoke to a renewed consciousness of the woeful fact. I carried it with me into all companies, into all occupations. Hardly anything had power to cause me to forget it for even a few minutes. For some months the cloud seemed to grow thicker and thicker. The lines in Coleridge's 'Dejection'—I did not then know them—exactly describe my case:

> A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
> A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
> Which finds no natural outlet or relief
> In word, or sigh, or tear.

In vain I sought relief from my favourite books, those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling minus all its charm, and I became convinced that my love of mankind—and of excellence for its own sake—had worn itself out. I did not seek comfort by speaking to others of what I felt. If I had loved anyone enough to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I would not have been in the condition I was. Also, I felt that my distress was not interesting or in any way deserving of respect. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy. Advice, if I had known where to seek it, would have been most precious. The words of Macbeth to the physician often occurred to my thoughts.[1] But there was no one on whom I could build the faintest hope of such assistance. It would have been natural for me to look to my father in any practical difficulties, but he was the last person to whom I would look for help in such a case as this. Everything convinced me that he had no knowledge of any such mental state as I was suffering from, and that even if he could be made to understand it he was not the physician who could heal it. My education, which was wholly his work, had been conducted without any regard to the possibility of its ending in this result; and I saw no use in giving him the pain of thinking that his plans had failed, when the failure was probably irremediable—and anyway beyond the power of his remedies. I had at that time no other friends to whom I had any hope of making my condition intelligible. It was however abundantly intelligible to myself, and the more I dwelt on it the more hopeless it appeared.

[1] [Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, / Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, / Raze out the written troubles of the brain, / And with some sweet oblivious antidote / Cleanse the charged bosom of that perilous stuff / Which weighs upon the heart? (*Macbeth* V.3)]

My course of study had led me to believe that all mental and moral feelings and qualities, good or bad, were the results of association; that we love one thing and hate another, take pleasure in one sort of action or contemplation and pain in another sort, through the clinging of pleasurable or painful ideas to those things, from the effect of education or of experience. As a consequence of this I had always heard it maintained by my father, and was myself convinced, that the aim of education should be to form the strongest possible *salutary* associations—of pleasure with all things beneficial to the great whole, and of pain with all things hurtful to it. This doctrine appeared to be unconquerable; but looking back it now seemed to me that my teachers' views about how to form and maintain these salutary associations had been superficial. They seemed to have relied entirely on the old familiar instruments—praise and blame, reward and punishment. Now, I did not doubt that by these means, begun early and applied unremittingly, intense associations of pain and pleasure (especially pain) might be created, and might produce desires and aversions capable of lasting undiminished to the end of life. But there must always be something artificial and casual [see Glossary] in associations thus produced. The pains and pleasures thus forcibly associated with things are not connected with them by any natural tie; and so (I thought) it is essential to the durability of these associations that they should become so intense and inveterate as to be practically indissoluble before the habitual exercise of the power of analysis had started. For I now saw, or thought I saw, what I had always before received with incredulity—that the habit of analysis has a tendency to wear away the feelings. And so indeed it has, if no other mental habit is cultivated and the analysing spirit remains without its natural complements and correctives. The very excellence of analysis (I argued) is that it tends to weaken and undermine whatever is the result of prejudice; that it enables us mentally to separate ideas that have only casually clung together; and *no* associations could ultimately resist this dissolving force if it weren't that we owe to analysis our clearest knowledge of the permanent sequences in nature—

- the real connections between things, not dependent on our will and feelings;
- natural laws by virtue of which in many cases one thing is inseparable from another in fact ·and not just in someone's mind·;
- laws which, in proportion as they are clearly perceived and imaginatively realised, cause our ideas of things that are always joined together in nature to cohere more and more closely in our thoughts.

Analytic habits may thus even strengthen the associations between causes and effects, means and ends, but tend to weaken those that are, to speak familiarly, a *mere* matter of feeling. So they are (I thought) •favourable to prudence and clear-sightedness but •a perpetual worm at the root of the passions and of the virtues; and, above all, utterly undermine all desires and pleasures that are the effects of association, i.e. (according to the theory I held) all except the purely physical and organic—and no-one had a stronger conviction than I had of the entire insufficiency of *these* to make life desirable. These were the laws of human nature by which (it seemed to me) I had been brought to my present state. All those I looked up to believed that

- the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and
- the feelings that made the good of others, and especially of mankind on a large scale, the object of existence,

were the greatest and surest sources of happiness. I was convinced of the truth of this, but to know that a feeling would make me happy if I had it did not give me the feeling.

My education, I thought, had failed to create these feelings in sufficient strength to resist the dissolving influence of analysis, while the whole course of my intellectual cultivation had made precocious and premature analysis the unvarying habit of my mind. I was thus (as I said to myself) left stranded at the start of my voyage,

- with a well-equipped ship and a rudder but no sail,
- with no real desire for the ends I had been so carefully fitted out to work for,
- no delight in virtue or the general good, but also
- just as little delight in anything else.

The fountains of vanity and ambition seemed to have dried up within me as completely as those of benevolence. I had had (as I reflected) some gratification of vanity at too early an age; I had obtained some distinction, and felt myself of some importance, before the desire for distinction and importance had grown into a passion; and what I had attained, though it wasn't much, had been attained too early and—like all pleasures enjoyed too soon—it had made me blasé and indifferent to the pursuit. Thus neither selfish nor unselfish pleasures were pleasures to me. And there seemed no power in nature sufficient to begin the formation of my character anew, and create in an irretrievably analytic mind fresh associations of pleasure with any objects of human desire.

These were the thoughts that mingled with the dry heavy dejection of the melancholy winter of 1826–7. During this time I went on with my usual occupations mechanically, by the mere force of habit. I had been so *drilled* in a certain sort of mental exercise that I could still carry it on when all the spirit had gone out of it. I even composed and gave several speeches at the Debating Society—I don't know how, or how successfully. Out of four years of continual speaking at that society, this is the only year of which I remember next to nothing. Two lines of Coleridge, in whom alone of all writers I have found a true description of what I felt, were often in my thoughts, not at this time (for I had never read them), but in a later period of the same mental malady:

> Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
> And hope without an object cannot live.

My case was probably not as special to *me* as I fancied it, and I don't doubt that many others have passed through a similar state; but the idiosyncrasies of my education had given to the general phenomenon a special character that made it seem the natural effect of causes that it was hardly possible for time to remove. I often asked myself if I could go on living in this manner. I generally answered that I did not think I could bear it beyond a year.

The cloud starts to lift

After about half a year, however, a small ray of light broke in on my gloom. I happened to be reading Marmontel's *Mémoires*, and came to the passage that relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he (then a mere boy) felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would make up for all they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me was gone. I was no longer hopeless; I was not a stock or a stone. Apparently I still had some of the material out of which all worth of character and all capacity for happiness are made. Relieved from my ever-present sense of irremediable wretchedness, I gradually found that the ordinary incidents of life could again give me some pleasure; that I could again find enjoyment—not intense, but sufficient for cheerfulness—in sunshine and

sky, in books, in conversation, in public affairs; and that there was again excitement, though of a moderate kind, in exerting myself for my opinions and for the public good. Thus the cloud gradually drew off, and I again enjoyed life: and though I had several relapses, some lasting many months, I was never again as miserable as I had been ·in that winter·.

The experiences of this period had two very marked effects on my opinions and character. **(1)** They led me to adopt a theory of life very unlike the one I had acted on before, a theory with much in common with the anti-self-consciousness theory of Carlyle (which at that time I had never heard of). I never wavered in my belief that happiness is •the test of all rules of conduct and •the goal of life. But I now thought that this goal was to be attained only by not making it the *direct* goal. The only happy people (I thought) are those whose minds are fixed on some objective other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit followed not as a means but as itself an ideal goal. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness along the way. The enjoyments of life (such was now my theory) are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing when they are taken *en passant* without being made a principal objective. Once you make them so, you will immediately feel them to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinising examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is for you to have as your purpose in life not happiness but something external to it. Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation, exhaust themselves on *that*; and if you are otherwise fortunately circumstanced you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without •dwelling on it or thinking about it, •forestalling it in imagination, or •putting it to flight by fatal questioning. This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life. I still hold to it as the best theory for all those who have only a moderate degree of sensibility and of capacity for enjoyment, i.e. for the great majority of mankind.

(2) The other important change in my opinions was that for the first time I gave the internal culture of the individual its proper place among the prime necessities of human well-being. I ceased to attach almost exclusive importance to the ordering of outward circumstances, and the training of the human being for thought and for action.

Music

I had now learned by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. I did not for an instant lose sight of or undervalue the part of the truth I had seen before; I never broke faith with *intellectual* culture or ceased to consider the power and practice of analysis as an essential condition of individual and of social improvement. But I thought that it had consequences which required to be corrected by joining other kinds of cultivation with it. It now seemed to me of primary importance to maintain a proper balance among the faculties. The cultivation of the feelings became one of the chief themes in my ethical and philosophical creed. And my thoughts and inclinations turned increasingly towards whatever seemed capable of serving that objective.

I •now began to find meaning in the things I had read or heard about the importance of poetry and art as instruments of human culture. But it was only •somewhat later that I began to know this by personal experience. Music was the only imaginative art in which I had from childhood taken great pleasure. Its best effect (in which it surpasses perhaps every other art) consists in exciting enthusiasm; in winding

up to a high pitch those feelings of an elevated kind that are already in the character but to which this excitement gives a glow and a fervour which—though transitory at its utmost height—is precious for sustaining them at other times. This effect of music I had often experienced; but like all my pleasurable susceptibilities it was suspended during the gloomy period. I had sought relief again and again from this quarter, but found none. After the tide had turned and I was in the process of recovery, I was helped forward by music but in a much less elevated manner. At this time I first became acquainted with Weber's *Oberon*, and the extreme pleasure I drew from its delicious melodies did me good by showing me a source of pleasure to which I was as susceptible as ever. But the good was much impaired by the thought that the pleasure of music fades with familiarity, and needs to be revived by intermittence or fed by continual novelty. (And that is quite true of such pleasure as I was having, that of mere *tune*.) And it is very characteristic of my state at that time and of the general tone of my mind at this period of my life that I was seriously tormented by the thought of the exhaustibility of musical combinations. The octave consists of only five tones and two semi-tones, which can be put together in only a limited number of ways of which only a small proportion are beautiful; most of these (it seemed to me) must already have been discovered, and there could not be room for a long succession of Mozarts and Webers to strike out entirely new and surpassingly rich veins of musical beauty, as *they* had done. This source of anxiety may be thought to resemble that of the philosophers of Laputa [in *Gulliver's Travels*], who feared that the sun might burn out. But it was **connected** with the best feature in my character, and the only good point to be found in my very unromantic and in no way honourable distress. [He is talking now about the general distress that he began to describe on page 49.] For though my dejection could not be called other than egotistical, produced by the ruin (I thought) of my fabric of happiness, yet the destiny of mankind in general was always in my thoughts and could not be separated from my own. . . . The question was this:

> If the reformers of society and government could succeed in their objectives, and every person in the community were free and in a state of physical comfort, would the pleasures of life—being no longer kept up by struggle and privation—cease to be pleasures?

And I felt that unless I could see my way to some better hope than this for human happiness in general, my dejection must continue; but that if I could see such an outlet I would then look on the world with pleasure, content with my fair share of the general lot. [Music might be such an 'outlet', but the tormenting thought of 'the exhaustibility of musical combinations' seemed to block it off; that is how the two troubles are **connected**.]

Wordsworth

This state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828) an important event in my life. I took up the collection of his poems from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief from it, though I had before resorted to poetry with that hope. In the worst period of my depression, I had read through the whole of Byron (then new to me), to see whether a poet, whose special department was supposed to be that of the intenser feelings could rouse any feeling in me. As might be expected, I got no good from this reading but the reverse. The poet's state of mind was too like my own. His was the lament of a man who had worn out all pleasures, and who seemed to think that life, to all who possess the good things of it, must necessarily be the vapid and uninteresting thing

which I found it to be. His Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them that I had; and I was not in a frame of mind to derive any comfort from the vehement sensual passion of his Giaours or the sullenness of his Laras. But while Byron was exactly what *did not* suit my condition, Wordsworth was exactly what *did*. I had looked into *The Excursion* two or three years before, and found little in it; and I would probably have found as little if I had read it at this time. But the miscellaneous poems in the two-volume edition of 1815 (to which little of value was added in the latter part of the author's life) proved to be the precise thing for my mental wants at that particular time.

In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. This power over me of rural beauty laid a foundation for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry, especially since his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which (because of my early Pyrenean excursion) were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this even better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more effectively than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed not mere •outward beauty but •states of feeling—and of thought coloured by feeling—under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings that I was looking for. In them I seemed to draw from a spring of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which all human beings could share in; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From those poems I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness when all the greater evils of life had been removed; and as I came under their influence I felt myself better and happier. There have certainly been, even in our own time, greater poets than Wordsworth; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only •without turning away from the common feelings and common destiny of human beings but •with a greatly increased interest in them. And the delight these poems gave me proved that with culture of this sort there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis. At the conclusion of the Poems came the famous ode, falsely called Platonic, 'Intimations of Immortality', in which—along with more than his usual sweetness of melody and rhythm, and along with the two passages of grand imagery but bad philosophy so often quoted—I found

- •that he too had had experience similar to mine;
- •that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but
- •that he had sought for and found compensation in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it.

The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression and was never again subject to it. I long continued to value Wordsworth less according to his intrinsic merits than by the measure of what he had done for me. Compared with the greatest poets he may be said to be the poet of unpoetical natures with quiet and contemplative tastes. But unpoetical natures are precisely those that require poetic cultivation. Wordsworth is more fitted to provide it than poets who are more *poets* than he.

Roebuck and feelings

It so happened that the merits of Wordsworth were the occasion of my first public declaration of my new way of thinking, and my separation from those of my habitual companions who had not undergone a similar change. The person with whom at that time I was most in the habit of comparing notes on such subjects was Roebuck, and I induced him to read Wordsworth, in whom he also at first seemed to find much to admire: but like most Wordsworthians I threw myself into strong antagonism to Byron, both as a poet and as to his influence on the character. Roebuck, whose instincts were all those of action and struggle, had a strong liking and great admiration for Byron. He regarded Byron's writings as the poetry of human life, while Wordsworth's, according to him, was that of flowers and butterflies. We agreed to have the fight out at our Debating Society, where we accordingly spent two evenings discussing the comparative merits of Byron and Wordsworth, propounding our respective theories of poetry and illustrating them by long recitations. Sterling also, in a brilliant speech, put forward his particular theory. This was the first debate on any weighty subject in which Roebuck and I had been on opposite sides. The schism between us widened more and more from this time, though we continued for some years to be companions. In the beginning our chief divergence related to the cultivation of the feelings. Roebuck was in many respects very different from the vulgar [see Glossary] notion of a Benthamite or utilitarian. He was a lover of poetry and of most of the fine arts. He took great pleasure in music, in dramatic performances, especially in painting, and himself drew and designed landscapes with great facility and beauty. But he never could be made to see that these things have any value as aids in the formation of character. Personally he had very quick and strong sensibilities, instead of being void of feeling as Benthamites are supposed to be. But, like most Englishmen who have feelings, he found his feelings standing very much in his way. He was much more susceptible to the painful sympathies [see Glossary] than to the pleasurable, and looking for his happiness elsewhere he wished that his feelings should be deadened rather than enlivened. And indeed the English character and English social circumstances make it so seldom possible to derive happiness from the exercise of the sympathies that it is not surprising if they count for little in an Englishman's scheme of life. In most other countries the paramount importance of the sympathies as a constituent of individual happiness is an axiom, taken for granted rather than needing any formal statement; but most English thinkers almost seem to regard them as necessary evils, required for keeping men's actions benevolent and compassionate. Roebuck was—or appeared to be—this kind of Englishman. He saw little good in any cultivation of the feelings, and none at all in cultivating them through the imagination, which he thought was only cultivating illusions. In vain I urged on him that the imaginative emotion which a vividly conceived idea arouses in us is not an *illusion* but a *fact*, as real as any of the other qualities of objects; and far from implying anything erroneous and delusive in our mental grasp of the object, is quite consistent with the most accurate knowledge and most perfect practical recognition of all its physical and intellectual laws and relations. The intensest feeling of the beauty of a cloud lighted by the setting sun is no hindrance to my knowing that the cloud is water-vapour that falls under all the laws of vapours in a state of suspension; and I am just as likely to act on these physical laws whenever there is occasion to do so as if I had been incapable of distinguishing beauty from ugliness.

Frederick Maurice

While my intimacy with Roebuck diminished, I fell more and more into friendly intercourse with our Coleridgian adversaries in the society—Frederick Maurice and John Sterling, both subsequently so well known, the former by his writings, the latter through the biographies by Hare and Carlyle. Of these two friends Maurice was the thinker and Sterling the orator—the impassioned expositor of thoughts which at this time were almost entirely formed for him by Maurice. I had for some time been acquainted with Maurice through Eyton Tooke, who had known him at Cambridge, and though my discussions with him were almost always disputes, I had carried away from them much that helped me to build up my new fabric of thought, in the same way as I was deriving much from Coleridge and from the writings of Goethe and other German authors which I read during those years. I have so deep a respect for Maurice's character and purposes, as well as for his great mental gifts, that I am reluctant to say anything that may seem to place him on a less high eminence than I would like to be able to grant to him. But I have always thought that more intellectual power was *wasted* in Maurice than in any other of my contemporaries. Few of them certainly have had so much to waste. Great powers of generalisation, rare ingenuity and subtlety, and a wide perception of important and unobvious truths, served him not for

> putting something better into the place of the worthless heap of received opinions on the great subjects of thought,

but for

> proving to his own satisfaction that the Church of England had known everything from the first, and that all the truths on the basis of which the Church and orthodoxy have been attacked (many of which he saw as clearly as anyone) are not only •consistent with the Thirty-nine articles [see Glossary] but are •better understood and expressed in those articles than by anyone who rejects them.

I have never been able to find any explanation of this other than by attributing it to that timidity of conscience, combined with basic sensitiveness of temperament, which has so often driven highly gifted men into Romanism from the need for a firmer support than they can find in the independent conclusions of their own judgment. No-one who knew Maurice would ever think of imputing to him any more vulgar kind of timidity, even if he had not given public proof of his freedom from it by •his ultimate collision with some of the opinions commonly regarded as orthodox and by •his noble origination of the Christian Socialist movement. From a moral point of view the nearest parallel to him is Coleridge, to whom I think him decidedly superior in merely intellectual power, apart from poetical genius. At this time, however, he might be described as a disciple of Coleridge, and Sterling as a disciple of Coleridge and of him. The changes that my old opinions were undergoing gave me some points of contact with them; and both Maurice and Sterling were of considerable use to my development.

Relations with John Sterling (1806–1844)

I soon became very intimate with Sterling, and was more attached to him than I have ever been to any other man. He was indeed one of the most lovable of men.

- •His frank, cordial, affectionate, expansive character,
- •a love of truth alike conspicuous in the highest things and the humblest,
- •a generous and ardent nature which threw itself

impetuously into the opinions it adopted, but was as eager to do justice to the doctrines and the men it was opposed to as to make war on what it thought their errors, and

- an equal devotion to the two cardinal points of *liberty* and *duty*,

formed a combination of qualities as attractive to me as to everyone else who knew him as well as I did. With his open mind and heart he found no difficulty in joining hands with me across the gulf that still divided our opinions. He told me how he and others had (on the basis of hearsay information) looked on me as a 'made' or manufactured man, having had a certain impress of opinion stamped on me which I could only reproduce; and what a change took place in his feelings when he found in the discussion on Wordsworth and Byron that Wordsworth (and everything that names implies) 'belonged' to me as much as to him and his friends! The failure of his health soon scattered all his plans of life and compelled him to live at a distance from London, so that after the first year or two of our acquaintance we saw each other only at distant intervals. But (as he said himself in a letter to Carlyle) when we did meet it was like brothers. Though he was never in the full sense of the word a *profound* thinker, his openness of mind and the moral courage in which he greatly surpassed Maurice made him outgrow the dominance that Maurice and Coleridge had once exercised over his intellect; though he retained to the last a great but discriminating admiration for both, and towards Maurice a warm affection. Except in that short and transitory phase of his life when he made the mistake of becoming a clergyman, his mind was always progressive; and each time I saw him after an interval the advance he seemed to have made since our last meeting made me apply to him what Goethe said of Schiller, *Er hatte eine fürchterliche Fortschreitung* [= 'He has advanced in colossal strides']. He and I started from intellectual points almost as wide apart as the poles, but the distance between us was always diminishing; if I made steps towards some of his opinions, he during his short life was constantly approximating more and more to several of mine; and there is no knowing how much further this spontaneous assimilation might have gone if he had lived and had health and vigour to continue his assiduous self-culture.

Macaulay versus my father

After 1829 I stopped attending meetings of the Debating Society. I had had enough of speech-making, and was glad to carry on my private studies and meditations without any immediate call for outward assertion of their results. I found the fabric of my old *taught* opinions giving way in many fresh places; I never allowed it to fall to pieces, but was constantly occupied in weaving it anew. During this transition I was never content to remain confused and unsettled, even for a moment. When I had taken in any new idea, I could not rest till I had adjusted its relation to my old opinions and ascertained exactly how much it ought to modify or supersede them.

The conflicts I had so often had to sustain in defending the theory of government laid down in Bentham's and my father's writings, and what I had learned of other schools of political thinking, made me aware of many things which that doctrine—professing to be a theory of government in general—ought to have made room for, and did not. But these things had until now remained with me as corrections to be made in applying the theory to practice rather than as defects in the theory. I felt that politics could not be a science of specific experience; and that the accusations against the Benthamic theory of being a *theory*, of proceeding *a priori*

by way of general reasoning instead of Baconian experiment, showed complete ignorance of Bacon's principles and of the necessary conditions of experimental investigation. At this point there appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* Macaulay's famous attack on my father's *Essay on Government*. This gave me much to think about. I saw that Macaulay's conception of the logic of politics was erroneous; that he stood up for the •empirical mode of treating political phenomena against the •philosophical; that even in physical science his notion of philosophising might have recognised Kepler but would have excluded Newton and Laplace. But I could not help feeling that—though the tone was inappropriate (an error for which Macaulay later made the most ample and honourable amends)—there was truth in several of his strictures on my father's treatment of the subject; that my father's premises were really too narrow, including only a small number of the general truths on which the important consequences in politics depend. *Identity of interest between the governing body and the community at large* is not, in any practical sense that can be attached to it, the only thing on which good government depends; nor can this identity of interest be secured merely by having the right electoral system. I was not at all satisfied with my father's way of meeting Macaulay's criticisms. He did not, as I thought he ought to have done, justify himself by saying :'I was not writing a scientific treatise on politics, I was writing an argument for parliamentary reform.' He treated Macaulay's argument as simply irrational, an attack on the reasoning faculty, an example of Hobbes's remark that when reason is against a man, a man will be against reason. This made me think that in my father's conception of philosophical method, as applicable to politics, there was really something more deeply wrong than I had hitherto believed. But I did not at first see clearly what the error might be.

