

# **John Stuart Mill; His Life and Works eBook**

## **John Stuart Mill; His Life and Works**

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## I.

### A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

John Stuart Mill was born on the 20th of May, 1806. "I am glad," wrote George Grote to him in 1865, with reference to a forthcoming article on his "Examination of Sir William

Hamilton's Philosophy," "to get an opportunity of saying what I think about your 'System of Logic' and 'Essay on Liberty,' but I am still more glad to get (or perhaps to *make*) an opportunity of saying something about your father. It has always rankled in my thoughts that so grand and powerful a mind as his left behind it such insufficient traces in the estimation of successors." That regret was natural. The grand and powerful mind of James Mill left very notable traces, however, in the philosophical literature of his country, and in the training of the son who was to carry on his work, and to be the most influential teacher in a new school of thought and action, by which society is likely to be revolutionized far more than it has been by any other agency since the period of Erasmus and Martin Luther. James Mill was something more than the disciple of Bentham and Ricardo. He was a profound and original philosopher, whose depth and breadth of study were all the more remarkable because his thoughts were developed and his knowledge was acquired mainly by his own exertions. He had been helped out of the humble life into which he had been born by Sir John Stuart, who assisted him to attend the lectures of Dugald Stewart and others at Edinburgh with a view to his becoming a minister in the Church of Scotland. Soon finding that calling distasteful to him, he had, in or near the year 1800, settled in London as a journalist, resolved by ephemeral work to earn enough money to maintain him and his family in humble ways while he spent his best energies in the more serious pursuits to which he was devoted. His talents soon made him friends, and the greatest of these was Jeremy Bentham.

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As erroneous opinions have been current as to the relations between Bentham and James Mill and have lately been repeated in more than one newspaper, it may be well here to call attention to the contradiction of them that was published by the son of the latter in "The Edinburgh Review" for 1844. "Mr. Mill and his family," we there read, "lived with Mr. Bentham for half of four years at Ford Abbey,"—that is, between 1814 and 1817,—“and they passed small portions of previous summers with him at Barrow Green. His last visit to Barrow Green was of not more than a month’s duration, and the previous ones all together did not extend to more than six months, or seven at most. The pecuniary benefit which Mr. Mill derived from his intimacy with Bentham consisted in this,—that he and his family lived with him as his guests, while he was in the country, periods amounting in all to about two years and a half. I have no reason to think that his hospitality was either given or accepted as pecuniary assistance, and I will add that the obligation was not exclusively on one side. Bentham was not then, as he was afterwards, surrounded by persons who courted his society, and were ever ready to volunteer their services, and, to a man of his secluded habits, it was no little advantage to have near him such a man as Mr. Mill, to whose advice and aid he habitually had recourse in all business transactions with the outward world of a troublesome or irksome nature. Such as the connection was, it was not of Mr. Mill’s seeking.” On the same unquestionable authority we learn, that “Mr. Mill never in his life was in debt, and his income, whatever it might be, always covered his expenses.” It is clear, that, from near the commencement of the present century, James Mill and Bentham lived for many years on terms of great intimacy, in which the poorer man was thoroughly independent, although it suited the other to make a fair return for the services rendered to him. A very characteristic letter is extant, dated 1814, in which James Mill proposes that the relations between him and his “dear friend and master” shall be to some extent altered, but only in order that their common objects may be the more fully served. “In reflecting,” he says, “upon the duty which we owe to our principles,—to that system of important truths of which you have the immortal honor to be the author, but of which I am a most faithful and fervent disciple, and hitherto, I have fancied, my master’s favorite disciple, —I have considered that there was nobody at all so likely to be your real successor as myself. Of talents it would be easy to find many superior. But, in the first place, I hardly know of anybody who has so completely taken up the principles, and is so thoroughly of the same way of thinking with yourself. In the next place, there are very few who have so much of the necessary previous discipline, my antecedent years having been wholly occupied in acquiring it. And, in the last

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place, I am pretty sure you cannot think of any other person whose whole life will be devoted to the propagation of the system.” “There was during the last few years of Bentham’s life,” said James Mill’s son, “less frequency and cordiality of intercourse than in former years, chiefly because Bentham had acquired newer, and to him more agreeable intimacies, but Mr. Mill’s feeling never altered towards him, nor did he ever fail, publicly or privately, in giving due honor to Bentham’s name and acknowledgment of the intellectual debt he owed to him.”

Those extracts are made, not only in justice to the memory of James Mill, but as a help towards understanding the influences by which his son was surrounded from his earliest years. James Mill was living in a house at Pentonville when this son was born, and partly because of the peculiar abilities that the boy displayed from the first, partly because he could not afford to procure for him elsewhere such teaching as he was able himself to give him, he took his education entirely into his own hands. With what interest—even jealous interest, it would seem—Bentham watched that education, appears from a pleasant little letter addressed to him by the elder Mill in 1812. “I am not going to die,” he wrote, “notwithstanding your zeal to come in for a legacy. However, if I were to die any time before this poor boy is a man, one of the things that would pinch me most sorely would be the being obliged to leave his mind unmade to the degree of excellence of which I hope to make it. But another thing is, that the only prospect which would lessen that pain would be the leaving him in your hands. I therefore take your offer quite seriously, and stipulate merely that it shall be made as soon as possible; and then we may perhaps leave him a successor worthy of both of us.” It was a bold hope, but one destined to be fully realized. At the time of its utterance, the “poor boy” was barely more than six years old. The intellectual powers of which he gave such early proof were carefully, but apparently not excessively, cultivated. Mrs. Grote, in her lately-published “Personal Life of George Grote,” has described him as he appeared in 1817, the year in which her husband made the acquaintance of his father. “John Stuart Mill, then a boy of about twelve years old,”—he was really only eleven,—“was studying, with his father as sole preceptor, under the paternal roof. Unquestionably forward for his years, and already possessed of a competent knowledge of Greek and Latin, as well as of some subordinate though solid attainments, John was, as a boy, somewhat repressed by the elder Mill, and seldom took any share in the conversation carried on by the society frequenting the house.” It is perhaps not strange that a boy of eleven, at any rate a boy who was to become so modest a man, should not take much part in general conversation; and Mr. Mill himself never, in referring to his father, led his hearers to suppose that he had, as a child, been in any way unduly repressed by him. The tender affection with which he always cherished his father’s memory in no way sanctions the belief that he was at any time subjected to unreasonable discipline. By him his father was only revered as the best and kindest of teachers.

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There was a break in the home teaching in 1820. James Mill, after bearing bravely with his early difficulties, had acquired so much renown by his famous "History of India," that, in spite of its adverse criticisms of the East-India Company, the directors of the Company in 1817 honorably bestowed upon him a post in the India House, where he steadily and rapidly rose to a position which enabled him to pass the later years of his life in more comfort than had hitherto been within his reach. The new employment, however, interfered with his other occupation as instructor to his boy; and for this reason, as well probably as for others tending to his advancement, the lad was, in the summer of 1820, sent to France for a year and a half. For several months he lived in Paris, in the house of Jean Baptiste Say, the political economist. The rest of his time was passed in the company of Sir Samuel Bentham, Jeremy Bentham's brother. Early in 1822, before he was eighteen, he returned to London, soon to enter the India Office as a clerk in the department of which his father was chief. In that office he remained for five and thirty years, acquitting himself with great ability, and gradually rising to the most responsible position that could be there held by a subordinate.

But, though he was thus early started in life as a city clerk, his self-training and his education by his father were by no means abandoned. The ancient and modern languages, as well as the various branches of philosophy and philosophical thought in which he was afterwards to attain such eminence, were studied by him in the early mornings, under the guidance of his father, before going down to pass his days in the India Office. During the summer evenings, and on such holidays as he could get, he began those pedestrian exploits for which he afterwards became famous, and in which his main pleasure appears to have consisted in collecting plants and flowers in aid of the botanical studies that were his favorite pastime, and something more than a pastime, all through his life. His first printed writings are said to have been on botany, in the shape of some articles contributed to a scientific journal while he was still in his teens, and it is probable, that, could they now be detected, we should find in other periodicals traces of his work, at nearly if not quite as early a period in other lines of study. That he worked early and with wonderful ability in at least one very deep line, appears from the fact that while he was still only a lad, Jeremy Bentham intrusted to him the preparation for the press, and the supplementary annotation, of his "Rationale of Judicial Evidence." That work, for which he was highly commended by its author, published in 1827, contains the first publicly acknowledged literary work of John Stuart Mill.

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While he was producing that result of laborious study in a special and intricate subject, his education in all sorts of other ways was continued. In evidence of the versatility of his pursuits, the veteran author of a short and ungenerous memoir that was published in "The Times" of May the 10th contributes one interesting note. "It is within our personal knowledge," he says, "that he was an extraordinary youth when, in 1824, he took the lead at the London Debating Club in one of the most remarkable collections of 'spirits of the age' that ever congregated for intellectual gladiatorship, he being by two or three years the junior of the clique. The rivalry was rather in knowledge and reasoning than in eloquence, mere declamation was discouraged; and subjects of paramount importance were conscientiously thought out." In evidence of his more general studies, we may here repeat a few sentences from an account, by an intimate friend of both these great men, of the life of Mr. Grote, which was published in our columns two years ago. "About this time a small society was formed for readings in philosophical subjects. The meetings took place at Mr. Grote's house in Threadneedle Street, on certain days from half past eight till ten in the morning, at which hour the members (all in official employment) had to repair to their respective avocations. The members were Grote, John Mill, Roebuck, William Ellice, William Henry Prescott, two brothers Whitmore, and George John Graham. The mentor of their studies was the elder Mr. Mill. The meetings were continued for two or three years. The readings embraced a small manual of logic, by Du Trieu, recommended by Mr. Mill, and reprinted for the purpose, Whately's Logic, Hobbes's Logic, and Hartley on Man, in Priestley's edition. The manner of proceeding was thorough. Each paragraph, on being read, was commented on by every one in turn, discussed and rediscussed, to the point of total exhaustion. In 1828 the meetings ceased; but they were resumed in 1830, upon Mill's 'Analysis of the Mind,' which was gone over in the same manner." These philosophical studies were not only of extreme advantage in strengthening and developing the merits of Mr. Mill and his friends, nearly all of whom were considerably older than he was, they also served to unite the friends in close and lasting intimacy of the most refined and elevating sort. Mr. Grote, his senior by twelve years, was perhaps the most intimate, as he was certainly the ablest, of all the friends whom Mr. Mill thus acquired.

Many of these friends were contributors to the original "Westminster Review," which was started by Bentham in 1824. Bentham himself and the elder Mill were its chief writers at first; and in 1828, if not sooner, the younger Mill joined the number. In that year he reviewed Whately's Logic; and it is probable that in the ensuing year he contributed numerous other articles. His first literary exploit, however, which he cared to reproduce in his "Dissertations

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and Discussions” was an article that appeared in “The Jurist,” in 1833, entitled “Corporation and Church Property.” That essay, in some respects, curiously anticipated the Irish Church legislation of nearly forty years later. In the same year he published, in “The Monthly Repository,” a remarkably able and quite a different production,—“Poetry and its Varieties,” showing that in the department of *belles-lettres* he could write with nearly as much vigor and originality as in the philosophical and political departments of thought to which, ostensibly, he was especially devoted. Shortly after that he embarked in a bolder literary venture. Differences having arisen concerning “The Westminster Review,” a new quarterly journal—“The London Review”—was begun by Sir William Molesworth, with Mr. Mill for editor, in 1835. “The London” was next year amalgamated with “The Westminster,” and then the nominal if not the actual editorship passed into the hands of Mr. John Robertson. Mr. Mill continued, however, to be one of its most constant and able contributors until the Review passed into other hands in 1840. He aided much to make and maintain its reputation as the leading organ of bold thought on religious and social as well as political matters. Besides such remarkable essays as those on Civilization, on Armand Carrel, on Alfred de Vigny, on Bentham, and on Coleridge, which, with others, have been republished in his collection of minor writings, he contributed many of great importance. One on Mr. Tennyson, which was published in 1835, is especially noteworthy. Others referred more especially to the politics of the day. From one, which appeared in 1837, reviewing Albany Fonblanque’s “England under Seven Administrations,” and speaking generally in high terms of the politics of “The Examiner,” we may extract a few sentences which define very clearly the political ground taken by Mr. Mill, Mr. Fonblanque, and those who had then come to be called Philosophical Radicals. “There are divers schools of Radicals,” said Mr. Mill. “There are the historical Radicals, who demand popular institutions as the inheritance of Englishmen, transmitted to us from the Saxons or the barons of Runnymede. There are the metaphysical Radicals, who hold the principles of democracy, not as means to good government, but as corollaries from some unreal abstraction,—from ‘natural liberty’ or ‘natural rights.’ There are the radicals of occasion and circumstance, who are radicals because they disapprove the measures of the government for the time being. There are, lastly, the Radicals of position, who are Radicals, as somebody said, because they are not lords. Those whom, in contradistinction to all these, we call Philosophical Radicals, are those who in politics observe the common manner of philosophers; that is, who, when they are discussing means, begin by considering the end, and, when they desire to produce effects, think of causes. These persons became Radicals because

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they saw immense practical evils existing in the government and social condition of this country, and because the same examination which showed them the evils showed also that the cause of those evils was the aristocratic principle in our government,—the subjection of the many to the control of a comparatively few, who had an interest, or fancied they had an interest, in perpetuating those evils. These inquirers looked still farther, and saw, that, in the present imperfect condition of human nature, nothing better than this self-preference was to be expected from a dominant few; that the interests of the many were sure to be in their eyes a secondary consideration to their own ease or emolument. Perceiving, therefore, that we are ill-governed, and perceiving that, so long as the aristocratic principle continued predominant in our government, we could not expect to be otherwise, these persons became Radicals; and the motto of their Radicalism was, Enmity to the aristocratical principle.”

