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Approved by:

W C Phillips
(read & signed F. W. Chandler)

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by

Warren Staebler

A.B. Princeton University 1933
M.A. University of Cincinnati 1939

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FORMATIVE YEARS (1838-66)
A Young Man's Wisdom of Life

Except for the date of his birth (December 24, 1938) and a few details about his father and the character of Blackburn, a factory town in Lancashire, there is very little in John Morley's Recollections to help in reconstructing a picture of his childhood and youth. The bleakness of the hills about Blackburn, the starkness and ugliness of the houses in the town, the constant smoke and merciless routine of the factory system, the outbreaks of unbridled lust among the workers in acts of debasing bestiality--all of these are here described as revealing the strong impression they made on young Morley, an impression which must have offset violently and intensified the steadiness of his rigid Evangelical life at home. Life in Blackburn was harsh and relentless and its insistence on a mechanical succession of minutes that must count for something, on profitable employment of time--on industry, in short--stamped itself on him, and was never erased. One of the most revelatory phrases in the whole of the Recollections is that introduced in his brief reminiscence of Blackburn, of the "iron regularity of days and hours." Revelatory, because Morley himself suggests the influence which the habits of those early days acquired; and because the discipline of his later literary life, when he was at his most productive, is of the same sort as this of Blackburn

sememechanical, severe, inflexible.

Life in Blackburn was harsh, but life in Morley's own home may have had its compensations. How much of grace or beauty or warmth there was, no one can say. Morley's family were Evangelicals, and his father, despite his interest in a good education for his son, was probably strict in conforming to the rigorousness of family life common to the rest of his sect. There must have been little in it endearing to Morley. When he was forty, he could look back and estimate it quite impersonally. Life in Blackburn was "dull and cramped," and the "narrow, unhistoric, and rancorous kind" of theology there did not make men love their neighbors.¹ Yet, lean as this Evangelicalism was, it was enough to awaken and nurture Morley's inborn susceptibility to impassioned rhetoric, especially of the theological kind. Fiery pulpit oratory gained an early hold over him, stirred up ecclesiastical longings inside him. He confessed to an "irresistible weakness" for "the taking gift of unction."² The intimate prayer of his family group must have agitated his religious emotions; and his early-formed devotion in it can account for the devoutness as part of the base of his later character, a devoutness recognized and commented on by some of his contemporaries. A preoccupation with what he flatly named holiness and tried so

1. See "Lancashire," Fortnightly Review, XXIV (New Series), July, 1878.

2. Recollections, I, p. 6.

frequently to define carried over from the earliest period in his life. This native attraction to religion and boyhood attachment to it were not inconsequential. The attachment, Morley outgrew; the attraction, he never rooted out, and we can see how it later led to certain definite preferences in literary style.

Along with the development of religious devotion and a strong predilection for unctiousness, Evangelicalism left its stamp on him in another way. Early industrialized communities like Blackburn offered "the most awful influx the world ever saw of furious provocatives" to moral mud-wallowing.¹ The only attempt to stem it was on the part of Evangelical clergymen, and the firm but benevolent "moral organization" which they succeeded in imposing on the inhabitants was all that saved them from living in utter chaos. Morley never forgot his early days in Lancashire Sunday schools; even after he had outgrown his belief in the Deity, he could maintain the importance of the ethical system drawn from the gospels and assert the value of "cleanliness, truth-telling, and chastity," three virtues which all Lancashireans were taught as children. "Moral" is a word that will occur again and again in Morley's speech.

Even this scant review of Morley's boyhood helps to

1. See "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (New Series), July, 1878, for Morley's account of conditions which, in his childhood, amounted to "something very like savagery,"--but for his appraisal, as well, of "an almost incredible" rise to decency in thirty years (1848-78).

form a fair understanding of some of the "complex elements of moral feeling and character"¹ that combined to make him receptive to certain widespread influences of the second half of the nineteenth century. Biological inheritances are undiscoverable, but the effects made by his environment are not hard to see. Evangelicalism was responsible for an abhorrence of fleshly immorality, an adherence to a clearly marked ethical code, a concern with holiness, and a zealous addiction to pulpit fervency. What the grinding monotony of the industrial routine in Blackburn did to young Morley, in moulding him to the practice of an "iron regularity of days and hours", is also clear, but there is an additional effect of this environment which must have a case made for it as the tracing of his plastic age moves on.

When Morley entered Oxford, it was with the intention of becoming an Evangelical minister.² Propitiously enough, his father got him settled in the very rooms in Lincoln College

1. From a critical precept of Mark Pattison, rector-recluse at Oxford, which Morley was fond of quoting: "What it is important for us to know of any age, our own included, is not its peculiar opinions, but the complex elements of that moral feeling and character, in which, as in their congenial soil, opinions grow."

2. The details of Morley's elementary and intermediate schooling can all be found in Hirst, I. There also is as much information as one can find about his Oxford career. This study of Morley, however, is not a chronological biography; even if it were, there would be little reason for repeating in it a series of facts which have already been more than competently set down by his official biographer. Whatever facts pertinent to the purpose of this paper have to be borrowed from him, will be borrowed, proper acknowledgment being made.

in which, over a century before, John Wesley had lived. And Morley was enthusiastic in pointing out another coincidence-- that the clergyman who had nominated Wesley to Lincoln had been named like himself, John Morley. So far, circumstances were conforming with ambitions, but not for long. From that point on, both time and place conspired against him. The decade of the 'fifties was drawing to a close and the upheavals in thought of those last years were still shaking men's minds. Prolonged and faithful scientific investigation was now promulgating the conclusions it had reached, and since the investigation had been carried on in the spheres of political economy, sociology, history, and religion as well as in natural science, all departments of men's belief were affected. The result of all this was that Morley, although he continued to go and hear Bishop Wilberforce cast spells with his unction, lost his belief, abandoned his churchly intentions, broke with his father, and left Oxford an agnostic. This was an apostasy that did not happen overnight, obviously, and yet he no more than mentions its occurrence. Probably its complete course took the bigger part of his three years at the university. He gives considerable space in his Recollections to the most important works responsible for the turning of the tide at Oxford in his day, but without any comment whatever on their effect on him, without the slightest description of his own transition. This is regrettable. Still, though an accurate chronological account of his progression cannot be made, some

attention to his experience at Oxford is necessary.

What were the chief forces operating on Morley--forces so strong as to become assimilated and retain an active influence on him for the rest of his life? Classicism (that is, the study of the classics), Darwinism, and Utilitarianism--certainly these three were powerful factors in shaping his adult attitudes. Classicism at first glance appears to be out of place on such a list. It meant nothing, the objector cries, but the study of superannuated Latinisms and useless Greek myths. What could it have done by way of making Morley an agnostic, or, to use a phrase that he himself might have used, by way of liberating him? This sort of objection is myopic and feeble. A schoolboy's contact with Latin and Greek might well have meant that--perhaps it still does--and even at Oxford there was much in the classical curriculum

1. Fortunately, we have Morley's own testimony, too important to be overlooked, to the place of the classics in a development of this kind: "...it is undeniable that some of those who have been greatest, not among 'liberal politicians', but among liberating thinkers, have drawn sustenance and inspiration from classical authors...Liberalism in its best sense, and in so far as it is the fruit of education and thought, not the spontaneous and half accidental suggestion of contemporary requirements and events, is developed by the free play of social, moral, and political ideas; and in what literature is that play more free, more copious, more actual, more exhilarating and stimulating than in ...classical authors?" ("The Life of James Mill," Fortnightly, XXXI, April, 1882, 486)

of the eighteen-fifties that was obsolete,¹ but no conscientious reader with any feeling at all for ideas could escape some serious and provocative questioning in Aeschylus and Euripides, much stimulating and challenging suggestiveness in Plato, and downright denial in Lucretius. In the nervous atmosphere of his Oxford days, Morley could not. But it was his study of Aristotle, colored by the opinions of a thoughtful tutor, which made him, in his own statement, an Aristotelian and not a Platonist.² The first step, then, in his conversion was accomplished by literature that was generally considered anything but incendiary. And Aristotelian rather than Platonist, Morley remained to the end of his days. Nothing of cloud stuff for his brain. With all respect for the poetic quality in Plato, Morley had no interest in wrestling with metaphysics and no talent for it. To one of his best friends, Frederic Harrison, he could confess in 1872: "My feelings about metaphysics are in temporary abeyance; I only know that I can't bear the unknowable."³ Reassertions of that frame of mind⁴ were to occur in after years. With his feet constantly on

1. For a first-hand account of the rotten wood in the Oxford curriculum of the middle of the century, see Oxford Studies in Essays by the Late Mark Pattison. Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1889. I, pp. 415-94.

2. Recollections, I, p.6

3. Hirst, I, p. 222

4. In 1883, as editor of Macmillan's, Morley confessed to a contributor that for him "the metaphysics of poetry are not a fruitful field." The nature of poetry did not interest him, and he added, "nor would it advance our business even if we could find it out." (Hirst, II, p. 174)

the ground, Morley avoided tenuous speculating; analysis, measurement, and classification were intellectual processes that kept him close to the immediate concrete.

To Aristotelianism, then, through the agency of the classics. But what makes this acknowledgment of his doubly interesting is his further testimony, in the same sentence, that "that was the Lancastrian temperament." The soil had been sown all the time, but the seeds had lain dormant. Despite his early surrender to Evangelicalism, the dominant, durable part of his nature was that which demanded earth substances, man-made materials to work with, and clock hours and factory whistles to work by--the very part of him which had been there all the time, actuating him from day to day, but which he had never been aware of for its being commonplace.

If the study of the classics introduced Morley to ways of thinking that were materialistic and first showed him that the true bent of his mind was one in the direction of questioning, probing, analyzing, and weighing, the influence of certain contemporary movements in thought completed the revelation, stamped a lasting mould on his mind, and left him an agnostic. Morley himself, in reviewing his Oxford days in the Recollections, reminds us of the revolutionary works which appeared in the 1840's and 1850's. Herbert Spencer and H.T. Buckle were great forces then in stirring people to a realization of the importance of sociology and sensational psycho-

logy, on the one hand, and the continuity of history, on the other. More purely in the field of literature were Tennyson with his Princess in 1847 and In Memoriam in 1850, and George Eliot, a strong, new figure on the horizon, whose Scenes of Clerical Life in 1857 and Adam Bede in 1859 commanded young Morley's attention and led to an admiration of her works that survived to the end. The fulminating Carlyle loomed across Morley's path when a friend at Oxford acquainted him with Sartor Resartus, The French Revolution, and the essays on Burns and Boswell's Johnson. Carlyle's influence on Morley, however, as will be seen later, did not amount to much. Undoubtedly, his preaching strengthened Morley's recently born concern with problems of society and politics, and the vehemence and color of his literary style led Morley to admire, but Carlyle's solution to England's difficulties, the young man found impracticable, and Carlyle himself not rational enough. Far more significant and consequential were Darwin and John Stuart Mill.

Just when Morley read The Origin of Species is not known. but since the work was published in 1859, its influence was widespread during his last year in Oxford. Though he says nothing about Darwinism and what it did to him as an undergraduate, he was already an evolutionist when he began work as a journalist in London in 1860, after leaving Oxford. And he continued to read Darwin, too, not uncritically. In March, 1871, for example, eleven years later, apropos of a recent

1
 book by Darwin, he confessed in some agitation that "all that about ethical evolution and the Function of Natural Selection in Civilization is very queer and doubtful." He felt a "dismal confusion in reading it" but was unable to put his "finger on the fallacy."² And four days later he did not find "Darwin at all satisfactory," thinking "his way of dealing with morals and society as fallacious as Huxley's." Only three years after this, however, upon more careful ruminaton, the digestion was successful, for Morley's conclusion, certain enough this time to broadcast in The Fortnightly Review, was that

Civilization on the evolutional theory is no more artificial than Nature is artificial. It is a part of Nature, all of a piece, as has been said, with the development of the embryo or the unfolding of a flower. The modifications which our race has undergone and still undergoes are the consequences of a law that underlies the whole organic creation. 3

John Stuart Mill influenced Morley more deeply and lastingly than any other single thinker. Both his Logic (1843) and his treatise on political economy (1848) left permanent impressions on Morley's mind. As a student at Oxford, he was frequently seen walking, sober and contemplative, with a copy of Mill in his hand. In 1859 Mill's famous essay on liberty appeared, and the disciple read it at a time when his mind was ripe for it. No other one volume

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1. The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex (1871)
 2. Hirst, I, p. 180.
 3. "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," Fortnightly, XVI, (November, 1874), 649.

contributed more to the composition of Morley's later Liberalism; in the Recollections Morley speaks of it in the same terms with Milton's Areopagitica.¹

With these influences, then, still at work upon him, Morley left Oxford and boldly struck out for London to make a living from journalism.² The facts, few as they are, concerning what happened to him there during the next seven years (1860-1867), can all be found so fully set down in Hirst that they need but little rehearsing here. This first London residence was a period of apprenticeship and was invaluable for a number of reasons.

First among its benefits was the experience which Morley obtained as a writer. He was actively employed in a number of capacities³ --as a collaborator with a former Oxford

1. Additional light is shed on the excitement of Morley's first contacts with Mill by this autobiographical fragment written more than a quarter of a century after he had left Oxford (see "The Life of George Eliot," Macmillan's Magazine, LI, February, 1885): Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge "were published (for the first time, so far as our generation was concerned) in the same year as Adam Bede, and I can vividly remember how the 'Coleridge' first awoke in many of us, who were then youths at Oxford, that sense of truth having many mansions, and that desire and power of sympathy with the past, with the positive bases of the social fabric, and with the value of Permanence in States, which form the reputable side of all conservatisms." The ideas thus shown, George Eliot and her stories lighted up with a "fervid glow."

2. According to Hirst, Morley later referred to his entrance into journalism as dictated by Hobson's choice: he had outgrown the ministry, was repelled by the army, had no taste for teaching, found medicine undesirable, and was not financially prepared to study law.

3. For a discussion of Morley's early days in journalism, see also William Harvie, "Lord Morley," Westminster Review, CLXXVI (July, 1911), 12-15; and "John Morley: A Study by a Member of Parliament," Century Magazine, XXXVI, 874-80.

acquaintance; as reader for, and contributor to the publishing house of Macmillan; as reviewer and reporter for The Leader (edited by the eccentric intellectual, G. H. Lewes) ^{as editor} and the equally ephemeral Star and Times; of the short-lived Literary Gazette (1858-62); and as reviewer and writer of middles (miscellaneous articles found between editorials and reviews) for The Saturday Review. These varied associations provided effective discipline for the young man who was later to have charge of one of the most influential of the large English periodicals during the fifteen years that proved to be its greatest period. Of all the contacts, the longest lasting and the most fruitful were those with Macmillan's and The Saturday Review. Most of what Morley wrote in his seven trial years appeared in the columns of The Saturday Review, and from it, so industrious was he and so well considered were his articles, he came to derive an income of ¹ seven hundred pounds a year!

The second of the benefits derived from the London apprenticeship was the establishment of friendships with three great characters who were themselves writers and thinkers-- with George Meredith, John Stuart Mill, and George Eliot.

1. This figure seems high, especially since his salary for editing The Fortnightly was reported to have been just six hundred pounds. Morley himself quoted the figure in after years to his friend J. H. Morgan in defending his assertion that a man does not need financial independence in order to make a good writer out of himself. The remark can be taken for what it is worth. In other matters, Morgan points out, Morley's memory in his old age was frequently at fault. See J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-92.

Morley's esteem for them still survives in written tributes. The sharpest and most beautiful of the literary portraits in the Recollections is the one of Meredith. The review of Cross's George Eliot's Life (Macmillan's, February, 1885) is an evaluation of admiration and sympathy. And Morley's early letters, as well as his printed review of the Autobiography (Fortnightly, January, 1874) and his causerie, "A Great Teacher,"¹ testify to the veneration he had for Mill.

The friendship with Meredith was the earliest formed and the last broken by death. In his Recollections Morley places the date of their first meeting somewhere in 1862, but since his review of Meredith's Evan Harrington, which was responsible for bringing the two together, appeared in The Literary Gazette on February 9, 1861, it is probable that the relationship became close a year or more earlier. Meredith, the senior, was interested in the ability of the young man and remained gracious in giving him helpful literary advice.

Mill's interest in Morley was likewise precipitated by a piece of Morley's writing--in this case by one of his "middles," called "New Ideas," which appeared in The Saturday Review in October of 1865. The gist of it was in the Mill tradition and showed that the essay on liberty six years earlier had gone deep. New ideas in themselves do not lack the means of taking root in human minds; not is it that mental soil is naturally hostile to the germination of new-planted

1. Reprinted now as number one in Oracles on Man and Government.

thought. It is not antipathy, declared Morley; it is apathy that is so enduring an obstacle in the path of intellectual progress. Mill was impressed by the rational exposition and wrote a complimentary note to the author who had shown such an "unusual amount of qualities which go toward making the most valuable kind of writer for the general public." ¹ Praise like this from so distinguished a thinker was irresistible, and, since Morley had been trying for several months to make his acquaintance, it was now only a matter of days until a meeting was arranged. The affinity between the two minds soon showed itself; Morley became "the young disciple" and before long was spending his Sunday evenings in the Mill household, where he grew intimate with the learned coterie that regularly gathered there. When, in the winter of 1867, he made a flying visit to America, he was provided handsomely with letters of introduction written by Mill to Emerson and several others among his friends there, in which Morley was mentioned as his "particular friend." ²

In Macmillan's for August, 1866, appeared a signed article by Morley, "George Eliot's Novels," in which in true Aristotelian fashion, he praised the novelist because, in her work, "no flapping of the wings of the transcendental angel is heard." The review was so favorable to George Eliot that she directed G. H. Lewes to look up the author and deliver her thanks to him. In the meeting that occurred, Morley's

1. Recollections, I, p.48

2. Ibid., p. 48

friendship with the great fiction writer and her vivisectionist-consort began. Through the course of that friendship, Morley was to learn much; among other things, he was to become indoctrinated with the Comtist philosophy and so have his ideas concerning history considerably expanded.

More interesting, however, than the journalistic activities in which Morley was engaged, more interesting even than the formation of his notable friendships, is the intellectual development which he was undergoing between 1860 and 1867. Those seven years were integrating years, in which all that he had assimilated at Oxford was tested by firsthand experience, to be in part discounted and rejected, or modified and retained.¹ The constituents of his character were shifting, settling on firm bases, and being shaped into an ordered, consistent, stabilized structure; he was evolving an attitude toward life and the world. The distractions and hardships, psychological as well as physical, of those days of trial made demands on him which he never forgot. In later life he was loth to talk about them, but his words, on the few occasions when he did mention them, invariably emphasized their severity and the rigorous discipline they had necessitated. In 1883,

1. In after years, J. Ramsay MacDonald was to say, in eulogizing Morley, "Oxford gave him nothing. The natural man pursued culture and found for him his avocation and his speech." (See "John Morley," The Contemporary Review, CXXXI, March, 1927, 282-9). This is overstretching the truth, even though Hirst lets us know that the extent of Morley's liberality of mind at Oxford did not permit him to argue in favor of relaxing the existing divorce laws or to commend Cobden for his contributions to politics!

for example, at forty-five he remembered sharply "the dangers and risks inseparable from this dismal unbefriended apprenticeship to work" through which he had passed, and he was led to make an admonition: "At no time should a young man's friends take more thought for him. Absolutely necessary it is indeed ~~that~~ he should learn as soon as may be to live his own life, and to walk in his own ways. But those who are bound to him may at least, in the majority of cases, secure to him some of the beautiful things of life, and ward off from him some of the ugly ones."¹

The record of what was going on in Morley's mind in those crucial days--of the ideas that were being examined and the conclusions that were being reached--he himself has left us, in two volumes, Modern Characteristics (1865) and Studies in Conduct (1867).² They were both collections, for some reason or another published anonymously, of the best of the essays which had appeared originally as "middles" in The Saturday Review. Nevertheless, whether or not their anonymity was dictated by an absence in him of complete self-assurance about them, and in spite of the fact that in his old age³ he minimized their worth, the two books remain interesting

1. "Anthony Trollope," Macmillan's Magazine, XLIX (November, 1883), 49.

2. Studies in Conduct, strangely enough, was withdrawn from sale almost immediately after it had appeared.

3. In 1921, Harold Laski, an admirer and friend of Morley's, told him that he owned a copy of Modern Characteristics. Morley, somewhat embarrassed by the information, replied that no author ought to be judged by anything he has written under forty.

to read, both as revelations of him and as commentaries on his times. They are related at once to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: to the characters of Overbury and Hall and to the essays of Addison and Steele,¹ with the distinction that Morley lacks the economy in type-treatment of the former and the geniality in criticism of the latter. Much more of Morley shows through the pages of his first two books than can be discerned about Addison in his Spectator papers. But there is no doubt of one direction of Morley's literary acquaintance and taste. Frequent reference to Milton, Pascal, Steele, Gray, Horace Walpole, and Johnson, and numerous expressions of temper reveal a certain sympathy for the seven-²teenth century, a stronger attachment to the eighteenth.

The anonymous volumes have been called Morley's Confessions.³ More appropriately, they are his Books of Prejudices. In

1. Consider, for example, such essay titles as "Small Hypocrisies," "Domestic Autocracy," "Culpability and Degradation," "Occasional Cynicism," "Town and Country," "Colloquial Fallacies," and such type designations as Trimmers, Social Salamanders, Intellectual Pachyderms, Social Troglodytes.

2. Probably Morley ought not to be considered unusual because of this preference. In after years (see "The Expansion of England," Macmillan's Magazine, XLIX, (February, 1884, 243) he wrote that he, like "most people who read the English language," knew more about, and felt less flatness and was more interested in "the names of the eighteenth century than in those of all other centuries put together." This familiarity resulted from the fact that Macaulay's most popular essays, found on shelves everywhere between Shakespeare and the Bible, were on 18th century figures and treated them in a "most glowing, vivid, picturesque, and varied style."

3. See F. B. Harvey, "Two Anonymous Books by Lord Morley," Contemporary Review, CXXXII (December, 1927), 750-6.

them there is much less of positive inclination and exclusive preference than there is of challenging analysis and censuring exposure. He is constantly objecting, rarely committing himself. He stands revealed, a young man inexorably critical, not only protesting against the fatuousness of conventional notions of things, but redefining them for himself, recasting and re-evaluating continually. Nothing is more the accompaniment of prejudice than the disposition to reprove and reform. Nothing is more characteristic of confession than egotistical demonstrativeness and vociferation; and there is none of that in these first two volumes.

As a young man in his twenties in London, Morley was active and ambitious and proud. He prided himself on his intellectual vigor, for in true Socratic fashion he held that right knowledge must precede right conduct, and that right knowledge can be grasped only by the mind that is disciplined and vigorous. He prided himself on his early success in the journalistic world and justifiably felt his own superiority to "that nondescript crowd, whose numbers" were "every day growing greater, of young men who flock up to town to make a speedy fortune by literature." He prided himself on his realism; that is, on the honesty and accuracy of his way of looking at life, on his courage in looking facts in the face. And this realism, in true Aristotelian fashion was an intellectual middle ground between optimism on the one hand and pessimism on the other, between cynicism

and sentimentality.¹ Yet it was not compromise. The middle ground was simply that place in the perspective of the mind's eye where the relationships among facts showed, least distorted; and once the mind's eye adjusted itself to proper focus, once it attained the trueness of that middle ground, it was to fix its vision and refuse to alter the shape or proportions of what it saw. The will behind the eye, although it had nothing to do with the character of what was seen, must be resolute. Compromise, on the other hand, was a violation of such resoluteness; it was a disposition to deny, or equivocate about, the rightness of the things seen, if such a denial or equivocation would make the carrying out of one's daily activities any easier. Thus Morley lost all patience with people around him who looked wistfully back on their past and idealized it as a time of unalloyed happiness, crying over their severance from it. With the pain of the quarrel with his father still in his breast and with a realization in his mind of the alienation that had taken place between him and his college friends--an alienation that was inevitable since post-college experience for all of them had been different-- he proclaimed that any recollection of the past was fraught with anguish and that any attempt

1. When he was forty-five, Morley remonstrated with political opponents who branded his thinking as pessimistic. He did not stand for pessimism, he wrote, "unless it is to be a Pessimist to seek a foothold in positive conditions and to insist on facing hard facts." (See his "The Expansion of England," Macmillan's, XLIX, February, 1884.)

to relive it, if it were possible, would result in needless misery. Gilders of the past and wishful recapturers of it, he denounced as sentimentalists; no indulgent reminiscence over it, he maintained, could prove beneficial. People who imagined that prostitutes, in remembering the sweetness of their old mothers and the innocence of the days of their own childhood, were sobered and incited to better conduct by such retrospection, were deluded; Morley, the realist, knew that prostitutes promptly had recourse to the solace of gin.

As a regular contributor to The Saturday Review, then, and as an editor, to a degree, in his own right, Morley saw all of London and learned all of it. He met and observed a wide variety of human beings. He travelled a good deal outside the metropolis, too, intent on understanding human conduct and on estimating the British national character. He was a roving reporter on human nature-at-large, a critical examiner, an appraiser of the times. "The prime characteristic of the Englishman is activity and energy," he discovered; and this characteristic was incarnate in the great Empire which the English nation had evolved. But everywhere he was angered by the spiritual complacency of too many of the British people, by their intellectual puerility and truculence. The aristocracy was "bloated and effete." The middle class was dedicated to the pursuit of two things--money and position; it was deplorably material-minded, Philistine. Not that Morley without reservation condemned the desire to become rich. He knew that it could breed, among other traits,

industry, thrift, and foresight. But he abominated the urge to accumulate money for its own sake. The temper of the age, he saw regretfully, was one of selfish discreetness and opportunism; and a prevalent British type was the trimmer, the man, who, Polonius-like, steered a middle course, equivocal implicitly if not explicitly, his sails ready to catch a favorable wind in any direction.

Apart from the engrossing activity of commerce, Morley determined to discover what sort of secular instruction motivated middle-class people. The stuff that young people's minds were expected to feed on, he discovered, was either harsh and thorny, or so flabby and insipid as to amount to pap. No contempt he could muster was too strong for dismissing the first kind of diet, epitomized in books of instruction like those of Hannah More. They were dangerous because their bleakness only begot bleakness. No geniality and liveliness of mind, no warmth and gracefulness of temperament could be the products of sermonizings that declaimed against clubs as "subversive of private virtue and domestic happiness," racing as unnatural, croquet as wicked, and walking in gardens on Sundays as frivolous. The second kind of diet, equally objectionable, was that found in such books as Martin Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy, which resulted, not in severity and harshness, but in ineptitude and foolishness. Its dressed-up platitudes were only so much "sonorous inanity." Both diets worked harm in their blighting of

personality. But they did more than that: they were responsible for an utterly false conception of values, in which the most superficial and restricted conduct was invariably confused with capacity. If a boy went to Church regularly, if he said his prayers every night, if he rose early every morning, if he saved his pennies industriously-- or if he did not swear or lie to his parents or cheat his brothers and sisters, then he was at once considered a lad of promise, and everybody had visions of a career for him. But they were unjustified in expecting success of him, because they knew nothing of his intellectual potentialities and had never seen him subjected to a test. His capacity remained unknown; what was mistaken for it was only a docile conformity to an accepted code of daily conduct.

Though such instruction and such a misconception of values fostered hardness and dullness in all males who grew up under their influence, the times were even more damaging of females in the lamentable "education" to which they were subjected and the kind of conduct they were exhorted to follow. Young Morley felt the abysmal ignorance and the painful inadequacy of young ladies again and again. Too often it was his misfortune, as an intellectual and eligible young man in town, to have to sit through an elaborate dinner with a frivolous and stupid companion at his side, or to be trapped behind ferns at a fashionable dance in an incipient flirtation by a personable admirer with whom it was impossible

to establish any intellectual contact, or to be sentenced to five long acts in a box at the theater with a young woman who had no notion even of what "dénouement" meant. Indeed if there is one social theme in these early years to which Morley returns more repeatedly than to any other, always with special indignation and disdainfulness, it is this very theme of women and their inadequacy. There is no denying his preoccupation with it and his perturbation by it. He may not have believed that all females per se were the confusion of men, but he obviously was convinced that, in their present state, they were a thorn in men's flesh. Constitutionally he was attracted to them, and it is unlikely that, slim and straight and superior as he was, they found him unattractive. Moreover there were additional qualifications which set him off in actual distinction: he was an Oxford man, he was rapidly assuming prominence among younger intellectuals and was already known to older "thinkers," he was witty (with a mordant nerve in his wit), and he made no attempt to disguise his impatience with female vanity or to dispel his hauteur in the presence of it.

The strongest expressions of Morley's discomfiture suffered at the hands of women found their way into The Saturday Review, but they were not reprinted in either of his anonymous books. His experiences in fashionable London society, that is, in Belgravian society, set him on fire, and in open contempt, in withering sarcasm he castigated it. What he saw was a world of pretence and deceit as glittering

and false as Duessa's Castle of Pride in The Faerie Queen. The role of women in that world was to attract and ensnare; and the accoutrements of fashionable life--dances, dinners, teas, croquet parties, theatre groups--were nothing but the trappings of a commerce in matrimony.

But it was not in Belgravia alone that women were stupid and inadequate. Everywhere in England they were woefully uneducated, and in the country their isolation handicapped them doubly. Still, though women were more capricious than men, though they were "very rarely magnanimous" because "magnanimity is not a feminine virtue," though they were not, as a rule, thoughtful readers and were "so intensely practical, in the narrowest and often the worst, sense of the term, as to look with habitual distrust upon those general ideas which it is the chief business of literature to sow," though they possessed an "overrated character for sensibility"--a quality in which men were at least their equals (young ladies, for example, who were ready at any time to write sweet verses, Morley had discovered were thoroughly prosaic), and though what was commonly called a "clever lady" was either dull and conceited or pert and conceited, still Morley acknowledged that women sometimes revealed "a full-blooded sweetness of character which is worth more than mere intellectual quickness." And even "the ordinary girl," he conceded, was "not morally pachydermatous." She was very often "uncommonly dull and stupid

and silly, but the dullest and stupidest may be the most sensitive about exposure and humiliation." More than that, no English girl whom he had met was guilty of the follies attributed to American girls--of such an extreme in ridiculousness, for example, as he had recently found in print when an American female confessed she was panting to "throw her soul into the arms of the Infinite."

Relations between women and men, in view of the nature of women and the disgracefully shoddy cultivation of that nature, concerned Morley. He observed the young men and ladies of his acquaintance acutely and he decided that friendship between the sexes, for example, was a rarity. It was possible, to be sure, but when it occurred it was almost invariably late in life, and even then, most examples of it were to be found among illustrious French people. Love, though it was a much stronger relationship and one much more common, interested him less. How much experience he himself had with it, there is no way of telling. The probability is that he had little, and that it was a temperamental lack of inclination toward love and not a searing disillusionment in any affaire du coeur which restrained him from attempting to widen his amatory experience. His attitude toward the subject is fixed. Love may be elemental, but it is at the same time elementary. A physiological manifestation, it disrupts man's thinking and causes aberrations in his conduct. Adopting St. Paul's terminology, Morley made his terse pronouncement: "When

he is in love, a man may think as a child and speak as a child; but if he is to go on growing he must put away childish things."¹

On the subject of marriage Morley's convictions were severely realistic--that is, they were implanted in a middle ground between the extremes of thinking all good of it on the one hand and all bad on the other. He was careful never to strain the limits of human nature, never to expect too much from it. Young as he was, he knew the importance of the part which amour propre plays in all human beings. Around him, he had too often seen men and women fling themselves passionately into marriage, promising the most glorious of futures, and swearing inordinately idealistic vows to each other, only to find themselves within two or three years disillusioned and indifferent on the cold earth of fact.

1. This intellectual superiority to love, this apparent absence of any organic susceptibility to it can be called, I suppose, an austere virginity. It has been pointed out only once before--by a sensitive, discerning Frenchman, Augustin Filon, who got to know Morley about 1890 and published a study of him, "John Morley, Critique, Journaliste, et Homme d'Etat," in the Révue des Deux Mondes, CVIII, November 1, 1891. Without, apparently, knowing anything of these early essays and therefore never having seen Morley proclaiming that love is no more an excuse than intoxication for the follies a man commits under its influence, Filon shrewdly suspected that Morley knew firsthand the very sentiment he had once defined in a line --"that subtle disdain of woman which is hidden at the bottom of certain souls and which one blushes to confess." Filon suggested that this "subtle disdain," apart entirely from any question of Puritanism, probably underlay Morley's inveterate taste for whiteness, and he concluded: "This severe man must have been, as much as or more than any other, capable of loving; but he has a refinement of mind which saves him from certain falls and which serves as virtue better than virtue itself."

Indeed, such a descent from passion to indifference was the regular procedure. Morley profited by the examples he saw and determined to save himself from the fate of a matrimonial morass. The fault was primarily that men and women were bereft of their reason and led by passion to enter a relationship whose eventualities they could not possibly gauge. But, beyond that, most couples, even if they had been lucid enough to foresee future developments, were not equipped to meet those developments and master them--the women, because they were uneducated, intellectually undisciplined, and vapid; the men because they were self-indulgent and intellectually too cowardly to look realistically at marriage and prepare themselves accordingly. Often, too, Morley saw men not so much made irresponsible by passion as yielding themselves to marriage, resigned and will-less, having superstitiously accepted it beforehand as an inevitable experience in the path of everybody, a kind of Rubicon to be crossed sooner or later. Their attitude was contemptible. As though a pusillanimous closing of the eyes and plunging into the waters of a Rubicon could make the direction of their life any easier! In nobody's life could there be any instantaneous reinforcement or transformation of character, any sudden magical imparting of the solution to a problem.

Unwilling to postpone "the future to the present," to purchase "a small gratification now at the sacrifice of a greater and more enduring good to come," Morley saw marriage much as Swift saw it in his "Letter to a Young Lady." The

rapture of romantic love is short-lived. In its place must come a relationship based on reasonableness and characterized by taste, good-naturedness, tolerance, and trust. But in his zeal to analyze the relationship and understand all possible consequences thoroughly, to discover what the worst could be like, he drank the bitter cup of speculation to the dregs. Of all kinds of women, which was it most disastrous to be tied to? The echo, he concluded, because her parrot-like mimicking would in time make a man's most cherished ideas become an abominable mockery in his own ears. Even the fool, on the other hand, could be amused and distracted by the presentation of baubles so that she would never be tempted to set foot on a man's intellectual domain. Speculation about children led only to a sardonic query: are babies, like bad port wine, a minor tribulation or a catastrophe?¹

1. Elsewhere, in characteristic Utilitarian fashion, Morley conceded that a child is probably a "nicer object" than a man, but countered with the reminder that a man is better because he is useful.

So far as the care and raising of children were concerned, Morley was not without some opinion to impart. He announced it a moral duty for all adults to keep in good health, for the sake of their unborn progeny, and therefore advocated gymnasiums and exercise for women. He decried the prevalence of domestic autocracy (John Wesley, for example, he denounced for his "lofty self-complacency"), and looked for the day when parents would cultivate a "discreet indifference" rather than an "unremitting attention" in their attitude toward their offspring. Children should be trained to be independent and the reins of parental discipline gradually slackened. A desirable system would be one in which a child, until his sixth or eighth year, would be under a despotic government, passing from it into a monarchy with diminished centralization, from which, in turn, he would proceed when he was fifteen to a limited monarchy, arriving ultimately at a republicanism, with the one-time parent-dictator now his guide and friend.