At last it flashed on me all at once in the course of other studies. In the early part of 1830 I had begun to put on paper the ideas on logic (chiefly on the distinctions among terms and the import of propositions) which had been suggested and in part worked out in the morning conversations I spoke of ·on page 44·. Having secured these thoughts from being lost, I pushed on into the other parts of the subject, to see whether I could do anything more towards clearing up the theory of logic generally. I grappled at once with the problem of induction, postponing that of reasoning, on the ground that you can't reason from premises until you have obtained them ·by induction·. Now, induction is mainly a process for finding the causes of effects; and in trying to trying to understand the way of tracing causes and effects in physical science I soon saw that in the more perfect sciences we

- •ascend by generalisation from particulars to the tendencies of causes considered singly, and then
- •reason downward from those separate tendencies to the effect of the same causes when combined.

I then asked myself 'What is the ultimate analysis of this deductive process?', because the common theory of the syllogism obviously throws no light on it. My practice (learned from Hobbes and my father) being to study abstract principles by means of the best concrete instances I could find, I chose *the composition of forces in dynamics* as the most complete example of the logical process I was investigating. So, examining what the mind does when it applies the principle of the composition of forces, I found that it performs a simple act of addition. It adds the separate effect of the one force to the separate effect of the other and puts down the sum of these as the joint effect. But is this a legitimate process? In dynamics and all the mathematical branches of physics it is; but in some other cases, e.g. chemistry, it is not; and I then recollected that something like this was

pointed out as one of the distinctions between chemical and mechanical phenomena in the introduction to that favourite of my boyhood, Thomson's *System of Chemistry*. This distinction at once made my mind clear as to what was puzzling me about the philosophy of politics. I now saw that whether a science is •deductive or •experimental depends on whether in the province it deals with the effects of conjoined causes •are or •are not the sums of the effects that the same causes produce when separate. It followed that politics must be a deductive science. It thus appeared that Macaulay and my father were both wrong: Macaulay had assimilated the method of philosophising in politics to the purely experimental method of chemistry; while my father, though right in adopting a deductive method, had chosen the wrong one,

- •not the appropriate process, that of the deductive branches of natural philosophy, but
- •the inappropriate one of pure geometry, which—not being a science of causation at all—does not involve any summing-up of effects.

A foundation was thus laid in my thoughts for the principal chapters of what I afterwards published on the logic of the moral sciences; and my new position's relation to my old political creed now became perfectly definite.

Influences from the Continent. . .

If I am asked what system of political philosophy I substituted for the one which (as a philosopher) I had abandoned, I answer:

> No system; only a conviction •that the true system was much more complex and many-sided than anything I had previously had any idea of, and •that its role was to supply not a set of model *institutions* but *principles* from which the institutions suitable to any given circumstances might be deduced.

The influences of European—i.e. Continental [see Glossary]—thought, and especially those of the reaction of the 19th century against the 18th, were now streaming in on me. They came from various quarters: •from the writings of Coleridge, which I had begun to read with interest even before the change in my opinions; •from the Coleridgians with whom I had personal contact; •from what I had read by Goethe; •from Carlyle's early articles in the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Foreign Review*, though for a long time I saw nothing in these but insane ramblings (my father *never* saw anything in them but that). From these sources, and from the acquaintance I kept up with the French literature of the time, I derived—among other ideas that came to the surface when the opinions of European thinkers turned everything upside-down—the following in particular. **(i)** That the human mind has a certain order of possible progress, in which some things must precede others, an order that governments and public instructors can modify but only within limits. **(ii)** That all questions of political institutions are relative, not absolute, and that different stages of human progress will *and should* have different institutions. **(iii)** That government is always in (or passing into) the hands of whatever is the strongest power in society, and that what this power is doesn't depend on institutions but institutions depend on it. **(iv)** That any general theory or philosophy of politics must rest on a preceding theory of human progress, and that this is the same thing as a philosophy of history. These mainly true opinions were held in an exaggerated and violent manner by the thinkers with whom I was now most accustomed to compare notes, and who—as usual with a reaction—ignored the half of the truth that the 18th century thinkers saw. But though at one period of my progress

I for a while under-valued that great century, I never joined in the reaction against it, but kept as firm a hold on one side of the truth as I had on the other. The fight between the 19th century and the 18th always reminded me of the battle about the shield, one side of which was white and the other black. I marvelled at the blind rage with which the combatants rushed against one another. I applied to them and to Coleridge himself many of Coleridge's sayings about half truths; and Goethe's motto , 'many-sidedness', was one which I then would willingly have taken for mine.

. . . especially from the St. Simonians

The writers of the St. Simonian school in France did more than any others to bring home to me a new mode of political thinking. In 1829 and 1830 I read some of their writings. They were then only in the earlier stages of their theorising. They had not yet dressed up their philosophy as a religion, nor had they organised their scheme of socialism. They were just beginning to question the principle of hereditary property. I was by no means prepared to go with them even this far, but I was greatly struck with the connected view of the natural order of human progress that they for the first time presented to me, and especially with their division of all history into organic periods and critical periods. During the organic periods (they said) mankind accept with firm conviction some positive creed, claiming jurisdiction over all their actions and containing more or less of truth and adaptation to the needs of humanity. Under its influence they make all the progress compatible with the creed, and finally outgrow it. Then follows a period of criticism and negation, in which mankind lose their old convictions without acquiring any new ones of a general or authoritative sort, except the conviction that the old ones are false. The period of Greek and Roman polytheism, so long as this was really believed in by educated Greeks and Romans, was an organic period, succeeded by the critical or sceptical period of the Greek philosophers. Another organic period came in with Christianity. The corresponding critical period began with the Reformation, has lasted ever since, still continues, and cannot altogether cease until a new organic period has been inaugurated by the triumph of a still more advanced creed. I knew that these ideas were not peculiar to the St. Simonians; on the contrary, they were the general property of Europe or at least of Germany and France; but so far as I knew they had never been so completely systematised as by these writers, nor had the distinguishing characteristics of a critical period been so powerfully set forth; for I had not then encountered Fichte's lectures on the *Characteristics of the Present Age*. In Carlyle, indeed, I found bitter denunciations of an 'age of unbelief' and of the present as being such; and like most people at that time I supposed these to be passionate protests in favour of the old modes of belief. But anything true in these denunciations I found more calmly and philosophically stated (I thought) by the St. Simonians.

One of their publications seemed to me far superior to the rest; in it the general idea was matured into something much more definite and instructive. This was an early work of Auguste Comte, who then called himself a pupil of Saint-Simon and even announced himself as such on the title-page. In this tract M. Comte first put forth the doctrine, which he afterwards so copiously illustrated, of the natural succession of three stages in every department of human knowledge: **(a)** the theological, **(b)** the metaphysical, and **(c)** the positive stage. He contended that social science must be subject to the same ·three-stage· law—that **(a)** the feudal and Catholic system was the concluding phase of the theological state of the social science, that **(b)** Protestantism

was the start of the metaphysical state and the doctrines of the French Revolution were its consummation, and that **(c)** its positive state was yet to come. This doctrine harmonised well with my existing notions, to which it seemed to give a scientific shape. I already regarded the methods of physical science as the proper models for political science. But the chief benefit I derived at this time from the trains of thought suggested by the St. Simonians and by Comte was that I obtained a clearer conception than ever before of what was special about an era of *transition* in opinion, and stopped mistaking the moral and intellectual characteristics of such an era for the normal attributes of humanity. I looked forward, through the present age of loud disputes but generally weak convictions, to a future in which the best qualities of the critical period—

> unchecked liberty of thought, unbounded freedom of individual action in all modes not hurtful to others

—would be united with the best quality of the organic period:

> convictions as to what is right and wrong, useful and pernicious, deeply engraven on the feelings by early education and general unanimity of sentiment, and so firmly grounded in reason and in the real demands of life that they won't have to be periodically thrown off and replaced by others, as have all former and present religious, ethical, and political creeds.

M. Comte soon left the St. Simonians, and I lost sight of him and his writings for a number of years. But I continued to cultivate the St. Simonians. I was kept *au courant* of their progress by one of their most enthusiastic disciples, M. Gustave d'Eichthal, who about then spent a considerable time in England. I was introduced to their chiefs, Bazard and Enfantin, in 1830; and as long as their public teachings and proselytism continued I read nearly everything they wrote. Their critical comments on the common doctrines of liberalism seemed to me full of important truth; and their writings helped to open my eyes to the very limited and temporary value of the old political economy, which assumes •private property and inheritance as unchallengeable facts, and •freedom of production and exchange as the peak of social improvement. The scheme gradually unfolded by the St. Simonians,

> under which the labour and capital of society would be managed for the general account of the community, with every individual being required to take a share of labour either as thinker, teacher, artist, or producer, all being classed according to their ability and remunerated according to their works,

appeared to me a far better description of socialism than Owen's. Their aim seemed to me desirable and rational, however ineffective their means to it; and though I did not regard their social machinery as either practicable or beneficial, I felt that the proclamation of such an ideal of human society would surely tend to give a beneficial direction to the efforts of others to bring society as at present constituted nearer to some ideal standard. I honoured them most of all for what they have been most cried down for, namely the boldness and freedom from prejudice with which they treated the subject of *family*. Of all the great social institutions, the family is the most important and the most in need of fundamental alterations, yet scarcely any reformer has the courage to touch it. In proclaiming the perfect equality of men and women, and an entirely new order of things in regard to their inter-relations, the St. Simonians—in common with Owen and Fourier—have entitled themselves to the grateful remembrance of future generations.

My thinking on other subjects

In giving an account of this period of my life, I have specified only such of my new impressions as appeared to me (then and since) to be turning points marking a definite progress in my mode of thought. But these few selected points give a very insufficient idea of the amount of thinking I engaged in on a host of subjects during these years of transition. Much of this, it is true, consisted in rediscovering things known to all the world that I had previously disbelieved or disregarded. But the rediscovery was to me a discovery, giving me full possession of the truths, not as traditional platitudes but fresh from their source; and it usually placed them in some new light by which they were reconciled with—and seemed to confirm while they also modified—the less generally known truths that lay in my early opinions, truths that in their essentials I had unwaveringly held to. All my new thinking only laid the foundation of these more deeply and strongly, while it often removed misapprehension and confusion of ideas that had perverted their effect. For example, during later episodes of dejection the doctrine of 'philosophical necessity' weighed on my existence like an an oppressive nightmare. I felt as if I was scientifically proved to be the helpless slave of antecedent circumstances; as if my character and that of all others had been formed for us by agencies beyond our control, and was wholly out of our own power. I often said to myself 'What a relief it would be if I could disbelieve the doctrine of the formation of character by circumstances!'; and remembering Fox's wish that the doctrine of resistance to governments might never be forgotten by kings nor remembered by subjects, I said that it would be a blessing if the doctrine of necessity could be believed by each person as applied to the characters of others and disbelieved as applied to his own. I pondered painfully on the subject until gradually I saw light through it. I saw that the word 'necessity', as a name for the doctrine of cause and effect, carried with it a misleading association when applied to human action; and that this association was the operative force in the depressing and paralysing influence that I had experienced. I saw that though our character is formed by circumstances, our own desires can do much to shape those circumstances; and that what is really inspiriting and ennobling in the doctrine of free-will is the conviction that we have real power over the formation of our own character; that our will, by influencing some of our circumstances, can modify our future habits or capabilities of willing. All this was entirely consistent with the doctrine of ·the formation of character by· circumstances, or rather it *was* that doctrine properly understood. From that time I clearly distinguished •the doctrine of ·the formation of character by· circumstances from •fatalism, and discarded altogether the misleading word 'necessity'. The doctrine—which I now for the first time rightly grasped—ceased altogether to be discouraging, and besides the relief to my spirits I no longer suffered under the burden of thinking one doctrine to be true and its contrary to be morally beneficial, a heavy burden to one who aims at being a reformer in opinions! The train of thought that had extricated me from this dilemma seemed to me in later years to be fitted to render a similar service to others; and it now forms the chapter on Liberty and Necessity in my *System of Logic*.

Again, in politics, though I

- •no longer accepted the doctrine of my father's *Essay on Government* as a scientific theory,
- •ceased to consider representative democracy as an absolute principle, and regarded it as a question of time, place, and circumstance, and
- •now looked on the choice of political institutions as

> a moral and educational question more than one of material interests, thinking that it ought to be decided mainly by the question 'What great improvement in life and culture stands next in order for the people concerned, as the condition of their further progress, and what institutions are most likely to promote it?',

this change in the premises of my political philosophy did not alter my practical political creed as to the requirements of my own time and country. I was as much as ever a radical and democrat for Europe, and especially for England. I thought the predominance of the aristocratic classes—the noble and the rich—in the English Constitution to be an evil worth any struggle to get rid of; not because of taxes or any such comparatively small inconvenience, but as the great demoralising [see Glossary] agency in the country. Demoralising **(1)** because it made the conduct of the government an example of gross public immorality, through the predominance of private over public interests in the State, and the abuse of the powers of legislation for the advantage of classes; and even more **(2)** because it meant that under English institutions hereditary or acquired riches were the almost exclusive source of political importance, so that riches and the signs of riches were almost the only things really respected (because the respect of the multitude always attaches itself principally to whatever is in the existing state of society the chief passport to power), with the result that the life of the people was mainly devoted to the pursuit of riches. While the higher and richer classes held the power of government (I thought), the instruction and improvement of the mass of the people were contrary to the self-interest of those classes because they would tend to increase the people's power to throw off the yoke: but if the democracy obtained a large share—perhaps the principal share—in the governing power, it would become the interest of the opulent classes to promote their education, in order to ward off really mischievous errors, especially those that would lead to unjust violations of property. On these grounds not only was I as ardent as ever for democratic institutions, but I earnestly hoped that Owenite, St. Simonian, and all other anti-property doctrines might spread widely among the poorer classes. I did not think those doctrines to be true, or want them to be acted on; but I wanted to make the higher classes see that they had more to fear from the poor when uneducated than when educated.

Return to political writing

This is the frame of mind in which the French Revolution of July ·1830· found me. It aroused my utmost enthusiasm, and gave me a new existence, so to speak. I went at once to Paris, was introduced to Lafayette, and laid the groundwork for the contacts I afterwards kept up with several of the active chiefs of the extreme popular party. After my return I entered warmly, as a writer, into the political discussions of the time; which soon became still more exciting by the coming in of Lord Grey's ministry and the proposing of the Reform Bill. For the next few years I wrote copiously in newspapers. It was about this time that Fonblanque, who had for some time written the political articles in the *Examiner*, became that paper's proprietor and editor. People still remember the verve and talent, as well as the fine wit, with which he carried it on during the whole period of Lord Grey's ministry, and what importance it had as the newspaper press's principal representative of radical opinions. The distinguishing character of the *Examiner* was given to it entirely by Fonblanque's own articles, which constituted at least three-fourths of all the original writing contained in it; but of the remaining fourth I contributed during those years a much larger share than anyone else. I wrote nearly all the

articles on French subjects, including a weekly summary—often quite long—of French politics; together with many leading articles on general politics, commercial and financial legislation, and any miscellaneous subjects in which I felt interested and which were suitable for the paper, including occasional reviews of books. Mere newspaper articles on the occurrences or questions of the moment gave no opportunity for the development of any general mode of thought; but I tried at the start of 1831 to embody in a series of articles headed 'The Spirit of the Age' some of my new opinions, and especially to point out in the character of the present age the anomalies and evils characteristic of the transition from a system of worn-out opinions to another still in the process of being formed. These articles were lumbering in style and not lively or striking enough to be acceptable to newspaper readers at any time; but even if they had been far more attractive, they would still have been ill-timed at that particular moment, when great political changes were impending and engrossing all minds; so my discussions missed fire altogether. The only effect that I know to have been produced by them was that Carlyle, then living in a secluded part of Scotland, read them in his solitude, said to himself (as he afterwards told me) 'Here is a new mystic', and on coming to London that autumn asked who wrote them. That inquiry was the immediate cause of our becoming personally acquainted.

Carlyle

I have already [page 59] mentioned Carlyle's earlier writings as one of the channels through which I received the influences that broadened my early narrow creed; but I do not think that those writings by themselves would ever have had any effect on my opinions. What truths they contained, though of the very kind I was already receiving from other quarters, were presented in a form and clothing less suited than any other to give them access to a mind trained as mine had been. They seemed a haze of poetry and German metaphysics, in which almost the only clear thing was a strong animosity to most of the opinions that were the basis of my mode of thought:

- religious scepticism,
- utilitarianism,
- the doctrine of ·the formation of character by· circumstances, and
- the attaching any importance to democracy, logic, or political economy.

Instead of my having been taught anything in the first instance by Carlyle, it was only in proportion as I came to see the same truths through media more suited to my mental constitution that I recognised them in his writings. Then indeed the wonderful power with which he expressed them made a deep impression on me, and for a long period I was one of his most fervent admirers; but the good his writings did me was not as •philosophy to instruct but as •poetry to animate. Even at the time when our acquaintance started I was not advanced enough in my new modes of thought to appreciate him fully; a proof of which is that •when he showed me the manuscript of ·his novel· *Sartor Resartus*, his best and greatest work which he had just then finished, I made little of it, though •when it came out about two years later ·as a serial· in *Fraser's Magazine* I read it with enthusiastic admiration and the keenest delight. Fundamental differences in our philosophies did not lead me to seek and cultivate Carlyle less. He soon found out that I was not 'another mystic', and when for the sake of my own integrity I wrote to him a clear statement of the opinions of mine that I knew he most disliked, he replied

that the chief difference between us was that I 'was as yet consciously nothing of a mystic'. I do not know when he gave up the expectation that I was destined to become one; but though his and my opinions in later years underwent considerable changes, we never came much nearer to each other's modes of thought than we were in the first years of our acquaintance. But I did not regard myself as a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet and I was not; that he was a man of intuition and I was not; and not only that

- as a man of intuition he saw many things long before I did, things that I could see—hobble after and prove—only when they were pointed out to me, but also that
- it was highly probable that he could see many things that were not visible to me even after they were pointed out.

I knew that I could not see *around* him, and could never be certain that I saw *over* him; and I never presumed to judge him with any definiteness until he was interpreted to me by one greatly superior to us both, more a poet than Carlyle and more a thinker than I, whose own mind and nature included his and infinitely more.

Relations with John Austin

Among the persons of intellect whom I had known of old, the one I now had most points of agreement with was the elder Austin. I have mentioned that he always set himself in opposition to our early sectarianism; and latterly he had come under new influences, as had I. Having been appointed Professor of Jurisprudence in the London University (now University College), he had lived for some time at Bonn to study for his lectures; and the influences of German literature and of the German character and state of society had made a very perceptible change in his views of life. His personal disposition was much softened; he was less militant and polemic; his tastes had begun to turn themselves towards the poetic and contemplative. He attached much less importance than formerly to outward changes unless they were accompanied by a better cultivation of the inward nature. He had a strong distaste for the general meanness of English life, the absence of enlarged thoughts and unselfish desires, the low objects on which the faculties of all classes of the English are intent. He held in very little esteem the kind of public interests that Englishmen care for. He thought that • under the Prussian monarchy there was more practical good government and (which is true enough) infinitely more care for the education and mental improvement of all ranks of the people than there is • under the English representative government; and he agreed with the French *économistes* that the real security for good government is *un peuple éclairé*, which is not always the fruit of popular institutions and would do such institutions' work better than they do if it—·i.e. an enlightened populace·—could be had without them. Though he approved of the Reform Bill, he predicted (correctly) that it would not produce the great immediate improvements in government that many expected from it. The men who could do these great things, he said, did not exist in the country. There were many points of sympathy between him and me, both in the new opinions he had adopted and in the old ones he retained. Like me, he never ceased to be an utilitarian, and with all his love of the Germans and enjoyment of their literature he never became in the smallest degree reconciled to the innate-principle metaphysics. He cultivated more and more a kind of German religion, a religion of poetry and feeling with little if any positive dogma; while in politics (which is where I most differed with him) he acquired an indifference bordering on contempt for the progress of popular institutions; though he

rejoiced in the progress of socialism, as the most effective means of compelling the powerful classes •to educate the people and •to impress on them the only real means of permanently improving their material condition, namely a limitation of their numbers. He was not at this time fundamentally opposed to socialism in itself as an ultimate result of improvement. He professed great disrespect for what he called 'the universal principles of human nature of the political economists', and insisted on the evidence that history and daily experience provide of the 'extraordinary pliability of human nature' (a phrase that I have somewhere borrowed from him), nor did he think it possible to set any definite limits to the moral capabilities that might unfold themselves in mankind under an enlightened direction of social and educational influences. Whether he retained all these opinions to the end of his life I do not know. Certainly the modes of thinking of his later years, and especially of his last publication, were much more Tory in their general character than the ones he held at this time.

Relations with my father

I now *felt* myself to be at a great distance from my father's tone of thought and feeling—greater, indeed, than a full and calm explanation and reconsideration on both sides might have shown to exist in reality. But my father was not one with whom calm and full explanations on fundamental points of doctrine could be expected, at least with someone he might regard as (in a way) a deserter from his standard. Fortunately we were almost always in strong agreement on the political questions of the day that engrossed a large part of his interest and conversation. We talked little about the matters of opinion on which we differed. He knew that the habit of thinking for myself, which his mode of education had fostered, sometimes led me to opinions different from his, and he perceived from time to time that I did not always tell him how different. I expected no good from discussing our differences, but only pain to both of us; and I never expressed them except when he gave utterance to some opinion or feeling repugnant to mine in a manner that would have made it dishonest for me to remain silent.

My other writings at that time

It remains to speak of what I wrote during these years, which—independently of my contributions to newspapers—was considerable. In 1830 and 1831 I wrote the five essays since published under the title of *Essays on some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, almost as they now stand except that in 1833 I partially rewrote the fifth essay. They were written with no immediate purpose of publication; and when some years later I offered them to a publisher, he declined them. They were not printed until 1844, after the success of the *System of Logic*. I also returned to thinking about logic, and like others before me puzzled over the great paradox of the discovery of new truths by general reasoning. As to the fact ·that new truths *are* discovered in this way· there could be no doubt. As little could it be doubted that all reasoning is resolvable into syllogisms, and that in every syllogism the conclusion is actually contained and implied in the premises. So:

> How could the conclusion, being so contained and implied, be a *new* truth? and how could the theorems of geometry, so different in appearance from the definitions and axioms, be all *contained* in them?

