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THE TABLES TURNED



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BY
JAMES BONAR

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PREFACE

THESE dialogues for the most part explain themselves. They deal more with character and personality than with doctrine and history.

The first was part of a lecture given in the London School of Economics, 19th January, 1926, on *Adam Smith and the Classical Economists*.

The second was written for an Adam Smith club founded in the 'Tower Hamlets' in 1880 and now meeting in the Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road. It was read there on 14th October, 1930.

The third was a contribution to the volume of *Economic Essays* prepared in honour of the *doyen* of American economists, *John Bates Clark*, in 1927, and printed for the American Economic Association, who have kindly allowed republication.

The fourth may be taken as a sequel to the third. It was written in the present year.

The fifth was written in 1927, and appeared this year, 1930, in the April number of the *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. X. Part 4. It is republished by the courtesy of the Indian Economic Association, Allahabad.

The writer has made use of a similar form of dialogue, Shaftesbury taking the chief place, in *Moral Sense* (Library of Philosophy, Allen and Unwin, 1930, Appendix).

J. B.

24.10.1930

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LET us leave our living contemporaries out of the game and fancy ADAM SMITH in Elysium. He believed in Elysium for such as himself and in a Tartarus for bad characters.¹ Let us suppose him cross-examined by his own followers there, without passion or prejudice, such things being left behind them. Let us believe with MAETERLINCK that they are wakened into speech by our remembrance of them.

Suppose a Tory Crusader or Anti-Gallican, of the type of renegade SOUTHEY, to challenge the very first paragraphs of the *Wealth of Nations*: 'DR. SMITH, you say that labour is the cause of all wealth; is not this a very incendiary statement? One of your editors, PLAYFAIR, has tried to show that, unlike the Physiocrats, you mean no mischief; but he clearly thinks you are touching pitch. You ought not to have praised those Frenchmen so much. You said they never did any harm in the world. It is more than has been said of your own School,

¹ Adam Smith: *Moral Sentiments*, Part II. Sect. II. *Merit and Demerit*, 6th ed.: 1790, Vol. I. 229.

Tacitus: *Ann.* I. i.: 'Sine ira et studio quorum causas procul habeo.'

Maeterlinck: *Blus Bird*, II. iii.

Playfair (William), 1759-1823. See his edition of *Wealth of Nations*, 1805, Vol. I. pp. xvii, etc. The offending and other passages: *W. of N.* IV. ix. MacCulloch's edition, 298; *Mor. S.*, ed. 1790, Vol. II. 105; *Edinburgh Review*, 1755, closing letter in Part II.

See *The Revolutionary Element in Adam Smith*, an Address to the National Liberal Club, 1924, dealing with Lord Acton's and Professor Foxwell's statement of the case.

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Sir, by English philanthropists. But it is the French philanthropists that give me my cue now. It is reported among the Jacobins that you are one of themselves, or, worse, a Sansculotte. Later generations will have it that you are not even a Marxian, you are a Bolshevik.

'You yourself condemn a "dangerous spirit of innovation." Does it not lurk in your text? Is there not a revolutionary element in yourself? Was ADAM SMITH, who once (let me say too mildly) censured ROUSSEAU, himself a ROUSSEAU?'

The Sage might answer calmly: 'Some of you gentlemen [probably intending MILL and MARSHALL] think it quite right to make a pointed statement in your first sentence, and then blunt the point by expanding, expounding, and altering, in the next sentences. I did no more. Perhaps I did less, for look at my text and context; observe what I really said, not *simpliciter* "labour supplies," but "labour originally supplies" the fund of all wealth. By and by I go on to show that in early times and savage places independent labour can indeed make both ends meet and keep all that it produces, but under this same "original state of things" there would never be a Wealth of Nations to consider at all. Humanity makes progress through suffering. The independence is suppressed for a time if progress is to be made and abundance is to come for us all. The suppression need not mean oppression, still less slavery, slavery being bad economy.¹ The "natural liberty" I desire is a "simple system" of which the completed accomplishment is the good of all. I think that the workman in civilized countries, in spite of his subjection to an employer, has always more than a bare living, and the greater the wealth of the nation the farther he is from that border line of mere necessities. I wrote a great part of a long chap-

¹ Slavery: *W. of N.* III. ii. 172 (MacCulloch's ed.).
Wages: *ib.* I. viii. 33. Ricardo, *Works*, p. 52. Marx, *Kapital*, I. 156.

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ter to show that in my time wages in England were decidedly above the line of bare living.'

'I said much the same in my own time,' interposed DAVID RICARDO, 'but people make the charge against me too.'

'I allow that you did say that,' said KARL MARX, 'and what is more I followed you, even though it blunted my point a little. But you let the employer's power remain.'

'In granting that wages tend to rise above bare living,' said MALTHUS, at last successful, 'DR. SMITH was really adopting my principle¹ that the standard of living stands behind the standard of wages and determines it even in the short run. You did not seem fully to recognize, DR. SMITH, that there was a constant need of control of the growth of population lest it should pull down both standards.'

'At least,' the Sage might answer, 'I stated your problem for you without mincing matters: "The demand for men, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of men." "Men, like all other animals, naturally multiply in proportion to the means of their subsistence." It was not I but one of my "admirers" who wrote that marriages had no connection with personal feelings but were simply regulated by average earnings. I never went so far as that, myself.'

'Still,' interposes modestly a son of our own times, 'you seem to make it all a question of Quantity. I find no Eugenics in your book. One of our later writers praised the much-abused Physiocrats for seeking in *their* Political Economy such know-

¹ Population: *Wealth of Nations*, I. viii. 36 and I. xi. 67.

'Average earnings': H. T. Buckle (1821-1862), *History of Civilisation in England* (1857-1861), Ch. I. p. 32 (ed. 1868).

Eugenics: Marshall, *Economics*, I. iv. § 2.

Talents: *Wealth of Nations*, I. ii. 7.

Race: J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, II. ix. § 3.

Workmen's Combinations: *Wealth of Nations*, I. viii. 30, 36.

Wages: *Ricardo to Trower*, XLII. 139.

Strong cases: *Ricardo to Malthus*, LXXI. 167.

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ledge as would raise the Quality of human life, the quality of the race; but you on the contrary never seem to consider the improvement of the race at all.'

'To some extent you are right,' would our hero answer; 'I never heard of a germplasm till you talked of it. I was strongly impressed, as you know, with the power of Division of Labour even over human character. I thought accordingly that high quality was not inborn but acquired, that the difference of talent between man and man at birth was very small. The philosopher and the street-porter differ chiefly because of their employment, surroundings and education, a dictum that ought to please such "followers" of mine as explain away all history by economic causes,—which I myself never did.'

'I went farther than you,' exclaimed JOHN STUART MILL, 'I said that it was a vulgar error to attribute diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences, and I included those of Race.'

'But, DR. SMITH,' said voices on all sides, 'you denied to the working-man the advantage of combining with his fellows, thereby reducing his chances of success in any surroundings and his chances of improving the surroundings themselves. MR. MILL never did that.'

'Remember,' might be the answer, 'my book came out in 1776, a date still remembered by you in connection with the American Colonies, as well as with such pigmies (*homunculi*) as HUME, GIBBON and myself. At that time most combinations were unlawful and nearly all of them unfortunate and mischievous. You have had a happier experience since. In my time the masters' combinations were worse than the men's. You will allow that, if I had any prejudices, they were in favour of the men.'

'So say we all of us,' chanted the School in chorus, and one added, 'It was *true* in most cases, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. We deplored the condition of the

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worker and with better reason than you, for in the next generation it became worse. The Factory System was hardly a simple system of natural liberty for the workpeople. The liberty was little in evidence, even after 1824, when the muzzle was removed. It was regard for your first principle of fluid competition that made us unwilling for a time to interfere with things as they were.'

'You were bewailing; what helped your bewailing? Personally I went farther than that,' said RICARDO. 'When the market was driving down wages everywhere, in November 1820, I, as a gentleman I suppose, always paid the same. Though in my study I imagined strong cases in order to elucidate principles, and reasoned about Wages on the basis of what you call fluid competition, I did not scruple to undermine that basis on my own estate among my own labourers.'

Laughter ensued at this, and MARX, remembering his Macaulay, whispered, 'See the despot Charles Stuart taking his boys on his knees and kissing them.' Then, more audibly, 'Be content, MR. RICARDO; your economics, such as they are, make the foundation of my politics such as they are!'

'Not content,' was the retort, 'you turn my Cost into mere Labour, and my Profits into Surplus Labour. Was I inhumane? Did I not strive with MACCULLOCH¹ over the effects of Machinery, saying, "the same cause which may increase the net revenue of the country may at the same time render the population redundant and deteriorate the condition of the labourer"?' WILKES was not a Wilkite, and I am not an unqualified Ricardian. The Political Economy Club under-

¹ Ricardo never a Ricardian? *Works*, XXXI. p. 236.

Political Economy Club of 1821, History, ed. by Henry Higgs, C.B., 212, 234, 268, 271 (Diary of J. L. Mallet).

Wealth of Nations, I. x., esp. p. 45, on trades.

J. S. M. on non-competing groups: *Pol. Ec.*, ed. Ashley, p. 388; cf. p. 291 (3rd ed., 1852, II. xiv. § 1).

Cairnes (John Elliot), 1823-1875, *Principles* (1874), I. iii. 70 ff.

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stood that very well. The stones have cried out since I was there, and betrayed our open secret.'

'They talk of fluid competition,' said JOHN MILL and CAIRNES in a breath, though CAIRNES had the longer breath. 'In your scheme of trades, DR. SMITH, you seem to forget economic friction. Even "in the same neighbourhood" it was not easy, even in your day, after feudalism and the guilds had gone, for men to *flow* from one trade to another, like water trying to find a level, with every change in the "net advantages." Trades are often self-contained non-competing groups.'

'Yes,' said a late Victorian, 'you were not alive to MR. MILL's Variations, MR. CAIRNES, and did not observe that he had faced right about between 1848 and 1852 and forestalled you. Small blame to either of you, but the one point of you twain is not the whole matter. Our time is not very different from yours in Competition for Goods and Competition for Capital—your "higgling of the market," DR. SMITH, has still a meaning for us there—but what worlds away as regards Labour! Many eager discussions in ancient circles between eminent men a hundred years ago seem to us to-day entirely unreal. In our days the ball does not go simply right or left as strikes the player; unlike "any other commodity" it is alive and has a will of its own.¹ Levelling of net advantages might be brought about under your "natural liberty," and it would work very well with the Theory of the Wages Fund, of which there are seeds, Sir, in your *Wealth of Nations*. The theory died when MR. MILL, after confessing far too much, gave it up to MR. THORNTON. Unlike our brave MALTHUS, MR.

¹ The ball 'has a will of its own': Mrs. Bernard Bosanquet's happy application of *Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. VIII, pp. 121, 122 of ed. 1871. Wages Fund: *Wealth of Nations*, I. ix. 43. Miss Ellis on the Variations in Mill: *Economic Journal*, 1906, 295, 296. Ashley's ed. of Mill's *Political Economy*, II. iv. § 1, 242.

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MILL did not do his penance in the white sheets of a new edition. He was equally shy when he recanted his concession about Infant Industries. He still asserts, too, that Political Economy cannot move without the principle of Competition. With all his reservations and variations he does not seem fully to understand how much the scene has shifted.'

'Peace,' said the Sage. 'Remember where you are.¹ I was inconsistent myself about Rent and Prices. If I remember rightly, I told someone that BENTHAM had proved me wrong about Usury. My dear friend HUME was against me on Rent, and ought to have warned me sooner. You see my repentance, too, was clandestine. But I clung to "natural liberty," which some of you tell me is farther off than ever. Tell me the unvarnished truth about it. Is there no competition now at all? Does potter no longer strive with potter, and joiner with joiner? Perhaps I was in my own way a visionary. I may have believed men cleverer than they really are, just as Utopians think they are more moral and reasonable. MR. MARX says he is no Utopian, but from all I hear he and his friends have a touch of that weakness. Their Utopias come in at the end like the Myths in PLATO's Dialogues. For myself, did I not write that we have never yet had perfect liberty and justice on the earth?² Of course I meant it would be heaven if we did have it. If people were either all perfectly good or all perfectly shrewd, then either my system or his would indifferently result in the Best of All Possible Worlds. Meanwhile we are both short of our postulate. The world is evil enough to spoil the Utopian postulate, and stupid enough to spoil mine. Ordinary men even in your twentieth century

¹ Rent: *Wealth of Nations*, I. vi. 23, rent enters into price; I. xi. 67, rent is an effect of price.

² Utopias: *Wealth of Nations*, IV. ix. 304; IV. ii. 199, etc.

Reforms: *Wealth of Nations*, I. x. 63 (Poor Law).

Coercive education: Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, Ch. XVII. p. 200, *Man versus State*, 24 seq. : contra, *Wealth of Nations*, V. i. art. 2, p. 352.

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are neither very good nor very wise. Perhaps the second drawback is the more serious. We do not need your German poets to teach us that the gods themselves fight a losing battle against dulness. What else are we in the world for but to mend that and other drawbacks, with the help perhaps of your "Eugenists," or in more old-fashioned ways? As a matter of fact I did not in my book expect too much of *humanity* but rather (in all reverence be it spoken) of Providence; I thought Providence would overrule or o'er inform the stupidity and the sinfulness, so that all should work together for good, without intending it.'

To which long reply someone, perhaps a Cambridge professor of our own times, makes an equally long rejoinder.

'Frankly spoken, DR. SMITH, since you want a plain, unvarnished tale, Combination has been lawful for 100 years in our country since your days. It is as powerful and prominent now as ever Competition was in your time. The Americans, of the United States, which you just lived to see established, tell us that the one necessarily grows out of the other. Even apart from Combination, Interference has grown in ways that would be strange to you. We have found it necessary to protect permanent feebleness by permanent regulation. Besides the weakness of children and young people and women, we have found a general weakness of men under certain conditions of labour. There is a *stratum* of the people unable to help itself even by Combination against odds, the odds showing no tendency to disappear of themselves by any automatic progress of the species. We get the Government to counteract them instead. You left the Poor Law for MR. MALTHUS to consider; you hardly mention it, I dare not say because you had none in Scotland in your time. MR. MALTHUS took it in hand and tried hard to keep it within the lines of your natural liberty, making at the same time concessions, wiser than he could then foresee. His desire to see the Poor Law abolished

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altogether seems near to fulfilment now, but hardly in the way he intended or for the reasons he used. We have set up Factory Acts and Trade Boards and Old Age Pensions, and finally aids, regular and irregular, to workpeople, not only unskilled, but skilled—measures that would bewilder you but are now taken for granted and warranted even by your own followers. A prominent Philosopher, MR. HERBERT SPENCER, made a stand but no impression. He might have appealed to your authority. Yet I think you would have supported some of our State institutions that he decries, say the Board Schools, which he calls “coercive education.” I appeal to your fifth book, where you allow to the State that, and a good deal besides that.’

‘We have done more for women¹ than protect them by Factory Acts,’ said another, perhaps a courageous lady-economist. ‘We have given the political rights claimed for them by MR. BENTHAM, and in industry they are now free to try what they are fit for. You will observe, too, that the topic is no longer treated jocosely.’

‘For myself,’ said the Sage, ‘when did I treat that or any other subject jocosely, on my guard in a book? Witness what I say in praise of women’s education as better than men’s. I am told it is even better now. I wrote perhaps less seriously than usual to DR. CULLEN about witch-doctors, but that was not in a book. Neither was my Saratoga joke about ruin in a nation, which I am told has been taken literally. The Anglo-Indian joke about the earthquake is no joke at all, but grim earnest. But, tell me, what do the men say when the women compete with them?’

‘My dear Sir, the men profess to be little alarmed, thinking their own Unions strong enough to hold the fort. You must

¹ Women: *Wealth of Nations*, V. i. 350; cf. IV. vii. 289. Rae (John), *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 276, date 1774; cf. p. 343, date 1777.

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know, DR. SMITH, that not only has practically every trade its Union with its minimum of wages below which competition is not allowed to drive them down, but the men do their bargaining with the employers collectively, not individually. As once in face of the employer, the individual is now helpless before the face of his Union, forgiving it as it is acting for his benefit along with his fellows.'

'A bright idea strikes me,' interposes another; 'competition for leadership is left.'

'Yes,' is the rejoinder, 'but that is not a desperate struggle for existence; it is a polite elbowing for room at the top. There may be more of the unemployed, too, from this power of the Unions. Better so, it is argued, than that the rate should fall down, and the normal standard of life with it. Instead of letting the unemployed bring wages down, we support them at the public expense and without the old drawbacks. The new "Combination" has carried away the Poor Law, to most intents and purposes.'

'You must already see,' said another, 'that to what was in your days a paradox the time has given proof. But you have not had the whole story even yet. There are now not only Unions but Federations of Unions, and when they act in concert, which is not always easy, they can shake all England. You will also be surprised to hear that there is now in Parliament a Labour Party and a strong one, once in place of power for a whole session, and likely to be so again, for a longer time of office. There are still, it is true, many workmen outside all Unions and even outside the Labour Party; but it is not these outsiders that determine the event. In short, the total result is a stiffening of wages, tending to make the labourers press the employer harder than in your day.'

'Then,' said the Sage, musingly, 'they can go on raising wages just to that point where the employer has too small profits left to make the business worth while to keep up?'

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‘That is so, Sir, and an Austrian successor of yours,¹ just before he left the earth, tried to show the limits. They will be settled rudely in practice on the earth’s surface presently, and most probably in Britain.’

‘Combination is not confined to workmen and employers,’ said another. ‘A very great part of the competition of traders in goods is the competition of companies against companies; and companies increase their strength against each other by combinations and federations, under new names.’

‘I should have expected perhaps,’ said the Sage, ‘that combination might necessarily grow out of competition (as you told me was said), but in the way of resistance to a monopoly gained by an unfair or too fortunate competitor. Till there is monopoly, I incline to cure competition by more competition.’

The reply might be: ‘To many reformers in our day monopoly seems nothing exceptional; they think competition tends normally to pass into combination, and the combination into a practical monopoly—and the remedy, they think, is that the State should take over the monopoly. Men are tired of waiting for the long run, which might mean waiting for the generation after us. The least patient are the youths, who are precisely the most likely to see it arrive. It is not the old men who are in a hurry.’

‘You open a new chapter to me,’ said the Sage. ‘I thought I had shown the unfitness of Governments to conduct trade. They are more profitable for obstruction than for creation, for negative rather than positive action. If you reply that they can own the property and hire the management, I am disposed to point out that, where there is owning, there is always the risk of meddling. In your politics I believe you call it lobbying; or at least the two go together. At present, in

¹ Böhm Bawerk: *Macht oder Oekonomisches Gesetz*, 1914.

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spite of the change you describe, my country seems to be still in the progressive state of wealth and trade.'

'Most of us think so, DR. SMITH, and are glad of it, all except MR. JOHN MILL, who prefers the stationary for reasons that would appeal to a lover of learned leisure like yourself. Yet it is the same MR. MILL who says that only through the principle of competition¹ is Political Economy a science, and he reminds the workmen that it is competition that gets them high wages when they have them. He saw that combination was hindering the tendency of wages to fall; but he did not give a very certain sound on the whole transformation, which had gone very far even in his day, if we call his day 70 years ago.'

'It might be put in another way,' said another theorist. 'Our economic method allows us to abstract from the plurality of causes and deal with *one* that is easily conceived predominant in the circumstances known to us. The abstraction might mean a sort of allowance for "reasonable wear and tear,"—a neglecting of say 10 per cent. for the other causes and a getting 90 per cent. of the truth. Most of us would allow that this happens for example in wholesale prices. The imperfection or untruthfulness would be more than 10 per cent. for retail prices. Now, it is argued that, with labour fully organized, 90 per cent. might be actually the exceptional element and 10 per cent. the "normal," to the horror of our friend DR. WHATELY here, who knows something about Logic. No method of abstraction could survive this disproportion. It exists strikingly for the "sheltered" trades, whose market is a home market kept safe for them by the structure of the earth and the things on it. But it is tending to arise for the rest in little less degree. Now abstractions are only tolerable when it

¹ Competition: Mill, *Political Economy*, II. i. 1, and II. iv. 1.

70 years, roughly the interval between the 'Liberty' which he himself valued above the rest of his works and the present time. See *Autobiography*, 253.

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is highly probable that they help us to arrive at the truth; when this result is highly improbable, even a wise man will say the abstraction is unreal.

'Give the statement another turn. In a right and proper abstraction, the *onus probandi* lies on the fractional and frictional causes, to prove if they can that they are not exceptions to a general rule. Now, where the exceptions, *pace* DR. WHATELY, become the rule, *non probant regulam*, they do not test the rule. Being no longer exceptions, they have ushered in a different rule under which *they* are the normal cases, the others the exceptions.

'This, it is said, will become true very soon for our reasonings about Wages, in all civilized countries, no doubt in the main at first about *low* wages. The theories of the old economists were excusable, since their supposed facts, the facts of their hypothesis, were not nearly so far from the real ones as they would be now.'

'You spoke of wholesale prices,' said the Sage, 'MR. MILL might still hold by his postulate in their case; there you have a large field of trade outside of the trade in human services, not *directly* in the market along with them but exerting a powerful effect on them, and all under the sway of competition in the old way.'

'Yes, Sir, MR. EMERSON of the United States said truly: "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." The best leaders of the working-men are under no delusion on this matter. They know that the market is indispensable; *goods* are in the saddle and ride mankind. The world of labour and of business may be controlled from the inside as much as our friends desire, and even by the State assisting them, but our friends depend after all on the market for goods. If the only competition left is between *groups* of producers instead of individuals, it is still competition, as it would be even if only the largest groups were left, the nations striving against nations.

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What you say yourself, Sir, of workmen may be said of traders like these, trading on the large scale; their real discipline is still that of their customers.¹

The Sage might answer, 'All is changed since my time evidently, in the outer world, during my oblivion of it for a century and more. Tell me, is there less or is there more change in doctrines of political economy? How much is left of my own?'

'You are a philosopher, DR. SMITH,' would be the rejoinder, 'or I should have said better not ask. There is something left, but there have been many amendments and censures, some serious and some petty. People say for example, rather pettily, that your arrangement of your books and chapters is not what it should be. Though most of them add that RICARDO's is far worse, they defend him by saying you had been at a University and he had not. Perhaps it never occurs to them that lucid order is a minor virtue left for smaller men.' 'One of you,' composedly answers the Sage, 'declared that RICARDO was a better man than I, except in the power of illustration. We certainly had a different notion of illustration, and I think my own was the better. He "imagined strong cases"; my own illustrations were nearly always actual incidents. I deduced much from the measurable dominating passion of civilized men to better their own condition. I found actual examples of this right and left, and I could give chapter and verse.'²

'Well, DR. SMITH, another ruling passion, of like measurable-ness, was set beside yours by MR. MALTHUS—not that you had neglected it, but you had not, he thought, seen as clearly as he how masterful it was and how worthy to have a seat be-

¹ Discipline of customers: *Wealth of Nations*, I. x. 59.