Fortified as he was against the attractiveness of women, Morley was equally secure from the blandishments of what people called nature. Buxom breezes, azure skies, moonlit waters, downy meadows, flowers, birds--these could not seduce him or distract him from his awareness of windstorms, floods, drouths, insect plagues, animal deformity, bodily disease. But it was a time of Romanticism still. The urge that Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley had exemplified, had not died with their deaths; in the late 1860's Swinburne was giving it even more vociferous expression. Everywhere Morley was encountering "Sympathy with Nature." Young men and women were maudlin in demonstrating it. He was revolted. "Sympathy with Nature," he decided, was usually a high-sounding name for loafing on the back in the sun. It was not necessarily bad in itself, but it was "wholly unfruitful of positive results upon character." Too much of "Sympathy with Nature," moreover, was a hatred of man, a contempt for him--an excuse for releasing individual lusts and indulging "anarchic passions." Morley condemned it as dangerous to society; "as much civilization is due to the steady repression of nature as to its development."

"Perhaps one of the most certain signs," however, "that the true meaning of sympathy with nature" had been recognized in the 1860's, "in spite of the growth of this . . . plague-stricken school," was "the visible spread of the idea that every sentient creature ought to be treated with humanity, just as much as the members" of the human species. This

"consideration for all sorts of foul animals and reptiles," along with the abandonment of the policy of "maltreating lunatics and burning ugly old women" for witches, was encouraging evidence of progress in one direction, at any rate. Morley still remembered acutely the horror he had experienced as a child in discovering other "boys . . . pulling flies to pieces and digging the eyes out of toads;" he winced at the recollection. He never ceased to plead that "dumb and helpless things have a capacity for something which at least passes with them for pleasure."¹

Nature was kind, then, in one act--that of implanting the instinct of "pity in the souls of the creatures she has abandoned." And for Morley, human beings on this planet were abandoned. As we have seen, he had become a follower of Lucretius; he believed that, as one part of the nature

1. In The Saturday Review Morley once bitterly satirized certain dukes who had been praised in newspapers for their records in duck-shooting. He was fond of pointing out, too, in the early days, that incident in Hugo's Légende des Siècles, in which a horse pulling a cart avoids stepping on a weakened toad in the road; it was evidence of Hugo's great soul. Later, in the early Fortnightly period, (1870) Morley had a disagreement with Trollope, an ardent fox-hunter, over Trollope's desire to prolong a controversy with a contributor, E. A. Freeman, on the subject of hunting with hounds. Attached as he became, moreover, to George Eliot and G. H. Lewes, Morley often found it almost more than he could do to call on the pair because he was habitually encountering maimed animals in the lower hall, subjects for Lewes in his laboratory experiments. According to Hirst, Morley never became reconciled to the vivisectioning of animals; if men, in the interests of science, needed to carve zoological organisms, he maintained, let them carve themselves. Of course all of this impassioned sympathy for dumb beasts is contained in Morley's lifelong admiration of Bacon's saying, "The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath." This aphorism was engraved in the marble of the fireplace in his library in London.

of things, men and women were only physical phenomena, no more than brief manifestations of matter, living their lives on the earth utterly unrelated to the will of an interested, guiding deity, for there was no such deity, or, if there was, all worldly evidence pointed against his having planned a special destiny for his creatures. And yet, abandoned though he was, Morley could not recommend a life of licentious self-indulgence for himself. Temperamentally he was too aware of the awe-fulness of human life--too sensitive to its suffering, its frustrations, its incongruities, its cosmic insignificance to take advantage of its supernatural dissociation and its transitoriness and glut himself bestially. His Blackburn environment had given him a physiological repugnance to lust in the raw; and his childhood Evangelicalism had developed in him an intellectual abhorrence of sensuality with its consequences. Through classical literature (Lucretius, in particular) he had learned at Oxford that man, living life on his own terms, can acquire, in his own sight, a dignity that will give his endeavor value. What if it is true, he appealed, as "fiery poets of despair are never weary of crying aloud to us, that Nature hates us, and that the gods are never found by our prayers? Is not this all the more reason why we should be as gods to one another?" But it was not only that Morley was by nature pitying or that he conceived pity as a godlike attribute, and it was not only that he discountenanced yielding to lust as a smirching of an individual's dignity; as a

member of a civilized society he knew the necessity for self-restraint and discipline among human beings. "If the idea of self-denial is to be expunged from the list of the things worthy of cultivation, then society must inevitably fall to pieces. If all men and women are to insist on drinking to the dregs the cup of every desire of their animal nature, without a thought of the effects which may flow from their gratification, then it is plain that most of the business of the world will come to a standstill."

And yet, socially, it was not enough that a man should restrict himself and abstain; he might keep society from falling to pieces by so doing, but he would be contributing nothing to make it any better. A morality of negation was not enough, and inertia was not a state worthy of man. One's chief purpose in living ought to be to secure his own contentment; that was admitted. But one ought to have a purpose co-ordinate with that--to do all that was compatible with his own objective, for his fellow human-beings. Morley had not outgrown the Golden Rule and he had not for nothing assimilated it to his Utilitarian principles. "The man lives most perfectly whose constant happiness is found in the consciousness that, in doing the best that he can for himself, he is also doing the best that he can for every being that is capable of having good done to it." In deriding the conventional confusion, then, of conduct with capacity, Morley was not advocating an abandonment of conduct; he was depreciating the petty, unintelligent, self-

concerning round of activities that was currently taken to mean conduct and urging the creation, in its stead, of a new and broader conception. He had no hesitancy in making his stand clear. "After all, the end of everything is living," he maintained. "Conduct is at once the aim and the test of all our learning and thinking and striving." But it was conduct of this larger, more humanitarian kind that he stood for; it was the only kind that was ennobling. "There can be no more deadly and baneful influence on conduct as it affects others than the one which teaches men to prefer anything under the sun to the happiness of the whole mass of sentient creatures. Beauty, truth, justice, every virtue, every pursuit, every taste--they are all good because, and just in so far as, they augment this stock."

In all of this emphasis upon the humanitarian direction of conduct, however, one must remember that Morley did not define any part of it as self-sacrifice. There was nothing of abnegation in him. The purely personal end of conduct, after all, is at least equally important with its social application, and in point of view of time, takes precedence over it. One's obligations to one's self and one's obligations to one's fellows are interrelated, interdependent, to be sure, but one strives to improve himself first, and afterwards, to benefit society; or, after he has set out to attain a goal for himself, does what he can in consideration of others, along the way. But what constituted happiness for

Morley? We have just seen him asserting that the very consciousness of assisting others contributes to one's own happiness. But what, more specifically, were some of the pursuits and tastes that he believed in cultivating?

For Morley fame was the spur to achievement. He made no secret of his desire for it. He had no patience at all with that "certain commonplace standard, easy to satisfy, beyond which nobody expects us to go," and no tolerance for self-styled "philosophers" who would "leave fame for fools" and content themselves "with listless irresolution or with truculence." Fame was a justifiable and worthy motive because it had "produced the greatest and most beneficent achievements that have made the globe as decently inhabitable as it is." The pursuit of it was in no way irreconcilable with the magnanimous conduct he had defined for himself; and the love of it, in contradistinction to Milton's pronouncement on the question, was not an infirmity in any noble mind. Morley was not a complacent Pharisee but only a self-respecting young Englishman justifiably priding himself on a certain realization of his own powers when he observed that most young men of his own age who had come to London to make literary reputations could not stand up under the severity of journalistic competition. He knew, at twenty-six, that he had already partially succeeded in doing what he wanted to do, in translating "the obscurity of local success into the daylight of metropolitan fame."

But it was not fame as a writer that young Morley wanted. Literature was not his ultimate objective; politics was. The choice between them was essentially one between thinking and doing, and of the two, Morley decided in favor of doing. Ever since his Oxford days, at least, the problem of establishing a preference had been on his mind. Now his London experience was enabling him to weigh the facts in favor of each of the two professions more carefully and arrive at a conclusion. The vigor to which his whole organism was adapted, for which it was shaped and strung, naturally led him to place a premium on activity. And yet, he did not consider ^{his} decision one peculiar to himself at all. He liked to think that in choosing as he had, he was acting in accord with a national tendency as well as with a personal disposition. Relating his own act to a background of national tradition gave it broader dimensions and suggested greater possibilities. "The prime characteristic of the Englishman," he had written, "is activity and energy;" so in casting his lot for "the conflicts of the political arena," he, like others before him, was gratifying "a national instinct."

"Some men," Morley reflected, "would rather have been the author of Hamlet or the Principia than have held the highest office in the state, but they are very often just the men of the smallest intellectual calibre and least likely to erect one of these intellectual monuments more lasting than brass." He himself would rather have delivered one of Gladstone's best speeches than have written the System of Logic or the History

of Inductive Philosophy. But it was "the highest office in the state," or a Gladstone, or one of Gladstone's "best speeches" that he fastened his attention on; nothing less than the best in political attainment or performance was worth striving for. He confessed that a second-rate writer can do more good than a second-rate politician. There was nothing to forbid him, however, from straddling both literature and politics, no reason why a man could not combine the careers of writer and statesman, even though "the two characters, in their fullest measure, are not frequently combined." Burke had possessed them consummately; and in Morley's own time both Gladstone and Disraeli had reputations in literature as well as in government. To be sure, their literary productions were necessarily slighter than their political, and Disraeli was superficial where Gladstone was philosophical, but, in spite of those reservations, the important fact was that they offered two examples of the man whose mind is broad enough to reconcile the experience of the council chamber and the parliamentary hall with the habits of the study and the writing desk. With his eyes fixed on such pre-eminent archetypes, Morley would make his objective the same embracing duality of achievement. At any rate, there was nothing to prevent him from using letters as a preparation for politics. How could the discipline exacted by a vigorous career as a writer be in any way inferior to the training obtained as a law student or as a member of a town administrative commission? And what

better preparation for a vigorous career as writer could he secure than the apprenticeship he was subjecting himself to in London--moving among thousands of men and women, living day after day as part of the working world? He was learning human nature, he was proving his ideas about life practically. His ultimate outlook on things would be saner as well as more comprehensive than if he were biding his time as a speculative visionary somewhere in the seclusion of a university.

Nothing is more interesting about these formative years of Morley's than the perfect and healthy confidence with which he decided on his life career and went about laying the groundwork of its structure. He made his plans and charted his steps coolly, deliberately. He knew himself and estimated his capacities judiciously, almost infallibly. He looked at life in proper focus, as we have seen, examined its ingredients, and evaluated them for himself. Where conventional values were seen to be false or out of proportion, he discarded them in favor of his own. The contemporary mistaking of conduct for capacity, we have already seen him deriding and rejecting. He redefined conduct, because he was convinced that no man could do the good thing until he first had learned what the good thing was; "the highest conduct" was always "the fruit of the character that has been most raised by wise intellectual culture." Everywhere in his redefinitions he was intent on discovering, and seemed always to perceive, the proper limits of things. Thrift, for example, was not at all, although most

people took it to be, "penurious frugality." It was the "wise and careful outlay of money" [how, not what, you spend], which lay between parsimony and prodigality, and it involved "a really lofty moral excellence." Likewise, in his attention to fame, and in his weighing of his own abilities, he took pains to be equally discriminating: it was good to have one's eyes on great men like Pitt and Fox and Burke, but it was not good to be persistently measuring one's self along side one's friends and acquaintances. Continued self-comparison of this sort bred the Pharisee; in succumbing to it people deluded themselves and soon began to find their superiority in wholly adventitious traits. They tormented and incapacitated themselves mentally, and made it impossible for magnanimity, one of the two or three most desirable intellectual traits, to find its way into their brains.

Morley early resolved that his own contribution to humanity would be made as an enlightener and reformer. He would try to enable people to see things as he saw them, as they should be seen. He would stir them to set themselves free from superstition, rote, cant. Although he might effect no improvement himself in their material living conditions, he could waken them to an awareness of the circumstances surrounding them and direct a campaign for the betterment of those circumstances. "The first of all social responsibilities," he maintained, "is to have an intelligent set of convictions upon the problems that vex and harass society, and

continually keep a wide margin of miserable anarchy about her skirts."¹ The second was to hold those convictions strongly and propagate them. Only through an education of the public, through a spreading of information and a development of opinion, could pauperism, prostitution, and the rest of "the most terrible questions of today" be attacked and solved. It was imperative that every man be taught what Morley himself had cultivated--"the all-important habit of taking care that his mind works at ideas instead of allowing it to absorb their pale shadows."²

Of course, men could be taught and civilization could be improved. As to that, Morley had made up his mind in advance; but, in his customary realistic temper, he was cautious to define for people the exact limits of what he meant. "Society," he concluded, "is a machine which, though always and boundlessly susceptible of improvement, generally works for the welfare of the community as well as the age will allow." And "man," he came to see in his London apprenticeship, "is in practice not so low nor in capacity so unspeakably sublime" as Carlyle and Emerson had maintained. Here was no dreamy enthusiast, no fanatic; these were the observations of a man who all his life, was to affirm that truth's ground is a middle ground, and that fidelity to that ground, though it means a moderation or reconciliation of extremes, does not entail

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1. "Social Responsibilities," Macmillan's, XIV (Sept., 1866)
 2. "George Eliot's Novels," Macmillan's, XIV (Aug., 1866)

compromise. Acquaintances of Morley, impatient with seeing him constantly in his role of Socratic gadfly, accused him of being querulous--of venting through his social criticism nothing more than his own strong desire to go back to the opinions and customs of his grandfathers. He denied the impugment. He had no such preference; but no more did he will a consummating acceleration of progress. He did not believe in "an instantaneous and unimpeachable millennium," he protested, and did not want to go to one any more than "a bad little boy does to heaven."

The career of reformer is a difficult one, for apart entirely from the personal qualifications of the aspirant to it, the way in which it is pursued can make all the difference in the world between success and failure. To reform a man, you must first show him that you respect him and have faith in him. So Morley reasoned. "Contempt for public opinion," he deplored. "In by far the majority of cases," he insisted, it is "a sign either of consummate impudence or surpassing shallowness," and the man who is always intent on being "in a complacent minority of one never makes a mark" on anybody "for the sufficient reason that he has no mark particularly worth making." Morley had no toleration for people who made themselves different just for the sake of being "original" or daring. Herbert Spencer was recommending to young men the practice of responding to dinner invitations by appearing without a dress suit and wearing a long beard, but Morley had

too strong a conviction of the importance of regularity and conformity in the little things of life ever to condone such bizarrerie in conduct. It was more, however, than an ingrained distaste for such sartorial eccentricity which led him to take issue with Spencer; it was the certainness that a flouting of the proprieties would be ruinous to him in his role of reformer. He must be circumspect and reasonable. "The identification," he wrote, "of all uncommon and unpopular views with strange manners and uncouth attire is a fatal course for anyone to pursue who wishes such views to become common and popular as speedily as may be."

The qualities needed for success in a public career, Morley had no difficulty in ascertaining as primarily intellectual; nor did he lose any time in undertaking their cultivation. It was not that he relied on a rigid routine, an exact budgeting of daily hours to be followed week in and week out. He was disciplined himself but he knew that the most meticulous system of dams and dikes and channels in the world is worthless if there is no current which they are designed to control. About him he saw young men by the dozens putting their faith in such abstract schedules, only to disappoint themselves and their admirers eventually by amounting to nothing. The trouble, here as in other things, was that conduct of the most superficial kind was being mistaken for capacity; or adolescent enthusiasm for a subject was being misconstrued as ability in it. Hardly anybody took the pains to know himself or to see beneath the

surface in anybody else. Year after year, breakdowns continued to mystify both their victims and their witnesses. But they held no mystification for young Morley. He had given them prolonged attention and he found them perspicuous. Breakdowns occur, it was obvious, not always through vices but often because of "a whole stock of intellectual habits which, though scarcely visible in themselves, are not less pestilent in their consequences than drunkenness or incontinence or systematic idleness."¹ We must realize that "there is all the difference between a strong passion and a strong reasonable will." What is indispensable is a "vigilant tenacity"; "Men with the best aims constantly break down because they cannot bring their great minds so low as details and items and little detached bits of labour and forethought."

More important even than intellectual carefulness, however, in gaining the world's really great prizes, are intellectual breadth, intrepidity, and vigor. Breadth, we have already seen, must be secured if one is to establish immunity to tormenting rancour, spite, jealousy. As for the second of the virtues, everybody, said Morley, admits the value of

1. Indeed it is possible for a man to make a mark in the world in spite of habitual vices. Morley's favorite example of this fact was Charles Fox, who, because he had intellectual abilities, achieved a certain political reputation, even though he was addicted to drinking, inordinate gambling, and loafing naked on his couch. The mark that Fox made, however, was not at all the same thing as success, if for no other reason than that through almost all of his political career he was not in a position to wield power.

intrepidity in physical conflict and praises it; what he must learn and be willing to concede is the even greater desirableness of it in questions of thought. To be "industrious or of good morality, and decently intelligent" at twenty-five is not enough. To become a Gibbon or a Buckle or a Hallam one needs intrepidity. And intrepidity is after all a manifestation of vigor, which "is perhaps the least to be dispensed with of all those virtues of understanding . . . because conduct, which is the ultimate test of the worth of all thinking, is sure to become weak and wavering in proportion to the falling-off of this internal vigour."

The possessor of these invaluable intellectual traits might well supplement them by the assistance to be derived from two additional sources--one, his own imagination; and the other, the circumstances of English society about him. The development of imagination not only had a big part to play in the growth of sympathetic, charitable conduct; it also, even when it was revealed by "castle building," was a bracer and a stimulus to young people in their ambitions --provided it was "superintended by reason and common sense." Thus arts like poetry and music (e.g., the opera) could inspire young men to glorious achievement. As for the encouragement offered by the organization of English society, though it was more adventitious, it was no less a stimulus. Who could resist the incitement to high endeavor afforded by the examples of Disraeli and Gladstone? Aristocratic birth

was no longer a prerequisite to the greatest political office in England; neither was vast wealth. Careers were now open to talents, and a man's abilities alone should determine how far he was to climb.

Morley had nothing but scorn for those who in the face of these circumstances desisted and paraded an attitude of sour grapes or tried to disparage all effort by whining over the adverse power of chance or fate. Breakdowns in life, visible or invisible, "are all the result of some kind of moral worthlessness. Neither untoward circumstances nor the evil behavior of others can effect the fall of a man with a firmly based character." These things may slow him up or make him stumble in his movement, but they cannot throw him into ruin. "People break down because they do not take pains with their character, as they would with their bodies if they were going to fight or to run a race. They seldom keep themselves in moral training." It was not that Morley denied the existence of chance or habit. He felt their force well enough, but he refused to recognize that that force invalidated human free will. It is every man's duty, when his character is building, to exert his will and be vigilant in seeing to it that the tastes and habits he forms are good ones; then, when he is confronted by a crisis precipitated by chance, he will be more likely to act intelligently than if he has grown up undisciplined. "Circumstances only act as a magnifying instrument," he averred; one makes his character and then is drawn along by it. This was a

position from which he would not flinch. "It is very proper and elevating to believe that 'Man is man and master of his fate.' Practically this is by far the most important and the most worthy aspect of human action, and to lose sight of this as the greatest of all principles in its kind is to suffer a complete moral paralysis. Only, in surveying life, it is childish not to see that a man is not by any means the only master of his fate." One's ancestors and parents, who bequeath him a certain physiological and intellectual inheritance, and one's environment, which modifies that inheritance, must not be forgotten. Nevertheless, "If a man has brains and health and a decently early start in the world, there is no external clog to prevent him from rising as high as he likes. There is nothing in the constitution of society to hinder an educated man from getting whatever praise or pudding his own qualities and conduct entitle him to."¹

Along with maintaining this, young Morley flatly refused to condone the conduct of anybody who, in laziness or indifference, made no effort to capitalize his abilities. There were only three misfortunes--"noxious elements," he called

1. This whole assurance is expressed, too, in a criticism of the fiction of Dumas, films, and that of Thackeray as well. Morley found that both writers employed a cynical reversal of circumstances for effect and accused them of exploiting a cheap trick. "Life is not made up of such conjuror's transitions, and the reiterated intrusion of them as philosophical representations of the lot of man, tends to divert the mind from a truer view of the matter. It requires very little reflection, and no very elaborate observation to learn that, in the main, what we call the irony of fortune is in reality the palpable result of human conduct, and that, in the main, 'man is master of his fate.'"

them--that might befall a man and that could be considered justifiable excuses for a sinking into despondency and inactivity: disease, bereavement, and spiritual dilemma. All other circumstances were non-extenuating.

Still, even in the absence of the "noxious elements," one was not supposed to give himself wholly up to the sweating pursuit of an early fame. Morley was not an advocate of omnivorous workers, and he knew that real fame is almost invariably achieved late in life. Anybody with high capabilities and the strong desire to realize them is impatient to arrive early, but he must restrain himself from falling into headlong haste. In spite of his placing a premium on intellectual vigor, Morley was no zealot. Like Milton in his early twenties, whose sonnet in reproach of Time, the subtle thief of youth, he often thought of and was fond of quoting from, Morley was moved by the almost irresistible urge to try his wings. He checked his eagerness, however, and reminded himself reasonably of his ultimate objective, that "large and serene internal activity" which was to be attained, not by any precipitousness in youth, but only by "time and industry and the maintenance of a thoroughly open mind." For him, mental ripeness was all. Short cuts, he would not tolerate. And yet everywhere about him he saw that modern speed--the mechanical speed of railroads, steamships, the telegraph--was deluding people in their attitude toward the affairs of life. There was already, for example, in the matter of reform, too much satisfaction with talking

and writing as a sure means of making human beings do what is right. Men should be always aware that there is no short and easy method to either bodily health or moral strength. Short cuts and dispatch may be all right in business, but they rub the "delicacy and bloom off life" if followed in all activities.

It is this very appreciation of "delicacy and bloom" in life, and this unwillingness to have them sacrificed that supply the clue for the discovery of Morley's whole opinion about satisfying living. Attainment of high office, while it may satisfy certain individual desires and consummate certain aptitudes as well as offer opportunities to do good to others, does not in itself guarantee happiness. A man must have a fruitful private life and be something in himself, apart from his public successes. He must possess "that wisdom which is the perfect and full flower of human character." This wisdom, one can see, comprises a number of important recognitions.

It includes, first and basically, the recognition that one must not expect too much from life. Nothing is more destructive of any capacity to live profitably than cynicism; and in nine cases out of ten, cynicism grows out of nothing more quickly than a soured idealism. Time and time again, Morley admonished his readers in The Saturday Review that any inexperienced, credulous, immoderate individual who adopts an impossibly altruistic attitude toward life is liable to have his ideal suddenly blasted

and be sent sprawling toward the other spiritual extreme.¹

The second recognition is that human character reaches its full flowering only when the soil in which it is nurtured contains "certain virtues of the heart" as well as those virtues of understanding earlier discussed. Thus it is in the "broad course of public transactions" that the talents related to intellectual capacity and cultivation count most, whereas in domestic life and individual happiness it is the graces and moral elements that are important. "Innate shrewdness and mother wit," "gentleness and delicacy and depth of moral sympathy," "simple affectionateness," and "honest good will"--all of these Morley could so disinterestedly see the worth of in private life that he was led to an admission about them which sounds almost like a contradiction from his lips: "It is the mark of a real highmindedness to be able to tolerate intellectual commonplace when it is accompanied

1. The experience of one Enfantin, the leader of the disciples of St. Simon, served Morley as an excellent illustration of the futility of immoderateness. Enfantin was a visionary, "the most extraordinary of modern enthusiasts." He styled himself the Free Man and claimed direct communication with heaven, persuaded men to give up their all and follow him, set down rules for the most eccentric costume and behavior, and, in spite of persecution by Parisians, sent converts to Egypt and Syria in search of the Free Woman, the theory being that when the Free Woman was found, a sudden regeneration would occur and a new era be ushered in all over the world. During his own youngmanhood, however, Morley saw Enfantin sink into obscurity, as postmaster in a provincial town and as official on a Lyons railway, then disappear into death.

by these minor virtues."¹

Somewhat like a corollary to this emphasis on "virtues of the heart" is the third recognition that things in themselves, apart from any visible or "actual" use of them, can be good and desirable. "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed," wrote John Milton heatedly in his "Areopagitica." "Virtue, of its very essence, is either practical or nothing," affirmed young Morley. Yet, in spite of his concurrence with Milton on the subject, in spite of his aversion to the "dilettantism of virtue," he was not an extremist in the practical. Certain ideas, certain traits of mind were, after all, worth fostering as ends in themselves--apart utterly from any palpable external results. The "consciousness of integrity and highmindedness" was to be so considered. Similarly, Justice should be loved and sought after, not only for its effect on others but for its wholesome, equilibrating effect on our own characters. But almost everybody remained motivated by the age-old "head-long anxiety" to get to the end of something, to finish the task at hand, to seize what he had set his mind on attaining. How regrettable, sighed Morley, when in "the long run, we shall probably find that the exercise of the faculties

1. Morley's toleration of intellectual commonplace, however, must not be misconstrued as advocacy of it. He continued to maintain that the only means of securing "largeness and openness of nature," of deriving room for the "free and uncontrolled play" of natural virtue, of developing "into a still sweeter and more exquisite flower" the "graciousness and simplicity of character anybody has" was through intellectual enlightenment. This "enriching influence" he had no hesitation in calling "culture."

has of itself been the source of a more genuine happiness than has followed the actual attainment of what the exercise was directed to procure."

The fourth recognition concerns the acceptance of the elementary fact that nobody can escape pettiness, even sordidness, in the routine of life. It is too bad, admitted Morley, that we cannot live as pure and simple and lovely a life as Adam and Eve did before the Fall. But, since golden ages and utopias are impossible, the only way in which we can compensate for their lack, is through cultivating "a habit of taking vivid interest in all that is passing in the world in practical exploit and speculation and art, to give existence an air of dignity and size and grandeur." This universalizing interest in things is, after all, the only kind compatible with that "large and serene internal activity," which enables one to live life on whatever terms he chooses, to make life conform to whatever dimensions he prefers to give it. So Morley, in contradistinction to intellectual Tories and what he called Social Troglodytes, did care earnestly about such matters as "the American War, or the coming Reform Bill, or Jamaica," or "Whether Governor Eyre was right or wrong, whether species have their origin in natural selection or in distinct acts of creation."

In valuing the "habit of taking vivid interest in all that is passing in the world" and in identifying the source of "the best kind of happiness" as being "in the widest possible range of interests and tastes," Morley did not

neglect "the keenest appreciation of all minor pleasures, and the nicest attention to all minor adornments." The place of pleasure in life he had early discovered and defined for himself; indeed he was fastidious in his pursuit of it to the point of being nicknamed "Priscilla."¹ "The proposition that all pleasant things are right is untrue," he conceded, "but it is certainly not so radically untrue as the more popular proposition that most pleasant things are wrong." The current practice of prescribing long, unbroken periods of work to be followed at infrequent intervals by short, detached periods of pleasure, he revolted against. A prescription of a quart of brandy one day and a quart of water the next is not at all a prescription for a mixture of brandy and water. "If it be sound doctrine that a line every day is the secret of success in art, it is not less true that an instalment of pleasure every day is at least one of the secrets of happiness in life."

The fact that many pleasures are small did not bother him. "Life without those secondary adjuncts of grace and dignity is like one of those plain gaunt houses which are often eminently commodious and healthy, but which still have no claim to be considered types of the most perfect domestic architecture." Still it was clear to him just how the widespread objection to minor pleasures was formed. People at large could see no "radical connection between dignity in

1. Applied by Morley's Liberal colleague, Campbell-Bannerman. See F. Brompton Harvey, "Two Anonymous Books by Lord Morley," Contemporary Review, CXXXII (December, 1927), 752.

small matters and genuine worth and power in . . . weightier matters" and so they arbitrarily dismissed all "small matters" as trivial and worthless.¹ Since there was no relation between sitting down to dinner with clean hands and abstaining from robbing their neighbor's chicken house, why should they bother about cleaning their hands? For Morley, however, the absence of any such relation or "radical connection" was no bar to the recognition of "dignity in non-essentials as a substantial and independent merit." Only "clowns," he said, "look on the simplest points of good breeding as despicable fopperies." For actual fopperies and small hypocrisies, he had no use; they were too often the outgrowth of extreme self-consciousness, self-uncertainty. But he was pained to think that "an absurd and offensive affectation" should ever be confused with "the genuine air and manner of distinction."² Loathing shabbiness, he could not tolerate the thought of

1. Morley's realism in measuring the part that "small matters" necessarily play in everyone's life extends as well to the avoidance of unfavorables as to the pursuit of favorables. He early gauged the importance of "minor tribulations" and the necessity of sparing one's self from them. To try to put up, day after day and week after week, with misplaced collar buttons or badly ironed shirts or underheated soup is too much for the patience of any sensitive man. He must insure himself against nervous misery by seeing that all the menial details in his commonplace existence are properly and mechanically executed.

2. This "distinction" had been well exemplified in Milton. Although the great poet had cultivated graces, he had considered them embellishments only, desirable in softening the contours of life. Never for a moment had he forgotten that underneath, the real business of life is to "scorn delights and live laborious days."

living in it and lost sympathy for those fellow-journalists who already as young men had reconciled themselves to it. Indeed, he was even unwilling at twenty-seven to admit the virtue of strict simplicity in living; it was at best "a negative virtue," and he considered that man a fool who, if he could afford not to, should deprive himself of the graces which were an enhancement of daily existence.

A glance at "those secondary adjuncts of grace and dignity" which Morley prized most discloses the refinement and discrimination that were to distinguish him for the rest of his life. He delighted in good living. Choice wines were dear to him, and he prided himself as a connoisseur. He knew his clarets and held that it was imperative for other men to; dullards who could not tell Gladstone from Lafitte or Cape from Port met with something hardly short of intolerance in his company. Fine foods, he was equally insistent on. He had an aversion to certain "popular poisons"--to melted butter, for example, and pork, which he was aghast that people really ate; he condemned suppers at nine or nine-thirty as unhealthy perpetrations; and he dismissed the fish dinner as the "most astounding invention of modern civilization." Good painting pleased him, and he surrounded himself with specimens of it. Fond of the theater, he was even more a devotee of music--of its larger forms, the oratorio and the opera, but of its smaller forms, too, among which he was modern enough in 1865 to prize Mendelssohn lieder and Beethoven sonatas (except for their "abstrusest parts," which he left to

impressionable young ladies). Conversation was a preoccupation with him; he disciplined himself to become an adept participant in it. Good conversation, he knew, requires art to conceal art. It does not consist of a rehashing of magazine or newspaper articles, it need not (and ought not) be disputatious, and it is damaged, not improved, by flashy paradoxes. At its best it is a "quiet, easy flow of talk," enlivened by aphorisms and epigrams, "pungent bits of absurdity." To talk pithily is necessarily to talk "pointedly and more or less audaciously;" but the exaggeration in such speech can be overlooked; even if it does border on the half-lie, it more than compensates for itself by being one aspect of the truth seen in a startling way. The English would do well to slough off their mistaken conviction that brilliancy always hides shallowness and to emulate the French, whose language is "an instrument which makes even dull men talk and write like wits."

Such pleasures as these, however, can only be found in the city; and, indeed, Morley's tastes were urban. Although he did not share Macaulay's utter unsensitiveness to country scenery, he nevertheless could agree with Samuel Johnson that when a man is tired of London he is tired of life. Rural landscape had its delights, to be sure, but occasional excursions into it sufficed; the contemplation of rural living made him writhe. He had no knowledge of gardening, and no taste for it; and he could not tolerate the prospect of being troubled by property repairs, pursued by carpenters and

plumbers, pestered by moles and rats. In a village he would be conspicuous; his most ordinary movements would be the subject of every yokel's daily gossip. Worse than that, he would have to put up with young ladies, even more vapid in their flirtatious chatter than Belgravian belles--rustic damsels, most of them, who had never even so much as seen a leading article in a newspaper. Worst of all was the absence of any intellectual companionship, any stimulating conversation among men. In their stead were only the "Tyranny of Tattle" and the "Great God of Dulness," which were "ten times worse" than the expense and dirt and noise of London could ever be.

One last "adjunct of grace" remains. This one, however, is by no means secondary; on the contrary, through the nurturing and preservation of it, Morley was immeasurably aided in giving his "existence an air of dignity and size and grandeur." It was a young man enriched and made eloquent by his relationships with Meredith and George Eliot and John Stuart Mill, who confided

. . . it is in the consciousness of an occult sympathy that the charm and consolation of friendship resides, not in being a more privileged and more intimate kind of gossip. In the most delicate kinds of friendship, a man or a woman, who thinks about it at all, cannot help feeling as Aladdin may have felt when, after accidentally rubbing the magician's ring, he first saw the genius of the ring appear, or when the genius of the lamp brought him delicious meats in golden vessels. There is an air of magic in the sudden perfection with which it is found that a whole set of new sympathies have sprung up, and a whole body of new pleasures been added to the old stock.

All his life he must see to it to be alive and equal to the

reciprocal respect and trust which high friendly affection entailed. He must retain his "flexibility and openness of spirit," so that the chance of making new friends would not be lost. The prime element in friendship, he believed, is always something like reverence, but without distance or abasement,--a consciousness of "one's own partial inferiority;" a friend has some "grace of character that you have not."

"The fatal law," however, "that the side on which we are most susceptible of pleasure is also that on which we may have inflicted on us the greatest pain, applies as well to friendship as to all other occasions of emotion." Sentimentalists, for example, cause themselves excessive anguish in not being able to endure the thought "of cutting adrift anybody to whom time has attached them;" in the face of a steady divergence of interests between them and their one-time intimate companions, they persevere blindly in thinking of their relationship as it originally was, only to have their delusion shattered at last by collision with some irremovable circumstance. But apart from sentimentalists, all of us, victims of antithetical prejudices and antagonistic ideas, are prey to quarrels. Quarrels do occur--even with our best friends, and their occurrence must be accepted; only in that acceptance, the fortunate efficacy of reconciliation must not be forgotten. What are inexcusable, and usually irremediable, are those half-deliberate quarrels that grow out of "gratuitous perversity" in human nature--out of caprice or jealousy.

They are unmanly, and each of us must be on his guard against them. All in all, given mutual appreciativeness and sincerity, friendships can be established and sustained, too, in spite of intellectual differences. Too many of us, unfortunately, in the sphere of friendship and social intercourse, as well as in the sphere of morals, are in the habit of confusing right with duty. We must abstain from always speaking our minds and understand that "a certain willingness to hear opinions patiently and silently, in spite of a strong itch to controvert them, is absolutely necessary to keep the world from being a sheer bear garden."