This, I thought, was a difficulty that no-one had sufficiently felt, and that anyway no-one had succeeded in clearing up. The explanations offered by Whately and others, though they

might give a temporary satisfaction, always left in my mind a mist still hanging over the subject. At last, when reading for a second or third time the chapters on reasoning in the volume 2 of Dugald Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, interrogating myself on every point and following out as far as I could every topic of thought that the book suggested, I came upon an idea of his about the use of axioms in reasoning which I did not remember having noticed before but which now seemed to me when I meditated on it to be true not only of axioms but of all general propositions whatever, and to be the key of the whole perplexity. From this germ grew the theory of the syllogism propounded in Book II of my *System of Logic*, which I immediately fixed by writing it out. And now, with greatly increased hope of being able to produce a work on logic of some originality and value, I proceeded to write Book I from the rough and imperfect draft I had already made. What I now wrote became the basis of that part of the subsequent treatise, except that it did not contain the theory of *kinds*, which was a later addition suggested by otherwise inextricable difficulties that met me in my first attempt to work out the subject of some of the concluding chapters of Book III. At the point I had now reached I made a halt, which lasted five years. I had come to the end of my tether; I could make nothing satisfactory of *induction* at this time. I continued to read any book that seemed to promise light on the subject, and appropriated the results as well as I could; but for a long time I found nothing that seemed to open to me any important vein of meditation.

In 1832 I wrote several papers for the first series of *Tait's Magazine*, and one for a quarterly periodical called the *Jurist*, which had been founded (and for a short time was carried on) by a set of friends—all lawyers and law reformers—with several of whom I was acquainted. The paper in question is the one on the rights and duties of the State respecting the property of corporations and churches. It now stands first among the collected *Dissertations and Discussions*, where one of my articles in *Tait*, 'The Currency Juggle', also appears. In the whole mass of what I wrote previous to these, there is nothing with enough permanent value to justify reprinting. The paper in the *Jurist*, which I still think a very complete discussion of the rights of the state over foundations, showed both sides of my opinions. It asserted as firmly as I would have done at any time that

> all endowments are national property that the government may and ought to control;

but it did not, as I would once have done,

> condemn endowments as such and propose that they should be *taken* to pay off the national debt.

On the contrary, I urged strenuously the importance of having a provision for education that •doesn't depend on the mere demand of the market, i.e. on the knowledge and discernment of average parents, but •is designed to establish and maintain a higher standard of instruction than is likely to be spontaneously demanded by the buyers of the article. All these opinions have been confirmed and strengthened by the whole course of my subsequent reflections.

Part 6
The most valuable friendship of my life. My father's death. Writings and other doings up to 1840

A sketch of Harriet Taylor

I have now reached the period of my mental progress when I formed the friendship that has been the honour and chief blessing of my existence, as well as the source of a great part of all that I have tried to do or hope to achieve hereafter for human improvement. My first introduction to the lady who after a friendship of twenty years consented to become my wife was in 1830, when I was in my 25th and she in her 23rd year. With her husband's family it was the renewal of an old acquaintanceship. His grandfather lived in the next house to my father's in Newington Green, and as a boy I had sometimes been invited to play in the old gentleman's garden. He was a fine specimen of the old Scotch puritan: stern, severe, and powerful, but very kind to children, on whom such men make a lasting impression. Although it was years after my introduction to Mrs Taylor before my acquaintance with her became at all close or confidential, I very soon felt her to be the most admirable person I had ever known. It is not to be supposed that she was then all that she afterwards became—no-one at the age of 23 *could* be. Least of all could this be true of her with whom self-improvement—*progress* in the highest sense and in all senses—was a law of her nature, made necessary equally by •the ardour with which she sought it and •the spontaneous tendency of faculties that could not receive an impression or an experience without making it the source or the occasion of a gain in wisdom. Up to the time when I first saw her, her rich and powerful nature had chiefly unfolded itself according to the accepted patterns of feminine skill. To her outer circle she was a beauty and a wit, with an air of natural distinction that was felt by all who approached her: to the inner circle she was a woman of deep and strong feeling, of penetrating and intuitive intelligence, and of an eminently meditative and poetic nature. Married at a very early age to a most upright, brave, and honourable man, of liberal opinions and good education, but without the intellectual or artistic tastes which would have made him a companion for her.[1] But he was a steady and affectionate friend for whom she had true esteem and the strongest affection through life and whom she most deeply lamented when dead. Shut out by the social disabilities of women from any adequate exercise of her highest faculties in action on the outside world, her life was one of inward meditation, varied by familiar contacts with a small circle of friends. Only one of these (long since deceased) had capacities of feeling or intellect kindred with her own, but all had more or less alliance with her in sentiments and opinions. I had the good fortune to be admitted into this circle, and I soon saw that she possessed •in combination the qualities which in everyone else I had known I had been only too happy to find •singly. In her,

- •complete emancipation from every kind of superstition (including that which attributes a suppose perfection to the order of nature and the universe) and
- •an earnest protest against many things that are still part of the established constitution of society

resulted not from hard intellect but from strength of noble and elevated feeling, and co-existed with

- •a highly reverential nature.

[1] [At this point in the manuscript JSM's step-daughter Helen Taylor has a pencilled note 'Not true'.]

In general spiritual characteristics, as well as in temperament and organisation, I have often compared her (as she was at this time) to Shelley; but in thought and intellect Shelley—so far as his powers were developed in his short life—was a mere child compared with what she ultimately became. Alike in the highest regions of speculation and in the smaller practical concerns of daily life, her mind was the same perfect instrument, piercing to the very heart and marrow of the matter; always seizing the essential idea or principle. The same exactness and speed of operation, pervading as it did her sensitive as well as her mental [here = 'intellectual'] faculties, would—with her gifts of feeling and imagination—have fitted her to be a consummate artist. Her fiery and tender soul and her vigorous eloquence would certainly have made her a great orator. Her profound knowledge of human nature and her discernment and sagacity in practical life would, in the times when such a career was open to women, have made her eminent among the rulers of mankind. Her intellectual gifts were in the service of the noblest and the best balanced moral character I have ever met with. Her unselfishness was not that of a taught system of duties, but of a heart that thoroughly identified itself with the feelings of others, and often went to excess in consideration for them by imaginatively investing their feelings with the intensity of its own. The passion for justice might have been thought to be her strongest feeling if it weren't for her boundless generosity and a lovingness ever ready to pour itself forth on any human beings capable of giving the smallest feeling in return. Her other moral characteristics were such as naturally accompany these qualities of mind and heart: •the most genuine modesty combined with the loftiest pride; •an absolute simplicity and sincerity towards all who were fit to receive them; •the utmost scorn for whatever was mean and cowardly, and •a burning indignation at everything brutal or tyrannical, faithless or dishonourable in conduct and character, while making the broadest distinction between *mala in se* and mere *mala prohibita*—·i.e.· between acts giving evidence of intrinsic badness in feeling and character, and acts that are only violations of conventions either good or bad, violations which, whether in themselves right or wrong, could be committed by persons who were in every other respect lovable or admirable.

Benefit received, benefit given

To be admitted into any degree of mental contact with a being who had these qualities was bound to have a most beneficial influence on my development; though the effect was only gradual, and many years passed before her mental progress and mine went forward in the complete companionship they eventually achieved. The benefit I received was far greater than any I could hope to give; though to her—who had at first reached her opinions by the moral intuition of a character with strong feelings—there was doubtless help as well as encouragement to be derived from one who had arrived at many of the same results by study and reasoning; and in the rapidity of her intellectual growth, her mental activity in converting everything into knowledge, doubtless drew many of its materials from me, as from other sources. If I went into details, I could go on indefinitely about what I owe to her, even just about what I owe intellectually to her; a few words will give some idea, though a very imperfect one, of its general character. Among those who are (like all the best and wisest of mankind) dissatisfied with human life as it is, and whose feelings are wholly identified with its radical amendment, there are two main regions of thought: **(a)** the region of ultimate aims, the constituent elements of the highest realisable ideal of human life, and **(b)** the region

of the immediately useful and practically attainable. In both these departments I have gained more from her teaching than from all other sources taken together. Real certainty lies principally in these two extremes, whereas my own strength lay wholly in the uncertain and slippery intermediate region, that of theory, or moral and political science. Not the least of my intellectual obligations to Mrs Taylor is that I have derived from her a wise scepticism about conclusions—mine or anyone else's—in that intermediate region, in political economy, analytic psychology, logic, philosophy of history, or anything else. This scepticism has not hindered me from following out the honest exercise of my thinking faculties to whatever conclusions might result from it, but it has put me on my guard against holding or announcing these conclusions with more confidence than the nature of such theories can justify, and has kept my mind not only •open to admit but •prompt to welcome and •eager to seek any prospect of clearer perceptions and better evidence, even on the questions on which I have most meditated. I have often received praise, which in my own right I only partially deserve, for the greater practicality which is supposed to be found in my writings compared with those of most thinkers who have been equally addicted to large generalisations. The writings in which this quality has been observed were the work not of one mind but of the fusion of two, one of them as pre-eminently **(b)** practical in its judgments and perceptions of things present as it was **(a)** high and bold in its anticipations for a remote futurity.

Influences of de Tocqueville

At the time of which I am writing, however, this influence was only one among many that were helping to shape the character of my future development; and even after it became (I may truly say) the chief driver of my mental progress, it did not alter the path I followed but only made me move along it more boldly and at the same time more cautiously. The only actual revolution that has ever taken place in my modes of thinking was already complete. My new tendencies had to be confirmed in some respects, moderated in others, but the only substantial changes of opinion that were yet to come related to politics. They consisted in •a greater approximation, so far as regards the ultimate prospects of humanity, to a qualified socialism, and •a shifting of my political ideal from pure democracy as commonly understood by its partisans to the modified form of it that is presented in my *Considerations on Representative Government*.

This last change, which took place very gradually, started with my reading, or rather studying, M. de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which fell into my hands immediately after its first appearance. In that remarkable work the excellences of democracy were pointed out in a more *conclusive* because more *specific* manner than I had ever known them to be, even by the most enthusiastic democrats; while the specific dangers that beset democracy, considered as the government of the numerical majority, were brought into equally strong light and subjected to a masterly analysis, not as reasons for resisting what the author considered as an inevitable result of human progress, but as indications of •the weak points of popular government, •the defences by which it needs to be guarded, and •the correctives that must be added to it in order that while full play is given to its beneficial tendencies its harmful tendencies may be neutralised or mitigated. I was now well prepared for theorising of this sort, and from this time onward my own thoughts moved increasingly in the same channel, though the consequent modifications in my practical political creed were spread over many years, as would be shown by comparing my first

review of *Democracy in America* in 1835 with the one in 1840 (reprinted in the *Dissertations*), and comparing the latter with my *Considerations on Representative Government* [1861].

A related subject on which also I derived great benefit from the study of Tocqueville was the fundamental question of centralisation [see Glossary]. The powerful philosophic analysis that he applied to American and to French experience led him to attach the utmost importance to

> having the collective business of society performed, as far as this can safely be done, by the people themselves, without executive government's intervening to supersede their agency or to dictate the manner of its exercise.

He regarded this practical political activity of the individual citizen not only as •one of the most effective means of training the social feelings and practical intelligence of the people—so important in themselves and so indispensable to good government—but also as •the specific counteractive to some of the characteristic infirmities of democracy, and •a necessary protection against its degenerating into the only despotism that there is real danger of in the modern world, namely the absolute rule of the head of the executive over a congregation of isolated individuals, all equals but all slaves. There was indeed no immediate peril from this source on the British side of the channel, where 90% of the internal business that is elsewhere done by the government was transacted by agencies independent of it; where centralisation was (and still is) the subject not only of rational disapproval but of unreasoning prejudice; where resentment of government interference was a blind feeling preventing or resisting even the most beneficial exertion of legislative authority to correct the abuses of what pretends to be •local self-government but too often is really •the selfish mismanagement of local interests by a jobbing and *borné* [see Glossary for both words] local oligarchy. But the more certain the public were to go wrong on the anti-centralisation side, the greater was the danger that philosophic reformers would fall into the contrary error and overlook the mischiefs of which they had been spared the painful experience. At this very time I was actively engaged in defending important measures, such as the great Poor Law Reform of 1834, against an irrational clamour based on the anti-centralisation prejudice; and if it hadn't been for the lessons of Tocqueville I think that I might, like many reformers before me, have been hurried into the excess opposite, i.e. into the prejudice which, being the one prevalent in my own country, it was generally my business to combat. As it is, I have steered carefully between the two errors, and whether or not I have drawn the line between them exactly in the right place I have at least insisted with equal emphasis on the evils on both sides and have seriously studied the means of reconciling the advantages of both.

Radicals in the first Reformed Parliament

In the meantime there had occurred the election of the first Reformed Parliament, which included several of the most notable of my radical friends and acquaintances—Grote, Roebuck, Buller, Sir William Molesworth, John and Edward Romilly, and several more; besides Warburton, Strutt, and others who were in parliament already. Those who thought of themselves as radicals and were so called by their friends, the philosophic radicals, now seemed to have a fair opportunity, in a more advantageous position than they had ever before occupied, for showing what was in them; and my father and I had great hopes of them. These hopes were destined to be disappointed. The men were honest, and faithful to their opinions so far as votes were concerned, often in spite of

much discouragement. When measures were proposed that were flagrantly at variance with their principles—such as the Irish Coercion [see Glossary] Bill, or the Canada Coercion Bill in 1837—they came forward manfully and braved any amount of hostility and prejudice rather than desert the right. But on the whole they did very little to promote any opinions; they had little enterprise, little activity; they allowed the radical portion of the House to be led by the old hands, Hume and O'Connell. A partial exception must be made in favour of one or two of the younger men; and in the case of Roebuck, it is his title to permanent remembrance that in his very first year as an MP he originated (or re-originated after the unsuccessful attempt of Mr Brougham) the parliamentary movement for National Education; and that he was the first to launch—and for years carried on almost alone—the contest for the self-government of the colonies. Nothing equal to these two things was done by any other individual, even of those from whom most was expected. And now on a calm retrospect I can see that the men were less at fault than we supposed, and that we had expected too much from them. They were in unfavourable circumstances. Their lot was cast in the ten years of inevitable reaction, when

> the reform excitement was over and the few legislative improvements that the public really called for had been rapidly carried out, so that power gravitated back in its natural direction, to those who were for keeping things as they were;

when

> the public mind wanted rest, and was less disposed than at any other period since the peace to let itself be moved by attempts to work up the reform feeling into fresh activity in favour of new things.

To achieve really great things by parliamentary discussion when the nation was in this mood would have required a great political leader, and no-one is to be blamed for not being that. My father and I had hoped that some competent leader might arise; some man of philosophic attainments and popular talents who

- could have put heart into the many younger or less distinguished men who would have been ready to join him,
- could have made them available, to the extent of their talents, in bringing advanced ideas before the public,
- could have used the House of Commons as a pulpit for instructing and impelling the public mind; and
- would either have forced the Whigs to receive their measures from him, or have taken the lead of the Reform party out of their hands.

There would have been such a leader if my father had been in Parliament. For lack of such a man, the educated radicals sank into a mere left wing of the Whig party. With a keen sense (I now think an *exaggerated* sense) of the possibilities open to the Radicals if they made even ordinary exertion for their opinions, I laboured from this time till 1839—by personal influence with some of them, and by writings—to put ideas into their heads and purpose into their hearts. I did some good with Charles Buller [1806–1848] and some with Sir William Molesworth [1810–1855], both of whom did valuable service but were unhappily cut off almost at the beginning of their usefulness. On the whole, however, my attempt was vain. Success in it required a different position from mine. It was a task only for someone who, being himself in Parliament, could have mixed with the radical members in daily consultation, could himself have taken the initiative and instead of urging others to lead could have summoned them to follow.

My other writings at that time

What I could do by writing, I did. During the year 1833 I continued working in the *Examiner* with Fonblanque, who at that time was zealous in keeping up the fight for radicalism against the Whig ministry. During the ·parliamentary· session of 1834 I wrote comments on passing events in the form of newspaper articles (under the title 'Notes on the Newspapers') in the *Monthly Repository*, a magazine conducted by Mr Fox—well known as a preacher and political orator, and later as member of parliament for Oldham—with whom I had recently become acquainted and for whose sake chiefly I wrote in his magazine. I contributed several other articles to this periodical, the most considerable of which (on the theory of poetry) is reprinted in the *Dissertations*. Altogether the writings I published from 1832 to 1834—apart from those in newspapers—amount to a large volume. But this includes abstracts of several of Plato's *Dialogues*, with introductory remarks, which had been written several years earlier though they were not published until 1834. (I afterwards found that they had been read, and their authorship known, by more people than were aware of anything else I had written up to that time.) To complete the tale of my writings at this period I may add that in 1833 at the request of Bulwer—just then completing his *England and the English*, a work greatly in advance of the public mind—I wrote for him a critical account of Bentham's philosophy, a small part of which he incorporated in his text, printing the rest (with an honourable acknowledgement) as an appendix. This was the first appearance in print of the favourable side as well as a part of the unfavourable side of my estimation of Bentham's doctrines, considered as a complete philosophy.

Founding of the *London Review*

But an opportunity soon offered, by which, as it seemed, I might have it in my power to give more effective aid, and also *stimulus* to the 'philosophic radical' party, than I had done until then. One of the projects occasionally talked of between my father and me and some of the parliamentary and other radicals who frequented his house was the founding of a journal of philosophic radicalism, to take the place the *Westminster Review* had been intended to fill; and the scheme had gone so far as to bring under discussion the monetary support that could be looked for, and the choice of an editor. Nothing came of this for some time; but in the summer of 1834 Sir William Molesworth—himself a hard-working student and a precise and metaphysical thinker, capable of aiding the cause by his pen as well as by his purse—spontaneously proposed to establish a review, provided I would consent to be its real editor if I could not be publicly annouced as such. Such a proposal was not to be refused; and the review was founded, at first under the title *London Review* and later under that of the *London and Westminster Review*, Molesworth having bought the *Westminster Review* from its proprietor, General Thompson, and merged the two into one. In the years between 1834 and 1840 the conduct of this review occupied the greater part of my spare time. In the beginning it did not as a whole by any means represent my opinions. I had to concede much to my inevitable associates. The *Review* was established to be the representative of the 'philosophic radicals', with most of whom I was now at issue on many essential points and among whom I could not even claim to be the most important individual. We all thought it essential to have my father's co-operation as a writer, and he wrote largely in it until prevented by his last illness. The subjects of

his articles, and the strength and decision with which his opinions were expressed in them, made the *Review* at first derive its tone and colouring from him much more than from any of the other writers. I could not exercise editorial control over his articles, and I was sometimes obliged to sacrifice to him portions of my own. The old *Westminster Review* doctrines, not much modified, thus formed the staple of the new *Review*; but I hoped that along with these I could introduce other ideas and another tone, obtaining a fair representation for my own shade of opinion along with those of other members of the party. With this end chiefly in view, I made it a special feature of the work that every article should bear an initial or some other signature, and be held to express the opinions solely of the individual writer, the editor being only responsible for its being •worth publishing and •not in conflict with the objectives for which the *Review* had been established. I had an opportunity to put into practice my scheme of conciliation between the old 'philosophic radicalism' and the new by the choice of a subject for my own first contribution. Professor Sedgwick, a man of eminence in a particular walk of natural science [geology], but who should not have trespassed into philosophy, had recently published his *Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge*, which had as its most prominent feature an intemperate assault on analytic psychology and utilitarian ethics, in the form of an attack on Locke and Paley. This had aroused great indignation in my father and others, which I thought it fully deserved. Here, I thought, was an opportunity to repel an unjust attack and to insert into my defence of Hartleianism and utilitarianism a number of the opinions that constituted my view of those subjects, as distinguished from the view of my old associates. In this I partially succeeded, though my relation to my father would have made it painful for me in any context, and impossible in a review to which he was also a contributor, to speak my whole mind on the subject at this time.

But I am inclined to think that my father was not so much opposed as he seemed to be to the modes of thought in which I believed myself to differ from him; that he did injustice to his own opinions by the unconscious exaggerations of an emphatically polemical intellect; and that when he was thinking without an adversary in view he was willing to make room for a great portion of the truths he seemed to deny. I have frequently observed that he made large allowance in practice for considerations that seemed to have no place in his theory. His 'Fragment on Mackintosh', which he wrote and published about this time, although I greatly admired some parts of it, I read as a whole with more pain than pleasure; yet on reading it again much later I found little in the opinions it contains that were not in the main just; and I can even sympathise with his disgust at the verbiage of Mackintosh, though his asperity towards it went beyond what was judicious and even beyond what was fair. It was a good augury, I thought at the time, that he gave a very favourable reception to Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. It is true that he said and thought much more about what Tocqueville said in favour of democracy than about what he said of its disadvantages. Still, his high appreciation for a book that was an example of a mode of treating the question of government almost the reverse of his—wholly inductive and analytical, instead of purely ratiocinative—gave me great encouragement. He also approved of an article that I published in the first number following the junction of the two *Reviews*, the essay reprinted in the *Dissertations* under the title 'Civilisation'; into which I threw many of my new opinions, and criticised rather emphatically the mental and moral tendencies of the time, doing this on grounds and in a manner that I certainly had not learned from him.

My father's death

All speculation on the possible future developments of my father's opinions, and on the probabilities of permanent co-operation between him and me in promulgating our thoughts, was doomed to be cut short. During the whole of 1835 his health had been declining; his symptoms became unequivocally those of pulmonary consumption [= tuberculosis], and after lingering to the last stage of debility he died on 23.vi.1836 ·at the age of 63·. Until the last few days of his life there was no apparent lessening of intellectual vigour; his interest in all things and persons that had interested him through life was undiminished, nor did the approach of death cause the smallest wavering in his convictions on the subject of religion. (In a mind as strong and firm as his it was impossible that it should.) After he knew that his end was near, his principal satisfaction seemed to be the thought of what he had done to make the world better than he found it, and his chief regret in not living longer was that he had not had time to do more.