The period of Mr. Mill’s most intimate connection with “The London and Westminster Review” forms a brilliant episode in the history of journalism; and his relations, then and afterwards, with other men of letters and political writers,—some of them as famous as Mr. Carlyle and Coleridge, Charles Buller and Sir Henry Taylor, Sir William Molesworth, Sir John Bowring, and Mr. Roebuck,—yield tempting materials for even the most superficial biography; but we must pass them by for the present. And here we shall content ourselves with enumerating, in the order of their publication, those lengthier writings with which he chiefly occupied his leisure during the next quarter of a century; though that work was frequently diversified by important contributions to “The Edinburgh” and “The Westminster Review,” “Fraser’s Magazine,” and other periodicals. His first great work was “A System of Logic,” the result of many years’ previous study, which appeared in 1843. That completed, he seems immediately to have paid chief attention to politico-economical questions. In 1844 appeared “Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy,” which were followed, in 1848, by the “Principles of Political Economy.” After that there was a pause of ten years, though the works that were issued during the next six years show that he had not been idle during the interval. In 1857 were published two volumes of the “Dissertations and Discussions,” consisting solely of printed articles, the famous essay “On Liberty,” and the “Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform.” “Considerations on Representative Government” appeared in 1861, “Utilitarianism,” in 1863, “Auguste Comte and Positivism” and the “Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy,” in 1865. After that, besides the very welcome “Inaugural Address” at St. Andrew’s in 1867, his only work of importance was “The Subjection of Women,” published in 1869. A fitting conclusion to his more serious literary labors appeared also in 1869 in his annotated edition of his father’s “Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind.”

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When we remember how much and what varied knowledge is in those learned books, it is almost difficult to believe, that, during most of the years in which he was preparing them, Mr. Mill was also a hard worker in the India House, passing rapidly, and as the reward only of his assiduity and talent, from the drudgery of a junior clerk to a position involving all the responsibility, if not quite all the dignity, of a secretary of state. One of his most intimate friends, and the one who knew far more of him in this respect than any other, has in another column penned some reminiscences of his official life; but if all the state papers that he wrote, and all the correspondence that he carried on with Indian officials and the native potentates of the East, could be explored, more than one volume would have to be written in supplement to his father's great "History of British India."

Having retired from the India House in 1858, Mr. Mill went to spend the winter in Avignon, in the hope of improving the broken health of the wife to whom he was devotedly attached. He had not been married many years, but Mrs. Mill, who was the widow of Mr. John Taylor, a London merchant, had been his friend since 1835, or even earlier. During more than twenty years he had been aided by her talents, and encouraged by her sympathy, in all the work he had undertaken, and to her rare merits he afterwards paid more than one tribute in terms that have no equal for the intensity of their language, and the depth of affection contained in them. Mrs. Mill's weak state of health seems to have hardly repressed her powers of intellect. By her was written the celebrated essay on "The Enfranchisement of Women" contributed to "The Westminster Review," and afterwards reprinted in the "Dissertations and Discussions," with a preface avowing, that by her Mr. Mill had been greatly assisted in all that he had written for some time previous. But the assistance was to end now. Mrs. Mill died at Avignon on the 3d of November, 1858, and over her grave was placed one of the most pathetic and eloquent epitaphs that have been ever penned. "Her great and loving heart, her noble soul, her clear, powerful, original, and comprehensive intellect," it was there written, "made her the guide and support, the instructor in wisdom, and the example in goodness, as she was the sole earthly delight, of those who had the happiness to belong to her. As earnest for all public good as she was generous and devoted to all who surrounded her, her influence has been felt in many of the greatest improvements of the age, and will be in those still to come. Were there even a few hearts and intellects like hers, this earth would already become the hoped-for heaven." Henceforth, during the fourteen years and a half that were to elapse before he should be laid in the same grave, Avignon was the chosen haunt of Mr. Mill.

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Passing much of his time in the modest house that he had bought, that he might be within sight of his wife's tomb, Mr. Mill was also frequently in London, whither he came especially to facilitate the new course of philosophical and political writing on which he entered. He found relief also in excursions, one of which was taken nearly every year, in company with his step-daughter, Miss Helen Taylor, into various parts of Europe. Italy, Switzerland, and many other districts, were explored, partly on foot, with a keen eye both to the natural features of the localities, especially in furtherance of those botanical studies to which Mr. Mill now returned with the ardor of his youth, and also to their social and political institutions. Perhaps the longest and most eventful of these excursions was taken in 1862 to Greece. On this occasion it had been proposed that his old friend, Mr. Grote, should accompany him. "To go through those scenes, and especially to go through them in your company," wrote Mr. Grote in January, "would be to me pre-eminently delightful; but, alas! my physical condition altogether forbids it. I could not possibly stay away from London, without the greatest discomfort, for so long a period as two months. Still less could I endure the fatigue of horse and foot exercise which an excursion in Greece must inevitably entail." The journey occupied more than two months; but in the autumn Mr. Mill was at Avignon; and, returning to London in December, he spent Christmas week with Mr. Grote at his residence, Barrow Green,—Bentham's old house, and the one in which Mr. Mill had played himself when he was a child. "He is in good health and spirits," wrote Mr. Grote to Sir G.C. Lewis after that visit; "violent against the South in this American struggle; embracing heartily the extreme Abolitionist views, and thinking about little else in regard to the general question."

It was only to be expected that Mr. Mill would take much interest in the American civil war, and sympathize strongly with the Abolitionist party. His interest in politics had been keen, and his judgment on them had been remarkably sound all through life, as his early articles in "The Morning Chronicle" and "The London and Westminster Review," and his later contributions to various periodicals, helped to testify; but towards the close of his life the interest was perhaps keener, as the judgment was certainly more mellowed. It was not strange, therefore, that his admirers among the working classes, and the advanced radicals of all grades, should have urged him, and that, after some hesitation, he should have consented, to become a candidate for Westminster at the general election of 1865. That candidature will be long remembered as a notable example of the dignified way in which an honest man, and one who was as much a philosopher in practice as in theory, can do all that is needful, and avoid all that is unworthy, in an excited electioneering contest, and submit without injury to the insults of political opponents and of political time-servers professing to be of his own way of thinking. The result of the election was a far greater honor to the electors who chose him than to the representative whom they chose; though that honor was greatly tarnished by Mr. Mill's rejection when he offered himself for re-election three years later.

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This is hardly the place in which to review at much length Mr. Mill's parliamentary career, though it may be briefly referred to in evidence of the great and almost unlooked-for ability with which he adapted himself to the requirements of a philosophical politician as distinct from a political philosopher. His first speech in the House of Commons, delivered very soon after its assembling, was on the occasion of the second reading of the Cattle Diseases Bill, on the 14th of February, 1866, when he supported Mr. Bright in his opposition to the proposals of Mr. Lowe for compensation to their owners for the slaughter of such animals as were diseased or likely to spread infection. His complaint against the bill was succinctly stated in two sentences, which fairly illustrated the method and basis of all his arguments upon current politics. "It compensates," he said, "a class for the results of a calamity which is borne by the whole community. In justice, the farmers who have not suffered ought to compensate those who have; but the bill does what it ought not to have done, and leaves undone what it ought to have done, by not equalizing the incidence of the burden upon that class, inasmuch as, from the operation of the local principle adopted, that portion of an agricultural community who have not suffered at all will not have to pay at all, and those who have suffered little will have to pay little; while those who have suffered most will have to pay a great deal." "An aristocracy," he added, in words that as truly indicate the way in which he subjected all matters of detail to the test of general principles of truth and expediency,—“an aristocracy should have the feelings of an aristocracy; and, inasmuch as they enjoy the highest honors and advantages, they ought to be willing to bear the first brunt of the inconveniences and evils which fall on the country generally. This is the ideal character of an aristocracy: it is the character with which all privileged classes are accustomed to credit themselves; though I am not aware of any aristocracy in history that has fulfilled those requirements.”

That, and the later speeches that Mr. Mill delivered on the Cattle Diseases Bill, at once announced to the House of Commons and the public, if they needed any such announcement, the temper and spirit in which he was resolved to execute his legislative functions. The same spirit and temper appeared in the speech on the Habeas Corpus Suspension (Ireland) Bill, which he delivered on the 17th of February; but his full strength as a debater was first manifested during the discussion on Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1866, which was brought on for second reading on the 12th of April. His famous speech on that occasion, containing the most powerful arguments offered by any speaker in favor of the measure, and his shorter speech during its discussion on the 31st of May, need not here be recapitulated. They were only admirable developments in practical debate of those principles

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of political science which he had already enforced in his published works. The other leading topics handled by Mr. Mill during the session of 1866 were the expediency of reducing the National Debt, which he urged on the occasion of Mr. Neate's proposal on the 17th of April; the Tenure and Improvement of Land (Ireland) Bill, on which he spoke at length and with force on the 17th of May, then practically initiating the movement in favor of land-reform, which he partly helped to enforce in part with regard to Ireland, and for the more complete adoption of which in England he labored to the last; the Jamaica outbreak, and the conduct of Governor Eyre, on which he spoke on the 31st of July; and the electoral disabilities of women, which he first brought within the range of practical politics by moving, on the 20th of July, for a return of the numbers of householders, and others who, "fulfilling the conditions of property or rental prescribed by law as the qualification for the electoral franchise, are excluded from the franchise by reason of their sex."

In the session of 1867 Mr. Mill took a prominent part in the discussions on the Metropolitan Poor Bill; and he spoke on various other topics,—his introduction of the Women's Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill being in some respects the most notable: but his chief action was with reference to Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, several clauses of which he criticised and helped to alter in committee. Though he was as zealous as ever, however, in his attendance to public business, he made fewer great speeches, being content to set a wise example to other and less able men in only speaking when he felt it absolutely necessary to do so, and in generally performing merely the functions of a "silent member."

In 1868 he was, if not more active, somewhat more prominent. On March the 6th, on the occasion of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's motion respecting the "Alabama Claims," he forcibly expressed his opinions as to the wrong done by England to the United States during the civil war, and the need of making adequate reparation; and on the 12th of the same month he spoke with equal boldness on Mr. Maguire's motion for a committee to inquire into the state of Ireland, repeating anew and enforcing the views he had lately put forward in his pamphlet on Ireland, and considerably aiding by anticipation the passage of Mr. Gladstone's two great measures of Irish Reform. He took an important part in the discussion of the Election Petitions and Corrupt Practices Bill; and among a great number of other measures on which he spoke was the Married Women's Property Bill of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre.

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Soon after that the House of Commons was dissolved, and Mr. Mill's too brief parliamentary career came to an end. The episode, however, had to some extent helped to quicken his always keen interest in political affairs. This was proved, among other ways, by the publication of his pamphlet on "England and Ireland" in 1868, and of his treatise "On the Subjection of Women" in 1869, as well as by the especial interest which he continued to exhibit in two of the most important political movements of the day,—all the more important because they are yet almost in their infancy,—the one for the political enfranchisement of women, the other for a thorough reform of our system of land tenure. The latest proof of his zeal on the second of these important points appeared in the address which he delivered at Exeter Hall on the 18th of last March, and in two articles which he contributed to "The Examiner" at the commencement of the present year. We may be permitted to add that it was his intention to use some of the greater quiet that he expected to enjoy during his stay at Avignon in writing frequent articles on political affairs for publication in these columns. He died while his intellectual powers were as fresh as they had ever been, and when his political wisdom was only ripened by experience.

In this paper we purposely limit ourselves to a concise narrative of the leading events of Mr. Mill's life, and abstain as far as possible from any estimate of either the value or the extent of his work in philosophy, in economics, in politics, or in any other of the departments of thought and study to which, with such depth and breadth of mind, he applied himself; but it is impossible for us to lay down the pen without some slight reference, however inadequate it may be, to the nobility of his character, and the peculiar grace with which he exhibited it in all his dealings with his friends and with the whole community among whom he lived, and for whom he worked with the self-sacrificing zeal of an apostle. If to labor fearlessly and ceaselessly for the good of society, and with the completest self-abnegation that is consistent with healthy individuality, be the true form of religion, Mr. Mill exhibited such genuine and profound religion—so permeating his whole life, and so engrossing his every action—as can hardly be looked for in any other man of this generation. Great as were his intellectual qualities, they were dwarfed by his moral excellences. He did not, it is true, aim at any fanciful ideal, or adopt any fantastic shibboleths. He was only a utilitarian. He believed in no inspiration but that of experience. He had no other creed or dogma or gospel than Bentham's axiom,—“The greatest happiness of the greatest number.” But many will think that herein was the chief of all his claims to the honor of all men, and the best evidence of his worth. At any rate, he set a notable example of the way in which a man, making the best use in his

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power of merely his own reason and the accumulated reason of those who have gone before him, wisely exercising the faculties of which he finds himself possessed, and seeking no guidance or support from invisible beacons and intangible props, may lead a blameless life, and be one of the greatest benefactors of his race. No one who had any personal knowledge of him could fail to discern the singular purity of his character; and to those who knew him best that purity was most apparent. He may have blundered and stumbled in his pursuit of truth; but it was part of his belief that stumbling and blundering are necessary means towards the finding of truth, and that honesty of purpose is the only indispensable requisite for the nearest approach towards truth of which each individual is capable. That belief rendered him as charitable towards others as he was modest concerning his own attainments. He never boasted; and he despised no one. The only things really hateful to him were arrogance and injustice, and for these he was, to say the least, as willing and eager to find excuse as could be the most devout utterer of the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We had noted many instances, coming within our own very limited observation, of his remarkable, almost unparalleled magnanimity and generosity; but such details would here be almost out of place, and they who need such will doubtless before long receive much more convincing proof of his moral excellence.