Ricardo and Adam Smith: *History of Pol. Ec. Club*, 206; cf. Dugald Stewart's ed. of *Essays*, 1795, p. xviii.

² Exception: *Wealth of Nations*, II. iv. 156 (illustration by letters of the alphabet).

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side your favourite among measurable motives. MR. MALTHUS has set it there once for all. We are even told that the latest fashion of 20th-century speculation finds it lurking in all sorts of unsuspected hiding places, where neither you nor MR. MALTHUS would ever have looked for it.

'Then in detail the theories of rent, exchange, value, prices, currency, profits and interest, foreign trade, taxation, have not remained exactly as you left them, not because you were narrow-minded but because, though one of the clearest souled of men, you were only a pioneer, and the economic world was young at the end of the 18th century.'

'I do not think I was narrow,' said the Sage, 'I think I saw most of what was there to see. The world has changed since my time; it is a larger and very different world, you all tell me. I could not predict the changes. Like other men reckoned wise, I had more insight than foresight. But how wrong to say that I, of all human beings, was limited by my surroundings! (BAGEHOT has said it.) How false, too, that a City man sees the City everywhere! (MARSHALL has said it.) They will tell me next that a Professor never sees beyond his lecture-room. I think nobly of the soul and in no way approve this opinion. As my friend GIBBON says,¹ the man of learning multiplies his own experience. Thought is free; it takes us above ourselves, out of our near surroundings, physical or spiritual, into the larger world which is to some of us our real surroundings. Belonging as I do to a somewhat large and undistinguished family, I think less of birth than some of you. But, if there are born fools, there are also men born for the universe, who do not narrow their minds to what my friend BURKE calls their little platoon or subdivision. Otherwise men could never rise to general principles and no science could come into being. Confined by surroundings

¹ Gibbon: *Decline and Fall*, Chapter IX.

fessors who are too much buried in the details of a world not their own. All depends on the will and quality of the thinker himself. His near surroundings are only the hedge of his garden, a very small part of the raw material of his thinking. Nor ought he to be limited by his audience. I did not write the *Wealth of Nations* to please the public but to tell them the truth, which they might take or leave. Absent-minded, was I? Like SOPHOCLES, I appeal to my book; could that have been written by a man not *compos mentis* and able to keep accounts? BURKE's countrymen would say that, if I was unlike other men in small matters, they were unlike me in big.

'I am not equally touched when you say I was not exhaustive and final. Few of us can do more than make a beginning. I am sorry I did so little, "but I meant to have done more"—indeed, I began more and left it for destruction as imperfect.¹ I am told some lectures of 1763 survived in spite of my precautions. You may have found some of my beginnings useful—which most useful on the whole?'

'Master,' exclaims an admiring disciple, 'all your beginnings are useful, if I should not say equally so. We were dwelling so much on one of them, the idea of an all-conquering natural liberty, simply because to us, your spiritual great grandchildren, it marked the greatest of all the differences between your time and ours. Labour, once downtrodden, then defiant, now dominant or even at times domineering,—causes a vast body of economic questions to be reconsidered. In other subjects, your problems were more nearly our own, and we judged of the solutions you gave as from essentially the same basis of facts for starting-point. Not so in that subject.'

¹ Remains: see Dugald Stewart, *Biographical Memoirs*, 1811, p. 110. *Lectures of 1763*, ed. Cannan, Clar. Press, 1896.

burst in a Cobdenite, 'was the British adoption of Free Trade just seventy years after your book first appeared. All the champions of that measure, or the foremost of them, belonged to your School and were proud of their Headmaster. You yourself thought it was as unlikely to come as any political Utopia.¹ Your French Treaty (1786)—for I may call it yours—did not last long; but COBDEN, following you, got another made (1860) that lasted a little longer and did more good in Europe generally. In the United States, within their frontiers, back and forward, free trade prevails between the 110 millions of people, without regard for infancy or maturity of the industries. Free trade does them no harm taken internally. But the States will not take our economic doctrines for external application any more readily than our international Leagues. They fend for themselves. They keep the simple system of natural liberty for themselves alone, and a wilful nation, like a wilful man, must have its way. Except inside the political boundaries, free trade, I am sorry to say, is still matter of debate everywhere, even, somewhat shamefacedly, in the British Parliament. Yet in a recent War it was hardly questioned that we had owed much of our fighting strength—military, naval, financial—to our free trade policy of the previous years. In Peace, I believe, we owe it to the same policy that we are still the world's emporium and the world's money market. It is true that rivals have made progress in their stern chase of us; and, as we now share trade, we share studies, economic included. Most of our brother economists, whether in Europe, America, Africa, or Japan, make their bow to you, Sir, and are of one mind with you on

¹ Free trade a Utopia: *Wealth of Nations*, IV. ii. 207.

Navigation Act: *ib.* IV. ii. 204.

Cosmopolitan: *ib.* V. ii. 383.

Waggon way through the air: *ib.* II. ii. 141. See p. 18 following.

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free trade. Even statesmen, when they create obstacles, and call them Safeguards, usually acknowledge the sacrifice they are making, and quote you, Sir, as praising the now defunct Navigation Act (repealed 1849): "Defence," you said of it, "is of more importance than opulence." "

'If goods are obstructed,' said another, 'there is more of a free trade in Capital than ever before. You told us truly, "The proprietor of stock is a citizen of the world." It goes over the whole world by fluid competition with every change of advantage and even far-off hope of such. In this respect the world is more nearly One City than ever it was under the Roman Empire. Governments interfere sometimes, but seldom. The Immigration of men, too, is, as a physical possibility, much easier than in your day, and we have literally what you spoke of in a figure, "a waggon way through the air." But the competition is not fluid, in either element. There is interference of governments, even of republican commonwealths and free self-governing Dominions.¹ The trading nations of the earth are not "one great mercantile republic" yet; they do not yet resemble "the different provinces of a great empire." This is the more surprising because they are coming to have more and more in common as the years go on. At present even Europe in respect of trade cannot be considered to be what you called it "one country." It is sometimes called one country when there is a desire to "protect" it against American competition. I do not think, Sir, you can approve of that attitude. A wealthy neighbour, you tell us, is a good thing in trade. Now in the 20th century all nations are neighbours. You can put a girdle round about the earth in less than forty minutes."

¹ Obstacles: *Wealth of Nations*, IV. i. 194; IV. v. 241; II. vii. Part III. 265; IV. iii. 219. Strakosch: *Europa als Thaurungs-grund*, 1926, Ch. VII. Max Wacch-ter: *Federation of European Nations*, 1924.

Two capitals: *Wealth of Nations*, II. v. 164; IV. i. 190, 199.

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'I conceded perhaps more than I ought to the doubters,' said the Sage, 'when I declared the inland trade much more important than the foreign, and talked rather obscurely about the two British capitals employed by the inland. But I defended a free and unfettered foreign trade because if the traders are left to themselves they will only take it up when it is relatively profitable, and it is always best to leave them and no others to decide whether it is so or not. Surely there is nothing revolutionary in saying "Hands Off!"'

A disciple, who had read his GIFFEN, answers, 'One of us has glorified the home trade¹ even more than you, Sir. He says that the foreign gives us no more than an eighth of our total income. Those who lived in England during the Great War found it hard to believe this, when they were trying to support life without either exports or imports. It was no consolation to read in MR. MILL that the only direct advantage of international trade is the imports. We all know that you cannot have the one without the other, however veiled the transaction may sometimes be. You have told us yourself, Sir, that Consumption is the end and Production only the means. But you are always telling us that trade is of goods for goods, and you mention two advantages of the American trade: it increased the enjoyments and it increased the industry of Europe.'

Said another, 'DR. SMITH, most of us feel bound to admit that MR. RICARDO unravelled this subject better than you did. He showed that trade between distant countries is not a question of mere costliness but of comparative costliness, those goods finding the market in which there is the *greatest* advan-

¹ Home trade: Giffen (Robert): *Essays on Finance*, 1st series, 1880 (Foreign Competition).

International Trade: J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, III. xvii. § 4.

Consumption and production: *Wealth of Nations*, IV. viii. 298; IV. vi. 245, 248; IV. vii. 265.

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tage, not all and sundry if all and sundry are equally less costly. RICARDO was well worthy of you also, and went a little farther than you, in presenting the theory of Currency, partly because of the new phases of the world of business, partly because of insistent practical problems, caused by vicissitudes of politics, which you could not foresee. Yet your lucid statement of the elements¹ was precious to us; your "pots and pans" and your "water-pond" still serve our turn for illustration in lecture rooms.'

'RICARDO's work, too, was not perfect,' said another. 'About Cost and Value, for instance, he made false starts and corrected himself, in the very department where, according to MR. JOHN MILL, he attained finality. In the matter of Wages in relation to Profits, RICARDO may be forgiven for erring, since the basis of discussion was in process of shifting and not yet shifted. His book was a book of theories. Yours bore fruit in practice. His chief practical achievement was the Ingot Plan of 1819, said now to have been revived in Britain.² But also he did his best to recommend to us a good way of reducing the Public Debt, to save us from the disasters which you and your friend HUME are expecting from it. No one listened then, and few will listen now. Yet the need is greater now. We have a million for every thousand of your Public Debt. You said, Sir, in the *Moral Sentiments*, that a man was happy if he was in health, was out of debt, and had a clear conscience. We are deep in Public Debt, and yet we sleep in peace, having in these latter days a fairly clear public conscience and a low death-rate. Few could be more optimistic than you in that book on morals; you actually believe, for example, that honesty is the best policy. Perhaps

¹ Homely Illustrations: *Wealth of Nations*, II. iii. 127, 139; IV. i. 192.

² Ingot Plan: Gold Standard Act, 13th May, 1925; Currency and Bank Notes Act, 2nd July, 1928.

The Debt: *Wealth of Nations*, V. iii. 413; cf. Hume, *Essay of Public Credit*.

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you yourself were better than your fellows; your ethical book overflows with human kindness and goodwill. But economists in your day were more inclined to panic than in ours, under very similar conditions of wars and revolutions. Our own would repeat after you that economy is the best policy, and implies the honesty, or cannot be perfect without it.¹ Our own would take your Saratoga jest not literally but seriously, and cling fondly to the belief, at once insupportable and irrefutable by reason, that the future hides in it more gladness than sorrow, more comfort than terror.' 'You may be quite right,' said the Sage, 'and since *you* are so solemn, let *me* for once forget my gravity and recommend to my School a headline in large letters for their copybooks, to be read in the imperative mood as follows: "Prudent Political Economists, proscribe prognostications."'

It is time to close the Elysian Gate; let us hope it was made of good honest horn, not the treacherous ivory.

The following quotation from the original lecture of 19th Jan., 1926, may illustrate the dialogue. The Political Economy Club was founded in 1821 and is still alive. The meaning of the term 'Classical' as describing a School was discussed in the lecture, and friends from Italy rightly claimed that Italy had used the phrase Classical Economists as early as 1803. But the Classical Economists of the fine Italian collection are of all schools; the term is used simply for eminent or illustrious, and not, as in the title of the lecture, of the followers of ADAM SMITH.

'Inside or outside the Club we have had Malthusians proper, and Neo-Malthusians whom it would be unkind to call Malthusians improper—FRANCIS PLACE and JAMES MILL. We have had Ricardians unqualified, JAMES MILL and MACCUL-

¹ *Mor. Sent.*, ed.: 1790, Vol. I. Part I. § iii. Propriety, p. 107; cf. p. 151 (on honesty).

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LOCH, and Ricardians qualified, J. B. SAY and NASSAU SENIOR. We have had by and by (though RICHARD JONES was really one of them) the Historical Economists, who are accused of making part of ADAM SMITH into the whole and reasoning by induction only, so far as that is possible; but have had, in CLIFFE LESLIE, THOROLD ROGERS, and CUNNINGHAM, men doing justice to the whole and reasoning occasionally by deduction like other folk. We have had Marxians, accepting the Classical Tradition just to show "what it all leads to,"—in their view a mad world to be righted by being overturned. We have had the Mathematical Economists, and the Marginalists with or without mathematics, called lately by a friend of ours the Neo-Classical School; and we have their branch the Futurists, who follow BÖHM's theory of Interest. All of them are liable to cross each other's lines, but all seem to have some strain of the Tradition. Most of the distinctive names will disappear, not necessarily when the men indicated have lost their case, but perhaps more often when they have so completely gained it that every one takes their main position for granted. This seems more especially true of the "Neologians" called Final Utilitarians or Marginalists.

'Besides these, some of our best men have confined their labours mainly to one part of the field, say Currency, the Exchanges, Statistics, Taxation, using a modicum of classical theory, as a candle light for dark places. Such were GOSCHEN and GIFFEN; and they were not outside; if we may say so, they adopted the Classical Articles as Articles of Peace for all except their special subjects. Perhaps the Statisticians fall most easily into this habit, though one of the founders of our Royal Statistical Society was MALTHUS, a thorough-paced "Classical" economist, and he was not alone there in this character.'



III

ADAM SMITH

among his Books

A Sequel to the Tables Turned

Adam Smith

There are drawbacks in being counted Sage and head of a School, especially here, where they can all attack me at once. Why call me Sage? The title sits better on my old teacher, 'the never-to-be-forgotten DR. HUTCHESON,' as I called him on leaving Glasgow.

Victorian

You will be surprised, Sir, to hear that for one economist who has heard of HUTCHESON hundreds have heard of ADAM SMITH. It is not national prejudice. The English GIBBON spoke of you¹ as 'a Sage and a friend,' and as 'a master of moral and political wisdom.'

Adam Smith

I praised GIBBON with equal fervour; so we are quits.

Victorian

You are still Master and Sage to an untold number of us, from Japan to Finland, from Capetown to Bombay. Late-comers to the Shades must have told you of your fame; and the orthodox DANTE, himself a great authority on the Shades,

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XXIV. *Miscell. Works*, 1796, Vol. I. p. 36 (Memoir).

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follows the pre-Christian VIRGIL in allowing fame to last there. He puts the famous people, himself included, in a place by themselves in Elysium.

Adam Smith

I seem to remember that with professional narrowness he confines the privilege chiefly to poets, though a few philosophers and warriors are admitted. I do not say whether he was right or wrong; but such as I could have found no place among his elect.

Victorian

Do you not come near to justifying him for this, Sir, in the old *Edinburgh Review* (1755)? In the closing 'Letter' of Part II you claim for the greatest English poets, 'a strength of imagination so vast, so gigantic, and supernatural' that it disarms criticism. If you mean that there is nothing so divine on earth as the very highest poetry and art, I cordially agree, only wishing that you saw more of it in our SHAKESPEARE. The same eulogy could hardly be applied to Science. DANTE seems to have applied it to Philosophy. I admit that there is no mention of economists, and you may not be among his chosen few. We may certainly find you among those placed in VIRGIL's elysium:

'Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes
Qui-que sui memores alios fecere merendo.'¹

Adam Smith

How does DRYDEN render the lines? I have misgivings about him.

Victorian

Justifiably, for his version is not equal to that of a modern

¹ *Aeneid*, VI. 663, 664. Conington, Prose transl. of Virgil, 1888, p. 259.

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scholar which I give you: 'All who by cunning inventions gave a grace to life and whose worthy deeds made their fellows think of them with love.' But you knew the original, and had a splendid copy of the Roman edition of 1763 in three folio volumes in your library.

Adam Smith

I favoured MILTON too in spite of his blank verse. He helps us little on this question, though, like DANTE, he gives us lights as well as shades, and provides his friend LYCIDAS with the brightest company on this side.

Victorian

I must not try to penetrate the secrets of your prison-house, or palace as it is more likely to be, if others choose for you. I must not ask if your friends are about you?

Adam Smith

Suppose, instead, that personal interests have rather changed their meaning than lost it. All the persons I knew in life have long been with me here, deformed, reformed, or transformed, as their state required. How this happens you will find out for yourself by and by.

Victorian

Forgive us if we retain the personal interests in their old form. Your admirer BAGEHOT once wrote a chapter about 'Adam Smith as a Person.'¹ He dwelt much on your foibles and weaknesses in a good-natured way. Your favourite POPE says, 'those best can bear reproof who merit praise'; and you will not mind what BAGEHOT says. But we prefer to

¹ Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, 1880.

ADAM SMITH

think of your strength and sources of it. One source was your Books, and we have better means of knowing them than he had.

Adam Smith

Do you mean the books I wrote? He could hardly have left them out; yet I did not fill a room with them like my old acquaintance JOHN CAMPBELL, if you ever heard of him.

Victorian

Oh, yes, we have heard of him. His *Political Survey of Britain* was in your library. DANTE, VIRGIL and MILTON are there too. It was of your library I meant to speak, not of your writings.

Adam Smith

Do you really wish to know the volumes I kept by me? Some of them suffered many removals, 'fittings' we call them in Scotland; they went from Glasgow to Edinburgh, Edinburgh to Kirkcaldy, to say nothing of earlier removals of a few of them. There were few things I loved so well, perhaps only my mother and David Hume.

Victorian

As the saints took pleasure in the stones of Jerusalem—you know the Psalm,¹ so your admirers take pleasure in tracking out your books and thinking, 'these were the very volumes he consulted in writing the *Moral Sentiments* or the *Wealth of Nations*.' And we have reasonably good proof of it in many cases.

Adam Smith

I left them with the pictures to DAVID DOUGLAS, my cousin, called LORD RESTON.

¹ Psalm cii. 14: Scotch Metrical version.

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Victorian

They went on his death to his daughters, MRS. BANNERMAN getting the economic books and MRS. CUNNINGHAM the others.¹ Your biographer RAE says that both portions still exist; but alas, they exist in a very divided state, owing to the deaths of Bannermans and Cunninghams. The collection since RESTON's decease was never one; and now it is many, too many.

Adam Smith

One or many, I was not confined to it. I was free to borrow from friends and they to borrow from me. I always obliged them when I could.

Victorian

There is a story about your reluctance to lend to SIR JOHN SINCLAIR in 1778.

Adam Smith

He wanted to borrow MOREAU DE BEAUMONT² *On European Finances*, if that be the right title. I had got that book by special favour of TURGOT and I had just promised to lend it to friend DAVIDSON. When SINCLAIR applied for it, I answered that I did not care to trust it as far as Thurso, but he might have it after DAVIDSON, the next time he was in Edinburgh.

Victorian

You seem to have told your borrowers not to scribble on the books. You did not scribble on them yourself. We can well understand that you lent and borrowed *inter amicos* and also

¹ Rae (John), *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, pp. 436, 438. Cf. Catalogue of Adam Smith's Library (Macmillan, 1894), pp. vii. seq.

² Moreau de Beaumont, *Catalogue*, p. 9. The proper title is: 'Mémoires concernant les Impositions et Droits en Europe,' 1768-9. Cf. Rae, pp. 343, 344.

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used the Advocates' Library, now the National one. But from natural human weakness we set most store on the books owned by yourself, and presumably handled by your own hands; and we have tracked out about 1,200 volumes, most of them bearing your very plain book-plate. With rich owners like the Pitt family and the Buccleuchs the book-plates are not always plain. Your young Buccleuch's copy of JOHN MILLAR's *Distinction of Ranks in Society*, 1771, had as book-plate the family arms, and on the full calf binding a ducal coronet. Perhaps you had recommended it to him knowing what he would make of it as a man of fortune. Your own books in the matter of numbers were not remarkable, if they numbered 3,000 volumes.¹ Perhaps you stopped short not because you had 'exceeded your fortune' but because you had 'satisfied your fancy.'

Adam Smith

I seem to remember using words like those about other people.

Victorian

Yes, in the third chapter of the second book of your *Wealth of Nations*. 'If a person has at any time been at too great expense in building, in furniture, in books or pictures, no imprudence can be inferred from his changing his conduct.' I might add, 'nor from his resorting to public libraries and the book-shelves of his friends.' The Will sets down, as you said, both books and pictures. We know more about the books.

Adam Smith

I see you are going to judge me not only by what I wrote but by what I had read in preparation for the writing.

¹Rae, p. 327.

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Victorian

If I may say it, judge is hardly the right word. The man that reads little is not necessarily the more original; the man that reads much has at least the chance of being the more accurate. Some men both original and accurate have lived all their lives without a library of their own; and we are thus deprived of one very good means of knowing them. We do not know what the 'pictures' were that are set down with the books in your Will and Testament, whether portraits or landscapes. For your own portrait we are satisfied with Tassie's medallion.¹

Adam Smith

So were we, I and my friends, though I never sat for my portrait to him or to anyone else. Kay's were taken at street corners.

Victorian

But we find Kay's amusing. They were at least contemporary.

Adam Smith

Must a portrait be like because it is contemporary? Perhaps your century is better than mine in that particular.

Victorian

Must not a caricature be so far like the original that it is at once recognizable? It must include the known features, exaggerated. If we only knew how to reduce the overloading we should have the real man. This is how you yourself explained the popularity of MANDEVILLE, in your *Moral Sentiments*. A certain trace of truth must be present as a basis for the falsehood.

¹ *Catalogue*, xviii. seq. 'The Portraits of Adam Smith,' by John Gray.

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But it is your mental portrait we seek when we look for the books you read. We think ourselves nearer to having it when we discover books which were (may I say?) taken to your bosom, living with you in your house.

Adam Smith

Are any such surviving me so long?

Victorian

We have a list of survivors, and I am going to recall some to your memory. I may call them your private friends. ARISTOTLE is not too heavy nor ROUSSEAU too light. In the *Edinburgh Review*,¹ the first of that name, in 1755, you are not afraid to offend writers on anatomy, medicine and even mathematics by saying all their subject needs is 'plain judgment and assiduity without demanding a great deal of talent or genius; the English especially, in all branches of science, lack system.' You are more respectful in the *Moral Sentiments*, and we know you owned and studied scientific works yourself. Your *Essays* alone would show that, and the library displays a large number of subjects into which people would say you only dipped, besides those which occupied the 'one talent which is death to hide.'

Adam Smith

You may as well say frankly that my likings were beyond my attainments.

Victorian

Your modesty puts it so. I should rather say that you read, furtively at home, anything and everything of intellectual interest that came to hand; this is a fair inference from our

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, 1755, Closing Letter, 64, 65. *Moral Sentiments*, 6th ed., I. 312.

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sample of your library, quite as likely to be a good sample as either of the other two-thirds if they ever existed. By the same standard your prime favourite among studies was not philosophy, not political economy, but literature. It drew you to KAMES, and KAMES drew you to Edinburgh, where¹ you lectured on literature after leaving Oxford (1748, 1749). You had BLAIR among your hearers. Your first chair at Glasgow, in which, you will remember, you did not sit comfortably (1750), was Logic. In the recollection of some of us that chair was, as lately as the 'seventies of the 19th century, called the chair of Rhetoric as well as Logic, and we may conjecture that you took advantage of that opportunity. LORD BUCHAN,² however, who wrote in ANDERSON'S *Bee* about you in 1791, is not likely to be right in saying you yourself wrote verses. HUME'S verses are well known and are not ambitious.³ I could name verses written *about* you,⁴ a

¹ Kames. See Rae, Ch. IV.

² *Bee*, Vol. II, May 11th and June 8th, 1791. Cf. Rae, Ch. XXV.

³ Hume's verses. Hill Burton, *Life of Hume*, 1846, I. 227.