Certainly the temper that provoked these reflections on life was far from optimistic. Indeed, acquaintance with it breeds the suspicion that it was one naturally inclined to pessimism--that Morley involuntarily saw bleakness and sensed hopelessness in human life but was buoyed up by his reason and disciplined will and saved from sinking into the black pit.¹

1. The only writer on Morley--and what is more surprising, the only contemporary observer of him--who has noticed this elegiac base of his nature, this inherent tendency to see things "pessimistically", and then this courage to triumph with his intellect over what could have become a paralyzing temperamental conviction, is again the Frenchman, Augustin Filon. (See his article "John Morley: Critique, Journaliste et Homme D'Etat," in the Revue des Deux Mondes, CVIII, Nov., 1891) Morley, he had discovered, always "carried within him a secret protestation against the optimism of science and of society." "He was melancholy. . . But his melancholy was born with him. From the first glance thrown about him, he had known that the world is evil, that it can become better, and that it will never be good; that 'the things called human intelligence and kindness are made painfully, with the strength of patience, out of detestable materials.' One of the first in his time, one of the

Hostile to panaceas, incredulous of any "instantaneous and unimpeachable millennium," he knew that progress needed ceaseless human effort, that it was not an automaton with a capital letter. "The true faith in the future is, that things will move if they are made to move, and not unless." Whatsoever work his hand found to do, he did it with all his might, and he agreed with Ecclesiastes in the advisability of the pursuit. But he would not go all the way with Ecclesiastes--or with a contemporary, Eugénie de Guérin either--in saying that it would have been better for man if he had not been born. He would not let himself despair. His resoluteness in facing life, however, was not at all the same thing as a wishful self-deception. His eyes were open to all the uglinesses and tragic scars of existence; his achievement is that as a youth in the face of them he could shape the convictions which he did. "So long . . . as these . . . noxious elements [disease, bereavement, religious dilemma] are absent, a wise man, who does not expect more from life than the conditions of life can ever suffer it to give," "who has with judgment fashioned out some predominant purpose, and at the same time kept all other sympathies and interests moderately accessible from without,

only ones among his race, in the midst of inane joviality or commercialized brutality, he has smelled the odor of death, that fine and delicate odor of autumnal dust that characterizes the ends of civilization and that some people, today, are savoring to the point of intoxication." But Morley, he goes on, did not succumb to this pessimistic disposition. This inborn apprehension, these ingrained sentiments did not drive him to despair. He went over intellectually to science and law.

has done as much as we mortals ever can to secure happiness of the best kind" and "will find within his reach a never-failing stock of adequate pleasures, which make his life very well worth living for." Thus Morley turned his face to the future and determined to meet it with "a vigorous and stalwart stride," not "at best only a feeble hobbling."¹

Almost immediately he was confronted by the rising sun of a glorious day. Late in 1866, through the influence of G.H. Lewes and his Oxford friend, Cotter Morison, he was appointed to the editorship of The Fortnightly Review. His period of apprenticeship was over; though not yet twenty-eight, he had already become known among literary intellectuals. Here before him was the horizon of a wide reputation lighting up.

1. In all of the foregoing exposition, the influence of two contemporary thinkers is clearly discernible. In Morley's insistence on not expecting too much from life, in his declaration that "mere acute pain" is never "good for much in morals," in his anxiety over the lack of education of women, in his assertion that "as much civilization is due to the steady repression of nature as to its development," in his belief that the paramount issue of life is "the happiness of the whole mass of sentient creatures,"--in all of these, the doctrines of Mill can be seen to have sown their seed. The communication of Matthew Arnold, who also later became a friend of Morley's, is apparent in Morley's scorn of the effete aristocracy and the money-grubbing middle class, in his contention that conduct ought not to be confused with capacity ("strictness of conscience" vs. "spontaneity of consciousness"), and in his subscribing to the "enriching influence" of what he does not hesitate to name "culture". No influence by George Eliot is apparent for the reason that Morley did not know her until late in 1866, toward the close of his apprenticeship and when the last of the articles in his two anonymous books was being written. Little of Meredith is to be found either, but for a different reason. Close as he and Morley were in their affections, they were antithetical in their temperaments; Meredith was keyed in major, Morley in minor.

THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW (1867-82)

Raising the Temperature of Thought through Journalism

The Fortnightly Review had been founded early in 1865 by Anthony Trollope, Cotter Morison, G. H. Lewes, the publisher Chapman, and others as an example of a new periodical "which should not only be good in its literature, but strictly impartial and absolutely honest."¹ It was additionally distinguished by its inauguration of the policy of signature for all its articles, a policy inspired by the French system and so eccentric for its day in England that it led one Edinburgh publisher to consider such a "senseless notion of a magazine" a sure revelation that its first editor's judgment was impaired. When Morley took charge of The Fortnightly, however, it had fallen on lean days. The original investors had lost the several thousands they had staked and so, even though they continued to "think more of reputation than of profit," they sensibly made over the worthless copyright to the firm of publishers, Chapman and Hall, then putting out the Review. Thenceforth the periodical, in spite of its name, appeared only once a month. Though Morley himself later explained that it did not have the same prestige or fulfill the same purpose as some of its more illustrious predecessors--The Edinburgh or The Westminster, for example--

1. See Trollope's article "G.H.L.", Fortnightly, XXV (January, 1879). See also the detailed account of the enterprise in Hirst, Vol. I. G. H. Lewes was the first editor, from May 1, 1865, the date of the initial issue, until the end of 1866, when, because of poor health, he resigned, and Morley succeeded to his post.

still, in his time it was in the front rank of journalistic shapers of public opinion, along with The Cornhill and The Saturday Review. And while it did not retain the complete eclecticism wished for it by its founders, it nevertheless carried the distinction in the 1870's of a strong openness of mind on all controversial matters of religion, science, politics, and social reform; and the fifteen years (1867-1882) under Morley's supervision were to become among the most profitable of its whole existence, as certainly they have remained its most influential. Its circulation increased, and the names of contributors became more distinguished. Morley later defined its temper then as "Rationalism without chill, in one sense, though with much of it in another."¹ The tone of its leading articles was anything but cold; the effect of some of them on readers was chilling to the extreme. Huxley's famous essay, "On the Physical Basis of Life," for example, which came out in 1869, was almost as sensational in its way as Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution had been earlier and splintered the last few theological arguments of weakened doubters who were tottering on the fence in the struggle between religion and science.

What, in detail, the circumstances were, surrounding Morley's appointment to the editorship of The Fortnightly, nobody knows. In his own words it was Cotter Morison, the brilliant and astonishingly versatile older friend of his

1. Recollections, I, 81.

at Oxford, the young man responsible for his exposure to Carlyle and Emerson, through whose influence he obtained the position. Beyond that, all we know is that young Morley, on request, appeared one day before Trollope in his office for an interview--only to be almost blown down by a sudden blast from the novelist who leaped from his seat behind his desk, "glaring as if in fury through his spectacles, and roaring like a bull of Bashan . . . 'Now, do you believe in the divinity of our beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?'"¹

But, whether or not he was satisfied with Morley's answer, the truth is that Trollope made a wise selection when he hired him, for the young man possessed superlative qualifications for such an office. At the outset he was distinguished by his ardent interest in all that was passing in the world. Although he never pretended, Bacon-like, to take all knowledge for his province, it is certain that few journalists in London could have matched his fund of information about literature, history, philosophy, science, politics, and art. Furthermore, no one his age could have laid more valid claim to the very quality he had early placed a premium on--intellectual intrepidity. His vigor, his stalwart stride

1. See Morley's article, "Anthony Trollope," Macmillan's, XLIX (November, 1883). Writing as editor, Morley left the piece unsigned; and in this incident as well as in a couple of others set down there, he refrained from mentioning himself by name. But it is clear, by the circumstances under which the little happenings are told, as well as by the purpose which they are meant to serve, that when he spoke of a "younger friend" (of Mill's) or a "young writer," he was designating himself.

were already exemplified by his style, which revealed an unusual gift for telling phrases.¹ It was not for nothing that he had grown up in the factory streets of Blackburn, where people were accustomed "even in the repose of ordinary intercourse to a naked vehemence of style that might seem to an innocent stranger to signal the near break-up of society" and where they gave and took "as pleasant banter, such crude pungencies as in other places would be wiped out in blood."² It was not for nothing either that he had grown up reading the Bible, impressing his ear with the sonority of its diction and his imagination with the grandeur of its figures. And it was not for nothing that he had become steeped in science, as he showed when he condemned contemporary style for having "no backbone in it;" "leaving the order of vertebrates," he complained, "it has sunk down to lower classes among mere molluscs and jelly fish and other flabby organizations."³ Aware of the trenchant, tireless power of his own mind, he had decided: "It is not the assiduous cultivation of a style as such, but the cultivation of the intellect and feelings which produces good writing. Style comes of brooding over ideas, not words."⁴

1. Contrast, in the light of what follows here, Morley's inadequate remark of later years, in answer to the question of his young friend, J. H. Morgan, "Where did you get your style?", "From the practice of journalism."! J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 192.

2. "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (July, 1878), 3.

3. Studies in Conduct, 162.

4. "George Eliot's Novels," Macmillan's, XIV (August, 1866), 277.

But beyond his endowments of a wide curiosity about the world and a strenuous, fearless brain, Morley was set apart from other men by two further distinctions: an extraordinary mental training, imparted by Mill, and a wide historical perspective, derived from readings in Comte. There is no doubt that contact with Mill shaped Morley's mind as an instrument--tooled and sharpened it, gave speed and incisiveness and accuracy to the cerebral processes of it, until in the sheer mechanics of thinking, of reasoning, it was dexterous and piercing, not infallible in the conclusions it reached, but unerring in its stroke. Morley's great skill as a critical analyst was derived wholly from the older man. It was Mill's own ability to strip an argument, to peel back layer after layer of the integument and penetrate to the core, which he assimilated. From that time forward it remained a principle of his that no man should allow himself any emotional attitude toward any issue of life until he had first conducted a careful intellectual examination into it and arrived at some adequate appraisal of it. If Mill was the Saint of Rationalism, John Morley became its militant crusader.

The manner in which the influence of Auguste Comte was communicated cannot be described. In the Recollections there is too much reticence about the Frenchman; Morley simply says that Cotter Morison at Oxford first made him aware of Comtism. But there must have been little indoctrination until later in his London apprenticeship when he formed his

friendship with Frederic Harrison, an avowed Comtist, and when he became intimate with George Eliot and G. H. Lewes, also devoted to the cause. In their company Morley undoubtedly met Congreve, the chief apostle of Comte in England, and from them he drew enough Comtist doctrine to effect a growth in his attitude toward life. As late as 1871 the Comtist conception of history was Morley's own, and he could confess to his friend Harrison, ". . . That my whole idea of history is his is certain; that my particular ideas in nearly all the subordinate points are his, is not less certain."¹

Comte saw that history must be conceived as a dynamic process, a gradual development, a long evolution, through successive stages of civilization, from simple, primitive forms of society to those that were more complex, more enlightened. History was continuous, a becoming, not something discontinuous and static. Positivism was his name for that way of looking at it which saw clearly how historical periods were related to one another in terms of cause and effect, how all events on this world's surface were to be studied and considered as phenomena understandable through a knowledge of the conditions in which they occurred. The positive attitude, in short, was the scientific attitude; with it you saw all things as they were and not as you might imagine them to be, led by the erroneousness of some superstition or creed. "Positive," as a word, enjoyed considerable

1. Hirst, I, p. 199.

vogue, and Morley made long use of it. He looked positively at religion, for example, and saw that its course illustrated exactly what Comte had laid down in his widely popular Law of the Three States; that every piece of human knowledge has passed, or must pass, through three states of growth--the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive (or scientific). Even the theological state of religion exhibited an inner evolution of its own, from fetichism among savages, through polytheism among more civilized peoples, to monotheism among relatively enlightened and comparatively modern societies. Each of these kinds of belief was referable to a certain state of development of the minds of the men who adhered to it, and under no circumstances could it be considered or criticized as a thing apart from the social conditions in which it flourished. It fulfilled certain definite needs for human beings at the time, and it was explainable only by an understanding of those needs.

Now all of this about the positive view of social and religious evolution made a profound impression on Morley, and he adopted it unreservedly. As an enlightened being, he insisted that it was his duty to maintain the "historic conception," which, in his own words, was "a reference of every state of society to a particular stage in the evolution of its general conditions."¹ He employed it as a kind of

1. "Some Greek Conceptions of Social Growth," Critical Miscellanies (Series I), 306.

measuring rod in estimating greater literary figures than himself--Voltaire among others--and more than once found them wanting under the application of it. This was the most valuable element of the Comtist philosophy which he acquired.

Another, for a time no less dear to Morley, was that great creation of Comte's, The Religion of Humanity. To sensitive thinking men of Morley's day, disillusioned by science and unable to retain their belief in Christianity, The Religion of Humanity seemed a satisfactory substitute. Morley likewise, until his Oxford days destined for an Evangelical pulpit, found himself adrift in a boat suddenly become rudderless, with the spiritual waters about him appearing unlikely to grow calmer. Utilitarianism and socially applied Darwinism had made him a believer respectively in the worth of "the greatest good for the greatest number" and in the certainty of progress in the evolution of civilization, but no vital spiritual longing in him was satisfied until humanity itself was shown by Comte to be deserving of the same sort of devotion and service as the Christian deity had hitherto received. Morley was reassured that "that swelling consciousness of height and freedom with which the old legends of an omnipotent divine majesty fill the breast, may still remain; for how shall the universe ever cease to be a sovereign wonder of overwhelming power and superhuman fixedness of law?"¹

1. Voltaire, p. 237.

Comte's scheme for including in Humanity's Pantheon all those who had contributed to the march of civilization in any way whatever, found favor with Morley. It was productive of what he liked to consider a historical broadmindedness on his part, and accounted for his undertaking later enthusiastic studies of men so widely different, so mutually antagonistic as De Maistre and Condorcet, Rousseau and Voltaire, Cromwell and Burke. That he could express interest in the separate members of these pairs almost in the same breath has seemed unintelligible to some observers of his career. It must be the result either of some fundamental falseness in his character or of a unique contradictoriness in his intellect, they argue;¹ an appreciation of De Maistre will necessarily exclude any esteem for Condorcet. But Morley saw and pointed out that while the philosophies of two great figures of the same age might have nothing at all in common, still each of them could contain elements which, taken individually, would be beneficial to the human race. And he could give additional support to his stand by citing one of his favorite assimilated dicta on such matters--Voltaire's words to Condorcet: "It is the part of a man like you to have preferences but no exclusions."²

Equipped as he was with his intellectual advantages, it was Morley's task as editor first to enlist noteworthy contri-

1. See, for example, P.E. More's essay on Morley in his A New England Group and Others: Shelburne Essays, eleventh series.

2. "Condorcet," Critical Miscellanies (Series I)

butors to The Fortnightly and second to act, in relation to them, as a director or guide--to impose, through his own writing, some policy on the Review, at least to impart some general character or tone to it. In his obtaining of contributors, he was extraordinarily successful. Nobody who takes the time today to read through even a volume of Morley's Fortnightly can repress sighs of admiration over the diversity of the subjects and significance he encounters, or the consistent brilliance of the writing with which those subjects are illuminated. The foremost writers in England all took part--Arnold, Swinburne, Meredith, Rossetti, Bagehot, Huxley, Pater, Lewes, Harrison, Dicey, Stephen, Pattison, and Myers. As for the leadership, which he demonstrated with his own work, Morley was zealous and indefatigable. Although he never succeeded in stamping an actual policy on his periodical, he did give it, through his reviews and pieces written in an editorial capacity, and through his special, independent, longer contributions, the color of Liberalism. There was no mistaking his social point of view--his outlook on his countrymen and his country's institutions; it was clearly the Liberalism he had learned from John Stuart Mill. "Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual" was its root. It stood "for pursuit of social good against class interest or dynastic interest. . . for the subjection to human judgment of all claims of external authority, whether in an organized church, or in more loosely gathered societies of believers, or in books held

sacred."¹ In law-making it attended first to "the higher characteristics of human nature," and in executive administration, it counted on mercy "as a wise supplement to terror." It was the opposite of Militarism and it was rooted in a belief in progress.

In Morley's young manhood, although some strides had been made in the direction of universal intellectual enlightenment and widespread social improvement, much still needed to be done for a full accomplishment of these benefits, and it was the Liberals who made it their task to secure that accomplishment. The ground yet to be covered was vast. To be sure, slavery and the slave trade had been abolished, strict conformity to the thirty-nine articles as a condition for entrance at the universities had been removed, the bars against Catholics in public office had been lifted, the Corn Laws had been exchanged for a more rational and more humane system of tariffs, and the voting franchise had been extended and improvements in municipal government effected, but Morley was alive to the fact that it was only recently that the last vestige of slavery in the new world had disappeared and that the first Catholic ever to be admitted to Oxford had been an undergraduate there in his own time. The voting right must be extended even further; public education must be improved and expanded, and a reputable system of state-supported schools

1. See Recollections, I, p. 19

developed; the living conditions of working people must be made sanitary, and wage-and-hour laws for the protection of workers passed; the Church must be made a free and separate institution from the State; and women must be recognized as living and participating members of an active society and be given the right and the means to be educated for social responsibility.

Such were the goals that Liberals fought for when Morley enrolled among them in his twenties. Some in the party, to be sure, were zealots for an end purely political and they trimmed their campaign platforms accordingly. But because Morley had gone to school under Mill, because he had been a moral Evangelical before that, he had a developed ethical nature; and only those principles which aimed at a broad and lasting benefit to society, principles at bottom practical and humane rather than politically opportunistic, were what he determined would actuate him in his career.

From Mill's examination of the whole matter of liberty, Morley had learned the responsibility which the state bears to the members of society, but he had discovered as well that the state has no right to interfere with the activity of any individual unless that activity has begun to injure the well-being or impede the freedom of movement of another individual. In Mill's Utilitarianism Morley had been inspired by the unselfishness and dignity in the conception of the useful, intelligent member of society; everybody has an inviolable right

to freedom of belief, of speech, and of activity, but that freedom does not exist without any direction; its finest, noblest employment is in causes that will be beneficial to the greatest number of one's fellow men. Only through such use of it is any progress possible. Each of us ought to be always aware of this high purpose of his freedom, of the serious relation of his own thought and conduct to the well-being of society. Now this is to put a premium on intelligence as well as on a refined ethical sense, but Mill, a saint in such matters himself, had confidence in human beings--or rather in the rationality of a number of them large and influential enough to be the motivation in social growth. And it was this trust in the power of a community of educated, thinking men and women which Morley derived. With all "better minds," of whom he counted himself one, Utilitarianism was a "highly rationalized kind of Christianity" and already widespread enough to be considered as "practically the dominant creed of the time." Morley could assert, as spokesman for the movement, "that he is the best man who finds his own highest happiness in promoting the happiness of as many people as possible," and remind his readers that "this is a principle drawn from the experience of men, and it rests on an intelligible basis. While it kindles and expands and elevates all the affections as powerfully as older creeds, it has the advantage, daily growing and more and more important, of offering no shock or disgust to the understanding."¹ And from fre-

1. Hirst, I, p. 76

quent contact with such ideas about women as saw light in print in the famous "On the Subjection of Women," Morley came to be clear-headed about female intelligence and to champion its right to equal development with that of men. Progress, then, through enlightenment. And the Liberal way, with its Utilitarian admixture, was the enlightened way.

The sudden elevation of a young man not yet twenty-nine years old to a journalistic post of such prominence and responsibility could not but have a marked effect on his disposition. Morley had forsworn ecclesiastical pulpits in his later days at Oxford, but the zeal of the preacher and the reformer had not died in him; The Fortnightly would become his pulpit and he would inveigh from it. In his correspondence with his friend Frederic Harrison at this period he shows that he himself recognized the different character of the pulpit he had attained; and Harrison, amused by the transfer of allegiance, playfully summed him up "as an apostle or rather entrepreneur of apostles. Let us say for short Diderot plus John Wesley."¹ So convinced was Morley of the necessity for the message he was to transmit, so sure was he of its indispensability to the salvation of England, that his fervency led him into excesses of statement in which he came dangerously close to claiming infallibility and in which what had been originally the open-mindedness of Liberalism was translated into the narrow-mindedness of dogmatism. Even in his earliest

1. Hirst, II, p. 162

essays for The Saturday Review, in spite of his customary reasonableness and moderation, there had been flashes of overstatement and unwise abruptness; moved by his scorn of cant, his natural impetuosity, he had more than once dismissed arguments with a single fact or two in refutation and then the hyperbolic remark that with "a hundred other cases" or "in a thousand other ways" or by "ten thousand other things" he could adduce additional proof.

This impatience on his part, this occasional urge to be high-handed were not at all mitigated by his realization of the weightiness of his editorship. Since the least of his words would now be a fiat, he was moved now and then to write them all large. Yet, in his less heated moments, when he reflected that his was part of the "immeasurably momentous task of forming national opinion," he confessed that the consciousness of his association with The Fortnightly often had "a very strong and perceptible influence" upon his writer's mind, and he strove to restrain the deep desire "to erect himself Pope and Sir Oracle," which "lies in the spirit of a man with strong convictions." Continual restraint of the desire, however, was too difficult. Morley's tone was the tone of the apostle militant; it even, at times, rang with something of gladiatorial pugnacity.¹ In the first year of

1. Directly applicable to himself is this phrase written by Morley about the philosophers in France preceding the Revolution: ". . .their spirit in a word was not apostolic but gladiatorial." (See "Rousseau's Influence on European Thought," Fortnightly, XI, May, 1872, 498.)

his leadership he wrote a brief but challenging manifesto,¹ in which he sounded the call to arms in behalf of the new journalism of signature. He had already seen signs that England was "on the eve of an era of free speech" and without taking the pains to list more than "one or two of the hundred symptoms" of it, he incited all the journalistic die-hards for anonymity and all men of his "own way of thinking" to fight it out--and "with no button at the ends" of their foils. Irrepressibly proud that hostilities had already begun, he welcomed more signing of articles, not only for the increased honesty and clarity which signing would effect, but so that there could be "more hard hitting."

It was not only the consciousness of his position, however, which prompted Morley to polemical excesses. Much of his barbed derision in The Fortnightly's pages, much of what is indistinguishable from out-and-out truculence, can be accounted for by the narrowing delight he took as a combatant in the flawless functioning of the weapon with which he was fighting--in this instance, his acute, untiring mind. Conducting campaigns as editor afforded him his first chance to test the mechanism of that mind, and he was carried away by his pride, his confidence over the way in which it met the great challenge. His was an absorbing excitement at the realization of the high performance of such an instrument. Emboldened by his own disclosed intellectual vigor and

1. "Anonymous Journalism," Fortnightly, II (September, 1867).

intrepidity, he often strode beyond the limits of caution, discretion, good taste. How else can one explain his occasional lapses into the two qualities of debate which he had set himself to abjure--vindictiveness and vilification? The best way of observing the vigor of his mind, as well as the subjects toward which it was directed, is in retracing exactly what he spent fifteen years in laying down and marking clearly--"the line of passage from sentimental Radicalism to scientific Liberalism." As he drew it, the route was distinguished by its penetration of certain areas of contested ground, areas which for Liberals were unmistakably explained by irremovable signposts.

First among these regions of dispute was religion. Morley knew that it was almost an instinct with Englishmen to feel strongly about this subject; even indifference, he had observed, had a constant tendency among Englishmen "to become venomous and acrid." And indeed his own behavior offered no exception to the rule. In the first place, the antipathy he bore against theology dated from the days of his Oxford apostasy; the old wound, occasioned by the quarrel with his father over the question of his taking orders, had never wholly healed. But beyond this quarrel with the church on the grounds of an unhappy association, there was an unyielding hostility to it for the reason that its dogma outraged his reason. In what were for him the Eternal Verities, he was a ruthless rationalist. Before he had reached his majority he had taken the trouble to ascertain whether his

religion was supernatural or not, and so from The Fort-
nightly pages he openly charged anyone who had not taken the
 same pains with "either cowardice or the most ignoble kind
 of indolence."¹ Holding with Socrates and Mill that good
 conduct was inseparable from enlightened conduct, he lashed
 out at the current notion that "truths external to the mind"
 could be known by intuition or revelation quite apart from
 observation or experience, because he was "persuaded" that
 it was for his times the chief "intellectual support of
 false doctrines and bad institutions." Nor did he have
 any patience with pseudo-rationalists who pursued the most
 exacting Biblical scholarship and laid claim to religious
 enlightenment, when, in reality they were only guilty of
 substituting a tracing of "the history of a conception or
 group of conceptions, for a scientific inquiry into its
 truth and its correspondence with reality or fitness."
 They might be able to discourse fluently on the metaphysical
 subtleties of the Church fathers, but they had shirked the
 responsibility of deciding whether traditional Christian
 theology answered the questions raised by nineteenth-century
 industrial civilization. Theirs was a "vicious habit" and
 the widespread practicing of it contributed powerfully to
 the continuation of the lamentable "religious anarchy" in
 England.

1. "A Recent Work on Supernatural Religion," Fortnightly,
 XVI (October, 1874), 518.

Fundamental in the Christian scheme of things, it was the postulation of an omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent Deity which Morley could not stomach. Any theodicy which exhorted its adherents to believe that a supreme Being was personally interested in the welfare of each one of them, when all about them there raged needless, undeserved pain and suffering and disease and waste, was anathema to him. The farther one's eye travelled, the wider his horizon became, the more it became evident to him that much of what people called Nature--God's handiwork--was only a "vast torment of blind and viewless forces." Without purpose, the world was equally without an underlying moral law. What evidence of divine retribution could be discerned on a globe where, from time immemorial, the beings who attained highest earthly power and greatest reputation were those who were the most ruthless and accomplished slaughterers of their fellows? In deadly earnest and steeled to draw blood in the encounter with all cowards who tricked their understandings and played "fast and loose with words," Morley execrated the "omnipotent Being for whose diversion the dismal panorama of all the evil work done under the sun was bidden to unfold itself" and who saw that it was very good; while the garment of natural theology for "covering the phenomena of existence," he kicked into the gutter for "a sorry rag."¹

1. See, for expositions of this attitude, "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV, (January, 1874); "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," Fortnightly, XVI (November, 1874);

The church, as an institution protecting, preserving, and disseminating such a theodicy had seen its day; it was doomed and must go. Not that it had made no contribution to mankind. On the contrary, Morley was keenly alive to its great work in the past. In what he said were wrongly called the Dark Ages, the mediaeval church, in spite of "many imperfections and some crimes," had done what no achievement of physical science could hope to vie with: it had purified men's appetites, set "discipline and direction on their lives," and offered to the world "new types of moral obligation and fairer ideals of saintly living," whose light even in 1875 still radiated like a beacon to guide the "poor voyages" of Morley and his contemporaries.¹ Nevertheless, the church, in spite of its ethical illumination and inspiration through the centuries, must be made to realize that henceforth it was to stand on its own foundations. The nineteenth century, after all, was an age of science, and in England science demanded that the church be disestablished, that it be made an institution separate from the state and be obliged to support itself on funds raised by itself. So, too, because of the falseness of the church's theology, must its hand be

and "Some Recent Travels," Fortnightly, XIX (May, 1876). Leslie Stephen's inflammatory "An Agnostic's Apology," which first appeared in The Fortnightly (XIX, June, 1876), is a vehement statement by one of Morley's contemporaries of the case against Christianity. Stephen concluded, too, that "This world, once more, is a chaos, in which the most conspicuous fact is the absence of the creator."

1. See "On Popular Culture: An Address," Fortnightly, XX (November, 1876), 638.

removed from any further connection with education in England; the taint of its doctrines in children's minds was a menace to the intellectual welfare of the nation that could be no longer tolerated.

So fervid was Morley as a leader in the campaign for disestablishment that he used the slightest editorial circumstance as an occasion for venting his wrath. His militant antipathy inserted itself somewhere into almost every piece he wrote for The Fortnightly--into the briefest review of a book of travels as well as into what might otherwise have been a perfunctory series of remarks on an approaching election. He was too indignant, too impatient to allow men to be gradually disabused of their religious error through the "silent dissolution" of that error by the slow, imperceptible infiltration into their minds of new ideas which would eventually render their old superstitions untenable. "Silent dissolution," though it might well be "the most pacific process" of enlightening mankind, was objectionable because it entailed a long intermediate period "of confused and debilitating half-belief." The sudden, direct shock of disillusionment was preferable, because in the long run, it would be seen to have braced and invigorated "the understanding."¹

1. "A Recent Work on Supernatural Religion," Fortnightly, XVI (October, 1874), 518. Just how the advocacy of this admittedly less pacific "direct exposure," which would be certain to cause pain to the person subjected to it, could have been reconciled by Morley to his refusal to accept the "Stoic's paradox that pain is not an evil" is not at all clear. So far as I know, he never felt the necessity of making such a reconciliation.

In his excessive eagerness, however, to increase the tempo of the dissolution, Morley became guilty of doing what he reproached immoderate journalists elsewhere for doing-- making "the principle of relativity" become the base of a set of absolute and final dogmas" and transforming what began as a "doctrine of uncertainty" into "a kind of authoritative nihilism."¹ Now he shouted for the exposure of "that sinister clerical army of twenty-eight thousand men in masks;" now he laughed with fierce delight at the "screams of infuriated theological auxiliaries" of the benighted landed gentry as they cowered before the handwriting on the wall; now he sneered despisingly at the "cant of timorous theologians." But it was an inoffensive-looking article² entitled "The Political Prelude" which poured the full measure of his anger and contempt on the heads of the representatives of a church which could ratify national arrogance but afford not the thinnest shred of moral guidance. In Morley's vilifying vocabulary, clergymen emerged as intellectual eunuchs--robbed of their cerebral energies when bishops had laid hands on their heads, rendering them creatures of immutable "mental sterility," in a ceremony which, because of its results, was not wholly unlike the Oriental way of producing "incomparable guardians of the seraglio." They existed as ecclesiastical tools for whom declining to use

1. See "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 4.

2. Fortnightly, IV (July, 1868).

their minds to the best of their capacity was "held laudable and excellent,"--as parasites who flourished by fastening themselves on three great branches of society; on women, who through a lack of intellectual cultivation, would "easily imbibe violent religious prejudices;" on "that immense mass of disinterested stupidity ("a great hive of Troglodytes") which exists in all countries;" and on the "anti-social classes, the great landowners, and the squires," whose own time of reckoning was not far distant.

Besides attacking the outgrown conventional religion, however, Morley was alert in the defense of the new, the modern religion which he, and others enlightened like him, had embraced--the non-theological religion in which love of humanity and disinterested zeal to work for its betterment, to assist in the movement of progress, in short, had taken the place of primary motivation formerly occupied by the injunctions of a supernatural deity. It was like Christianity¹ only in that Christ's own system of ethics was retained. When the new religion was charged with being bleak, with having nothing like the "beauties of association" of traditional Christianity with which to stir human imagination, Morley was forced to admit that there was something chilling

1. The relation of a system of ethics, or morality, to religiousness, Morley was not at all in doubt about; he never confused the two. In 1873, for example, with careful discrimination, he wrote: "Morality is not of the essence of religion; is not its vital or constitutive element; does not give us the secret of its deep attachments in the human heart." (See Hirst, I, p. 320.)

about its starkness. But after all, he countered, was not Christianity itself in the days of its origin bare likewise and was it not dismissed then by fashionable, cultivated followers of "mellowed pagan philosophy as crude, meagre, jejune, dreary"¹? Would it not be probable, then, for the new religion, through the centuries to come, to enrich itself, to take on attractive warmth and coloring?

When Morley used the word "science" or the word "scientific," he was not thinking of any particular branch of knowledge like chemistry or physics or zoology, though he was well informed on almost all such branches; he had in mind a way of thinking, of looking at life, in which a human being undertook to understand all the phenomena of existence --biological, psychological, religious, aesthetic, social, or political--as products of natural forces that could be studied, examined, analyzed, and measured. All things that are, are effects, and so as effects can be traced back to causes. What truths men learn about themselves and their environment, they can learn only through scientific investigation, through painstaking observation and experiment. Deducing from a priori postulates is dangerous; and believing, simply because you have been told so, that things can happen according to the arbitrary will of some supernatural intelligence, without any relation to the palpable and visible

1. See "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 16.

phenomena attendant on earth at the time, is a practice excusable only among savages.

It was because of his insistence on the interrelatedness of all phenomena, his continual effort to demonstrate the continuity of history, and his exactitude in evaluating any one cultural achievement of an ancient civilization only in the light of what he had been able to discover about the rest of the cultural manifestations of the same epoch, that the French philosopher Comte was scientific. And it was because he was scientific that he was enthusiastically adopted as champion and leader of their cause by the advanced among the moderns of the eighteen-sixties and 'seventies in England. Morley early added to his vocabulary the word "positive" and, as editor of The Fortnightly he had no hesitancy about declaring that "the most important law at which the science of history" had yet arrived was "one concerning the successive stages through which a certain mental conception has to pass."¹

Now Comtism and history and science were inextricably tied up with progress. Looking positively (i.e., scientifically) at history, Comte had detected a successiveness of stages of social growth, a development of men's conceptions; and this growth, this development, by the very nature of the meaning of the words, was always upward, in the direction of

1. "Mr. Froude on the Science of History," Fortnightly, II (July, 1867), 231. This is, of course, the famous Law of the Three States (theological, metaphysical, and scientific). See page 66.

something better. Just as philosophical monotheism was superior to fetichism as an explanation of life's phenomena, so positivism was superior to monotheism. In a word, if there was growth, there was progress, and it was an invincible belief in progress that was cemented as the cornerstone of the faith for the future. As The Fortnightly's preacher, Morley showed how the gratitude of each one of us to the thinkers and workers of the past for the benefits they have helped make it possible for us to enjoy ought to stimulate the sober desire in us to play some part, no matter how small, in the creation of still greater benefits for the generations to come. The stronger our awareness is of our debt to the past, the deeper ought our sense of responsibility be to those who follow in the future. Eventually, there will be a millennium--a time when all the possibilities of men's reason will be realized and when all human desires for the betterment of earthly living will be consummated. To be sure, Morley, who had preached earlier, in The Saturday Review, against "short cuts" and had protested there against having to go to "an instantaneous and unimpeachable" millennium, did not expect finality of achievement in the following century. After all, progress was not steadily continuous and automatous. Morley compared its law to the "law" by which a locomotive was made to run on rails, rails that eventually led to a certain terminus and could not lead to any other. But consider, he asked, what happened to that "law" when "a malignant or incompetent or careless driver" got behind the throttle; imagine

the derailment, the rooting up of the earth, the destruction of human life, the obstructing of the way.¹ Yet, in spite of the fact that progress was "a tardy, stumbling, blind, and most extravagantly wasteful process,"² the millennium would come if men worked for it, countless ages in the future though it might be.

Morley, striving as one of those self-dedicated to insuring the advent of the millennium, made every effort to plot the path of advance for his generation. He was unshakable in his conviction that the last page in the book of progress had been unturned, that the limits of human capacity for social improvement had not only remained untapped but had as yet not even been seen. When doubters confronted him with the question whether a democratic organization was not incompatible with social advance, whether, for instance, there were not greater strides forward in a society solidified by strict unity of belief, he answered with a stout denial. Consider, he urged them, the Byzantine Empire, or any of "the great theocracies, ancient Egypt, Islam under the Caliphs, India under the Buddhists or Brahmins."³ And to the more querulous, as well as more ignorant, of such questioners, he added that if they had

1. See "France in the Seventeenth Century," Fortnightly, I (January, 1867), 16

2. See "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875), 902

3. See "Mr. Mill's Doctrine of Liberty," Fortnightly, XIV (August, 1873), 248

taken the pains to study the past broadly and scientifically, they would have known the answer at the outset. For was not an understanding of the past necessary to an understanding of the present? More than that, was it not indispensable to a realization of the right direction to be followed into the future? When sterile hangers-on, fearful that the incrustations over their minds would be scraped, protested against Morley's desire to abandon certain outworn social institutions or conventions, he had to remind them that progress was not entirely a negating movement. Old ideas had to be eviscerated, to be sure, and old notions, in their decay, destroyed, but, at the same time, there could be seen occurring a "growth of notions newer and more enduring." Real leaders in the cause of progress were builders. Like Descartes, they did not just "pull down the existing edifice of crumbling convictions and tottering traditions, and then leave men naked and houseless." After demolishing the old, they "laid the more stable foundations of the new."¹

In talking often, as he did, about the science of history, Morley was not insensitive to the possible questionableness of his association of the terms. For want of a better work-a-day name, however, for that particular scientific study, he retained the older one with which he had begun. Still, on at least one occasion,² he took the pains to demonstrate un-

1. See "France in the Seventeenth Century," Fortnightly, I (January, 1867), 2-5.

2. See "Mr. Flint's Philosophy of History," Fortnightly, XVI (September, 1874).

mistakably what he meant when he used it. The science of history was simply another name for the dynamic branch of the science of sociology; it could be called, in short, "social dynamics," and the only really valid system of it owed its origin to Comte. Social dynamics differed from history chiefly in that it was more comprehensive. In social dynamics you sought an embracing knowledge of the whole of a past culture--all its beliefs, its domestic customs, its arts, its commercial and industrial systems, and whatever other constituents could be uncovered. Once you had attained a large aggregation of such data about a number of cultural groups, you set out scientifically to trace the relations between them, to follow the "succession and order" in which they evolved; you sought always to understand the cultural phenomena and their connections in strict terms of cause and effect. In the light of such a taxing procedure, "history, properly so-called," appeared as nothing more than "descriptive sociology," providing raw material for the larger, more general study; history was not concerned with discovering the laws that governed "the entire evolution," it explored "only a part of the succession of historical events," and it sought "not the ultimate but the proximate causes of the facts of modern" civilizations.