We shall not here dilate on those minor qualities of mind and heart that made Mr. Mill's society so charming to all who were fortunate enough to have any share in it; and these, especially in recent years, were many. When the first burden of his grief at the loss of his wife had passed,—perhaps partly as a relief from the solitude, save for one devoted companion, that would otherwise have been now forced upon him,—he mixed more freely than he had done before in the society of all whose company could yield him any satisfaction or by whom his friendship was really valued. His genial and graceful bearing towards every one who came near him must be within the knowledge of very many who will read this column; and they will remember, besides his transparent nobility of character, and the genial ways in which it exhibited itself, certain intellectual qualities for which he was remarkable. We here refer, not to his higher abilities as a thinker, but to such powers of mind as displayed themselves in conversation. Without any pedantry, —without any sort of intentional notification to those with whom he conversed that he was the greatest logician, metaphysician, moralist, and economist of the day,—his speech was always, even on the most trivial subjects, so clear and incisive, that it at once betrayed the intellectual vigor of the speaker. Not less remarkable also than his uniform refinement of thought, and the deftness with which he at all times expressed it, were the grasp

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and keenness of his observation, and the strength of memory with which he stored up every thing he had ever seen, heard, or read. Nothing escaped his notice at the time of its occurrence: nothing was forgotten by him afterwards. His friends often found, to their astonishment, that he knew far more about any passages in their lives than he had been made aware of than they could themselves remember; and, whenever that disclosure was made to them, they must have been rejoiced to think, that this memory of his, instead of being, as it might well have been, a dangerous garner of severe judgments and fairly-grounded prejudices, was a magic mirror, in which their follies and foibles were hardly at all reflected, and only kindly reminiscences and generous sympathies found full expression.

But he is dead now. Although the great fruits of his life—a life in which mind and heart, in which senses and emotions, were singularly well balanced—are fruits that cannot die, all the tender ties of friendship, all the strictly personal qualities that so much aided his work as a teacher of the world, as the foremost leader of his generation in the search after truth and righteousness, are now snapped forever. Only four weeks ago he left London for a three-months' stay in Avignon. Two weeks ago he was in his customary health. On the 5th of May he was attacked by a virulent form of erysipelas. On the 8th he died. On the 10th he was buried in the grave to which he had, through fourteen years, looked forward as a pleasant resting-place, because during fourteen years there had been in it a vacant place beside the remains of the wife whom he so fondly loved.

H. R. *Fox Bourne*.

## II.

### HIS CAREER IN THE INDIA HOUSE

I have undertaken to prepare a sketch of Mr. Mill's official career, but find, on inquiry, scarcely any thing to add to the few particulars on the subject which have already found their way into print. Of his early official associates, all have, with scarcely an exception, already passed away; and there is no one within reach to whom I can apply for assistance in verifying or correcting my own impressions. These are in substance the following.

In the few last decades of its existence, the East-India Company's establishment, in Leadenhall Street, consisted of three divisions,—the secretary's, military secretary's, and examiners' offices,—in the last of which most of the despatches and letters were composed which were afterwards signed by the directors or the secretary. Into this division, in the year 1821, the directors, perceiving an infusion of new blood to be very urgently required, introduced, as assistant examiners, four outsiders,—Mr. Strachey (father of the present Sir John and Major-Gen. Richard Strachey), Thomas Love

Peacock (author of "Headlong Hall"), Mr. Harcourt, and Mr. James Mill; the selection of the last-named being all the

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more creditable to them, because, in his “History of British India,” he had animadverted with much severity on some parts of the Company’s administration. Two years afterwards, in 1823, the historian’s son, the illustrious subject of these brief memoirs, then a lad of seventeen, obtained a clerkship under his father. According to the ordinary course of things in those days, the newly-appointed junior would have had nothing to do, except a little abstracting, indexing, and searching, or pretending to search, into records; but young Mill was almost immediately set to indite despatches to the governments of the three Indian Presidencies, on what, in India-House phraseology, were distinguished as “political” subjects,—subjects, that is, for the most part growing out of the relations of the said governments with “native” states or foreign potentates. This continued to be his business almost to the last. In 1828 he was promoted to be assistant examiner, and in 1856 he succeeded to the post of chief examiner; after which his duty consisted rather in supervising what his assistants had written than in writing himself: but for the three and twenty years preceding he had had immediate charge of the political department, and had written almost every “political” despatch of any importance that conveyed the instructions of the merchant princes of Leadenhall Street to their pro-consuls in Asia. Of the quality of these documents, it is sufficient to say, that they were John Mill’s; but, in respect to their quantity, it may be worth mentioning that a descriptive catalogue of them completely fills a small quarto volume of between three hundred and four hundred pages, in their author’s handwriting, which now lies before me; also that the share of the Court of Directors in the correspondence between themselves and the Indian governments used to average annually about ten huge vellum-bound volumes, foolscap size, and five or six inches thick, and that of these volumes two a year, for more than twenty years running, were exclusively of Mill’s composition; this, too, at times, when he was engaged upon such voluntary work in addition as his “Logic” and “Political Economy.”

In 1857 broke out the Sepoy war, and in the following year the East-India Company was extinguished in all but the name, its governmental functions being transferred to the Crown. That most illustrious of corporations died hard; and with what affectionate loyalty Mill struggled to avert its fate is evidenced by the famous Petition to Parliament which he drew up for his old masters, and which opens with the following effective antithesis: “Your petitioners, at their own expense, and by the agency of their own civil and military servants, originally acquired for this country its magnificent empire in the East. The foundations of this empire were laid by your petitioners, at that time neither aided nor controlled by Parliament, at the same period at which a succession of administrations under the control of Parliament were losing, by their incapacity and rashness, another great empire on the opposite side of the Atlantic.”

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I am fortunate enough to be the possessor of the original *Ms.* of this admirable state paper, which I mention, because I once heard its real authorship denied in that quarter of all others in which it might have been supposed to be least likely to be questioned. On one of the last occasions of the gathering together of the Proprietors of East-India Stock, I could scarcely believe my ears, when one of the directors, alluding to the petition, spoke of it as having been written by a certain other official who was silting by his side, adding, after a moment's pause, "with the assistance, as he understood, of Mr. Mill," likewise present. As soon as the Court broke up, I burst into Mill's room, boiling over with indignation, and exclaiming, "What an infamous shame!" and no doubt adding a good deal more that followed in natural sequence on such an exordium. "What's the matter?" replied Mill as soon as he could get a word in. "M——[the director] was quite right. The petition was the joint work of —— and myself."—"How can you be so perverse?" I retorted. "You know that I know you wrote every word of it."—"No," rejoined Mill, "you are mistaken: one whole line on the second page was put in by——."

In August, 1858, the East-India Company's doom was pronounced by Parliament. The East-India House was completely re-organized, its very name being changed into that of the India Office, and a Secretary of State in Council taking the place of the Court of Directors. But a change of scarcely secondary importance to many of those immediately concerned was Mill's retirement on a pension. A few months after he had left us an attempt was made to bring him back. At that time only one-half of the Council were nominated by the Crown, the other half having been elected, and the law prescribing that any vacancy among these latter should be filled by election on the part of the remaining elected members. On the first occasion of the kind that occurred, Mill was immediately proposed; and I had the honor of being commissioned to sound him on the subject of the intended offer, and to endeavor to overcome the objections to acceptance which it was feared he might entertain. I went accordingly to his house at Blackheath, but had no sooner broached the subject than I saw that my mission was hopeless. The anguish of his recent bereavement was as yet too fresh. He sought eagerly for some slight alleviation of despair in hard literary labor; but to face the outside world was for the present impossible.

Here my scanty record must end, unless I may be permitted to supplement its meagreness by one or two personal—not to say egotistical—reminiscences. The death of Mr. Mill senior, in 1836, had occasioned a vacancy at the bottom of the examiner's office, to which I was appointed through the kindness of Sir James Carnac, then chairman of the Company, in whose gift it was. Within a few months, however, I was transferred to a newly-created branch of the secretary's

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office; owing to which cause, and perhaps also to a little (or not a little) mutual shyness, I for some years came so seldom into contact with Mr. Mill, that, though he of course knew me by sight, we scarcely ever spoke, and generally passed each other without any mark of recognition when we happened to meet in or out of doors. Early in 1846, however, I sent him a copy of a book I had just brought out, on "Over-population." A day or two afterwards he came into my room to thank me for it; and during the half-hour's conversation that thereupon ensued, sprang up, full grown at its birth, an intimate friendship, of which I feel that I am not unduly boasting in declaring it to have been equally sincere and fervent on both sides. From that time for the next ten or twelve years, a day seldom passed without, if I did not go into his room, his coming into mine, often telling me as he entered, that he had nothing particular to say; but that, having a few minutes to spare, he thought we might as well have a little talk. And what talks we have had on such occasions, and on what various subjects! and not unfrequently, too, when the room was Mill's, Grote, the historian, would join us, first announcing his advent by a peculiar and ever-welcome rat-tat with his walking-stick on the door. I must not dwell longer over these recollections; but there are two special obligations of my own to Mill which I cannot permit myself to pass over. When, in 1856, he became examiner, he had made it, as I have been since assured by the then chairman of the East-India Company, a condition of his acceptance of the post, that I, whose name very likely the Chairman had never before heard, should be associated with him as one of his assistant examiners; and I was placed, in consequence, in charge of the Public-Works Department. Not long afterwards, having lapsed into a state of nervous weakness, which for nearly a year absolutely incapacitated me for mental labor, I should, but for Mill, have been compelled to retire from the service. From this, however, he saved me by quietly taking upon himself, and for the space of twelve months discharging, the whole of my official duties, in addition to his own. Is it wonderful that such a man, supposed by those who did not know him to be cold, stern, and dry, should have been enthusiastically beloved by those who did?

It is little to say, that my own friendship with him was, from first to last, never once ruffled by difference or misunderstanding of any kind. Differences of opinion we had in abundance; but my open avowal of them was always recognized by him as one of the strongest proofs of respect, and served to cement instead of weakening our attachment. [1] The nearest approach made throughout our intercourse to any thing of an unpleasant character was about the time of his retirement from the India House. Talking over that one day with two or three of my colleagues, I said it would not do to let Mill go without receiving

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some permanently-visible token of our regard. The motion was no sooner made than it was carried by acclamation. Every member of the examiners' office—for we jealously insisted on confining the affair to ourselves—came tendering his subscription, scarcely waiting to be asked; in half an hour's time some fifty or sixty pounds—I forget the exact sum—was collected, which in due course was invested in a superb silver inkstand, designed by our friend, Digby Wyatt, and manufactured by Messrs. Elkington. Before it was ready, however, an unexpected trouble arose. In some way or other, Mill had got wind of our proceeding, and, coming to me in consequence, began almost to upbraid me as its originator. I had never before seen him so angry. He hated all such demonstrations, he said, and was quite resolved not to be made the subject of them. He was sure they were never altogether genuine or spontaneous; there were always several persons who took part in them merely because they did not like to refuse; and, in short, whatever we might do, he would have none of it. In vain I represented how eagerly everybody, without exception, had come forward; that we had now gone too far to recede; that, if he would not take the inkstand, we should be utterly at a loss what to do with it; and that I myself should be in a specially embarrassing position. Mill was not to be moved. This was a question of principle, and on principle he could not give way. There was nothing left, therefore, but resort to a species of force. I arranged with Messrs. Elkington that our little testimonial should be taken down to Mr. Mill's house at Blackheath by one of their men, who, after leaving it with the servant, should hurry away without waiting for an answer. This plan succeeded; but I have always suspected, though she never told me so, that its success was mainly due to Miss Helen Taylor's good offices. But for her, the inkstand would almost certainly have been returned, instead of being promoted, as it eventually was, to a place of honor in her own and her father's drawing-room.

Mine is scarcely just now the mood in which I should have been naturally disposed to relate anecdotes like this; but, in the execution of my present task, I have felt bound chiefly to consider what would be likely to interest the reader.

W.T. Thornton.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] I may be permitted here, without Mr. Thornton's knowledge, to recall a remark made by Mr. Mill only a few weeks ago. We were speaking of Mr. Thornton's recently published "Old-fashioned Ethics and Common-Sense Metaphysics," when I remarked on Mr. Mill's wide divergence from most of the views contained in it. "Yes," he replied, "it is pleasant to find *something* on which to differ from Thornton." Mr. Mill's prompt recognition of the importance of Mr. Thornton's refutation of the wage-fund theory is only one out of numberless instances of his peculiar magnanimity.—B.