⁴ Caleb Colton's *apud* Rae, p. 35; Addington's in *Life of Sidmouth*, I. 151; but the best known is the couplet by Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry, in his 'Verses to Sir Joshua Reynolds and Co.,' on the possibility of a man's improvement after his 45th year. Dr. Johnson thought the Dean would bear improvement, and the Dean shows in this poem, of nine couplets, the way it could be done, and describes the Club members, who could help him to do it. The 8th stanza runs so:

'If I have thoughts and can't express 'em,
Gibbon shall teach me how to dress 'em
In terms select and terse;
Jones teach me modesty and Greek;
Smith how to think, Burke how to speak,
And Beauclerc to converse.'

Annual Register, 1776, pp. 223, 224.

(In the text Gibbon is made Gibbons, and Burke Burk.) There are also verses of Robert Burns, in a Rhyming Epistle to one of his friends:

'I send you here by Johnnie Simpson
Two Sage Philosophers to glimpse on;
Smith with his Sympathetic Feeling,
And Reid to Common Sense appealing.'

For more about the respect of Burns for Adam Smith, see *Moral Sense* in Library of Philosophy (Allen and Unwin, 1930), p. 223.

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very different matter. Your favourite foreign language was French, for the study of which your travels were presently to give you facilities. But even on travel you seem to have cared only to seize the meaning and convey it intelligibly if not elegantly.

Adam Smith

That is all that MORELLET meant when he said I spoke French badly: 'Il parlait fort mal notre langue.' It was equally true of HUME, or the ladies of the salons where he was fêted would not have complained that he was dumb.¹

Victorian

You wrote on the Origin of Languages; the first origin of your own, acquired, languages rouses our curiosity.

Adam Smith

Please come back to my books. The 'private friendship,' as you call it, for some of them, means very little. Sometimes it was only a lifelong habit of letting them keep their places on the shelves. I kept some old text-books of school and college in this manner.

Victorian

We know that, Sir; we have a *Eutropius* of Edinburgh 1725 descending to us in that manner: 'In usum scholarum,' inscribed 'Adam Smith his book, May 4th, 1733'—naturally lacking 'the very plain book-plate.' A Professor, one of your School, sent it back to Kirkcaldy, where it has a place with other relics in a sort of shrine. We have note too of a *Horace*, Foulis, 1744, doubtless from Oxford. Is it the only relic

¹ Hume in Paris, Hill Burton, II. 224, year 1765. Morellet's remark on Adam Smith's French is in his *Mémoires* (1821), I. 237. See MacCulloch's Introduction to *Wealth of Nations*, p. ix. ed. 1863.

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from Oxford? You were seven years at Balliol, 1740 to 1746; and we are sure you were not doing nothing, though (you tell us) as little assisted by the College there as GIBBON was at Magdalen. You are said to have offended by reading HUME's Human Nature when you were a mere freshman. The guilty copy is now in our collection.¹ You were not likely to buy many books yourself in those days, and it is said you got this one from the anonymous author, afterwards a hero, like yourself.

Adam Smith

I may parody my friend DAVID² and say, 'Many a better man has been made a hero of before.'

Victorian

Some people in the 20th century are trying to 'write you down,' defying BENTLEY, who said no one could do that but the author himself. They say you wrote your books out of other men's books.

Adam Smith

Which men's, pray? and which books? With such critics 'most authors steal their works or buy.'³ I wrote only two. Take them separately. How could the *Moral Sentiments* be so described? I certainly read HUTCHESON and HUME and KAMES before I wrote that book, but only to find that after all I must take my own way, or offend, as MILTON says, in much higher quarters by hiding my talent.

Victorian

In our sample of your library, Sir, we have duly found HUTCHESON, and HUME, HOBBS, and BERKELEY, and many

¹ Cf. Rae, p. 15, date 1740. Compare p. 362, date 1782.

² Hill Burton, *Life of Hume*, II. 436 on 'St. David.' A variant of the same story is given by Alex. Carlyle of Inveresk, *Autobiography* (1860, Blackwood), p. 276.

³ Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, Part III.

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more. We have found POLYBIUS, whose sayings on sympathy were read by HUME and you with the same attention, and contrary interpretations. The carping critics do not blame your book on morals so much for its debt to others as for its pleasing style ; they say it is rather literature than philosophy. It is of a piece with this that your reviews in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1755 were neither of philosophical books nor of books on political economy.

Adam Smith

As to the reviews, remember that in 1755 I had not embarked on a book on either subject. In regard to the comment on the *Moral Sentiments*, it is a compliment, to which I add my own comment, namely, that the 'carping critics' are bound to refute or accept the philosophy, which is the soul of the book, whether its body is clothed in silk attire or in rags.

Victorian

It is the other book, Sir, which is said to levy too much unacknowledged tribute, especially on QUESNAY and his friends.

Adam Smith

Surely I gave them not a few pages of praise.

Victorian

You did indeed, Sir ; you gave them the whole ninth chapter of your IVth Book, and you said that in spite of faults their system of political economy was the nearest approach made at that time to the truth as you understood it. You did not hold, with them, that agriculture is the only productive industry, or that all taxation should fall on the net produce of the land. Yet you thought also that they magnified the political element in political economy. But you praised their services

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to economic theory and their public services towards the better government of France. You sometimes followed them more closely than we like, exaggerating the productiveness of agriculture over manufacture, and calling labour that ends in services unproductive.¹ In our sample library we miss DUDLEY NORTH with his splendid summary, in 1691, of your Free Trade doctrines. We miss BARBON. But those French economists are well represented.

Adam Smith

I was bound to know them even in my Glasgow days. HUME and I were blamed for preferring French to other foreign languages. And it would have been still stranger if, on my tour with young BUCCLEUCH, the economists, of whom I met and knew so many, had not presented me with their works. BUCCLEUCH gave me the *Journal de l'agriculture*, ten volumes, 1765 to 1767.

Victorian

Witness his arms on the copy, as well as your book-plate. The book was important for the history of the Sect.² We have found QUESNAY'S *Physiocratie*, 1767, crown 8vo, 'from the author,' handsomely bound, and MERCIER DE LA RIVIÈRE, *L'Ordre Naturel*, 1767. There is also MORELLET'S answer in 1770 to GALIANI'S attack on the Physiocrats.

Adam Smith

For elementary English and even Latin, Kirkcaldy Burgh school served me well. Nearly all my other languages were learned by private study in later life—Greek, of course, I

¹ See Cannan's Introduction to his edition of the *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. I. xxxi., and 355 note. Cf. Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 1897, pp. 132, 133.

² See Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 1897, p. 63.

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learned at Glasgow under ANDREW DUNLOP¹ French was the only modern language besides my own that I could talk at all, and I probably talked it at least as well as ROUSSEAU talked English in 1766. I collected many French documents besides books.

Victorian

We found, Sir, in your library a collection of French parliamentary papers from Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, Provence,—petitions and remonstrances, as well as Proceedings of Courts, and Chambers,—in more than six volumes, filling eight pages of our small-octavo catalogue.² They are none too many; such is the light they throw on the state of those parts of France in the 'fifties and 'sixties of your century. They have left traces³ on your *Wealth of Nations*. You were hardly a book-collector; you gathered those papers for the sake of the use to which you might put them when read. The collector as such does not read his books, but shows them to his rivals with a chuckle.

Adam Smith

I not only read them, but was glad to get them in good condition. I was a beau in my books,—not that you could perceive as much from their condition now; and I did not try to be a beau in any other sense whatever.

Victorian

You look quite neat and trim, Sir, in your portrait so far as it goes. As for your books, they had more than ordinary wear and tear.⁴ You did not bequeath them to the Nation at your

¹ Rae, Chs. I. II.

² *Catalogue*, pp. 75 to 83: 'Parlements, Conseils,' etc.

³ 'Traces': e.g. III. 417, I, MacCulloch's edition; Vol. II. 403 of Cannan's.

⁴ 'Wear and tear': see Cannan, Introduction to *Wealth of Nations*, p. xiv. Our author sometimes says 'tear and wear.'

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death; you would as soon have asked for a peerage in your life. While you were on the earth, they moved backwards and forwards, from the High Street of Glasgow when you were Professor, in your confined quarters of the Old College, to Panmure House in the Canongate at the base of the Calton Hill,¹ where you died. The Old College in 1870 was deserted by the Muses and left to Vulcan and Mercury, all except one gateway which was carried over bodily to the New College on Gilmorehill in the respectable West End of Glasgow. Some of your books, and, whether you like it or not, manuscript notes of your lectures, will be found in the College Library. I wish we could have added the little private library of the Moral Philosophy class of which you were once custodian.² It is right that some relics of your library should be kept in the University where you composed the *Moral Sentiments*. By the operation of your last Will and Testament the books have been sent flying all over the earth. There is one at Baltimore in the United States, in the reverent care of Johns Hopkins University. There are said to be one or two in Japan, well-reverenced there also, we must not say *in partibus infidelium*. Your copy of Statius travelled to Vienna.

Adam Smith

Let me contradict your opinion of my modesty, and remark that I not only collected well-printed books where I could, but helped to publish them. The brothers ROBERT and ANDREW FOULIS, whose printing became celebrated, owed something to the support given by me and my colleagues.³

¹ Panmure House : see Rae, p. 325 ; cf. 435.

² Rae, p. 169, as to the library of the class. Professor W. R. Scott reports (in 1930) that the Maconochie MS. described by Prof. Cannan (Lectures of 1763, p. xvi.), is now happily safe in the University.

³ See *Robert and Andrew Foulis and the Glasgow Press*, editor David Murray, publisher Maclehose, 1913.

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Victorian

So did JAMES WATT. You all helped Glasgow to be what it is now. But as a literary man you were more concerned with books than with steam-engines. There is a reference in your *Wealth of Nations* to the gilding of books by bookbinders at Birmingham.¹ You personally directed the binding of your Tracts, making your own list of contents in your own large handwriting. DEAN TUCKER'S *Tracts* are there, for example, with others in one volume, well bound, though not gilded. You do not quote TUCKER nor did he agree with you at all points; but there he is in your library, and we feel sure that you had read him. You do not mention all that you had read.

Adam Smith

Remember that you have not found all I had.

Victorian

And to those you had you do not always give full references. You possessed the full printed account of the Ayr Bank, but avoid the name in your text; though it has slipped into your index.

Adam Smith

BUCCLEUCH was involved in that bank.

Victorian

Such omissions do not matter, but there is one which has distressed some readers from the want of an evident reason. Sir JAMES STEUART wrote *Political Economy*, a book of large dimensions and pretensions. You simply take no notice of him, and

¹ *Wealth of Nations*, I. xi. Part III, Third Period, MacCulloch, 95; Cannan, Vol. I. 207.

Ayr Bank: see *Wealth of Nations*, II. ii; Cannan, Vol. I. p. 296.

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yet he was a contemporary, who wrote quite civilly of your own *Moral Sentiments*.

Adam Smith

I avoided even his title 'Political Economy.' It was threadbare. I had avoided 'Moral Philosophy' for a like reason in 1759. It is wrong to suppose we had quarrelled. It is true that I got more light on his ideas from friendly talk than from his book,¹ which was not quite in harmony with mine.

Victorian

STEUART, Sir, seems to have fared as ill with you as the young composer of a new opera fared with the Maestro² who cruelly said to him during the performance of it, 'I have been listening to you for two hours; you have said nothing to me yet.'

Adam Smith

Well, he wrote in a style to me unpleasing, far more discursive than my own later style; and there was little or no attempt at system.

Victorian

FRANCIS HORNER, born 1778, early enough to have seen you in the flesh, became a disciple of yours in mature age. He thinks that you would have done better to have attempted no system or appearance of system, but given us scattered essays, as in fact HUME had done. The 'appearance of system' might apply to STEUART also.

¹ Stuart, Rae 61. Cf. 5 and 253, 254: 'Without once mentioning it [S's book], I flatter myself that any fallacious principle in it will meet with a clear and distinct confutation in mine' (date 1772, to Pulteney).

² Charles Hallé, *Life and Letters*, 1896, p. 43. Cherubini to Halévy.

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Adam Smith

I observe you are passing from my library to my doctrines. System or no system, what I have written I have written.

Victorian

Then ARTHUR YOUNG, the traveller and the talker, who did so much for English agriculture, cannot have found favour with you, though you have not a few of his books. He went farther than FRANCIS HORNER¹ in hatred of system. You would like him for being burned in effigy for opposing restrictions on the wool trade.² Your biographer tells of your efforts to free Ireland's wool trade, as we might well believe, from your *Wealth of Nations*, you would be sure to do.¹ Finding so much of ARTHUR YOUNG in your library, we are surprised to find so little of JEREMY BENTHAM,³ who agreed with you far more completely than ARTHUR YOUNG. He agreed with you so well that he convinced you that you were inconsistent in allowing any Usury laws. He is represented in your sample library by a tract on the Hard Labour Bill.

Adam Smith

He gave me some hard knocks over Usury, I freely admit.

Victorian

You might have escaped them if you had listened to THOMAS REID⁴ and his plea for freedom of Usury. You might in the

¹ *Memoirs of Horner*, 1843, Vol. I. 126.

² Arthur Young: see *Example of France*, 1793. On his being burned in effigy see his *Autobiography* (Smith Elder, 1898), p. 173, date 1788.

Compare *Wealth of Nations*, IV. vii., and Rae, Chap. XXIII, date 1779.

³ Bentham: see Rae, p. 424.

⁴ Reid: see Dugald Stewart, *Life of Adam Smith* in *Biographical Memoirs of Smith, Robertson and Reid*, Edinburgh, 1811, quarto, p. 148, note: 'In an Essay read before a literary society in Glasgow, some years before the publication of the *Wealth*

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same way have escaped the hard knocks JAMES ANDERSON gave you on Rent, if you had listened to DAVID HUME and his warning in 1776, the last chance he had. You sometimes talk in the *Wealth of Nations* as if you had listened; but you sometimes offend, as *Hume* clearly saw. HUME wrote to you in the letter beginning 'Euge! Belle!' 1st April, 1776: 'If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. I cannot think that the rent of farms makes any part of the price of the produce.'

Adam Smith

STEUART at least was not before me there. Nor was he before me on Usury; he was, in fact, the culprit attacked by REID.

Victorian

Yes, so we gather from DUGALD STEUART. It is not claimed that STEUART was before you or even on a level with you anywhere, but only that he did not deserve to be completely ignored. It can hardly be replied that he for his part ignored your *Wealth of Nations*. He died in 1780, only four years after its appearance. His own book, though reprinted at Dublin in 1770, had sold ill, and its second edition was really in the *Collected Works* which his son brought out in six volumes in 1805. By that date, Father Time prevented both of you from noticing each other, you having left us in 1790. The unpleas-

of Nations, Dr. Reid disputed the expediency of legal restrictions on the rate of interest, founding his opinion on some of the same considerations which were afterwards so forcibly stated by Mr. Bentham. His attention had probably been attracted to this question by a very weak defence of these restrictions in Sir James Steuart's *Political Economy*, a book which had then been recently published (1767), and which (though he differed widely from many of its doctrines) he was accustomed, in his academical lectures, to recommend warmly to his students. It was indeed the only systematical work on the subject that had appeared in our language, previous to Mr. Smith's *Inquiry*.' Hume's letter is given by Hill Burton, *Life of Hume*, Vol. II. 486.

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ant fact is that he was first in the field, 1767, and you possessed his book. Were you turned against him because he was 'out in the '45'?

Adam Smith

So was HAMILTON of Bangour, whose poems I edited in 1749.

Victorian

You do not name him in your edition, nor do you include the verses, so popular among the Jacobites, on Gladsmuir, otherwise called Prestonpans.

Adam Smith

The sale of the book might have suffered from both name and verses—whereas no one could object to 'Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow.'

Victorian

The suppression in either case was not permanent, and we can well consider it an act of mercy. It would be entirely consistent with your character, Sir. You refused to let the poor Glasgow students pay for the full course, when you left them to join BUCCLEUCH in January 1764, although the poor students¹ protested that they had had their money's worth. You were a bad specimen, Sir, of a hard-hearted political economist. We have heard of a certain pocket-book, given away in France; and your early biographer DUGALD STEWART hints at all manner of secret benefactions. You were not a good hater. Your censures of RICHARD PRICE show that you were annoyed by excessive praises of PRICE as 'a writer of acknowledged talents' and 'an able calculator,' the words used by JOHN HOWLETT in his *Examination*, 1781, of PRICE's book, on the alleged decline of English Population in your century.

¹ The students: see Rae, pp. 169, 170; the pocket-book, Rae, p. 200.

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Your supposed quarrel with JOHNSON is hard to reconcile with your gentle review of his *Dictionary* and your possession of his *Shakespeare*¹ and *Rambler*. You had no great antipathy, but felt no attraction? You did not take to each other, that is all. GIBBON's remarks on JOHNSON's *Irene* are more severe than anything of yours on JOHNSON's work.

Adam Smith

Kindly leave my virtues and come back to my library. You will find I owed more to DAVID than to STEUART, and you will find many books of DAVID in your collection if they are not lost, even the *Natural Religion* which I reluctantly refused to publish for him although he pressed me hard.

Victorian

He had a wonderful insight; and one of his biographers, HILL BURTON, thinks he runs you closely for the honour of first founder of Political Economy in our country. But you were the first to become Shepherd of a Flock, as QUESNAY was the first in France. HUME did precisely what HORNER thought you ought to have done. He confined himself to separate Essays on the subject. The main lesson of your book, if we can speak of one main lesson, was perhaps the political and economical virtues of 'natural liberty'; and this was the phrase and theme of your 'never-to-be-forgotten Dr. Hutcheson.'

Adam Smith

He did not invent it, but he certainly impressed it on his students.

¹ *Catalogue*, p. 103. Cf. Rae, pp. 154, 288, 366. Gibbon on 'Irene,' *Decline and Fall*, Ch. LXVIII. p. 235, of edition 1823, volume VIII. Adam Smith is said to have read an account of Hume's Essays on Commerce to the Glasgow Literary Society, 1753. See Rae, 95.

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Victorian

You do not fail in acknowledgments to your father HUTCHESON and brother HUME; and, though ADAM FERGUSON makes an unkind suggestion to the contrary, you did not fail towards the French economists. But some in our time have thought you to fail towards RICHARD CANTILLON, whom they regard as father of those Economists. It is true that he did not become the Shepherd, but they rank him with yourself in power to present a system, and they, I mean our moderns, bestow QUESNAY'S aureole¹ on him. You do not seem to have noticed his greatness, and your omission is a puzzle to some of us. It was not a case like DUDLEY NORTH'S. We know that CANTILLON'S book was in your library, dated 1755.

Adam Smith

You provoke me to say, 'these are your gods, O Israel.' Had I not myself enough left? CANTILLON defines wealth as I do, not precious metals but food, goods, and comforts of life; and then he forgets his own definition and speaks as if a country in its foreign trade could be really enriched only by the precious metals, these being the only indestructible goods.²

Victorian

Greater men than he have had their lapses, Sir, and the bigger the books the more likely the lapses. In private conversation often, and in your books sometimes, you were hard to reconcile with yourself.

¹ See Henry Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 1897, pp. 16, 36.

² 'Enough left': see Rae, p. 270. Cantillon, *La nature du commerce en général*, 1755, Part III, Ch. I. pp. 310, 314. As to Adam Smith's contradictions in conversation, see Carlyle, *l. c.* 279, and in his books, e.g. Cannan's *Wealth of Nations*, I. Introduction, xiv. on beer.

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Adam Smith

I did not ignore CANTILLON; I quoted him more than once, did I not?

Victorian

You quote him more than once in your *Wealth of Nations*, in one case without name, and I fear in the other case not very accurately,¹ setting down to him what belongs to PERRY. You seem to have trusted to your memory, and it sometimes failed you, for authors and the titles of their books, while you were preoccupied with your argument. The failing leans to virtue's side. You pass everything through your own mind and show it by using your own words. Some ideas seem to a man to grow up in his mind for the first time, when they really grew up earlier somewhere else. The unconscious contributions to your thoughts may have been made, for example, by current events like the discovery of silver mines and the inventions in agriculture and industry, which affect all men equally but produce theories in thinking men who can put two and two together. It is not wonderful if the same events sometimes produce the same theories in different men, without any collusion. This may have happened with the adoption by you and the French economists of a reckoning by the circling year, the annual produce, which we find coming into use in the middle of your century. Nature leads to that in agriculture; and convenience leads us to treat other production, say mining and manufacture, in the same way. So natural liberty and its advantages might well occur both to you and others at the same time; you did not borrow from each other.

Adam Smith

Yes, and I confess it stung me not a little to be charged with plagiarism, when this kind of coincidence was all that had happened.

¹ 'Not very accurately': Book I. viii, Cannan, Vol. I. 70, 81.

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Victorian

I remember, Sir, a passage in your *Moral Sentiments* where you deal with this subject.¹ You are labouring the point that unmerited reproach causes a lingering pain which is more pungent than any pleasure of unmerited applause, and you say: 'Though no man of middling good sense can derive much pleasure from the imputation of a laudable action which he has not performed, yet a wise man may suffer great pain from the serious imputation of a crime which he never committed, including that of pretending to write what another wrote.' You may have remembered in 1790 the pain you felt in 1755, when some one charged you with plagiarism and you produced a sort of manifesto to defend yourself. We gladly clear you of all appearance of evil as well as the evil itself in that instance.

Adam Smith

It might perhaps have been well for me to have done in 1755 what I recommended to HUME in 1766,² and taken no notice of an unjust charge.

Victorian

Yes, you wrote to HUME: 'By endeavouring to unmask before the public this hypocritical pedant, you run the risk of disturbing the tranquillity of your whole life. By letting him alone he cannot give you a fortnight's uneasiness.'³ It is as if you had cried out: 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' Yet you yourself were not ill-disposed to ROUSSEAU.

¹ *Moral Sentiments*, 6th ed. Vol. I. Part III. Ch. i. pp. 305 to 308.

² Hill Burton, *Life of Hume*, Vol. II. 350; cf. p. 326 for the episode of Rousseau. See also *Le Séjour de J. J. Rousseau en Angleterre, 1766-1767*. Louis J. Courtois, Geneva, 1911.

³ 'Uneasiness': *ib.* p. 350, date Paris, 6th July, 1766.

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Adam Smith

Did I not write about him in the *Edinburgh Review* when he was but little known in our country? I have been blamed for it.

Victorian

You gave him more pages of your 'Letter to the Authors' than you gave to anybody else, quoting his *L'Inégalité parmi les Hommes* of 1754. You were chosen out of many others as spokesman of the discontented friends of that Review, discontented with the way in which the paper had been conducted. You asked the editors for certain changes, in language curious to us now. We get the idea that Scotland was still bending low before England after nearly half a century of Union. *Inter alia* you say: 'As since the Union we are apt to regard ourselves in some measure as the countrymen of those great men [BACON, BOYLE and NEWTON], it flattered my vanity as a Briton to observe the superiority of the English philosophy thus acknowledged by their rival nation [France],' and you rightly tell the editors that they will never command general attention unless they look beyond Scotland and even beyond England in their survey of important works, doing for Europe what they had done for Britain, singling out performances likely to keep hold of the public for say forty or fifty years to come instead of a fortnight after the writing of them. You show the way by a long notice of ROUSSEAU's essay, quoting passages which certainly did keep hold, indeed some would think helped to found modern socialism.