His place is an eminent one in the •literary and even in the •political history of his country; and it is far from honourable to the generation which has benefited by his worth that he is so seldom mentioned and—compared with men far his inferiors—so little remembered. This is probably to be ascribed mainly to two causes. **(1)** The thought of him merges too much in the deservedly superior fame of Bentham. Yet he was anything but Bentham's mere follower or disciple. Precisely because he was himself one of the most original thinkers of his time, he was one of the earliest to appreciate and adopt the most important mass of original thought that had been produced by the generation preceding him. His mind and Bentham's were essentially of different constructions. He had not all Bentham's high qualities, but neither had Bentham all his. It would indeed be ridiculous to claim for him the praise of having accomplished for mankind such splendid services as Bentham's. He did not revolutionise—or rather *create*—one of the great departments of human thought. But, setting aside all that portion of his labours in which he benefited by what Bentham had done, and counting only what he achieved in analytic psychology, a province in which Bentham had done nothing, he will be known to posterity as one of the greatest names in that most important branch of theoretical endeavour, on which all the moral and political sciences ultimately rest, and will mark one of the essential stages in its progress. **(2)** The other reason why his fame has been less than he deserved is that despite the great number of his opinions that have now been generally adopted (partly through his own efforts), there was over-all a marked opposition between his spirit and that of the present time. As Brutus was called the last of the Romans, so was he the last of the 18th century: he continued its tone of thought and sentiment into the nineteenth (though modified and improved), partaking neither in the good nor in the bad influences of the reaction against the 18th century that was the great characteristic of the first half of the 19th. The 18th century was a great age, an age of strong and brave men, and he was a fit companion for its strongest and bravest. By his writings and his personal influence he was a great centre of light to his generation. During his later years he was quite as much the head and leader of the intellectual radicals in England as Voltaire was of the *philosophes* of France. It is only one of his minor merits that he was the originator of all sound statesmanship concerning the subject of his largest work, India. He wrote on no subject that he did not enrich with valuable thought, and it will be long before any of his books will be wholly superseded, or will cease to be instructive reading to students of their subjects. (The one

exception to this is his *Elements of Political Economy*, a very useful book when first written, but which has now for some time finished its work ·thus putting itself out of date·.) In the power of influencing the convictions and purposes of others by mere force of mind and character, and in the strenuous exertion of that power to promote freedom and progress, he left (as far as I know) no equal among men and only one among women.

Broadening the *London Review*

Though intensely aware of my own inferiority in the qualities by which my father had acquired his personal ascendancy, I had now to try what it might be possible for me to accomplish without him: and the *Review* was the instrument on which I built my chief hopes of establishing a useful influence over the liberal and democratic section of the public mind. Deprived of my father's aid, I was also exempted from the restraints and reticences [see Glossary] by which that aid had been purchased. I did not feel that there was any other radical writer or politician to whom I was bound to defer in any way that conflicted with my own opinions; and having the complete confidence of Molesworth, I resolved henceforth to give full scope to my own opinions and modes of thought, and to open the *Review* widely to all writers who were in sympathy with *progress* as I understood it, even if this cost me the support of my former associates. Carlyle consequently became a frequent writer in the *Review* from this time; Sterling an occasional one, soon after; and though each individual article continued to be the expression of the private sentiments of its writer, the general tone conformed to a reasonable extent to my opinions. For the conduct of the *Review*, under and in conjunction with me, I associated with myself a young Scotchman of the name of Robertson, who had some ability and information, much industry, and an active scheming head, full of devices for making the *Review* more saleable. I based a good deal of hope on his capacities in that direction, so that when Molesworth early in 1837 became tired of carrying on the *Review* at a loss and wanting to get rid of it (he had done his part honourably, and at no small financial cost) I determined to continue it at my own risk until Robertson's plans should have had a fair trial; this was very imprudent for my own financial interest, and was very much based on reliance on Robertson's devices. The devices were good, and I never had any reason to change my opinion of them. But I do not believe that any devices would have made a radical and democratic review defray its expenses, including a paid editor or sub-editor and a liberal payment to writers. I myself and several frequent contributors gave our labour free, as we had done for Molesworth; but the paid contributors continued to be paid on the usual scale of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*, and this could not be done from the proceeds of the sale.

Back to logic

In the same year, 1837, and in the midst of these occupations, I resumed the *System of Logic*. I had not touched my pen on the subject for five years, having been brought to a halt on the threshold of *induction*. I had gradually discovered that what was mainly needed to overcome the difficulties of that branch of the subject was a comprehensive and also accurate view of the whole circle of physical science, which I feared it would take me a long course of study to acquire; because I did not know of any book or other guide that would spread out before me the generalities and processes of the sciences, and I thought I would have to

extract them for myself, as I best could, from the details. Happily for me, Dr Whewell, early in this year, published his *History of the Inductive Sciences*. I read it with eagerness, and found in it a considerable approximation to what I wanted. Much if not most of the philosophy of the work appeared open to objection; but the materials were there for my own thoughts to work on, and the author had given them that first degree of elaboration that so greatly facilitates and abridges the subsequent labour. I had now obtained what I had been waiting for. Under the impulse given me by the thoughts excited by Dr Whewell, I read again Sir J. Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, and I could measure the progress my mind had made by the great help I *now* found in this work—though I had read and even reviewed it several years earlier, with little profit. I now set myself vigorously to work out the subject in thought and in writing. The time I spent on this had to be stolen from more urgent occupations. I had just two months to spare at this period, in the intervals of writing for the *Review*. In these two months I completed the first draft of about a third, the most difficult third, of the book. I had already written about another third, so that only one-third remained. What I wrote at this time consisted of the remainder of the doctrine of Reasoning (the theory of Trains of Reasoning, and Demonstrative Science), and most of Book IV on Induction. When this was done, it seemed to me that I had untied all the really hard knots, and the completion of the book had become only a question of time. Having got that far I had to leave off in order to write two articles for the next number of the *Review*.

Evaluating Comte

When these were written I returned to the subject of induction, and now for the first time I came across the two volumes of Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive* that had so far been published. My theory of induction was substantially completed before I knew of Comte's book; and it is perhaps well that I came to it by a different road from his, since the consequence has been that my treatise contains—as his certainly does not—a reduction of the inductive process to strict rules and to a scientific test, in the way that the syllogism is a test for ratiocination. Comte is always precise and profound on the methods of investigation, but he does not even attempt any exact definition of the conditions of proof; and his writings show that he never achieved a sound conception of them. But this was precisely the problem I had proposed to myself in writing about induction. Nevertheless, I gained much from Comte with which to enrich my chapters in the rewriting, and his book was of essential service to me in some parts that remained to be thought out. As his subsequent volumes successively appeared I read them •avidly, but when he reached the subject of Social Science I read •with varying feelings. The fourth volume disappointed me: it contained those of his opinions on social subjects that I most disagree with. But the fifth, containing the connected view of history, rekindled all my enthusiasm, which the sixth (or concluding) volume did not materially lessen. The only purely logical leading conception for which I am indebted to him is that of the inverse deductive method, as the method chiefly applicable to the complicated subjects of history and statistics, a process differing from the more common form of the deductive method in that

> •instead of arriving at its conclusions by general reasoning, and verifying them by specific experience

(as is the natural order in the deductive branches of physical science),

- it obtains its generalisations by a collation of specific experiences, and verifies them by ascertaining whether they are such as would follow from known general principles.

This was an entirely new idea to me when I found it in Comte, and but for him I might not soon (if ever) have arrived at it.

I had been long an ardent admirer of Comte's writings before I had any communication with Comte himself, and I never did meet him in the flesh. But for some years we were frequent correspondents, until our correspondence became full of controversy and our zeal cooled. I was the first to slacken correspondence; he was the first to drop it. I found—and so did he, probably—that I could do no good to his mind, and that all the good he could do to mine he did by his books. This would never have led to breaking off contact if the differences between us had been on matters of simple doctrine. But they were chiefly on points of opinion that blended in both of us with our strongest feelings, and determined the entire direction of our aspirations. I had fully agreed with him when he maintained that

> the mass of mankind, including even their rulers in all the practical departments of life, must from the necessity of the case accept most of their opinions on political and social matters, as they do on physical, from the authority of those who have bestowed more study on those subjects than they generally have it in their power to do.

This lesson had been strongly impressed on me by the early work of Comte that I have mentioned. And there was nothing in his great *Treatise* that I admired more than his remarkable exposition of the benefits the nations of modern Europe have historically derived from the separation during the middle ages of temporal from spiritual power, and the distinct organisation of the latter. I agreed with him that the moral and intellectual ascendancy once exercised by priests must in time pass into the hands of philosophers, and will naturally do so when they become sufficiently unanimous, and in other respects worthy to possess it. But when he exaggerated this line of thought into a practical system in which philosophers were to be organised into a kind of corporate hierarchy, invested with almost the same spiritual supremacy as the Catholic church once had (though without any secular power); when I found him relying on this spiritual authority as the only security for good government, the sole bulwark against practical oppression, and expecting that it would make innocuous and beneficial a system of despotism in the state and despotism in the family; it is not surprising that while as logicians we were nearly at one, as sociologists we could travel together no further. M. Comte lived to carry these doctrines to their most extreme consequences in his last work, the *Système de Politique Positive*, where he laid out the most complete system of spiritual and temporal despotism that ever yet emanated from any human brain with the possible exception of Ignatius Loyola's—a system by which the yoke of general opinion, wielded by an organised body of spiritual teachers and rulers, would be made supreme over every *action* and (as far as humanly possible) every *thought* of every member of the community, not only in matters involving the interests of others but also in ones that involve only the concerns of the person himself. It is only fair to say that this work is a considerable improvement, in many points of feeling, over Comte's previous writings on the same subjects; but as a contribution to social philosophy its only value (it seems to me) consists in putting an end to the notion that no effectual moral authority can be maintained over society without the aid of religious belief; for Comte's

work recognises no religion except that of humanity, yet it leaves an irresistible conviction that any moral beliefs agreed to by the community generally can be brought to bear on the whole conduct and lives of its individual members with an energy and potency truly alarming to think of. The book stands a monumental warning to thinkers about society and politics of what happens when men lose sight in their theorising of the value of liberty and of individuality.

Trying to form a Radical party

To return to myself. For some time longer the *Review* took up nearly all the time I could devote to authorship or to thinking with authorship in view. The articles from the *London and Westminster Review* that are reprinted in the *Dissertations* are hardly a quarter of those I wrote. In the conduct of the *Review* I had two principal objects. **(1)** One was to free philosophic radicalism from the reproach of sectarian Benthamism. I wanted—while retaining the precision of expression, the definiteness of meaning, the contempt for declamatory phrases and vague generalities, that were so honourably characteristic of Bentham and of my father—to give a wider basis and a more free and genial character to radical theorising; to show that there was a better and more complete radical philosophy than Bentham's, while recognising and incorporating all of Bentham's that is permanently valuable. In this first objective I succeeded to a certain extent. **(2)** The other thing I attempted was to stir up the educated Radicals, in and out of Parliament, to *exertion*, to induce them to turn themselves into a powerful party capable of taking the government of the country, or at least of dictating the terms on which they would share it with the Whigs, this being something I thought they could become by using the proper means. This attempt was chimerical from the outset; partly because the time was unpropitious, the reform fervour being in its period of ebb and the Tory influences powerfully rallying; but still more because—as Austin so truly said—'the country did not contain the men'. Among the Radicals in Parliament there were several qualified to be useful members of an enlightened Radical party, but none capable of forming and leading such a party. The exhortations I addressed to them found no response.

Lord Durham, Carlyle

One occasion did present itself when there seemed to be room for a bold and successful stroke for radicalism. Lord Durham had left the ministry because (it was thought) they were not sufficiently liberal; he afterwards accepted from them the task of ascertaining and removing the causes of the Canadian rebellion; he had shown a disposition to surround himself at the outset with Radical advisers; after one of his earliest measures—a good measure in intention and in effect—was disapproved and reversed by the Government at home, he had resigned his post and placed himself openly in a position of quarrel with the ministers. Here was a possible chief for a Radical party in the person of a man of importance who was hated by the Tories and had just been injured by the Whigs. Anyone with the most elementary notions of party tactics must have tried to make something of such an opportunity. Lord Durham was bitterly attacked from all sides, inveighed against by enemies, given up by timid friends; while those who would willingly have defended him did not know what to say. He appeared to be returning a defeated and discredited man. I had followed the Canadian events from the beginning; I had been one of the prompters of his prompters; his policy was almost exactly what mine would have been, and I was in a position to defend it. I wrote

and published in the *Review* a manifesto in which I took the very highest ground in his behalf, claiming for him not mere acquittal but praise and honour. Instantly a number of other writers took up the tone; I believe there was some truth in what Lord Durham with polite exaggeration said to me soon after, namely that the almost triumphal reception he met with on his arrival in England might be ascribed to this article. I believe it to have been the 'word in season' which, at a critical moment, does much to decide the result; the touch that determines whether a stone set in motion at the top of a hill will roll down one side or the other. All hopes connected with Lord Durham as a politician soon vanished; but with regard to Canadian policy and to colonial policy generally the cause was gained: Lord Durham's report, written by Charles Buller partly under the inspiration of Wakefield, began a new era; its recommendations, extending to complete internal self-government, were in full operation in Canada within two or three years and have been since extended to nearly all the other colonies of European race that have any claim to be important communities. And I may say that I contributed materially to this result by successfully upholding the reputation of Lord Durham and his advisers at the most important moment.

One other case occurred during my conduct of the *Review*, which similarly illustrated the effect of taking a prompt initiative. I believe that the early success and reputation of Carlyle's *French Revolution* were considerably accelerated by what I wrote about it in the *Review*. Immediately on its publication and before the commonplace critics—all those whose rules and modes of judgment it set at defiance—had time to preoccupy the public with their disapproval of it, I wrote and published a review of the book, hailing it as one of those productions of genius that are above all rules and are a law to themselves. Neither in this case nor in that of Lord Durham do I ascribe the impression that I think was produced by what I wrote to any particular merit in the writing; indeed I do not think that the article on Carlyle was well written. In both cases I am convinced that anybody in a position to be read, who expressed the same opinion at the same precise time and made a tolerable statement of the just grounds for it, would have produced the same effects. But, after the complete failure of my hopes of putting a new life into Radical politics by means of the *Review*, I am glad to look back on these two instances of success in an honest attempt to do mediate [= middle-man] service to things and persons that deserved it.

Writing on Bentham and Coleridge

After the last hope of the formation of a Radical party had disappeared, it was time for me to stop the heavy expenditure of time and money that the *Review* cost me. It had to some extent answered my personal purpose as a vehicle for my opinions. It had enabled me to express in print much of my altered mode of thought, and to separate myself in a marked manner from the narrower Benthamism of my early writings. This was done by the general tone of all I wrote, including various purely literary articles, but especially by the two papers (reprinted in the *Dissertations*) that attempted a philosophical estimate of Bentham and of Coleridge. In the first of these, while doing full justice to the merits of Bentham, I pointed out what I thought the errors and deficiencies of his philosophy. I still think the substance of this criticism to be perfectly just; but I have sometimes doubted whether it was right to publish it at that time. I have often felt that Bentham's philosophy as an instrument of progress was to some extent discredited before it had done its work, and that to lend a hand towards lowering its reputation

was doing more harm than service to improvement. Now, however, when a counter-reaction appears to be setting in towards what is good in Benthamism, I can look with more satisfaction on this criticism of its defects, especially as I have myself balanced it by vindications of the fundamental principles of Bentham's philosophy, which are reprinted along with it in the same collection. In the essay on Coleridge I tried to characterise the European reaction against the negative philosophy of the 18th century; and here, if the effect only of this one paper were to be considered, I might be thought to have erred by giving undue prominence to the favourable side, as I had done in the case of Bentham to the unfavourable. In both cases, the impetus with which I had detached myself from what was untenable in the doctrines of Bentham and of the 18th century may have carried me too far on the contrary side, though in appearance rather than in reality. But my defence in the case of the article on Coleridge is that I was writing for Radicals and Liberals, and it was my business to dwell most on what writers of a different school had to say from which they might derive most improvement.

The number of the *London and Review* containing the paper on Coleridge was the last published during my proprietorship. In the spring of 1840 I made over the *Review* to Mr Hickson, who had been a frequent and very useful unpaid contributor under my management, with only one stipulation, namely that the change should be marked by a resumption of the old name *Westminster Review*. Under that name Mr Hickson conducted it for ten years, on the plan of paying contributors only out of the net proceeds of the *Review*, letting them have it all and giving his own labour as writer and editor gratuitously. Given the difficulty of obtaining writers that arose from this low scale of payment, it is highly creditable to him that he was able to maintain in some tolerable degree the character of the *Review* as an organ of radicalism and progress. I continued to send it occasional contributions; but not exclusively, because the greater circulation of the *Edinburgh Review* induced me from this time to offer articles to it also when I had something to say for which it appeared to be a suitable vehicle. And the concluding volumes of *Democracy in America* having just then come out, I inaugurated myself as a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* by the article on that work which heads the second volume of the *Dissertations*.

Part 7
General view of the remainder of my life

What is worth relating of my life from this time onward will come into a very small compass; for I have no further mental changes to tell of but only (I hope) continued mental progress. This does not admit of a consecutive history, and the results of it—if they are real—will be best found in my writings. So I shall greatly abridge the chronicle of my subsequent years.

Finishing the *System of Logic*

The first use I made of the leisure gained by disconnecting myself from the *Westminster Review* was to finish the *Logic*. In July and August 1838 I had found an interval in which to complete the first draft of Book III. In working out the logical theory of the laws of nature that are not laws of causation or corollaries from such laws, I was led to recognise *kinds* as realities in nature and not mere distinctions for convenience; a light that I had not obtained when Book I was written and that required me to modify and enlarge several chapters of that Book. The Book on Language and Classification and

the chapter on the Classification of Fallacies were drafted in the autumn of the same year, and the remainder of the work in the summer and autumn of 1840. From April following to the end of 1841 my spare time was devoted to completely rewriting the entire book. This is how all my books have been composed. They were always written at least twice over: a first draft of the entire work was completed to the very end of the subject, then the whole begun again from the start, but now incorporating all sentences and phrases of the old draft that seemed as suitable to my purpose as anything I could write in place of them. I have found great advantages in this system of double redaction [= 'writing twice']. Better than any other mode of composition it combines the freshness and vigour of the first conception with the superior precision and completeness resulting from prolonged thought. In my own case, moreover, I have found that the *patience* needed for a careful elaboration of the details of composition and expression costs much less effort after the entire subject has been once gone through and the substance of what I have to say has in some manner, however imperfect, been put on paper. The only thing I am careful to make as perfect as I can in the first draft is the arrangement. If that is bad, the whole thread on which the ideas string themselves becomes twisted; thoughts placed in a wrong connection are not expounded in a manner that suits the right one, and a first draft with this vice is next to useless as a foundation for the final treatment.

During the re-writing of the *Logic* Dr Whewell's *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* made its appearance. This was fortunate for me, as it gave me a full treatment of the subject by an antagonist, and enabled me to present my ideas with •greater clearness and emphasis as well as •fuller and more varied development, in defending them against definite objections or clearly confronting them with an opposite theory. The controversies with Dr Whewell, as well as much matter derived from Comte, were first introduced into the book in the course of the re-writing.

Puzzling success of the *System of Logic*

At the end of 1841 the book was ready for the press and I offered it to Murray, who kept it until too late for publication that season, and then refused it for reasons that could just as well have been given at first. But I have had no cause to regret a rejection which led to my offering it to Mr Parker, by whom it was published in the spring of 1843. My original expectations of success were extremely limited. Archbishop Whately had indeed rehabilitated the name of Logic and the study of the forms, rules, and fallacies of reasoning; and Dr Whewell's writings had begun to arouse an interest in the other part of my subject, the theory of induction. But a treatise on such an abstract matter could not be expected to be popular; it could only be a book for students, and students on such subjects were (at least in England) •few and •devoted chiefly to the opposite school of metaphysics, the ontological and 'innate principles' school. So I did not expect the book to have many readers or approvers; and I expected little practical effect from it except for keeping unbroken the tradition of what I thought a better philosophy. What hopes I had of arousing any immediate attention were mainly based on Dr Whewell's polemical propensities; from observation of his conduct in other cases I thought he would probably do something to bring the book into notice by replying, *promptly*, to its attack on his opinions. He did reply but not till 1850, just in time for me to answer him in the *third* edition. I have never thoroughly understood how the book came to have so much success—·surprisingly much· for a work of that kind—or what sort of persons compose the bulk of those

who have bought (I will not venture to say *read*) it. But the fact becomes partially intelligible in the light of the many proofs that have since been given of a revival of theorising, and indeed theorising of a free kind, in many quarters and especially in the universities, where at one time I would have least expected it.

Possible usefulness of the *System of Logic*

I have never indulged the illusion that the book had made any considerable impression on philosophical opinion. The German or *a priori* view of human knowledge and of the knowing faculties is likely for some time longer (though it may be hoped in a diminishing degree) to predominate among those who occupy themselves with such inquiries, both here and on the Continent. But the *System of Logic* provides what was much wanted, a text-book of the opposite doctrine—the one that derives all knowledge from experience and all moral and intellectual qualities principally from the direction given to the associations. I make as humble an estimate as anybody of what either an analysis of logical processes, or any possible canons of evidence, can do •by themselves towards guiding or correcting the operations of the understanding. I certainly do think them of great use when •combined with other requisites; but whatever may be the practical value of a true philosophy of these matters, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the harm done by a false one. I am convinced that in these times the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions is the notion that truths external to the mind can be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience. By the aid of this theory, every long-standing belief or intense feeling whose origin is not remembered can dispense with the obligation of justifying itself by reason, and is erected into its own all-sufficient voucher and justification. There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices. And the chief strength of this false philosophy in morals, politics, and religion lies in its customary appeal to the evidence [see Glossary] of mathematics and of the cognate branches of physical science. To expel it from these is to drive it from its stronghold; and because this had never been effectively done, the intuitive school—even after what my father had written in his *Analysis of the Mind*—appeared to have had the best of the argument and really did so, on the whole, as far as published writings were concerned. In attempting to clear up the real nature of the evidence of mathematical and physical truths, the *System of Logic* met the intuitive philosophers on ground on which they had previously been thought to be unassailable; and gave its own explanation, from experience and association, of the special character of what are called 'necessary truths', a character that is offered as proof that their evidence must come from a source deeper than experience. Whether this has been done effectively is still *sub judice*; and even if it has, depriving a mode of thought so strongly rooted in human prejudices and partialities of its mere theoretical support goes only a very little way towards overcoming it. Still, though it is only one step it is a quite indispensable one. Prejudice can only be successfully combated by philosophy, so no really permanent headway can be made against it until it has been shown not to have philosophy on its side.