Not all people shared Morley's opinions. Eminent writers challenged the assumption that any study of the past, no matter how prolonged and brain-consuming, could be

scientific. How could any occurrence, three thousand years old, they demanded, be judged in terms of cause and effect? Among Morley's antagonists was James Anthony Froude, who maintained that, since a historian, to be scientific, would have to limit himself to those influences which were "palpable and ponderable" and would necessarily have to neglect all the unmeasurable thoughts and affections and emotions of men, he would be giving a sorry, shrunken picture of historical development.¹ Morley, however, retaliated with the assertion that imponderables, no less than ponderables, were fit subjects for the scientific historian's research; "the intense convictions of men" were "at least as much the property of history as their outward actions"? Froude asked with finality, "Will a time ever be when the lost secret of the foundation of Rome can be recovered by historic laws? If not, where is our science of history?" And he was answered by withering, extreme analogy from Morley: "This is exactly as if somebody were to say, 'Will a time ever be when meteorological laws can tell us whether it was a wet or a fine day at Jericho a thousand years ago? If not, where is our science of meteorology?'" And when Froude cited free

1. See Morley's article, "Mr. Froude on the Science of History," Fortnightly, II (July, 1867).

will as a separate, autonomous agency inside man setting him irreparably apart from all animate organisms whose behavior could be observed and recorded in terms of cause and effect, he was accused out-and-out of "abject fatalism." Morley, who at twenty-five had made up his mind that "man is man and master of his fate," argued that to think of the will as an independent instrument, miraculously given and miraculously made to function in varying circumstances in varying, unpredictable directions, exclusive of antecedents, would be to make man "the victim and sport of a supernatural force." In much the same manner as he had earlier explained what he meant in saying that a man first makes his character and then is drawn along by it, he cried out that it is much more reasonable to call a human being free "when you believe his will to follow determinate antecedents--desires, aversions, habits of character, opportunity--because antecedents are controllable." By so believing, it is possible early in life to take pains to make one's "virtuous desires and aversions predominant." This, announced Morley, is the scientific, as opposed to the theological, view of human character.

In his contentions, Froude further represented the undesirable theological outlook on history when he asserted that there is a moral order in the universe, that a study of the past makes discernible a system of retribution at work as part of the nature of things, Morley dismissed all such asseverations with contempt. The only retribution which scientific investigation exposes can be contained in the law,

"he that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." If there is no theistic purpose, however, there is scientific order. Conditions produce results invariably, and man as a rational animal can be shown to have learned gradually how to escape inimical effects by avoiding the circumstances which regularly precipitated them. History, then, even if we hold no preconceptions of justice and moral right and wrong, is not a "chaotic agglomeration of intricate accidents" but an "intelligible array of orderly sequences."

All of this is not to say, however, that morality can be held to have played no part in history, that it is not a potent force in the active existence of a nation. With the distinction always in his mind between what a man knows to be right and his will or desire to practice it, Morley admitted that "The immediate cause of the decline of a people is nearly always a decline in the quantity of its conscience, not a depravation of its theoretical ethics,"¹ and he cited as evidences of this fact the ancient Greek decay, as well as the Christian fall before the Saracens at Constantinople and in Spain. Quantity of conscience, to pursue the analysis further, is derived from intellectual vigor, and cannot exist apart from it; it is always the legal code which grows first and the ethical code which "follows steadily behind it," so that although "moral dogmas" do advance, they do so only by

1. See "A Fragment on the Genesis of Morals," Fortnightly, III (March, 1868), 337.

the impetus they derive from "intellectual processes."
 Thus the "great moral reformer" can be defined as "simply the man who brings the healthiest and strongest intellect into questions of conduct and character, instead of into chemistry, physiology, or any other science." In any civilization, therefore, "the high moral type" is not that which conforms to a divine system of ethics, received intuitively, but "that which best meets the requirements of the situation, and it flows from the very definition that the low moral type will fall before it, and be visited by ruin."¹

Just as the force of morality (quantity of conscience) could be shown to have played a measurable part in history, so history itself, as a study, must be understood to possess a recognizable moral value, must be realized as an instrument of "practical moral significance." Through a deepening of a child's perspective, history was the best means of awakening him to a consciousness of his debt to the past and, therefore, of fostering in him the desirable feelings of gratitude, humility, and solicitude for the future. That one was scientific in his study of history did not mean that he had to remain absolutely impersonal in the face of the facts that his research had revealed, that he had to forego the privilege (for Morley, the necessity) of making up his

1. "A Fragment on the Genesis of Morals," Fortnightly, III (March, 1868), 337.

mind about things. Science should develop and sharpen discrimination, not nullify it. No one was under any obligation to consider the acts of Aurelian and Napoleon with the same dispassionate scrutiny as he would watch the oxidation of sulphur or the emergence of a butterfly from its chrysalis. Now it was history seen thus, as an invaluable means of nurturing the highest moral consciousness, which made Morley assign it to a fundamental place in his plan for reform of a subject with which he as a Liberal leader was all his life passionately concerned--education.

Of all the pages which Morley wrote as the official polemist of The Fortnightly, none were more timely, more controversial, or more effectual than those which composed The Struggle for National Education.¹ He was fighting for a complete reform of the English elementary school system, and since at bottom the weakness and the evil of that system lay in a state-promoted association of school instruction with the established church, he found, in his ecclesiastical antipathy, a ready-to-hand incitement to strong language and incontrovertible argument. It was in this polemic that Morley struck off the most succinct, and yet most comprehensive, condemnation he ever wrote of the record of the Church in England, in which he said that in "every other great

1. Fortnightly, XIV (August, September, and October, 1873). In his "Valedictory" (Fortnightly, XXXII, October, 1882) Morley said that there was widespread apprehension over his articles on National Education because they "were thought to indicate a deliberate plot for suppressing the Holy Scriptures in the land"!

crisis" except that of 1688 she had "made herself the ally of tyranny, the organ of social oppression, the champion of intellectual bondage."¹ But apart from such vituperation of the church and her clergy, expert always at dressing up "obscurantism in preacher's phrases and Bible precedents," Morley showed how slightly more than a fourth of all the children in England over six emerged from their school training without being able to read the Bible intelligibly, to write the slightest letter coherently, or to do any more in arithmetic than add six and four. It was not only that most of the training of teachers was controlled by the church or that too much of the actual instruction of the children was of a religious cast; it was that the quality of the teaching was so bad everywhere that even the church catechism in wholly sectarian schools was scrappily learned and disgracefully misunderstood. What must be accomplished was the establishment of a complete system of state-supported schools, in which the instruction would be wholly secular. The church must be removed irrevocably from

1. "The Struggle for National Education," Fortnightly, XIV (August, 1873), 144. It certainly should be pointed out that this aversion to church-directed education, and this eagerness for reform, were by no means new with Morley. See, for example, his very early "Social Responsibilities" in Macmillan's for September, 1866, where he is exasperated by the English "sluggishness" over reform of any kind, and looks with admiration on the "vigour and activity" with which the colony of Victoria conducts its educational program. There, he says, denominational differences were forbidden to block the path of the movement toward nationalization, and "the preposterous right" is denied to parents "of pleasing themselves whether their children shall grow up in darkness or enlightenment."

any participation in such a scheme.¹ It was time that the government accepted the education of young people as "one of the highest of national duties" instead of neglecting it as "a superfluity left to the sects."² What a deplorable example England offered in requiring that her children pass only five years of their lives in school (from eight to thirteen) and in subjecting them to the haphazard tutelage of teachers who were not university-bred and were abysmally deficient in mathematics, grammar, geography, and history! How she suffered by comparison with the United States, where Morley had learned firsthand in a talk with "a professor at a university in one of the great towns of the West," that young men and women were well enough equipped to go directly from their elementary schools to classes at college, and where they were deeply enough imbued with the desire for higher learning that some, to earn their way, "would rise at four or five in the morning

1. Morley did not advocate excluding ministers from membership on school boards, however. "Disqualification never made anybody better;" and the fact that a clergyman as a school trustee would have to cooperate with laymen as his equals could not but result in his own enlightenment.

2. The government had professed a recognition something like this in its Education Bill of 1870, the measure against which Morley directed his attack, but its interest in a real reform, he showed, had since been revealed as spurious. That bill had nominally encouraged non-sectarian schools and school boards, but actually it had buttressed denominational schools by insuring that 73% of the national appropriation for primary education went to the Church of England. It had done nothing to alter the organization of training schools for teachers; most of them remained in the hands of the sects. In the bill, too, although the state had pledged itself to see that schools were maintained and that secular subjects were taught, it had stated that it would keep its hands off religious teaching.

to make their days' bread by distributing the morning papers," while others would "light the lamps in the streets," and still others would go "down to the town every afternoon to earn a dinner by shaving at a barber's."¹

There were some, cynics and habitual do-nothings, who deprecated Morley's rudeness in the attack he was leading. Suppose his plans for educational reform were all adopted and enacted, they reasoned; there would be no millennium. But such a protest was no deterrent of his vigor. A millennium it might not be, but what a "substantial social gain"! It is true, he conceded, that the soundest of elementary trainings will not make people virtuous or moral or inflexibly good citizens; but it cannot be denied that it will give them a better chance to become that. At the very least, they will be in a position to take care of their own affairs. The time has passed when "rude vigour" could be complacently trusted "as a substitute for trained intelligence." A better education is imperative now that "ignorant multitudes" are the "political masters of the realm."²

Just what this better education should be, once the machinery for dispensing it had been perfected, Morley knew thoroughly. In an address on popular culture delivered in Town Hall, Birmingham, on October 5, 1876, in opening that

1. "The Struggle for National Education," Fortnightly, XIV (August, 1873), 154.

2. Ibid. (October, 1873), 423.

year's session of the Midland Institute there, he gave a clear exposition of his plan.¹ What he would like to see eventually was a national state of affairs in which a young man could be "educated at a day-school in his own town," have the opportunity of following higher education there, too, and he taught "at the earliest convenient time . . . to earn his own living." The popular education to which he would be exposed should aim to develop in him "the habit of valuing, not merely speculative or scientific truth, but the truth of practical life." It was the "intellectual conscience" in people that needed growth, and the greatest advance which Morley could imagine in the English populace was one in which all men--and particularly all women--would have learned "to quantify their propositions."

In its diffusing of knowledge, popular education should rid itself of what had all along been its repellent harshness, its offensive vein of ascetic and puritanical rigorousness. After all, looked at humanly, one of the chief aims of modern schools ought to be to teach people how to amuse and refresh themselves "in a rational rather than an irrational manner;" and so, in their reading of literature, for instance, students

1. See "On Popular Culture: An Address," Fortnightly, XX (November, 1876). Interestingly enough, though Morley deliberately shied away from teaching as a career when he left Oxford in 1859, and though he found his short stay as a tutor in a boarding school in Charlton, Kent in 1860 as disagreeable as his limited experience as tutor to an English boy in Paris earlier that same year, in later life he had more than one important association with school administration. One was his presidency of the Midland Institute for the year 1876-6, and another, the most significant, was his chancellorship of the University of Manchester, 1908-23.

should be given the key to the most stimulating and pleasurable set of books in the world, those contained in the French language. It was because French, in addition to its "clearness firmness, and order," was distinguished by something not possessed by English--"liveliness in union with urbanity"--that more men and women in England would do well to learn it.

The most significant characteristic of the curriculum which Morley recommended was its generalness; yet he took every precaution to prevent his listeners from confusing "general" with "superficial." Having a general knowledge did mean knowing only general truths, but it meant knowing them thoroughly and in relation to one another; it was not at all incompatible with being methodical. And just as it was better to read, in place of Racine's plays, the essays of Sainte Beuve because they bore a closer relation to contemporary life, so it was more valuable to digest and correlate the significant facts, the leading ideas, in such subjects as logic, mathematics, geometry, chemistry, astronomy, and natural history instead of laboring year in and year out over the exacting details of Latin grammar, the metrical intricacies of Latin Poetry, or the perplexing subtleties of theological dogma. What was essential was that the mind of the student be acclimated to the intellectual atmosphere of his own age, that he understand himself as a social member as well as a biological organism in the complex civilization of the nineteenth century. And since, as

Morley never tired of repeating, there is no better way of understanding the present and one's relation to it, than through an intelligent study of the past, the most valuable subject in any system of popular education is history--not history taught as a series of dates and kingships, beginning arbitrarily with England in 901 or 1066 or 1603 or 1688, but history as an enlightening vision of the growth of the western world.¹ Through such a survey course, which would begin with Greek civilization and then proceed through Roman culture, Mahometan culture, and Christian society in the "dark ages" to the development of modern Europe during the Renaissance, students could be made to see the linking of centuries,--in short, the oneness of history, its greatest fact. The broad, continuous lines of the development of occidental civilization would then be imprinted on all minds. This would be its immeasurable intellectual advantage. But there was an additional profit, a moral one. Enrichment of character is always "a higher thing than mere intellect," and history so studied, with people learning to see both the beginning and the end of things, "to look before and after" as well as at, would result in this enrichment; it would tend to make human character "constantly alive with the spirit

1. Morley emphasized history so strongly because he was afraid that physical sciences were being given a disproportionate amount of attention, owing chiefly to an extreme reaction against the excessive importance in which literature had earlier been held. The "historic sciences," he continued to say, develop as rapidly as the physical, and so a good educational scheme ought to have equal place for them both.

of beneficence." The complaint that "the commonest people" would not grasp or respond to such a course, Morley rejected summarily. How do we know?, he asked; "We have never yet . . . tried the height and pitch to which our people are capable of rising."

Separate from all of this about popular education was what Morley called academic education. It was to be had at universities, and its object was not to diffuse knowledge but to increase it. Ever since his Oxford days, however, he had known that this object was abused, even at England's highest institutions. In the face of an almost universal preoccupation among university students with crew-racing and rugby and cricket and the planning of social delights for the holiday, how was any such purpose to be realized? Nevertheless, in spite of the prevalence of attractive diversions, the attempt ought not to be abandoned of demonstrating to young men that a university, in fulfilling its function of increasing knowledge, must turn out individuals who are conspicuous, first, for "intellectual strenuousness," and second, for a deep love of ideas and "unswerving devotion to truth."¹ With the increasing strife between rival factions over the conflicting rights of science and the classics to a place of supremacy in the academic curriculum intended to promote intellectual strenuousness and devotion to truth, Morley had no patience. The antagonism was "fruitless and

1. See Morley's "causeries," Fortnightly, I (February, 1867), 246-7.

senseless;" both science and classical literature supplied far too special and valuable materials "to the modern intellect" for either to be dispensed with. They were equally needed; neither could be called "the best educational instrument."¹

Because he believed so firmly that women, even more than men, would benefit by learning how to "quantify their propositions," Morley gave considerable time and thought during his Fortnightly incumbency to the support of movements for female betterment. An interesting evidence of the strong-rootedness of his convictions on the subject is his unhesitating, and surprising, declaration that Mill's essay "On the Subjection of Women" was more important than his searching "On Liberty." The essay on Liberty was an exposition in the abstract, whereas that on the subordination of women was a concrete application; its "accurate and unanswerable reasoning," its "noble elevation," its "sagacity" of "maxims on conduct and character," the "beauty of its aspirations for the improvement of collective social life"--all these made it more significant and more consequential.² But, although he now and then, in reviews and³

1. See Morley's brief review of Mill's published "Inaugural Address" (University of St. Andrews), Fortnightly, I (March, 1867), 388.

2. See "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 12.

3. See, for example, his review of The Social and Political Dependence of Women, Fortnightly, I (May, 1867).

editorials, continued to maintain that women needed more education and deserved the political power that would enable them to press on by themselves for additional changes,¹ there is nothing in The Fortnightly that is construable as a policy on his part. On at least one occasion, however, he took issue with women over what constituted a government act beneficial to their own sex. In "A Short Letter to Some Ladies,"² he demonstrated vigorously that modernness of mind of which he was so proud, that steadfastness in looking the most objectionable of facts in the face. When asked to join the Ladies' Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, acts by which the government sought to check the spread of syphilis through the medical inspection and treatment of prostitutes, he had flatly refused. The ladies, in their aversion to the government's practice, were undoubtedly well-meaning, but they were sentimentalists. Why must people continue to imagine that every human being, no matter what his present state of rottenness or demoralization, still possessed an infinite capacity for self-improvement and would respond promptly and eagerly to the slightest benevolent interest shown in him? Prostitution was a fact; not only that--for Morley's generation it was so rampant and rooted that it was "practically

1. Intellectual training, he felt, would help them to guide their emotions, and active social life would be a necessary stimulus to both their intellectual and emotional faculties.

2. See Fortnightly, VII (March, 1870).

. . . as if it were a necessity." As for its origin, there was "no more effective cause of the misconduct of vicious women" in England, the indignant ladies were informed, "than the misconduct of virtuous ones." Young girls, when employed as servants or seamstresses by the most respectable families were usually shockingly underpaid and treated with an intolerable coldness or "inhuman reserve." Under such circumstances, they were driven to the streets. And, in the long run, Morley could not see that it was "much more degrading and soul-destroying and fundamentally immoral, to wear away a life in pandering to the coarse appetite of one sex than in pandering to the ignoble and monstrous vanity of the other."¹

When, in January, 1873, Morley wrote an editorial² protesting heatedly against the "atrocious wrong" committed by certain moneyed London newspapers and a prejudiced judge in subjecting five gas stokers guilty of conspiring to break a "Masters and Servants Act," to a sentence four times harsher than it should have been according to the law by

1. It is only fair, however, to mention the letter of rebuttal from one E. A. Venturi, a member of the London committee of the Ladies' Association. Making use of Morley's own kind of argument, she pointed out that it was an obliteration of prostitution itself which the Ladies sought, not just a checking or a curing of the physical consequences of it. People must be taught to consider prostitution an evil, a sin, and so to abstain. Do you consider it a sin, Mr. Morley?, she asked. If you say that it is a necessity, then you have admitted that it is not a sin. (See Fortnightly, VII, May, 1870.)

2. See "The Five Gas Stokers," Fortnightly, XIII (January, 1873).

which alone they ought to have been tried, he was not voicing a new-born concern for working men. Next to the religious theme, and along with that of politics, the theme of labor and its future was of longest standing with him. In the early 1860's the question was already implanted in his mind: was the increase in national wealth going to make for more equal distribution or not?¹ That was the most important thing to consider about the new order. In 1866 he was berating the English for the impotence of what they called their public opinion; although there was widespread knowledge of the barbarous, incredible conditions among child-laborers, that knowledge was accompanied by no feeling and so was unable to institute any reform. Social apathy in the face of increasingly rapid industrial advance was throwing into gloomier light the future of those who toiled; the workers' problem had become "the great proletarian tragedy." Again and again in The Fortnightly Morley lamented the "profuse and ruthless using up of human life merely in the way of business." He was equally unremitting in calling attention to the movement for the emancipation of the industrial classes as the distinguishing movement of the century; it was an advantage "for all the highest interests of society," and alongside it everything else, "even convulsions of faith,"² had to be subordinate. And what a theme for the future

1. See "Needy Men" in Modern Characteristics.

2. See, for example, "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (July, 1878), 9.

historian--as inspiring as it was grand and inescapable! After all, was not the rise of the masses to a preponderance in political control a rise unaccompanied by any partison or factional motives, for the reason that the masses constituted no class at all but were the body of the people? Their interests, simply because they were the multitude, were the interests of the state; their cause was that of humanity.

In his own lifetime Morley had seen an unbelievable advance among workers, an almost magical transformation of their material lot. In his early childhood men were still being imprisoned for combining to ask for higher wages, and such was the brutalizing squalor in which their families were condemned to live that illiteracy and immorality and disease menaced them constantly. Factory men, rotting under the curse of liquor, carried their drink along with them into the works, and in the towns there was dog fighting every Saturday afternoon.¹ But by the end of the second year of Morley's editorship, the picture had been transformed. The right of laborers to combine and form unions had been insured through their vigorous defence and championship by Morley's own friend, Frederic Harrison. Already in Lancashire towns thousands of factory families were benefitting by their connection with cooperative stores and mills, and their houses, unimaginative, but solid and well painted, were

1. See, for example, "An Address to Some Miners," Fortnightly, XXI (March, 1877).

to be seen lining the streets of the towns, neat and clean and regular. The core of the population was thrifty, healthy, stable, self-respecting, not to be matched even in the United States for its capacity to use advantageously its abundance of insurpassable means to "decent and happy living." Many mothers of families still worked in the mills all day, but their industrious labor left them better off than if they had dawdled at home. The average earnings of man, woman, and child amounted to some seventeen shillings a week and were handed over regularly to the common fund of the house. To be sure, much drunkenness still remained to be combatted, and some two thousand villages in England had not yet been roused from their political torpor, but then the movement for industrial reform had only just begun. On the whole, Morley was convinced that the best type of mill worker was as good as the best representatives of "active humanity" anywhere else, and the best type abounded.¹

The recurrence of strikes was a regrettable and as much a cause of concern to Morley as to any other sensitive, social-minded man of his time. Strife between employer and employe, he was pained at seeing; and he knew that it was most deplorable, not for the material damage or physical injury which it strewed, but for its psychological consequences, the seeds of increased suspicion and resentment

1. "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (July, 1878), 4.

which it sowed in the minds of the mill owner and his paid hands, aggravating the original source of antagonism, and rendering more unlikely the chances for a reasonable, equitable reconciliation. What could be done about such dissension? Of some things, Morley was certain. Strikes would never be obviated, just as he had years ago discovered that quarrels between friends cannot be wished out of existence. Human beings are human, and wherever they are, the possibility of discord exists. But that is not to say that the number of strikes cannot be reduced or that the settlement of them cannot be more satisfactory, to the strikers as well as to the capitalist. After all, the interests of the owner of a factory and of the men who work in it are identical, and the prosperity of any community owes as much to the ingenuity and direction of the owner as to the industry of his employes. It is absurd to defame every capitalist as a merciless and mercenary autocrat, wolfishly rapacious, tyrannizing over his innocent and too credulous men, exploiting them, draining their energies and wearing away their lives, with no thought except for his own belly and his own purse. And it is equally false to howl down every mill hand as an ignoramus, a bestial lout, valueless to society, unable to conduct his own life, and fit for nothing but victimization by a ruthless factory routine. What is needed is more light, more knowledge on both sides, for strikes arise out of misunderstanding. The employe must know the problems as well as the objectives of

his employer and realize the relations which exist between the industry at which he works and raw materials, markets, and wars. So, too, must the employer make an effort to understand the handicaps of his men, their point of view, their necessities, their desires; he must comprehend that even though his interests and theirs in the successful functioning of his plant are the same, yet there are points at which his material interests and theirs cross, and that, in such a crossing, it is the workers' interests which are paramount because they are those "of civilization and the community." Only if he is sympathetic to them and they to him, only if they both willingly cooperate and make mutual concessions, can anything approaching industrial harmony exist in the future. Without such rational conduct, chaos will rule. "This may sound vague," Morley himself admitted,¹ but panaceas have no place in the experience of men, and dreams of ideal systems, despite their beauty, are worthless.

Yet, even though "all the people in the world are not sensible, patient, unprejudiced" and invariably careful in their conduct, most of them, workers as well as capitalists, can be taught to assume a reasonable and beneficial amount of "moral responsibility to the commonwealth," and it was this assumption alone which, Morley felt, would enable English society to weather the "great economic revolution" that sooner or later would convulse western Europe and

1. See "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (July, 1878), 24.

possibly even strike "tranquil, conservative and unspeculative England."¹ In Socialism, Morley had no confidence. It was a panacea, of a special political kind, whose weakness lay in its attempt to impose a pattern on men from the outside instead of beginning by reforming them inside, and in a sentence which might have come from his revered Burke, he declared that "no political solution is adequate for a mighty problem that is at once economic and moral."² Socialism was not a dead force, however. About its torch, still alight in Western Europe, Morley, in spite of his disapprobation, was concerned enough to ask whether it burned for illumination or conflagration.³ Types of solution of the dominant problem of industrial organization varied, after all; there was no one system which would do for all the nations of the western world. Socialism might conceivably be the "wholesome and normal type" for Russia, say, or France; but England was not therefore bound to adopt it. For her, Morley thought that a

1. See "A New Work on Russia," Fortnightly, XXI (Feb., 1877), 264.

2. "Lancashire," Fortnightly, XXIV (July, 1878), 1. This ingrained aversion to panaceas is exemplified, too, in Morley's abhorrence of economic catch words, phrases, and theories. Particularly irksome to him was the ubiquitous mouthing of "supply and demand" and the application of it as a formula by advocates of unlimited production. As Morley put it, "Unlimited production implies illimitable demand, which is an absurdity." Since foremost political economists were theorists who could not agree with one another, he saw no reason why laborers' minds should be befuddled with their jargon. A workman no more needed a course in political economy, he insisted, than a farmer needed one in geology or astronomy.

3. "A New Work on Russia," Fortnightly, XXI (Feb., 1877), 264.

partial displacement and gradual modification of the old feudal structure was best, because the capitalist performed "functions with which the workmen will never be able to dispense." In the period of transition and alteration, what was desirable was that all kinds of laboring people should form vigorous unions for themselves, whose continual pressure on capitalists would stimulate the growth in them of the requisite "social and moral motives."¹

As to the desirability of unions, Morley had not the least doubt. But their advantage lay not only in their being a means by which workers could better their wages; even more important was the service they rendered in accustoming workers to cooperating with one another. Without the habit of acting in concert with his fellows, of subordinating personal aims and desires to the good of a whole community,² no man was "more than half a human creature." Parliamentary

1. "A New Work on Russia," *Fortnightly*, XXI (February, 1877), 264.

2. Elsewhere ("Lancaster," *Fortnightly*, XXIV, July, 1878, 5) Morley called this habit "the most civilizing agency in the world." Not all unions, to be sure, were "wise and just." But the very existence of a few that were rough and intractable was proof of the need for their surviving, because it was only by working sympathetically in a body that their members could learn moderation and fair play. Interestingly enough, too, Morley exhorted members of industrial combinations to champion the cause of farmers and assist them to form their own unions. If the agricultural population of England was organized to protect itself, he believed, it would be satisfied, and there would be no shifting of people from the country to the city to flood the industrial labor market. As somewhat of a corollary to this exhortation was his repeated conviction that the cause of the English laborer and the Irish peasant were substantially the same.

elections were too infrequent and Parliament itself too far removed from millhands and miners for them to be strongly and continually attentive to national affairs, but their unions gave them a field of social and political activity that was immediate; their day-to-day awareness of belonging to a great combination was "like belonging to a great country."

To the question whether workmen were capable of such realization, Morley had early answered in a stout affirmative. After all, labor unions, like political elections and political parties and political constitutions were what Matthew Arnold asserted them to be--machinery and nothing more. Morley had seen eye to eye with Arnold in this from the start. What really mattered was the men who composed unions and parties, was what the men thought and how they acted with one another. It was imperative for the salvation of democratic society that the workers, now that they had obtained political power, should have inculcated in them the ideas and affections which would fit them to wield that power intelligently and for their own good. Since the landed and commercial plutocracy was too "choked by wealth" to take any initiative in pointing a way into the future, since the church as a force in society was now impotent, and since newspapers were too much the instruments of capitalist controllers, too responsible to their advertisers, the great body of workers was left as the only hope of England. All his life Morley protested against calling artisans "roughs." It was undeniable that they had neither the time

nor the means for solving the complicated problems of government; "But," he affirmed, "if the facts are put honestly before them, I would trust any great popular body of our countrymen--and the greater the body, the more sure would my trust be--to decide upon them with generosity, with straightforward manly simplicity."¹

Through the whole of the Fortnightly period Morley's conduct with laborers was marked by admirable honesty and candor and common sense. But in this as in so many other things, he was only being consistent with lines of behavior that he had drawn for himself back in the first years of his apprenticeship. Before he was twenty-seven he had seen enough of it to denounce the hypocrisy of upper-class reformers who exhorted artisans to do one thing and then did the opposite themselves. He was obdurate in flaying cant. Class distinction in relaxation and recreation, in spite of the sophistries of demagogues, was good; and so, although he was an active advocate of workmen's clubs, he disapproved of their being turned into pleasureless Sunday School rooms on the one hand, or soft lounging places, on the other, where rich sympathizers could come and practice, en bon-homme, an artful fraternizing. As editor of The Fortnightly he was in some demand as a speaker before laboring groups;²

1. "An Address to Some Miners," Fortnightly, XXI (March, 1877), 393.

2. See, for example, printed in The Fortnightly, his "An Economic Address: with Some Notes" (XXIV, October, 1878), and his "An Address to Some Miners."

always he exercised a judicious clear-sightedness as to the difference between his station and theirs, his function and theirs. He never put on a show; he never talked down. Though he could remind an audience of miners that ideas are sometimes as hard to get at as coal or limestone and that fatigue can follow prolonged mental exertion, too, he dismissed as "nonsense and clap-trap" the notion that there was no distinction between him and them. But it was a good thing, he held, for both kinds of men to see as much as possible of one another; and he welcomed such an occasion of speaking to them as an unanswerable refutation of the contention of "preposterous alarmists" that the continued growth of industrial unions would drive all intelligent, self-respecting men out of the field of politics and leave it to slick-tongued, unscrupulous demagogues. If such men did disappear from public life, it would be through their own fault.

Politics, to be sure, were no cure-all, for a political form was only a special kind of machinery. But a political form did have the value of being a means through which the effecting of certain social improvements could be facilitated. The regenerating and the saving of England rested upon the leavening and shaping of human character, it was true, but any reformer too impetuous in his efforts to take notice of the irresistible modification taking place in the English political pattern and to chart his own program accordingly

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was venting wind to no purpose. The signs of the times all pointed in one direction--to Industrialism from Territorialism. Along that passage political progress lay; the day of a landed aristocracy with its machinery of landlords, rents, and tenantry was past. Put in another way, the future of England was dependent upon the outcome of the showdown fight between culture and democratic opinions on the one hand, and wealth and vested interest on the other--between brains and numbers, in short. Although, as Morley pointed out,² England was the only one among the world powers not to have endured an upheaval in the twenty years between 1858 and 1878, the absence of internecine turmoil was not to be interpreted as impotent quiescence or torpid stasis. The New Revolution had been under weigh for decades; and Morley derided unmercifully old ladies who still thought dreamily about the imminence of democracy in terms of "the guillotine and Marie Antoinette," fashionable Tory hostesses who supposed vaguely that its advent would "cause Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Bright, and the others to chew tobacco, and to shoot at one another across the House with revolvers," and specimens of aristocratic petrifaction who were convinced that all educated men would abjure

1. See, for discussions of this modification, "Young England and the Political Future," "The Liberal Programme," "The Political Prelude," "The Chamber of Mediocrity"--all in The Fortnightly: for April, 1867; September, 1867; July, 1868; and December, 1868, volumes I, II, III, and III, respectively.

2. See "A Political Epilogue," Fortnightly, XXIV (September, 1878), where Morley discusses the international scene following the Treaty of Berlin.

Parliament from now on and only leaders of Trades' Unions squat there to "repudiate the National Debt, secularize the revenues of the Church, and confiscate the land and the factories."¹

In spite of the myopia of such troglodytes, however, the first step in the New Revolution had already been accomplished in the Reform Bill of 1867. With the definitive transference of political power from a class to the nation, the "first campaign" in the war against Privilege and Obstruction had been successfully terminated. The peaceableness of the transaction was proof that the New Revolution was only Evolution after all, unless what was now only resentment and disagreement among the classes in opposition would become in time fixed hostility, and obstacles would be thrown into the path of the party of Progress which could not be removed except by force. Then blood might be spilled. In answer to the die-hards who lamented that democracy would weaken the English executive, Morley explained that for years that executive had been the "weakest and most impotent . . . in the civilized world." If one wanted to see what an executive could amount to under a democratic system, one had only to consider the United States, where, during the Civil War, Lincoln had carried on "an enterprise of colossal magnitude with a vigour and completeness and clearness of practical vision only to be paralleled in English history

1. "Young England and the Political Future," Fortnightly, I (April, 1867), 493.

by the dictatorship of Cromwell and the dictatorship of the first and greater Pitt.¹ On the contrary, if weakness was being exposed anywhere in the English machinery, it was in the House of Lords, whose "antics" were more and more showing them up for what they were--the "recognized centers of political opaqueness."

Nevertheless, Morley knew and preached that there was nothing in the nature of things that made a democracy superior to an aristocracy. Unless widespread apathy and sluggishness and superficiality in things political were reduced among the English, there would be a bitter reckoning to pay. Grim dangers lay ahead and it was well that the people should know about them. "Birth," he wrote,² "is as likely to give us good legislators and administrators as deliberate elections, unless the electors keep steadily in view the choice of the best man they can possibly find. An aristocracy, even demoralized as ours has become, is much more likely to produce men with the gift of government than a plutocracy, equally demoralized and timorous, and without the great advantage of good traditions." Moreover, in spite of its usual tendency to indifference and complacency, a democracy was its own danger in its susceptibility to violence, injustice, and imperiousness, in which its extremes

1. "The Liberal Programme," Fortnightly, II (September, 1867), 363.

2. "Old Parties and New Policy," Fortnightly, IV (September, 1868), 330.

were as reprehensible as those of any military dynasty. Plato's figure describing the dual nature of the soul could be applied as well to society. Consider, Morley would say, the vindictiveness in the decree of the Athenian Demos against Mytilene, or the chauvinistic approval by the American people of the flagitious Indirect Claims. And the machinery of party government, too, inseparable from a democratic system, was liable to set in motion certain evils which endangered society. Party wrangling, with its heinous name-calling, its recrimination, its vilification, its gutter nose-thumb-ing, caused open and broad controversy among statesmen to degenerate into "the spiteful scuffling of pigmies;" it was an irreparable waste of force--of governing force in rulers and of moral force in people. Party craft and unscrupulousness, too, was a threat; through chicanery, bribery, artful misrepresentation and demoralizing money squandering, it boosted into legislative office mediocrities who were nothing but tools. Eight out of ten national representatives, Morley felt, were made through such means and were narrow, servile, corrupt.