### III.

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*His moral character.*

To dilate upon Mr. Mill's achievements, and to insist upon the wideness of his influence over the thought of his time and consequently over the actions of his time, seems to me scarcely needful. The facts are sufficiently obvious, and are recognized by all who know any thing about the progress of opinion during the last half century. My own estimate of him, intellectually considered, has been emphatically though briefly given on an occasion of controversy between us, by expressing my regret at 'having to contend against the doctrine of one whose agreement I should value more than that of any other thinker.'

While, however, it is almost superfluous to assert of him that intellectual height so generally admitted there is more occasion for drawing attention to a moral elevation that is less recognized partly because his activities in many directions afforded no occasion for exhibiting it, and partly because some of its most remarkable manifestations in conduct are known only to those whose personal relations with him have called them forth. I feel especially prompted to say something on this point, because, where better things might have been expected, there has been, not only a grudging recognition of intellectual rank, but a marked blindness to those fine traits of character, which, in the valuation of men, must go for more than superiority of intelligence.

It might indeed have been supposed, that even those who never enjoyed the pleasure of personal acquaintance with Mr. Mill would have been impressed with the nobility of his nature as indicated in his opinions and deeds. How entirely his public career has been determined by a pure and strong sympathy for his fellow men, how entirely this sympathy has subordinated all desires for personal advantage, how little even the fear of being injured in reputation or position has deterred him from taking the course which he thought equitable or generous—ought to be manifest to every antagonist, however bitter. A generosity that might almost be called romantic was obviously the feeling prompting sundry of those courses of action which have been commented upon as errors. And nothing like a true conception of him can be formed, unless, along with dissent from them, there goes recognition of the fact that they resulted from the eagerness of a noble nature impatient to rectify injustice and to further human welfare.

It may perhaps be that my own perception of this pervading warmth of feeling has been sharpened by seeing it exemplified, not in the form of expressed opinions only, but in the form of private actions, for Mr. Mill was not one of those, who, to sympathy with their fellow men in the abstract, join indifference to them in the concrete. There came from him generous acts that corresponded with his generous sentiments. I say this, not from second-hand knowledge, but having in mind a remarkable example known only to myself and a few friends. I have hesitated whether to give this example, seeing that it has personal implications. But it affords so clear an insight into Mr. Mill's character, and shows so much more vividly than any description could do how fine were the motives swaying his conduct, that I think the occasion justifies disclosure of it.

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Some seven years ago, after bearing as long as was possible the continued losses entailed on me by the publication of the "System of Philosophy," I notified to the subscribers that I should be obliged to cease at the close of the volume then in progress. Shortly after the issue of this announcement I received from Mr. Mill a letter, in which, after expressions of regret, and after naming a plan which he wished to prosecute for re-imbursing me, he went on to say, "In the next place ... what I propose is, that you should write the next of your treatises, and that I should guarantee the publisher against loss; *i.e.*, should engage, after such length of time as may be agreed on, to make good any deficiency that may occur, not exceeding a given sum,—that sum being such as the publisher may think sufficient to secure him." Now, though these arrangements were of kinds that I could not bring myself to yield to, they none the less profoundly impressed me with Mr. Mill's nobility of feeling, and his anxiety to further what he regarded as a beneficial end. Such proposals would have been remarkable even had there been entire agreement of opinion, but they were the more remarkable as being made by him under the consciousness that there existed between us certain fundamental differences, openly avowed. I had, both directly and by implication, combated that form of the experiential theory of human knowledge which characterizes Mr. Mill's philosophy: in upholding Realism, I had opposed in decided ways those metaphysical systems to which his own Idealism was closely allied; and we had long carried on a controversy respecting the test of truth, in which I had similarly attacked Mr. Mill's positions in an outspoken manner. That, under such circumstances, he should have volunteered his aid, and urged it upon me, as he did, on the ground that it would not imply any personal obligation, proved in him a very exceptional generosity.

Quite recently I have seen afresh illustrated this fine trait,—this ability to bear with unruffled temper, and without any diminution of kindly feeling, the publicly-expressed antagonism of a friend. The last evening I spent at his house was in the company of another invited guest, who, originally agreeing with him entirely on certain disputed questions, had some fortnight previously displayed his change of view,—nay, had publicly criticised some of Mr. Mill's positions in a very undisguised manner. Evidently, along with his own unswerving allegiance to truth, there was in Mr. Mill an unusual power of appreciating in others a like conscientiousness, and so of suppressing any feeling of irritation produced by difference,—suppressing it, not in appearance only, but in reality, and that, too, under the most trying circumstances.

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I should say indeed, that Mr. Mill's general characteristic, emotionally considered, was an unusual predominance of the higher sentiments,—a predominance which tended, perhaps, both in theory and practice, to subordinate the lower nature unduly. That rapid advance of age which has been conspicuous for some years past, and which doubtless prepared the way for his somewhat premature death, may, I think, be regarded as the outcome of a theory of life which made learning and working the occupations too exclusively considered. But when we ask to what ends he acted out this theory, and in so doing too little regarded his bodily welfare, we see that even here the excess, if such we call it, was a noble one. Extreme desire to further human welfare was that to which he sacrificed himself.

*Herbert Spencer.*

### IV.

*His botanical studies.*

If we would have a just idea of any man's character, we should view it from as many points, and under as many aspects, as we can. The side-lights thrown by the lesser occupations of a life are often very strong, and bring out its less obvious parts into startling prominence. Much especially is to be learned of character by taking into consideration the employment of times of leisure or relaxation; the occupation of such hours being due almost solely to the natural bent of the individual, without the interfering action of necessity or expediency. Most men, perhaps especially eminent men, have a "hobby",—some absorbing object, the pursuit of which forms the most natural avocation of their mind, and to which they turn with the certainty of at least satisfaction, if not of exquisite pleasure. The man who follows any branch of natural science in this way is almost always especially happy in its prosecution; and his mental powers are refreshed and invigorated for the more serious and engrossing if less congenial occupation of his life. Mr. Mill's hobby was practical field botany; surely in all ways one very well suited to him.

Of the tens of thousands who are acquainted with the philosophical writings of Mr. Mill, there are probably few beyond the circle of his personal friends who are aware that he was also an author in a modest way on botanical subjects, and a keen searcher after wild plants. His short communications on botany were chiefly if not entirely published in a monthly magazine called "The Phytologist," edited, from its commencement in 1841, by the late George Luxford, till his death, in 1854, and afterwards conducted by Mr. A. Irvine of Chelsea, an intimate friend of Mr. Mill's, till its discontinuance in 1863. In the early numbers of this periodical especially will be found frequent notes and short papers on the facts of plant distribution brought to light by Mr. Mill during his botanical rambles. His excursions were chiefly in the county of Surrey, and especially in the neighborhood of Guildford and the beautiful

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vale of the Sittingbourne, where he had the satisfaction of being the first to notice several plants of interest, as *Polygonum dumetorum*, *Isatis tinctoria*, and *Impatiens fulva*, an American species of balsam, affording a very remarkable example of complete naturalization in the Wey and other streams connected with the lower course of the Thames. Mr. Mill says he first observed this interloper in 1822 at Albury, a date which probably marks about the commencement of his botanical investigations, if not that of the first notice of the plant in this country. Mr. Mill's copious *Ms* lists of observations in Surrey were subsequently forwarded to the late Mr. Salmon of Godalming, and have been since published with the large collection of facts made by that botanist in the "Flora of Surrey," printed under the auspices of the Holmesdale (Reigate) Natural History Club. Mr. Mill also contributed to the same scientific magazine some short notes on Hampshire botany, and is believed to have helped in the compilation of Mr. G.G. Mill's "Catalogue of the Plants of Great Marlow, Bucks."

The mere recording of isolated facts of this kind of course affords no scope for any style in composition. It may, however, be thought worth while to reproduce here the concluding paragraph of a short article on "Spring Flowers in the South of Europe," as a sample of Mr. Mill's popular manner, as well as for its own sake as a fine description of a matchless scene. He is describing the little mountain range of Albano, beloved of painters, and, after comparing its vernal flora with that in England, goes on:—

'If we would ascend the highest member of the mountain group, the Monte Cavo, we must make the circuit of the north flank of the mountains of Marino, on the edge of the Albano Lake, and Rocca di Tassa, a picturesque village in the hollow mountain side, from which we climb through woods, abounding in *Galanthus nivalis* and *Corydalis cava*, to that summit which was the *arx* of Jupiter Latialis, and to which the thirty Latian cities ascended in solemn procession to offer their annual sacrifice. The place is now occupied by a convent, under the wall of which I gathered *Orinthogalum nutans*; and from its neighborhood I enjoyed a panoramic view, surely the most glorious, in its combination of natural beauty and grandeur of historical recollections, to be found anywhere on earth. The eye ranged from Terracina on one side to Veii on the other, and beyond Veii to the hills of Sutrium and Nepete, once covered by the Cimmian forests, then deemed an impenetrable barrier between the interior of Etruria and Rome. Below my feet the Alban mountain, with all its forest-covered folds, and in one of them the dark-blue Lake of Nemi; that of Albano, I think, was invisible. To the north, in the dim distance, the Eternal City, to the west the eternal sea, for eastern boundary, the long line of Sabine mountains from Soracte past Tibur and away

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towards Proeneste. The range then passed behind the Alban group, but re-appeared to the south-east as the mountain crescent of Cora and Pometia, enclosing between its horns the Pontine marshes, which lay spread out below as far as the sea line, extending east and west from Terracina in the bay of Fondi, the Volscian Anxur, to the angle of the coast where rises suddenly, between the marshes and the sea, the mountain promontory of Circeii, celebrated alike in history and in fable. Within the space visible from this one point, the destinies of the human race were decided. It took the Romans nearly five hundred years to vanquish and incorporate the warlike tribes who inhabited that narrow tract, but, this being accomplished, two hundred more sufficed them to complete the conquest of the world.

During the frequent and latterly prolonged residence at Avignon, Mr. Mill, carrying on his botanical propensities, had become very well acquainted with the vegetation of the district, and at the time of his death had collected a mass of notes and observations on the subject. It is believed to have been his intention to have printed these as the foundation of a flora of Avignon.

In the slight contributions to the literature of botany made by Mr. Mill, there is nothing which gives any inkling of the great intellectual powers of their writer. Though always clear and accurate, they are merely such notes as any working botanical collector is able to supply in abundance. Mainly content with the pursuit as an outdoor occupation, with such an amount of home work as was necessary to determine the names and affinities of the species, Mr. Mill never penetrated deeply into the philosophy of botany, so as to take rank among those who have, like Herbert Spencer, advanced that science by original work either of experiment or generalization, or have entered into the battle-field where the great biological questions of the day are being fought over. The writer of this notice well remembers meeting, a few years since, the (at that time) parliamentary logician, with his trousers turned up out of the mud, and armed with the tin insignia of his craft, busily occupied in the search after a marsh-loving rarity in a typical spongy wood on the clay to the north of London.

But however followed, the investigation of nature cannot fail to influence the mind in the direction of a more just appreciation of the necessity of system in arrangement, and of the principles which must regulate all attempts to express notions of system in a classification. Traces of this are not difficult to find in Mr. Mill's writings. It may be safely stated, that the chapters on classification in the "Logic" would not have taken the form they have, had not the writer been a naturalist as well as a logician. The views expressed so clearly in these chapters are chiefly founded on the actual needs experienced by the systematic botanist; and the argument is largely sustained by

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references to botanical systems and arrangements. Most botanists agree with Mr. Mill in his objections to Dr. Whewell's views of a natural classification by resemblance to "types," instead of in accordance with well-selected characters; and indeed the whole of these chapters are well deserving the careful study of naturalists, notwithstanding that the wonderfully rapid progress in recent years of new ideas, lying at the very root of all the natural sciences, may be thought by some to give the whole argument, in spite of its logical excellence, a somewhat antiquated flavor. How fully Mr. Mill recognized the great importance of the study of biological classifications, and the influence such a study must have had on himself, may be judged from the following quotation:—

"Although the scientific arrangements of organic nature afford as yet the only complete example of the true principles of rational classification, whether as to the formation of groups or of series, those principles are applicable to all cases in which mankind are called upon to bring the various parts of any extensive subject into mental co-ordination. They are as much to the point when objects are to be classed for purposes of art or business as for those of science. The proper arrangement, for example, of a code of laws, depends on the same scientific conditions as the classifications in natural history; nor could there be a better preparatory discipline for that important function than the study of the principles of a natural arrangement, not only in the abstract, but in their actual application to the class of phenomena for which they were first elaborated, and which are still the best school for learning their use. Of this, the great authority on codification, Bentham, was perfectly aware; and his early 'Fragment on Government,' the admirable introduction to a series of writings unequalled in their department, contains clear and just views (as far as they go) on the meaning of a natural arrangement, such as could scarcely have occurred to any one who lived anterior to the age of Linnaeus and Bernard de Jussieu" (*System of Logic*, ed. 6, ii., p. 288).