The dangers of general society

Being now released from any active concern in contemporary politics, and from any literary occupation involving personal communication with contributors and others, I could now indulge the inclination—natural to thinking persons when

the age of boyish vanity is once past—for limiting my society to a very few persons. General society as now carried on in England is such an insipid affair, and found to be so even by the persons who make it what it is, that it is kept up for any reason rather than the pleasure it affords! All serious discussion on matters on which opinions differ being considered ill-bred, and the national deficiency in liveliness and sociability having prevented the cultivation of the art of talking agreeably on trifles, in which the French of the last century so much excelled, the sole attraction of so-called 'society' to those who are not at the top of the tree is the hope of being aided to climb a little higher in it; while to those who are already at the top it is chiefly a compliance with custom and with the supposed requirements of their station. Such society must be supremely unattractive to anyone with more than a very common order in thought or feeling, unless he has personal objectives to serve by it; and these days most people with high-class intellects make their contact with it so slight, and at such long intervals, as to be almost considered as retiring from it altogether. Those persons of any mental superiority who do otherwise are almost without exception greatly harmed by it. Not to mention loss of time, •the tone of their feelings is lowered: •they become less in earnest about opinions of theirs that they must remain silent about in the society they frequent; •they come to look on their most elevated objectives as unpractical, or at least as too remote from realisation to be more than a vision or a theory. And if they have the unusual good fortune to retain their higher principles unimpaired, still with respect to the persons and affairs of their own day they unconsciously adopt the modes of feeling and judgment in which they can hope for sympathy from the company they keep. A **person of high intellect** should never go into unintellectual society unless he can enter it as an apostle; yet he is the only person with high aims who can safely enter it at all. **Persons merely with intellectual aspirations** had much better associate regularly with at least their equals—and as far as possible their superiors—in knowledge, intellect, and elevation of sentiment. Moreover, if the character is formed and the mind made up on the few cardinal points of human opinion, agreement of conviction and feeling on *these* has always been felt to be essential for anything worthy the name of 'friendship' in a really earnest mind. These factors combined to make very small the number of those whose society, and still more whose intimacy, I now voluntarily sought.

Rethinking politics with Mrs Taylor

By far the principal one of these was the incomparable friend of whom I have already spoken [page 68]. At this period she lived mostly with one young daughter in a quiet part of the country, and was only occasionally in town with her first husband Mr Taylor. I visited her equally in both places; and was greatly indebted to the strength of character that enabled her to disregard the false interpretations liable to be put on the frequency of my visits to her while she was living generally apart from Mr Taylor, and on our occasionally travelling together, though in all other respects our conduct during those years gave not the slightest ground for any supposition other than the true one, that our relation to each other at that time was one of strong affection and confidential intimacy [see Glossary] only. For though we did not consider the ordinances of society binding on such an entirely personal subject, we did feel bound that our conduct should not in any way bring discredit on her husband or therefore on herself.

In this third period (as it may be termed) of my mental

progress, which now went hand in hand with hers, my opinions gained equally in breadth and depth: I understood more things, and I now understood more thoroughly things I had understood before. I had now completely turned back from what had been excessive in my reaction against Benthamism. At the height of that reaction I had certainly become

- much more indulgent to the common opinions of society and the world, and
- more willing to be content with seconding the superficial improvement that had begun to take place in those common opinions,

than was appropriate in someone whose convictions on so many points differed fundamentally from them. I was too inclined to put in abeyance the more decidedly heretical part of my opinions, which I now regard as almost the only ones the assertion of which tends in any way to regenerate society. But in addition to this our opinions—·i.e. Mrs Taylor's and mine·—were far *more* heretical than mine had been in the days of my most extreme Benthamism. In those days I had seen little further than the old school of political economists into the possibilities of fundamental improvement in social arrangements.

Private property and inheritance had appeared to me, as to them, to be the last word in legislation; and I looked no further than to mitigating the inequalities produced by these institutions, by getting rid of primogeniture and entails [see Glossary for both words]. The notion that it was possible to go further than this in removing the injustice—for it *is* an injustice, whether or not it can be completely remedied—involved in the fact that some are born to riches and the vast majority to poverty, I then reckoned chimerical, and only hoped that by universal education leading to voluntary restraint on population the life of the poor might be made more tolerable. In short, I was a democrat but not in the least a socialist. We ·two· were now much *less* democrats than I had been, because so long as education continues to be so wretchedly imperfect we dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass; but our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general label 'socialists'. While we repudiated with the greatest energy that tyranny of society over the individual which most socialistic systems are supposed to involve, we looked forward to a time

- when society will no longer be divided into the idle and the industrious,
- when the rule that *they who do not work shall not eat* will be applied not only to paupers but to everyone,
- when the division of the product of labour, instead of depending. . . .on the accident of birth, will be uncontroversially made on an acknowledged principle of justice; and
- when it will no longer be (or be thought to be) impossible for human beings to exert themselves strenuously in procuring benefits that are to be shared with the society they belong to.

The social problem of the future

The social problem of the future we considered to be this:

> how to unite •the greatest individual liberty of action with •a common ownership in the raw material of the globe and •an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour.

We had not the presumption to suppose that we could already foresee what precise form of institutions could most effectively achieve these objectives, or how long it would take

for them to become practicable. We saw clearly that to for any such social transformation to be either possible or desirable an equivalent change of character must take place both in the uncultivated herd who now compose the labouring masses and in the great majority of their employers. Both these classes must learn by practice to work and combine for generous purposes, or at least for public and social purposes, and not as hitherto solely for narrowly ·self·-interested ones. But the capacity to do this has always existed in mankind, and is not likely ever to become extinct. Education, habit, and the cultivation of the sentiments will make a common man *dig* or *weave* for his country as readily as *fight* for his country. It is indeed true that men in general can be brought up to this point only by slow degrees, by a system of culture prolonged through successive generations. But the hindrance—·the factor making the process so slow·—is not in the essential constitution of human nature. Interest in the common good is at present so weak a motive in most people not because it can never be otherwise but because the mind is not accustomed to dwell on it, as it dwells from morning till night on things that tend only to personal advantage. When called into activity by the daily course of life (as only self-interest now is) and spurred from behind by the love of distinction and the fear of shame, interest in the common good is capable of producing even in common men the most strenuous exertions as well as the most heroic sacrifices. The deep-rooted selfishness that forms the general character of the existing state of society is so deeply rooted only because the whole course of existing institutions tends to foster it; and in some ways modern institutions have this tendency more than ancient ones did, because the occasions on which the individual is called on to do anything for the public without receiving its pay are far less frequent in modern life than in the smaller commonwealths of antiquity. These considerations did not make us overlook the folly of premature attempts to dispense with the inducements of private interest in social affairs when no substitute for them can be provided; but we regarded all existing institutions and social arrangements as being (in a phrase I once heard from Austin) 'merely provisional', and we welcomed with the greatest pleasure and interest all socialistic experiments by select individuals (such as the Co-operative Societies). These experiments, whether they succeeded or failed, were sure to operate as a most useful education of those who took part in them, by cultivating their capacity of acting on motives pointing directly to the general good, or making them aware of the defects that make them and others unable to do so.

The *Principles of Political Economy*

In the *Principles of Political Economy* these opinions were promulgated, less clearly and fully in the first edition, rather more so in the second, and quite unequivocally in the third. The difference arose partly from the change of times, the first edition having been written and sent to press before the French Revolution of 1848, after which the public mind became more open to the reception of novelties in opinion, and doctrines that would have been thought very startling a short time before now appeared moderate. In the first edition the difficulties of socialism were stated so strongly that the tone was on the whole that of opposition to it. In the following year or two much time was given to the study of the best socialistic writers on the Continent, and to meditation and discussion on the whole range of topics involved in the controversy: and the result was that most of what had been written on the subject in the first edition was cancelled and replaced by arguments and reflections representing a more advanced opinion.

The *Political Economy* was far more rapidly executed than the *Logic* or indeed than anything of importance that I had previously written. It was started in the autumn of 1845 and was ready for the press before the end of 1847. In this period of little more than two years there was an interval of six months during which the work was laid aside while I was writing articles for the *Morning Chronicle* (which unexpectedly entered warmly into my purpose) urging the formation of peasant properties on the waste lands of Ireland. This was during the period of the Famine, the winter of 1846–47, when the stern necessities of the time seemed to provide a chance to gain attention for what appeared to me the only way of combining •relief for immediate destitution with •permanent improvement of the social and economic condition of the Irish people. But the idea was new and strange; there was no English precedent for such a proceeding: and the profound ignorance of English politicians and the English public concerning all social phenomena not generally met with in England (however common elsewhere) made my endeavours an entire failure. Instead of a great operation on the waste lands, and the conversion of tenants into proprietors, Parliament passed a Poor Law for maintaining them as paupers; and if the nation has not since found itself in inextricable difficulties from the joint operation of the old evils and this quack remedy, it is indebted for its deliverance to the unexpected fact of the depopulation of Ireland, started by famine and continued by emigration.

The rapid success of the *Political Economy* showed that the public wanted such a book and were prepared for it. Published early in 1848, an edition of 1000 copies was sold in less than a year. Another similar edition was published in the spring of 1849; and a third of 1250 copies was published early in 1852. It was from the first continually cited and referred to as an authority, because it was a book not merely of abstract science but also of application, and treated political economy not as a thing by itself but as a fragment of a greater whole; a branch of social philosophy so interlinked with all the other branches that its conclusions, even in its own particular province, are true only conditionally, subject to interference and counteraction from causes not directly within its scope; while it has no claim, when taken separately from other classes of considerations, to be a practical guide. Political economy in fact has never claimed to give advice to mankind with no lights but its own; though people who knew nothing but political economy (and therefore didn't know that well) have taken it on themselves to advise, and could do so only by such lights as they had. But the numerous sentimental enemies of political economy, and its still more numerous interested enemies in sentimental guise, have been very successful in gaining belief for this—·i.e. for the accusation that political economy sets itself up as a practical guide·—among other unmerited imputations against it, and the *Principles* having become for the present the most popular treatise on the subject, in spite of the freedom of many of its opinions, has helped to disarm the enemies of this important line of attack. It is not for me to judge how much it is worth as an exposition of the science, and what the value is of the applications it suggests.

Hopes for the mental emancipation of England

For a considerable time after this I published no large work, though I still occasionally wrote in periodicals, and my correspondence (much of it with persons quite unknown to me) on subjects of public interest swelled to a considerable bulk. During these years I wrote or started various Essays, for eventual publication, on some of the fundamental questions of human and social life, with regard to several of which I

have already much exceeded the severity of the Horatian precept ·that a writer should keep his work for at least nine years before publishing it·. I continued to watch with keen interest the progress of public events. But on the whole it was not very encouraging to me. The European reaction after 1848, and the success of an unprincipled usurper [Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte] in December 1851 seemed to put an end to all present hope for freedom or social improvement in France and the Continent. In England, I had seen and continued to see many of the opinions of my youth obtain general recognition, and many of the reforms in institutions for which I had through life contended either carried out or in the course of being so. But these changes had brought much less benefit to human well-being than I would formerly have expected, because they had produced very little improvement in that which all real improvement in the life of mankind depends on, namely their intellectual and moral state; and it may even be that the various causes of deterioration that had been at work in the meantime had more than counterbalanced the tendencies to improvement. I had learned from experience that many false opinions can be replaced by true ones without in the least altering the habits of mind of which false opinions are the result. The English public, for example, are quite as raw and undiscerning on subjects of political economy since the nation has been converted to free-trade as they were before; and they are still further from having acquired better habits of thought and feeling—or being in any way better fortified against error—-on subjects of a more elevated character. They have thrown off certain errors, but the general intellectual and moral discipline of their minds is not altered. I am now convinced that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible until a great change takes place in the basic constitution of their ways of thinking. The old opinions in religion, morals, and politics are so much discredited in the more intellectual minds as to have lost most of their efficacy for good, while they have still life enough in them to be a powerful obstacle to the growth of better opinions on those subjects. When the philosophic minds of the world can no longer believe its religion, or can only believe it with modifications amounting to an essential change of its character, that starts a transitional period of

- weak convictions,
- paralysed intellects, and
- growing laxity of principle,

which cannot end until the basis of their belief has undergone a renovation leading to the rise of some faith—whether religious or merely human—which they can really believe; and when things are in this state, all thinking or writing that does not tend to promote such a renovation is of little value beyond the moment. Since the apparent condition of the public mind offered little to indicate any tendency in this direction, my view of the immediate prospects of human improvement was not optimistic. More recently a spirit of free theorising has sprung up, giving a more encouraging prospect for the gradual mental emancipation of England; and coinciding with the more promising renewal of the movement for political freedom in the rest of Europe, it has given a more hopeful aspect to the present condition of human affairs.

Two events involving my wife

Since the time of which I have now spoken the most important events of my private life took place. The first of these was my marriage in April 1851 to the lady whose incomparable worth had made her friendship the greatest source to me of happiness and of improvement during many years in which we never expected to be in any closer relation to one another.

Ardently as I should have aspired to this complete union of our lives at any time at which it had been practicable, my wife and I would both far rather have forgone that privilege for ever than have owed it to the premature death [at the age of 62] of one for whom I had the sincerest respect, and she the strongest affection. That event, however, having taken place in July 1849, it was granted to me to derive from that evil my own greatest good by adding to the partnership of thought, feeling, and writing that had long existed a partnership of our entire existence. For seven and a half years that blessing was mine; for seven and a half only! I can say nothing that could describe even faintly what that loss was and is. But because I know that she would have wished it, I try to make the best of what life I have left, and to go on working for her purposes with whatever lessened strength I can derive from thoughts of her and communion with her memory.

End of the East India Company

During the years between the start of my married life and the catastrophe that closed it, the principal occurrences of my outward existence (unless I count a first attack of the family disease, and a consequent journey of more than six months for the recovery of health in Italy, Sicily, and Greece) had reference to my position in the India House. In 1856 I was promoted to be chief of the office in which I had served for upwards of 33 years. The position, that of Examiner of India Correspondence, was the second highest (after that of Secretary) in the East India Company's home service, involving the general superintendence of all the correspondence—except the military, naval, and financial—with the Indian Governments. I held this office as long as it continued to exist, which was a little more than two years; after which it pleased Parliament—in other words Lord Palmerston—to •put an end to the East India Company as a branch of the government of India under the Crown, and •convert the administration of that country into a thing to be scrambled for by second- and third-rate English parliamentary politicians. I was the chief manager of the resistance the Company made to their own political extinction. For my opinions on the folly and mischief of this ill-considered change I refer the reader to the letters and petitions I wrote for the Company and to the concluding chapter of my treatise on *Representative Government*. Personally I considered myself a gainer by it, as I had given enough of my life to India and was not unwilling to retire on the liberal compensation granted. After the change was complete Lord Stanley, the first Secretary of State for India, made me the honourable offer of a seat in the Council, and this proposal was subsequently renewed by the Council itself the first time it had to fill a vacancy in itself. But the conditions of Indian government under the new system made me anticipate nothing but useless vexation and waste of effort from any participation in it: and nothing that has since happened has had any tendency to make me regret my refusal.

My wife and my daughter

During the two years which immediately preceded the cessation of my official life, my wife and I were working together on *Liberty*. I had first planned and written it as a short essay in 1854. It was in mounting the steps of the Capitol in January 1855 that the thought first arose of converting it into a volume. Nothing else I have written has been so carefully composed or so diligently corrected as this. After it had been written as usual twice over, we kept it by us, bringing it out from time to time and going through it anew, reading, weighing, and criticising every sentence. Its final

revision was to have been a work of the winter of 1858–9, the first after my retirement, which we had arranged to pass in the South of Europe. That hope and every other were frustrated by the most unexpected and bitter calamity of her death—at Avignon, on our way to Montpellier—from a sudden attack of pulmonary congestion.

Since then I have sought for such alleviation as my state admitted of, by the mode of life that most enabled me to feel her still near me. I bought a cottage as close as possible to the place where she is buried, and there her daughter (my fellow-sufferer and now my chief comfort) and I live constantly during a great part of each year. My objects in life are solely those which were hers; my pursuits and occupations are those she shared in or sympathised with, which are indissolubly associated with her. Her memory is to me a religion, and her approval the standard—a summary of all worthiness—by which I try to regulate my life.

In taking up my pen some years after closing the preceding narrative, I am influenced by a desire not to leave incomplete the record, for the sake of which this biographical sketch was chiefly undertaken, of the obligations I owe to those who have contributed essentially to my own mental development or had a direct share in my writings and in whatever else of a public nature I have done. In the preceding pages, this record, so far as it relates to my wife, is not as detailed and precise as it ought to be; and since I lost her I have had other help that is not less deserving and requiring acknowledgment.

Collaboration with my wife

When two persons have their thoughts and speculations completely in common; when all subjects of intellectual or moral interest are discussed between them in daily life, and probed to much greater depths than are usually or conveniently sounded in writings intended for general readers; when they set out from the same principles, and arrive at their conclusions by processes pursued jointly; it is of little consequence in respect to the question of originality which of them holds the pen. The one who contributes least to the composition may contribute most to the thought; the writings that result are the joint product of both, and it must often be impossible to disentangle their respective parts and affirm that *this* belongs to one and *that* to the other. In this wide sense all my published writings—not only during the years of our married life, but during the many years of confidential friendship that preceded it—were as much my wife's work as mine, her share in them constantly increasing as years advanced. But in certain cases what belongs to her can be distinguished and specially identified. Over and above the general influence her mind had over mine, the most valuable ideas and features in these joint productions—those that have been most fruitful of important results, and have contributed most to the success and reputation of the works themselves—originated with her, were emanations from her mind. My part in them was no greater than in any of the thoughts I found in previous writers and made my own only by incorporating them into my own system of thought. During the greater part of my literary life I have performed in relation to her the office which from a rather early period I had considered as the most useful part I was qualified to take in the domain of thought, that of an interpreter of original thinkers and mediator between them and the public. I always had a humble opinion of my own powers as an original thinker except in abstract science (logic, metaphysics, and the theoretic principles of political economy and politics), but I thought myself much superior to most of my contemporaries in willingness and ability to

learn from everybody; as I found hardly anyone who made such a point of examining what was said in defence of all opinions, however new or however old, in the conviction that even if they were errors there might be a substratum of truth underneath them and that in any case the discovery of what made them plausible would be a benefit to truth. So I had marked out this as a sphere of usefulness in which I was under a special obligation to make myself active, the more so because the acquaintance I had formed with the ideas of the Coleridgians, of the German thinkers, and of Carlyle, all of them fiercely opposed to the mode of thought in which I had been brought up, had convinced me that along with much error they possessed much truth. It was veiled from minds otherwise capable of receiving it by the transcendental and mystical phraseology in which they were accustomed to shut it up, and from which they did not want and did not know how to disengage it; and I did not despair of separating the truth from the error, and expressing it in terms that would be intelligible and not repulsive to those on my own side in philosophy. It will easily be believed that when I, thus prepared, came into close intellectual communion with a person of the most eminent faculties, whose genius as it grew and unfolded itself in thought continually struck out truths far in advance of me, but in which I could not (as I had done in those others) detect any mixture of error, the greatest part of my mental growth consisted in the assimilation of those truths, and the most valuable part of my intellectual work was in building the bridges and clearing the paths that connected them with my general system of thought.

[Start of a long footnote:] The steps in my mental growth for which I was indebted to her were far from being those that a person wholly uninformed on the subject would probably suspect. It might be supposed, for instance, that my strong convictions on the complete equality that ought to exist between men and women in all legal, political, social and domestic relations may have been adopted or learned from her. This was so far from being the fact that those convictions were among the earliest results of my thinking on political subjects; and I think the strength with which I held them was the main originating cause of the interest she felt in me. What *is* true is that until I knew her the opinion was little more than an abstract principle in my mind. I saw no more *reason* why women should be held in legal subjection to other people than why men should. I was certain that their interests required just as much protection as men's, and were unlikely to obtain it without an equal voice in making the laws by which they are to be bound. But the perception of the vast practical bearings of women's disabilities that found expression in the book on *The Subjection of Women* was acquired mainly through her teaching. Without her rare knowledge of human nature and comprehension of moral and social influences, I would doubtless have held my present opinions but I would have had a very insufficient perception of how the consequences of women's inferior position intertwine themselves with all the evils of existing society and with all the difficulties of human improvement. I was indeed painfully conscious how much of her best thoughts on the subject I have failed to reproduce, and how greatly that little treatise falls short of what would have been if she had put on paper her entire mind on this question, or had lived to revise and improve my imperfect statement of the case, as she certainly would have done. [End of the footnote]

The *Principles of Political Economy*

The first of my books in which her share was conspicuous was the *Principles of Political Economy*. The *System of Logic* owed little to her except in the minuter matters of

composition, in which respect my writings, both great and small, have greatly benefited by her accurate and clear-sighted criticism.

[Start of a long footnote:] The only person from whom I received any direct assistance in preparing the *System of Logic* was Mr Bain, since so justly celebrated for his philosophical writings. He went carefully through the manuscript before it was sent to press, and enriched it with a great number of additional examples and illustrations from science. I inserted many of these, as well as some detached remarks of his own in confirmation of my logical views, nearly in his own words.

My obligations to Comte were only to his writings, i.e. to the part of his *Système de Philosophie Positive* that had then been published; and, as has been seen from what I have said in this Memoir [page 77], the amount of these obligations is far less than has sometimes been asserted. The first volume, which contains all the fundamental doctrines of the book, was substantially complete before I had seen Comte's treatise. I derived from him many valuable thoughts, conspicuously in the chapter on Hypotheses and in the view taken of the logic of algebra; but it is only in the concluding Book on the Logic of the Moral Sciences that I owe to him any radical improvement in my conception of the application of logical methods. This improvement I have stated and characterised in a former part of the present Memoir. [End of the footnote]

The chapter of the *Political Economy* that has had a greater influence on opinion than all the rest, namely the one on 'the Probable Future of the Labouring Classes', is entirely due to her. In the first draft of the book that chapter did not exist. She pointed out the need for such a chapter and the extreme imperfection of the book without it. She was the cause of my writing it; and the more general part of the chapter—the statement and discussion of the two opposite theories concerning the proper condition of the labouring classes—was wholly an exposition of her thoughts, often in her own words. I did not learn the purely scientific part of the *Political Economy* from her; but it was chiefly her influence that gave the book the general tone that •distinguishes it from all previous expositions of political economy that had any claim to being scientific, and •has made it so useful in conciliating minds that those previous expositions had repelled. This tone consisted chiefly in properly distinguishing

(1) the laws of the production of wealth, which are real laws of nature that depend on the properties of objects, from

(2) the modes of its distribution, which—subject to certain conditions—depend on human will.