Adam Smith

You would need to tell me what that might be.

Victorian

It lies latent in your quotation and the words cling to the

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memory: 'From the instant in which one man had occasion for the assistance of another, from the moment that he perceived that it could be advantageous to a single person to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, labour became necessary, and the vast forests of nature were changed into agreeable plains which must be watered with the sweat of mankind, and in which the world beheld slavery and wretchedness begin to grow up and blossom with the harvest.' 'Thus man from being free and independent became by a multitude of new necessities subjected in a manner to all nature, and above all to his fellow-creatures, whose slave he is in one sense even when he becomes their master; rich, he has occasion for their services; poor, he stands in need of their assistance; and even mediocrity does not enable him to live without them. He is obliged, therefore, to endeavour to interest them in his situation, and to make them find, either in reality or in appearance, their advantage in labouring for his.' You quote these passages without any more severe comment than you reserved for the kindred MANDEVILLE. Such passages made revolutionaries in your time and ours. It was an open secret that you were the writer of that letter which made them better known.

Adam Smith

An open secret is still a secret as long as the writer likes to keep it so. I do not think the Letter has been quoted against me.

Victorian

Also, it was written eleven years before the trouble began between HUME and ROUSSEAU. Yet you may have been carried away by a true spirit of prophecy, and, if all stories are true, you held to the prophecy. You are said to have declared in 1782 to Professor Sr. FOND of Paris, who came to see

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you in Edinburgh, that ROUSSEAU's *Social Compact* (1762) 'will one day avenge all the persecutions he suffered,' just as if he had been more sinned against than sinning.¹

Adam Smith

Yes, in one respect I rank him above VOLTAIRE; instead of laughing at vice and folly, 'ROUSSEAU conducts the reader to reason and truth by the attractions of sentiment and the force of conviction.' VOLTAIRE stood by himself; he was 'the only one'; but he had his faults like the rest of us.

Victorian

JAMES MACKINTOSH, if it were he that wrote the Preface to the second edition of that *Edinburgh Review* in 1818, takes note of that long quotation in it from ROUSSEAU and professes to see in it your preparation for your own views of the growth of society, very unlike ROUSSEAU'S.

Adam Smith

He might surely have observed some comments of mine on changes like those in France,² made in the last edition revised by me of the *Moral Sentiments*.

Victorian

He is far from hostile to you, Sir, though he was not one of the Edinburgh youth who 'lived on you.' He says of you that 'among the inferior excellences of this great philosopher,' 'he manages the English language with a freer hand and with more native ease than any other Scottish writer.' 'He might be taken for an English writer not peculiarly idiomatical.'

¹ 'More sinned against than sinning': Rae, p. 372.

² 'Changes in France': cf. *Moral Sentiments*, 6th ed., Vol. XI. 106 to 108.

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And he thinks you got the style partly from Oxford, that is to say from Balliol, partly from Glasgow, that is to say from HUTCHESON. I dare say Oxford contributed; but how HUTCHESON, an Irishman, should be peculiarly well-fitted to teach English to a Scotchman, MACKINTOSH, though himself a Scot, is at no trouble to explain. He may have been thinking of BERKELEY, BURKE, and SWIFT.

Adam Smith

BLAIR, who was not grateful enough for all he got directly or indirectly from HUTCHESON, calls his style 'careless and neglected.' Remember POPE:

'We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow.
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.'¹

What matters in books is not their style for its own sake, but their effectiveness, whether they nurse any spark of reason in their readers or no. As DAVID HUME wrote to HUTCHESON,² reason is the same everywhere, the same with us here as with you there.

Victorian

You mean, Sir, that a fine style is of no account in the eye of pure reason, *sub specie aeternitatis*. For all that, it is a great comfort to us here in the Wilderness, and we are glad to have it in your *Moral Sentiments*.

Adam Smith

Observe that there is less of it in the *Wealth of Nations*, to the latter's advantage, if a man can judge his own books.

¹ Mackintosh, Preface to 2nd ed., *Edinburgh Review*, p. ix. Blair, review of Hutcheson, *Edinburgh Review*, 1755. Pope, *Criticism*, Part II.

² 'Reason the same everywhere': Hill Burton, *l. c.*, I. 119. Cf. *Moral Sense* (Library of Philosophy), Allen and Unwin, 1930, pp. 102, 105.

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Victorian

That same test of Reason, Sir, would hold not only for your compositions, which stand the test well, but for all your library, parts of which would stand it indifferently. The books in your library, say the minor French classics or no classics, would not all appeal to our reason now. When some soul of reason lay in them, you were the man discerningly to distil it out.

Adam Smith

What I have read I have read, including much that both worlds will quite willingly let die. I add again : what I have written I have written, with the same saving clause.



THE MALTHUSIAD

Fantasia Economica

If the tables have been turned on ADAM SMITH since his first edition in 1776, what of MALTHUS since 1798? He might seem less vulnerable as presenting a smaller surface to attack, a single contention instead of a system of doctrines—more vulnerable, on the other hand, as putting all his eggs into one basket. It may prove that what is obsolete in him is just the eggs in the other baskets, which he could not refrain from filling, indeed, as a professor, was bound to fill according to his faculties.

Suppose him to appear in a dream to some Young Economist of our century, demanding ‘Am I obsolete or am I not?’

The other might answer:

MR. MALTHUS, if we believe your earlier opponents and some of your later, you were obsolete from the first, or at least as soon as MR. GODWIN found that you were after all worth powder and shot, and wrote his *Enquiry concerning Population*, 1820.

The Shade might reply:

We there as you here are bound to speak nothing but good of those who have left the world, and, though at one time I held GODWIN an indifferent amateur in statistical study, I allow that he gave me a hint from which I profited. It helped me to rid myself of early raw exaggerations; and by the time

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he and BOOTH and COLERIDGE, to say nothing of HAZLITT, had said their say, I had already gone beyond them and escaped their hands.

Young Economist

Is it true that you made population increase faster than food?

Shade

Even in my first fine careless rapture I never made it work miracles. I said it was always tending to increase beyond the food, and trying hard to do it, and it was repressed and kept down by vice, and misery or the fear of misery. I used to read GIBBON'S volumes as they came out, and you will find the conjunction 'either vice or misery' in a passage dealing with exposure of children by poor parents.¹ In my second edition (1803) I allowed for a third power, moral restraint, which saves the situation, and, whatever my critics may say, saves it without vice or misery.

Young Economist

MR. MALTHUS, if you had said all this at first, would your book have made such a noise in the world? You get the credit of having roused civilized humanity from its visions of an Earthly Paradise by showing the existence of something in human nature fatal to all paradises. Writers before you had the idea of it in their *brain*, but you got it into other people's *bones*.² You would hardly have done so, Sir, if you had made

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XIV. (Vol. II. and p. 100 of ed. 1823), describes Constantine's efforts to stop the practice.

Malthus, after passing as 9th Wrangler, writes to his father in April 1788 that he has begun to read Gibbon. (*Malthus and his Work*, 2nd ed. (Unwin), 1924, p. 412.) To Gibbon 'misery' probably meant 'misère'—poverty, one of his many Gallicisms; and poverty might have been the better word for Malthus to use.

² Stokes quoted by A. Schuster, *Nature*, February 1925, p. 305, on the discovery of the Röntgen rays.

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all your corrections in the proofs of your first essay; you wisely kept them for the second.

Shade

My exaggeration was not intentional. I honestly did not see in 1798 what I saw in 1803. You speak of corrections. The introduction of moral restraint was the one important correction. Corrections and additions are bound to be legion in every scientific inquiry. We get more and more of the truth as we go on, but all grows from the same root; there is no recantation of first principles. I am prepared to hear from you that the process had gone on in your day as in mine.

Young Economist

I shall try to follow your well-known example, Sir, and be polite even in telling of things disagreeable. The process as you describe it assuredly went on within your own book in the successive editions of it; and I take for granted that you know all about your critics till the 29th of December, 1834, when you left us. If you had been Professor at Cambridge instead of Haileybury for thirty years, lecturing not to cadets of the East India Company but to future professors, you might have founded something like a school. As it was, you reached the highly trained and learned and scientific men only through your books and their letters and occasional visits to you. Other economists, like RICARDO, got fruitful hints from you on Rent and less lucky ones on Wages and Value. You lived to see the Philosophical Radicals put you into their creed and calendar. You lived to see your maxims embodied for good or ill in a New Poor Law, 1834. You helped statisticians to draw together (in that same year) into a Statistical Society, and you will be glad to know that the said Society still exists and occasionally studies Births, Mar-

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riages and Deaths just as you would have desired. You had previously (1831) joined with all the talents to found the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which still remembers you in its Biological and Economic sections. You were no ardent politician, but you must have triumphed with the rest of the Whigs when the Reform Bill passed in 1832. You will hardly care to know that in your own country reform has gone farther since then, and we are a democracy in everything but the name.

Shade

There was certainly comfort in these last years. But *surgit amari aliquid*; there were some signs of the times that made me uncomfortable. Though it hurts my own feelings I must mention that my checks on population were often redefined for me by people who used my name and authority unadvisedly, including some of the politicians to whom you have referred. As you know, I do not love to dwell on this subject; my check was always moral restraint, and deferment of marriage; with them it is something different.

Young Economist

Your own successor, Sir, RICHARD JONES, declared that the adjective should be dropped or altered into 'voluntary.'

Shade

I was always a little afraid of what would happen if it were dropped, as indeed it was by my friends PLACE and JAMES MILL and his precocious son. JAMES MILL, like me, was in John Company's service. You will admit that, like him, I fought valiantly for the Company and my college, not without frank criticism. I may venture to say, I was a good friend to my young men in that same college, and though bois-

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terous they were rarely bad, and I think we respected one another.

Young Economist

Everybody respected you, Sir. But the college is gone, or rather it is transformed into a public school, and a very good one. It produced some famous men, but after certain disturbances in India and changes of policy and plans of selection at home it was doomed to go. As a matter of fact it went before the Company, 1855, largely because of a Report from your friend and champion MACAULAY. PROFESSOR MONIER WILLIAMS¹ speaks from tradition of the delightful evening parties your wife gave to the college, and of your own great amiability and charm of character. You need have no fear on that head. MISS MARTINEAU, MISS EDGEWORTH, MACKINTOSH, SYDNEY SMITH, all sang your praises. The banter of the last is not to be mistaken for dislike.

Shade

But to the end I was out of doors an ogre, an enemy of marriage and of the multitude, more especially of the labouring poor.

Young Economist

That was because the full consequences of your central doctrine were not at first seen. I mean the supreme need of watching, supporting, and raising the general standard of living, so that what was done fairly well in your time by the middle and upper classes might be done by all classes, labouring poor included. It was left to that 'precocious lad' of whom you have just spoken to say plainly that you did not close the door of progress; you were the first to open it. Even Utopians (and they are of very different quality from those of your day)

¹ *Old Haileybury* (Constable), 1894, pp. 198, 199.

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are coming round to this view of the matter, without otherwise agreeing with you altogether.

Shade

You have made me remember the happy days I passed at Haileybury when 'the ogre' lived the placid life of a man of letters. *Que voulez-vous de moi?*

Young Economist

Votre bénédiction. I am narrating, not criticizing, and if you will forgive my youthful presumption I am going to tell in my own way what has happened to your cause after 1834. Prepare to be bewildered like any other Rip Van Winkle, whether in the body or out of it (for both happen). Hear the best news first. You have had a real victory, though you have founded no school, and your followers are broken up into groups that would puzzle you and sometimes offend. I shall not dwell on the class of whom even your amiability speaks with impatience. It is far from extinct; it may be considered a power, indirectly a political power; and some of your own admirers condone it as presenting the less dreadful of two ugly alternatives. They claim to have obeyed you best by disobeying you. With or without their assistance there has been, especially in your own country, a remarkable fall in the birth-rate and death-rate, with no such fall in marriages. I turn rather to your influence on scientific men. You have led DARWIN and WALLACE to give us a theory of the origin of species by natural selection and the struggle for existence. The philosopher, HERBERT SPENCER, has supported them in the main; and in general outline the theory has influenced all sorts and conditions of thoughtful men for the last sixty years. Like your own theory, it has needed modifications and is getting them. Out of it has grown a class of your followers

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who call themselves Eugenists, faintly foreshadowed by you in your quotation from the *Tatler* about Maud the Milkmaid. They would perpetuate good strains of population by inheritance. The quality of the population rightly seems to them more important than the quantity. You were a Utilitarian, Sir, but I seem to remember passages in your *Essay* showing that Greatest Happiness need not mean greatest numbers, but might be secured by smaller numbers of higher quality. It is open to question whether the great men or the great masses should matter most to a lover of his country.

Shade

Strange that a small man like me, small in mental stature, should have got a hearing at all, still less should have left his mark on great men and movements. I feel, *si parva licet componere magnis*, as SHAKESPEARE'S Henry VIII must have felt when told of the Great Elizabeth to come after him.

Young Economist

Measured by influence, Sir, you are not a small man; and like DARWIN you have added an adjective to the English language. You are not in Westminster Abbey, for no mere economists are there; but pilgrims have gone to Bath Abbey for your sake.

Shade

You speak of influence. Apart from the *Essay*, I should have thought to survive by a subdued influence on my dear RICARDO and his followers, not by any influence on science at large, still less by public fame. RICARDO was a very brother, and we might have agreed altogether if we had lived long enough together. As it was, he and his followed what I considered devious ways.

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Young Economist

Yes, I remember your solemn indictment of them in the *Quarterly Review*, 1824; and the course of time has turned the tables on that 'New Political Economy.' A Classical School, of your type rather than theirs, might have lasted longer than theirs, for theirs cannot be said to have lasted very long.

Shade

I think you will find my tables not so easy to turn as theirs. The observers of my rules are on the whole more than the breakers thereof. My warnings against partial remedies for excessive population are probably standing; emigration, for example, and a potato diet did not go to the root of the matter.

Young Economist

The last had a tragic exposure in an Irish Famine ten years after your death. But the relation of the Classical School to labour was in your system very much what it had been in the other systems, and it is just there that the change is greatest, and you have fared no better than RICARDO and the rest. You and he and all of them fell down.

Shade

I was an early supporter of Factory Acts. Put that to my credit.

Young Economist

But a half-hearted repealer of the Corn Laws, if you could be called a repealer at all. Your concessions did credit to your heart, but they weakened your reasoning; and you did not withdraw them, like your precocious young friend, when you found them abused. But be comforted. Your other writings, books, articles, and letters, tell us much about you and

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we value them accordingly; but we count them all minor alongside of the *Essay*. You spoke of a gradual emendation. Travellers have corrected many of your illustrations from savage life, and our historians have mended your details of history. There was little folklore or archæology in your day; and medical skill is much better now. In fact, Man on the Earth is much better known to us than you could know him. Our scientific men, too, UDNY YULE, PEARL, VIRGILI, have even amended your Ratios, without absolute agreement, it is true, about the substitute.

Shade

I was quite prepared for that. My main point was a disproportion seen as soon as mentioned but hard to reduce to exact figures. In the concrete, the population of a country is always relative to its conditions, and it is seldom safe to make prophecies.

Young Economist

You would applaud a shrewd remark made recently by a member of your Statistical Society, that in order to forecast population we must first forecast trade and production. Our age is grown so pickled that, instead of discussing 'room and food' like you, it discusses the *optimum*, said to be a botanical term, here used for the number of working inhabitants just enough to produce sufficiency under a given standard of living. Relativity is thus forced upon our discussions, for the standard may vary with groups within the nation.

Shade

I should have revelled in such topics. One soweth and another reapeth. I am glad something of my work remains, though its new shape makes it hard for me to recognize it. A

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man's task is given to him from day to day, and he knows not which part of it will prosper. I may have wasted time over minor matters such as the question of a standard of value.

Young Economist

Be not perturbed, MR. MALTHUS; your main service is so great that the minor matters will not be remembered against you, even if not wholly in your favour. I said you might be measured by the results of your work; I add, with juvenile audacity, that a man's greatness may also be measured by the mistakes he has lived down. Forgive both blame and praise. In the work of every economist, even in the great ADAM and RICARDO, there is a part that is obsolete. The weight is too heavy to be lifted unless by two or three together. We youths, whether precocious or only studious, render willing obeisance to those who, like yourself, have lifted more than their share of the weight. You will be glad to hear from me that we have still such leaders as you, not only in the British Isles but Over the Seas.

Like Achilles in the *Odyssey*, the Shade retired to his meadow of asphodel with the long strides of a man not altogether dissatisfied.

IV

DAVID RICARDO

Young Economist

I hope MALTHUS is out of hearing, for I was about to say to you that though we think of you and him together, we defer more to you than to him in debate. In most of your personal qualities the one man was as good as the other—both of you thorough gentlemen. If he had just a little more of the University man's toleration and forbearance, you had a certain suavity and dignity due to your Spanish ancestors, as ADAM SMITH had the Aberdonian grit from his father. We had a case like yours not long ago. I mean, we had amongst us an economist famed among other things for his touch of Spanish courtesy; and we knew how to value him.¹

¹ *Ricardo, 1772-1823*. For the story of his life, see Professor J. H. Hollander's *David Ricardo, a Centenary Estimate*, in Johns Hopkins University Studies, 1910. The family has been traced to Spain (Andalusia) early in the 17th century, then to Italy (Leghorn), then to Holland (Amsterdam) early in the 18th century, then to England (London), where the economist's father, Abraham Ricardo, settled in 1764 and became a broker in London, 1773. David, born 19th April, 1772, was his third child. He was two years at school in Amsterdam. His two letters to Maria Edgeworth, *Economic Journal*, September 1907, give a glimpse of his early life. He was regarded as a precocious boy, and entered his father's business at fourteen, studying chemistry, geology, and Shakespeare at home. He became a Christian and married a Quakeress in 1793. (See Hollander's *David Ricardo* (above), pp. 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34.) Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), *Recollections of a Long Life*, published 1909, Vol. II. 179, under date of March 2nd, 1822, tells the story of the first reading of the *Wealth of Nations* as he (Hobhouse) heard it from Ricardo's own lips. Compare for what follows in the text the *Letters to Malthus*, January 1816, p. 107, and Hollander (as above), p. 41. *Letters to Trower*, pp. 45, 46. The Spanish courtesy belonged to F. Y. Edgeworth.

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Ricardo

You speak of qualities which all of us might be supposed to have in common. My supposed superiority in debate means only that for some kinds of argument I was better equipped than he; and, as you hint, he had academical training. I had not the learning of PROFESSOR ADAM SMITH or PROFESSOR THOMAS ROBERT MALTHUS. It was well for me (or I thought it so) that learning was not needed for the clear thinking demanded of me, both in business and in the public policy which I saw affecting my business. I certainly tried hard to avoid confusions and confusedness. I tried hard, whether using my pen or my voice, to make my meaning clear. When my friend failed in this, it might well be thought that he was taking a wider view than I, seeing more elements in the subject than I did, and finding it more difficult to narrow his mind and hold them apart for the moment—whereas I thought this narrowing to be necessary for the first steps of clear theory.

Young Economist

JOHN MILL spoke in his Autobiography of 'the superior lights of RICARDO' as against ADAM SMITH's 'more superficial view' of political economy. This provoked the cry of 'Ancient Lights,' critics finding your clearness more apparent than real. Some of us speak up for you. We allow that you and MALTHUS are both sometimes obscure, but yours we contend is like the obscurity of one of our Victorian poets who was of Laureate rank without the title; it is always a penetrable obscurity. His not always; his was rather that of another well-known Victorian poet who showed us that it was quite possible to be unintelligible without being profound.

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Ricardo

You are judging my friend too harshly. As to myself, in Parliament at least, where I could not be supposed to be airing a view for the first time, I think I was usually understood. But I never learned the command of style possessed by those two eminent Professors. Masters of style were rare then in the Stock Exchange. I am told they occur oftener now. I was not one of them.

Young Economist

You wrote to SIR JOHN SINCLAIR in 1814, 'The Stock Exchange is chiefly attended by persons who are unremittingly attentive to their own business and are well acquainted with its details, but there are very few in number who have much knowledge of political economy, and consequently they pay little attention to finance as a subject of science.'¹

¹ The Stock Exchange: see *Letters to Trotter*, p. 7.

Goschen on his own book and how his University helped him: *Essays and Addresses on Economic Subjects* (Arnold), 1905, p. 328; compare Pref. vii: 'Gratitude for the training which I received at my old University, whose teaching is too often denounced as unpractical and as not qualifying men for the business of life, prompts me to place on record that I have always attributed such ability as I possessed in respect of dissecting complex monetary phenomena into their simple elements, and of presenting them in clear and intelligible phraseology, to the various mental processes through which I was put at Oxford. I "construed" commercial documents; I subjected bills of exchange to logical scrutiny,—and looked at them as bearing on general laws.'

So Professor Karl Pearson in *Grammar of Science*, 1892, p. 8 note: 'Personally I have no recollection of at least 90 per cent. of the facts that were taught to me at school, but the notions of *method* which I derived from my instructor in Greek Grammar (the contents of which I have long forgotten) remained in my mind as the really valuable part of my school equipment for life.'

This is quite consistent with the chastening remark addressed to his pupils by an Oxford tutor who had once been a stockbroker: 'I derived a much higher opinion of men's intellects from working with them on the Stock Exchange than I have derived from reading their essays here.'

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Ricardo

In that respect I was among the rarities, it must be admitted even by myself; I paid attention to finance and not merely for the sake of private gain.

Young Economist

One of our public men, who wrote a brilliant and successful book on the *Foreign Exchanges* some fifty years after you, had been at Oxford and attributed his fresh power of dealing with his subject to the mental training he got there. He would have been the first to say that you were his superior.

Ricardo

I have no doubt but that you are wrong; what I missed in myself seems to have been precisely what he possessed in large measure, 'lo bello stile.'³

Young Economist

You used your pen and your voice as vigorously as any Professor, though you never even gave a lecture. You began by writing to the *Morning Chronicle*, you went on to write pamphlets; then you wrote a book. Finally, to crown all, to the horror of COBBETT, you sat in the House, and, now and again, spoke in it, after cries of 'Ricardo' from all sides. Now if MALTHUS had stood up in the House he would have been looked at with interest from his name and fame, but the members would not have deferred to him and demanded his opinion.¹

¹ Ricardo in Parliament: Hollander, *David Ricardo*, p. 53 note: To Trower, pp. 54, 59, 106, 167; to Malthus, p. 154.

Horner, *Life* by his brother, II. 143 (1813).

'No glamour': To Malthus, pp. 147, 149 (1818); cf. p. 155.

'Corn labour and bullion': To Malthus, p. 88.

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Ricardo

Yet some of you sneer at me for getting a seat from virtue of my success in business.