Such perils, however, did not alter the fact that a unique and immeasurable advantage resided in a democratic structure of society. "What we see every day with increasing clearness," Morley wrote encouragingly, "is ¹ that not only

1. "On Popular Culture," Fortnightly, XX, (December, 1876) 649.

the well-being of the many, but the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the average interest, curiosity, capacity, are all highest." That was the matchless value of a democracy: that in its encouragement and stimulation of the whole people to improve itself, it multiplied the chances of emergence of the specially endowed few who could become wise leaders. For Morley was not, any more than Mill, a leveller-- unless levelling could be construed as levelling up, instead of down, and even then he would probably have made reservations in committing himself. For him the supreme task of far-sighted statesmanship was not in establishing social equality but in creating social unity.¹ Intent himself on capturing "the genuine air and manner of distinction," he knew well enough that not just anybody, because he was anybody, was capable of living up to the precepts of Mill's essay, "On Liberty." The cultivation of complete independence and true individuality requires extraordinary discipline of will and intellect. For this reason he could say that that essay was "in fact one of the most aristocratic books ever written," taking the pains to add that he did not mean "British aristocratic, 'with the politest and gracefullest kind of woman to wife.'²"

In the long run Morley believed that democratized constit-

1. See Morley's eloquent statement of this in "The Liberal Programme," Fortnightly, II (September, 1867), 369.

2. "Mr. Mill's Doctrine of Liberty," Fortnightly, XIV (August, 1873), 246.

uencies of working men would see England safely through her crisis. Theirs was a sure but inexplicable instinct for feeling and sympathizing with the right cause, an instinct that was a mystery to anybody except believers in democracy. They possessed an advantage at the outset in being unencumbered by "fixed ideas;" and their native hard-headedness and common sense, sharpened and informed by better education, could always be relied upon to choose the best man in debates, to see through and reject the candidate who, in the face of "a vast host of new difficulties," came equipped "with only the old clumsy and ineffectual weapons."¹

The existence of England as a political entity, however, was not a phenomenon confined within the shores of the British Isles, unrelated to and unaffected by the daily life of nations elsewhere in the world. Nothing more outraged Morley's political conscience than the time-worn asseveration that, because of her geographical insularity, England could pursue, and pursue profitably, a policy of isolation. Whether they wanted to or not, the English people must realize that their country was

1. This faith can be found affirmed again and again after Morley's departure from The Fortnightly (1882). An exposition of it is the substance of every one of his defences of the democratic system. One of the fullest of these is his answer to Henry Sumner Maine's indictment of popular government, "Sir H. Maine on Popular Government," which appeared in The Fortnightly, XXXIX (February, 1886). There again he asserts (164) that laborers in the "bracing air of common life" possess "as much of the information necessary for shaping a sound judgment on the political issues submitted to them, as an equal number of average Masters of Arts and Doctors of Laws."

a vital organ in the great world body politic, and that for a healthful and efficient functioning of that body, English participation and cooperation were essential. To think otherwise was absurdity and delusion. As though, in the human body, the heart could suddenly declare itself independent of all other organs and attempt to follow an exclusive path of operation! Moreover England could not afford to remain indifferent to what happened in other parts of the globe for the elementary reason that her possession of widely scattered dependencies linked her willy-nilly with the activities of other continents, imposed upon her international obligations which she was powerless to disregard.¹ But it was this very Imperialism of England's which was such a thorn in Morley's flesh, and he condemned it incessantly for a "silly policy." In the first place it was a perpetual incitement to greed; viciously, with the acquisition of every new colony, it whetted men's appetites to reach out and grab another. Unending conquest and inordinate exploitation were its poisonous fruits. It was shameful of England, even though she was the most civilized nation in the world, to set such an example of selfishness and rapacity and callous inefficiency. Urgent problems by the score demanded her whole attention at home, without her stirring recklessly abroad and encumbering her hands with ex-

1. These obligations were of two kinds. In the matter of India, for example, it was England's duty, first, to govern India for the Indians, efficiently and beneficently; but it was also her responsibility to cultivate and maintain friendliness with the nearest great power--in this case, Russia. And so with Canada: in addition to keeping her contented, England must secure American amity.

traneous responsibilities. She should set her own house in order before undertaking to teach other peoples how to live. What guilt must imperialistic statesmen own to in their secret moments of candor! They should be manful enough to proclaim openly what Morley was preaching in his Fortnightly, that "the crust of a seared conscience is a perilous base for an empire."¹ Moreover, Imperialism should be abandoned by the government because the English populace had lost its longing for colonies, for a world-wide empire on which the sun would never set. This part of the handwriting on the wall, Morley had read with finality as early as 1875.² And beyond that, climactically, was his conviction that Imperialism was incompatible with a democratic form of government.³ After all,

1. "Some Recent Travels," Fortnightly, XIX (May, 1876), 755. Elsewhere ("The Plain Story of the Zulu War," Fortnightly, XXV, March, 1879, 350) Morley admonished English statesmen to avoid the truculent brutality and fanatical cruelty that marked the treatment by Spain and Portugal of their early settlements overseas. They "strewed a hemisphere with such states as Mexico, drifting and festering like a Leviathan wreck on the tideless heavy waters of that worst barbarism which comes of the corruption of civilization." Many years later (1904) in an address at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburg, Morley had occasion to touch again on the political incapacity of the Latin republics in the Western World: "What more instructive warning can we find than South America, against the dream that to endow a community with freedom is of itself to make sure either of progress or of order?" (See "Some Thoughts on Progress," Educational Review, XXIX, January, 1905, 1-17)

2. See, for example, "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875).

3. See "A Political Epilogue," Fortnightly, XXIV (Sept., 1878), 328-32. Thirty-three years later, however, Morley was of the mind that "empire over distant dependencies has not been broken down by democracy at the metropolis" but by absolutism in one form or another; and he cited the disintegration of the Roman and Spanish empires, as well as the severing of the thir-

an imperialistic policy was a policy constantly precipitating emergencies, and did anybody suppose that the slowness of parliamentary procedure was fitted for the quick action demanded by such emergencies? More than that, could it be imagined that the power of variable and slow constituencies was reconcilable with a program of continual aggrandizement? If France had had household suffrage during the Napoleonic era, is it likely that those prolonged wars would have been fought?

teen American colonies from their mother country, to warn twentieth-century Britons that wise rule in India would be "overthrown by the folly of democracy" in the British Isles. See Morley's "British Democracy and India," Nineteenth Century, LXIX (February, 1911), 189-209.

1. For detailed vigorous expressions of Morley's stand against Imperialism in imperialistic crises, see his "The Plain Story of the Zulu War" and his "Further Remarks on Zulu Affairs" in The Fortnightly, XXV (March and April, 1879), and his "Egyptian Policy: A Retrospect" in The Fortnightly, XXXII (July, 1882). In the first two articles he condemned the Zulu War as "one of the worst crimes that has ever been perpetrated" in England's history and showed how it was deliberately forced on the Zulus by irresponsible English statesmen, exemplars of the patriotism that is only "canting and insolent nonsense." Although he praised England for having abjured war as a means of keeping peace with European nations, he denounced her for having adopted it as apparently the only means of maintaining peace with savages and "inferior races." The English unwillingness to understand the Zulu way of life and assist it to develop in its own fashion was inexcusable. As for the annexation of the Transvaal in August, 1879, it was as criminal a betrayal as the act of Germany would be if she suddenly sprang up and seized Czechoslovakia! In the third article Morley insisted that England's duty as a civilized power to keep the Suez Canal open for the benefit of "the commerce of the world" was no justification of her obtruding herself into Egyptian politics. She ought to put things right, cease her exploitation, and help the Egyptians to devise a program that would turn the government into their own hands. In February, 1884, Morley wrote "The Expansion of England" for Macmillan's. There he undertook to show that closer attachment would be disastrous to the empire in case of

England's extra-insular relations were not restricted, however, to the colonial members of her empire. Other independent nations in the world, in particular, the nations of continental Europe, demanded careful attention, for, since their spheres of economic, scientific, and aesthetic activity were continually intersecting England's own, it was preposterous to think that she could disregard their political movement. And since Morley was confident that the era of militarism was drawing to an end and western civilization was on the threshold of an epoch of pacific industrialism,¹ in which the domestic happiness of peoples everywhere would replace territorial conquest as the supreme objective of national policy, he advocated a voluntary assumption by England of leadership in the new international order. England was the most advanced industrially among all countries, and she was the most wealthy; she, therefore, knew most acutely the losses that would be suffered in an outbreak of wars. Her cause, more than the cause of any other power, was the cause of peace; and her chief

war, repeated his assurance that most colonists wanted to loosen the bonds of attachment, denounced the whole Imperialistic School as the Bombastic School, and dismissed the ideal of a British Empire that would be like the old Roman Empire, with mighty fleets and armies, as "impracticable, . . . puerile, and retrograde."

1. This confidence, expressed thus in 1867, was doomed to be short-lived. By 1880 he had to admit "that civilization is now passing through--or, it may be, entering upon--a great armed period, an era of violence and the sword." See "The England of Today," Fortnightly, XXVII (January, 1880), 149.

function should be to spread harmony and understanding among occidental lands, as her chief self-imposed obligation was to sow the seeds of civilization in savage places. Her "international duty" was to intervene in Europe. Abstinence from aggression, while it was something, was not enough, for were there not sins of omission as well as of commission? England must become, urged Morley eloquently, "the high-minded, benignant, and virile guardian of the European peace."¹ Only by so doing could she justify her high position among nations and demonstrate that she was not following "both riches and peace in a base fashion." And so three years before the Franco-Prussian War, he deplored that his country had not used the force of her navy and her military armament to keep down any continental aggressor, to make France and Germany behave! He also pleaded with statesmen to discontinue the age-old policy of contracting alliances on geographical principles and effect them thenceforth only on moral grounds. If it were seen, after faithful study, that Russia, for instance, in the temper of her national life, bore much in common with England, that the lines of social

1. "England and the European Crisis," Fortnightly, I (May, 1867), 628. Nothing better illustrates Morley's growth beyond the so-called Manchester Liberalism, which he repudiated, than an exhortation like this to his country. He could no more condone a policy of laissez-faire for a nation than he could for an individual. The temper he wished England to cultivate was precisely that which distinguished a virtuous man--"To be habitually considering not what we have done but what might have been done if opportunity had been strained to its very utmost point of tension . . ." ("Young England and the Political Future," Fortnightly, I, April, 1867, 494.)

development into the future ran parallel for both countries,¹ then an alliance should be made with Russia.

Morley's aversion to war and militarism had nothing to do with the quantity of his patriotism. Just as he had pronounced in his apprenticeship against a Pagan Patriotism of superstition and violent prejudice, so he now, as leader of The Fortnightly Aufklärung, called sharp attention to the difference between his own reasoned patriotism on the one hand, with its sense of justice toward other nations and its clear perception of the real interests for England, and that chauvinism on the other which listened only to "hollow blasts" on "the trumpet of patriotic charlatanry."

1. Interestingly enough, Russia, with Germany, was the most seriously considered subject in Morley's foreign policy. He really feared her and considered with misgivings what might happen to Europe if ever the flood of slavish barbarism broke through its western walls. About Germany, Morley was enlightened and progressive, and, so, genuinely hopeful. Her unification and preponderating he maintained resolutely, was a prerequisite to any stability on the continent, and he welcomed it. It was strictly a consummation of the political desires of the whole German nation, and so, in a way, inevitable; whereas the effort of France to dominate was the result solely of the detestably selfish dynastic aspirations of one corrupt man, Louis Napoleon. To be sure, Germany exhibited military cruelty and the barbarous principle of divine right, but she was still in a transitional, semi-feudal state; once she had achieved maturity and integration, Morley was sure she would devote her energies to civilization, to Liberalism. France, "the great high temple and shrine of piratical Bonapartism," was the bearer of a mission that was, after all, "spiritual rather than material, intellectual rather than military. . . ." Furthermore, Germany unified was a dependable barrier against Russian incursion. For these points of view see "France and Germany," Fortnightly, VIII (September, 1870). See also "A New Work on Russia," Fortnightly, XXI (February, 1877), for Morley's concern with Russian developments.

Militarism was only "fatuous soldiering" and the fondness of a good many people for it was what had brought about the "silly military panic" after the German crushing of France¹ in 1871. A spreading of militarism with its supplanting of "civil liberty by the license of martial law," would result inevitably in something that Morley envisioned with horror-- a transformation of the old England of justice and freedom "into a Pirate-Empire, with the Cross hypocritically chalked upon its black flag."²

Although the Franco-Prussian struggle modified Morley's views on war, it did not unrecognizably warp their shape. In 1875 he believed as fervently as he had in 1867 that it was England's great moral responsibility to take the leadership among nations in an effort to make peace prevail, only he no longer advocated her intervening by herself as supreme policeman. For the future, she must organize a great league of pacific powers to include Italy, Austria,

1. Morley's friend Frederic Harrison was among those who fell prey to the panic. He urged the creation of a military force and its immediate embarkation for the continent where it would be used to chastise the Germans and destroy their military power. In addition he proposed that Britain form a league of powers to encircle Germany and prevent any further national expansion. See "Bismarckism," Fortnightly, VIII (December, 1870).

2. "Further Remarks on Zulu Affairs," Fortnightly, XXV (April, 1879), 561.

3. See "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875).

Belgium, Turkey, and to be prepared to reinforce diplomatic reasoning by military sanctions. Only through such a determined, concerted effort could recalcitrant potential belligerents be kept down and the flames of war continually smothered. But such international cooperation must be tough-fibered; it must consist of more than self-satisfying assiduousness in exchanging notes and making promises, to endure and be effectual. As Morley put it, "It is worse than puerile if all our inspired leading articles about the strength of England, the resoluteness of England, the great virtuousness of England, the fine place of England in Europe, only mean that one of our ambassadors is occasionally to read out Aesop's fable of the Wolf and the Lamb, done into diplomatic phrase by Lord Derby, for the benefit of the German or other foreign minister . . ."¹ Pious didacticists who believed that a canting of the "vague and unreal moralities of the old religion" would dispel notions of war were deluding themselves; so were economist-statisticians who cited the intricacy of international trade relations and the increases resulting to England from a lowering of her tariff barriers. It was true that England had opened her markets to the world, admitted Morley; but man cannot live by bread alone and so let her now open her heart as well.

And it was exactly this opening of the heart everywhere,

1. See "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875), 908.

this "new and enlarged illumination of the social sentiment" all over the world that was the only sure means to quenching the fires of international hatred, the only real foundation on which a policy for a lasting peace could be built. It underlay even Morley's plan, his machinery, for a league of pacific powers who would enforce peace. After all, there can be no war only if a people will not have it. An enlightened populace is the only supreme arbiter, the sole guarantee against war. So in every nation people must have their conceptions of what constitutes public duty and public benefit broadened. They must see beyond arbitrary political boundaries, transcend primitive race prejudice, and convert their narrow national prejudice into broad civilized sympathy and obligation. Without such intellectual agreement, such moral unity, such commonness of sentiment, a league comprising England and Italy and Austria and Belgium and Turkey would never become a community and would be foredoomed to early dissolution, for its members would have no reason and no means for perpetuating their accord. Looking into the

1. Morley was always fond of pointing out that there had been one period in European history when such intellectual understanding and sympathy among nations was being realized. During the 18th century, from the end of the Seven Years' War to the French Revolution, the "better side of French thought" was pervading Western Europe and affecting the better minds of every country. There was a growth of tolerance, of what might have become an almost universal disinclination to war, but Napoleon ended it all; he sowed the seeds of an intensified, poisonous international rivalry such as Europe had never known before. See, for example, "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875), 909, and "Some Thoughts on Progress," Educational Review, XXIX (January, 1905), 1-17.

future, Morley could see that without an expansive informing and transforming of common opinion everywhere, no peace would be any more than a transitory truce which the belligerents used only to recover their breath and regather their forces for another swift, desperate, and sanguinary struggle. ¹ What human beings must realize is that wars are not necessary in every small quarrel to express national disapproval or impose chastisement. In most such instances the censure of a nation's whole public opinion should be resorted to and would prove sufficient. The true mark of the quality of civilization of any country is the degree of moral force it can exert, not the quantity of military force it can muster. In this respect it would be well to emulate America, who, with inferior armament, already exercised more moral power over France and Germany than England herself. And so Morley exhorted England's public opinion in 1870 to unite itself--exhorted the public opinion of all of Europe to unite itself--and express its strong displeasure to Germany over her seizure of Alsace. He would not assert that war is never necessary, never "justifiable," ² but he maintained that

1. The treaty of 1871 he unhesitatingly called "a more or less prolonged truce;" and, prophetically, he warned against the time when Germany might seize Holland and Belgium and France in a "monstrous pacification!" See "A Day at Sedan," Fortnightly, XVII (June, 1875), 906.

2. The American Civil War, for example, was one war which Morley never tired of saying could not have been averted by any amount of skillful diplomacy. For his attitude toward the French Revolution, see p. 168. In 1901, after condemning the Boer War, he could nevertheless aver that there are some situ-

it is such a hideous process and is so far-reaching and deadly in its effects, not only on the material welfare of a country, but on the psychological health of its inhabitants as well, that it ought to be more carefully considered, weighed, and guarded against than any other incident in a nation's life. As for England herself, he was sure that in the future, so influential and peaceful were her enfranchised workers, any prime minister who attempted to engage her in a long war would have "to show them with unanswerable force of demonstration, and often repeated, that the very independence of the country" was in danger, or else he would "have to overthrow the electoral system."¹

It was during the Fortnightly period that Morley, in the attainment of his full intellectual stature, first reached a height where he could measure John Stuart Mill and discern deficiencies in his thinking. He venerated Mill, not only because he was wise, but because he was benignant; his was a lofty moral intelligence. And although Morley came to see more and more clearly as he grew older that what he had taken at Oxford to be the star's brilliance of Mill's philosophy, the world about him considered nearer a lamp's glow, he never

ations when war is a national duty, not to be shirked without dishonor. "I have no natural gift, I am sorry to say, of turning my cheek to the smiter." See Sirdar Ali Khan, The Life of Lord Morley, London, Pitman & Sons, Ltd. 1923, p. 163.

1. "A Political Epilogue," Fortnightly, XXIV (September, 1878), 331.

ceased to recognize the wisdom in that glow.¹ In 1906 he publicly cited the last chapter in Mill's work on representative government as "still the classic book on the subject."²

Most of the divergences from the path of the great Utilitarian were on the subject of religion and were occasioned by the appearance in 1874 of Mill's Three Essays on Religion. Mill's ^{no}pronouncements were a stimulus, an excitation, and forced Morley to reexamine his whole structure of ideas on theology. Although, like other Englishmen, he took his religion hard and so was aghast at what he considered Mill's heresy, his alarm today seems unaccountable and his rectifications of Mill's "errors" unimportant. Nevertheless, some consideration of his corrections is not uninteresting. Because Mill had admitted that on the grounds of worldly evidence, a divine revelation, in the case of Christ and his mission, was not absolutely impossible or incredible, and furthermore that, on the grounds of evidence, though there is no assurance of life after death, there is at the same time nothing to forbid or prevent anybody from believing in such a state, if he feels the belief "conducive either to his satisfaction or his usefulness," Morley immediately ascribed to Mill a "creed of low probabilities and faintly cheering potentialities."³ Then, after explaining that

1. Wisdom, Morley defined in "The Death of Mr. Mill," Fortnightly, XIII (June, 1873), 671, as "an ardent interest in human improvement with a reasoned attention to the law of its conditions."

2. Speeches on Indian Affairs, p. 64.

3. "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," Fortnightly, XVI (November, 1874), 637.

the best way of showing respect to one's best teacher was in not veiling or muffling one's "strong dissent," and after acknowledging his own intellectual inferiority, he launched into a deploring of Mill's "obliqueness, evasiveness," and "shiftiness of issue" in the whole controversy. He was perplexed and disappointed by Mill's failure to say exactly what he meant by religion, and he contradicted point-blank Mill's opinion--"When the only truth ascertainable is that nothing can be known, we do not by this knowledge, gain any new fact by which to guide ourselves."¹ And what lamentable ambiguity there was in Mill's avowal that it is "perfectly conceivable that religion may be morally useful without being intellectually sustainable."² Useful to whom?, asked Morley. To an individual if he himself cannot sustain it and has therefore ceased to believe in it? Or to other people while they have not yet discovered that it cannot be defended? In that case, if they do not know it to be false, it is still intellectually sustainable to them. As for Mill's speaking of God as a Mind--how could Mind, even though spelled with a capital, be an entity? Mind can have no existence apart from body, and to imagine that it can is to run perilously close to the abstruseness of "Plato's doctrine of archetypal Ideas." On the other hand, if you endow a supernal Mind with body, you are being anthropomorphic. Finally, in spite of the fact that he

1. "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," Fortnightly, XVI (January, 1875), 111.

2. Ibid., 112.

had taught for years that there is no evidence in Nature of a benevolent creator, Mill had backtracked in this last book and asserted that there is evidence, after all, of a creator who is benevolent, even though not wholly so. What an apostasy!

In addition to these religious differences, a survey of Morley's Fortnightly writing reveals several other minor qualifications which details of Mill's thought underwent in his mind. One of the weakest points in Mill's doctrine of liberty was, Morley said, "the extreme vagueness of the terms protective and self-regarding."¹ How can any opinion or any serious act be regarded as wholly, unreservedly self-regarding? More penetrating thinking and more sharp definition were needed here. Mill's exposition of Utilitarianism, too, was marred by a shortcoming. He had said that the motive of a doer of an act has nothing to do with the morality of his act. Morley, strenuous in his Utilitarian reasoning, disagreed. In spite of his great deference to the man who had "done so much to reconstruct and perfect the utilitarian system," he was constrained to show that the doer has to be included among all those on whose happiness his act has any effect; since "his motive reacts with full power upon his character, strengthening or weakening this or that disposition or habit" in it, the results of that motive on himself have to be considered among the

1. "Mr. Mill's Doctrine of Liberty," Fortnightly, XVI (August, 1873), 238.

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total consequences of the act.

The significant fact to be observed, however, is that in spite of these disagreements with parts of Mill's doctrine, these specialized refinements of it, Morley remained faithful to the body of it to the end of his days. He never denied that the most desirable thing for society is the development of aristocratic individuals, independent in their tastes; and he himself in his own life bore admirable testimony to the degree to which, in a commoner, that aristocratic individualism can rise. And since, for him, it was a democratic political structure which afforded the most channels to all individuals through which to cultivate themselves, he, like Mill, clung to democracy and shunned Socialism.² His belief in an enlightened minority

1. "Mr. Lecky's First Chapter," Fortnightly, V (May, 1869), 532.

2. Mill's feelings about Socialism require some explanation. In an uncompleted book on the subject, published after his death (at Morley's urging) by his wife in The Fortnightly, XXV (February, March, April, 1879) as "Four Chapters on Socialism," he rejected Socialism as a politico-social form adoptable by the whole English nation. "The evils and injustices suffered under the present system," he wrote, "are great, but they are not increasing; on the contrary, the general tendency is towards their slow diminution." No one abuse existed, he held, the simple abolition of which would land humanity in a state of happiness. If you compared a capitalistic with a socialistic state calmly and rationally, and asked yourself which one offered the better chance "for overcoming the inevitable difficulties of life," you would discover that the answer was more dependent on "intellectual and moral conditions" than most people were willing to admit. Apart, too, from the great disadvantage that in a socialized state the motive of conscience, or social unselfishness, would be less effectual than that of personal gain in capitalistic society, because conscience is always stronger as a restrainer than as an impeller, Mill saw the chief evil

was the rock on which he built his faith for living; without it there was only dust.

Crowded and busy as Morley's Fortnightly days were with editing, writing, and speaking, there was time nevertheless for diversions, for the pursuit of graces and refinements. Plays and operas and oratorios and recitals gave continual satisfaction. Trips to the continent offered a stimulus, through a change of scene, a making of new friends, and an opportunity to observe, firsthand, the latest foreign political developments. Luncheons with firm companions and evenings with guests at home remained durable pleasures. And there were visits to especial intimates like Leslie Stephen or George Meredith or Mill himself, from which he would come away refreshed and happy, but somewhat saddened, too, because to his elegiac nature the most joyous of days were invariably tinged with sadness. Sometimes it was his good fortune to play Boswell to Mill and take down to Blackheath some eminent acquaintance who had never met the great Utilitarian. On one occasion, Mill expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of the novelist Trollope. Morley arranged to convoy Trollope down on a Sunday afternoon. But in spite

of Socialism as the "delusive unanimity produced by the prostration of all individual opinions and wishes before the decree of the majority." --On the other hand, Leslie Stephen, in his The English Utilitarians (Vol. III, pp. 224-29) shows how Mill, by making concession after concession in the direction of state regulation or restriction of the conduct of individuals, had gone step by step, farther toward Socialism than his aversion to it all-of-a-piece would indicate possible. Mill, for example, was not at all opposed to legislation preventing unwise marriages or overlarge inheritances, and he admitted the need for state regulation of education.

of Trollope's assurance beforehand, "Stuart Mill is the only man in the whole world for the sake of seeing whom I would leave my own home on a Sunday," the party was not a success. Trollope proved to be a bull in a china shop; his blustering offset violently Mill's gentle courtesy and modesty. Morley was relieved to get his guest safely away. "Trollope," he concluded, "did not recognize the delicacy of Truth, but handled her as freely and as boldly as a slave-dealer might handle a beautiful Circassian." ¹ Often, in the drawing room of George Eliot and G. H. Lewes, when the serious talk about Comtism had run its course, Lewes himself, "a source of incessant and varied stimulation," would cast a bohemian fascination over the company and reminisce vivaciously though somewhat shockingly about his early days in second-rate theaters. Or Trollope, again, would make the center of the floor shake with his bawling voice as he told a funny yarn or gave bodily illustration to a favorite notion. For the making of a writer, he put much more faith in a lump of cobbler's wax on the seat of a chair than in inspiration, and one afternoon he "expounded this theory of the seat of inspiration . . . with an inelegant vigour of gesture that sent a thrill of horror through the

1. "Anthony Trollope" (unsigned), Macmillan's, XLIX (November, 1883), 55. This figure about the hallowedness of Truth was a favorite with Morley and he played variations on it frequently. In connection with Macaulay, Truth is only somebody to be knocked down and dragged after him by the hair of her head, "a prisoner of war and not a goddess." (See p. 242). For Voltaire, however, she was "a goddess . . . to be sought in the free tumult and joyous strife of many voices." (See p. 193).

polite circle there assembled"¹! Sunday morning breakfasts around town, where the food was abundant and the talk long, were regular occasions, but at these Morley was not always conspicuous for his voice. One morning in March, 1877, at Lord Houghton's, when the breakfast guests included a young writer from America, he was curiously silent the whole while. Henry James was impressed by his youthful appearance, thought he had "a most agreeable face," but was disappointed that "he hardly opened his mouth."²

Morley's whole conductorship of The Fortnightly was marked by self-respecting discipline and an insistence on the highest standards for his review. Since he had never "brutalized" the "literary ideal" himself in descending to write stuff for a publisher just to prevent him from going to another contributor for it, so he never asked any young man eager to submit material, to smirch his integrity by writing what he did not believe.³ Likewise, since he had early learned not to hand in "obscure and befouled manuscript" and had discovered that it was usually the smaller author who exploited the indecencies of illegibility, he was heatedly intolerant of procrastination and dirty scrawling

1. "Anthony Trollope," Macmillan's, XLIX (November, 1883), 54.

2. The Letters of Henry James (New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1920) I, p. 53.

3. This brutalizing of the literary ideal, incidentally, was what Morley could never forgive Trollope. The novelist, in his earlier days, had not been above such feeding to publishers.

in any of his own would-be contributors. There was no reason why "dawdling, slipshod habits of work" should be at all less disgraceful for writers than for any other kind of workers. And he steadfastly refused to "read through every manuscript that any simpleton chose to pester him with;" it was "a waste of time absolute and unredeemed."¹

These exactions in Morley's regime were more than beneficial to The Fortnightly Review. In the first place, they so increased its quality that it sold more and more widely and became a profitable investment to its publisher-owner, Chapman. The man who had realized with his majority that true thrift consists in a "wise and careful outlay of money" and who many years later as Secretary of State for India, was to "watch the expenditure of Indian revenue as the ferocious dragon of the old mythology watched the golden apples,"² could demonstrate that for an editor scrupulousness was more than its own reward. In five years from the time he took command of The Fortnightly, the circulation had almost doubled itself and was still rising.³ Ambitiously and wisely, he decided to buy the review and offered its controller more than three times what he had paid for it, but the offer was refused. Financial solvency, however, was not all that The Fortnightly achieved under Morley.

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1. "Anthony Trollope," Macmillan's, XLIX (November, 1883), 52.
 2. From "Budget Speech for 1907," Speeches on Indian Affairs, p. 103.
 3. It had grown from 1400 to 2500. See Hirst, I, p. 84.

Its potency as a force leavening public opinion and stirring people to think has been attested by men who were growing up them. Through its pages, as later through his independent speeches and books, Morley exerted an influence on the generation developing between 1870 and 1890 which makes him "fit to compare with any of the greater Victorians. Young men swore by him and found in his writings a more fervent and brilliant exposition of Liberal ideas than anywhere else except in the speeches of Mr. Gladstone."¹ To them he communicated something of his own disposition to swim against the stream. In intellectual circles, just as one "slept on Browning, Dean Milman, Cardinal Newman, 'Puseyism'," so one "sipped neo-Christianity or atheism with John Morley;"² Fortnightly was one constituent in the vogue of sophisticated radicalism. Indeed, so extreme did Morley's editorial polemics read to worried conservatives that he was accused of using The Fortnightly to incite revolution. Even though he had taken the pains to allay some fears in the second year of his incumbency by announcing publicly that his was not "the temper of the Jacobin and the sans-Culottist"³ and that the difference between reformers of his day and the French Revolutionists of a century before

1. J. A. Spender, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-10.

2. Austin Harrison, Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories (London. William Heinemann, Ltd., 1926).

3. See "The Chamber of Mediocrity," Fortnightly, IV (December, 1868).

lay in an absence of past-destroying fanaticism, his denunciations continued to be apprehended as signals for subversion. Even the scientist John Tyndall, eminently rational, came to include him "among the young men who fostered the delusions of Mr. Gladstone's old age" and foresaw dangerous possibilities that he "might some day play the role of a Robespierre."¹ In vain did he contend that England's whole history revealed the English national character as one deficient in ardour rather than steadiness and so intellectually sluggish that the smallest changes in government could be effected only by an "amount of effort so prodigious that anywhere else it would mean a revolution."² In 1870 he was assailed by a Col. Chesney, himself "anti-republican, yet sick of the time, and looking earnestly for its remedies," and accused of widening the social gulf between classes through "inflammatory appeals" to poorly informed, bad-thinking artisans and factory workmen. His name was again linked with that of Robespierre, another "incorruptible patriot," and he was warned that the current he was accelerating would not stop with embracing workmen in its gathering impetus, but would become in time a "vortex of democracy" swirling lower to whip up the dregs of humanity and shooting them to the surface in a froth of insane mob

1. See "Mr. John Morley" (anonymous), Fortnightly, LXIV (August, 1898), 260.

2. See Col. Chas. C. Chesney's letter to Morley, "England and the French Republic," Fortnightly, VIII (November, 1870).

rule bent on sweeping away the upper classes forever. In answer to the indictment and to an impassioned peroration, in which he was urged to desist from fomenting class hatred and "to construct, instead of teaching only how to destroy," Morley retaliated with the grand Burkean pronouncement, "No class has a monopoly of nonsense." England would move nowhere by thinking of her own people "as a vile and turbulent rabblement;" if Chesneyites really wanted to sound the depths of political stupidity and conceit, they should "fathom the opinions . . . of the clergy, the peerage, and the journalists" on such great subjects as the American Civil War, the extension of the suffrage, and Episcopalism disestablishment in Ireland. "Nobody," assured Morley, "is less of a Robespierist than I, and nobody has been more careful to insist upon the mortal errors of method which marked the course of the French Revolution and landed it in disaster and ruin. . . Whatever is written here in a revolutionary sense, is obviously a warning to those above and not an invitation or an incitement to those below."²

Meanwhile, in occasional volumes published independently of The Fortnightly Review, Morley was making an author's name for himself. When the first book of his Critical

1. "A Note to the Above," Fortnightly, VIII (November, 1870).

2. Morley's "Note" to Col. Chesney's "Letter," Fortnightly, VIII (November, 1870), 588. For Morley's thoroughness in pointing out the shortcomings of the French Revolution, see his excellent ninety-page chapter entitled "The Revolution" in his Edmund Burke.

¹
Miscellanies appeared early in 1871, no less forbidding a critic than the very Robert Buchanan who had damned the poets Swinburne and Rossetti in the same year with his "Fleshly School of Poetry," commended it as a collection of "finely-wrought and thoroughly stimulating essays."² Although Morley, in his excessive zeal, often lost sight of the relativity of truth, and although "his destructive criticisms on religion" destroyed nothing for Buchanan except "a little of the confidence" he usually felt in their writer, nevertheless the author of such critical appraisals was to be welcomed, for his interest in sociology, his devotion to truth, and his compassion for mankind, "as another adherent to the blessed cause of Humanity." And by 1886, only three years after his withdrawal from The Fortnightly, at a time when he was advanced enough as an author to have his collected works published in nine volumes by Macmillan and Company, Morley was being read with such approbation in America that one magazine considered the notion of proposing him as an intellectual model for young men.³ He was a "healthy moralist," exemplary in never trying to "minimize or to unduly extenuate" faults of his characters, but it was regrettable that he was so

1. Published by Chapman and Hall. The contents of Morley's Critical Miscellanies included much that had already appeared in The Fortnightly.

2. "Mr. John Morley's Essays," Contemporary Review, XVII (April-July, 1871), 319-37. Buchanan calls Morley amusingly "the last disciple of Auguste Comte."

3. Melville B. Anderson, "John Morley," The Dial, VII (June-September, 1886), 40-42 and 101-2.

"radical religiously;" if he were not, he would be an ideal guide for the younger generation. Still, wrote the reviewer, "as they stand, his writings, to those who look to literature for other than rhetorical qualities, are fascinating as Macaulay can never be again."!

In dispassionate retrospect The Fortnightly's fifteen years under Morley appear a unique exemplification of the unsurpassably apt phrase with which he described them--"Rationalism without chill, in one sense, though with much of it in another."¹ Yet strenuous rationalist and director of the campaign though he was, he was, after all, fallible, and anybody who took the time, might have discovered certain inconsistencies in him and been amused at exposing them. Short-tempered with impatient doubters of the religion of progress, to whom he pointed out that Humanity's millennium must necessarily be countless ages in the future, how could he reasonably advocate jettisoning Christianity because it had failed to achieve a consummation in only eighteen hundred and seventy years? How could he denounce believers in the existence of a divine plan underlying the universe and at the same time subscribe unreservedly to the non-theological doctrine that the cosmos is an "intelligible array of orderly sequences," whose end is a civilized ultimate? How could he, in refuting Mr. Lecky, maintain that, although human beings have a "sense of moral obligation," it is "acquired and not innate," and then, in eulogizing Mr. Mill, defend "the ingenuous moral ardour which is in-

1. Recollections, I, p. 81

instinctive in the best natures"? The whole temper with which he conducted The Fortnightly was, for that matter, often fundamentally inconsistent, and, ironically, his own words, written in description of the paradoxical strife of the times, are the best summarization of it--a temper in which "even the principle of relativity becomes the base of a set of absolute and final dogmas, and the very doctrine of uncertainty itself becomes fixed in a kind of authoritative nihilism . . ." ¹ Editorially he could damn the cowardice and the cant of the sinister army of clerics; socially he could be most agreeable to them and discover an easiness in their company which was not to be duplicated in his intercourse with any other professional group. His was a "climax of delight" when he found himself placed one evening by his dinner host, Lord Houghton, next to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was "tickled . . . hughly" by noticing the "scandalised eyes" of the other guests as they followed his ² animated, cordial discourse with his prelatical companion. On another occasion he could inform his sister, "By the way, my lunch with the Dean of St. Paul's was marvellously pleasant. . . . I always get on better with clergymen and pastors (yes--pastors non episcopal) than with anybody else." ³ Did

1. "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 4.