The common run of political economists run these together under the label 'economic laws', which they think cannot be defeated or modified by human effort; ascribing the same necessity to **(1)** things that depend on the unchangeable conditions of our earthly existence as to **(2)** those that are merely the necessary consequences of particular social arrangements. Given certain institutions and customs, wages, profits, and rent will be determined by certain causes; but this class of political economists drop the indispensable presupposition and argue that these causes must, by an inherent necessity against which no human means can avail, determine the shares in the division of the product that fall to labourers, capitalists, and landlords. The *Principles of Political Economy* yielded to none of its predecessors in aiming at the scientific appreciation of the action of these causes, under the conditions they presuppose; but it set the example of not treating those conditions as final. It treats only as provisional and liable to be much altered by the progress of social improvement the economic generalisations that depend not on **(1)** necessities of nature but

on those combined with **(2)** the existing arrangements of society. I had indeed partially learned this view of things from the thoughts awakened in me by the theorising of the St. Simonians; but my wife's promptings are what made it a living principle pervading and animating the book. This example illustrates well the general character of what she contributed to my writings. What was abstract and purely scientific was generally mine; the properly human element came from her. In all that concerned the application of philosophy to the demands of human society and progress, I was her pupil in boldness of thinking *and* in cautiousness of practical judgment. For, on the one hand, she was much more courageous and far-sighted than I would have been without her, in anticipations of an order of things to come in which many of the limited generalisations now so often confused with universal principles will cease to be applicable. The parts of my writings—especially of the *Political Economy*—that contemplate possibilities in the future such as have in general been fiercely denied by political economists when affirmed by socialists would have been either absent expressed much more timidly and in a more qualified form if it were not for her. But, ·on the other hand·, while she thus made me bolder in speculation on human affairs, her practical turn of mind and her almost unerring estimate of practical obstacles repressed in me all tendencies that were really visionary. Her mind invested all ideas in a concrete shape, and formed to itself a conception of how they would actually work; and her knowledge of the existing feelings and conduct of mankind was so seldom at fault that the weak point in any unworkable suggestion seldom escaped her.[1]

Liberty

Liberty was more directly and literally our joint production than anything else that bears my name, for every sentence of it was several times gone through by us together, turned over in many ways and carefully weeded of any faults in thought or expression that we detected in it. It is in consequence of this that although it never underwent her final revision it far surpasses, as a mere specimen of composition, anything that has come from me either before or since. With regard to the thoughts, it is difficult to identify any particular part or element as being more hers than all the rest. The whole mode of thinking of which the book was the expression was emphatically hers. But I also was so thoroughly imbued with it that the same thoughts naturally occurred to us both. That I *was* thus penetrated with it, however, I owe in a great degree to her. There was a stage in my mental progress when I might easily have fallen into a tendency towards over-government, both social and political; as there was also a stage when, by reaction from a contrary excess, I might have become a less thorough radical and democrat than I am. In both these points, as in many others, she benefited me as much by keeping me right where I was right as by leading me to new truths and ridding me of errors. My great readiness and eagerness to learn from everybody, and to make room in my opinions for every new acquisition by adjusting the old and the new to one another, might have seduced me into modifying my early opinions too much if it were not for her steadying influence. She was in nothing more valuable to my mental development than by her just measure of the relative importance of different considerations, which often protected me from allowing to truths I had only recently learned a more

[1] A few dedicatory lines acknowledging what the book owed to her were prefixed to some presentation copies of the *Political Economy* on its first publication. Her dislike of publicity prevented their insertion in the other copies of the work.

important place in my thoughts than was properly their due.

The *Liberty* is likely to survive longer than anything else I have written (with the possible exception of the *Logic*), because the conjunction of her mind with mine has made it a kind of philosophic text-book of a single truth, which the changes progressively taking place in modern society tend to bring out into ever stronger relief:

> the importance to man and society of a large variety in types of character, and of giving full freedom to human nature to expand itself in innumerable and conflicting directions.

Nothing can better show how deep are the foundations of this truth than the great impression the exposition of it made at a time when there was not obviously much need for such a lesson. The fears we expressed that

> the inevitable growth of social equality and of the government of public opinion would impose on mankind an oppressive yoke of uniformity in opinion and practice

might easily have appeared fanciful to those who looked more at present •facts than at •tendencies; because the gradual revolution that is taking place in society and institutions has so far been decidedly favourable to the development of new opinions, and has procured for them a much more unprejudiced hearing than they previously met with. But this is a feature of periods of transition when old notions and feelings have been unsettled and no new doctrines have yet risen to take their place [see page 60]. At such times people with any mental activity, having given up many of their old beliefs and not feeling quite sure that those they still retain can stand unmodified, listen eagerly to new opinions. But this state of things is necessarily transitory; eventually

- •some particular body of doctrine rallies the majority around it, and
- •organises social institutions and modes of action conformably to itself;
- •education impresses this new creed on the new generations without the mental processes that have led to it, and
- •it gradually acquires the same power of *compression* that was for so long exercised by the creeds it had replaced.

Whether this noxious power will be exercised depends on whether mankind have by that time become aware that it cannot be exercised without stunting and dwarfing human nature. It is then that the teachings of the *Liberty* will have their greatest value. And it is to be feared that they will retain that value for a long time!

As regards originality, the book of course has no other originality than that which every thoughtful mind gives to its own mode of conceiving and expressing truths that are common property. The book's leading thought is one that mankind have probably never been entirely without since the beginning of civilisation, though in many ages it has been confined to insulated thinkers. To speak only of the last few generations, it is distinctly contained in the vein of important thought about education and culture spread through the European mind by the labours and genius of ·Johann Heinrich· Pestalozzi. The unqualified championship of it by Wilhelm von Humboldt is referred to in the book, but he by no means stood alone in his own country. During the early part of the present century the doctrine of the rights of individuality, and the claim of the moral nature to develop itself in its own way, was pushed by a whole school of German authors even to exaggeration; and the writings of Goethe, the most celebrated of all German authors, though not belonging to any school, are penetrated throughout by views of morals and of conduct in life which, though

often in my opinion not defensible, are incessantly seeking whatever defence they admit of in the theory of the right and duty of self-development. In our own country before *On Liberty* was written, the doctrine of individuality had been enthusiastically asserted—in a style of vigorous declamation sometimes reminding one of Fichte—by Mr William Maccall in a series of writings of which the most elaborate is entitled *The Elements of Individualism*; and a remarkable American, Mr Warren, had formed a System of Society on the basis of 'the sovereignty of the individual', had obtained a number of followers, and had actually started the formation of a Village Community (whether it now exists I know not), which superficially resembles some of the projects of socialists but is diametrically opposite to them in principle, because it recognises no authority whatever in society over the individual, except to enforce equal freedom of development for all individualities. As the book that bears my name claimed no originality for any of its doctrines, and was not intended to write their history, the only predecessor of whom I thought it appropriate to say anything was Humboldt, who furnished the motto to the work, though in one passage I borrowed the Warrenites' phrase 'the sovereignty of the individual'. I hardly need to say that there are abundant differences in detail between the conception of the doctrine by any of the predecessors I have mentioned and that set forth in the book.

After my irreparable loss, one of my first concerns was to print and publish the treatise so much of which was the work of her whom I had lost, and to consecrate it to her memory. I have made no alteration or addition to it, nor shall I ever. Though it needed the last touch of her hand, no substitute for that touch will ever be attempted by mine.

Parliamentary reform

A little later the political circumstances of the time induced me to complete and publish a pamphlet ('Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform') part of which had been written some years earlier on the occasion of one of the abortive Reform Bills, and had at that time been approved and revised by her. Its principal features were

(1) hostility to the ballot [see Glossary] (a change of opinion in both of us, in which she rather preceded me), and

(2) a claim of representation for minorities though not at that time going beyond the cumulative vote proposed by Mr Garth Marshall.

In finishing the pamphlet for publication with a view to the discussions on the Reform Bill of Lord Derby's and Mr Disraeli's Government in 1859, I added a third feature,

(3) a plurality of votes to be given not to •property but to •proved superiority of education.

This recommended itself to me as a means of reconciling •the irresistible claim of every man or woman to be consulted and allowed a voice in the regulation of affairs which vitally concern them with •the greater weight justly due to opinions based on greater knowledge. But I had never discussed this suggestion with my almost infallible counsellor, and I have no evidence that she would have agreed with it. As far as I have been able to observe, it has found favour with nobody. All who desire any sort of inequality in the electoral vote want it in favour of property and not of intelligence or knowledge. If it ever overcomes the strong feeling that exists against it, this will only be after the establishment of a systematic *national education* by which the various grades of politically valuable acquirement can be accurately defined and authenticated. Without this it will always remain liable to strong and possibly conclusive objections; and with this,

it would perhaps not be needed.

It was soon after the publication of 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform' that I became acquainted with Mr Hare's admirable system of personal representation, which in its present shape had just been published for the first time.

[Here is Mill's sketch of Hare's system in his book *Considerations on Representative Government* (see page 99): According to this plan, the unit of representation, the quota of electors who would be entitled to have a member to themselves, would be ascertained by the ordinary process of taking averages, the number of voters being divided by the number of seats in the House: and every candidate who obtained that quota would be returned, from however great a number of local constituencies it might be gathered. The votes would, as at present, be given locally; but any elector would be at liberty to vote for any candidate in whatever part of the country he might offer himself. Those electors, therefore, who did not wish to be represented by any of the local candidates, might aid by their vote in the return of the person they liked best among all those throughout the country who had expressed a willingness to be chosen. This would, so far, give reality to the electoral rights of the otherwise virtually disfranchised minority. But it is important that not those alone who refuse to vote for any of the local candidates, but those also who vote for one of them and are defeated, should be enabled to find elsewhere the representation which they have not succeeded in obtaining in their own district. It is therefore provided that an elector may deliver a voting paper, containing other names in addition to the one which stands foremost in his preference. His vote would only be counted for one candidate; but if the object of his first choice failed to be returned, from not having obtained the quota, his second perhaps might be more fortunate. He may extend his list to a greater number, in the order of his preference, so that if the names which stand near the top of the list either cannot make up the quota, or are able to make it up without his vote, the vote may still be used for some one whom it may assist in returning. To obtain the full number of members required to complete the House, as well as to prevent very popular candidates from engrossing nearly all the suffrages, it is necessary, however many votes a candidate may obtain, that no more of them than the quota should be counted for his return: the remainder of those who voted for him would have their votes counted for the next person on their respective lists who needed them, and could by their aid complete the quota. To determine which of a candidate's votes should be used for his return, and which set free for others, several methods are proposed, into which we shall not here enter. He would of course retain the votes of all those who would not otherwise be represented; and for the remainder, drawing lots, in default of better, would be an unobjectionable expedient. The voting papers would be conveyed to a central office; where the votes would be counted, the number of first, second, third, and other votes given for each candidate ascertained, and the quota would be allotted to every one who could make it up, until the number of the House was complete: first votes being preferred to second, second to third, and so forth. The voting papers, and all the elements of the calculation, would be placed in public repositories, accessible to all whom they concerned; and if any one who had obtained the quota was not duly returned it would be in his power easily to prove it.**]**

I saw this great practical and philosophical idea as the greatest improvement of which the system of representative government is susceptible; an improvement which in the most felicitous manner exactly meets and cures the grand (and what before seemed the inherent) defect of the representative system, namely that of giving to a numerical

majority *all power* instead of only a *power proportional to its numbers*, enabling the strongest party to exclude all weaker parties from making their opinions heard in the assembly of the nation except through whatever opportunities they may get from the accidentally unequal distribution of opinions in different localities. To these great evils nothing more than very imperfect palliatives had seemed possible, but Mr Hare's system provides a radical cure. This great discovery (for that's what it is) in the political art inspired me, as I believe it has inspired all thoughtful persons who have adopted it, with new and more optimistic hopes for the prospects of human society. It does this by freeing the form of political institutions towards which the whole civilised world is manifestly and irresistibly tending—·namely democracy·—from the chief part of what seemed to qualify or make doubtful its ultimate benefits. Minorities, so long as they remain minorities, are and should be outvoted; but under arrangements that enable *any* assemblage of voters amounting to a certain number to place in the legislature a representative of its own choice, minorities cannot be suppressed. Independent opinions will force their way into the council of the nation and make themselves heard there, which often cannot happen in the existing forms of representative democracy; and the legislature, instead of being entirely made up of men who simply represent the creed of great political or religious parties, with individual peculiarities weeded out, will include a large proportion of the most eminent individual minds in the country, placed there without reference to party by voters who appreciate their individual eminence. I can understand that otherwise intelligent persons might, through not having examined it carefully, be repelled from Mr Hare's plan by what they think to be the complex nature of its machinery. But anyone who does not feel the need that the scheme is intended to meet, anyone who throws it over as a mere theoretical subtlety or whimsical fancy, tending to no valuable purpose and unworthy of the attention of practical men, may be pronounced an incompetent statesman and unequal to the politics of the future. I mean unless he is a minister or aspires to become one; for we are quite accustomed to a minister continuing to profess unqualified hostility to an improvement almost to the very day when his conscience or his self-interest induces him to take it up as a public measure and carry it.

Had I met with Mr Hare's system before the publication of my pamphlet I would have given an account of it there. Not having done so, I wrote an article in *Fraser's Magazine* (reprinted in my miscellaneous writings) principally for that purpose, though I included in it along with Mr Hare's book a review of two other productions on the question of the day—a pamphlet by my early friend Mr John Austin, who had in his old age become an enemy to all further Parliamentary reform, and an able and ingenious though partially erroneous work by Mr Lorimer.

Other writings

In the course of the same summer I fulfilled a duty particularly incumbent on me, that of helping (by an article in the *Edinburgh Review*) to make known Mr Bain's profound treatise on the mind, just then completed by the publication of its second volume. And I carried through the press a selection of my minor writings, forming the first two volumes of *Dissertations and Discussions*. The selection had been made during my wife's lifetime, but the revision we planned to do with a view to republication had been barely started; and when I no longer had the guidance of her judgment I despaired of pursuing it further, and republished the papers as they were, except for deleting passages that were no

longer in accordance with my opinions. My last literary work of the year was an essay in *Fraser's Magazine* (afterwards republished in the third volume of *Dissertations and Discussions*) entitled 'A Few Words on Non-Intervention'. I was prompted to write this paper by a desire—while defending England from the imputations (commonly brought against her on the Continent) of a special selfishness in matters of foreign policy—to warn Englishmen that this imputation gains plausibility from the low tone in which English statesmen are accustomed to speak of English policy as being concerned only with English interests, and from the conduct of Lord Palmerston at that time in opposing the Suez Canal. And I took the opportunity to express ideas that had long been in my mind (some generated by my Indian experience, others by the international questions that then greatly occupied the European public) concerning the true principles of international morality, and what changes can legitimately be made in it by difference of times and circumstances. I had already discussed this topic somewhat in the defence of the French Provisional Government of 1848 against the attacks of Lord Brougham and others, which I published at the time in the *Westminster Review*, and which is reprinted in the *Dissertations*.

Working from Avignon

I had now settled (I thought) for the remainder of my existence into a purely literary life; if I can call 'literary' something that continued to be occupied primarily with politics—and not merely with theoretical but practical politics—although a great part of each was spent hundreds of miles from the chief seat of the politics of my own country, to which I wrote and primarily *for* which I wrote. In fact, the modern facilities of communication, for a political writer in tolerably easy circumstances, have not only removed all the disadvantages of distance from the scene of political action but have turned them into advantages. The immediate and regular receipt of newspapers and periodicals keeps him up to date with even the most temporary politics, and gives him a much *more* correct view of the state and progress of opinion than he could acquire by personal contact with individuals; for everyone's social intercourse is more or less limited to particular sets or classes, whose impressions are the only ones to reach him through that channel; and experience has taught me that •a recluse who reads the newspapers can be much less ignorant of the general state of the public mind (or of the active and instructed part of it) than •those who give their time to the absorbing claims of 'society' and don't have time to keep up a large acquaintance with the organs of opinion. There are, no doubt, disadvantages in too long a separation from one's country, in not occasionally renewing one's impressions of the light in which men and things appear when seen from a position in the midst of them. But the deliberate judgment formed at a distance and undisturbed by inequalities of perspective is more dependable, even for the application of theory to practice. Alternating between the two positions, I combined the advantages of both. And, though the inspirer of my best thoughts was no longer with me, I was not alone: she had left a daughter, my stepdaughter Miss Helen Taylor, the inheritor of much of her wisdom and all of her nobleness of character, whose ever growing and ripening talents from that day to this have been devoted to the same great purposes and have already made her name better and more widely known than her mother's was, though I predict that it is destined to become even more so if she lives. Of the value of her direct cooperation with me something will be said later, but it would be vain to try to give an adequate idea of what I owe in the way of instruction to her great powers

of original thought and soundness of practical judgment. Surely no-one ever before was so fortunate as I was, after such a loss as mine, drawing another prize in the lottery of life—another companion, stimulator, adviser, and instructor of the rarest quality. Anyone who ever thinks of me and of the work I have done must not forget that it is the product not of one intellect and conscience but of three, of whom the least considerable—and above all the least original—is the one whose name is attached to it.

Representative government

The work of the years 1860 and 1861 consisted chiefly of two treatises, only one of which was intended for immediate publication. This was the *Considerations on Representative Government*, a connected exposition of what the thoughts of many years had led me to regard as the best form of a popular constitution. Along with as much of the general theory of government as is necessary to support this particular portion of its practice, the volume contains many matured views of the principal questions that occupy the present age, within the province of purely organic institutions, and raises in advance some other questions to which growing necessities will sooner or later compel the attention both of theoretical and of practical politicians. The chief of these questions concerns the distinction between

- the function of **making laws**, for which a numerous popular assembly is radically unfit, and
- the function of **getting good laws made**, which is the popular assembly's proper duty and cannot be satisfactorily fulfilled by any other authority.

This requires that there be a Legislative Commission, as a permanent part of the constitution of a free country; consisting of a small number of highly trained political minds whose role when Parliament has determined that a law shall be made is to make it; Parliament retaining the power of passing or rejecting the bill when drawn up, but not of altering it otherwise than by sending proposed amendments to be dealt with by the Commission. The issue concerning the most important of all public functions, that of legislation, is a particular case of the great problem of modern political organisation, stated (I believe) for the first time in its full extent by Bentham, though in my opinion not always satisfactorily resolved by him—namely the problem of combining •complete popular control over public affairs with •the greatest attainable perfection of skilled agency.

The Subjection of Women

The other treatise written at this time was published some years later under the title *The Subjection of Women*. It was written at my daughter's suggestion that there should be in existence a written exposition—as full and conclusive as I could make it—of my opinions on that great question. The intention was to keep this among other unpublished papers, improving it from time to time if I was able, and to publish it at the time when it seemed likely to be most useful. As ultimately published it was enriched with some important ideas of my daughter's and some passages of her writing. But all that is most striking and profound in what was written by me belongs to my wife, coming from the fund of thought that had been made common to us both by our innumerable conversations and discussions on a topic that filled so large a place in our minds.

Soon after this time I took from their repository a portion of the unpublished papers I had written during the last years of our married life, and shaped them—with some additional matter—into the little work entitled *Utilitarianism*, which

was first published in three parts in consecutive numbers of *Fraser's Magazine* and later reprinted in a volume.

The American civil war

Before this, however, the state of public affairs had become extremely critical because of the outbreak of the American civil war. My strongest feelings were engaged in this struggle, which (I felt from the beginning) was destined to be a turning point, for good or evil, of the course of human affairs for an indefinite duration. Having been a deeply interested observer of the slavery quarrel in America during the many years that preceded the open breach, I knew that the war was in all its stages an aggressive enterprise of the slave-owners to extend the territory of slavery, under the combined influences of •financial interest, •domineering temperament, and •the fanaticism of a class for its class privileges—influences so fully and powerfully depicted in the admirable work *The Slave Power* by my friend Professor Cairnes. If they succeeded, that would be a victory of the powers of evil that would give courage to the enemies of progress and damp the spirits of its friends all over the civilised world, while it would

- •create a formidable military power based on the worst and most anti-social form of the tyranny of men over men,
- •destroy for a long time the prestige of the great democratic republic, and thereby
- •give to all the privileged classes of Europe a false confidence that could probably be extinguished only in blood.

On the other hand, if the spirit of the North was sufficiently roused to carry the war to a successful conclusion, and if that did not come too soon and too easily, I foresaw—going by the laws of human nature and the experience of revolutions—that when it did come it would probably be *thorough*: that the bulk of the Northern population,

> whose conscience had so far been awakened only to the point of resisting the further extension of slavery, but whose fidelity to the Constitution of the United States made them disapprove of any attempt by the Federal Government to interfere with slavery in the States where it already existed,

would acquire feelings of another kind when the Constitution had been shaken off by armed rebellion, would determine to have done for ever with the accursed thing [i.e. slavery], and would join their banner with that of the noble body of abolitionists, of whom Garrison was the courageous and single-minded apostle, Wendell Phillips the eloquent orator, and John Brown the voluntary martyr.[1] Then too the whole mind of the United States would be let loose from its bonds, no longer corrupted by the supposed necessity of apologising to foreigners for the most flagrant of all possible violations of the free principles of their Constitution; while the tendency of a fixed state of society to perpetuate a set of national opinions would be at least temporarily checked, and the national mind would become more open to recognising whatever was bad in either the institutions or the customs of the people. These hopes have been completely realised with regard to slavery, and are in course of being progressively realised with regard to other matters.

[1] The saying of this true hero, after his capture, that he was worth more for hanging than for any other purpose reminds one by its combination of wit, wisdom, and self-devotion of Sir Thomas More.

Foreseeing from the first this double set of consequences from the success or failure of the rebellion, it may be imagined with what feelings I contemplated the rush of nearly the whole upper and middle classes of my own country—even those who passed for Liberals—into a furious pro-Southern partisanship, the only exceptions (almost) to the general frenzy being the working classes and some of the literary and scientific men. I never before felt so keenly how little permanent improvement had reached the minds of our influential classes, and of what small value were the liberal opinions they had acquired the habit of professing. None of the Continental Liberals committed the same frightful mistake. But the generation that had extorted Negro emancipation from our West India planters had passed away; and the following generation had not learned by many years of discussion and exposure to feel strongly the wickedness of slavery; and Englishmen's habitual inattention to whatever is happening in the world outside their own island made them profoundly ignorant of all the antecedents of the struggle, so that it was not generally believed in England, for the first year or two of the war, that the quarrel was about slavery. There were men of high principle and unquestionable liberality of opinion who thought it was a dispute about tariffs, or assimilated it to the cases in which they were accustomed to sympathise with people struggling for independence.