*Henry Trimen.*

## V

### HIS PLACE AS A CRITIC

Mr. Mill's achievements as an economist, logician, psychologist, and politician are known more or less vaguely to all educated men; but his capacity and his actual work as a critic are comparatively little regarded. In the three volumes of his collected miscellaneous writings, very few of the papers are general reviews either of books or of men; and even these volumes derive their character from the essays they contain on the severer subjects with which Mr. Mill's name has been more peculiarly associated. Nobody buys his "Dissertations and Discussions" for the sake of his theory of poetry, or his essays on Armand Carrel and Alfred de Vigny, noble though

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these are in many ways. His essay on Coleridge is very celebrated; but it deals, not with Coleridge's place as a poet, but with his place as a thinker—with Coleridge as the antagonistic power to Bentham in forming the opinions of the generation now passing away. Still at such a time as this it is interesting to make some endeavor to estimate the value of what Mr. Mill has done in the way of criticism. It is at least worth while to examine whether one who has shown himself capable of grappling effectively with the driest and most abstruse problems that vex the human intellect was versatile enough to study poetry with an understanding heart, and to be alive to the distinctive powers of individual poets.

It was in his earlier life, when his enthusiasm for knowledge was fresh, and his active mind, "all as hungry as the sea," was reaching out eagerly and strenuously to all sorts of food for thought,—literary, philosophical, and political,—that Mr. Mill set himself, among other things, to study and theorize upon poetry and the arts generally. He could hardly have failed to know the most recent efflorescence of English poetry, living as he did in circles where the varied merits of the new poets were largely and keenly discussed. He had lived also for some time in France, and was widely read in French poetry. He had never passed through the ordinary course of Greek and Latin at school and college, but he had been taught by his father to read these languages, and had been accustomed from the first to regard their literature as literature, and to read their poetry as poetry. These were probably the main elements of his knowledge of poetry. But it was not his way to dream or otherwise luxuriate over his favorite poets for pure enjoyment. Mr. Mill was not a cultivator of art for art's sake. His was too fervid and militant a soul to lose itself in serene love and culture of the calmly beautiful. He read poetry for the most part with earnest, critical eye, striving to account for it, to connect it with the tendencies of the age, or he read to find sympathy with his own aspirations after heroic energy. He read De Vigny and other French poets of his generation, with an eye to their relations to the convulsed and struggling state of France, and because they were compelled by their surroundings to take life *au sérieux*, and to pursue, with all the resources of their art, something different from beauty in the abstract. Luxurious passive enjoyment or torpid half-enjoyment must have been a comparatively rare condition of his finely-strung, excitable, and fervid system. I believe that his moral earnestness was too imperious to permit much of this. He was capable indeed of the most passionate admiration of beauty, but even that feeling seems to have been interpenetrated by a certain militant apostolic fervor; his love was as the love of a religious soldier for a patron saint who extends her aid and countenance to him in his wars. I do not mean to say that his mind was in a perpetual

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glow: I mean only that this surrender to impassioned transports was more characteristic of the man than serene openness to influx of enjoyment. His "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties," while clear and strenuous as most of his thoughts were, are neither scientifically precise, nor do they contain any notable new idea not previously expressed by Coleridge, except perhaps the idea, that emotions are the main links of association in the poetic mind: still his working out of the definition of poetry, his distinction between novels and poems, and between poetry and eloquence, is interesting as throwing light upon his own poetic susceptibilities. He holds that poetry is the delineation of the deeper and more secret workings of human emotion. It is curious to find one who is sometimes assailed as the advocate of a grovelling philosophy complaining that the chivalrous spirit has almost disappeared from books of education, that the youth of both sexes of the educated classes are growing up unromantic. "Catechisms," he says, "will be found a poor substitute for the old romances, whether of chivalry or faery, which, if they did not give a true picture of actual life, did not give a false one, since they did not profess to give any, but (what was much better) filled the youthful imagination with pictures of heroic men, and of what are at least as much wanted,—heroic women."

If Mr. Mill did not love poetry with a purely disinterested love, but with an eye to its moral causes and effects, neither did he study character from mere delight in observing the varieties of mankind. Armand Carrel the Republican journalist, Alfred de Vigny the Royalist poet, Coleridge the Conservative, and Bentham the Reformer, are taken up and expounded, not as striking individuals, but as types of influences and tendencies. This habit of keeping in view mind in the abstract, or men in the aggregate, may have been in a large measure a result of his education by his father; but I am inclined to think that he was of too ardent and pre-occupied a disposition, perhaps too much disposed to take favorable views of individuals, to be very sensitive to differences of character. It should not, however, be forgotten that in one memorable case he showed remarkable discrimination. Soon after Mr. Tennyson published his second issue of poems, Mr. Mill reviewed them in "The Westminster Review" for July, 1835, and, with his usual earnestness and generosity, applied all his powers to making a just estimate of the new aspirant. To have reprinted this among his miscellaneous writings might have seemed rather boastful, as claiming credit for the first full recognition of a great poet: still it is a very remarkable review; and one would hope it will not be omitted if there is to be any further collection of his casual productions. I shall quote two passages which seem obvious enough now, but which required true insight, as well as courageous generosity, to write them in 1835—

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“Of all the capacities of a poet, that which seems to have arisen earliest in Mr. Tennyson, and in which he most excels, is that of scene-painting in the higher sense of the term; not the mere power of producing that rather vapid species of composition usually termed descriptive poetry,—for there is not in these volumes one passage of pure description,—but the power of creating scenery in keeping with some state of human feeling, so fitted to it as to be the embodied symbol of it, and to summon up the state of feeling itself with a force not to be surpassed by any thing but reality.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“The poems which we have quoted from Mr. Tennyson prove incontestably that he possesses in an eminent degree the natural endowment of a poet,—the poetic temperament. And it appears clearly, not only from a comparison of the two volumes, but of different poems in the same volume, that with him the other element of poetic excellence, intellectual culture, is advancing both steadily and rapidly; that he is not destined, like so many others, to be remembered for what he might have done rather than for what he did; that he will not remain a poet of mere temperament, but is ripening into a true artist.... We predict, that, as Mr. Tennyson advances in general spiritual culture, these higher aims will become more and more predominant in his writings; that he will strive more and more diligently, and, even without striving, will be more and more impelled by the natural tendencies of an expanding character, towards what has been described as the highest object of poetry,—‘to incorporate the everlasting reason of man in forms visible to his sense, and suitable to it.’”

This last sentence might easily be construed into a prediction of “In Memoriam” and “The Idyls of the King.”

If it is asked why Mr. Mill, with all his width of knowledge and sympathy, has achieved so little of a reputation as a miscellaneous writer, part of the reason no doubt is, that he sternly repressed his desultory tendencies, and devoted his powers to special branches of knowledge, attaining in them a distinction that obscured his other writings. Another reason is, that, although his style is extremely clear, he was for popular purposes dangerously familiar with terms belonging more or less to the schools. He employed these in literary generalizations, without remembering that they were not equally familiar to his readers; and thus general readers, like Tom Moore, or the author of the recent notice in “The Times,” who read more for amusement than instruction, were disposed to consider Mr. Mill’s style “vastly unreadable.”

*W. Minto.*

## VI.

### HIS WORK IN PHILOSOPHY

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To a savage contemplating a railway train in motion, the engine would present itself as the master of the situation,—the determining cause of the motion and direction of the train. It visibly takes the lead, it looks big and important, and it makes a great noise. Even people a long way up in the scale of civilization are in the habit of taking these attributes, perhaps not as the essential ones of leadership, but at all events as those by which a leader may be recognized. Still that blustering machine, which puffs and snorts, and drags a vast multitude in its wake, is moving along a track determined by a man hidden away from the public gaze. A line of rail lies separated from an adjacent one, the pointsman moves a handle, and the foaming giant, that would, it may be, have sped on to his destruction and that of the passive crew who follow in his rear, is shunted to another line running in a different direction and to a more desirable goal.

The great intellectual pointsman of our age—the man who has done more than any other of this generation to give direction to the thought of his contemporaries—has passed away; and we are left to measure the loss to humanity by the result of his labors. Mr. Mill's achievements in both branches of philosophy are such as to give him the foremost place in either. Whether we regard him as an expounder of the philosophy of mind or the philosophy of society, he is *facile princeps*. Still it is his work in mental science which will, in our opinion, be in future looked upon as his great contribution to the progress of thought. His work on political economy not only put into thorough repair the structure raised by Adam Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo, but raised it at least one story higher. His inestimable "System of Logic" was a revolution. It hardly needs, of course, to be said that he owed much to his predecessors,—that he borrowed from Whewell much of his classification, from Brown the chief lines of his theory of causation, from Sir John Herschel the main principles of the inductive methods. Those who think this a disparagement of his work must have very little conception of the mass of original thought that still remains to Mr. Mill's credit, the great critical power that could gather valuable truths from so many discordant sources, and the wonderful synthetic ability required to weld these and his own contributions into one organic whole.

When Mr. Mill commenced his labors, the only logic recognized was the syllogistic. Reasoning consisted solely, according to the then dominant school, in deducing from general propositions other propositions less general. It was even asserted confidently, that nothing more was to be expected,—that an inductive logic was impossible. This conception of logical science necessitated some general propositions to start with; and these general propositions being *ex hypothesi* incapable of being proved from other propositions, it followed, that, if they were

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known to us at all, they must be original data of consciousness. Here was a perfect paradise of question begging. The ultimate major premise in every argument being assumed, it could of course be fashioned according to the particular conclusion it was called in to prove. Thus an 'artificial ignorance,' as Locke calls it, was produced, which had the effect of sanctifying prejudice by recognizing so-called necessities of thought as the only bases of reasoning. It is true, that outside of the logic of the schools great advances had been made in the rules of scientific investigation; but these rules were not only imperfect in themselves, but their connection with the law of causation was but imperfectly realized, and their true relation to syllogism hardly dreamt of.

Mr. Mill altered all this. He demonstrated that the general type of reasoning is neither from generals to particulars, nor from particulars to generals, but from particulars to particulars. "If from our experience of John, Thomas, &c., who once were living, but are now dead, we are entitled to conclude that all human beings are mortal, we might surely, without any logical inconsequence, have concluded at once from those instances, that the Duke of Wellington is mortal. The mortality of John, Thomas, and others is, after all, the whole evidence we have for the mortality of the Duke of Wellington. Not one iota is added to the proof by interpolating a general proposition." We not only may, according to Mr. Mill, reason from some particular instances to others, but we frequently do so. As, however, the instances which are sufficient to prove one fresh instance must be sufficient to prove a general proposition, it is most convenient to at once infer that general proposition, which then becomes a formula according to which (but not from which) any number of particular inferences may be made. The work of deduction is the interpretation of these formulas, and therefore, strictly speaking, is not inferential at all. The real inference was accomplished when the universal proposition was arrived at.

It will easily be seen that this explanation of the deductive process completely turns the tables on the transcendental school. All reasoning is shown to be at bottom inductive. Inductions and their interpretation make up the whole of logic; and to induction accordingly Mr. Mill devoted his chief attention. For the first time induction was treated as the *opus magnum* of logic, and the fundamental principles of science traced to their inductive origin. It was this, taken with his theory of the syllogism, which worked the great change. Both his "System of Logic" and his "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy" are for the most part devoted to fortifying this position, and demolishing beliefs inconsistent with it. As a systematic psychologist Mr. Mill has not done so much as either Professor Bain or Mr. Herbert Spencer. The perfection of his method, its application, and the uprooting of prejudices which stood in its way,—this was the task to which Mr. Mill applied himself with an ability and success rarely matched and never surpassed.

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The biggest lion in the path was the doctrine of so-called “necessary truth.” This doctrine was especially obnoxious to him, as it set up a purely subjective standard of truth, and a standard—as he was easily able to show—varying according to the psychological history of the individual. Such thinkers as Dr. Whewell and Mr. Herbert Spencer had to be met in intellectual combat. Dr. Whewell held, not that the inconceivability of the contradictory of a proposition is a proof of its truth co-equal with experience, but that its value transcends experience. Experience may tell us what *is*; but it is by the impossibility of conceiving it otherwise that we know it *must be*. Mr. Herbert Spencer, too, holds that propositions whose negation is inconceivable have “a higher warrant than any other whatever.” It is through this door that ontological belief was supposed to enter. “Things in themselves” were to be believed in because we could not help it. Modern Noumenalists agree that we can know nothing more of “things in themselves” than their existence, but this they continue to assert with a vehemence only equalled by its want of meaning.

In his “Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy,” Mr. Mill gives battle to this mode of thought. After reviewing, in an opening chapter, the various views which have been held respecting the relativity of human knowledge, and stating his own doctrine, he proceeds to judge by this standard the philosophy of the absolute and Sir William Hamilton’s relation to it. The argument is really on the question whether we have or have not an intuition of God, though, as Mr. Mill says, “the name of God is veiled under two extremely abstract phrases,—‘The Infinite’ and ‘The Absolute.’” So profound and friendly a thinker as the late Mr. Grote held this raising of the veil inexpedient, but he proved, by a mistake he fell into, the necessity of looking at the matter in the concrete. He acknowledged the force of Mr. Mill’s argument, that “The Infinite” must include “a farrago of contradictions;” but so also, he said, does the Finite. Now undoubtedly finite things, taken distributively, have contradictory attributes, but not as a class. Still less is there any one individual thing, “The Finite,” in which these contradictory attributes inhere. But it was against a corresponding being, “The Infinite,” that Mr. Mill was arguing. It is this that he calls a “fasciculus of contradictions,” and regarded as the *reductio ad absurdissimum* of the transcendental philosophy.