Young Economist

FRANCIS HORNER and many other perfectly honest and admirable reformers, of your time, entered it like you under a bad system with the view of making it a good one. It is common knowledge that a very wise and careful man can use a dirty road without being dirtied. We have now abolished the Pocket Boroughs, with other dirty approaches. In your case it would have been worse for England if their dirtiness had kept you out. But I wish you had at least seen your constituents. I am told you never visited Portarlington at all. Yet you found time to go to JOSEPH HUME's election dinner at Hereford in 1821, and speak there, and to visit France, Switzerland and Germany. Now you might at least have gone to your own election dinner, as HORNER seems to have done. You may be compared with the men who enter the Church to reform it from within, or to Henry IV of France, to whom Paris was well worth a mass.

Ricardo

Public life had no glamour for me. It was not till 1819 that I entered the House, being before then even a Sheriff unwillingly. I preferred my shady groves at Gatcomb, and was always glad to leave other subjects and discuss with MALTHUS 'corn, labour and bullion.'

Young Economist

You recurred with some zest also to Parliamentary Reform. JAMES MILL had introduced you to BENTHAM.¹ You admired

¹ Bentham: *Letters to Malthus* p. 55. Compare *Letters to Trower*, p. 1 (1811). Ballot: Elliot, I. 209 (1858). J. S. Mill: see his *Autobiography*, pp. 27, 28, 54, 72, 120. The mention of Ricardo's 'superior lights' is on p. 28.

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him more than he admired you. He ought to have been proud of his convert, and your conversion was not far from complete, MR. RICARDO. You tried to do the same by MR. MALTHUS, but you did not succeed, nor did you expect success. Our system now includes most of the points for which BENTHAM contended, and your young friend, JOHN STUART MILL, helped us to that achievement.

Ricardo

He was his father's son, though I am told he gave up the Ballot and did not believe entirely in BENTHAM.

Young Economist

He was proud to remember that he had been taken by his father to see you. You were then enlightening young economists without being a Professor. How did you come to learn the subject yourself?

Ricardo

Really through the study of the *Wealth of Nations*, with which I made acquaintance quite by accident. My wife and I were at Bath together for her benefit, and I got the book out of the circulating library. It made me nearly the 'man of one book.' I did not hold ADAM SMITH infallible, but, when I tested his book in practice, I found it right in nine cases out of ten. Then I read the *Essay* of MALTHUS in its first form, and the economic articles in the *Edinburgh Review* (1808). One of these was a review of THOMAS SMITH on *Money and Exchange* by JAMES MILL; it roused my spirit of criticism not so much by being wrong, which was unlikely in MILL's case, but by being undecided. It was a time when a long-continued premium on gold over paper was exciting attention, and making people ask what caused it. I wrote to MILL, and what I wrote became a letter to the *Chronicle* of August 1809.

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Young Economist

And from that you passed to a whole new system of political economy?

Ricardo

Not so fast. Say rather that reflection on currency and prices made me test my Master's theory of value as something connected with prices but not identical with it, and needing more study than he seemed to have given to the subject. After discussing currency and taxes and the Debt with MACCULLOCH and MILL, as well as Rent and the Exchanges, corn and bullion, with MALTHUS, I put my provisional conclusions somewhat hastily into a book, and you may be sure they did not come at once into line as a properly arranged system. MACCULLOCH, who had altered some of his own views, need not have been surprised that I amended some of mine after no long time.

Young Economist

You were at least sparing no pains to have your positions tested, and you seem to have consulted your friends rather too much than too little.

Ricardo

I knew my own defects and I knew that they could help me to overcome them.

Young Economist

Do not think I am questioning you either from impertinent curiosity or from a notion of criticizing you; I only want to learn for my own good what to imitate in your way of life and what to avoid. We, with the superior wisdom that comes after the event, think that your friends sometimes pushed you along too fast. ADAM SMITH, who I hope is also out of hear-

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ing, might, on the contrary, have gained by such pushing. He wrote to PULTENEY¹ once, from Kirkcaldy, buried in the *Wealth of Nations*, that he had made himself ill 'from want of amusement and from thinking too much upon one thing.' Some people think it lawful, even praiseworthy, to wear out the body as MILTON wore out his eyesight, in the public service. But, if ADAM SMITH had practised economy there, we might have had greater things from him. How pathetic is his saying, 'I regret I have done so little. But I meant to have done more.' DAVID HUME, who was far from successful in preserving his own health, pressed him in vain to come to Edinburgh; HUME not coming to him because a bad sailor, afraid of that short crossing by sea to Kirkcaldy. HUME's criticism would have served him better than MACCULLOCH's served you, Sir. But you too did not have a reverend care of your health, and left us at an earlier age than either ADAM SMITH or HUME. Let us believe with a forgotten poet that man is immortal till his work is done.

Ricardo

I may comfort myself with that idea; I certainly made no attempt to shorten my own life, too common an incident in my time.

Young Economist

You found solace in friendship. When you thought of a new line of inquiry your friends were at once informed of it, even MALTHUS, who was the most likely to differ from you. Indeed you distinguish him by an affection you do not show to the others. We have your letters to TROWER and MACCULLOCH, though not your letters to MILL. You write to

¹ Adam Smith to Pulteney, 5th September, 1772, Rae, p. 254.
'Meant to have done more:' Dugald Stewart, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1795, p. lxxxix.
Hume at sea: Hill Burton's *Life of Hume*, Vol. II. p. 429 (date 20th August, 1769).

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MACCULLOCH as an intellectual exercise because he most nearly agreed with you, to MALTHUS who seldom quite agreed but was congenial, and to TROWER with less *épanchement* as BENTHAM called it. BENTHAM¹ meant in his own case that you opened your hearts to each other; but he did not rouse you to those delightful explosions we have in the *Notes* and sometimes in the *Letters*.

Ricardo

I should not allow that my friend BENTHAM was ever lacking in feeling, but there was no lavish overflowing of it towards myself in particular. Our common ground was political reform, in which he was my tutor.

Young Economist

Did you find it easy to conjoin politics with study? What might we have had from you if you had been free from the first of them? We should not like to have lost your services on Commissions and Committees, but to do that work a man need not be in politics at all. Our WILLIAM GLADSTONE came nearest to the feat of being engrossed in study and engrossed in politics at the same time of life. In most men, even of unusual power of intellect, statesmanship demands for success a certain exclusive devotion, which you, Sir, did not accord to it. Of English economists who have figured in Parliament, JOHN MILL is to some of us the standing example and constant warning, he being of the first class in his science, and little more than a passman in politics. There have been more examples on the Continent; TURGOT long ago, YVES GUYOT and CARL MENGGER recently. MILL, like yourself, Sir, impressed people in the House but was never, like CHARLES

¹ Bentham: *Letters to Malthus*, p. 55, where (line 14 from top 'on these principles' should read 'in these particulars.'

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TOWNSHEND, completely at home in it. HENRY FAWCETT, long after your time, was statesman and economist, but not of Cabinet rank in the latter capacity. GOSCHEN, who had much in common with you, declared quite wrongly that he himself had no right to be called an economist at all.

Ricardo

Can you produce any Prime Ministers?

Young Economist

ROBERT PEEL was one. You saw his beginnings. He followed your lead, and always went farther than he intended, somewhat in the fashion of Cromwell's hero. You will call him more statesman than economist, but he had something of the second in him. If we have had in my own time no economist Prime Ministers, we have had a philosophic Lord Chancellor and a philosopher Premier. America had a philosopher President, which is as good as a Philosopher King. No one of them all had equal success in both pursuits. There might be a doubt in all the cases which of their two pursuits was the unsuccessful and which the successful.

Ricardo

In my time we had BROUGHAM, who was a political philosopher, like BURKE, if I dare to rank them together.

Young Economist

And young MACAULAY, for young he was in your day, Sir, and FRANCIS HORNER, if only he had lived to the threescore years and ten.

Ricardo

I admit your doctrine true as a rule, and it is true of me.

DAVID RICARDO

Even with more success than I had in the House I could not have been stretched into Cabinet rank.

Young Economist

But it was you who brought the House to the Resumption of Cash Payments in 1819, and, though social and industrial problems have entered an entirely new phase, the questions of currency have not altered much. You have heard already that your Ingot Plan was adopted by us in 1925 after the reign of paper currency during a War that we called 'long,' though it lasted only four years and you had endured one of twenty. In your day the Northern parts of the Island alone economized in their currency by using paper, on a basis of other people's gold. Now all England in that particular has become Scotch. Sovereigns are still coined in South Africa and Australia, as an overt way of supporting a home industry. Here we no longer see them. A man can get gold bars if he wants to make large payments abroad.

Ricardo

I never wished to see any other than a paper system established in this country. I wished to have no gold in circulation at all.¹ I proposed that the Bank should be obliged to give uncoined gold or silver of standard value for notes no lower than £50, £60 or £600, or a total of small notes amounting thereunto.

Young Economist

The Resumption Act of 1819 made the limit not less than the price or value of 60 (standard) ounces. The Gold Stan-

¹ Ingot plan: See *Economic Journal*, 1923, p. 292; compare pp. 288, 301, 302, VI. and Prof. Gregory's *Select Statutes, etc. relating to British Banking, 1832 to 1928*, Vol. II. p. 383.

'Most of us were agreed': To Malthus, 1820, p. 171.

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dard Act of 1925 made it 'in the form of bars containing approximately 400 ounces troy of fine (not standard) gold.' This is a higher flight than yours, and it was taken quite quietly. They bettered your instruction. Observe how often I quote your favourite SHAKESPEARE.

Ricardo

I am indeed surprised to have converted Government to my view after a century. In 1819, when the iron was hot, all my striking produced only a very imperfect reform. What of the other principles on which most of us were fairly well agreed?

Young Economist

You mean perhaps your own scheme of distribution? It has been necessarily altered by the Turning of the Tables, as, I think, you heard the other day.

Ricardo

I was going back in my thoughts just two steps farther than my own innovations.

Young Economist

I understand then that you mean the two 'proved to demonstration' by an adherence to which, you wrote to MALTHUS, 'governments cannot fail to promote the welfare of the people who are submitted to their sway. What more clear than the advantages which follow from freedom of trade or the evils resulting from holding out any peculiar encouragement to population?' The lesson of MALTHUS has been learned better than the lesson of ADAM SMITH. Our Great War, of four years, brought about the creation of a large number of small States, which at once, on the pretext that Defence was more important than Opulence, proceeded to shut their doors and narrow the markets for goods all over Europe. It is even

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thought now by the older States that the doors hitherto open ought to be closed, or left only half open. However, there is no talk of this for the United States of America, which remain a gigantic free market *inter se* and prosper under it.

Ricardo

In regard then to my 'innovations' there will not be better news to tell, perhaps worse.

Young Economist

They are, Sir, nearly all of them altered by later innovations of other people, but the stimulus given by yours to economic theory remains one of the most remarkable facts in the history thereof. When young MILL said you had left nothing for future theorists to do in regard to Value, he was presently shown to be quite wrong. But those who followed him (to quote your SHAKESPEARE again) must need begin their innovations by plucking the heart out of your mystery and in seeming to know your stops. It was a wonderful influence for a member of the Stock Exchange to exert in the world of letters. If you had exerted it only in the world of Chancellors of the Exchequer or Governors of the Bank of England, there would have been less surprise. MILL might have delivered that encomium of his on your theories of currency without much extravagance.

Ricardo

Did you say that my *Notes on Malthus* had been recently dragged to light?

Young Economist

Yes; that is your last message to us. You did not yourself think much of those notes, and MACCULLOCH still less. But they tell us at least which of the subjects treated in MALTHUS'

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Political Economy of 1820 were thought by you important, and which not important. A running commentary such as yours in the Notes is a sort of dialogue between the critic and his victim. The writer, if he were more unscrupulous than you (say as unscrupulous as JOHNSON over the Debates), can always give himself the last word.

Ricardo

In the case of a written manuscript and still more in a printed book the last word is what the critic chooses to make so.

Young Economist

Precisely, but I do not say it was on that principle that your Notes find General Gluts to be the most important heresy in your friend's book. I have been wondering if you would still take the same view in spite of the clamour raised by producers. You think with ADAM SMITH that to extend the market is always better than to cut down production?

Ricardo

So I urged against MALTHUS; I agreed with J. B. SAY that demand can be taken for granted and production creates its own market.

Young Economist

May I suggest that the economic problems of your day were the same as ours are now in spite of our sensational inventions and discoveries? Perhaps the greatest difference from your world is the annihilation of time and distance. Exchanges and prices and stocks are now known over the whole globe at once; and we are nearer to our customers. We can talk to them in the Antipodes without leaving home. We can take the wings of a dove and fly to them.

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Ricardo

Does this mean that the problems are different or only that the intervals are narrowed, so that all are now equally larger or equally smaller? All things and persons, you say, are nearer to each other, but are they different proportionally from what they were in my time? It would have been difficult for ROTHSCHILD now to effect his *coup* after a victory unknown to the world in general but known to him. But at least winter and summer, day and night, and the difference between past, present and future have not ceased; Nature's problems remain, with only a quantitative difference of calculation to favour your new century. You ought to have gained greatly by that saving of time, but you and yours stand to each other substantially as you did before, the presumption being that you all gain equally, whether by being made smaller as in Lilliput or taller as in Brobdingnag. All such changes in conditions of life are economies of living; and all economies of living come under the rules of economy in general.

Young Economist

I remember that you 'exchanged' horses with other travellers because 'it ought to be the rule of a political economist to save every portion of labour which does not produce pleasure or gratification to some one human being.'¹ This was to generalize the economy in a manner very pleasant for your fellow-travellers.

Ricardo

More often the introduction of a new economy causes positive distress to someone in the first instance, and I have no doubt it was so with your inventions and discoveries. When

¹ The 'exchanging' of the horses: See *Letters to MacCulloch. Sinking Fund and Savings Banks: To Trower*, p. 15.

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once they are there, they will be handled by the same economic principles as have prevailed before your day; the saving of labour, avoidance of waste, provision for the future being the chief of them, even in the case of the Governing Body. I once said to TROWER that the Sinking Fund 'is the general savings bank of the Nation and should be encouraged on the same principles as encouragement is given to those institutions.'

Young Economist

You were prepared to help in the sinking of the Debt by a levy on capital to which you yourself would be a willing contributor. But neither the Sinking Fund nor a Capital Levy can now get a fair hearing. This was the note on which your Notes ended, and I follow your example, having no comfort to give you on the subject. You speak in that final Note of a different Distribution as the result of the vanishing of the Debt. The next century may see that Redistribution, with no change perhaps in the form of Government, but with an Aristocracy of skilled labourers, in receipt of high incomes, paying for the unskilled unemployed, and hiring both capital and business talent. This would be the full consummation, the complete Turning of the Tables. I do not know whether the new aristocracy should be regarded as the truth lurking in all aristocracy or as the falsehood lurking in all democracy. It might not be worse than the old aristocracy, to which indeed it has close resemblance. The Tables might be Turned again after that, in far-off days, to introduce the Millennium.

Ricardo

In any case, your inventions and discoveries would neither cause such a state of things nor prevent it. It is beyond your prevision as those wonders were beyond mine.

DAVID RICARDO

Young Economist

Yes, prevision may be the worst kind of vision, and unlike MALTHUS you did not attempt it.¹ Sufficient unto the day are the economic problems thereof. Ours are sufficiently hard for our day. You have sharpened our tools for dealing with them, and we think of you with respect and gratitude.

¹ 'Did not attempt it': See *Notes*, p. 150. The prophecy is in Malthus, *Political Economy*, 1820, p. 325: 'I should feel no doubt, for instance, of an increase in the rate of profits in this country for twenty years together, at the beginning of the 20th century, compared with the twenty years which are now coming on, provided this near period were a period of profound tranquillity and peace and abundant capital, and the future period were a period in which capital was scanty in proportion to the demand for it owing to a war, attended by the circumstances of an increasing trade, and an increasing demand for agricultural produce similar to those which were experienced from 1793 to 1813.'



J. S. MILL

the Reformer

Mill

Am I not too small a man to be put to the question? I was not original, only willing and eager to learn from everybody.¹

Newcomer in Hades

Too small a man? Would you be content with a lower place than COMTE, who was quite sure for his part he was a great man?² Think of TAINE and you can say, 'I was adored too once.' Your *Logic* was enough to decide him. Even before your *Logic*, JOHN STERLING spoke of you in 1840 as 'a man of extraordinary power and genius!' CAROLINE FOX spoke of you as 'a very uncommon-looking person, such acuteness and sensibility marked in his exquisitely chiselled countenance.'

Mill

I wrote my own *Life* very largely to show what could be made of an ordinary man if he were extraordinarily well brought up.³ I took up intellectual labour early and lost no

¹ Willing to learn: *Autobiography*, Longmans, 1873, p. 190, where his wife is to share the credit for his 'greater practicality.'

² *Comte and Positivism*, Trübner, 1865 (from *Westminster Review*,) p. 130. Taine, *Study of Mill*, 1866, transl. 1870. *Journals of Caroline Fox*, revised ed., 1883, p. 69; compare p. 85, date 1840.

³ Education: *Autobiography*, pp. 1, 30, 34, 35. Compare pp. 31, 57, and *Caroline Fox*, pp. 94, 107.

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time over frivolities. I had really a happy childhood, without adventures. I was never stolen by gipsies like your Sage. My father was my only schoolmaster, and I left his hands at 14, with a start of 25 years over my contemporaries. I kept up my health by temperance and much walking. There are many grades between Under-dog and Super-man. You mean only that I was no Under-dog?

Newcomer in Hades

By the Dog of Egypt, who was no Under-Dog, I do mean something more. Even SOCRATES was aware he was an unusual kind of man.¹ You must have had a glimmering notion of that sort too.

Mill

You are an Economist and may be thinking of my *Political Economy*. Kindly observe that economists do not reach the highest honours. They tell me Darwin's grandson, whose book surpassed my expectations,² is in Westminster Abbey. MALTHUS is not in that Abbey. The Sage (as your friends call him) sleeps in the Canongate, RICARDO at Chippenham, his daughters over him as guardian angels; MARX, the cosmopolitan, at Highgate; the rest among their own people. I am at Avignon among my Frenchmen. My *Liberty*, 1859, and my *Logic*, 1843, may preserve my memory a little.

Newcomer in Hades

Pray, do not moralize among the tombs; you have passed beyond them. Are you afraid to think what you have done besides these two books?

¹ *Apology* (in Plato), pp. 20, 21.

² *The Letters of John Stuart Mill*, ed. by Hugh S. R. Elliott. 2 vols. Longmans, 1910. Vol. I, 236, date 1860.

J. S. MILL

Mill

No, at the close of life I did not smack my lips like HARRIET MARTINEAU.¹ But I thought better of life than my father did, to whom it was 'a poor thing at the best.' A man, who does his utmost with his powers cannot be wasting time.

Newcomer in Hades

No, indeed; and to judge by fame you lost little time. You ruled for forty years as no other writer on your subjects. You did not stand or fall by one book only. All those years, we heard of MILL's *Logic*, MILL's *Political Economy*, MILL's *Liberty*, MILL on *Subjection of Women*, MILL on *Representative Government*. We looked for MILL on *Ethology* and MILL on *Sociology*, but they never appeared, though you left us good sketches of them.²

Mill

I suppose you have read my *Political Economy*. It was assailed even in my lifetime, and is possibly forgotten now except by economists like you. It used to have readers outside the schools and I cultivated them, as my manner was, by cheap editions, with results that surprised myself.³

¹ Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, with memorials by Maria Weston Chapman, 3 vols. end 2d. 1877. The article in the *Daily News* written by herself was printed on 29th June, 1876, two days after her death. The expression in the text is implied in the phrase of that article on p. 470 of Vol. III: 'She enjoyed her share of the experience.' etc. For the contrasted view of James Mill see his son's *Autobiography*, p. 98, and for his son's view, Elliot, *l. c.* I. 92, II. 362. Caroline Fox, pp. 114, 192, 295.

² *Logic*, VI. v. Elliot, Vol. I. 226.

³ Cheap editions: *Autobiography*, pp. 278, 279.

Mill on Harriet Martineau: Elliot, I. 157 (date 1850).

Emancipation of Political Economy: Elliot, II. 90. "Yours are now the old doctrines." See Marshall, *Principles*, 1890; *Memorials*, 1925, p. 119, on Mill's theory of value 1876.

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Newcomer in Hades

In Political Economy, JEVONS, who encouraged us to call it Economics, led the first serious revolt against you in the schools. RUSKIN was a knight-errant, and not even what you call HARRIET MARTINEAU, a tyto. But it was ALFRED MARSHALL in 1890, not STANLEY JEVONS in 1871, who really dethroned you. He did more justice to you than JEVONS or CAIRNES; but his Preface in 1890 places you, MR. MILL, where you placed your predecessors in 1848. You emancipated Political Economy from them; he would emancipate Economics from you. The New Age has new problems, and the old doctrines must be recast. Yours are now the old doctrines. Having been in the Canon for a whole generation you are now in the Apocrypha, to be read for example of life and instruction of manners. You know the rest of the Article; we are not to apply you to establish any doctrine, *ad dogmata confirmanda*. This does not infer mediocrity; your forerunners had the same fate, and MARSHALL will have it in due time. DANTE says this happens in the Fine Arts; *a fortiori* will it happen with our economic heroes.

Mill

Yes, not only I but all economists become apocryphal writers. They write no books that remain for all time canonical in the sense of the sixth article of your thirty-nine.

Newcomer in Hades

We look to you then, confidently, for instruction of manners. THOMAS HILL GREEN said he would rather have been you than CARLYLE; you were 'such an extraordinarily good man.'¹

¹ T. H. Green: in R. L. Nettleship's *Memoir of Thomas Hill Green*, with Preface by Mrs. T. H. Green (Longmans, 1906), p. 224.

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Yet you thought you were made for the relatively common-place.

Mill

Yes, my strength lay neither in the region of ultimate aims, the Eternities and Immensities, nor in helping the world at close quarters to earn its daily bread, but in the intermediate region¹ of moral and political theory. I busy myself with what BACON called the *axiomata media*, the science of science, of the methods of science. Now, the Superman goes to first principles; therefore I was no superman.

Newcomer in Hades

You counted your study, however, of very high dignity, 'the crown and consummation of a liberal education.' You stationed yourself in the middle where GOETHE puts all the philosophers.

Mill

GOETHE says elsewhere that the man in the middle is the man of the world, a description which hardly fits me though it very well fitted GOETHE at Coblenz in 1774, between BASEDOW, the enthusiast and LAVATER, the man of science. Your eulogist could justify himself, if at all, not by the subjects chosen but by the way they were pursued. He may have thought me more impartial than CARLYLE and more anxious to do justice to opponents. All I can say is that for the most part I lived the scholar's life more assiduously than most professors though I never was a professor or even had a degree.

¹ Intermediate region: *Autobiography*, p. 189; *Dissertations*, Vol. I. Bentham, p. 384, ed. Parker, 1859; compare Elliot, II. 333. St. Andrews Address, 1867, p. 9. Goethe: *Wilhelm Meister*, *Wanderjahre* II. i. 152. The other reference is to 'Das Weltkind in der Mitte,' 'the Worldling, in between them.'

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Newcomer in Hades

You came out of the scholar's life when you sat for Westminster in 1865. You escaped into it again three years afterwards.

Mill

I was not made for a political career or even for an academic.