Urging England not to support the south

It was obviously my duty to be one of the small minority who protested against this perverted state of public opinion. I was not the first to protest. It ought to be remembered to the honour of Mr Hughes and of Mr Ludlow that they, by writings published at the very beginning of the struggle, began the protestation. Mr Bright followed in one of the most powerful of his speeches, followed by others not less striking. I was on the point of adding my words to theirs when there occurred, towards the end of 1861, the seizure of the Southern envoys on board a British vessel by an officer of the United States. Even English forgetfulness has not yet had time to lose all remembrance of •the explosion of feeling in England which then burst forth, •the expectation (prevailing for some weeks) of war with the United States, and •the warlike preparations actually started on this side ·of the Atlantic·. While this state of things lasted there was no chance of a hearing for anything favourable to the American cause; and in fact I agreed with those who thought the act unjustifiable, and such as to require that England should demand its disavowal. When the disavowal came and the alarm of war was over I wrote, in January 1862, the paper in *Fraser's Magazine* entitled 'The Contest in America'. And I shall always feel grateful to my daughter that her urgency prevailed on me to write it when I did, for we were then on the point of setting out for a journey of some months in Greece and Turkey, and but for her I would have deferred writing till our return. Written and published when it was, this paper helped •to encourage Liberals who had felt overborne by the tide of illiberal opinion, and •to form in favour of the good cause a nucleus of opinion that increased gradually and then—after the success of the North began to seem probable—rapidly. When we returned from our journey I wrote a second article, a review of Professor Cairnes' book, published in the *Westminster Review*. England is in many uncomfortable ways paying the penalty of the durable resentment that her ruling classes stirred up in the United States by their ostentatious wishes for the ruin of America as a nation; they have reason to be thankful that a few, if only a few, known writers and speakers, standing firmly by the Americans in the time of their greatest difficulty, partly

diverted these bitter feelings and made Great Britain not altogether odious to the Americans.

Examination of Hamilton's philosophy

This duty having been performed, my principal occupation for the next two years was on subjects not political. The publication of Mr Austin's *Lectures on Jurisprudence* after his decease gave me an opportunity of paying a deserved tribute to his memory, and at the same time expressing some thoughts on a subject on which I had bestowed much study in my old days of Benthamism. But the chief product of those years was the *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. His *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, ·posthumously· published in 1860 and 1861, I had read towards the end of the latter year with a half-formed intention of giving an account of them in a review, but I soon found that this would be idle and that justice could not be done to the subject in less than a volume. I had then to consider whether it would be advisable that I myself should attempt such a performance. On consideration, there seemed to be strong reasons for doing so. I was greatly disappointed with the *Lectures*. I read them with no prejudice against Sir W. Hamilton. Until then I had deferred the study of his *Notes to Reid's Works* because of their unfinished state, but I had not neglected his *Discussions in Philosophy...*; and though I knew that his general mode of treating the facts of mental philosophy differed from the one I most approved of, still •his vigorous polemic against the later Transcendentalists, and •his strenuous assertion of some important principles, especially the relativity of human knowledge, gave me many points of sympathy with his opinions and made me think that genuine psychology had more to gain than to lose by his authority and reputation. His *Lectures* and the dissertations on Reid dispelled this illusion: and even the *Discussions in Philosophy...*, read by the light that these throw on them, lost much of their value. I found that the points of apparent agreement between his opinions and mine were more verbal than real; that the important philosophical principles that I had thought he recognised were *explained away* by him so as to mean little or nothing, or were continually lost sight of, and doctrines entirely inconsistent with them were taught in nearly every part of his philosophical writings. My estimation of him was therefore so far altered that instead of regarding him as occupying a kind of intermediate position between the two rival philosophies, holding some of the principles of both, and supplying both with powerful weapons of attack and defence, I now looked on him as one of the pillars—and in this country, from his high philosophical reputation, the chief pillar—of the one that seemed to me to be erroneous.

Intuition versus experience

Now, the difference between these two schools of philosophy, that of intuition and that of experience and association, is not a mere matter of abstract theory; it is full of practical consequences, and lies at the foundation of all the greatest differences of practical opinion in an age of progress. The practical reformer has continually to demand that changes be made in things that are supported by powerful and widely-spread feelings, or to question the apparently necessary and unchallengeable nature of established facts [see Glossary]; and his argument often requires him to show how those powerful feelings had their origin, and how those facts came to seem necessary and unchallengeable. So there is a natural hostility between him and a philosophy which discourages the explanation of feelings and moral facts by circumstances and association, and prefers to treat them as

ultimate elements of human nature; a philosophy that is dedicated to holding up favourite doctrines as intuitive truths, and regards intuition as the voice of nature and of God, speaking with an authority higher than that of our reason. In particular, I have long felt that one of the chief hindrances to the rational treatment of great social questions, and one of the greatest stumbling blocks to human improvement, is the prevailing tendency to regard all the marked distinctions of human character as innate and mainly indelible, and to ignore the irresistible proofs that by far the greater part of those differences—whether between individuals, races, or sexes—are such as not only could but naturally *would* be produced by differences in circumstances. This tendency has its source in the intuitional metaphysics that characterised the reaction of the 19th century against the 18th, and it is a tendency so agreeable to •human indolence as well as to •conservative interests generally that unless it is attacked at the very root it is sure to be carried to even a greater length than is really justified by the more moderate forms of the intuitional philosophy. That philosophy, not always in its moderate forms, had ruled the thought of Europe for the greater part of a century. My father's *Analysis of the Mind*, my own *Logic*, and Professor Bain's great treatise had tried to re-introduce a better mode of philosophising, recently with quite as much success as could be expected; but I had for some time felt

- that the mere contrast of the two philosophies was not enough,
- that there ought to be a hand-to-hand fight between them,
- that controversial as well as expository writings were needed, and
- that the time was come when such controversy would be useful.

Considering then the writings and fame of Sir W. Hamilton as the great fortress of the intuitional philosophy in this country, a fortress made more formidable by the man's imposing character and his (in many respects) great personal merits and mental endowments, I thought it might be a real service to philosophy to attempt a thorough examination of all his most important doctrines, and an estimate of his general claims to eminence as a philosopher; and I was confirmed in this resolution by observing that in the writings of at least one (and him one of the ablest) of Sir W. Hamilton's followers his particular doctrines were made the justification of a view of religion that I hold to be profoundly immoral—namely that it is our duty to bow down in worship before a Being whose moral attributes are affirmed to be unknowable by us, and to be perhaps extremely different from those we call by the same names when speaking of our fellow creatures.

As I advanced in my task the damage to Sir W. Hamilton's reputation became greater than I at first expected, because of the almost incredible multitude of inconsistencies that turned up when different passages were compared with one another. It was my business, however, to show things exactly as they were, and I did not flinch from it. I tried always to treat the philosopher whom I criticised with the most scrupulous fairness; and I knew that he had plenty of disciples and admirers to correct me if I ever unintentionally did him injustice. Many of them accordingly *have* answered me, more or less elaborately; and they have pointed out oversights and misunderstandings, though few in number and mostly unimportant in substance. Such of those as had (to my knowledge) been pointed out before the publication of the latest edition (at present the third) have been corrected there, and the remainder of the criticisms have been replied to as far as seemed necessary. On the whole, the book has done its work: it has shown the weak side of Sir W. Hamilton, and

has reduced his too great philosophical reputation within more moderate bounds; and by some of its discussions, as well as by two expository chapters on the notions of matter and of mind, it has perhaps thrown additional light on some of the disputed questions in the domain of psychology and metaphysics.

Evaluating Comte

After the completion of the book on Hamilton I took up a task which various reasons seemed to make specially incumbent on me, namely that of giving an account of the doctrines of Auguste Comte and forming an estimate of them. I had contributed more than anyone else to making his thought known in England. Mainly because of what I had said of him in my *Logic*, he had readers and admirers among thoughtful men on this side of the Channel at a time when his name in France had not yet emerged from obscurity. So unknown and unappreciated was he at the time when my *Logic* was written and published that to criticise his weak points might well appear superfluous, while it was a duty to give as much publicity as one could to the important contributions he had made to philosophic thought. However, at the time I am now writing about this state of affairs had entirely changed. The general character of his doctrines was known very widely, and his name was known almost universally. He had taken his place in the estimation both of friends and opponents as one of the conspicuous figures in the thought of the age. The better parts of his theories had made great progress in working their way into minds that were fitted to receive them by their previous culture and tendencies; and under cover of those better parts the worse parts—greatly developed and added to in his later writings—had also made some way, having obtained active and enthusiastic adherents, some of them of considerable personal merit, in England, France, and other countries. These facts not only made it desirable that someone should undertake the task of sifting what is good from what is bad in M. Comte's thought but seemed to impose on myself in particular a special obligation to make the attempt. This I accordingly did in two essays, published in consecutive numbers of the *Westminster Review* and reprinted in a small volume under the title *Auguste Comte and Positivism*.

Cheap editions of my writings

The writings I have now mentioned, together with a small number of papers in periodicals that I have not deemed worth preserving, were the whole of the products of my activity as a writer during the years from 1859 to 1865. In the early part of 1865, in compliance with a wish frequently expressed to me by working men, I published cheap People's Editions of those of my writings that seemed the most likely to find readers among the working classes, namely *Principles of Political Economy*, *Liberty*, and *Representative Government*. This was a considerable monetary sacrifice, especially as I resigned all idea of deriving profit from the cheap editions: after ascertaining from my publishers the lowest price that they thought would remunerate them on the usual terms of an equal division of profits, I gave up my half-share to enable the price to be fixed still lower. To the credit of Messrs. Longman they fixed, unasked, •a certain number of years after which the copyright and printer's plates were to revert to me, and •a certain number of copies after the sale of which I would receive half of any further profit. This number of copies (which in the case of the *Political Economy* was 10,000) has for some time been exceeded, so that the People's Editions have begun to yield me a small but unexpected monetary

return, though far from an equivalent for the loss of profit from the Library Editions.

Offers of membership of Parliament

In this summary of my outward life I have now arrived at the time when my tranquil and retired existence as a writer of books was to be exchanged for the less congenial occupation of a member of the House of Commons. The proposal made to me early in 1865 by some electors in Westminster did not present the idea to me for the first time. It was not even the first offer I had received, for more than ten years earlier my opinions on the Irish land question [see page 87] led Mr Lucas and Mr Duffy to offer, in the name of the popular party in Ireland, to bring me into Parliament for an Irish County, which they could easily have done; but the incompatibility of a seat in Parliament with the office I then held in the India House precluded even consideration of the proposal. After I left the India House several of my friends would gladly have seen me a member of Parliament, but it seemed unlikely that the idea would ever take practical shape. I was convinced •that no numerous or influential portion of any electoral body really wanted to be represented by a person with my opinions, and •that someone who had no local connection or popularity, and who did not choose to stand as the mere organ of a party, had little chance of being elected *anywhere* except through the expenditure of money. Now it was and still is my fixed conviction that a candidate ought not to incur one farthing of expense for undertaking a public duty. Lawful expenses of an election that have no special reference to any particular candidate ought to be borne as a public charge by the State or by the locality. What the supporters of each candidate must do in order to bring his claims properly before the constituency should be done by unpaid agency or by voluntary subscription. If members of the electoral body or others are willing to subscribe money of their own for the purpose of bringing into Parliament (by lawful means) someone who they think would be useful there, no-one is entitled to object; but that any part of the expense should be borne by the candidate is fundamentally wrong, because it amounts in reality to *buying his seat*. Even on the most favourable supposition about how the money is expended, there is a legitimate suspicion that anyone who gives money for leave to undertake a public trust has other than public ends to promote by it; and (a consideration of the greatest importance) when the cost of elections is borne by the candidates, that deprives the nation of the services in Parliament of all who cannot or will not afford to incur a heavy expense. If an independent candidate has almost no chance to come into Parliament without complying with this vicious practice, it isn't always morally wrong for him to spend money ·to support his candidacy·, provided that no part of it is directly or indirectly employed in corruption. But to justify this he ought to be very certain that he can be of more use to his country as a member of Parliament than in any other way that is open to him; and this assurance, in my own case, I did not feel. It was by no means clear to me that I could do more from the benches of the House of Commons than from the simple position of a writer to advance the public objectives that had a claim on my exertions. So I felt that I ought not to seek election to Parliament, much less to spend any money in procuring it.

Election to Parliament

But the conditions of the question were considerably altered when a group of electors sought me out and spontaneously offered to bring me forward as their candidate. If they

still wanted me as their candidate after I had explained my opinions and the only conditions on which I could conscientiously serve, it was questionable whether this was not one of those calls on a member of the community by his fellow-citizens that he was scarcely justified in rejecting. So I put their disposition to the proof by one of the frankest explanations ever presented, I should think, to an electoral body by a candidate. In reply to their offer I wrote a letter for publication, saying that

- I had no personal wish to be a member of parliament, that
- I thought a candidate ought neither to canvass nor to incur any expense, and that I could not consent to do either, and that
- if elected I could not undertake to give any of my time and labour to their local interests.

With respect to general politics, I told them without reserve what I thought on a number of important subjects on which they had asked my opinion; and one of these being the suffrage, I made known to them among other things my conviction that women were entitled to representation in Parliament on the same terms as men. (I was bound to make this conviction known, because I intended if elected to act on it.) It was no doubt the first time such a doctrine had ever been mentioned to English electors; and the fact that I was elected after proposing it gave the start to the now vigorous movement in favour of women's suffrage. Back then nothing appeared more unlikely than the election of a candidate (if I could be called a candidate) whose professions and conduct set so completely at defiance all ordinary notions of electioneering. A well-known literary man, who was also a man of society, was heard to say that the Almighty himself would have no chance of being elected on such a programme! I strictly adhered to it, neither spending money nor canvassing, nor did I take any personal part in the election until about a week before the day of nomination, when I attended a few public meetings to state my principles and give to any questions the electors might reasonably put to me for their own guidance, answers as plain and unreserved as my Address. On one subject only, my religious opinions, I announced from the beginning that I would answer no questions; a determination that appeared to be completely approved by those who attended the meetings. My frankness on all other subjects on which I was interrogated evidently did me far more good than my answers did harm. Among the proofs I received of this, one is too remarkable not to be recorded. In the pamphlet 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform' I had said rather bluntly that the working classes, though differing from those of some other countries in being ashamed of lying, are yet generally liars. This passage some opponent got printed on a placard which was handed to me at a meeting, chiefly composed of the working classes, and I was asked whether I had written and published it. I at once answered 'I did'. These two words were scarcely out of my mouth when vigorous applause resounded through the whole meeting. It was evident that the working people were so accustomed to equivocation and evasion from those who sought their votes that when they heard someone instead openly declare something that was likely to be disagreeable to them, instead of being offended they concluded at once that this was a person they could trust. A more striking instance never came under my notice of what (I believe) is the experience of those who best know the working classes, that the most essential of all recommendations to their favour is that of complete straightforwardness; its presence outweighs in their minds very strong objections, while no amount of other qualities will make amends for its apparent absence. The first working man who spoke after the incident I have

mentioned (it was Mr Odger) said that the working classes had no desire not to be told of their faults; they wanted friends, not flatterers, and were obliged to anyone who told them anything in themselves that he sincerely believed to require amendment. The meeting heartily responded.

Had I been defeated in the election, I would still have had no reason to regret the contact it had brought me into with large bodies of my countrymen. This gave me much new experience, and also enabled me to scatter my political opinions rather widely, and by making me known in many quarters where I had never before been heard of it increased the number of my readers and presumably the influence of my writings. These latter effects were of course produced in a still greater degree when, as much to my surprise as to anyone's, I was elected to Parliament by a majority of some hundreds over my Conservative competitor.

Activities as an MP

I was a member of the House during the three sessions of the Parliament that passed the Reform Bill; during which time Parliament was necessarily my main occupation except during its recess. I was a fairly frequent speaker, sometimes giving prepared speeches and sometimes speaking extemporaneously. But my choice of occasions was not the one I would have made if my leading objective had been parliamentary influence. When I had gained the ear of the House, which I did by a successful speech on Mr Gladstone's Reform Bill, I steered by the idea that when anything was likely to be done as well—or well enough—by other people there was no need for me to meddle with it. This led me in general to reserve myself for work that no others were likely to do; so a great proportion of my appearances were on points on which the bulk of the Liberal party—even the advanced portion of it—had a different opinion from mine or had no strong opinion at all.

Several of my speeches, especially one against abolishing capital punishment and another in favour of resuming the right to seize enemies' goods in neutral vessels, were opposed to what then was (and probably still is) regarded as the *advanced* liberal opinion. My advocacy of women's suffrage and of personal representation [see page 96] were at the time looked on by many as whims of my own; but the great progress since made by those opinions, and especially the zealous response made from almost all parts of the kingdom to the demand for women's suffrage, fully justified the timeliness of those movements and turned into a personal success something that I undertook as a moral and social duty. Another duty that was particularly incumbent on me as one of the London Members was the attempt to obtain a municipal government for London; but on that subject the indifference of the House of Commons was such that I found hardly any help or support •within its walls. On this subject, however, I was speaking for an active and intelligent body of persons •outside; the scheme originated with them, not with me, and they carried on all the agitation on the subject and drew up the Bills. My part was to bring in Bills already prepared, and to sustain the discussion of them during the short time they were allowed to remain before the House. This was after I had taken an active part in the work of a Committee presided over by Mr Ayrton, which sat through most of the Session of 1866 to take evidence on the subject. The very different position in which the question now stands (1870) ought to be attributed to the preparation that went on during those years and that produced little visible effect at the time. Such a period of incubation has to be gone through by any question on which there are strong private interests on one side and only the public good on the other.

The same idea—that my usefulness in Parliament could come from my doing work that others were not able or not willing to do—made me think it my duty to come forward in defence of advanced Liberalism on occasions when most of the advanced Liberals in the House preferred not to incur the hostility that this would bring. My first vote in the House was in support of an amendment in favour of Ireland, moved by an Irish member and supported by only five English and Scotch votes (my own, and those of Mr Bright, Mr McLaren, Mr T.B. Potter, and Mr Hadfield). And the second speech I delivered[1] was on the bill to prolong the suspension of *habeas corpus* in Ireland. When in this speech I denounced the English way of governing Ireland, I said no more than the general opinion of England now admits to have been just; but the anger against Fenianism [see Glossary] was then in all its freshness; any attack on what Fenians attacked was looked on as a defence of them; and I was so unfavourably received by the House that more than one of my friends advised me (and my own judgment agreed with the advice) not to speak again until the favourable opportunity that would be given by the first great debate on the Reform Bill. During this silence many enjoyed thinking that I had turned out a failure, and that they wouldn't be troubled with me any more. Their uncomplimentary comments may, through the force of reaction to them, have helped to make my speech on the Reform Bill the success it was. My position in the House was further improved by •a speech in which I insisted on the duty of paying off the National Debt before our coal supplies are exhausted, and by •an ironical reply to some of the Tory leaders who had quoted against me certain passages of my writings, and called me to account for others, especially for one in my *Considerations on Representative Government* saying that the Conservative party was by the law of its composition the stupidest party. They gained nothing by drawing attention to the passage, which up to that time had not excited any notice; and the label 'the stupid party' stuck to them for a considerable time afterwards. Having now no longer any fear of not being listened to, I confined myself (too much, I now think) to occasions on which my services seemed specially needed, and abstained more than enough from speaking on the great party questions. With the exception of **Irish questions**, and those that concerned **the working classes**, a single speech on Mr Disraeli's Reform Bill was nearly all that I contributed to the great decisive debates of the last two of my three sessions. But I have much satisfaction in looking back to the part I took on the two classes of subjects just mentioned.

Supporting the working men

With regard to the working classes, the chief topic of my speech on Mr Gladstone's Reform Bill was the assertion of their claims to the suffrage. A little later, after the resignation of Lord Russell's ministry and the succession of a Tory Government, came •the working classes' attempt to hold a meeting in Hyde Park, •their exclusion by the police, and •the breaking down of the park railing by the crowd. Though Mr Beales and the leaders of the working men had retired under protest before this took place, a scuffle ensued in which many innocent persons were maltreated by the police, and the exasperation of the working men was extreme. They showed

[1] The first was in answer to Mr Lowe's reply to Mr Bright on the Cattle Plague Bill, and was thought at the time to have helped to get rid of a provision in the Government measure that would have given to landholders a second indemnity, after they had already been once indemnified for the loss of some of their cattle by the increased selling price of the remainder.

a determination to make another attempt at a meeting in the Park, to which many of them would probably have come armed; the Government made military preparations to resist the attempt, and it seemed that something very serious was about to happen. At this crisis I really believe that I was the means of preventing much harm. In Parliament I had taken the side of the working men, and strongly censured the conduct of the Government. I was invited, with several other Radical members, to a conference with the leading members of the Council of the Reform League; and it was I, mainly, who persuaded them to give up the Hyde Park project and hold their meeting elsewhere. It was not Mr Beales and Colonel Dickson who needed persuading; on the contrary, it was evident that these gentlemen had already exerted their influence in the same direction, so far without success. It was the working men who held out, and so determined were they to pursue their original scheme that I had to pull out all the stops. I told them this:

> A proceeding that would certainly produce a collision with the military could be justifiable only if **(a)** the state of affairs had become such that a revolution was desirable, and **(b)** they thought themselves able succeed in a revolution.

To this argument, after considerable discussion, they at last yielded: and I was able to inform Mr Walpole that their intention was given up. I shall never forget the depth of his relief or the warmth of his expressions of gratitude. After the working men had conceded so much to me, I felt bound to comply with their request that I would attend and speak at their meeting at the Agricultural Hall; the only meeting called by the Reform League which I ever attended. I had always declined being a member of the League, on the avowed ground that I did not agree in its programme of manhood suffrage and the ballot [see Glossary]: from the ballot I dissented entirely; and I could not consent to hoist the flag of manhood suffrage, even on the assurance that the exclusion of women was not intended to be implied; since if one goes beyond what can be immediately carried, and professes to take one's stand on a principle, one should go the whole length of the principle. I report in such detail on this matter because my conduct in it gave great displeasure to the Tory and Tory-Liberal press, who have charged me ever since with having shown myself, in the trials of public life, intemperate and passionate. I do not know what they expected from me; but they had reason to be thankful to me if they knew from what I had in all probability preserved them. And I do not believe it could have been done at that particular juncture by anyone else. No other person, I believe, had at that moment the necessary influence for restraining the working classes, except Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright, neither of whom was available: Mr Gladstone, for obvious reasons; Mr Bright because he was out of town.

When, some time later, the Tory Government brought in a bill to prevent public meetings in the Parks, I not only spoke strongly in opposition to it, but formed one of a number of advanced Liberals who, aided by the very late period of the Session, succeeded in defeating the Bill by what is called talking it out. It has not since been renewed.