2. See Morley's letter to Harrison (June 28, 1876), Hirst, II, p. 13.

3. See Morley's letter to his sister Grace (October 6, 1877), Hirst, II, p. 53. It must not be forgotten that, during the 1870's, Morley was elected to membership in the Metaphysical Club, which, in addition to his friend Harrison, included such theological advocates as Gladstone and Cardinal Manning.

he remember that ten years earlier,¹ in The Saturday Review, he had declared the selfish, equivocal opportunism of political trimmers, reprehensible as it was, less to^{be}/anathematized than the duplicity of "the compromising Gallio who would dine with an archbishop one day, and have half-a-dozen Essayists and Reviewers to breakfast the next morning."? And, on the subject of religious belief, what an indefensible inconsistency there was between Morley's faith as a Utilitarian that in the psychological and nervous shock were likely to make men worse, and his conduct as Fortnightly manifesto-maker in undertaking to disabuse men's minds suddenly, shock or no shock, because in the long run a direct rupture would brace and invigorate their understanding! Did he not hold the conviction that profound religious dilemma, occasioned by loss of faith, was, with bereavement and lasting disease, a justifiable excuse for falling into pessimism, into social apathy and inertia, which, under any other circumstances, were abominable? Moreover, apart from theology, what an irreconcilability there was between Morley's derision of Carlyle's "boisterous old notion of hero-worship," an unedifying, unprofitable "half-truth," and his serene admission in contemplation of Mill that "an excessive admiration for a benign and nobly pitiful character is so attractive and so wholesome that one can have little satisfaction in

1. See "Trimmers" in Studies in Conduct, p. 86.

searching for defective traits."¹!

Yet, arresting and human as inconsistencies are, a survey of Morley's Fortnightly years can result in an observation of something which, in the whole pattern of his life, is more important. A gradual growth toward moderation is discernible and can be traced. "Humility," he had said,² "is a rationalistic, no less than a Christian grace;" and while it is true that he had been from the first days of his enlightenment appropriately humble in his veneration of the great civilizers of the past and in his anxious concern to contribute to the welfare of the future, it is no less true that his tone in saying that had not always been appropriately chastened and modest. The nearer he drew to middle age, however, the less combative and loud he became in his effort to prove to people that he was in earnest about his humility. At the beginning of his editorship, excited by the realization of the power he was to wield, it was with difficulty that he could abstain from speaking as Sir Oracle, and yet seldom that he succeeded in not sounding like that; at the end of his office he was sobered and restrained enough to admit that, whereas a

1. "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," (Part II) Fortnightly, XVII (January, 1875), 121.

2. "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 8. In the early Saturday Review days Morley had redefined meekness, saying that his was the real kind, the sense of inadequacy before an exalted intellectual ideal, not the spurious sort, the listless irresolution before the hollow idols of convention.

fellow "editor of a Review of great eminence" considered himself the equal in importance of "twenty-five members of parliament," he "took a slightly more modest view" toward his own abilities. "For the new priest of Literature," he had learned, "is quite as liable to the defects of spiritual pride and ambition as the old priest of the Church, and it is quite as well for him that he should be on his guard against these scarlet and high-crested sins."¹ Whereas, at the outset, in sounding the alarum against anonymous journalism, Morley had championed the signing of articles because it would necessitate a removal of all masks, make for more hard hitting, and enable opponents to draw blood, at the conclusion he confessed that the change from anonymity to signature had "not led to one-half either of the evils or of the advantages that its advocates and its opponents foretold." It was good, he had come to see, for every writer to cultivate a "double mood of care and carelessness," to be as preoccupied as possible with his book, and as confident as possible about it, at the time of writing, but to treat it "as little seriously as possible" after it was finished and launched.² Such an attitude was best for the honesty of

1. See Morley's "Valedictory," Fortnightly, XXXII (October, 1882). He confesses that in the heat of controversy his tone had often been too strong but consoles himself with the reflection that "Time, happily, is merciful, and men's memories are benignly short."

2. For this idea, see "A Word with Some Critics," Fortnightly, XXVI (October, 1879).

one's work and for one's own "mental health and self-possession." For Morley refused to agree with Pliny that scribere legenda is on the same height with facere scribenda. How many writers in a century can be adduced to illustrate it?, he would ask. There was not one book in a million which was of any real concern seriously or divertingly.

As early as 1878¹ Morley put into print his realization that Liberal reviews no longer enjoyed the advantage they had possessed in the first half of the century. Their staffs were no longer unified and integrated by a set of common ideas or a current of common feeling; "cohesion" was gone. Although good, servicable writing was much more frequent than in 1805, no journalistic group could be compared to the early Edinburgh Reviewers, most of whom had all been students at the University of Edinburgh, or to the old Westminster Reviewers, who "had all sat at the feet of Bentham," or even to the Saturday Reviewers in the 1850's, who had "rallied round" their editor and fought Philistinism. If only The Fortnightly's personnel possessed such unity of conviction and platform, its strength as a leader of public opinion would be multiplied a hundred times! "At the present moment," signed Morley, "the only motto that can be inscribed on the flag of a liberal Review is the general device of Progress, each writer interpreting it in his own sense, and within such limits as he may set for

1. See "Memorials of a Man of Letters," Fortnightly, XXIII (April, 1878).

himself."¹ By the end of The Fortnightly incumbency, this state of affairs was even more to be deplored. Unable, as their predecessors in James Mill's day were, to "explain in the large dialect of a definite scheme what were their aims, and whither they were going," Liberals in 1882 were dangerously handicapped.² The perplexities confronting them were just "as embarrassing" and, if anything, more numerous. Manchesterism as a solution, for example--what did it have to offer? There was, to be sure, a certain utility in what it stood for, but at best it could be considered nothing more than "a number of empirical maxims," Spencerism was losing influence yearly, for it was utterly off the track. The state was intervening more and more often, more and more extensively, in the affairs of communities and individuals, and Spencer deplored that. Comtism, finally, was inadequate because it had in it too much that was "arbitrary, accidental, or even personal;" it was too strongly Catholic to establish any relation to a country of democratic institutions and "centuries of energetic Protestantism."

But these words on Comtism, though they are final, do not say all that might be said about Morley's personal association with it. His growth away from the sect is one

1. "Memorials of a Man of Letters," Fortnightly, XXIII (April, 1878), 604.

2. See the "Life of James Mill," Fortnightly, XXXI (April, 1882), 503-4. These reflections can likewise be found restated, though more succinctly, in Morley's "Valedictory," Fortnightly, XXXII (October, 1882), 520.

of the salient features of his intellectual development during The Fortnightly period. Through George Eliot and G. H. Lewes, devotees of The Religion of Humanity, he had come to know some of the most influential Comtists in England and been drawn closely into the Comtist intellectual atmosphere. He came near joining the movement at one time, but resisted the impulse, and, although he continued to see a good deal of its chief apostles through the early 1870's, he steadily drew further and further away from any participation in the activities of the group.¹ The ritual of The Religion of Humanity was repellent to a nature like Morley's. Like Mill he found the educational policy outlined by Comte, with its concentration of complete power in the hands of a small, dictatorial, priest-like class, incompatible with his belief in the right of the individual to free inquiry, and like him, too, he was turned away by near-disgust from Comte's excessive veneration of women, his inclusion in his Pantheon of so many soldiers, and his enthronement of Humanity as an entity endowed anthropomorphically.² Humanity on "the throne occupied by the Supreme Being under mono-

1. In a letter to his friend Frederic Harrison he early took care to point out the pitfalls, though with considerable banter: "Why do you talk of Supreme Power with capital letters? It is the thin-eye of the wedge of a new theology, with incorporated abstractions instead of the old gods. Beware--or you become a theist and a metaphysician in positivist's clothing." (October 16, 1872). See Hirst, I, p. 222.

2. For Mill's complete statement, see his The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte (Spencer, Boston, 1866).

theistic systems" was "a fantastic decoration."¹ The picture outraged his sense of the rational, and he later summarized the creed as "hard, frigid, repulsive, and untrue."² Indeed, as early as 1870 he had been nettled when somebody in an article for The Saturday Review labeled The Fortnightly³ "the effective and consistent organ" of the sect of Comte. What of Mill and Spencer and Huxley, strong anti-Positivists!, he cried,--and Bagehot and Swinburne and Tyndall! No designation was further from the truth. What was true was that The Fortnightly, "with the exception of The Westminster Review," was "the only English organ in which Positivism" had been "treated seriously and had fair play, and in which it" had "never been attacked or defended except by competent persons."

Most significant of all, however, in Morley's growth toward moderation of tone is his loss of faith in physical science and the emergence in him of a hostile distrust of it. Although he had never, even in his earlier moments of aggressive endorsement, wholly enlisted in the cause of Darwin and Huxley and Tyndall, and so had never descended to the fatuous, slavish science-worship of Gilbert's Poo-Bah in The Mikado, who perpetually boasted of his ancestry in a

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1. "Auguste Comte," Oracles on Man and Government, p. 230.
 2. "A Catalogue of Great Men," Politics and History, p. 79.
 3. See "The Fortnightly Review and Positivism," Fortnightly, VIII (July, 1870).

primordial, protoplasmal globule, Morley, nevertheless, was for a while something of a militant adjutant in the cause. Yet, by 1871 his tone was already cooling and his words grown fewer; what England needed, he said simply, was "respect for brains, faith in science, constant feeling after improvement."¹ Less than two years later he was alarmed. "Politics and the acquisition of wealth," he wrote,² "do not constitute the only perils to the growth of culture in England. The specialism of physical science threatens dangers of a new kind."³ Eighteen months later still he was lamenting the rapid superseding of the old Nature of theology by the new Nature of physical science, because the new Darwinian nature would reduce Man and the importance of his voluntary activity to nothing. In 1876 Morley began to bend every effort to awakening people to the distinction between the historical and social sciences on the one hand, and the physical on the other. If all over England a realization, comparable to his own, of the importance of History could be achieved, and if in every school history were stressed as it deserved to be, then his fear of "the excessive supremacy claimed for physical science," one of "the most impoverishing characteristics" of his day, would be

1. "England and the War," Fortnightly (October, 1870), VIII, 487.

2. "Mr. Pater's Essays," Fortnightly (April, 1873), XIII, 477.

3. See "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion" (Part I), Fortnightly, XVI (November, 1874), 649.

allayed.¹ True culture was invariably superior to mere physical science; a cultured traveller could take "just as much interest in astronomical, geological, and botanical matters" as the scientific traveller and yet "rejoice in all the historical and political connections" of places as well.² But it was true culture alone which conferred such advantages, never for a moment that specious culture which Morley could not cease decrying--the culture which was only a "fine name for drawing room prejudice plus literary impertinence."³

With the moderation of Morley's tone, with the disappearance from it of the victorious ring of the Fire Bringer, there came a growing suspicion of the effectiveness of the fight he had been waging. He had begun as a hard-fisted gladiator, irrepressible in his intellectual strenuousness, who in his first campaigns against the church and plutocratic interests had called out "Reform!" in the voice of a man who feels himself on the threshold of a New Era. But as the smoke and the dust of the turmoil cleared, he saw the shapes of many of the old landmarks unchanged. How many real victories over Phillistinism and Toryism had been won? How many conversions to the cause of Liberalism and Culture had

1. "On Popular Culture," Fortnightly, XX (November, 1876), 639.

2. "Some Recent Travels," Fortnightly, XIX (May, 1876), 751.

3. "The Liberal Eclipse," Fortnightly, XVII (February, 1875), 299.

been gained? Looking backward over the strife of his fifteen years, Morley, in taking leave of The Fortnightly, could smile with calm detachment. Had not much of the public interest in rooting out religious error really been only an "elegant dabbling in infidelity"? "The Agnostic," he admitted amusedly, "has had his day with the fine ladies, like the black footboy of other times, or the spirit-rapper and table-turner or our own."¹ Yet, in spite of the fact that what he had been foremost in was more likely a tournament than a bettle, there was reassurance in the fact that certain ideas, relatively unknown and whispered about as anarchic in 1867, had gained audible adherents by 1882, and that a certain stubborn opposition had been formed against blind custom and the rote of age-old convention. For it could never be denied that "whatever gives freedom and variety to thought, and earnestness to men's interest in the world, must contribute to a good end."

1. "Valedictory," Fortnightly, XXXII (October, 1882), 518. Eight years earlier, in a moment of cool lucidity, Morley had acknowledged in similar words that there is always one class in "the better kind of society" which is eager to learn only because it is fashionable to know what is being said. "A new idea about God, or property, or the family, is handed round among the company, as ladies of quality in Queen Anne's time handed round a black page or a China monster." "Mr. Mill's Autobiography," Fortnightly, XV, January, 1874, p. 19.)

THE MAN OF LETTERS (1867-1903)
Applying the Historical Method to Criticism

When a certain commentator wrote, a number of years ago, "The critic is, we take it, the irreducible personage in John Morley's make-up,"¹ he expressed, somewhat unemphatically, the most significant fact about Morley's mind. It was nothing if not critical, from first to last, and the truth of this assertion is evidenced in the whole of its literary output. In his preoccupation with life, biography, historical study, and literary criticism were all bound up together; Morley was not a specialist in genres. The critical nature of his historical thinking, as we have seen, was revealed explicitly to his Fortnightly readers in 1868 when² he explained that impartiality in a historian did not mean vacillating irresolution and was not at all the same thing as an incapacity to sum up two views and decide on grounds of evidence which was the truer or more desirable, to conclude about Catherine de Medici, for example, whether she was morally only as good as the standards of her time allowed, or whether she was better or worse.

Unfortunately, for his readers, Morley never formulated in a separate essay an exposition of his critical principles or objectives, but that fact does not mean that he did not

1. "A Critic and Statesman," The Nation, 87 (September 10, 1908), 34-5.

2. See Fortnightly, III (April, 1868), 477.

harbor a set of them as fully worked out as those of Arnold in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." The comprehensiveness, the vigor, and the influence of his own writing is, in its obverse way, proof of what he once decreed: "Criticism without a doctrine can never be adequate or decisive."¹ Not that with a doctrine, he ever became a doctrinaire, but simply that he had made up his mind about the things he was to believe; he had no more use than Samuel Johnson for men whose attitude toward life embraced "nothing more shaped and incorporate than a little group of potential and partially incoherent tendencies."² The earliest printed remarks he made on the subject of literary criticism reveal a concern with it and a decision to fix his standards. In a discussion of plain dealing in his Studies in Conduct he had maintained that praise was as important as censure; a critic should have an "eye for a perfection" as well as the "keenest vision for a flaw." Earlier, in Modern Characteristics, he had determined that, although showing how a book came to be written was informative and interesting, demonstrating^{its} beauty and truth was more significant; and he had argued that the French critics, Sainte-Beuve, Joubert, and Villemain went too far in the amount of knowledge they advocated having of the writer himself before judging his work.³ What is noteworthy here

1. "Mr. Flint's Philosophy of History," Fortnightly, XVI (September, 1874), 341.

2. See Voltaire, p. 75.

3. Morley, of course, continued to read Sainte-Beuve, and with profit. In 1876 he urged the adoption of his essays

is not only the idea advanced but the fact that Morley was already acquainted with the recognized leaders of contemporary criticism in France. To what exact extent and in what precise succession the elements of Sainte-Beuve's critical practice were communicated to him is not known, but that they were communicated and did affect him, cannot be denied. The greater dispassionateness of Sainte-Beuve, his desire that in critical portraits analysis should disappear in creation, his insistence on the value of social background, and his recognition of the part which heredity, physiology, and hygiene play in moulding human character--by giving careful attention to all of these, Morley gained. In 1878, he could be authoritative in stating that, "in criticism in its literary sense," France had always been, and was

school

into a liberating curriculum. See ante, p. 98. The Joubert mentioned is probably Jules Francois (1834-9) and not Joseph (1754-1824), although Morley knew work by both. Joseph, in his epigrammatic Pensées (see a partial translation of them by G. H. Calvert, Boston, W. V. Spencer, 1867) reveals himself, in his own words "like Montaigne . . . unfit for continuous discourse," and so inadequate for sustained criticism. Abel Villemain published a Choix d'Etudes sur la Littérature Contemporaine in 1858 (Didier, Paris), which included essays on Brougham and Milton. He seems to have been internationally interested and active minded, but Brunetière depreciated him in 1906 for what was apparently the very thing in his criticism that Morley objected to in 1865--excessive and unpurposeful use of biographical material: "Il s'amuse de la biographie plutôt qu'il ne s'en sert, et il nous en amuse plutôt qu'il ne la fait servir à l'intelligence des oeuvres." Villemain, with his introduction of history into literary criticism, however, is acknowledged to have paved the way for Sainte-Beuve. See F. Brunetière, L'Evolution des Genres. Paris: Hachette. 1906. p. 209.

1. For an informative survey of Sainte-Beuve's career as critic see F. Brunetière, "L'Oeuvre de Sainte-Beuve," L'Evolution des Genres.

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still, without a rival. At the same time he could exhibit a familiarity with German critical thought and declare with equal finality that in "historic criticism," which was more profound, Germany was supreme.

The thoroughness of Morley's understanding of his craft is illustrated by the completeness of his critical doctrine as it lies embodied in his books, for it contained the three essentials for any such doctrine,--clear, definitive conceptions of the stuff with which the critic works, the whole result at which he should aim, and the method to be pursued, in securing that result. The material with which he was to deal, was man's record of his experience--literature, in short; and so his earliest definition of it emphasized its broad and immediate relation to life: "Literature . . . is at once the noblest result and the finest gratification of man's curiosity about his own nature and his own lot." So conceived, it widened the range of human ideas and became an enrichment of human spiritual experience. Later, with a more practiced eye to its effects, he defined it further as "the master organon for giving men the two precious qualities of breadth of interest and balance of judgment; multiplicity of sympathies and steadiness of sight." The ultimate purpose

1. Diderot, II, p. 45.

2. "George Eliot's Novels," Macmillan's, 14 (August, 1866).

3. Voltaire, p. 95. Morley added another definition in after years: "Literature consists of all the books--and they are not so many--where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity, and attraction of form." See "The Great Commonplaces of Reading," The Critic, 48 (February, 1906), 144-52 or "Words and Their Glory" in Politics and History.

of criticism was social. It must be raised above the degenerate state in which it had for so long existed, perverted by the undisciplined prejudices or the unreliable whims of its unhistoric-minded practitioners into nothing more than an "industriously compiled catalogue of notions and opinions" or "a trick of forced and artful illustration." In his study of the past and his comment on it, the critic must not only discuss ideas; he must disseminate and propagate them. He must strive to "help to create a literary atmosphere" which would "spread a disposition for positive thought and . . . distribute knowledge"; in such an attempt, his work, which was "in superficial appearance merely an appreciation of the production of others," would be "in fact tantamount to constructive production of a really original kind."¹ He would be assisting ordinary men and women in their shaping of a coherent philosophical attitude toward life, and he would be stimulating creative writers in their search for themes. Such criticism would be, therefore, essentially disinterested, the production of a man who, though actively in his own time, would not be of it to the point of becoming wholly absorbed by its problems and contaminated by its strife. Intellectual detachment, in a word, was the critic's indispensable armor. Equipped with

1. See "Mr. Pater's Essays," Fortnightly, XIII (April, 1873). These fragmentary quotations derive from a long paragraph (p. 471) which is so excellent a presentation of Morley's stand that it ought to be quoted in full. How much of the conception set forth here is owed to Arnold's earlier The Function of Criticism at the Present Time cannot be gauged; a fair measure of it undoubtedly is.

it, he could do what the method he must follow, demanded-- investigate the past and relate it to the present, discern accurately the relations between a man's thought and the leading ideas of his age, then trace what connection the features of that thought have with the intellectual climate of modern times. This method, Morley described alternately as dynamic, synthetic.

In such an enlightened, historical doctrine of criticism, there was little place for abstracts. Morley, never a theorizer, abjured all metaphysical speculation. Even in his criticizing of literature he wasted no time on tenuous problems of aesthetics. A piece of poetry, for example, interested him either because of its relation to other poetical works, to questions of language, to matters of form, or because of its bearing on conduct and life, but not at all because of the mystery of what per se it was. And so the age-old controversy of literary critics over the nature of the catharsis in Aristotle's Poetics wearied him; there was "no subject in literature, not even the interpretation of the Apocalypse, that" had "given birth to such pedantic, dismal, and futile discussion."¹ Nevertheless, certain other concepts, which he apparently thought less nebulous, he early took the pains to define for himself. The effect of beauty, he decided, was produced by "such an arrangement and disposition of the parts of the work as, first kindling a great

1. Diderot, I, p. 242.

variety of dispersed emotions and thoughts in the mind of the spectator, finally concentrates them in a single mood of joyous, sad, meditative, or interested delight."¹ Such an effect could be gained through various ways; in poetry, for example, the beauty of "Thyrsis" was "mainly produced by a fine suffusion of delicately-toned emotion; that of 'Atalanta' by splendid and barely rivalled music of verse; of In Memoriam by its ordered and harmonious presentation of a sacred mood." About morality, though he never defined it, Morley was equally clear-sighted; touching, as it did, the well-springs of human conduct, it was not at all the same thing as surface didacticism. He early declared against the conventional habit of confusing art with morality; Dore's illustrations for Tennyson's Elaine could no more be considered moral or immoral than gravitation could.² And he never ceased to ridicule the fact that "in popular speech morality and immorality" were "most absurdly confined to transactions with a woman in them."³

The whole of this critical doctrine can be found in operation in the works which Morley wrote as contributions to literature. His output comprises a series of French studies rang-

1. "On The Ring and the Book," Fortnightly, V (March, 1869), 385.

2. See "Causeries," Fortnightly, I (Jan., 1867), 101-2. "Why may I not enjoy Doré's conception of Mr. Tennyson's landscape without feeling my moral pulse every moment, to see how my passions are faring? The moral hypochondriac is becoming a serious bore."

3. "The Political Prelude," Fortnightly, IV (July, 1868), 103

ing in size from monographs to full-volume biographical treatments, a single volume, On Compromise, in the tradition of Mill, a series of essays in literary criticism, and five political biographies.

The French studies were Morley's largest literary enterprise. They extended over a period of ten years and represent an interest in French literature that was lifelong. Several factors accounted for the affinity. His father had taught himself a reading knowledge of French, and Morley, exposed to the printed language as a child, probably learned the rudiments of it then. How much reading in it he did at Oxford is a question. He was introduced to Comte there and may have read him in the original. Undoubtedly the few months which he spent in Paris as a tutor after graduation had much to do with his mastering the tongue and acquiring a broad acquaintance in its literature. By the time that he met Mill in 1865 he was at home in French, familiar with Victor Hugo and George Sand in the original. The real roots of his affinity for French, of course, lay in his temperament. His rationality and his predilection for clarity and succinctness found satisfaction in the language. What he said in admiration of it almost a half century later, in 1912, testifies to this:

French is the most oecumenical of all living tongues: so sociable, so exact, so refined, copious, and subtle in its diversity of shades in every field, grave and gay: so apt alike for what is trivial, and for high affairs of thought or business. -1

1. Politics and History, p. 45

That French literature of the eighteenth century, in particular, should have absorbed him was not due alone to any special charm in the style of that period, which, in spite of the lucid Voltaire and aphoristic Vauvenargues, showed the abandoned, swollen Rousseau and heavy, diffuse Diderot. What attracted Morley more strongly was something else. He loved "the great spirits of the 18th century" because they had striven in the cause of progress and fought for enlightenment. Their breadth of mind, their zeal for humanity, and their confidence in the scientific method for reaching their goal made them admirable. They worked from no arbitrary a priori premises; they observed social as well as natural phenomena patiently, they studied the results of their observation coolly, and then, in the light of reason, they condemned or commended, as the case under examination might warrant. Unlike the metaphysicians of the seventeenth century, they did not concentrate the exercise of their reason on abstracts; they were on their way to becoming positivists. Their common sense always had what they considered an infallible standard to refer to--concrete nature itself. They ceased to speculate; they measured and experimented. Prejudice and superstition and fanaticism must be destroyed. Church and state had tyrannized over men's minds; false thinking through centuries had corrupted them. Back to tangibles they went, to realities that could be evidenced, to sense experience as an aid to thought and a test of it. And so all social insti-

tutions went under analysis; their histories were examined. What good fortune would it be for the human race if political mythology could be erased from men's minds, theological absurdities exposed and abandoned, and fear, bigotry, intolerance, blindness annihilated.

Now Morley saw the similarity between that movement toward éclaircissement and the struggle on foot in England in his own day. The aims and the spirit of the leaders of English Liberals and scientific materialists had much in common with the purpose and the attitude of Diderot and his co-workers. In both cases the great end was intellectual enlightenment and material improvement, the general temper was humanitarian and truth-loving. But there the analogy stopped; smaller, more specific aims were different in eighteenth century France, more particular and vital methods were unrelated, and the physical circumstances in which the éclaircissement was to take hold were totally dissimilar. Morley saw all this, too, but for him, the pulpit intellectual, the recognition of the likeness in the boldest lines of the two movements seen as wholes was the significant fact; it was enough to stir him to action and fire him with the consideration of himself as one of the great champions in the tradition of Voltaire and Diderot, helping to point the way out of darkness. That Morley did think of himself in this light is undeniable, but any young man in similar circumstances would be tempted to draw the same comparison, and Morley after all had special gifts which

came close to justifying such self-esteem.

Since he saw the relationship between the French attempt at intellectual emancipation and the current English campaign against Tories and theologians, he was possessed by the urge to inform the English public of it. He would remind Englanders that the struggle for Truth is not confined to one country and one time, and he would show, beyond any doubt, how the desire for Truth was what had motivated the Encyclopedists and therefore linked them, as spiritual precursors, to present English revolutionaries in thought. Now, as late as 1870, to undertake this in England was to run the risk of blasting your reputation, and Morley realized the precariousness of his position. About France, Englishmen in general were still provincial, and about the French Revolution, almost every one was proudly ignorant as well as fiercely taciturn; the Revolution was unmentionable, and they still felt its horror. Morley was indignant at their failure to see it in any perspective, to consider it dispassionately, but he knew, too, that no attempt had been made to depict both sides of the upheaval. Burke had assailed its leaders and set the tone for all following English criticism. Carlyle had followed and made a contribution to literature but done an injustice to history. Morley strode into the stream of intolerance to erect a bridge of understanding, but for years he was misunderstood and denounced by bigots who saw him as a dangerous subverter of English institutions, a politician moved by the most incendiary and

bloodthirsty principles of the Revolution. In 1888, although he had rejoined several times previously, he finally replied at length to such attacks. He patiently explained his original purpose, reminded his enemies that "an entirely heterogeneous set of circumstances" in nineteenth century England made a duplication of French Revolutionary procedure impossible, and pointed out the bad logic in their attack by showing that "only on the principle that who drives fat oxen must himself be fat, can it be held that who writes on Danton must be himself in all circumstances a Dantonist."¹

Nobody should undertake the reading of the French studies without consulting beforehand the last eighty-five pages of Edmund Burke, Morley's first volume published in his own name (1867) and undoubtedly, inadequate though he afterwards considered it, one of the few in his entire output most likely to survive. These pages constitute an analysis of the French Revolution and its effects, and with extraordinary perspective and comprehensiveness they transmit Morley's final opinions on the whole event, opinions from which he never swerved thereafter. The section is, then, a preface to the various studies which followed it, a philosophical survey of the ground which they were to cover in more detail. Had Victorian alarmists equipped themselves, before reading "Robespierre" or Rousseau, with an understanding of its contents, they would

1. "A Few Words on French Models" in Oracles on Man and Government, p. 179.

hardly have erred as they did in denouncing the earnest editor of The Fortnightly Review.

Driven to know why the Revolution broke out in France instead of some other continental country, Morley discovered that it was not because social conditions were so disproportionately worse there than elsewhere, but because the permeation of radical political ideas had been wider and deeper among the French than among any other people. Even their king, Louis XVI, affected by the atmosphere about him, had talked reform and made the mistake of exhibiting an "ostentatious deference to public opinion." Perturbed by the problem of war as a justifiable means of achieving a goal, by the question whether such a cataclysm as the Revolution could leave behind it any good results, any benefits to the society which it had wounded, Morley lamented that because of human nature, political and social changes could not "be consummated with the same autumnal stillness and silence in which Nature works her transformations." The suffering of men and women was indeed deplorable, but suffering was not all that a war disclosed:

Every mass of men in volcanic moments, like the mythic Aetna, covers a Titan; and it is by the Titan only that they can be moved. It is an evil, but not an unmixed evil, that this should be so. These violent rebellions against a spiritual or social destiny too hard to be longer-endured, disclose heights of sacrifice and energy and aspiration in man, a tidal sweep and depth of moral force, which progress could ill afford to spare.¹

There were certain positive results of the Revolution after

1. Edmund Burke, p. 238.

all. It had "impregnated the political atmosphere with ethical ingredients," even though to be sure, those ingredients were since sometimes disregarded; it had implanted a realization of justice, "as the radical condition of all social arrangements," in the forefront of politicians' minds; and it had achieved a renovation of "the generous and sublime sentiment of the brotherhood of men," which for centuries had been lost to Christianity. Even some of the strongest opponents of the Revolution, like De Maistre in philosophy and Chateaubriand in religion, had "caught a measure of brightness and largeness from their adversary."

On the other hand nobody was more ready than Morley to expose the shortcomings and the harmful effects which marred the work of the Revolutionists. Their tragic deficiency was, at the outset, their abysmal lack of practical experience. Handicapped by it, they were unable to realize the necessity in political reform "of temporizing, of compromise, of aiming not too high, of conciliating masses of opposing interest;" they were blind to the fact that France, as a single member of the European family of states, was sure, in experimenting as she was, "to call down the fierce hostility of all the other unrevolutionized governments;"¹ they were overtaken by

1. "It would be fairer, as it seems to me, to attribute the disastrous failure of the Revolution in France not so much to her unfitness for liberty, as to the still more imperfect preparation of her neighbors. It was the enmity of the retrograde powers of Europe which first drove her into the excesses natural to panic, and then by their flagitious designs aroused that military temper, which eventually slew her new-born freedom." p. 231.

timorousness in their own internal activity and led on from uncertainty to fear, to cruelty, whereas, if they had had the practice of free men in a representative government they would never have fallen into such ghastly excesses; and finally they had been powerless to see the irreconcilability, the hostility which existed among the nobles, the clergy, and the third estate, rendering any cooperation impossible. The Revolutionists had been excessive theorizers and speculators, too abrupt in referring all problems confronting them to metaphysical principles. Visionaries, a priori-ists, actuated by too much love of mathematical, geometrical symmetry, they had made a fetich of Equality, whereas they should have discarded their imaginary "social contract" and preached "general utility," abandoned the dogma of "inherent right" in favor of the criterion of "general happiness." Their uprooting break with the past was to be condemned, for "those who detest the past with indiscriminate execration are sure, in the long run, to come to distrust the future also." Nevertheless, the great spirit which animated them must be considered along with the visible failures of the stupendous transformation which they attempted. And in future decades, when our perspective is clearer and our indignation cooled, it will become true that the atrocities and anarchy of the last ten years of the eighteenth century, which loom so large because they were precipitated all at once instead of gradually, "were less, not greater" than the crimes and confusion prevalent in France since the Regency.

In the character, then, of a "Diderot-plus-John Wesley" interpreter of eighteenth-century French thought to a new age, itself rationalistic and scientific, Morley launched out on his enterprise. What is interesting now in a reading of these controversial studies is the Maccabean ardency of their tone and the frequency with which he points out parallels in situation between the Encyclopedists' day and his own, or seizes on an incident as a point of departure for comment directed at an issue hot for him in the 1870's. He was not intent on panegyricizing; he was determined to give an unprejudiced account of both the constructive and destructive natures of pre-Revolutionary thought. Although he could not resist praising ideas or methods, where praise was due, to the disfavor of certain features of the scientific-liberal procedure of his time, neither could he refrain from exposing weaknesses or fallacies in the Encyclopedist attack, to the advantage of his own fellows. There is no doubt of his zeal in trying to make these volumes timely. The smallest studies in the series are for the most part the earliest: "De Maistre" (1868), "Condorcet" (1870), "Turgot" (1871), "Vauvenargues" (1872), and Robespierre (1876) are no more than monographs, but although brief, they are direct, compact, and strongly written so as to leave unmistakable impressions of the contribution each of the figures made to his age.

DE MAISTRE

De Maistre, as a figure engaging Morley, at first seems

paradoxical. Morley himself was aware of the irreconcilability between his own character and that of the great Catholic and probably took considerable pleasure in noticing the consternation which his study caused. Nothing in De Maistre's ideas was tolerable, but what the whole sum of those ideas stood for in opposition to the temper of the Encyclopedists made for a startling contrast, and Morley was quick to see its dramatic value. He could make a clear statement of De Maistre's theological absolutism without subscribing to it himself. As a matter of fact, in fairness to his intention of showing both sides of the question of the reconstruction of society, he could not avoid setting down the case for the reactionaries. Furthermore, proud of the broadmindedness in such matters taught him by Comte, he was more than a little eager over the sheer problem of estimating a character so antagonistic and discovering his peculiar contribution to humanity.

De Maistre, intent on "absolutely killing the spirit of the eighteenth century," considered the Revolution the breakdown of civilization in France, analogous to the crumbling of the Roman Empire in the fifth, and denounced the whole school of rationalists and encyclopedists for having caused it. For him Christianity alone could restore order, and the Pope alone must be the spiritual and temporal authority, controlling civilization. Councils were futile for government, since "what is doubtful for forty men is doubtful for the

whole human race." Morley states De Maistre's arguments fully and then, in the light of Rationalism, bleaches out weaknesses. De Maistre's God he defines as "a colossal September 1st, enthroned high in the peaceful heavens, demanding ever-renewed holocausts in the name of the public safety,"¹ and the Frenchman's contention that Christian rulers had lived longer than non-believers and had all distinguishingly died of illnesses that had no specific names, he dismisses as absurd. He appeals to the course of events in his own age to show that De Maistre's solution was "desperate and impossible."

Catholicism may long remain . . . a deep source of spiritual consolation and refreshment and a bright lamp in perplexities of conduct and morals; but, resting on dogmas which cannot by any amount of compromise be incorporated with the daily increasing mass of knowledge . . ., upheld by an organization which its history for several centuries has exposed to the disgust and hatred of men as the sworn enemy of mental freedom and growth, the pretensions of Catholicism to renovate society are among the most pitiable and impotent that ever devout, high-minded, and benevolent persons deluded themselves into maintaining or accepting. 2

Even if Christianity were to be restored, it would have to be in an almost unrecognizably different form, and there would be no possibility of a union between spiritual and temporal powers. "The free church in the free state"-- and this is a fragment from a Liberal slogan dear to Morley--

1. "De Maistre" in Biographical Studies, p. 162.

2. Ibid, p. 187.

is coming closer and closer to an actuality, for "if the Church has the uppermost hand, it impairs freedom; if the state is supreme, it impairs spirituality."¹ And with this pronouncement to his contemporaries, Morley closes his essay. But, as reading, the little work is worth more than this account of it as a rational penetration of Catholic politics can indicate; De Maistre as a human being interested Morley, and the first section shows him as a refugee against the background of the Revolution, with quotations from his letters to enliven the picture.

CONDORCET

Toward Condorcet, Morley is very fair. He praises him for his interest in humane legal reforms, for his advocacy of female emancipation, and for his rare intelligence in holding what came near being a scientific conception of history, but detects a fallacy in this same attitude which his optimism led him to, and discounts him for saying: "The history of the human species as a whole may be regarded as the unravelling of a hidden plan of nature for accomplishing a perfect state of civil constitution for society."² Enlightened by Comte, Morley regrets this reading in of a divine purpose; in the positive scheme of things, final intentions do not exist. With the scales still meticulously balanced

1. "De Maistre" in Biographical Studies, p. 188.