Newcomer in Hades

This last is not so evident. Perhaps both are doubtful. Even in the House, though you were not a perfect speaker, you were impressive.¹ But like CARLYLE you were once a Lord Rector. You addressed the young men of St. Andrew's impressively on University education in 1867. You had long before helped to create the University of London. You went to John Austin's lectures at University College in 1828, and played with the idea of lecturing there yourself in 1867. Though not a University man, you rubbed shoulders with Universities. Did you also rub shoulders with mysticism? CARLYLE hailed you as a fellow-mystic in 1831, just seventeen years before you drummed him out of the ranks of modern reformers—for his *Past and Present* (1843). Your capitals leave us in no doubt that you mean him.

Mill

He was wrong. I struggled against any approach to mysticism. Parting from BENTHAM expressly at a later time,² I

¹ Roebuck to Chadwick in Elliot, II. 59; cf. I. 253.

University College: Bain's *J. S. Mill*, p. 32, Longmans, 1882. Elliot, II. 93.

Carlyle: See Mill's *Political Economy*, IV. vii, Ashley's ed., p. 754.

² Bentham: *Utilitarianism*, 1863, Ch. I. *Autobiography*, p. 143; cf. *Utilitarianism*, p. 14.

Unlike Bentham: Elliot, I. 103-4, and II. 222. Caroline Fox, p. 124. *Dissertations*, Vol. II. 450 seq.

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distinguished higher and lower pleasures, as PLATO had done. I thought that Happiness, though the chief end of man, should be pursued not directly but indirectly. I held it better to be a SOCRATES dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. People might say I spoiled my Utilitarianism without rising above it. I was at one time distressed that I had worn away all my powers of feeling by an excess of what CARLYLE calls 'victorious analysis.' But I never confused feeling or fancy with logic. Where logic stopped, I stopped with it. I never liked any one to criticize BENTHAM but myself; and I remained a professed Utilitarian all my days, but a Utilitarian who, unlike BENTHAM, takes account of the whole of human nature. In reviewing WHEWELL I made that plain.

Newcomer in Hades

As much a Utilitarian as HEGEL a Lutheran.¹ 'Ich bin es und will es bleiben' (1840). We can safely leave you to deal with BENTHAM alone. Why do you speak of his early impressions as formed in the age of 'the leanest and barrenest men'?² His *Fragment on Government*, the first-fruits of his impressible youth, appeared in 1776 along with the *Decline and Fall* and the *Wealth of Nations*. It was the age too of EDMUND BURKE. If such are lean, where shall fatness be found? In 1838 when you thus write of him, you are in revolt against his rule of the majority, but it was not from such men that he got it. You do justice to the age afterwards: 'a great age, an age of strong and brave men,' of whom your father was the last. I suppose we may call him in the conveniently ambiguous Latin '*ultimus illuminatorum*.' But your fascinating presentments of BENTHAM and COLERIDGE were presentments

¹ Hegel: *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I. 89, ed. 1840.

² 'Leanest and barrenest men': *Dissertations*, Vol. I. 35; cf. pp. 334, 378. 'An age of strong and brave men': *Autobiography* p. 205. 'Bentham and Coleridge': *Dissertations*, Vol. I. 330 seq.; *Autobiography*, p. 243.

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of two sides of your own nature. You were under the spell of COLERIDGE. Was BENTHAM, on the other hand, making you, like Mrs. Browning's Lucretius, 'teach a truth you could not learn?'¹

Beyond the field of firm belief which stopped with logic you allowed an area of 'imaginative conjecture.'² You were always 'member for France,' though the overflowing sentiment and openness, to say nothing of the dreaminess, supposed to belong to that nation, were not conspicuous in you. You have pointed out the defects of your Frenchmen as well as their excellences. You rose superior to your sect's aversion from sentiment, in the autumn of 1826;³ and recovered your lost feeling by means of poetry, especially the poetry of WORDSWORTH. Some of us can hardly forgive you for calling him 'the poet of unpoetical natures.' The phrase rivals 'the leanest and barrenest men.' What you say of SHELLEY gives us misgivings, not entirely removed by your youthful essay on Poetry. You believe that in thought and intellect, so far as shown in his short life, SHELLEY was a child compared with someone else you knew; namely the lady⁴ who wrote on the Enfranchisement of Women.

Mill

You doubt it only because you did not know her.

Newcomer in Hades

I remember the story, and I respect the feeling. I respect also the English reticence that kept it for the Autobiography.

¹ Mrs. Browning: *A Vision of Poets*.

² 'Conjecture': Elliot, II. 64, date 1866.

'Member for France': Bain, *Life of J. S. Mill* (1882, Longmans), p. 78.

Defects of Frenchmen: Caroline Fox, p. 357. Elliot, I. 44, 74 ff.

³ 'Sentiment': *Autobiography*, p. 133; cf. pp. 111, 146 (date 1828), 149.

'Poetry': *Dissertations*, I. 63 ff. (date 1833).

⁴ 'The lady': *Autobiography*, p. 186. *Dissertations*, Vol. II. 411 ff., date 1851.

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RICARDO kept such things for his letters. One word as to RICARDO. Please understand in spite of your modesty that you are to us the developed RICARDO. Though he was no opponent, you characteristically stated his positions better than he did himself, or with all his pains MACCULLOCH did for him. After doing that, you added a new element to political economy, for with the assistance of your honoured lady you wrought social philosophy¹ into the texture of it. Others had distinguished but not combined them. In your youthful *Unsettled Questions* you had spoken of 'the common interest of all nations,' and in the *Political Economy* of 'the collective economical interests of the human race.' You rose above insularity. You were no mere Formulator but a Reformer, in this as in all your subjects.

Mill

Your Sage dealt with all nations and spoke of them as one great mercantile republic. But there was something to reform in him and even in RICARDO, whom I am accused of praising too highly. Like Iago, I am nothing if not critical, and I dare to say that 'my father's *Elements*,' drawn up from notes of his Ricardian lessons, given to me in my thirteenth year, are out of date now.² But all true criticism involves construction. Few things annoy me more than the careless ease with which men dismiss the old political economy, and appeal to 'practical experience,' by which they mean what they have seen, heard, and misunderstood. We have all sorts of false political economy, judgments by commonsense. Yet

¹ 'Social Philosophy' and reform: *Autobiography*, p. 23. *Unsettled Questions* (Parker, 1844, but written (or projected and rejected) 1831), p. 31. *Political Economy*, V, xi. § 14, p. 970 (ed. Ashley, 1909).

² James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*, 1821. *Autobiography*, pp. 25, 26, 205; to D'Eichthal, in *Cosmopolis*, 1897, p. 350, date 1830. Elliot, I. 206. *Dissertations*, I. 52. *Macvey Napier*, 1844, p. 478. Compare Elliot, II. 331; D'Eichthal, *l.c.* 350.

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there abide 'fundamental principles put out of the reach of controversy, by ADAM SMITH, MALTHUS, and others.'

Newcomer in Hades

An economist at 13! If you were not a Superman, you were certainly a superchild. No other could have survived that education, perhaps the only successful attempt ever made to put an old head on young shoulders. It gives us relief to find, up and down in your life, traces of our common humanity.¹ At seven years of age, studying the American War of Independence, you took the wrong side because it was the English side. Fifty years later (we rejoice to hear from LEONARD COURTNEY) you called for muffins at the Political Economy Club when the supply had run short and no one else dared to ask for more. You wrote tragedies as a boy, on the models of JOANNA BAILLIE. It was a refreshing sign of human weakness to sympathize with the Tractarians. We like to hear that your father failed to make you follow the rules of elocution, and that you first learned to compose properly when you were asked to turn BENTHAM's later manner of speech into his earlier. We were glad you enjoyed *Sartor Resartus*, once in type, and that you were a little softened towards HAMILTON when you found by VERTCH's *Life* of him that he had family affections. Most of all were we charmed to find you in love, like one of ourselves, even if you had rallied COMTE on it as if for a weakness. You had humour yourself as well as a sense of its value.² You said to CAROLINE FOX in 1842, 'Life is not all fun though there is a great deal of fun in it.' And you remarked in your shortlived diary of 1854,

¹ Like other men: *Autobiography*, pp. 4, 15, 23, 116, 175 (1824). *History of Political Economy Club*, p. 326; Bain's *J. S. Mill*, p. 69. Elliot, II. 206. *Comte and Positivism*, pp. 131, 157.

² Fun and humour: Caroline Fox, pp. 195, 419. Elliot, II. 360; cf. pp. 361, 371, 373. *Autobiography*, p. 192. Bain, *J. S. Mill*, pp. 59, 60; cf. p. 333. *Comte and Positivism*, 1865, p. 154. *Dissertations*, I. 18, 21.

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that humour has saved many a man from madness. Like the rest of us, as soon as you had passed forty, you thought the world was more frivolous than in your youth. It was a very human discovery too that your earlier writings seemed as strange as if written by somebody else.

Mill

I trust this is friendly irony, not spiteful sarcasm. There is little of irony or humour in my books, whatever may have peeped out in private life. SYDNEY SMITH would have said that my ancestry conferred precocity but no humour. Now it is quite true that my father was Scotch, but I assure you that, like CARLYLE's Teufelsdröckh, he could laugh heartily on occasion, if that goes for anything.

Newcomer in Hades

Compared with his biographer, he might indeed have been humorous. His biographer has written exquisitely of yourself: 'His nervous energy was so completely absorbed in his unremitting intellectual application as to be unavoidably unavailable for establishing the co-ordination of muscular dexterity.' No one but the biographer of JOHNSON could rival that passage. *Risum teneatis amici?*

Mill

I might smile at the passage without being quite sure that I had not written it myself.

Newcomer in Hades

MR. MILL, you were Polonius to CARLYLE's Hamlet; but even in your always sententious and serious books I can sometimes find the humour shining through. You yourself say that a little sense of it would have shown COMTE the

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absurdity of his symbols of worship. You had it when you said that 'the groans of no plundered abstraction can disturb the sleep of the just; as long as the bread is not taken from any of our fellow-creatures, we care not though the whole English dictionary had to beg in the streets.' You were speaking of Church property and supposing yourself to be asked, when all individuals had been compensated, 'Would you rob the Church?' It is delightful to find you thus, in your later manner, reasoning from particular to particular and disclaiming all sympathy with abstractions; all such *entia rationis* were fair game to you even in 1833.

Mill

I valued the school Logic,¹ notwithstanding. It makes men give precise meaning to the terms they use; I did not find Mathematics doing it so well.

Newcomer in Hades

Accordingly we find you saying, in the article on BERKELEY'S *Theory of Vision*: 'Nobody is bound to prove a proposition which nobody can understand.' True fun is sure to Logic near allied in that passage. It was a jocose or else unguarded remark in *Representative Government*: 'Things left to take care of themselves inevitably decay.' This would have made an abrupt end of the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. You wrote to CARLYLE in 1833, that, though the end of that same doctrine was in view and without resurrection, it was not yet come, and you leave a good deal of it standing in your *Political Economy*. These *obiter dicta* were surely not serious. You were grimly jesting too, were you not, when you consoled the French people² for defeat in 1870, by telling them that their principle

¹ School logic: *Autobiography*, pp. 17 to 19.

Berkeley: *Dissertations* II., 1842, p. 93.

Fun: See *Repras. Govt.*, Ch. II., pop. ed., p. 9. Cf. Elliot, I. 46; *Political Economy* (Ashley), p. 950, Bk. V. Ch. XI.

² French: Elliot, II. 271.

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of Equality would now be adopted internationally, there being now no dominant Power, neither France nor Germany. After the Great War just over, we might have gilded our pills for Germany with a like comfort, if we had thought of it.

Mill

The public must judge me by what I made public, not by my private letters.

Newcomer in Hades

I think I like you best in your furious moods.¹ You speak of Protectionism as 'an organized system of pillage of the many by the few.' When MANSEL supposed a Deity above Morality you were not content with the mild protest of Father MALEBRANCHE against a similar idea in his day: 'S'il y avoit un tel Dieu (sans bonté et sans sagesse) le vrai Dieu nous défendrait de l'adorer et de l'aimer.' You roundly declare that if the Deity is to be above morality you will go to Tartarus rather than obey him. I know it was an echo of DRYDEN'S Juvenal and his hungry Greek; but you make it your own. Your education left a great deal unspoiled in you, MR. MILL, not always the features sure of the paternal approval, but pleasing to ordinary folk like me.

Mill

I called MANSEL'S book 'detestable, to me absolutely loathsome.' Was this too strong? Strong language may reveal too much of the writer's mind ('indecently expose' it, as SYDNEY SMITH once said); but it is better than irony which may, as by SWIFT and RABELAIS, be too easily used to conceal the

¹ Furious moods: Elliot, II. 295. Malebranche, *Morale*, VIII. (*apud* Mackintosh, *Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy*, p. 73). *Hamilton's Philosophy*, 1865, 3rd ed., 1872, 129; Mansel, *On the Limits of Religious Thought*, 1859; Elliot, I. 272; Bain, *J. S. Mill*, p. 122.

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writer's mind, for its essence is to have a double meaning, certain (and sometimes intended) to be missed by an unwary reader. You may find this kind of irony in DAVID HUME, among philosophers.

Newcomer in Hades

Perhaps your education led you away from all that was not plain and serious.

Mill

No harm if it had done so. The chief harm of that education appeared on the surface. In spite of my father's warnings I seem to have shown myself in what you would call my tender youth, 'greatly and disagreeably self-conceited,' as I have frankly set down in my *Autobiography*.¹

Newcomer in Hades

You are not a Leveller, MR. MILL. You would not say with some of our American friends 'anybody is fit for anything.' You do say as a matter of fact, 'One person is not as good as another; and it is reversing all the rules of rational conduct to attempt to raise a political fabric on a supposition which is at variance with fact.' You write to BAIN, 'I am not anxious to bring over any but really superior intellects and characters to the whole of my opinions' (on religion). You write also that 'a person of high intellect should never go into unintellectual society unless he can enter it as an apostle; yet he is the only person with high objects who can safely enter it at all.' You think it right that a superior person, man or woman, should pass for what he or she really is, neither under nor overvalued. In fact you agree for once with ST. PAUL; of whom as a rule you think lightly with BENTHAM rather than favourably with COMTE.

¹ In what sense conceited: *Autobiography*, pp. 33, 228; Elliot, I. 280, 223 (1859); cf. I. 144, II. 100; to Florence Nightingale, 1867, through Miss Helen Taylor. *Dissertations*, III, 19 (Parliamentary Reform, 1859).

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Mill

Granted: but my state of mind in the early period was neither humility nor arrogance. I was aware I knew more than my fellows, but I knew how it had all been conveyed to me without any merit of mine. As to the later citation, about high intellect, you will observe I do not say I myself was possessed of such. What I was even then possessed of was the idea of improvement and reform; and these subjects in England are reckoned too serious to be discussed in society. Hence my condemnation of society. These are to me the most important of subjects. All my writings bear upon them, even the *Logic* and the *Political Economy*. It was never with me 'knowledge for its own sake' even in the *Logic*. I was a Reformer and knew I should have my cross to bear.¹

Newcomer in Hades

There was certainly more Logic than Liberty in your education. Still the *Logic* was your own choice and (with some hints from BAIN) your own work. Your concern was to clear men's heads, as the best preparation for the coming Age that would demand all their powers of thinking; and the *Logic* seemed to you what you could do best for them, as you were not an artist like CARLYLE. 'The majority even of those who are capable of receiving truth into their minds must, you say, have the logical side of it turned first towards them.' And truth must grow like a seed rather than be struck out like a spark from a discussion. You had no great faith in mere discussion.

Mill

You give me credit for what I really tried in the *Logic*. I added that Poetry is higher than Logic, and the union of the

¹ 'I was a Reformer': Caroline Fox, p. 89 (1840); cf. pp. 427, 434. Cf. *Autob.*, pp. 133, 145.

Logical side first: Elliot, I. 35 (1832), 47. *Autob.*, p. 176; cf. Caroline Fox, p. 217.

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two, properly handled, is Philosophy.¹ I was better supported in the writing of *Liberty* and yet, paradox as it seems, you will find more of myself there. My book on Ethology or the formation of character, was, as you say, never written, and when I projected it my counsellor was not with me. It was to include national character.

Newcomer in Hades

Yes, like 'Probable Futurity' in the *Political Economy*, the *Liberty*, we understand from you, was a joint work; and we agree that it tells, more than any other, of yourself, and your heart's desire, a desire (allow me to say it), which your helper advanced, not created. It is indeed a classical demonstration of the 'importance to man and society of a large variety of types of character and of giving full freedom to human nature to expand itself in innumerable and conflicting directions.'² The good of the species is the chief end, but it can best be advanced by the development in each man of what is best in him. So you write to CARLYLE in 1834, and more authoritatively (as in a book) in 1840: 'The unlikeness of one person to another is not only a principle of improvement but would seem almost to be the only principle.' You wrote nothing stronger in the *Liberty*, 1859. It seems to mean that all progress comes from the eccentricities of individuals. The idea helps us to understand your remark to CAROLINE Fox about your discovery that what was right for others might be wrong for you. One of our later poets says, there are inviolate caverns of the mind as there are under the sea.

¹ Poetry, Logic, and Philosophy: Elliot, I. 55; cf. p. 96 (to Carlyle 1833).

² Principles of progress: *Autobiography*, pp. 252, 253. Elliot, I. 92. *Dissertations*, II. 71 (on De Tocqueville). Caroline Fox, p. 195.

'Inviolable caverns,' etc.: William Watson. Elliot, I. 293, to Villari, 1858; II. 309, to Acollas, 1871.

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Mill

I had often occasion to remind both friends and critics that the subject of that book was not political liberty but freedom from the tyranny of opinion and prejudice. In England we have more of the political; in France more of the moral and intellectual. What I desired was the autonomy of the individual.

Newcomer in Hades

In your diary you say that the French think and the English do not; but this may be a passing word.¹ In Avignon you corrected some first impressions of France.

Mill

You are quoting my *obiter dicta* and *obiter scripta* alongside of my books. Allow for differences in time and maturity and you will not (I think) find my books in conflict with one another. Letters are often a serious matter; but letters and, still more, conversation may err on the side of complaisance. This may have happened in my letters to CARLYLE, and in my conversations at Falmouth, where STERLING and CAROLINE FOX had too good hopes of me.² But my chief end in life and the Cross I was to bear were never doubtful.

Even in the *Political Economy* I kept in view the 'practical applications,' for which I confess my father's lessons had fitted me none too well. I had at least learned from him and BENTHAM to be impatient of long-standing abuses. It is true that at the crisis of my life already mentioned I had a vision of disappointment;—if all abuses were corrected, and all my reforms carried, should I be happy? And I answered, No.

¹ French: Elliot, II. 377; cf. I. 256, 257, II. 319.

² Too good hopes: Elliot, I. 22, 26; Caroline Fox, pp. 89, 223.

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Newcomer in Hades

Your grievances being all gone? I seem to remember a theory of pleasure rejected by PLATO in the *Gorgias*, which made pleasure depend on wants or discomforts removed. But you came triumphantly through that crisis. After reading MARMONTEL'S *Memoirs*, that self-same moment you could feel,¹ and (if I read you rightly), in order to keep hold of the power to feel, you resolved always to make some other end than happiness the purpose of life—not the joy but some bringer of the joy. This is not far from ARISTOTLE'S degradation of Pleasure in an adjunct or concomitant of the strivings for other ends, ἐπιγυγνόμενόν τι as is said in the *Ethics*. It had a touch too of the Englishman in it, MR. MILL. You wrote in your diary of 1854, 'It is characteristic of the English that they have no trust in the attainment of any end by directly aiming at it.' It must have been your own characteristic at the time of your mental awakening.

Mill

Please remember that in the crisis I was not thinking only of myself and my aspirations but of mankind in general. If all reforms were accomplished, and we had a world without poverty, 'the pleasures of life being no longer kept up by struggle and privation would cease to be pleasures.'

Newcomer in Hades

Dangerously near the Sage's view. There is a dictum in the diary hardly consistent with it or with your own craving for

¹ The change, etc.: *Autobiography*, pp. 140, 141, 142. Cf. Elliot, II. 384; *Autobiography*, pp. 145, 146.

'General good': Elliot, II. 385, 1854. *Dissertations*, II. 25, 51 (on De Tocqueville).

'Jacket and Trousers': Caroline Fox, p. 367.

Chartism and progress: Caroline Fox, 432, 434. *Political Economy*, 6th ed., II, xii. (Ashley), 384. Elliot, I. 302, II. 359, 374. St. Andrews address, p. 34.

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solitude. 'An earthly life both pleasant and innocent can be had by many and might by all. What is now wanted is the creed of EPICURUS warmed by the additional element of an enthusiastic love of the general good.' So you had written in 1840, that in the political institutions of a democracy like the American, a man feels that 'the common weal is his weal'; and you take for granted that 'moral excellence must have a deeper foundation than either the calculations of self-interest or the emotions of self-flattery.' You had certainly some common ground with T. H. GREEN. It was not a very exceptional crisis—yours of 1826, at the age of 20. It seems to have had a happy ending, a better understanding between you and men of the opposite camp. It made little change in what I may call your intellectual programme, your ideas of reform; you found yourself at the end of life with the same plans before you. However, you must have been pleased to find that some of them, to use the merry metaphor of CAROLINE FOX, had been promoted to jacket and trousers.

Mill

Even in 1843 I allowed that the temper of the English world was becoming a little better. The country had learned something from Chartism, that victory of the vanquished; and in 1865, I said, there was no time in our history when improvement was going on in so many directions at once and meeting such fair consideration. You know I always held that moral regeneration must precede social, and that the danger of democracy was intellectual stagnation. Whatever BUCKLE may say, human intellect improves more slowly than human feelings.

Newcomer in Hades

We must write you down a moderate optimist,¹ in spite of

¹ Optimist or pessimist? *Dissertations*, I. 160 ff., II. 189 (Revolution). Elliot, II. 298, 309, 310 (Revolution); cf. I. 7, 24, 131, II. 380. *Autobiography*, pp. 145, 255, 256,

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your indictment of Civilization in 1825. After all you allow that in Civilization the stagnation is tempered by associations and societies, and clubs of all sorts, of which truly there was no lack in England when I left it lately. But you had another vision of disappointment, the dream of a limit to musical combinations. We might have expected you to dream rather of a limit to mechanical inventions, to usher in your desired Stationary State. For a man supposed by many to be prosaic and absorbed in dismal sciences, you were indeed a dreamer of dreams, MR. MILL, 'Probable Futurity' is always in your thoughts. There is a visionary element in your *Liberty*. You desire what was called in your day the Sovereignty of the Individual, better called by yourself Autonomy of the same. Like the rest of us, you have some difficulty in reconciling it with the encroachments of Government, which, notwithstanding, you regard as inevitable. Have we more to fear than to hope from coming changes?

Mill

In my papers on Socialism, I have acknowledged that English Socialists are no architects of ruin.

Newcomer in Hades

You mean, like BURKE, that sometimes the French are so. To KARL MARX the necessary prelude of Revolution was the crowing of the Gallic Cock.¹ There is a saying of Napoleon III, that in France reform is not possible without Revolution.