Mr. Mill’s religious tendencies may very well be gathered from a passage in his review of Auguste Comte, a philosopher with whom he agreed on all points save those which are specially M. Comte’s. “Candid persons of all creeds may be willing to admit, that if a person has an ideal object, his attachment and sense of duty towards which are able to control and discipline all his other sentiments and propensities, and prescribe to him a rule of life,

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that person has a religion; and though every one naturally prefers his own religion to any other, all must admit, that if the object of his attachment, and of this feeling of duty, is the aggregate of our fellow-creatures, this religion of the infidel cannot in honesty and conscience be called an intrinsically bad one. Many indeed may be unable to believe that this object is capable of gathering round it feelings sufficiently strong; but this is exactly the point on which a doubt can hardly remain in an intelligent reader of M. Comte: and we join with him in condemning, as equally irrational and mean, the conception of human nature as incapable of giving its love, and devoting its existence, to any object which cannot afford in exchange an eternity of personal enjoyment." Never has the libel of humanity involved in the current theology been more forcibly pointed out, with its constant appeal to low motives of personal gain, or still lower motives of personal fear. Never has the religious sentiment which must take the place of the present awe of the unknown been more clearly indicated. It is this noble sentiment which shines out from every page of Mr. Mill's writings and all his relations to his fellow-creatures: the very birds about his dwelling seemed to recognize it. It is this noble sentiment which infuses a soul of life into his teachings, and the enunciation and acting-out of which constitute him, not only the great philosopher, but also the great prophet of our time.

J. H. LEVY.

## VII

### HIS STUDIES IN MORALS AND JURISPRUDENCE

The two chief characteristics of Mr. Mill's mind are conspicuous in the field of morals and jurisprudence. He united in an extraordinary degree an intense delight in thinking for its own sake, with an almost passionate desire to make his intellectual excursions contribute to the amelioration of the lot of mankind, especially of the poorer and suffering part of mankind. And yet he never allowed those high aims to clash with one another: he did not degrade his intellect to the sophistical office of finding reasons for a policy arising from mere emotion, nor did he permit it to run waste in barren speculations, which might have excited admiration, but never could have done any good. This is the reason why so many persons have been unable to understand him as the prophet of utilitarianism. A man of such exquisite feeling, of such pure conscientiousness, of such self-denying life, must surely be an advocate of what is called absolute morality. Utilitarianism is the proper creed of hard unemotional natures, who do not respond to the more subtle moral influences. Such is the view natural to those who cannot dissociate the word "utilitarianism" from the narrow meaning of utility, as contrasted with the pleasures of art. The infirmity of human language excuses such errors; for the language in which controversy is conducted

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is so colored by sentiment that it may well happen that two shall agree on the thing, and fight to the death about the word. We need the support of such reflections when we recall the history of such a word as “pleasure.” To pursue pleasure, say the anti-utilitarians, is a swinish doctrine. “Yes,” replied Mr. Mill, “if men were swine, and capable only of the pleasures appropriate to that species of animals.” Those who could not answer this argument, and at the same time cannot divest themselves of the association of pleasure with the ignoble, took refuge in the charge of inconsistency, and, finding there was not less but more nobility in Mr. Mill’s writing than their own theory, accused him of abandoning the tradition of his school. Mahomet would not go to the mountain, and they pleased themselves with the thought that the mountain had gone to Mahomet. Such a charge is really tantamount to a confession that popular antipathy was more easily excited by the word than by the real doctrine. Nevertheless Mr. Mill did an incalculable service in showing not less by his whole life, than by his writings, that utilitarianism takes account of all that is good in man’s nature, and includes the highest emotions, as well as those that are more commonplace. He took away a certain reproach of narrowness, which was never in the doctrine, and which was loudly, though perhaps with little reason, urged against some of its most conspicuous supporters. An important addition to the theory of morals is also contained in the book on “Utilitarianism.” His analysis of “justice” is one of the happiest efforts of inductive definition to be found in any book on ethics. From any point of view, it must be regarded as a valuable addition to the literature of ethical philosophy.

The somewhat technical subject of jurisprudence was not too much for Mr. Mill’s immense power of assimilation. One of his earliest efforts was as editor of Bentham’s “Rationale of Judicial Evidence.” He must, therefore, at an early period, have been master of the most original and enlightened theory of judicial evidence that the world has seen. He lived to see nearly all the important innovations proposed by Bentham become part and parcel of the law of the land; one of the last relics of bigotry—the exclusion of honest atheists (and only of such) from the witness-box—having been removed two or three years ago. Mr. Mill, in after years, attended Austin’s famous lectures on jurisprudence, taking extensive notes; so that he was able to supply the matter wanting to complete two important lectures, as they were printed in the first edition of Austin’s works. Among the “Dissertations and Discussions,” is a criticism of Austin’s work, which shows that he was far more than a scholar,—a most competent judge of his master. He pointed out in Austin’s definition of “right” a real defect. One of the points that Austin elaborated most was a classification such as might serve for a scientific code of law. Mr. Mill fully acknowledged the merits of the scheme, but laid his finger unerringly on its weakest part. His remarks show, that, if he had followed up the subject with an adequate knowledge of any good system of law, he would have rivalled or surpassed his achievements in other departments of knowledge.

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W. A. HUNTER.

### VIII.

#### HIS WORK IN POLITICAL ECONOMY.

The task of fairly estimating the value of Mr. Mill's achievements in political economy—and indeed the same remark applies to what he has done in every department of philosophy—is rendered particularly difficult by a circumstance which constitutes their principal merit. The character of his intellectual, no less than of his moral nature, led him to strive to connect his thoughts, whatever was the branch of knowledge at which he labored, with the previously-existing body of speculation, to fit them into the same framework, and exhibit them as parts of the same scheme; so that it might be truly said of him, that he was at more pains to conceal the originality and independent value of his contributions to the stock of knowledge than most writers are to set forth those qualities in their compositions. As a consequence of this, hasty readers of his works, while recognizing the comprehensiveness of his mind, have sometimes denied its originality; and in political economy in particular he has been frequently represented as little more than an expositor and popularizer of Ricardo. It cannot be denied that there is a show of truth in this representation; about as much as there would be in asserting that Laplace and Herschel were the expositors and popularizers of Newton, or that Faraday performed a like office for Sir Humphry Davy. In truth, this is an incident of all progressive science. The cultivators in each age may, in a sense, be said to be the interpreters and popularizers of those who have preceded them; and it is in this sense, and in this sense only, that this part can be attributed to Mill. In this respect he is to be strongly contrasted with the great majority of writers on political economy, who, on the strength perhaps of a verbal correction or an unimportant qualification of a received doctrine, if not on the score of a pure fallacy, would fain persuade us that they have achieved a revolution in economic doctrine, and that the entire science must be rebuilt from its foundation in conformity with their scheme. This sort of thing has done infinite mischief to the progress of economic science; and one of Mill's great merits is, that both by example and by precept he steadily discountenanced it. His anxiety to affiliate his own speculations to those of his predecessors is a marked feature in all his philosophical works, and illustrates at once the modesty and comprehensiveness of his mind.

It is quite true that Mill, as an economist, was largely indebted to Ricardo; and he has so fully and frequently acknowledged the debt, that there is some danger of rating the obligation too highly. As he himself used to put it, Ricardo supplied the backbone of the science; but it is not less certain that the limbs, the joints, the muscular developments,—all that renders political economy a complete and organized

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body of knowledge,—have been the work of Mill. In Ricardo's great work, the fundamental doctrines of production, distribution, and exchange have been laid down, but for the most part in mere outline; so much so, that superficial students are in general wholly unable to connect his statement of principles with the facts, as we find them, of industrial life. Hence we have innumerable "refutations of Ricardo,"—almost invariably refutations of the writers' own misconceptions. In Mill's exposition, the connection between principles and facts becomes clear and intelligible. The conditions and modes of action are exhibited by which human wants and desires—the motive powers of industry—come to issue in the actual phenomena of wealth, and political economy becomes a system of doctrines susceptible of direct application to human affairs. As an example, I may refer to Mill's development of Ricardo's doctrine of foreign trade. In Ricardo's pages, the fundamental principles of that department of exchange are indeed laid down with a master's hand; but for the majority of readers they have little relation to the actual commerce of the world. Turn to Mill, and all becomes clear. Principles of the most abstract kind are translated into concrete language, and brought to explain familiar facts; and this result is achieved, not simply or chiefly by virtue of mere lucidity of exposition, but through the discovery and exhibition of modifying conditions and links in the chain of causes overlooked by Ricardo. It was in his "Essays on Unsettled Questions in Political Economy" that his views upon this subject were first given to the world,—a work of which M. Cherbuliez of Geneva speaks as "un travail le plus important et le plus original dont la science economique se soit enrichie depuis une vingtaine d'annees."

On some points, however, and these points of supreme importance, the contributions of Mill to economic science are very much more than developments—even though we understand that term in its largest sense—of any previous writer. No one can have studied political economy in the works of its earlier cultivators without being struck with the dreariness of the outlook which, in the main, it discloses for the human race. It seems to have been Ricardo's deliberate opinion, that a substantial improvement in the condition of the mass of mankind was impossible. He considered it as the normal state of things that wages should be at the *minimum* requisite to support the laborer in physical health and strength, and to enable him to bring up a family large enough to supply the wants of the labor-market. A temporary improvement indeed, as the consequence of expanding commerce and growing capital, he saw that there might be; but he held that the force of the principle of population was always powerful enough so to augment the supply of labor as to bring wages ever again down to the *minimum* point. So completely had this belief become a fixed idea in Ricardo's mind, that

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he confidently drew from it the consequence, that in no case could taxation fall on the laborer, since—living, as a normal state of things, on the lowest possible stipend adequate to maintain him and his family—he would inevitably, he argued, transfer the burden to his employer; and a tax nominally on wages would in the result become invariably a tax upon profits. On this point Mill's doctrine leads to conclusions directly opposed to Ricardo's, and to those of most preceding economists. And it will illustrate his position as a thinker, in relation to them, if we note how this result was obtained. Mill neither denied the premises nor disputed the logic of Ricardo's argument: he accepted both; and in particular he recognized fully the force of the principle of population; but he took account of a further premise which Ricardo had overlooked, and which, duly weighed, led to a reversal of Ricardo's conclusion. The *minimum* of wages, even such as it exists in the case of the worst-paid laborer, is not the very least sum that human nature can subsist upon: it is something more than this; in the case of all above the worst-paid class it is decidedly more. The *minimum* is, in truth, not a physical but a moral *minimum*, and as such, is capable of being altered with the changes in the moral character of those whom it affects. In a word, each class has a certain standard of comfort below which it will not consent to live, or at least to multiply,—a standard, however, not fixed, but liable to modification with the changing circumstances of society, and which, in the case of a progressive community, is, in point of fact, constantly rising, as moral and intellectual influences are brought more and more effectually to bear on the masses of the people. This was the new premise brought by Mill to the elucidation of the wages question; and it sufficed to change the entire aspect of human life regarded from the point of view of political economy. The practical deductions made from it were set forth in the celebrated chapter on "The Future of the Industrial Classes,"—a chapter which it is no exaggeration to say places a gulf between Mill and all who preceded him, and opens an entirely new vista to economic speculation.

The doctrine of the science with which Mill's name has been most prominently associated within the last few years is that which relates to the economic nature of land, and the consequences to which this should lead in practical legislation. It is very commonly believed, that on this point Mill has started aside from the beaten highway of economic thought, and propounded views wholly at variance with those generally entertained by orthodox economists. No economist need be told that this is an entire mistake. In truth, there is no portion of the economic field in which Mill's originality is less conspicuous than in that which deals with the land. His assertion of the peculiar nature of landed property, and again

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his doctrine as to the “unearned increment” of value arising from land with the growth of society, are simply direct deductions from Ricardo’s theory of rent, and cannot be consistently denied by any one who accepts that theory. All that Mill has done here has been to point the application of principles all but universally accepted to the practical affairs of life. This is not the place to consider how far the plan proposed by him for this purpose is susceptible of practical realization; but it may at least be confidently stated, that the scientific basis on which his proposal rests is no strange novelty invented by him, but simply a principle as fundamental and widely recognized as any within the range of the science of which it forms a part.

I have just remarked that Mill’s originality is less conspicuous in relation to the economic theory of land than in other problems of political economy, but the reader must not understand me from this to say, that he has not very largely contributed to the elucidation of this topic. He has indeed done so, though not, as is commonly supposed, by setting aside principles established by his predecessors, but, as his manner was, while accepting those principles, by introducing a new premise into the argument. The new premise introduced in this case was the influence of custom as modifying the action of competition. The existence of an active competition, on the one hand between farmers seeking farms, on the other between farming and other modes of industry as offering inducements to the investment of capital, is a constant assumption in the reasoning by which Ricardo arrived at his theory of rent. Granting this assumption, it followed that farmers as a rule would pay neither higher nor lower rents than would leave them in possession of the average profits on their capital current in the country. Mill fully acknowledged the force of this reasoning, and accepted the conclusion as true wherever the conditions assumed were realized; but he proceeded to point out, that, in point of fact, the conditions are not realized over the greater portion of the world, and, as a consequence, that the rent actually paid by the cultivators to the owners of the soil by no means, as a general rule, corresponds with that portion of the produce which Ricardo considered as properly “rent.” The real regulator of actual rent over the greater part of the habitable globe was, he showed, not competition, but custom; and he further pointed out that there are countries in which the actual rent paid by the cultivators is governed neither by the causes set forth by Ricardo, nor yet by custom, but by a third cause different from either,—the absolute will of the owners of the soil, controlled only by the physical exigencies of the cultivator, or by the fear of his vengeance if disturbed in his holding. The recognition of this state of things threw an entirely new light over the whole problem of land-tenure, and plainly furnished grounds for legislative interference in the contracts between landlords and tenants. Its application to Ireland was obvious; and Mill himself, as the world knows, did not hesitate to urge the application with all the energy and enthusiasm which he invariably threw into every cause that he espoused.