2. "Condorcet" in Biographical Studies, p. 114.

for his judgment, he sums up. Condorcet is to be admired for his contributions "to the stock of science and social speculation," for his lofty sentiments, his "noble solicitude for human well-being, his eager and resolute belief in its indefinite expansion, and the devotion that sealed his faith by a destiny as tragical as any" that occurred in those bloody days; but there is this vital shortcoming to face in his philosophy--"He measures only the contributions made by nations and eras to what we know; leaving out of sight their failures and successes in the elevation of moral standards and ideals, and in the purification of human passions."¹

TURGOT

As with Condorcet and De Maistre, so with Turgot, Vauvenargues, Robespierre. Each one, as Morley treated him, exhibited some trait of character or showed some accomplishment which helped to raise the Englishman's image of the Revolutionary period into bolder relief and to throw certain corner details of it, never exposed before, into clear light. Additionally, some of them served to illustrate Morley's own sympathies. Turgot, for example, the economist² so admired by Mill and revealed to Morley by him, ought to

1. "Condorcet," in Biographical Studies, p. 116.

2. Once, when Mill, who spoke reverently of "godlike Turgot" and read him for inspiration in moments of depression, was rejected as parliamentary representative by the constituency at Westminster, Morley consoled him by reminding him that Turgot, too, had been dismissed by the king of France a century before. Mill was gratified by the analogy.

be significant to Englishmen because his brief experience as Comtroller-General at the court of Louis XVI exposed the truth that anarchy and not despotism in the royal government--anarchy years old--was driving the country into a revolution. In his earlier experience as Intendant of the Generality of Limoges he had shown himself liberal; good government was a religion to him, and he believed in progress, even though, benevolently undemocratic, he did proceed on the grounds of "everything for the people; nothing by the people." Justice was his watchword; it alone, and not pity or charity, could "keep the balance true among all rights and all interests."¹ This insistence of his allied him to Burke.

For Morley's special interest and admiration were Turgot's enlightenment in his historic conception; early in life he had reached the conclusion that "all epochs are fastened together by a sequence of causes and effects; linking the condition of the world to all the conditions that have gone before it."² But the Frenchman was made additionally congenial because of his conscientious objection to Christianity and his honesty in leaving the Church, for which he had been preparing to take orders; his discernment that "it is not error that opposes the progress of truth; it is indolence, obstinacy, the spirit of routine, everything that favours

1. "Turgot" in Biographical Studies, p. 63.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

inaction;" and his concern over the importance of the man of action as contrasted with the man of letters. Morley could commend Turgot for these features of his intellectual development because he had arrived at them all himself and counted them vital, though his own answer to the last, the problem of the man of letters, was different from Turgot's. Morley was adamant in insisting that in every instance the man of action is more valuable unless "the man of letters is engaged on work that seriously advances social interests and adds something to human stature."¹ But his difference of opinion here was the result of a temperamental inclination, and he knew that neither he nor Turgot could be proved right or wrong on rationalistic grounds alone. Another preference on the part of Turgot, however,--in this case amounting to an exclusion--could not be so tolerated. Morley had more than a qualification to make to it and discounted it completely as a fallacious opinion common to Turgot's century. The Frenchman had considered ideas superior to morals as forces aiding the movement of civilization; Morley, no more attached to theological dogma than Turgot, but able to see Christianity in unbiased perspective and to point out benefits as well as deficiencies, rejoined that the anti-religious heat of the eighteenth century had blinded deniers to certain advantages which the church had given to the past;

1. "Turgot," p. 29.

the saint does have his place in history even though Turgot and his fellows "passionately threw him out from their calendar as the wooden idol of superstition."¹ The impression of Morley's days in Blackburn had not lost its meaning for him. He continued to affirm, as he does here, that "the leading of souls to do what is right and humane, is always more urgent than mere instruction of the intelligence as to what exactly is the right and humane."² The intellect could accomplish many things, but despite his allegiance to it, he tried to be under no delusion as to its limitations.

VAUVENARGUES

The rest of the shorter French studies are easy to dismiss. Vauvenargues was in no way the philosophic equal of De Maistre or Turgot, but in him Morley found some human traits that made for warm liking. Though disillusioned by his early experience in the army, Vauvenargues had fallen into no extreme despondency; he had continued to hold a middle path between perfectibilists on the one hand and the pessimism of Pascal on the other. Though he moved in frivolous circles, he never played smart in his attitude toward women. He cherished what he called "virtuous instinct" in human nature, and Morley identified it sympathetically

1. "Turgot," p. 36.

2. Loc. cit. In 1911 Morley was still asserting this: "The great need in modern culture, which is scientific in method, rationalistic in spirit, and utilitarian in purpose, is to find some effective agency for cherishing within us an interest in ideals." Literature, he thought, should be such an agency, though literature alone would not make a good man. See "Words and Their Glory," Politics and History, p. 186.

with that reasoned prejudice in which he, like Burke, had come to place so much faith. He wrote graceful characteres, too, but what he is most memorable for are his maxims, "nearly always moderate and persuasive" and marked by "delicacy and half-reserved tenderness." Morley developed a life-long attachment to them, adopting several favorites as his own, to use again and again in his later speaking and writing.¹

ROBESPIERRE

"Robespierre" is significant because it is the most vivid, the most animated of the series. There is much more of the pictorial in it than there is in any of the others, and Morley undoubtedly had Carlyle in mind when he did it. Though there is no attempt to outdo Carlyle and though his style has nothing in common with that of The French Revolution, still there is much of the graphic quality, much of the pace that Morley so much admired in the older writer's dramatic presentation of the upheaval. Here is the only picture he ever attempted of the Revolution at work, and uncannily, for a treatment so small, he makes events in the years between 1791 and 1794 move. This sort of narrative is unusual for him; that he should be so successful in a first and highly concentrated effort, is the more extraordinary. Characters are sketched in effectively, and the atmosphere of tension is reproduced. But political definitions and a detailed analysis of the phil-

1. Three of Morley's favorites that recur are "Great truths come from the heart.", "It is a great sign of mediocrity always to praise moderately.", and "To carry through great undertakings, one must act as though one would never die."

osophical changes involved are not subordinated to the drama of the event, and this is what separates Morley's method from Carlyle's; he strives for a balance between the narrative and its interpretation. There is an interesting arraignment of the Catholic Church—cool and rational—framed by Morley for one which Chaumette might have used in attacking Christianity, but regrettably had not; interesting, because it was one to which Morley himself subscribed. But the chief value, again, lies in the vivid style of the monograph, of which this single paragraph is as good a specimen as any:

Robespierre's style had no richness either of feeling or of phrase; no fervid originality, no happy violences. If we turn from a page of Rousseau to a page of Robespierre, we feel that the disciple had none of the sonorous thrill of the master; the ardour has become metallic; the long-drawn plangency is parodied by shrill notes of splenetic complaint . . . The absence of these intenser qualities did not make Robespierre's speeches less effective for their own purpose. On the contrary, when the air has become torrid, and passionate utterance is cheap, then severity in form is very likely to pass for sense in substance. That Robespierre had decent fluency, copiousness, and finish need hardly be said . . . Robespierre was as solicitous about the correctness of his speech as he was about the neatness of his clothes; he no more grudged the pains given to the polishing of his discourses than he grudged the time given every day to the powdering of his hair. -1

VOLTAIRE

Sometime early in the first week of June, 1871, Morley was "seized, after the manner of p^oets, with a phrenetic and wholly invincible oestrus--to write a monograph--Voltaire."

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1. "Robespierre" in Biographical Studies, p. 226.

Everything else had disappeared from his mind, he told Harrison in a note; night and day he was possessed with Voltaire and stuck to his table like a slave. "What a subject! It will be about the size of Burke or a little bigger."² Morley's enthusiasm was justified. The single volume that he turned out is one of his best--for quickness of intellect, for liveliness of tone, for all that can be considered characteristic of the Morley of The Fortnightly Review. From beginning to end the interest is sustained; it is all rationalism, colored and enlivened by emotion. What gives it special appeal is not only the treatment of Voltaire but the references to contemporary problems in England and, above all, the light thrown on Morley himself by the consideration he gives these problems.

There is no attempt to recreate eighteenth century France or to bring Voltaire to life as a character in the splendid artificiality of the age; Voltaire the biological man is subordinated to Voltaire the thinking man, and it is his career as a crusher of infamy that counts. There are

1. Hirst, I, p. 189. Four years earlier, however, the intention of someday writing a book on Voltaire had begun to stir inside him. In January, 1867, in reviewing in The Fortnightly the first volume of a life of Voltaire by one Francis Espinasse, he deplored the confusion in which French biographers were still handling the details of Voltaire's career. "It is a question whether even yet any biographer, either French or English, is capable of seizing--what is more important than dates and details only--the spirit, and character, and ultimate influence of Voltaire. However, the mere fact that an English writer has undertaken a biography on a very considerable scale is significant that the time for understanding Voltaire is at least approaching." (I, 125).

anecdotes and quotations from letters and brief sketches of some of his human relationships, but they are carefully chosen, only those that are indispensable; the picture is to be of Voltaire the spreader of enlightenment. Nor will Morley estimate his subject morally; moral aspects, as well as physical, must give way to intellectual. Not that moral considerations will be neglected--"there ought to be little condonation of the foibles and none at all of the moral obliquities of the dead, because this would mean the demoralization of the living"--but that they will be on the final balance of good and evil than on the first innate conditions of temperament, the fixed limitations of opportunity, and the complex interplay of the two with that character, which is first their creature, and then their master.¹ Now this is a scientific credo for a writer, and though Morley was not deluded by any intention of being wholly impersonal in his evaluation, still, in keeping with the tendency of his time toward more accurate observation, he was confident of being predominantly dispassionate. And though he was aware that a highly developed moral code was vital to the existence of modern society, he always retained an aversion to what he called "the bald division of men into sheep and goats."² It was too pat to be logically justifiable; and furthermore, on the biographical critic's part, it necessitated a certain

1. Voltaire, p. 79.

2. Loc. cit.

amount of prying into biological lives and unshrouding of dirty secrets, and all of that was repugnant to him; it was little edifying to the character.¹

Materialistic skepticism in France during Voltaire's youth, his own inclination to it, his strengthening absorption of it during his stay in England, his abhorrence of Church tyranny and social injustice, his devotion to the cause of truth and enlightenment through the great part of his life--all of these Morley gives a clear account of. True to his word, he pays as much attention to the maturing of Voltaire's mind--to the influences at work on it--as he does to the activity of that mind, once made whole. But the origin of such a mind baffles him. Comte-like--and this is the book in which, he confessed to Frederic Harrison, his whole conception of history was that of the Frenchman--he considers such widely different benefactors of the human race as Luther, Calvin, and Voltaire in the same breath, and then goes on to speak of the whole historical process in terms borrowed from nineteenth-century science. The

1. With appropriate disinterestedness, although he commends Voltaire for his observation, "I now perceive that we must still wait three or four hundred years" (i.e., for the consummation of the great revolution in men's minds), because this revealed the great breadth of Voltaire's vision and his understanding of historical continuity, Morley finds him wanting in a reliable, scientific comprehension of the sources to which a writer must go for an understanding of the nature and structure of a whole society; Voltaire was too inclined to depend on gossip, reminiscences, and diaries instead of investigating, and coming to grips with, problems of finance, of trade, of agricultural production.

history of civilization exhibits an evolution of its own working on principles that make it analogous to biological evolution. Even among societies the fittest survive; but those fittest depend upon intellectual advancement, and that in turn is the result of the existence of superior spirits, superior minds, that loom up suddenly, anomalies in the world of thought as startling as decisive mutations in the animal world. But how, asks Morley, can these variations from normal species be accounted for? Scientists have no explanation for biological accidents, "nor any more than this can history explain the law by which the most striking variations in intellectual and spiritual quality within the human order have had their origin."¹ But, despite the hopelessness of an answer, Voltaire is one of these variations, and Morley acknowledges humanity's debt to him. He is a miracle, the result of "an unknown element at the bottom of the varieties of creation, whether we agree to call that element a volition of a supernatural being, or an undiscovered set of facts in embryology."²

Voltaire's attack upon the Church was particularly significant to Morley. Voltaire had discriminated carefully between ecclesiastical dogma and the Christianity of the German on the Mount, to whose humanity "not a man then alive" was "more keenly sensible," and so did Morley. Yet Voltaire

1. Voltaire, p. 17.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

had betrayed a historical short sightedness in not admitting the contributions of the Catholic Church to the groping, inchoate civilization of the Middle Ages. Still his fight against church hypocrisy and superstition was open, bold, relentless, flashing, and not like the campaign of the nineteenth century, full of "cowardice of heart and understanding, when each controversial man at arms is eager to have it thought that he wears the colors of the other side, when the theologian would fain pass for rationalist, and the free-thinker for a person with his own orthodoxies, if you only knew them, and when philosophic candour and intelligence are supposed to have hit their final climax in the doctrine that everything is both true and false at the same time."¹ There is characteristic Morleyan audaciousness, militancy, even truculence. It was this uncompromising, bitter, withering partisanship in matters of theology that stirred so much resentment against him during the Fortnightly period and which he later regretted on more than one occasion. The curl of the lip is not hard to detect behind the last clause in the sentence just quoted, or for that matter, behind his definition of "our lofty new idea . . . of emancipation of understanding as emancipation from the duty of settling whether important propositions are true or false." The wound made by the disillusionment at Oxford had gone deep. So, too, had the early recognition by Mill, and the

1. Voltaire, p. 8.

early rise to a place of editorial responsibility excited his pulse.

Other aspects of Morley's character, no less significant and enduring, appear in Voltaire. The problem involving the two careers, posing the man of letters against the man of action, crops up again. Voltaire's attitude toward it was the right one, maintains Morley; he "rated literature as it ought to be rated, below action, not because written speech is less of a force, but because the speculation and criticism of the literature that substantially influences the world, make far less demand than the actual conduct of great affairs on qualities which are not rare in detail, but are amazingly rare in combination--on temper, foresight, solidity, daring--on strength, in a word, strength of intelligence and strength of character."¹

Morality in literature--in creative, imaginative literature, not this time in biographical analysis--is given an expected serious consideration. Voltaire's La Pucelle is the cause of a prolonged discussion of the justification of sexual licentiousness as a decoration in narrative. The fact that Condorcet, admirable in almost every respect, had defended the ribald account of Jean makes it an apparent stumbling block in Morley's path. He does not believe in censorship, but he must find some firmly lines grounds on which to evaluate, and to indict this conte lascive he relies

1. Voltaire, p. 15.

on the basic postulates of his whole conception of human morals. Literature is an interpretation of life, a supplement to it, must help to make it effectual--that is, to give it unity; and Morley insists that unity of life is dependent on the integrity of human relations. "Our identity does by no means consist in a historic continuity of tissues, but in an organic moral coherency of relation," and, in the absence of any divine ordination, "it is this, which alone, if we consider the passing shortness of our days, makes life a whole, instead of a parcel of thrums, bound together by an accident."¹ This is a sound and dignified conclusion to reach, and in the face of it La Pucelle shrinks pitiably; its shameless, sportive promiscuity condemns it, for "is not every incentive and every concession to vagrant appetite a force that enwraps a man in gratification of self, and severs him from duty to others, and so a force of dissolution and dispersion?"² So Morley vindicates himself, corrects Condorcet, and passes criticism on Voltaire, but genially he reminds his readers of Candide's own remark: "The unwise value every word in an author of repute."³ And his last reflections on the matter are dispassionate ones, accounting for the scurrilous treatment of the virgin-martyr not in an innate immorality of Voltaire, but in two features of his

1. Voltaire, p. 122.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Ibid., p. 127.

age: its licentiousness derived from the glossed but abandoned sensuality of the royal court, and its contempt for the medieval valuation of purity, a natural but regrettable accompaniment of the breakdown of Church dogma.

Morley rightly places Voltaire below the greatest masters of literature, because of his lack of spiritual profundity and imaginative power. Only in that kind of literature which is "to diffuse the light by which common men are able to see the great host of ideas and facts that do not shine in the brightness of their own atmosphere," do the Frenchman's curiosity, intelligence, frankness, wit, and marvelous facility of expression make him unrivalled. Even in comedy, "the veritable comedy of human character and life," Voltaire falls short of highest achievement. In caricature he "has no equal" and in Candide or Zadig, for example, he has arrived as high as wit can go, but his imaginative limitation, his inability to identify himself with a wide variety of lives outside his own social sphere and make their essences his own, his lack of a "tragic breadth" of view and of a wide "consciousness of contrasts" mark him inferior to "Shakespeare, Moliere, and even Aristophanes."¹

All of this is sound criticism. Moving on to the question of style, Morley is equally revealing, not only with regard to his subject, but about himself as well. The utilitarian value of Voltaire's prose--that is, the perfect appropriateness

1. Voltaire, p. 117.

of it as a vehicle for his ideas--he cannot help exclaiming over. Its lucidity, its flexibility, its economy, "where the nimbleness of the sentence is in proportion to the firmness of the thought," all call for admiration. But about this same economy, the thirty-three-year-old preacher of Liberalism and spreader of agnosticism, already gasped at by some and damned by others as the Saint-Just of journalism, goes on to say; "We find no bastard attempts to reproduce in words deep and complex effects which can only be adequately presented in colour or in the combination of musical sounds."¹ From the point of view of literary style, nothing could be more orthodox. Morley stands for tradition; nothing is more repugnant to him than the enfant terrible of writing. And this early-rooted position remains firm for the rest of his life. Whitman's experiments in bold free verse he held beneath consideration,² and French symbolism, on the verge of being born in 1871, must have become anathema to him. How early twentieth-century polyphonic prose impressed him, we can only conjecture, but even the later nineteenth-century movement toward "art for art's sake" was unwelcome to him, despite his admiration of Pater and his prose. Words without sense he condemned as "the smirks and affectations of mere elegant dispersiveness."³

1. Voltaire, p. 97.

2. See the Recollections, II, p. 78 for an account of Morley's reaction to Whitman, whom he met in America in 1867.

3. Voltaire, p. 95.

Morley traced a decline in "the purity and harmony" of contemporary prose in both England and France back to Voltaire. Voltaire's own style was excellent, but what he represented was disastrous--a radical break with tradition, a "reaction against a spurious dignity of style," which lost proportion and direction, too, when men following him carried it on. Without Voltaire's own reason and balance, they identified real dignity with spurious dignity and fell into a blind attack on all the intellectual and aesthetic elements of the old order. This, Morley deplures: "an assumed vulgarity tries to pass for native homeliness, and, as though a giant were more impressive for having a humped back, some men of genius seem only to make sure of fame by straining themselves into grotesqueness." Academic rule has its place, declares Morley, and painstakingness cannot fail to have an "exceedingly great reward."

Where does Morley's own style fit into all of this? Obviously he does not consider himself Voltaire's successor. Harrison, two years later, was to tell him that, although his prose was potentially better than anybody else's, with the single exception of George Eliot's, it was still "not yet at its best by reason of its excessive richness and audacity and complexity." Calling him "a prose Browning who delights the cultured but who is too difficult for the multitude," he urged him to "speak to the people in words of

1. Voltaire, p. 100.

Cobbett-like simplicity."¹ Morley himself realized this dominating characteristic of his prose at the time he was writing Voltaire and he rationalized his position handily enough. It was not that he did not aim at simplicity, but that the sort of simplicity in which Voltaire, for example, had been brilliant, was no longer possible. What was the closest thing to it was "an intensely elaborated kind." Society had become more complex, knowledge had become more expansive and incredibly more branched, and the result was that Truth had to be followed "slowly along paths steep and devious;" all thought had "been touched by complexities that were then unseen. Hence, as all good writers [and Morley includes himself in this group] aim at simplicity and directness, we have seen the growth of a new style, in which the rays of many side-lights are concentrated in some single phrase."² This is sound enough reasoning, interesting, too, because it is an early realization of his own kind of writing, and an early attempt to explain it. Style always continued to be a reflection of habits of mind for Morley, and "the spirit of science and fact and ordered knowledge" continued to be the shaper of those habits. Looking back in 1911, he could see that a whole new vocabulary dated from 1859: the growth of science had ushered in an "epoch of quieter style

1. Hirst, II, p. 250.

2. Voltaire, p. 99.

after the giants: Carlyle, Ruskin, and Macaulay."¹

But this "sound enough reasoning" is not the whole truth about Morley's style in 1871; there was more to it than an "intensely elaborated" simplicity. "Every man is born with all the centuries in him," he used to remind his readers, and that fact can be applied to him in a sense slightly different from the one intended. Literarily, in the Morley who did Voltaire, there was a predominance of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, conditioned by the innate Aristotelian and Evangelical bases of his temperament, and this predominance found expression in marked stylistic tendencies. The clarity, the balance, the brevity, the sententiousness of eighteenth-century prose--its aphoristic quality, in short--always attracted him and became a feature of his own writing. Voltaire has such fine representatives of it as, "His [Voltaire's] was one of the robust and incisive constitutions, to which doubt figures as a sickness, and where intellectual apprehension is an impossibility" (p. 9), and "Where it is a duty to worship the sun, it is pretty sure to be a crime to examine the laws of heat." (p. 12) Offsetting this epigrammatic keenness, however, there is a great deal of writing that reveals an admiration of seventeenth century qualities, of unctiousness, in short. From the impassioned peroration of the book comes this line: "And a man will be already in no

1. See "Words and Their Glory" in Politics and History, pp. 197-210.

mean paradise, if at the hour of sunset a good hope can fall upon him like harmonies of music that the earth shall still be fair and the happiness of every feeling creature still receive a constant augmentation and each cause yet find worthy defenders, when the memory of his own poor name and personality has long been blotted out of the brief recollection of men for ever." (p. 238) Figures drawn on classical models, too, like that one of Voltaire's conception of Truth --"a goddess . . . to be sought in the free tumult and joyous strife of many voices, there vindicating her own majesty and marking her own children"¹--or figures dependent on an acquaintance with the Bible for understanding,² are frequent. The long line, the sonority, the majesty of the great seventeenth-century prose had much power over Morley, and he had read the chief divines with profit. Even among English eighteenth-century writers, his favorite was Burke, who preserved emotional intensity and dignified rhetorical splendor.

There is no doubt about Morley's concern for grandeur in his prose. And although, forty years after Voltaire, he was to tell an annual General Meeting of the English Association that the age of grandeur had died with Burke and that it is

1. Voltaire, p. 52. See, too, how Truth as a goddess appealed to Morley--in his use of the same sort of figure--in his essay on Macaulay. Critical Miscellanies, p. 187.

2. See p. 32. Apropos of Voltaire's destructive criticism, "Has Jericho always fallen without the blasts from the seven trumpets?"

only natural that prose should be unemotional "where the themes and issues are those of scientific truth,"¹ he was apparently forgetting that in his Fortnightly days he, too, had been a man of "supreme issues, earnest convictions, eager desire to convert and persuade," and that these things that "moved to eloquence at its highest" had not ceased to exist, as he implies, after Sir Thomas Browne, Raleigh, Bacon, Hooker, Burke. There is something almost apologetic in this address about Morley's explanation of the change in tests-- something apologetic and something dangerously close to deliberate neglect, too, so far as an honest consideration of the character of his earlier work is concerned. His own books, though they have not been forgotten, have certainly not survived on the crest of the wave like those of the "classic masters," and, therefore, remembering the great career prophesied for him by Harrison and Meredith years before, recalling the regret expressed by Hardy more recently, over the wasting of that ^{career} by an entrance into politics, he attempts to extenuate his failure to establish his place by the side of the most eloquent. And when he confesses "if we are on our way to a quieter style, I am not sorry for it," the implication is that he is relieved that "the giants" have had their day, too. Carlyle and Macaulay, as long as they are brilliant in the public eye, remind him painfully of his own missing the mark. With them in the background, his

1. "Words and Their Glory," in Politics and History, p. 210.

his own shortcoming in stature is no longer conspicuous and he can concentrate on a change of tone. For Morley's style in his Fortnightly period was not quiet. It was not loud either, but it was grand, with the best features of classical prose adapted to the modern temper; and a comparison of it with Macaulay's or with Carlyle's, that of Carlyle's Voltaire or his Burns, not his Sartor Resartus or his French Revolution, shows unmistakably--and this is the rest of the "whole truth" about Morley's style in 1871--that the zealous young rationalist was influenced by both of the giants. There was no imitation, and Voltaire is the better for that; but the breadth of vocabulary, the vigor in movement, the self-assertiveness in tone, the finality of pronouncement, the keenness and distinctiveness of mind in seeing traits and arguments in new lights, the particular kind of originality and picturesqueness in much of the figurative language, all show how strong and durable the impression of Macaulay and Carlyle was when Morley read them at Oxford.

ROUSSEAU

All that has been said of the purpose and nature of Morley's treatment of Voltaire holds true as well of Rousseau.¹ Morley undertook the study because there was "no full biographical account of the man in English," and Frederic Harrison complimented him on its success because he knew no work which contained "so much that is at once central and

1. Two volumes, 1873. Revised in 1878.

scientific about the problems"¹ of their time. What made it "in many ways the most important book" of the day was not only what Morley asserted that Rousseau did or said, not only how he described him doing or saying it, but the contemporary significance he ascribed to it, the historical interpretation he placed on it. Rousseau, too, was seen illuminated against a special background of the 1870's.

In its literary merit Rousseau ranks close to Voltaire. There is the same brilliant, high level of style to distinguish it. Morley's ability to strike off telling phrases was never more active; his phraseology is incontestably charged and accurate. Most of it is hard to resist quoting. In addition to sharply tempered prose, there is again much that is ecclesiastical in its tone, which a single phrase like "those singular spirits who come from time to time to quicken the germs of strange thought and shake the quietness of the earth"² is enough to illustrate. It is this quality, this particular kind of gravity and dignity, that makes an appreciator like Morley's biographer, Mr. Hirst, cite some of his purple patches as fit to take their place alongside of acknowledged passages of the loftiest English prose and rank Morley among the greatest masters of all time.³

1. Hirst, I, p. 235.

2. Rousseau, I, p. 6.

3. Morley is represented in The Oxford Book of English Prose, to be sure, but only by a passage from his essay on Wordsworth.

Most of the chief themes of Voltaire are echoed in Rousseau. At the outset there is a plea for broadmindedness and tolerance in considering the great confessor. Morley's method of appraising is to be "open and liberal" and he conscientiously urges the necessity in such a case of enlarging "the vocabulary beyond the pedantic formulas of unreal ethics." He realizes the precariousness of undertaking an honest biographical account of a man whose life is still unmentionable to most of his Victorian audience. But he is no prude, and, considering the obstacles in front of him, the frankness with which he discusses Rousseau's erotic aberrations is commendable. He is not out to placard physiological data; the details of Rousseau's irregularities are repellent to him; hence he pays attention to the effect which those irregularities had on the man who practiced them, and to the lesson which such conduct ought to teach humanity in general. Mme. de Warens, for example, whose extra-marital attachment to Rousseau apparently interested Morley, and who eventually sank into abandoned promiscuity and died in poverty and wretchedness, is the subject for a short sermon on continence, in which the biographer assures us that "the old hoary world" values it, along with prudence and honesty, as a good thing because "the breach of such virtues is ever in the long run deadly to mutual trust, to strength, to freedom, to collectedness, which are the reserve of humanity against days of ordeal." This same valuation had been, of course, a strong feature of his creed as stated

in Voltaire. Later, in having to deal with the escapade involving Rousseau and Mme. de Houdetot, an affaire which precipitated the Nouvelle Heloise, Morley cannot stifle his disgust and justifiably sums it all up in a phrase which is one of the most picturesque he ever wrote: "a scene of moral humiliation that half sickens, half appals, and we turn away with dismay as from a vision of the horrid loves of heavy-eyed and scaly shapes that haunted the warm, primeval ooze."¹

There is the expected hatred of non-humanitarian Church dogma, too. Rousseau's begetting of illegitimate children, bequeathed to institutions, can be condoned, for the Frenchman acted charitably to them, but the Christian clergy, on the other hand, can never be forgiven for commanding ignorant Church members through the centuries to burden the world with thousands of children, incontinently produced and destined to be brought up in squalor.

There is a good deal of Comtism as well in the work, both in Morley's attitude toward history and in his religious sentiment about humanity struggling toward a millennium, which, he acknowledges, will require "uncounted myriads of lives, and immeasurable geologic periods of time, for its high and beneficent consummation."²

But there are certain new notes sounded in Rousseau

1. Rousseau, I, p. 249.

2. Ibid., p. 174.

which indicate developments in Morley himself. There is a more explicit statement of what literary criticism should do than any other he has yet made. It penetrates beneath the surface of the question and reveals a sharp discernment of its constituents. In one respect, so far as it concerns the instrumental part of criticism, the method, the technique of it, it is classical. Like Johnson, Morley is not in favor of "numbering the streaks on the tulip." Subjective identification with a text and subjective "interpretation" of it, too, he condemns; but this does not mean that he applies his own method rigidly, impersonally, according to fixed rules. It is simply that criticism ought to "separate what is accidental in form, transitory in manner, and merely local in suggestion, from the general ideas that live under a casual and particular literary robe."¹ Too fine a concern with details of style or construction, too strong a pre-occupation with idiosyncrasies of the author's character or conduct are bad and do nothing but encourage "poverty of spirit." "Larger impressions and more durable meanings" are what are important in appraising a work, and a critic can understand an author only by "advancing to the central elements" of his being. And so, following this credo, Morley goes into an analysis of Rousseau's character early in his book and sums up his "central elements" in a brilliantly written picture of "the type of character that lay unfolded

1. Rousseau, II, p. 21.

in the youth of seventeen." Rousseau was fundamentally a paradox: "a vagrant sensuous temperament, strangely compounded with Genovese austerity; an ardent and fantastic imagination, incongruously shot with threads of firm reason; too little conscience and too much . . ."¹

Then, apropos of this keenness of Morley's, this ability to go beneath exteriors, there is a most interesting examination of Rousseau's mental processes, really an excursion into psychology, strikingly modern for 1873. And though he is forced to use a figure to make clear what he wants to say, there is no denying the acuteness and the fitness of his conclusion. Recollection was much sweeter to Rousseau than actual experience, and images were much more titillating than facts, because "his rational part was fatally protected by a non-conducting envelope of sentiment; this intercepted clear ideas on their passage, and even cut off the direct and true impress of those objects and their relations, which are the material of clear ideas."²

A third new feature of Rousseau is a denunciation of censorship in literature. Even though Morley, two years earlier, after accounting historically for the ribaldry in Voltaire's Pucelle, had justified his own depreciation of the book, he had not examined the question of censorship. Here it is thought through and his conclusion vehemently

1. Rousseau, I, p. 44.

2. Ibid., p. 84.

stated. Certain books are undoubtedly inflammatory for children; the Bible in this respect is as dangerous as the Nouvelle Heloise. But this fact does not mean that they ought to be kept from adults or ought not to be written. The most consequential human relationship and the most far-reaching human passion are as vital to literature as they are powerful in life, and so-called incendiary books must be acknowledged to treat them frankly. A censorship which would aim to extirpate such themes would be a "puerile doctrine that must emasculate literature and art."¹ Besides, immorality is a relative thing, and must be looked at broad-mindedly, historically. The Nouvelle Heloise is shocking to a contemporary public nourished on the milk diet of pure Victorian literature, but "to the people who read Crebillon and La Pucelle, it was without doubt elevating." This is not to say, of course, that all the loathsome, garbaged details about perverted human instincts and emotions have a right to be paraded on the pages of what is called literature. Morley, it is true, could assert, "In any case, let us know the facts about human nature, and the pathological facts no less than the others. These are the first thing, and the second, and the third also."² But here he meant that such facts are indispensable only to the physician and the psychologist for their understanding and successful treatment

1. Rousseau, II, p. 26.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

of mentally sick men and women; in the craft of writing they have no part to play.

The Nouvelle Heloise, Morley praises for a reason additional to those customarily followed by literary critics. It was a picture of idealized domesticity, an arraignment of all that was bad in the domestic service of the old aristocratic order, and as such "marks a beginning of true democracy, as distinguished from the mere pulverisation of aristocracy" and implies "the essential priority of social over political reform."¹ This is different appreciation because it comes from a Liberal critic, who is more sensitive to historical developments than a reviewer of purely aesthetic interests would be, and who keeps his eye more constantly open for ideas of social significance, thought of a humanitarian kind, in what he reads. Democracy owes its existence to Liberalism, and it manifests itself in individualism. Therefore, when he discovers in Rousseau a literary expression of democratic thought, he pronounces it important.

Last, Morley points out errors in the plan of child education as Rousseau described it in his Social Contract. Again, it is his Liberal training which sharpens his eye to detect errors--in particular, his association with John Stuart Mill and his absorption of Mill's educational ideas. Rousseau placed far too much emphasis on self love as a motivating

1. Rousseau, II, p. 45. This priority, as will be shown in a later chapter, Morley never ceased to preach.

force in human beings and in his educational scheme made no attempt at all to curb it. His system would result in individuals who have no respect for society and utter contempt for authority; reared on egotism, they would be thrown into a social state which they soon would transform into a "moral wilderness." Furthermore, the technique of their teacher in their early days, as Rousseau outlined it, depended too much on stratagem and "artificially contrived circumstances." What it was imperative to develop in the child, Rousseau missed: "spontaneousness of habit," which can only result from complete sympathy between the child and its teacher. Not that Morley was impetuously idealistic about human nature. He knew it is not the reason of the pupil that can be appealed to, for that reason is only embryo. The "firm and promptly acting habit" which must be acquired early will depend on his being taught by good example to act through the "desire to please."¹ The permeation of Mill's thought in all of this is obvious.

But, despite the brilliant, forceful writing of Rousseau, and despite the understanding of a character antithetically different from Morley's own, the impression that the book leaves is not wholly pleasing. For what Morley intended the book to be, a presentation of a misunderstood character to an unenlightened public, there is too much of the intellectual about it to give it a wide appeal. Morley had high

1. Rousseau, II, p. 257.

ideals about writing and was excessively conscious of himself in relation to a line below him that he must never descend to, because it meant vulgarity and cheapness, even if it did mean popularity. In this respect Macaulay and his wide public, as will appear later, were his constant concern. He hoped for a popularity like Macaulay's, even if he did not covet it, and there is near-resentment in the brusque way he customarily dismissed the latter's vogue as being due to a cheap flashiness and a tickling of the public's palate. Morley hoped for popularity and yet, at the same time, considered himself one of the rationalistic elite. He too strongly felt himself an author writing for his own chosen few, for, about Rousseau, he remarked to Harrison that he doubted whether there was "much of a public for this kind of work in England, or anywhere else out of Paris."¹

This excess of the intellectual element is inseparable from what Gilbert Murray considers the chief weakness of the French studies, the "sleepless austerity of his critical attitude." Morley, he says, never allows himself to enjoy his characters as characters; his liking for them is always subject to qualification, and he never allows them "a long run without a jerk" on the leash.² There is a good deal in Rousseau to justify this opinion. Morley himself wrote, though not in the highest seriousness, that "pity is the right mind in which to think of the miserable wretch."³

1. Hirst, I, p. 237.

2. "John Morley," The Nation (London), XXXIV (January 12, 1924), 540-2

3. Hirst, I, p. 221.

And constantly, in his analysis of that "very mixed personage," there is censure of a fault ready for every praise of a virtue.

In the long run, Rousseau's lack of the historical sense, his emotional abandon, which in his Confessions was "more revolting in its self-feeling" than anything any monk or saint ever wrote, and his "pernicious" views on women, whom he wanted to place in a "semi-philosophic seraglio," made any admiration of him by Morley impossible. And, finally, in the prose of the book itself, there is something that comes close to the very "overleaping ambition" he later counselled against because it was as disastrous in literature "as in so many other things."¹ The striking phrases are almost too many, the brilliance is almost too consistent --not in any pictorial quality per se, for Morley was never fond of bold decoration, but in the cerebral sharpness and dexterity revealed and the intellectual demands made. In other words, there is hardly any relaxation possible for the reader; he has the constant impression of confronting a mind tense and unflagging in its process of analysis.