Mill

Quote him in full. He said, 'In France revolutions are easy but reforms slow, almost impossible; in England, reforms are

191, 230, 234. *Political Economy* (Ashley), p. 764. *Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1879, written 1869 (Socialism). Caroline Fox, p. 357, date 1853. Chartists: Francis Place, *Life*, p. 375. Alfred Marshall, *Memorials* (Edgeworth's reminiscences of him), p. 71.

¹ Suggested by Burke, *Regicide Peace*, Works II. 377. 4to. 1837.

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steady and certain, but revolutions can never be accomplished.'

Newcomer in Hades

You say yourself that Revolution was very near us in 1832, the days of Reform; and it was so in the days of the Chartists in 1839, if we believe FRANCIS PLACE. You wrote to JOHN AUSTIN in 1847, that you only wished it would come, to shake us up and put some ideas into our heads. You wrote in your diary seven years later 'English working-men are never likely to rise until they are starving, and they are never likely to be starving now for generations to come.' This is a new version of '*panem et circenses*,' 'comfort and cinemas,' as EDGEWORTH renders it. But I think that you believe, with MALTHUS, that a rising standard of 'comfort and cinemas' will bring the desire to have more of such, and you say yourself in the diary that improvement is sometimes thrust on the less happy by those who are already improved. Many of the so-called 'upper classes' make common cause with the Socialists now. Formerly, at least according to TOLSTOI in '*Que faire?*', it was the upper classes who insisted on the distinction of classes; now it is only the Communists and immoderate Socialists who talk of class-consciousness. Nevertheless, you think that even our moderate Socialists, though they do not try to produce the General overturn (*culbute général*) all at once, have it in their minds to see it done by and by.

Mill

The ordinary citizen is swayed by his standard of comfort, the reformer by his standard of excellence; both are growing. The new times demand a new type of statesman,¹ one who

¹ New kind of Statesman: Elliot, II. 56.
Riches and Poverty: *Political Economy*, IV. vi. 2. Elliot, II. 121 (1868, of Chadwick).

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will legislate for Posterity; and greater equality will be one of his aims. This is a mere generality, but there is no harm in that where the malady is general. Where there is a particular grievance, generality may be an insult.

Newcomer in Hades

Indeed, Sir, we all desire to see the extremes of riches and poverty removed, even if some eggs be broken for the omelette. We agree with your book that 'the best state for human nature is that in which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer.' In your enthusiasm of humanity as SEELEY called it, or passion for the public good as you call it, you are akin to MALTHUS among your classical predecessors, and to ALFRED MARSHALL among your successors. MARSHALL's spur or sting was the thought of the lowest classes of labour; in all his efforts he was trying to raise them or rather to abolish the conditions that killed all thought and aspiration in them. Your eye was rather fixed on the great army of industrial toilers of ordinary capacity and with an ordinary competency, men not in the lowest depths of poverty but men who ought to be raised higher in mind, as well as in body and estate. In short you were the Apostle of the higher education of the average man. This burden of yours may have been in GREEN's mind when he said you were 'Such a good man.'¹

Mill

I can tell you at least who is not a good man; the man who allows a wrong to be done in his name without protest, or lets it go on standing when he might help to right it.

¹ 'Such a good man': St. Andrews Address, p. 74. *Autobiography*, p. 116. *Dissertations*, I. 336.

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Newcomer in Hades

Well, you thought at the same time that in your day men's powers and goodness were not such as to make sweeping changes possible even in the political machinery. It is wonderful how free the son of JAMES MILL was from 'the exaggerations of an intellect emphatically polemical.'

Mill

About the time when I became a moderate Socialist, I became a moderate democrat.¹ My ideal representative government would include HARE's proportional scheme with the quota and preferences. It would be carried on by men trained to govern and be governed, government being at least as hard a 'mystery' as any other craft, the leaders trained to lead, the followers to follow. The faults of representative assemblies are simply those of untrained politicians. The members are no mere delegates. 'The people ought to be the masters, and they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves.'

Newcomer in Hades

May I put it in this way? If any at the bottom are fit to go to the top, they must learn statesmanship. To make haste to be in power may be as ruinous as to make haste to be rich. He that believeth must not make haste, whether over the writing of a book or the making of a political constitution. Revolution is not the weapon for us.

¹ Moderate democrat: *Autobiography*, p. 191, circa 1840. Elliot, II. 130 (1868). *Representative Government*, V. vi., 1861. *Dissertations*, I, 471, 472, 1835; II. 81, 82, 1840.

'The Revolution' scouted: Elliot, II. 347, 1872; *contra* (to Chapman), I. 162, 1851. Political Economy not negligible: *Pol. Econ.*, IV. vii. 752 (Ashley); cf. IV. vi. 2 and 749. Elliot, II. 55, 1866; to D'Eichthal, 1829, in *Cosmopolis*, April 1897, p. 30. Socialism: *Fortnightly Review*, 1879, pp. 379, 380.

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Mill

I scout 'the' Revolution, name and thing. Remember, I did not cease to be an economist when I became a modified Socialist. Disregard 'economics' as you call it, and the result is enfeeblement. The product must increase with the number of those who share in it. COMTE wrongly made production the chief end of society. I think it is not that; I prefer a stationary State, secured by prudential restraint of population, and not requiring the destruction of solitudes. Solitudes 'impassable and impenetrable' are the surroundings in which the best individuals best grow up. I said all this in 1848 and have not unsaid it. I support production and all the economies of production; but I do not regard them as the whole of man, the chief end of life. The idea that they are so, may have had its use; 'while minds are coarse, they require coarse stimuli; and let them have them!'

Newcomer in Hades

The phrase is stinging, and separates you from the Manchester School. Your papers on Socialism are less severe, though written in 1869 when you supposed yourself more advanced than in 1848.

Mill

Even in 1848 in my first edition I was, as you rightly said, deliberately working for the Emancipation of Political Economy from the successors of RICARDO¹ who were making a wrong use of it. In my third edition I went a step farther than that, and (if you like) prepared the way for my modified Socialism. Though I tried to show in the *Probable Future* that to abolish the middleman by co-operation is to raise wages

¹ Ricardians: Elliot, I. 149, 1849; cf. I. 167 (to Soetbeer, 1852). *Pol. Econ.*, IV. vii. 6. p. 789.

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without touching the capitalist or rather the employer, with his profits, it was not that I had scruples against touching him if the common good required it. By and by THORNTON showed me that the employer could be touched more effectively than my classical teachers had believed.

Newcomer in Hades

You confessed as much in the *Fortnightly Review*. The account of the Wages Fund¹ which you give in that article does not leave quite the same impression as the account in your book. It sharpens the features of the case, as if the quota of the employer's income reserved for wages was rigidly ear-marked, with no elasticity in it, so that the employer could never be squeezed up to give more, while the workman could often be squeezed down to take less. When your mind was unruffled by doubts, you used general terms; we do not hear of limits unconditionally predetermined, but of circulating capital and population. It is true that you could not then foresee the power of Trades Unions to create the conditions which have raised real wages and unmistakably turned the tables. It is with us a question not so much of raising wages as of training the workmen, now that the wages are raised. Their increased earnings create increased responsibilities, not only the moral which you considered, but the economical, which were not perhaps equally brought home to you since the occasion was farther off. They should learn all the best virtues of the best of the present employing classes, including the provision of capital for future production.

Mill

THORNTON, I suspect, saw no farther than I did into the future. On my own principles of controversy, I felt bound to

¹ Wages Fund: *Fortnightly Review*, May 1869. Cf. *Pol. Econ.*, Ashley, pp. 344, 347; *contra*, p. 992.

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state his case first of all at its best for him and its worst for me. In doing so I convinced myself that he had the best of it out and out in judgment of me, his opponent; and I frankly said so.

Newcomer in Hades

Your brother-economists were nearly all anxious to be convinced, for they saw that what was denied even by the vaguer theory of a Wages Fund was being accomplished *de facto* in the world outside their study. But why should you be unfair to yourself? Your over-scrupulous conscientiousness was a stumbling-block to students who tried to put your two and two together.

Mill

I may have leant over backwards. The main question is: Was the ruling theory true or not? If we allow that it is not true even in the less rigid form, the other falls of itself. But you and others have spoken of the existence in these latter days of something beyond the mere power of the Unions to break through the supposed limits of a Wages Fund. There seems to be a new way of escape from the natural consequences of wages, unduly high in market conditions. The usual surplus labour is said to be duly present but without pulling down the rates of wages, those unemployed being supported largely at the public expense yet not by a Poor Law.

Newcomer in Hades

Your own view of the relief of the able-bodied¹ may be reconciled with the new kind of relief of the unemployed now; but you still stand by the Poor Law and the principles of 1834.

¹ Public relief of able-bodied: *Pol. Econ.*, V. xi. 13 (Ashley), pp. 67-69.

'Land and Labour': Elliot, II. 311; cf. I. 108.

Labour Party: Elliot, II. 45, 46, 70 (1865).

One thing at a time: Elliot, I. 218 (to Villari, 1859). *Autobiography*, pp. 108, 109.

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Mill

You will remember that in 1869, the year of my article on THORNTON, I was beginning to write on Socialism.

Newcomer in Hades

Yes, and in the first paper on Socialism, presumably the first to be written, you are a better prophet than ever the Sage was. Writing just after the passing of an Act extending the suffrage to working-men in the cities, and without the panic of a politician, you forecast the ultimate effects with hardly a word wrong. You say too in 1871, that land and labour will soon be the whole of politics. You knew that the time appointed was long; it was twenty years before the rural labourers got their vote; but you saw even then that in the fullness of time there would be a Labour Party in politics, representing the employed generally. You will care to know that such a party began by being the tail of the Radicals as the Radicals in your day were of the Whigs. It was not clearly in being as a separate force till forty years after your prophecy—but it has now the full equipment of a separate party, a head, body, and tail of its own; it is said, a steady head, a stolid body, and a restive tail. There has been even an experience of government, in 1924, just a century after repeal of the Combination Acts. There was much responsibility and little power. Another trial will show if it is proof against the corruption, feared by you, that is in the political world through power and patronage. Your forecast there is gloomy, but you think a Labour Party would stand out against underhand dealing and against bureaucracy.

Mill

I knew how unprepared my countrymen were. I am not surprised that the change took forty years. A nation in deliber-

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ation is like a very young man ; it can think of only one thing at a time.

Newcomer in Hades

If wages earners had been really 'Wage slaves' they would hardly have waited forty years before voting out or thrusting out the slave-owner. It was clearly no such simple case as the unlocking of a door and the knocking-off of chains.

Mill

Their position was not that of slaves, but of men nominally and legally free who needed an education before, like other citizens, they could win to themselves the full privileges of liberty, and use the functions characteristic of liberty in a civilized country. A people are civilized¹ when they 'act together for common purposes in large bodies' and rely for their security on 'social arrangements' instead of force. Otherwise, as CARLYLE said, they have 'all the powers of civilization and none of its rules to guide them.'

Newcomer in Hades

I agree. This does not come by instinct. A Roman could not be consul before forty years of the discipline of life. No wonder if the good time supposed to be coming for us all, comes in slow strides of forty years each, till the goal shall be reached. This is an unpalatable word for our impatient youth. Strange to say, forty years ago it was a group of young men who preached something very like it and called it Fabian, we may say, Cunctatorial Socialism.

¹ The civilized: *Dissertations*, I. 162. Cf. *Letters of Carlyle to J. S. Mill* (Fisher Unwin), 1923, p. 33.

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Mill

That group evidently got its cues from my papers. I have indeed in private letters dropped hints that 'changes effected rapidly by force¹ may sometimes be more permanent than the slow ones. If readers wrest these sayings, it is to their own destruction.

Newcomer in Hades

MR. MILL, you were tempting the English people to put Violence on a level with the Vote. The public would hear, in June 1851, on the eve of the *coup d'état*, that the Prospectus of the New *Westminster Review* was not to MR. MILL'S mind because it had not this fiery element in it, but only 'philosophic reform,' now old-fashioned. You were writing by request in a letter meant to go beyond your correspondent, and therefore presumably in well-weighed language, giving your mature conviction at the age of 45.

Mill

It was more mature in 1872 when I answered the International Working Men's Association, scouting the Revolution, name and thing, in full publicity. My ripe word is in favour of the progress made in the slower fashion, when we fasten on all the best features of our present institutions and improve them here and now. They may some of them improve themselves out of existence, by the growth of something better which has been grafted on them. It will long be the formula of moderate reformers that 'the words proposed by our revolutionaries to be left out stand part of our bill.' They stumble that run fast. There are many kinds of compromise, not all of them admirable, not all of them ugly. I recom-

¹ Force: Elliot, I. 162; cf. 131, 1851.

Compromise: *Dissertations*, I. 165. Elliot, I. 302, II. 210, 378. St. Andrews, p. 15.

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mend no compromise with a generally admitted crime and evil. But all combinations of men imply some degree of compromise. The good kind is, for example, a concession of delay where ignorance is the obstacle and eventual supersession of an abuse will come by diffusion of knowledge to prepare the way before it. The ugly kind was that proposed by some Americans after the Civil War, by which slavery, a moral evil, was to be allowed in some states, forbidden in the rest. Sometimes we ask much, knowing we shall get at least a little. Pitch your claims high and some will be granted. Sometimes it is wiser to pitch them low, as when GEORGE STEPHENSON put his claim for his engine at ten miles an hour, knowing that if he had said thirty, nobody would have treated him seriously. These questions, however, are rather of tactics than strategy; and I prefer to discuss strategy.

Newcomer in Hades

Now I can better understand why your third paper on Socialism pleased and displeased both parties equally. It pleased with its criticisms, of the other side, and displeased with its concessions, to the other side. You must have held the scales truly indeed.

Mill

Much the same, I am told, was said of my *Essays on Religion*. 'I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.' It is an English weakness for which we must make allowances, the love of compromise. When I gave way to it in dealing with the Greater Britain about their Infant Industries¹ I had reason to repent, and I repented accordingly.

¹ Infant industries : Elliot, II. 27, 57, 66, 116, 197, 298. Cf. *Autobiography*, pp. 238, 85, 86.

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Newcomer in Hades

Seeing no doubt that, like Peter Pan, the Infants had no desire to grow up. Nor have they done so since.

Mill

Even the English often make compromise a vantage-ground for reaction. They may exchange false opinions for true, in the case of free trade, without throwing off the habits of mind that produced the falsities. The statesman must always deliberate which is the path that at any given time he might, could, would or should pursue. To take only one step forward may be no ill compromise, but the true wisdom. We must, of course, see to it that there is no going back. During my thirty years in the Civil Service, 1828 to 1858, I was learning something that told in all my political philosophy, namely, the necessity of compromise, and how, on paper and in practice, we must save the essential by sacrificing the non-essential.

Newcomer in Hades

You are thinking now of another kind of infant, *l'enfant terrible*, Socialism. In 1869, when writing those papers, you found it hard to forget that LOUIS BLANC and the St. Simoni-ans were no longer our oracles. After all, you learned from them and FOURIER and ROBERT OWEN the importance of association and associations. Nobody has made those so prominent as you in *Political Economy*; and you are especially delighted with the Co-operative Union as a voluntary effort, not a creation of Government. Yet you lament that small means 'produce no effect at all.'¹ You despise the day of small things. You seem always uncertain on which to bestow the larger share of your admiration, the wonderful national

¹ Co-operation and 'small means': *Political Economy*, II. xiii. 4 (Ashley), p. 383.

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character or the wonderful individual man. On the whole you think more of the individual man with his inviolate caverns. Not CARLYLE or RUSKIN or MATTHEW ARNOLD has censured English Society more severely; French Society escapes.¹ You praise individual Englishmen in the exceptional cases 'where an unusual tenderness of conscience leads to a habitual exercise of the intellect on questions of right and wrong.' The English as a body are blamed for not wearing their heart upon their sleeve. You yourself can hardly be said to have done so till after your death, even at Falmouth. Perhaps you looked at the English a little more favourably when you were a little way off from them at Avignon in the later years of your life. Your friend CARLYLE thought better of them than you: 'Stupidest in speech, wisest in action.' You question that? Well, if they are inarticulate over everyday affairs, how could they intelligibly utter their deepest thoughts if they ever tried? But they might, as CARLYLE says, be wise in action.

Mill

I do question that, both ways. They are not entirely stupid in applying principles, but they take the principles at second hand. I admit, with reservations, that they are wise in action, slow but sure. In 1869, I wrote that I knew they would do nothing rashly. I have personal reasons for knowing they are often just and generous, unexpectedly, and choose a man for Parliament even if he will not speak down to them and flatter them.² I was elected at Westminster in 1865, on what many superior people thought an absurdly eccentric programme.

¹ Society: *Autobiography*, p. 58 ff.; *contra*, p. 261.

Stupidity: Elliot, II. 357, 374 (Diary).

² In Parliament: *Autobiography*, pp. 282-284; cf. 163, 166, 172, 174. Elliot, II. 22-26; cf. (on Bastiat), 228, 345.

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Yes, you were brave enough to tell an unpalatable truth to a public meeting of working-men, GEORGE ODGER at the head of them; and to their honour they applauded you for it; and you sat for Westminster in spite of that incident and your advanced programme.

Mill

It was, I think, a fair and moderate programme. My own mind had been gradually prepared for the principles on which its details were founded. Even in 1830, I looked forward to a future which should unite 'the best qualities of the critical with the best qualities of the organic periods' to use the St. Simonian distinction, and though I thought France led the way I was far from confining consideration to French schemes. So later in the papers on Socialism my several arguments apply to all countries of our state of civilization. I think less than most of my friends of the differences of Race. But I admit that the French are led away by phrases. Their economists are more numerous than ours but less profound, and even in BASTIAT with all his merits prejudices come out. In our own country and everywhere else the great democratic changes must for sureness and permanence be preceded by a change of heart in employers and employed; both must learn public spirit. I believe that common men in all countries have the capacity for that, and can learn to dig or weave for their country as readily as they now learn to fight for it. The hindrance is more in institutions than in human nature.¹

¹ Human nature and institutions: *Autobiography*, pp. 232, 233. Hallam, *Constitutional History* popularised, 1869, Ch. IX. 364. Cf. *Dissertations*, II, 47. Elliot II. 278.

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Newcomer in Hades

So said WILLIAM GODWIN. One might answer that those institutions were themselves created, aided, and abetted by human nature. But GODWIN was thinking of laws and governments, you more of 'social arrangements,' bad schools, bad fashions, bad habits and traditions. Your oracle gets its interpretation from your essay on Liberty. Now, in spite of these hindrances, or rather in order to do away with them, is there a seed of public spirit left in us? A friend reminds me that HALLAM, writing in 1827, speaks as if it existed under the Long Parliament but not at the time of writing. He says the Triennial Bill of 1640 was to secure that 'so long as a sense of public spirit should exist in the nation (*and beyond that time it is vain to think of liberty*) no prince could be free from restraint for more than three years,' a time too short for much mischief. In our own day and country it is not the monarchs that endanger liberty; they sometimes have the inward spiritual grace, as well as the outward visible sign due from them *ex officio*. Their main fault is their expensiveness.

Mill

You are getting more out of HALLAM's words than he put into them. We are not in the 17th century. The Triennial Bill might be security enough for a population of six millions, and not for one of thirty. The smaller the circle (and six are a small circle), the keener the interest in public affairs, for they approach more nearly to private affairs. Now it is private affairs that provoke the untaught interest of the ordinary man. When we reach the greater circle, we laboriously acquire an interest in it by education. Some do not acquire it at all.

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Newcomer in Hades

You mean that public spirit is an enlarged private zeal. I have read something like this in BURKE, and in ADAM SMITH's *Moral Sentiments*¹ we hear of an 'enlarged benevolence.' But as to the drawback of greater numbers, our population was much more than thirty millions when I left, and yet a great many of your reforms, MR. MILL, had donned jacket and trousers. Observe, there is only partial success, no embarrassing finality to revive your feelings of 1826. But perhaps you are disappointed whether you win or lose.

Mill

Disappointed? No, I should stalk off like MALTHUS with long strides. I am become a fool in glorying, you have compelled me. I wrote in 1861, that when the organic or constructive movement really began my speculations on constitutional government might prove of some value. I was quite prepared for a very slow progress.² Though I never entirely despaired of my country or the world, I sometimes talked as if, instead of coming with a thunder-clap, reform advanced at the pace of geological periods, none of them so short as forty years. In private conversation and letters I may have spoken differently.

Newcomer in Hades

Yes, in a private letter to an American friend in 1869, you wrote that 'the emancipation of women and co-operative

¹ *Moral Sentiments*, 3rd ed. p. 364.

² Rate of progress: Elliot, I. 246.

The chief essential changes: Elliot, II. 172, 286.

Position of women: Elliot, II. 104, 1867; to Florence Nightingale, through Miss Helen Taylor. Cf. Elliot, I. 208 (1858); *Autobiography*, p. 291; Caroline Fox, p. 34 (1838).

Ballot: Elliot, I. 210 (1858). Cf. *Subjection of Women*, p. 182, ed. 1870; cf. p. 105 ff.; *Pol. Econ.*, XI. 9. Elliot, II. 120; cf. 365. *Representative Government*, XVIII. 140.

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production are the two great changes that will regenerate society,' and in your diary of 1854, that 'a slight change in education would make the world totally different.' We have taken one step at least towards regeneration out of these three, namely, the first of them.

Mill

Is the position of women reformed? For man or woman political power is the only security against oppression. Have they obtained it?

Newcomer in Hades

Reform moves faster than geological changes. Women vote for Parliament, and at least in the Commons, sit in Parliament. They take part in Government. You speak of 'the Toryism of sex.' We may have something of this left. But we have the Ballot, which you disliked; and we cannot tell with certainty how the women vote. ARAGO defined the Tory as the fixed point from which to measure progress. Nobody wears the name of Tory now; but it is believed that many women, even after their emancipation, are content to mark time.

Mill

In spite of my father, I did not on reflection like the Ballot, nor did I like the idea of payment of members, which I am told has been adopted. But emancipation means more than the vote, or I wrote my Essay on *Liberty* in vain. It means 'the free direction and disposal of their own faculties.'

Newcomer in Hades

Something has been done for this, MR. MILL. Let me begin with the humbler achievements. You favoured the Factory Acts, though you say little about them in your *Political Economy* and make much of the invidious classification of women

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with children under those Acts. Both women and children are better protected now. Higher careers are open to women. We have women doctors, lawyers, justices, mayors, presidents of great societies, and professors at colleges, where in almost all cases now they take degrees on the same footing as men. They are getting advantage from the open competitions for the Civil Service of which you so heartily approved.

Mill

The open career will not of itself regenerate Society. The higher education is needful for women precisely as for men; but they may make it tell in ways of their own.