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In the above remarks, I have attempted to indicate briefly some few of the salient features in Mill's contributions to the science of political economy. There is still one more which ought not to be omitted from even the most meagre summary. Mill was not the first to treat political economy as a science; but he was the first, if not to perceive, at least to enforce the lesson, that, just because it is a science, its conclusions carried with them no obligatory force with reference to human conduct. As a science, it tells us that certain modes of action lead to certain results; but it remains for each man to judge of the value of the results thus brought about, and to decide whether or not it is worth while to adopt the means necessary for their attainment. In the writings of the economists who preceded Mill, it is very generally assumed, that to prove that a certain course of conduct tends to the most rapid increase of wealth suffices to entail upon all who accept the argument the obligation of adopting the course which leads to this result. Mill absolutely repudiated this inference, and, while accepting the theoretic conclusion, held himself perfectly free to adopt in practice whatever course he preferred. It was not for political economy or for any science to say what are the ends most worthy of being pursued by human beings; the task of science is complete when it shows us the means by which the ends may be attained; but it is for each individual man to decide how far the end is desirable at the cost which its attainment involves. In a word, the sciences should be our servants, and not our masters. This was a lesson which Mill was the first to enforce, and by enforcing which he may be said to have emancipated economists from the thralldom of their own teaching. It is in no slight degree through the constant recognition of its truth, that he has been enabled to divest of repulsiveness even the most abstract speculations, and to impart a glow of human interest to all that he has touched.

J. E. CAIRNES.

## IX.

### HIS INFLUENCE AT THE UNIVERSITIES.

Some time ago, when there was no reason to suppose that we should so soon have to mourn the loss of the great thinker and of the kind friend who has just passed away, I had occasion to remark upon the influence which Mr. Mill had exercised at the universities. I will quote my words as they stand, because it is difficult to write with impartiality about one whose recent death we are deploring; and Mr. Mill would, I am sure, have been the first to say, that it is certainly not honoring the memory of one who is dead to lavish upon him praise which would not be bestowed upon him if he were living. I will therefore repeat my words exactly as they were written two years since: 'Any one who has resided during the last twenty years at either of our universities must have noticed that Mr. Mill is the author who has most

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powerfully influenced nearly all the young men of the greatest promise.' In thus referring to the powerful influence exercised by Mr. Mill's works, I do not wish it to be supposed that this influence is to be measured by the extent to which his books form a part of the university *curriculum*. His "Logic" has no doubt become a standard examination-book at Oxford. At Cambridge the mathematical and classical triposes still retain their former *prestige*. The moral science tripos, though increasing in importance, still attracts a comparatively small number of students, and there is probably no other examination for which it is necessary to read Mr. Mill's "Logic" and "Political Economy." This fact affords the most satisfactory evidence that the influence he has exerted is spontaneous, and is therefore likely to be lasting in its effects. If students had been driven to read his books by the necessity which examinations impose, it is quite possible, that, after the examination, the books might never be looked at again. A resident, however, at the university can scarcely fail to be struck with the fact, that many who perfectly well know that they will never in any examination be asked to answer a question in logic or political economy are among the most diligent students of Mr. Mill's books. When I was an undergraduate, I well remember that most of my friends who were likely to take high mathematical honors were already so ultimately acquainted with Mr. Mill's writings, and were so much imbued with their spirit, that they might have been regarded as his disciples. Many looked up to him as their teacher; many have since felt that he then instilled into them principles, which, to a great extent, have guided their conduct in after life. Any one who is intimately acquainted with Mr. Mill's writings will readily understand how it is that they possess such peculiar attractiveness for the class of readers to whom I am now referring. There is nothing more characteristic in his writings than generosity and courage. He always states his opponent's case with the most judicial impartiality. He never shrinks from the expression of opinion because he thinks it unpopular; and there is nothing so abhorrent to him as that bigotry which prevents a man from appreciating what is just and true in the views of those who differ from him. This toleration, which is so predominant a feature of his writings, is probably one of the rarest of all qualities in a controversialist. Those who do not possess it always produce an impression that they are unfair; and this impression, once produced, exercises a repelling influence upon the young. Another cause of the attractiveness of Mr. Mill's writings is the precision with which his views are expressed, and the systematic form which is given to his opinions. Confidence is reposed in him as a guide, because it is found that there is some definite goal to which he is leading his readers: he does not conduct them they know not whither, as

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a traveller who has lost his way in a mist, or a navigator who is steering his ship without a compass. The influence exercised by Mr. Mill does not chiefly depend upon the originality of his writings. He did not make any great discovery which will form an epoch in the history of human thought; he did not create a new science, or become the founder of a new system of philosophy. There is perhaps not so much originality in his "Political Economy" as in Ricardo's; but there are thousands who never thought of reading Ricardo who were so much attracted by Mr. Mill's book, that its influence might be traced throughout the rest of their lives. No doubt one reason of his attractiveness as a writer, in addition to other circumstances to which allusion has already been made, is the unusual power he possessed in applying philosophical principles to the facts of ordinary life. To those who believe that the influence Mr. Mill has exercised at the universities has been in the highest degree beneficial,—to those who think that his books not only afford the most admirable intellectual training, but also are calculated to produce a most healthy moral influence,—it may be some consolation, now that we are deploring his death, to know, that, although he has passed away, he may still continue to be a teacher and a guide. I believe he never visited the English universities: it was consequently entirely through his books that he was known. Not one of those who were his greatest admirers at Cambridge, when I was an undergraduate, ever saw him till many years after they had left the University. I remember that we often used to say, that there was nothing we should esteem so great a privilege as to spend an hour in Mr. Mill's society. There is probably no bond of attachment stronger than that which unites a pupil to one who has attracted him to new intellectual pursuits, and has awakened in him new interests in life. Some four or five years after taking my degree, I met Mr. Mill for the first time; and from that hour an intimate friendship commenced, which I shall always regard as a peculiarly high privilege to have enjoyed. Intimacy with Mr. Mill convinced me, that, if he had happened to live at either of the universities, his personal influence would have been no less striking than his intellectual influence. Nothing, perhaps, was so remarkable in his character as his tenderness to the feelings of others, and the deference with which he listened to those in every respect inferior to himself. There never was a man who was more entirely free from that intellectual conceit which breeds disdain. Nothing is so discouraging and heart-breaking to young people as the sneer of an intellectual cynic. A sarcasm about an act of youthful mental enthusiasm not only often casts a fatal chill over the character, but is resented as an injury never to be forgiven. The most humble youth would have found in Mr. Mill the warmest and most kindly sympathy.

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It may be said, if Mr. Mill has not become the founder of a new philosophical school at the universities where must we seek the result of his influence? I cannot give any thing like a complete reply to this question now; but any one who has observed the marked change which has come over the mode of thought in the universities in the last few years will be able to form some idea of the kind of influence which has been exercised by Mr. Mill. Speaking generally, he has obtained a very wide acceptance of the utilitarian doctrines: they were presented by Bentham in a form so harsh and unattractive as to produce an almost repelling effect. Mr. Mill, on the contrary, showed that the utilitarian philosophy might inspire the most active benevolence and the most generous enthusiasm. This acceptance of utilitarianism has produced a very striking effect in modifying the political opinions prevalent in the universities. For many years what has been known as the liberalism of young Oxford and Cambridge is in many respects fundamentally different from what is known as liberalism outside the universities. The liberalism of the universities, as well as that of the Manchester school, are both popularly described as advanced but between the two there is in many essentials the widest possible divergence. What is known as Philosophical Radicalism will long bear the impression of Mr. Mill's teaching.

It should be particularly remembered, that, avowing himself a liberal, he never forgot that it is the essence of true liberalism to be tolerant of opinions from which one differs, and to appreciate the advantages of branches of learning to which one has not devoted special attention. It is somewhat rare to find that those who profess themselves undoubted liberals are prepared to accept a consistent application of their principles. There is almost sure to be some region of inquiry which they regard as so dangerous that they regret that any one should enter upon it. Sometimes it is said that freedom of thought, though admirable in politics, is mischievous in theology: some, advancing what they believe to be one step further, express a general approbation of freedom of thought, but stigmatize free-thinkers. Again, it may be not infrequently observed that devotion to some particular study makes men illiberal to other branches of knowledge. Metaphysicians and physiologists who have never taken the trouble to master mathematical principles dogmatically denounce the influence of mathematics. Eminent classics and mathematicians have too frequently sneered at each other's studies. No one was ever more free from this kind of bigotry than Mr. Mill, and it probably constitutes one of the main causes of his influence. Some years ago I happened to be conversing at Cambridge with three men who were respectively of great eminence in mathematics, classics, and physiology. We were discussing the inaugural address which Mr. Mill had just delivered as rector

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of the St. Andrew's University. The mathematician said, that he had never seen the advantages to be derived from the study of mathematics so justly and so forcibly described; the same remark was made by the classic about classics, and by the physiologist about natural science. No more fitting homage can probably be offered to the memory of one to whom so many of us are bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection, than if, profiting by his example, we endeavor to remember, that above all things he was just to his opponents, that he appreciated opinions from which he differed, and that one of his highest claims to our admiration was his general sympathy with all branches of knowledge.

HENRY FAWCETT.

### X.

#### HIS INFLUENCE AS A PRACTICAL POLITICIAN.

Every one must be familiar with the often expressed opinion, that, as a practical politician, Mr. Mill's career was essentially a failure. It has been said a thousand times that the principal result of his brief representation of Westminster was to furnish an additional proof, if one were wanted, that a philosopher is totally incapable of exercising any useful influence in the direction of practical politics. It is proposed briefly to examine this opinion, though it may, indeed, with truth be urged that the present time is not calculated to make the examination an impartial one. The inquiry involves an almost constant reference, either expressed or implied, to Mr. Mill's personal character and influence, and it is hardly possible for those who are mourning him as a friend to speak of these dispassionately. It is perhaps hardly necessary at such a time as this to ask the indulgence of the reader if this unworthy tribute to the memory of a great man is colored by personal reverence and gratitude.

When, it is said that Mr. Mill failed as a practical politician, there are two questions to be asked: "Who says he has failed?" And "What is it said that he failed in?" Now, it seems that the persons who are loudest in the assertion of his failure are precisely those to whom the reforms advocated by Mr. Mill in his writings are distasteful. They are those who pronounce all schemes of electoral reform embodying the principle of proportional representation to be the result of a conspiracy of fools and rogues; they are those who sneer at the "fanciful rights of women;" they are those who think our present land tenure eminently calculated to make the rich contented, and keep the poor in their proper places; they are those who believe that republicans and atheists ought to be treated like vermin, and exterminated accordingly; they are those who think that all must be well with England if her imports and exports are increasing, and that we are justified in repudiating our foreign engagements, if to maintain them would have an injurious effect upon trade. The assertion of failure coming from such persons does not mean that Mr. Mill failed

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to promote the practical success of those objects the advocacy of which forms the chief feature of his political writings. It is rather a measure of his success in promoting these objects, and of the disgust with which his success is regarded by those who are opposed to his political ideas. It was known, or ought to have been known, by every one who supported Mr. Mill's candidature in 1865, that he was a powerful advocate of proportional representation, and that he attributed the very greatest importance to the political, industrial, and social emancipation of women; he advocated years ago, in his "Political Economy," the scheme of land tenure reform with which his name is now practically associated; his essay "On Liberty" left no doubt as to his opinions upon the value of maintaining freedom of thought and speech, his article entitled "A Few Words on Non-intervention" might have warned the partisans of the Manchester school that he had no sympathy with their views on foreign policy. There is little doubt that the majority of Mr. Mill's supporters in 1865 did not know what his political opinions were, and that they voted for him simply on his reputation as a great thinker. A large number, however, probably supported him, knowing in a general way the views advocated in his writings, but thinking that he would probably be like many other politicians, and not allow his practice to be in the least degree influenced by his theories. Just as radical heirs apparent are said to lay aside all inconvenient revolutionary opinions when they come to the throne, it was believed that Mr. Mill in Parliament would be an entirely different person from Mr. Mill in his study. It was one thing to write an essay in favor of proportional representation it was another thing to assist in the insertion of the principle of proportional representation in the Reform Bill, and to form a school of practical politicians who took care to insure the adoption of this principle in the school board elections. It was one thing to advocate theoretically the claims of women to representation it was another to introduce the subject into the House of Commons, to promote an active political organization in its favor, and thus to convert it, from a philosophical dream, into a question of pressing and practical importance. It was one thing to advocate freedom of thought and discussion in all political and religious questions it was another to speak respectfully of Mr. Odger, and to send Mr. Bradlaugh a contribution toward the expenses of his candidature for Northampton. The discovery that Mr. Mill's chief objects in Parliament were the same as his chief objects out of Parliament branded him at once as an unpractical man: and his success in promoting these objects constituted his "failure" as a politician. His fearless disregard of unpopularity, as manifested in his prosecution, in conjunction with Mr. P.A. Taylor, of Ex-Governor Eyre, was another proof that he was entirely unlike the people who call themselves "practical politicians." His persistency in conducting this prosecution was one of the main causes of his defeat at the election of 1868.