Land in Ireland

On Irish affairs also I felt bound to take a decided part. I was one of the foremost in the deputation of Members of Parliament who prevailed on Lord Derby to spare the life of the condemned Fenian insurgent, General Burke. The leaders of the party handled the Church question so vigorously in the session of 1868 that nothing more was required from me than an emphatic adhesion. But the land

question was nowhere near so advanced: the superstitions of landlordism had until then been little challenged, especially in Parliament, and the backward state of the question—so far as the Parliamentary mind was concerned—was evidenced by failure to carry the extremely mild measure brought in by Lord Russell's government in 1866. On that bill I delivered one of my most careful speeches, in which I tried to set out some of the principles of the subject, in a manner calculated less to stimulate friends than to conciliate and convince opponents. The engrossing subject of Parliamentary Reform prevented this bill and a similar one brought in by Lord Derby's government from being carried through. They never got beyond the second reading. Meanwhile the signs of Irish disaffection had become much more decided; the demand for complete separation between the two countries had assumed a menacing aspect, and nearly everyone felt that if there was still any chance of reconciling Ireland to the British connection it could only be by subjecting the territorial and social relations of the country to much more thorough reforms than had yet been contemplated. The time seemed to me to have come when it would be useful to speak out my whole mind; and the result was my pamphlet 'England and Ireland', written in the winter of 1867 and published shortly before the start of the ·parliamentary· session of 1868. The leading features of the pamphlet were •an argument to show the undesirableness—for Ireland as well as England—of separation between the countries, and •a proposal for settling the land question by giving to the existing tenants a permanent tenure, at a fixed rent to be assessed after due inquiry by the State.

Except in Ireland the pamphlet was not popular, as I did not expect it to be. But ·there were two justifications for publishing it·. **(1)** If nothing less than what I proposed would do full justice to Ireland or give a prospect of conciliating the mass of the Irish people, the duty of proposing it was imperative. **(2)** If on the other hand there was any intermediate course that had a claim to be tried, I knew that to propose something 'extreme' was the true way not to block but to facilitate a more moderate experiment. It is most improbable that a measure conceding so much to the tenantry as Mr Gladstone's Irish Land Bill did would have been proposed by a government or carried through Parliament if the British public had not been led to see that a case might be made—and perhaps a party formed—for a considerably stronger measure. It is the character of the British people—or at least of the higher and middle classes who pass muster for the British people!—that they won't approve of any change unless they look on it as a middle course; they think every proposal extreme and violent unless their antipathy to extreme views can be vented on some other proposal that goes still further. So it proved in the present instance; my proposal was condemned, but any scheme of Irish Land reform short of mine came to be thought moderate by comparison. I may observe that the attacks made on my plan usually gave a very incorrect idea of its nature. It was usually discussed as a proposal that the State should buy up the land and become the universal landlord; though in fact it only offered this to each individual landlord as an alternative, if he preferrred selling his estate to retaining it on the new conditions; and I fully anticipated that most landlords would continue to prefer the position of landowners to that of government annuitants, and would retain their existing relation to their tenants, often on better terms than the full rents on which the compensation to be given them by Government would have been based. This and many other explanations I gave in a speech on Ireland, in the debate on Mr Maguire's Resolution, early in the session of 1868. A corrected report of this speech, together with my speech on

Mr Fortescue's Bill, has been published (not by me, but with my permission) in Ireland.

Seeking justice for Negroes in Jamaica

During those years I had to perform another public duty of a most serious kind, both in and out of Parliament. A disturbance in Jamaica, provoked in the first instance by injustice and exaggerated by rage and panic into a premeditated rebellion, had been the motive or excuse for taking hundreds of innocent lives by military violence or by sentence of so-called 'courts-martial', continuing for weeks after the brief disturbance had been put down; with many added atrocities of destruction of property, flogging women as well as men, and a general display of the brutal recklessness that usually prevails when fire and sword are let loose. The perpetrators of those deeds were defended and applauded in England by the same kind of people who had so long upheld Negro slavery; and it seemed at first as if the British nation was about to incur the disgrace of letting pass without even a protest excesses of authority as revolting as ones that Englishmen can hardly find words adequate to express their abhorrence when they perpetrated by agents of other governments. After a short time, however, an indignant feeling was aroused; a voluntary Association formed itself under the name of the Jamaica Committee, to take such deliberation and action as the case might admit of, and adhesions poured in from all parts of the country. I was abroad at the time, but I sent in my name to the Committee as soon as I heard of it, and took an active part in the proceedings from the time of my return. There was much more at stake than only justice to the Negroes, imperative as that consideration was. The question was whether the British dependencies, and eventually perhaps Great Britain itself, were to be under the government of •law or of •military licence; whether the lives and persons of British subjects are at the mercy of any two or three officers—however raw and inexperienced, or reckless and brutal—whom a panic-stricken Governor or other official may assume the right to constitute into a so-called 'court-martial'. This question could be decided only by an appeal to the courts, and the Committee decided to make such an appeal. This decision led to a change in the chairmanship of the Committee, because the chairman, Mr Charles Buxton, thought it inexpedient (not unjust) to prosecute Governor Eyre and his principal subordinates in a criminal court: but a numerously attended general meeting of the Association having decided this point against him, Mr Buxton withdrew from the Committee, though continuing to work in the cause, and I was to my surprise elected Chairman. So it became my duty to represent the Committee in the House, sometimes •by putting questions to the government, sometimes •as the recipient of more or less provocative questions addressed by individual members to myself, but especially •as speaker in the important debate that was originated in the session of 1866 by Mr Buxton. The speech I gave then is the one I would probably select as my best speech in Parliament.[1] For more than two years we carried on the combat, trying every avenue to the courts of criminal justice that was legally open to us. A bench of magistrates in one of the most Tory counties in England dismissed our case; we were more successful before the magistrates at Bow Street, which gave an opportunity to

[1] Among the most active members of the Committee were Mr P.A. Taylor, M.P., always faithful and energetic in every assertion of the principles of liberty; Mr Goldwin Smith, Mr Frederic Harrison, Mr Slack, Mr Chamerovzow, Mr Shaen, and Mr Chesson, the honorary secretary of the Association.

the Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench, Sir Alexander Cockburn, to deliver his celebrated charge that settled the law of the question in favour of liberty, as far as it is in the power of a judge's charge to settle it. But there our success ended, for the Old Bailey Grand jury by throwing out our bill prevented the case from coming to trial. It was clear that to bring English officials to the bar of a criminal court for abuses of power committed against Negroes and mulattoes was not a popular proceeding with the English middle classes. But we had done our best to redeem the character of our country by showing that there was at any rate a body of persons determined to use all legal means to obtain justice for the injured. We had elicited from the highest criminal judge in the nation an authoritative declaration that the law was what we maintained it to be; and we had given an emphatic warning to those who might be tempted to similar guilt hereafter that, though they might escape the actual sentence of a criminal tribunal, they were not safe from being put to some trouble and expense to avoid it. Colonial governors and other persons in authority will have a considerable motive to stop short of such extremities in future.

As a matter of curiosity I kept some specimens of the abusive letters—almost all anonymous—which I received while these proceedings were going on. They are evidence of the sympathy felt with the brutalities in Jamaica by the brutal part of the population at home. They graduated from coarse jokes, verbal and pictorial, up to threats of assassination.[1]

Extradition, Bribery

Among other matters of importance in which I took an active part, but which excited little interest in the public, two deserve particular mention. I joined with several other independent Liberals in defeating an Extradition Bill introduced at the very end of the session of 1866. By this, though surrender avowedly for political offences was not authorised, if political refugees were charged by a foreign government with acts that are inevitably involved in all attempts at insurrection they would be surrendered to be dealt with by the criminal courts of the government they had rebelled against, thus making the British Government an accomplice in the vengeance of foreign despotisms. The defeat of this proposal led to the appointment of a Select Committee (in which I was included) to examine and report on the whole subject of Extradition Treaties; and the result was that in the Extradition Act that passed through Parliament after I had ceased to be a member, opportunity is given to anyone whose extradition is demanded of being heard before an English Court of justice to prove that the offence with which he is charged is really political. The cause of European freedom has thus been saved from a serious misfortune, and our own country from a great wickedness.

The other subject to be mentioned is the fight kept up by a body of advanced Liberals in the session of 1868 on the Bribery Bill of Mr Disraeli's Government—a fight in which I took a very active part. I had sought the advice of several of those who had applied their minds most carefully to the details of the subject—Mr W.D. Christie, Mr Pulling,

[1] [Footnote by Mill's step-daughter Helen Taylor (see page 98)] At one time I reckoned that threats of assassination were received at least once a week; and I noticed that threatening letters were always especially numerous by Tuesday's morning post. I inferred that they were meditated during the Sunday's leisure and posted on the Mondays. It might be worthwhile to collect evidence as to the proportions of crime committed on the different days of the week. It may be observed however that in England Sunday is generally used for all kinds of letter writing, innocent as well as guilty.

Mr Chadwick—as well as giving much of my own thought to the matter, for the purpose of formulating amendments and additional clauses that might make the Bill really effective against the numerous modes of corruption, direct and indirect, that might otherwise (as there was much reason to fear) be increased instead of diminished by the Reform Act. We also aimed at grafting onto the Bill measures for reducing the mischievous burden of so-called 'legitimate expenses' of elections. Among our many amendments were:

- Mr Fawcett's, for for making the returning officer's expenses a charge on the rates instead of on the candidates;
- another for the prohibition of paid canvassers, and the limitation of paid agents to one for each candidate;
- a third for extending the precautions and penalties against bribery to municipal elections, which are well known to be not only a preparatory school for bribery at parliamentary elections but an habitual cover for it.

The Conservative government, however, when once they had carried the leading provision of their Bill (for which I voted and spoke), namely the transfer of the jurisdiction in elections from the House of Commons to the Judges, made a determined resistance to all other improvements; and after one of our most important proposals, Mr Fawcett's, had actually obtained a majority they summoned the strength of their party and threw out the clause at a subsequent stage. The Liberal party in the House was greatly dishonoured by the conduct of many of its members in giving no help whatever to this attempt to secure the necessary conditions of an honest representation of the people. With their large majority in the House they could have carried all the amendments, or better ones if they had better to propose. But it was late in the session; members were eager to set about their preparations for the impending general election; and while some (such as Sir Robert Anstruther) honourably remained at their post though rival candidates were already canvassing their constituency, a much greater number placed their electioneering interests before their public duty. Many Liberals also looked with indifference on legislation against bribery, thinking that it merely diverted public interest from the ballot, which they considered—very mistakenly, I think it will turn out—to be the only remedy, and a sufficient one. From these causes our fight, though kept up with great vigour for several nights, was wholly unsuccessful; and the practices that we tried to make more difficult prevailed more widely than ever in the first general election held under the new electoral law.

Proportional representation

My participation in the general debates on Mr Disraeli's Reform Bill was limited to the one speech already mentioned [on page 108]; but I took that opportunity to bring formally before the House and the nation the two great improvements that remain to be made in representative government. One of them was Personal Representation or—as it is called with equal propriety—Proportional Representation. I brought this under the consideration of the House by an expository and argumentative speech on Mr Hare's plan; and subsequently I was active in support of the very imperfect substitute for that plan that Parliament was induced to adopt in a few constituencies. This poor makeshift had scarcely any recommendation except that it was a partial recognition of the evil that it did so little to remedy. As such, however, it was attacked by the same fallacies, and required to be defended on the same principles, as a really good measure; and its adoption in a few parliamentary elections, as well as the subsequent introduction of what is called the Cumulative

Vote in the elections for the London School Board, have had the good effect of speeding up the conversion of the equal claim of all electors to a proportional share in the representation from •a subject of merely theoretical discussion into •a question of practical politics. This assertion of my opinions on Personal Representation cannot be credited with any considerable or visible amount of practical result.

Votes for women

It was otherwise with the other motion that I made in the form of an amendment to the Reform Bill, and that was by far the most important—perhaps the only really important—public service I performed as a Member of Parliament. It was a motion to strike out the words that were understood to limit the electoral franchise to males, and thereby to admit to the suffrage all women who, as householders or otherwise, had the qualification required of male electors. For women not to make their claim to the suffrage at the time when the elective franchise was being largely extended would have been to give up the claim altogether; and a movement on the subject was begun in 1866 when I presented a petition for the suffrage signed by a considerable number of distinguished women. But it was still uncertain whether the proposal would obtain more than a few stray votes in the House; and when, after a debate in which the speakers on the contrary side were conspicuous by their feebleness the votes recorded in favour of the motion amounted to 73—made up by pairs and tellers to above 80—the surprise was general and the encouragement great; all the greater because one of those who voted for the motion was Mr Bright, which could only be attributed to the impression made on him by the debate, as he had previously made no secret of his disagreement with the proposal. The time appeared to my daughter, Miss Helen Taylor, to have come for forming a Society for the extension of the suffrage to women. The existence of the Society is due to my daughter's initiative; its constitution was planned entirely by her, and she was the soul of the movement during its first years, though delicate health and superabundant occupation made her decline to be a member of the Executive Committee. Many distinguished members of parliament, professors, and others, and some of the most eminent women the country can boast of, became members of the Society, a large proportion either directly or indirectly through my daughter's influence, she having written most—and all the best—of the letters by which adhesions was obtained, even when those letters bore my signature. In two remarkable instances—those of Miss Nightingale and Miss Mary Carpenter—the reluctance to come forward that those ladies had at first felt (not because they disagreed) was overcome by appeals written by my daughter though signed by me. Associations for the same object were formed in various local centres, Manchester, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, and others that have done much valuable work for the cause. All the Societies take the title of branches of the National Society for Women's Suffrage; but each has its own governing body and acts in complete independence of the others.

Correspondence

I believe I have mentioned all that is worth remembering of my proceedings in the House. But listing them, even if I did it completely, would give an inadequate idea of my occupations during that period, and especially of the time taken up by correspondence. For many years before my election to Parliament I had been continually receiving letters from strangers, mostly addressed to me as a writer on philosophy, and

either propounding difficulties or communicating thoughts on subjects connected with logic or political economy. In common (I suppose) with all who are known as political economists, I was a recipient of all the shallow theories and absurd proposals by which people are perpetually trying to show the way to universal wealth and happiness by some artful reorganisation of the currency. When there were signs of sufficient intelligence in the writers to make it worthwhile attempting to put them right, I took the trouble to point out their errors; until the growth of my correspondence made it necessary to dismiss such persons with very brief answers. But many of the communications I received were more worthy of attention than these, and in some of them oversights of detail were pointed out in my writings, which I was thus enabled to correct. Correspondence of this sort naturally multiplied with the multiplication of the subjects on which I wrote, especially those of a metaphysical kind. But when I became a member of parliament I began to receive letters on private grievances and on every imaginable subject that related to any kind of public affairs, however remote from my knowledge or pursuits. It was not my constituents in Westminster who laid this burden on me; *they* kept with remarkable fidelity to the understanding on which I had consented to serve. I did receive an occasional application from some innocent youth to procure for him a small government appointment; but these were few, and how simple and ignorant the writers were was shown by the fact that the applications came in about equally whichever party was in power. My invariable answer was that it was contrary to the principles on which I was elected to ask favours of any government. But on the whole hardly any part of the country gave me less trouble than my own constituents. The general mass of correspondence, however, swelled into an oppressive burden.

From this time on a great proportion of all my letters (including many that turned up in the newspapers) were written not by me but by my daughter;[1] at first merely from her willingness to help in disposing of a mass of letters greater than I could get through without assistance, but afterwards because I thought the letters she wrote superior to mine, and more so in proportion to the difficulty and importance of the occasion. Even those I wrote myself were generally much improved by her, as is also the case with all the more recent of my prepared speeches. Not a few passages (and those the most successful) of those, and of some of my published writings, were hers.

Other writings

While I remained in Parliament my work as an author was unavoidably limited to the recess. During that time I wrote (besides the pamphlet on Ireland, already mentioned [on page 110]), the essay on Plato, published in the *Edinburgh Review* and reprinted in the third volume of *Dissertations and Discussions*; and the address which, conformably to custom, I delivered to the University of St. Andrew's whose students had done me the honour of electing me to the office of Rector. In this Discourse I gave expression to many thoughts and opinions that had been accumulating in me through life, regarding the various studies that belong to a

[1] One which deserves particular mention is a letter respecting the Habitual Criminals Act and the functions of a police generally, written in answer to a private application for my opinion, but which got into the newspapers and excited some notice. This letter which was full of original and valuable thoughts was entirely my daughter's; I can never hope to rival the fertility and aptness that distinguishes her practical conceptions of the adaptation of means to ends.

liberal education, their uses and influences, and how they should be pursued to render their influences most beneficial. The position I took up, vindicating the high educational value of the old classic *and* the new scientific studies, on even stronger grounds than are urged by most of their advocates, and insisting that it is only the stupid inefficiency of the usual teaching that makes those studies be regarded as competitors instead of allies, was (I think) calculated not only to aid and stimulate the improvement that has happily started in the national institutions for higher education, but also to spread sounder ideas than we often find even in highly educated men regarding the conditions of the highest mental cultivation.

During this period also I started (and completed soon after I had left Parliament) the performance of a duty to philosophy and to the memory of my father, by preparing and publishing an edition of the *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, with notes bringing up the doctrines of that admirable book to the latest improvements in science and in theorising. This was a joint undertaking: the psychological notes being furnished in about equal proportions by Mr Bain and myself, while Mr Grote supplied some valuable contributions on points in the history of philosophy incidentally raised, and Dr. Andrew Findlater made good the deficiencies in the book arising from the imperfect philological knowledge of the time when it was written. Having been originally published at a time when the current of metaphysical speculation ran in a quite opposite direction to the psychology of Experience and Association, the *Analysis* had not obtained as much immediate success as it deserved, though it had made a deep impression on many individual minds, and through those minds had greatly contributed to creating that more favourable atmosphere for the Association Psychology of which we now have the benefit. Admirably adapted for a class book of the Experience Metaphysics, it only required to be enriched, and in some cases corrected, by the results of more recent labours in the same school of thought, to stand as it now does in company with Mr Bain's treatises at the head of the systematic works on Analytic psychology.

Thrown out of Parliament

In the autumn of 1868 the Parliament that passed the Reform Act was dissolved, and at the new election for Westminster I was thrown out; not to my surprise or (I believe) to that of my principal supporters, though in the few days preceding the election they had become more hopeful than before. If I had not been elected in the first place, *that* would not have required any explanation; what arouses curiosity is that I *was* elected the first time, or that having been elected then I was defeated afterwards. But the efforts made to defeat me were far greater on the second occasion than on the first. For one thing, the Tory government was now struggling for existence, and success in any contest was of more importance to them. Also, all persons of Tory feelings were far more embittered against me individually than on the previous occasion; many who had at first been either favourable or indifferent were now vehemently opposed to my re-election. As I had shown in my political writings that I was aware of the weak points in democratic opinions, some Conservatives (it seems) had had hopes of finding me an opponent of democracy; because I was able to see the Conservative side of the question, they presumed that I, like them, could not see any other side. Yet if they had really read my writings they would have known that after giving full weight to all that appeared to me well-grounded in the arguments against democracy, I unhesitatingly decided in its favour, while recommending that it should be accompanied

by such institutions as were consistent with its principle and calculated to ward off its drawbacks, one of the chief of these remedies being Proportional Representation, on which scarcely any of the Conservatives gave me any support. Some Tory expectations seem to have been based on the approval I had expressed of plural voting [= allowing one person to have more than one vote] under certain conditions. Mr Disraeli made a suggestion of this sort in one of the Resolutions that he introduced into the House preparatory to his Reform Bill (it met with no favour, and he did not press it); and it has been surmised that this arose from what I had written on the point; but if it did, it had been forgotten that I •had made it an express condition that the privilege of a plurality of votes should be tied to education, not to property, and even so •had approved of it only on the supposition of universal suffrage. How utterly inadmissible such plural voting would be under the suffrage given by the present Reform Act is proved to any who could otherwise doubt it by the very small weight the working classes are found to possess in elections, even under the law that gives no more votes to any one elector than to any other.

Exasperating the Liberal party

While I thus was far more obnoxious to the Tory interest and to many conservative Liberals than I had formerly been, the course I pursued in Parliament had not made Liberals generally enthusiastic in my support. I have already mentioned [on page 107] how large a proportion of my prominent appearances had been on questions on which I differed from most of the Liberal party, or about which they cared little, and how few occasions there had been on which the line I took was such as could lead them to attach any great value to me as a mouthpiece for their opinions. I had moreover done things that had created a personal prejudice against me in many minds. Many were offended by what they called the persecution of Mr Eyre [see page 111]; and still greater offence was taken at my sending a contribution to the election expenses of Mr Bradlaugh. Having refused to be at any expense for my own election, and having had all its expenses defrayed by others, I felt under a special obligation to contribute in turn where funds were deficient for candidates whose election was desirable. I accordingly sent contributions to nearly all the working class candidates, and among others to Mr Bradlaugh. He had the support of the working classes; having heard him speak, I knew him to be a man of ability and he had proved that he was the reverse of a demagogue by strongly opposing the prevailing opinion of the democratic party on two important subjects—Malthusianism [see Glossary] and Personal Representation. Men of this sort, who shared the democratic feelings of the working classes but judged political questions for themselves and had the courage to assert their individual convictions against popular opposition, seemed to me to be needed in Parliament, and I did not think that Mr Bradlaugh's anti-religious opinions (even though he had expressed them intemperately) ought to exclude him. Financially supporting his election would have been highly imprudent if I had been at liberty to consider only the interests of my own re-election; and, as might be expected, the utmost possible use—both fair and unfair—was made of this act of mine to stir up the electors of Westminster against me. These various causes, combined with an unscrupulous use of the usual monetary and other influences on the side of my Tory competitor while none were used on my side, explain why I failed at my second election after having succeeded at the first. No sooner was the result of the election known than I received three or four invitations to become a candidate for other

constituencies, chiefly counties; but even if success could have been expected, and this without expense, I was not disposed to deny myself the relief of returning to private life. I had no cause to feel humiliated at my rejection by the electors; and if I had, the feeling would have been far outweighed by the numerous expressions of regret which I received from all sorts of persons and places, and in a most marked degree from those members of the Liberal party in Parliament with whom I had been accustomed to collaborate.

Returning to Avignon

Since that time little has occurred that needs to be recorded here. I returned to my old pursuits and to the enjoyment of a country life in the South of Europe, alternating twice a year with a residence of some weeks or months in the neighbourhood of London. I have •written various articles in periodicals (chiefly in my friend Mr Morley's *Fortnightly Review*), have •made a few speeches on public occasions, especially at the meetings of the Women's Suffrage Society, have •published the *Subjection of Women*, written some years before, with additions by my daughter and myself, and have •started the preparation of matter for future books, of which it will be time to say more in detail if I live to finish them. Here, therefore, for the present, this Memoir may close.