

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 117 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 150 the 'evidence of mathematics' is the *evidentness*, the obvious truth, of mathematical truths.

fact: On page 169 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 151.

jejune: Thin, un nourishing. 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 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 misman-

agement 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 announced 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 135]. 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 144], 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 127]. 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 166): 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 154] 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 canvass-

ing, 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 163] 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 delivered¹ 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 concil-

iating 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 preferred 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 165)] 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 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 175]; 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 177]), 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 174] 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 178]; 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.