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If to be unpopular because he promoted the practical success of the opinions his life had been spent in advocating is to have failed, then Mr. Mill failed. If, however, the success of a politician is to be measured by the degree in which he is able personally to influence the course of politics, and attach to himself a school of political thought, then Mr. Mill, in the best meaning of the words, has succeeded. If Mr. Mill had died ten years ago, is it probable that his views on representative reform would have received so much practical recognition as they have obtained during the last five years? If he had never entered the House of Commons, would the women's-suffrage question be where it now is? Before he introduced the subject into the House of Commons in 1867, it may be said to have had no political existence in this country. The whole question was held in such contempt by "practical politicians," that the House would probably have refused to listen to any member, except Mr. Mill, who advocated the removal of the political disabilities of women. Mr. Mill was the one member of Parliament whose high intellectual position enabled him to raise the question without being laughed down as a fool. To every one's astonishment, seventy-four members followed Mr. Mill into the lobby: the most sanguine estimate, previous to the division, of the number of his supporters had been thirty. Since that time, the movement in favor of women's suffrage has made rapid and steady progress. Like all genuine political movements, it has borne fruit in many measures which are intended to remove the grievances of which those who advocate the movement complain: among these collateral results of the agitation for women's suffrage, may be enumerated the Married Women's Property Act, the Custody of Infants Bill, and the admission of women to the municipal and educational franchises and to seats upon school-boards. A large part of the present anxiety to improve the education of girls and women is also due to the conviction that the political disabilities of women will not be maintained. In this question of the general improvement of the position of women, Mr. Mill's influence can scarcely be over-estimated. All through his life he regarded it as a question of first-rate importance; and the extent to which he was able practically to promote it is sufficient in itself to make his career as a politician a success. A strong proof of the vitality of the movement, of which he was the principal originator, is that his death cannot injuriously affect its activity or its prospects of ultimate success. What he has done for women is final: he gave to their service the best powers of his mind and the best years of his life. His death consecrates the gift: it can never lessen its value.

What is true of Mr. Mill's influence on the women's-suffrage question is true also of the other political movements in which he took an active interest. He was able in all of these powerfully to influence the political history of his day in the direction in which he desired to influence it. If this is failure, failure is worth much more than success.

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Of the influence of Mr. Mill's personal character on those who were his political associates, it is difficult to speak too warmly. No one could be with him or work with him without being conscious of breathing a purer moral atmosphere: he made mean personal ambitions and rivalries seem despicable and ridiculous, not so much by any thing that he said directly on the subject, as by contrast with his own noble, strong, and generous nature. It is almost impossible to imagine that any one could be so insensible to the high morality of Mr. Mill's character as to suggest to him any course of conduct that was not entirely upright and consistent. A year or two ago, however, a story was told of a gentleman who asked Mr. Mill to stand for an Irish constituency, and stated that the only opinion it would be necessary for him to change was the one he had so often expressed against denominational education. A smile at the man's stupidity, and the remark, "I should like to have seen Mill's face when he heard this suggestion," is the almost invariable comment on this story. It is a very suggestive indication of the impression Mr. Mill's moral influence made on those who knew him.

An apology is due to the readers of these pages that the task of speaking of Mr. Mill as a practical politician has not fallen into more competent hands. No one can be more deeply sensible of my inability to deal adequately with the subject than I am myself. This sketch ought to have been written by one who is in every way more qualified to speak of Mr. Mill's political career than I am. Unavoidable circumstances, however, prevented his undertaking the work; and as the time was too short to allow of any being spent in a search that might have proved fruitless, the honor of writing these lines has devolved upon me.

MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT.

## XI.

### HIS RELATION TO POSITIVISM.[2]

The present course of lectures on a special subject has made no pretension to present the religious aspect of Positivism, and I shall not venture to intrude on one of its gravest functions the due commemoration of the dead. But nothing that is spoken here should have a merely scientific form, nor can I be satisfied until I have tried to give expression to the feeling which must be foremost in the minds of all present. It is impossible to forget that it was by Mr. Mill that Comte was first made known in this country, and that by him first in this country the great doctrines of positive thought, the supreme reign of law in the moral and social world, no less than in the intellectual world, were reduced to system and life. This conception as a whole has been gradually forming in the minds of all modern thinkers; but its full scope and force were presented to Englishmen for the first time by Mr. Mill. The growth of my own mind, and of that of all those with whom I have been associated, has been simply the recognition of this truth in all its

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bearings and force; and it was in minds saturated with this principle by the teaching of Mr. Mill that the great phases of English thought have germinated in our day. In this place it is impossible to forget, that, in introducing to the English world the principles of Comte, Mr. Mill so clearly and ardently professed the positive philosophy at that time restricted to its earlier phase alone. In this place it is impossible, too, to forget the generous assistance which he extended to Comte, whereby he was enabled to continue his labors in philosophy, impossible also to forget the active communion of mind between them, and the large space which their intercourse occupied in the thoughts and labors of both. Nor can I, and many present here, forget the many occasions on which we have been guided by his counsel and supported by his help in many a practical work in which we have depended on his example and experience. It is needless to repeat, for it must be present to all minds, how many and deep are the differences which separate him from the later doctrines of Comte, and how completely he repudiated connection with the religious reconstruction of Positivism. We here, at any rate, shall claim Mr. Mill for Positivism in no other sense than that in which he claimed it for himself in his own latest writings. These differences we shall neither exaggerate nor veil. They stand all written most clearly for all men to weigh and to use. But naturally we shall point, as one of us has already publicly pointed, to the cardinal features of agreement, and the vast importance of the features for which we may claim the whole weight of his authority. Yet I would not pretend that it is only on this side of his connection with the founder and principles of Positivism, that we dwell on the memory of Mr. Mill with admiration and sympathy. We reverence that unfaltering fearlessness of spirit, that warmth of generous emotion, that guileless simplicity of nature, which made his life heroic. Neither insult, failure, nor abandonment could shake his sense of duty, or touch his gentle and serene fortitude. For us his high example, his noble philosophic calm, continue to live and to teach. He, being dead, yet speaketh. And, if his great heart and brain are no longer amongst us as visible and conscious agencies, his spirit lives yet in all that he has given to the generation of to-day: the work of his spirit is not ended, nor the task of his life accomplished; but we feel that his nature is entering on a new and greater life amongst us,—one that is entirely spiritual, intellectual, and moral.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

## FOOTNOTES:

[2] Part of a lecture on "Political Institutions," delivered at the Positivist School, May 11.

## XII.

HIS POSITION AS A PHILOSOPHER.

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It is always hazardous to forecast the estimation in which any man will be held by posterity. In one sense truly we have no right to anticipate the judgment of the future, sufficient for us to form opinions satisfactory within the limits of our own generation. Sometimes, by evil chance, a great name is covered with undeserved reproach; and it is reserved for a distant future to do it justice. But such a work as Mr. Carlyle did for Cromwell we may confidently anticipate will never be required for the name of John Stuart Mill. He is already enrolled among the first of contemporary thinkers, and from that list his name will never be erased. The nature of Mr. Mill's work is such as to make it easy to predict the character of his future reputation. His is the kind of philosophy that is destined to become the commonplace of the future. We may anticipate that many of his most remarkable views will become obsolete in the best sense: they will become worked up into practice, and embodied in institutions. Indeed, the place that he will hold will probably be closely resembling that of the great father of English philosophy,—John Locke. There is indeed, amid distinguishing differences, a remarkable similarity between the two men, and the character of their influence on the world. What Locke was to the liberal movements of the seventeenth century, Mr. Mill has more than been to the liberal movement of the nineteenth century. The intellectual powers of the two men had much in common, and they were exercised upon precisely similar subjects. The “Essay on the Human Understanding” covered doubtless a field more purely psychological than the “Logic;” but we must remember that the “Analysis of the Mind” by the elder Mill had recently carried the inductive study of mind to an advanced point. If, however, we regard less the topics on which these two illustrious men wrote, than the special service rendered by each of them to intellectual progress, we may not unfittingly compare the work of Locke—the descent from metaphysics to psychology—to the noble purpose of redeeming logic from the superstition of the Aristotelians, and exalting it to something higher than a mere verbal exercise for school-boys. The attack that Locke opened with such tremendous effect on the *a priori* school of philosophy was never more ably supported than by the “Logic” and controversial writings of Mr. Mill.

The remarkable fact in regard to both these great thinkers—these conquerors in the realms of abstract speculation—is their relation to politics. Locke was the political philosopher of the Revolution of 1688; Mr. Mill has been the political philosopher of the democracy of the nineteenth century. The vast space that lies between their treatises represents a difference, not in the men, but in the times. Locke found opposed to the common weal an odious theory of arbitrary and absolute power. It is interesting to remember what were the giants necessary to be slain

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in those days. The titles of his first chapters on "Government" significantly attest the rudimentary condition of political philosophy in Locke's day. Adam was generally considered to have had a divine power of government, which was transmitted to a favored few of his descendants. Accordingly Locke disposes of Adam's title to sovereignty to whatever origin it may have been ascribed,—to "creation," "donation," "the subjection of Eve," or "fatherhood." There is something almost ludicrous in discussing fundamental questions of government with reference to such scriptural topics; and it is a striking evidence of the change that has passed over England since the Revolution, that, whereas Locke's argument looks like a commentary on the Bible, even the bishops now do not in Parliament quote the Bible on the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Nevertheless Locke clearly propounded the great principle, which, in spite of many errors and much selfishness, has been the fruitful heritage of the Whig party. "Political power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury, *and all this only for the public good.*" Locke also enounced the maxim, that the state of nature is one of equality. Mr. Mill's special views on the land question are not without parallel in Locke; for that acute thinker distinctively laid down that "labor" was the true ground even of property in land. Still it must be confessed that Locke's political philosophy is much cruder than Mr. Mill's. His "Essay on Government" is as the rough work of a boy of genius, the "Representative Government" a finished work of art of the experienced master. And this difference corresponds with the rate of political progress. The English constitution, as we now understand it, was unknown at the Revolution: it had to be slowly created. Now the great task of the future is to raise the mass of the people to a higher standard of political intelligence and material comfort. To that great end no man has contributed so much as Mr. Mill.

Perhaps the one writing for which above all others Mr. Mill's disciples will love his memory is his essay "On Liberty." In this undertaking Mr. Mill followed the noble precedent of Locke, with greater largeness of view and perfection of work. Locke's four letters "Concerning Toleration" constitute a splendid manifesto of the Liberals of the seventeenth century. The principle, that the ends of political society are life, health, liberty, and immunity from harm, and not the salvation of souls, has taken nearly two centuries to root itself in English law, but has long been recognized by all but the shallowest bigots. And yet Locke spoke of "atheism being a crime, which, for its madness as well as guilt,

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ought to shut a man out of all sober and civil society.” Here again, what a stride does the *Liberty* make? It is, once more, the difference of the times, rather than of the men. The same noble and prescient insight into the springs of national greatness and social progress characterizes the work of both men, but in what different measures? Again, we must say, the disciple is greater than the master. Closely bearing on this topic is the relation of the two men to Christianity. Locke not only wrote to show the “Reasonableness of Christianity,” but paraphrased several of the books of the New Testament. Mr. Mill has never written one sentence to give the least encouragement to Christianity. But, although a contrast appears to exist, there is really none. Locke was what may be called a Bible Christian. He rejected all theological systems, and constructed his religious belief in the truly Protestant way,—with the Bible and his inner consciousness. His creed was the Bible as conformed to reason; but he never doubted which, in the event of a conflict, ought to give way. To him the destructive criticism of biblical scholars and the discoveries of geology had given no disquietude; and he died with the happy conviction, that, without abandoning his religious teaching, he could remain faithful to reason. Mr. Mill inherited a vast controversy, and he had to make a choice like Locke, he remained faithful only to reason.

Perhaps, it might be urged, this comparison leaves out of account the very greatest work of Mr. Mill,—his ‘Political Economy.’ Locke lived too soon to be an Adam Smith; but, curiously enough, the parallel is not broken even at this point. In 1691 and again in 1695 he wrote, “Some considerations of the consequences of the lowering of interest, and raising the value of money,” in which he propounded among other views, that, “taxes, however contrived, and out of whose hands soever immediately taken, do, in a country where the great fund is in land for the most part terminate upon land.” There is of course no comparison between the two men on this head: nevertheless it is interesting to note in prototype the germs of the great work of Mr. Mill. It shows the remarkable and by no means accidental similarity between the men.

The parallel is already too much drawn out, otherwise it would be worth observing on the characters and lives of these two men. Enough, however, has been said to show that we may not unreasonably anticipate for Mr. Mill a future such as has fallen to Locke. His wisdom will be the commonplace of other times: his theories will be realized in political institutions; and we may hope and believe the working-class will rise to such a standard of wealth and culture and political power as to realize the generous aspirations of one of England’s greatest sons.

W.A. HUNTER.