Newcomer in Hades

You described the introduction of Industrial Partnerships¹ as the other change which would immediately regenerate Society. You thought the world would be ripe for such before it could be at all ready for Socialism. The legal obstacles have been removed as you desired, but this reform is not yet in jacket and trousers; it is, let us say, in the jacket but not yet in the trousers, while, all the time, it is becoming more clear that the Tables are Turned on the employers. The 'labouring classes' have greater power both in Parliament and out of it than in your day. All the greater is their jealousy of real or fancied assailants of their independence. The House of Lords is hardly to be counted an assailant now, for though it has not been thoroughly reformed in the way you desired, it has been bridled by the Parliament Act of 1911. Our democracy starts with one great advantage: all parties recognize that our judges are not corrupt, an opinion with which in spite of your youthful speeches in debating societies I feel sure you would

¹Copartnership: Elliot, I. 193, II. 198, 199. *Dissertations*, II. 215. Debating Society: See *Economica*, March 1925, speech of 1825, ed. Prof. Laski.

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agree. It is not the law but the old prejudices that are the difficulty. There would be more of your industrial partnerships if the employers gave to the representatives of the employed the same confidences as are given to shareholders' representatives in an ordinary company. When the employed are made sure that there is no hiding or covering up, the plan of partnership is said to answer well even now. At first and a little time afterwards plans of this sort will need more intellect than is usually the share of ordinary men, employers or employed. The partners need not have the playfully imagined disinterestedness of the shepherds in the first book of PLATO's *Republic*, or Ezekiel xxxiv. 2, who fattened the sheep entirely for the sheep's advantage. But neither will they see in all profits unpaid labour, as of eggs on the breakfast-table, certainly not produced for the producer's benefit. They will find that business ability is wanted even in the poultry-yard before the hens yield profit to their employer. Still, in those industrial partnerships at least, the hen is unmistakably mistress of the situation. She hatches and markets her own eggs and there is no exploitation for alien breakfast-tables. The scheme as yet wants men who are forward by nature, or forwarded by education; we must provide education¹ for both the bright and the dull, education in a broad sense, embracing morals and public spirit.

Mill

Yes, in both employers and employed there must be a moral education, and also the intellectual education in the elements, call it mere instruction, ought to be better than in my time. It was wretched then except in Scotland. But the 'sourde animosity' of the employed towards the employers

¹ Education: *Dissertations*, II. 200 ff. (*Claims of Labour*, 1845).

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will not disappear till the first become partners of the second, and they must be educated to that end.

Newcomer in Hades

In spite of many drawbacks, education is better now. Citizens generally, 'labourers' in the broad sense or the narrow, are better instructed now than in your time, and likely to do better justice to new opportunities in spite of the newness. The success of co-operation in shopkeeping has brought out a latent business quality in not a few of the 'horny-handed sons of toil.' You deplored the depredations of the middleman on the wages of the workman, far worse, you said, than any depredations of the capitalist.¹ They have been checked all over the country for five millions of co-operators. This does not mean that we are very near your industrial millennium. The pace is set for co-operation, both productive and distributive, by the world outside with its competitive markets. A world where co-operation rules alone without leaning on competition has been tried in Russia unsuccessfully. At present co-operation, like the Labour Party in 1924, is kept in power by the disagreements of other parties. It will be long before we are able to dispense with the rewards and punishments of competition. Hired managers may not obstruct experiments but they are not likely to push them. Without experiments, as you often tell us, there is no progress.² After you JEVONS set greatest store by experiments, especially in legislation; he would try a measure locally on a small scale before applying it to the whole kingdom.

¹ Wages and the middleman: *Pol. Econ.* (Ashley), IV. vii. 789.

² Experiments: *Socialism*, III. 517, 518. Jevons, *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1880.

Social service: Prof. Clay, *Economic Journal*, March 1927, pp. 8 ff.

Currency: *Dissertations*, I. 42.

London government: Elliot, I. 235 (1860); *contra*, p. 283, II. 183, 386 (1854).
Autobiography, pp. 286, 287.

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Mill

This seems better than tentative legislation for the whole kingdom at once.

Newcomer in Hades

Yet we have had a burst of the latter sort at the beginning of this century—acts for Social Services, Insurance, Pensions, Industrial Schools for example, and especially Public Health Acts relating to hospitals, maternity and child welfare. These, or at least the Public Health Acts, seem likely to stay; the provision for the unemployed seems to have been worse administered. All such measures help the poor more than the rich; they therefore raised real wages at a time when nominal wages ceased to rise. So at least it has been ingeniously argued.

Mill

It might have been difficult to try such experiments on a small scale; and you will remember I did not recommend it without exceptions.

Newcomer in Hades

No, I remember you would not allow unlimited liberty of 'currency juggling.' We have reformed that indifferently well with us. Though the jugglers are always with us, the balance of opinion is against them, even in Birmingham. The War carried us into a paper currency; six years of Peace carried us back again to solid ground (1925).

Mill

If there are rocks ahead, there are also steps ahead. Sad to say, it is seldom my London that takes them, more often the North of England and the Midlands. But my London was probably sound on the Currency.

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Newcomer in Hades

You may like to hear of the fortunes of your London in other connections. You and your friends desired one municipal government for London, not that you loved centralization, but you thought the English bias was unfairly allowed to tell against it even when the merits of the case were in its favour. It is a general term, no more terrible than the Church and your other 'plundered abstractions.' In London I do not think it was the unfamiliar name but the too familiar thing that was disliked; the people preferred to administer the Poor Law in their small localities, and they hated central boards because these interfered with old liberties of action. Sometimes, it is true, a familiar ill name like Socialism makes them start.

Mill

You were right in saying 'you and your friends'; others shared with me the desire for a government of London that should do better than the Metropolitan Board of Works of 1855.

Newcomer in Hades

In your day, Sir, all London outside the sacred City lay under Vestries. You thought in 1869 that one large body would excite the jealousy of Parliament itself, from common false notions of the power of the Paris Commune. But if you had reached the years not of Methuselah but only of BENTHAM you would have found your idea carried out and even your reservations and safeguards in effect adopted. The Conservatives themselves adopted and passed a general scheme of County Councils for all Britain, in 1888. London outside the walls of the City was glorified as one County by itself, to the exclusion of the enveloping Middlesex and the rest. To relieve the 'centralization' we received from the same Conservatives in 1899, a group of Borough Councils doing the

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work of the abolished vestries, missed but not wanted, as Temple Bar by the omnibus drivers. It was, as you had planned, one Municipality, so framed as to allow a chastened local activity; and the incubation of the idea has been shorter than you expected.

Mill

It is to be hoped that those who live in these later days will remember their known and unknown benefactors.

Newcomer in Hades

Yes, Sir, it has been on the whole a real benefaction. It has in many ways rejuvenated Greater London, and roused a civic patriotism rivalling that of the Old City in the days of JOHN MILTON. It has made this greater area a better dwelling-place for human beings. I cannot say there is no complaining in our streets, but the streets themselves are better; and provision of better houses for humble citizens has at least made a beginning. There is a cautious municipal Socialism that falls in very well with your views. It is not at all confined to London, but exists, say, in Manchester, Glasgow, Huddersfield, and Birmingham. There are parallels overseas. Even the great centralizers, political Socialists, far from being jealous of municipal, are proud to point to it as a forerunner. You might prefer to say that the great cities are playing a part like that of your favourite federalism.¹

Mill

I recommended that for France, especially as giving a good opportunity for social experiments. She would then have been one, but not indivisible. There was something of the sort before the Revolution.

¹ Federalism: Elliot, I. 320; cf. 348, II. 294. *England and Ireland* (1868), pp. 12, 20, 22, 26, 32, 35.

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Newcomer in Hades

It seems strange to some of us that you did not recommend it for Ireland. You thought we were very bad governors of Ireland; you would have reversed the standing policy, and given the land to the men that tilled it, as during the French War GENERAL HOCHÉ would have done if his expedition had succeeded, and his landing in 1796 had been followed by conquest. The Irish peasant would have become as the French is now, or as we have allowed the cultivator to be in some parts of India. But you thought the independence of Ireland neither possible nor desirable. You may be surprised to hear that Southern Ireland has now an independence, qualified by 'the personality' of a common monarch, and by a federal union, of both of which you then thought little. Yet it was understood quite in your own manner as a step towards 'Universal Peace, grounded on federal institutions.' You suggested a Loan scheme for the buying out of the Landlords. It was adopted by a Conservative Government. A coalition between Conservatives and Liberals went farther and granted 'Home Rule' in 1922, after a great war and in presence of a great crisis in Irish affairs. The incubation lasted thirty-six years, and but for the War and the Crisis might have been going on still, though the War, that eventually hastened, at first delayed Home Rule. We cannot blame you for believing in what now seem half-measures. We have had the special assistance of big political events.

Mill

Do not suppose that I thought Peasant Proprietorship¹ a general panacea. I wrote in all editions of my *Political Econ-*

¹ Peasant Proprietorship: *Political Economy*, IV. vii. 4 (Ashley), p. 762. *Autobiography*, p. 235.

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omy, that it was pedantic to suppose agricultural improvement would come in the same way into all countries alike. But I thought Ireland needed the French system, while the plan of landlord and tenant seemed to fit ourselves as we then were. I put this Irish proposal forward as the thin end of the wedge, in the years of Famine, 1846, 1847; but no man regarded. Few had even heard of such a creature as a 'peasant proprietor.' I have had my way now, but not at all according to any vision of mine in the final scene.

Newcomer in Hades

You desired Proportional Representation¹ for all representative systems, to secure representation of minorities and thereby mitigate a little the tyranny of majorities, which is as odious to you in politics as in Society. The Irish Free State adopted it for its Lower House. You were generous in acknowledgments to MR. THOMAS HARE, and you were sometimes sanguine about the prospects of the scheme at large. It has not been entirely untried, but in Britain it is not yet in jacket and trousers, only in large blue books and certain Universities. Its period may prove to be geological. It is at least an excellent topic for young men's debating societies.

Mill

Pray be serious. Without that safeguard, democracies are imperfect. My comfort is that the idea usually attracts the

¹ Proportional Representation: *Representative Government*, Ch. VII. Elliot, I. 215 ff., esp. 221. *Autobiography*, p. 259.

Double Government in India: *Representative Government*, Ch. XVIII. Caroline Fox, p. 920.

The 'Colonies': *Representative Government*, XVIII. 133. *Autobiography*, p. 216.

International Understanding: *Dissertations*, III. 153 (on non-intervention).

Caroline Fox, p. 421. Elliot, I. 238; cf. II. 294, 296.

Not for 'peace at any price': Elliot, I. 292; cf. 133.

Parties: *Representative Government*, VII. 56 note.

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best men, and sometimes the best politicians. They recognize that in an ideal democracy minorities are outvoted but not suppressed.

Newcomer in Hades

Another experiment may surprise you as much as Home Rule in Ireland. You seem to have expected failure in the Government of India when your East India Company lost hold of it. There is actually an experiment going on now in the Self-Government of India, a Dyarchy. As a Radical, you must approve of it, and as a servant of the Company understanding the matter from the inside of its office you liked the Double Government, of Crown and Company. At present the Double Government is of Crown and Country. An admirer of yours, MR. JOHN MORLEY, has the credit of the first steps towards it. It is still on its trial.

Mill

What of Greater England, the dependencies overseas?

Newcomer in Hades

These 'dependencies' no longer 'depend'; they are children that have all grown up, without much help or hindrance from us for the most part. They are no longer Colonies but Dominions; and your forecasts were justified. You regarded the spiritual bond between us and them as 'a step towards universal peace and general friendly co-operation among nations.' They are 'a group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations' as is said in the Irish Oath of Allegiance (1922). You stood out for DURHAM and his claims for Canada, in 1837. You had aspirations after an international understanding. Since the Great War of the 20th century, we have seen the beginnings of a League of Nations,

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which is already drawing on its jacket and trousers. We remember that you wrote to BARCLAY FOX in 1840 on 'the bestial antipathies between nations,' and to CLIFFE LESLIE in 1860: 'that there may one day be a kind of loose federation among the countries of Europe, and a common tribunal to decide their differences, is likely enough.' This and a little more has happened, though the Philosopher President who set it agoing failed to carry his own country with him. Notwithstanding occasional shyness of the United States, it is as true now as in your day that we deal more frankly with them than with any other nation. 'The ostensible causes of our disagreements are always the real ones.'

Mill

In their great struggle I sided with BRIGHT and COBDEN in their support. As you know I am not an advocate of Peace at any price.

Newcomer in Hades

You went farther than BRIGHT and COBDEN in many matters. You would not have bound yourself, as COBDEN did, to go no farther than ADAM SMITH in Land Reform.¹ The land was not made by the landlords and should, you said, belong to the State. You have given us many household words in philosophy and politics. Among the political are the 'stupid party,' and the 'unearned increment.' The 'stupid party' has disappeared with the Tories. The other phrase is still with us. You applied it to rural as well as urban incomes. Agriculture since you left us has for the most part had dull times and no

¹ The Land: Elliot, II. 123.

Unearned increment: Elliot, II. 264, 313, 314; cf. 315, 340, 390.

Not too fast: Elliot, II., Appendix B.

Death Duties: Elliot, II. 315; cf. 307, *Pol. Econ.*, V. ii. 3. Ashley, pp. 806, 808.

Final utility: *Pol. Econ.*, II. ii. § 4, 228. *Palgr. Dict.*, article J. S. Mill, p. 76a.

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increment. The problem of city property, where speaking broadly there have been no dull times, has occupied us very often. HENRY GEORGE came to us forty years ago from California to preach the redemption of all peoples by the nationalizing of all lands. He went in the same direction as you, but would have us go very much faster. The idea is still in process of incubation. We are more severe taxers of all rich people, especially after their death. Our great achievement, quite acceptable to you, Sir, is a Death Duty, making the heirs of a multi-millionaire (of over two millions) give up 40 per cent. to the Exchequer, and lesser fortunes in less (but still fiscally profitable) proportions. The result is a certain diminution of overgrown properties. But the unearned increment in its own right remains substantially where it was, in spite of a promising measure begun and dropped just before the War. It must be said that Taxation as a whole body and system is better understood and better adjusted in our day than in yours. The improvement has been assisted by an economic principle called Final or Marginal Utility, hardly discoverable in your *Political Economy*, Sir, though EDGEWORTH'S microscope found a trace of it. JEVONS and MARSHALL made it prominent in theirs. In our Income Tax as in those Death Duties we may be said to exempt necessaries as you prescribe; and we apply the progressive scale which you deprecated, declaring it a punishment of industry and thrift. You desired retention of the House Duty, to catch something of the unearned increment; we have lately, they say, abolished it altogether. You desired to contrive a tax on expenditure. It has been tried, not very happily, elsewhere; we have not adopted it.

Mill

You mean that some of my ideas have been carried out in substance, none in detail.

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Newcomer in Hades

It is the substance that matters. There are few more successful reformers than yourself. Even your 'Malthusian heresy,' with details altered, is now almost an orthodoxy.¹ I do not know that co-operation has taken particular care of the matter as you fondly expected, but the civilized world in general shows signs of attention to it. It was not always of sufficient concern to the finer wits of your own day; your own father, 'advanced' as he was, did not at first show the way.

Mill

For common delicacy forbear. I have never defended him; I have denounced those who follow his example.

Newcomer in Hades

Oh, Mr. MILL. I shall most certainly forbear. You were the eldest of the nine, and were safe in any case. If, as some heretics do vainly talk, Credit is Capital, surely Youth and Talents might easily seem to your father to be so, and therefore to justify him, with more cause than the Vicar of Wakefield, in refusing to remain single and only talk of population. You, yourself, Sir, did not seize every occasion for showing the way. You say nothing of the subject at St. Andrews, when pressing the young men to study Political Economy. Perhaps the warnings of MALTHUS were included in your allusion to the unfeeling laws of Nature that will break even the righteous neck when disregarded. Your University programme,

¹ Malthusianism: *Pol. Econ.*, I. x., II. xii., xiii., esp. 375 note. Bain, *J. S. Mill*, pp. 61, 89, 162. Elliot, I. 142; cf. 269. II. 127. *Autobiography*, p. 3. St. Andrews Address, pp. 69, 70, cf. 12, 16. Hone's *Trials*, 1817, III. 37 (Hone and Ellenborough).

University seats and votes: Elliot, I. 290. *Representative Government*, Ch. VIII. 72, 73, etc.

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like the old Arts programme of the Scotch Universities, would include classical literature, philosophy and the outlines of science. It was not heretical for those days; it may be so now. You were perhaps thinking of your own ready acquisition of Latin and Greek in your teens; you never will believe yourself precocious and abnormal; and you ask, 'Is the human capacity to learn measured by the capacity of Eton and Westminster to teach?' Even the poor Scotch student learns a saving amount of your subject, retrieving the backwardness of *his* teens during his four years of college, where he cultivates philosophy on a little oatmeal. Our Pundits at the Universities take a more modest view of human powers, and, to use your own metaphor, have for the most part given up the attempt to make both coat and trousers. Even in the new provincial foundations, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, special studies, nearly or wholly professional, are allowed to begin earlier than you would have liked.

Mill

I warned the lads that 'Too narrow a view of the possibilities of education narrows our conceptions of the future of mankind.'

Newcomer in Hades

It may mollify you to hear that we give University graduates an extra vote, thereby carrying out, I admit, somewhat feebly, a favourite idea of your own. A better atonement is the general influence of the provincial institutions themselves, spread far more widely over the country now than in your day and enabling every poor man that has the will to get something in the shape of 'higher education.' I do not think you would repeat the doctrine of your article on Civilization, that the advance of the masses crushes intellectual energy. You will allow that DE TOCQUEVILLE's forecast of a stag-

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nant uniform America has hardly been justified there. Both there and here the types of men and districts remain varied, unlike each other and thereby stimulating each other, democratic as they are.

Mill

You are beginning to sing the praises of the Present. The Past and the Absent are always in the wrong. But your defence means only that we are no worse than our ancestors.

Newcomer in Hades

Still, Sir, you are the last man to undervalue new opportunities and new machinery, whether for material progress or intellectual. Since you put this Present on its defence, I submit that materially we are much better than you were in the 'forties, and spiritually a little better, even though that cometh not of observation, like high wages, and electric lighting. It is perhaps significant that good music has larger audiences than in your day, and cheap literature of a good sort has a large circulation or the publishers would not publish it; also that with us, and still more in America, any and every lecturer even on profound subjects finds hearers.

Mill

COBDEN wrote to FRANCIS PLACE¹ in 1846, 'You have lived through by far the most eventful seventy years in the world's history.' He was no doubt excited by the victory of Repeal; but could anyone looking back now over seventy years say as much?

Newcomer in Hades

You remember that, when the patient in Bedlam said to the visitor 'I am the Emperor of China,' his keeper whispered,

¹ Cobden to Place: *Life of Place*, by Wallas, p. 396.

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'They all say that, Sir.' What was it that PLACE had seen? COBDEN's words are: 'Bless yourself that you live in times when reform bills, steamboats, railroads, penny postage, and free trade, to say nothing of the ratification of civil and religious liberties' (in which you have helped), 'have been possible facts.'

Mill

There is no one to match the praiser of his own time for exaggeration. I am told that COBDEN added, 'The fifty years during which you have been an observer of public events have been more fertile in great and enduring incidents than any five centuries I could select.' If he did not set much store by the Reformation and Renaissance, he might have remembered the Discovery of America, without which much of his own occupation were gone.

Newcomer in Hades

Yes, they all say that; and I shall try not to glory in having lived seventy years after FRANCIS PLACE and fifty after you, Sir. But we have not been behind our ancestors in material improvements and inventions. It is the age of the aeroplane. Science has found out the secrets of heights and depths unconquered in your day. Both Poles have been visited and there are no longer any solitudes.

Mill

So much the worse, to my thinking.

Newcomer in Hades

Let me go on and you will be better pleased. Medical skill is better. We are nearly as successful now in curing as in killing. As for our political achievements in the world at large, we have more than doubled last century's number of popular

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governments in Europe. We have a new plan for training backward peoples elsewhere for self-government. They become 'mandatory states' instead of subjects.

Mill

Could we not train our workmen for Copartnership on this plan,—the employer to regard his factory as mandated territory, the employed, on reaching maturity, to choose as their Ruler and Governor the man among them who had the best head for business?—It was a good idea.

Newcomer in Hades

It was an idea 'new under the sun,' produced under that brilliant novelty the League of Nations, which is champion of the minorities and weaker Powers. In our own country political liberty has gone from strength to strength, I confess with too little regard for your particular clients the minorities. The autonomy of the individual, if no better off, is no worse off. When all is said, I admit that we are unprofitable servants; it was no glory to do all this with so much unused power to have done more. But is not this neglect chargeable against every Present Time, so long as all men are mortal?

Mill

You have said little of the spirit, intellect, patriotism, scientific study, leaders of thought, poets and artists. We were hungry for great men¹ of all sorts in my time, and I joined in

¹ Great men: Elliot, I. 34 (1832), 40 (1833); to Carlyle, II. 384, Diary, 1854. *Dissertations*, I. 97 (1835).

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. LXVI, towards end: 'some spark of freedom may be produced by the collision of adverse servitude,' in the case of Platonists *versus* Aristotelians (under Byzantine Empire, 15th cent.).

De Tocqueville: *Dissertations*, II. 30; cf. I. 98.

Solitude and public employment: Mackenzie *versus* Evelyn, 1665, 1667.

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CARLYLE's laments. It seemed to me (in that year of Reform) that the world was becoming 'a dead flat.' I thought I should lose all interest in the world if there were not two or three persons of such high quality that they redeemed it from total barrenness. There were few such in my own day. But I was not always so despondent, at least in my Books. Perhaps I was most so in my youth.

Newcomer in Hades

We judge you, Sir, by the words of your own publications, your ripe considered judgments on any matter. In reminiscences and letters we often too plainly recognize the spur of the moment, or the curb of ill-health. No man is heroic at all moments. The public sees the hero in his heroic moments, which are, say, a tenth of the whole. Your valet sees you in the other nine, and makes the most of the observations which bring you down to his own level. Your correspondents were of higher quality than the valet; but still your dicta to them are your apocrypha, not your canonical scripture. Please believe that I have been questioning you not in the manner of an astute counsel lying at the catch, but as an inquiring spirit seeking light, in a wholly deferential manner.

Mill

CARLYLE's Heroes did not get my ripe considered word in their favour. They might help the world perhaps if there were always two of them together as rivals, to checkmate each other and undo the bad effects of autocracy, but this seldom happens.

Newcomer in Hades

It is GIBBON's notion, of dividing the allegiance of those who rush to slavery. Your DE TOCQUEVILLE thought that democracies did not of themselves bring forward the best men.

J. S. MILL

Perhaps the best men do their work without being 'brought forward.' While we were waiting for them, they may have been silently doing the things we wanted. What says GUIZOR quoted by you? 'Things in England are greater than the men accomplishing them.' Some men, called small, were in fact accomplishing the things. So said MOMMSEN of Republican Rome: 'Ordinary men, extraordinary deeds.' In spite of CARLYLE it may turn out that in politics, now all-democratic, the superman is a superstition and superfluity. We should surely be well served by citizens otherwise 'ordinary' if they had your passion for public service and at the same time your devotion to personal liberty, the free growth of each man's talents. This means for men like you an embarrassing alternation of 'solitude and public employment,' an old dilemma. Duty called you to both, MR. MILL. In which of them did you find your Greater Happiness?

But the lover of Solitude had already regained it.

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