DIDEROT

Morley's two volumes on Diderot and the Encyclopedists, published in 1878, closed his series of French Studies. They were to be more descriptive than either Voltaire or Rousseau and possessed the special function of bringing the "social significance and positive quality of the group into the

1. See "Words and Their Glory" in Politics and History, p. 198 .

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prominence" they deserved. In this respect Diderot was to be a kind of summary of all that had gone before, and in so far as an account of the Encyclopedia and the men who created it is concerned, Morley succeeded in making it that. So far as the general character of the eighteenth century is concerned, however, and so far as its great problems in philosophy, science, politics, and religion are important, he says nothing more final or illuminating than he has already said in Turgot or Voltaire or Rousseau. His point of view is no broader; his voice is not more commanding. The important generalizations concerning the age have already been decisively laid down, and Diderot helps the reader to see it more clearly as a whole by reiterating and filling in in much detail. There is a wealth of information about the century in the work. In its purely literary quality, however, it is not climactic. Morley was almost never strong in description, probably because, temperamentally, he was not inclined toward it, and Diderot, which is a special effort to be effective in it, falls below the early pages of Rousseau, which were remarkable for their account of the formation of the Romanticist's character, and certainly below the whole of Robespierre, which, again, is the most vivid piece Morley ever wrote. The style in these last volumes is not up to the high level of Voltaire and Rousseau; much of their brilliance and animation is lacking, and Morley's own interest

1. Diderot and the Encyclopedists, Preface, p. 3.

in the Frenchmen appears to be flagging. Perhaps he has been at work too long on the series. At any rate there are passages in Diderot which leave the impression that he has not yet caught his breath after the pace of the two earlier studies. Frequently he avoids detailed explanations of topics by referring to definitive statements that can be found in either Voltaire or Rousseau, as though the exertion needed for reopening and re-examining the matters would be exhausting--almost the excuse of a tired man. The vigor in his tone is sporadic, and there are places when his comments are perfunctory.

Like the preceding biographical studies, Diderot is interesting and important for what it reveals of Morley as well as for what it contributes about the editor of the Encyclopedia. Since Morley is naturally interested in the personality before him, his own reaction to that personality, his own remarks about it, are valuable. It is the relation of Diderot's principles to leading beliefs of his own age that is vital to him. And so what appeals to us is to see just how much of himself Morley incorporated in his analysis. "No man was ever writ down save by himself." Here again the conclusion is that Diderot does not mark a climax; there is reiteration but no further revelation. The matter of religion comes up for frequent discussion, and what we already know of Morley's attitude toward it, we find restated. There is a distinction between the rationalists' attack on the Church

of England in the 1870's and "the use of those more brutal weapons in controversy" by Frenchmen against the Catholic Church a century before. And then, true to the rationalist's urge inside him to know why, Morley goes on to account for the change in method. Wordsworth's poetry and the Oxford tracts are responsible, he reasons, because they have tempered the Anglican church and given it "an equity, a breadth, an elevation, a pensive grace" that it never had before.¹

There is also the expected bold indictment of Catholicism and defense of the Revolution in the assertion that all of the crimes and all of the blood shed by the French cataclysm are only a drop in comparison with the fanatical excesses with which the Church has stained the book of history. And Morley, like John Stuart Mill before him, deplors the fact that the breakdown of the belief in God has so often resulted in a corresponding collapse ethically, but he explains it reasonably by remarking that it is impossible to build sound ethics "on the shifting sands and rotting foundations of theology."²

The influence of science on men's lives is naturally given a good deal of emphasis, and Morley classifies Diderot as a "social destroyer by accident, but in intention . . . a truly scientific moralist, penetrated by the spirit of

1. Diderot, I, p. 215.

2. Ibid., p. 71

observation and experiment." ¹ Praise of his candor and baldness in dissection, though, leads Morley into a consideration of Diderot's psychology, and that, inevitably, carries over into the basic field of sex and sexual ethics, where his attitude remains as firm as it was in Rousseau. Censorship is wholly bad, but a line must be drawn somewhere, and good taste is the only agency to help a man draw it; the scientific laboratory is one thing, the literary page another. Diderot's attempt "to give an air of polite comedy to functions and secretions must be pronounced detestable." ²

Morley argues against Diderot, too, for advocating the abolition of marriage. If society is to hold together, the units composing it must be stable; abolish the home, and society is destroyed. For the home rests on a foundation, too--the moral integrity of the man and woman who organize it; and they can have no integrity if they reduce their attraction "to its purely physical elements" and return to the "nakedness of the brute;" the moral associations clustered around the relationship must be maintained. Morley is not playing the sentimental philosopher here. He is writing more frankly about sex and the marriage relationship than he has ever written before. He acknowledges that in too many cases the home has been a "ghastly failure," brutally cruel to the woman, and "spirit-breaking" to the man, but

1. Diderot, II, p. 52.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

such instances are exceptions, and he pleads for a development in the individual of moral reliability and spiritual sympathy. Because Diderot, like Victor Hugo after him, constantly "poured fulminant denunciations" on Society in the abstract, he will have to be regarded as inferior to the greatest English thinkers, from Milton down to Mill, who impressed "new ideas on the Individual" and exacted a "vigorous personal answer to the moral and spiritual call." This is exactly the sort of fervent criticism that Voltaire contained, when Morley argued that life ought to be more than a meaningless parcel of thrums; and, at bottom, it is one with the ideals that Matthew Arnold gave voice to in Dover Beach. Morley went further with science and rationalism than did Arnold, but he would not go all the way to an absurd nihilism; at bottom, there remained spiritual questions, profound problems involving a purpose for life which he felt objective reasoning could not solve.

Diderot is praised for his penetrating understanding of women, which was in such contrast to Rousseau's superficial and immoral conception of them, but Morley laments that he did not see "the guiding idea of the unity of the intellectual history of man, and the organic integrity of thought."¹ A habit of suspending judgment in Diderot, which Morley refers to as a "reasoned leniency," calls for admiration, because this particular mark of breadth of mind, he had

1. Diderot, I, p. 240

earlier singled out in Burke, who maintained that he did not know how to indict a whole nation. Diderot's great pity, too, makes Morley commend him, but praise of this quality is to be expected, for Morley's favorite aphorism, engraved over the fireplace in the library of his own home, and used time and time again in his own writing, was one by Francis Bacon: "The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath." Diderot's style, appraised impartially, Morley finds with too much of German heaviness and dispersiveness to rank with the best French of his period.

Diderot is significant, finally, for several instances of what is almost a sense of humor on Morley's part. On one occasion, in speaking of the didactic drama which Diderot helped to popularize and develop, he regrets that "the emphasizing moralists of Diderot's school never understood that virtue may be made attractive without pulling the reader or the spectator by the sleeve and urgently shouting in his ear how attractive virtue is." Even mild facetiousness of this sort is rare in Morley.

The French studies, representing ten of Morley's most productive years in criticism, are enough to stand as an illustration of his critical temper and method. He appears as a rationalist before all else--a rationalist abhorring metaphysics, hating theology, yet reverencing things of the spirit; a rationalist who keeps his historic sense foremost and maintains that no modern thinking being can lead an

intelligent life without it. He is a utilitarian, and, since he hopes for the greatest good for the greatest number, is always interested vitally in social movements and political theories. Comtism carries this attitude one step further toward optimism, and as a Comtist, he believes in progress and looks for an eventual consummation of it; he will go so far as to feel that benevolent emotion directed toward humanity ought to supersede reverence of the Christian deity as a religious force. He is a Liberal, too, and that means, along with his rationalism, utilitarianism, and Comtism, that he believes passionately in the individual--male or female--and in the individual's right to freedom and his capability of development. And, so far as a way of acquiring truth is concerned, he is like his age, scientific; it is the method of observation and analysis alone which is reliable, and what man ought to believe in are material, visible facts, not a priori postulates. These leading beliefs are his critical materials, his tools of judgment. In simplified form they are what he values as the motivating forces of life, and as he cherishes them in himself, he will look for them and acclaim them in others.

In his method he measures his subject against a social background. More than that, he frequently places him in sharp relief against a background of all history. So Rousseau, considered in relation to social speculation before and after his time as well as in terms of the social theory of his own day, is found wanting, because he was blind to all the ante-

cedents of that contemporary thought and custom which he wanted to uproot at a pulling, when, to be understood, they would have had to be traced back through centuries. Rousseau, conveniently shortsighted, could see only the imagined perfect state of nature before civilization began and the idealized state that would spring into existence after the present social system was remade. There was no continuity in his conception, and not enough soundness in his speculation. All the complexities involved in growth were beyond him. But growth meant a great deal to Morley, and he thought in terms of it. Darwinian theory had colored everybody's thinking, and no institution, like no organism, could be considered apart from its evolution. Hence, how men thought about history, what ideas they contributed to social thought, and what they did for the intellectual or spiritual benefit of humanity were all-important in his estimating of them.

Criticism, then, had widened its scope. It was no longer what it had been in the hands of Samuel Johnson-- a judgment according to "taste" that was rather the impressing of a powerful enlightened personality in domination over the minds about him; and it was not even any longer the restrained appraising of Macaulay--brilliant and fascinating as that appraising had been,--because it had consisted too often in focussing on biographical highlights and had been too often liable to narrow moral classification. In the modern critical scheme, the character of the subject ought to be impartially considered and subordinated to a patient

search for his ideas and an analysis of their relationship to the intellectual currents of his age. In its purpose and technique, criticism ought to be scientific, to substitute "becoming for being, the relative for the absolute, dynamic¹ movement for dogmatic immobility." His temper and method, then, are well illustrated by the French studies; and so is his vehicle, his prose style, distinguished by "constant precision of phrase--elaborate sustentation of argument."²

THE POLITICAL BIOGRAPHIES

Since to Morley, no less than to Arnold, literature was a criticism of life--one of "the great humanizing arts," "the master organon for giving men the two precious qualities of . . . multiplicity of sympathies and steadiness of sight,"³ the five political biographies of Burke, Cobden, Walpole, Cromwell, and Gladstone, are not out of place in a consideration of his critical activity. As biographies of distinguished men in English history, apart from the literary value of the writing in them, they ought to be worth while for what they reveal of certain attitudes of their author toward his subjects, for what they show of his own criticism of life. How much of a "multiplicity of sympathies" appears in them? What degree of "steadiness of sight"? Much of him is in

1. Recollections, I, p. 65.

2. Diderot, II, p. 38. A phrase used by Morley in discussing what conversation, to be good, did not need to have.

3. Voltaire, p. 95.

the biographies, just as a good deal was in the French studies. His wide sympathy among personalities is evident, of course, merely from a survey of the different historical figures in which he took an interest: Rousseau as opposed to Voltaire, Cromwell as opposed to Cobden, De Maistre against Robespierre, Walpole against Gladstone. And Morley recognized his own adaptability very early. He described it in a figure to Harrison almost vivaciously: "I am by nature vagrant and bee-like, gathering honey (and acids) from every subject that opens."¹ His "steadiness of sight" is equally evident and consistent. The values in life which he early learned to cherish, and the objectives of criticism which he was illustrating in the French studies, he clings to through these biographies, in other words, over a period of thirty-six years, from 1867 to 1903.

In general, the writing in this English series is below the sustained force of the earlier group. Burke is an exception, but it was the first of the five, and Burke as a man held a special attraction for Morley until the end of his life. Cromwell, too, is not markedly inferior in certain respects, but Cobden, Walpole, and Gladstone are reticently and soberly--frequently dully--written, with nothing of the brilliance of Rousseau or Voltaire. The fact that they were outgrowths of his preoccupation with contemporary politics and so became laden with an intolerable weight of dates and

1. Hirst, I, p. 191.

and facts is partly responsible for the decline. In the case of Walpole it is probably wholly responsible. Worth further consideration is the fact that Cobden and Gladstone were contemporaries of Morley and left such an abundance of biographical materials at hand that, in writing their lives, he considered it appropriate to remove himself almost completely. Perhaps growing older also had something to do with the falling-off, because a later friend's testimony bears it out that in his older age writing became a painful effort to him.¹ More important, however, in accounting for tediousness and the soberness is his own feeling about biography; and, since Cobden and Gladstone are more truly biographical--in their length, at any rate--than the shorter studies of Walpole, Burke, and Cromwell, they would be expected to conform more strictly to it. Though he never evolved a worked-out method for biography as a separate branch of literature, he always insisted that it was not the biographer's task to "rake among the private obscurities of even first-rate men;" in studying his subject, he was to keep himself as much as he could "in contact with what is great."² In other words, biography, like the best in other kinds of literature, should edify, and what edifies is not the full-drawn picture of a man, but an exposition of the

1. See J. H. Morgan's John, Viscount Morley, An Appreciation and Some Reminiscences, p. 59.

2. Voltaire, p. 81.

of the principles by which he acted. Personalities had no pictorial appeal to Morley; they held him through the ideas to which they gave expression. Values in character rather than incidents in narrative were his concern. Moreover, since Morley did not feel himself equipped temperamentally to write biography, he conscientiously refrained from undertaking what would profess actually to be one. In the "hands of a man of the requisite capacity and sensibility," biography was probably supreme among all forms of prose, but one could "almost count upon one's fingers the really good" specimens of it in English literature. Not many lives either would inspire such masterpieces. And so Morley announced in the preface to his Edmund Burke that he would devote himself not to a literary reproduction of the man in whom he was interested but to a historical "criticism of his . . . relations, and contributions to the main transactions of his time." Finally, there is this to say, that the older Morley grew, the more firmly did he believe that no biography could penetrate a man and reveal his inmost self, in the face of his complexities and hidden streams of character. "The half of us," he maintained, "is misunderstanding, even between those who are most close to one another, and whom the action most concerns."¹

BURKE

Morley held a lifelong attachment to Edmund Burke. He was stirred by his earliest study of the great statesman,

1. "See "The Man of Letters as Hero," Macmillan's, LI

spoke of him twenty years later as "the most majestic of them all," and only five years before his death was still reading him with the exclamations: "He is a great theme. What a mind! His fame grows greater with time! Macaulay was right when he said of certain passages, "How divine!"¹ The first sketch appeared in instalments in The Fortnightly Review in 1867; it was published later that year in book form, and by 1876 had been reviewed in one source "as equal to Macaulay's little biographies."² Burke had had much of the rationalist in him; he had hated the "very sound of metaphysical distinctions" and abstract systems. Aristotelian, too, he had insisted that political panaceas were futile; government measures must be tried through practice and must be made to suit man's nature "as modified by his habits." He had seen the equal importance, along with intellectual habits, of moral and spiritual ideals in life; he had distrusted logic as a single, guiding force and written that unsparing, malevolent use of it could blast every human ideal and institution. He had been liberal in much of his attitude toward the people--liberal without being democratic; he had championed the cause of the Americans in the Revolutionary crisis by saying that England's winning the war would prove fatal in the end to the liberties of England itself,"

1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 85.

2. Hirst, II, p. 15. This early version is, of course, Edmund Burke, a different work from the later Burke. Apart, however, from the absence of the excellent section on the French Revolution (about which, see ante, pp. 167-70) and from the presence of certain additional information about Burke's

and he had declared: "Whenever the people have a feeling, they commonly are in the right; they sometimes mistake the physician."¹ He had had some conception of the continuity of history, too; and in what he wrote of the traditions and functions of social classes in England, Morley could praise his insight as showing "moral, historic, conservative imagination, in which order, social continuity, and the endless projection of past into present, and of present into future are clothed with the sanctity of an inner shrine."² Burke had believed in the goodness of the majority of mankind, too; there had been no retrogression in his scheme of things. He had seen the importance of order: liberty with order in the state being equivalent to justice, and order in the individual's own life to be secured through what he called "just prejudice," prejudice with latent reason in it, rendering "a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts." To him, as to Morley, the establishment of a fundamental dignity and integrity in a human being was the basis essential for a life that was to be more than "a meaningless parcel of thrums." Even though Burke had prized peace above truth, then, Morley found him in these other important respects a great-minded, great-souled man--a fore-

personal life, the second treatment is substantially the same as the first and so will be used here for all the material quoted in illustration of Burke's principles.

1. Burke, p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

shadower of certain aspects of Liberalism. Furthermore, Burke had been an ideal combination of the man of action and the man of letters, and Morley, with an eye to his own future, could write revealingly: "Like some other men in our history, he showed that books are a better preparation for statesmanship than early training in the subordinate posts and among the permanent officials of a public department."¹ His fervid, magnificent style, Morley admired, "because his sentiment was lofty," but those passages of it were to be preferred where reason and judgment and lucidity, not declamation, produced the "effects of eloquence."²

Burke, then, as early as it came, was one of Morley's most significant books. First, it was a clear, vigorous, and full presentation of the character of the great statesman without being idolatrous or prolix, and, in making prominent the ideas he had stood for, in demonstrating the consistency throughout his career, Morley disproved the assertion of so many previous historians that Burke had moved from liberalism in his youth to reactionaryism in his old age. Morley showed that fundamentally he was conservative in his earliest days, and, that despite his intense hatred of the French Revolution in his decline, he was not shifting further to the right in damning it. Second, the book was a revelation of the base of conservatism inside Morley himself. It was

1. Burke, p. 203.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

not for nothing that Morley praised Burke's "just prejudice" and the other qualities mentioned above. But it was a time when all issues were hot, and in the excitement of the moment a theological stand was readily confused with a moral one, a scientific with a political. So Morley himself in 1871, four years after the instalments of Burke in The Fortnightly, was to be grotesquely misinterpreted. He stood for Parliament in 1869 for Blackburn, his home town, but the election went against him. Two years later his Voltaire appeared, and the very people whom he had wanted to represent as a political Liberal turned against him and denounced him as an atheist, a spiritual as well as social anarchist. A Blackburn reviewer of his book encouraged his flock to thank heaven that they had been spared sending such a destroyer to the English government.¹ There were similar denunciations after the publication of Rousseau. Not all of this was an exaggeration of Morley's political radicalism, and utter blindness to the spiritual principles strong and active in him. Outraged defamers would have known, had they taken the pains to read Edmund Burke, that for England, no less than, for Heaven, Morley advocated order as a first law.

COBDEN

The Life of Richard Cobden was published in 1881 and was a literary effort that Morley certainly never would have

1. For an account of the episode and a reprint of part of the review, see Hirst, I, p. 211.

undertaken, had his strong interest in politics not pre-disposed him to it. What was more fitting than that one of the greatest of recent Liberal leaders should be commemorated in prose by one of the chief contemporary Liberal voices? Yet, though the subject was somewhat officially assumed on Morley's part, the result of his work on it is not at all unpleasing. There was much in Cobden that he found to admire, much that he found they had in common. Temperamentally, despite his common birth, Cobden, too, was graceful, idealistic, dignified, and made himself well-read. He got to know and like French, and became the friend of Prosper Mérimée. He was morally opposed to slavery, and he denounced the secession of the South in America in 1861. His political experience led him to condemn English Imperialism, to hate force instead of justice as a governmental policy, to admire "Prussian efficiency and intelligence," to criticize the British Constitution as too much "a thing of monopolies and churchcraft and sinecures, armorial hocus-pocus, primogeniture and pageantry,"¹ and to urge tolerance and more self-government in England's treatment of Ireland, adding pertinently that as Catholic and Protestant could not "live together in Belfast, excepting under something like martial law," the English were not the people "to teach Christian charity and tolerance to the Hindoos."² Morley's own

1. Cobden, p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 452.

experience had led him to all of these stands by 1881. More than that, Morley, who in 1912 could still declare that the essential in any community was "a grand reserve of wise, thoughtful, unselfish, long-sighted men and women" with "parliamentary power enough,"¹ had every reason, thirty-one years earlier, to feel himself one with Cobden, who insisted that it was not the franchise itself but an enlightened electorate, not a revolution but the schoolhouse, that could effect a change for the better in England and make it permanent. Cobden had sympathized with women, too, and believed that as the doctrine of physical force lost favor and a belief in moral power succeeded it, they would "gain in the scale." Equally strong in making for a personal bond between him and Morley was his attitude toward religion. Cobden confessed that, by nature, he had much "veneration" and a "sympathy for men who act under that impulse," because he revered it "as the great leverage which has moved mankind to powerful action."² No man, theologian or scientist, could do more than profess "to act on the morality of the New Testament." And this sentence which he wrote about the dedication of his life, apart from slight differences in vocabulary, might well have been written by Morley himself: "At all events, let us remember that to live usefully is far better than living

1. Politics and History, p. 73.

2. Cobden, p. 134.

long. And do not let us deprive ourselves of the gratification at last, a gratification which the selfish never have, that we have not embittered our whole lives with heaping up money, but that we have given a part of our time to more rational and worthy exertions."¹

These qualities in Cobden, then, made for Morley's admiration of him, and it is that admiration which makes itself felt in the tone of the biography, to enliven it and give it some human interest. For Morley's prose itself would never impart any vitality to the book; there is very little of him in it, and even that little is subdued, without any of the rhetoric, the sonority and the gravity, of the best of the French Studies. He quotes abundantly from Cobden's letters and journals, sometimes making whole chapters of the extracts, and it may be that the simplicity and homeliness of Cobden's style have influenced him. More explanatory of his withdrawing from the picture and of his shading of his prose is his conviction about biography, mentioned earlier, that it ought to be an objective presentation of the subject, with no sustained concern with any aspects of his character except those that edify. As a consequence, the biographer himself must be in retirement. And here, with a mass of material at his disposal, Morley lets Cobden speak for himself, limiting his own comments to a minimum and keeping their tone impersonal; it is his selection and arrangement

1. Cobden, p. 80.

of that material which makes the book a readable piece of biography. But Mr. Hirst, Morley's own biographer, confuses editing with creating and exclaims rhapsodically that the book is "a superb example of literary craftsmanship; . . . the prose of a genius in biography is like the poetry of the sacred bards who save their Agamemnons from the long night of oblivion."¹

WALPOLE

All that has been said about the worth of The Life of Richard Cobden will become clear when Morley's Walpole is put up alongside it for comparison. Walpole is a political biography, too, and, one would like to believe that it would never have been written if Morley had not been acting as self-appointed literary commemorator for his party. Unfortunately this wish is not borne out by fact. Because Walpole, long before Britain's expulsion of the French from the New World, had rejected a parliamentary proposal to tax colonists in America, Morley, in his twenties, considered him a "pro-²foundly sagacious" man. Although the book was published in 1884, three years after Cobden, it marks a retrogression in literary value and human interest, and these two qualities are practically synonymous where biography is concerned. Walpole is deadly reading. What interest the eighteenth century minister could have had for Morley, outside of certain political tendencies which he exemplified, it is impossible

1. Hirst, II, p. 111.

2. Edmund Burke, p. 126.

to see. The biography was apparently not remembered as a labor of love, for Morley never speaks of it later, never quotes from it or alludes to themes in it as he is accustomed to do with certain others. Walpole as a man was his anti-thesis, and there was nothing in his life that was matter for great literature, literature of edification. In his biographer's own words, he had no "moral dignity in his character" and his social conduct would have made him intolerable to Victorians; he was without an "elevated imagination" and in his speeches was never "truly eloquent;" and he "looked upon writing as a mechanical business," took no delight in reading, and called musicians "a pack of fiddlers."¹ Spiritually and aesthetically, he was benighted. To see anything at all of merit in him, Morley recommends that men of action be judged "by the standards of men of action."² Walpole, through his "penetration and rapidity" as a politician, had defeated a bill that would have given the House of Lords "a fixed preponderance of power over Crown and Commons alike," and he deserved compliment for setting his "deep stamp" on the form of English government.³ He had possessed the three necessary qualifications "of a chief minister," acute judgment, wide knowledge "of the business in hand," and tenacious will; and fifty-five years before

1. Walpole, p. 111.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. Ibid., p. 57.

Adam Smith he had advised that trade be made "as practicable and as easy as may be."¹ His other great contribution, in terms of policy, was that he had "made a long stride towards establishing the doctrine of Cabinet solidarity."² These facts are the only reasons for the book's being.

CROMWELL

What matters in the case of Morley's Oliver Cromwell is, first, that it was not undertaken at any official request, and, second, that it is a presentation of a man who was both authoritarian and liberal. It was the combination of these two sides of his character that fascinated Morley (though they would obviously appeal to any biographer of the great Puritan) and, though he simplifies his treatment of them, he makes it none the less strong-lined. The book appeared in July, 1900, late in Morley's career, and there is an apology in the preface for its appearing at all; had he known soon enough what the historian Gardiner was planning on Cromwell in an exhaustive way, he would never have undertaken to write his smaller book, but he had already launched into the stream by the time he made the discovery, and there was nothing else to do but move steadily on across. In the impression it leaves, Cromwell reminds one strongly of Burke, not only for the occasional comparison of the two men or of their statements,³ but for Morley's reaction to Cromwell's

1. Walpole, p. 161.

2. Ibid., p. 161.

3. See Cromwell, p. 204, where Morley says that Cromwell's "In the government of nations, that which is to be looked after is the affections of the people." might have come "straight out of Burke."

character, too, which, as in the case of Burke, is one of admiration before his breadth of sight, his practical-mindedness, and his expansive soul. Here, as he has done before, Morley is fair enough to introduce the reactionaryism of his subject and give it unbiased consideration in his study. He never tries to overlook or excuse; he only regrets. Nevertheless, after allowances have been made for his frankness in handling the narrowing change which overtook the great leader and the brutal excesses which stained his dictatorship, what one remembers as uppermost in the book are some of those early declarations of Cromwell's--with such a thrilling ring for Morley because they were so startling in their liberal humanity,¹--and Morley's own last word on him, "what in a single sentence defines the true place of Cromwell in our history," that, in a time of crisis, he struck for unity of the state and liberty and "crushed the absolutist pretensions alike of crown and mitre."²

GLADSTONE

Morley's Life of William Gladstone (1903) offers a problem at the outset: what made for the special connection between him and his subject? The task itself of getting the biography together was a commission from the crown, but beyond that, what made him consider it a labor of love, what made him intend the work to be a commemoration? At

1. Cromwell, p. 432, for example: "It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition he may abuse it."

2. Cromwell, p. 429.

first sight these questions appear to be stumbling blocks that cannot be got over. Huxley, for example, had summed up Gladstone as the man who had debased "the greatest intellect in Europe" by "simply following majorities and the crowd."¹ Morley was of the school of Huxley. Would he not feel the same way about the prime minister? Indeed, in the early Fortnightly days, though he praised Gladstone on at least one occasion for his industry, official knowledge, financial ingenuity, and love of improvement, Morley did not hesitate at other times to stigmatize the great politician's mind as a "busy mint" for coining "logical counterfeits"² and to denounce him because, in his fondness for "bewildering words or impotent silence," he "never took up a decided line about foreign affairs but once in his life, and that was when he declared with a terseness as unprecedented with him as it was unlucky, that the Southern slaveholders were made into a nation."³ Was his contempt for that "fund of brutal, stubborn biblicalism in our Briton" and "that don of hypocrites and thieves at Westminster"⁴ only assumed, and did he later perjure himself when he got into office under one of the most pious, most orthodox high-church statesmen England had ever had? To all of this the answer is, no. There is

1. Gladstone, p. 536 (Vol. III).

2. "The Struggle for National Education," Fortnightly, XIV (August, 1873).

3. "England and the War," Fortnightly, VIII (October, 1870), 484.

4. Hirst, I, p. 233. From a letter to Harrison in 1873.

no doubt of the genuineness of the affection which Morley developed for Gladstone, and the admiration he expresses in a passage like the following has to be counted like the following has to be counted as sincere. He is describing his conversations with the prime minister as "in the highest degree stimulating, bracing, widening," and goes on to exclaim

I return to my room with the sensations of a man who has taken delightful exercise in fresh air. He is so wholly free from the ergoteur [quibbler] . . . He fits his tone to the thing; he can be as playful as anybody . . . He cannot resist rising in an instant to the general point of view--to grasp the elemental considerations of character, history, belief, conduct, affairs . . . I never knew anybody less guilty of the tiresome sin of arguing for victory. 1

So far as Huxley's remark is concerned, Morley, certainly by the time he came to know Gladstone intimately, in the late 1870's, had no sympathy with it. And between his Fortnightly days and his experience as Irish Secretary under the prime minister, his conviction of the limitations of the scientific outlook was deepened. So far as social improvement went, and Liberal policy along with it, scientists were too restricted in their field of interest to appreciate the great objectives aimed at. They were as narrow from their point of view as theologians were from theirs, and Morley gave up the notion of counting on them in the great campaign for progress. As his confidence in science as an agent bringing the millennium nearer declined, so did his antipathy

1. Gladstone, III, p. 482. Written in 1892.

against religion as an agent working against it. The antagonism between churches and agnostics that had been so heated in the 1860's and '70's cooled, and by the middle of the 1880's Morley even lost his intellectual interest in trying to keep it going. Theological arguments had become commonplace, and, since he was no longer a leader, an innovator, there was no further fun in fighting. As his religious hatred waned, so his political interest grew--grew into a devotion. The theological convictions of a man meant little, but his political principles gave him his character and worth. Gladstone's earnestness, then, and his direction as a great party leader drew Morley to him. It was not for nothing that Morley had said, "Harmony of aim, not identity of conclusion, is the secret of the sympathetic life."¹ Besides these factors, however, there were other reasons--more personal and, in their own way, just as fundamental--why Gladstone and Morley should have become so attached. They had in common a deep love of books, and^{in particular,} a reverence of the classics, and Gladstone was, in a limited sense, an author in his own right. More than this, however, was Morley's own basic devoutness, not uprooted or lost, even though he had not taken orders after Oxford. Harrison informed him as early as 1876 that Gladstone was "seriously, deeply impressed"² with it. That early, too, Morley had recognized in the

1. On Compromise, p. 105.

2. Hirst, II, p. 11.

statesman the very wholesomeness and breadth which he later held so dear,¹ and he acknowledged that he "quite felt his attraction." It was about this time, likewise, that he began to commend on how singularly personable he seemed to be to figures in the church, and on the remarkable ease he had in getting along with them.²

Morley's interest in Gladstone's career is strictly in his growth into a Liberal, and he avoids any exploration of his theological history. "What is extraordinary . . . is . . . that with a steadfast tread he marched along the high anglican road to the summits of that liberalism which it was the original object of the anglicans to resist and overthrow."³ That is the justification of the book. Morley painstakingly traces Gladstone's development from the Tory who in 1833 voted for the worst clauses of an Irish Coercion Bill, was against the admission of Jews to Parliament and opposed to allowing dissenters to attend universities, voted emphatically for the Corn Law, protected military and naval sinecures, defended shorter parliaments, and condemned the ballot; through the maturing thinker who in 1842 was pledging his life to "the external warfare against ignorance and depravity;" to the retired prime minister, a confirmed Liberal, who could look back with satisfaction on the incite-

1. Hirst, II, p. 7.

2. See ante. p. 144 for anecdotes about this fact.

3. Gladstone, I, p. 153.

ment he had given to the Italian movement for independence and the progress he had made in the direction of Home Rule for Ireland. Gladstone had had to discover Liberty for himself; it had never been taught to him at Oxford.

As biography, these three thick volumes continue the method used in Morley's Life of Richard Cobden. There is hardly anything of the biographer in the printed matter; Gladstone speaks for himself through his diaries and letters --and there were originally thousands of pages from them that had to be gone over before The Life was begun. Morley's burden was tremendous and, unfortunately, the result of it is still felt in his production. It is cumbersome, laborious, almost impossible reading. Factually, it is too heavy; politically, it is too involved; it is dead under its own weight. It is no "masterpiece in biography" at all, as some critics would have it, but a patient, correct achievement in documentary organization.¹

1. Comment has varied widely about Gladstone. Henry James, of all people, described it as "formidable, but rich, and . . . very well done; a type of frank, exhaustive, intimate biography . . . largely a history of English politics for the last 50 years--but very human and vivid."! (See The Letters of Henry James, II, p. 11.) Mrs. Humphry Ward, who showed such acumen in her estimate of Morley's temper, was no less enthusiastic about the work; for her it "rises into its [literature's] high places, and becomes a delight instead of an edifying or informing necessity," a "fascinating record" of Morley as well as of Gladstone. (See her A Writer's Recollections, II, pp. 8 and 10.) Morley himself, influenced, no doubt, by the large sale of the biography, supposed that, of all his books, it was most likely to live on! Margot Asquith, however, maintained that Gladstone's life should never have been entrusted to Morley; the "biography is heavy and buries the man it pretends to reveal." (See her More or Less About Myself, p. 87.) In this country, astute Henry Adams, called the three volumes

The striking fact about the English biographical series, when it is surveyed in perspective alongside of the French Studies, is the strong philosophical consistency in it, from the first book to the last. Morley's "steadiness of sight" impresses. The same values which we earlier saw as features of his critical attitude stand strong and are repeatedly emphasized. And although they are felt as identifying stamps, boundary posts of a field that is somewhat more limited than it appeared to be on first meeting, there is

a "murder of Gladstone" and defined as "painful" Morley's "conscientious effort, only too visible," to make a "sympathetic" character out of the prime minister who "believed himself to be divinely inspired" and "played parts like a Roman Catholic Jesuit Pope . . . supremely honest in self-deception." (See Letters of Henry Adams, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford, Vol. II, p. 412.) It is in this criticism that Adams, with remarkable insight, discerned the base of sadness and tragic life-consciousness in Morley. "As his optimism is an imposed stage-role, he is very right to display it with great moderation. A most difficult task, --if not impossible,--and I hope he will be politically stronger for it." This about optimism and the stage-role, I think, overshoots the mark, but the comment in general is extraordinary for the extent to which it reveals Adams, who had never met Morley, sensing the real tone of his temperament. The two men were exact contemporaries, and it is regrettable that the period of Adams' stay in London preceded the period of Morley's Fortnightly reputation there. In Adams' own words, "Morley came after my time and belongs to a circle with which I was never in concert." (Letters, II, p. 650.) Would the two, similarly endowed as they were in so many respects, have repelled each other? Certainly Adams' Weltschmerz was incompatible with Morley's vigorous enunciation that life was worth living, and Adams' hopeless nostalgia for the world of mediaeval Christianity repugnant to Morley's steadfast confidence in the ability of men to order their lot. Of course, it must be remembered that "identity of conclusion" was not for Morley a prerequisite to friendship, and that Adams' somewhat cynical desisting from attempts to improve society was directly traceable to the possession of him by an ineradicable spiritual despair, which for Morley was an extenuating "noxious element."

no denying that they cover a wide range of intellectual interest and denote a comprehensive mind. Morley's attitude is fixed, and its components can be set down in outline. Rational-mindedness, scientific habit, historic awareness, moral integrity, spiritual insight, humanitarian sympathy, political liberality--these are always the qualities in men on which he places the highest value, the notes which sound again and again in his criticism.

* *

The Critical Essays

Soon after Victor Hugo's Travailleurs de la Mer appeared in 1866, Morley wrote a review which Hugo himself happened to come across. He was struck by the brilliance of the thing and wrote to Morley that his ideas had been clearly understood and the whole book faultlessly interpreted for the English public. This was the beginning of a literary relationship between the two men that lasted until Hugo's death and was featured by another impressive review on Morley's part and an actual meeting with the great poet and novelist in 1879. What it meant for him in the literary world was a certain prestige and, along with articles on Meredith and George Eliot, it marked the beginning of a long series of miscellaneous reviews--essays in criticism that

1. Of Quatre-Vingt Treize, Fortnightly, XV (March, 1874). Morley complains against the use of certain abstractions, but praises Hugo for his combination of the poetic and scientific tempers.

belong to the same category as similar essays by Carlyle, Macaulay, and Matthew Arnold. Morley follows the same general pattern that his great predecessors in criticism had used, and his occasions for writing are the same; a new production by a famous author has appeared, a complete edition of the works of an author now dead has been issued, or a significant writer has just died and an estimate of his career is timely. The strongest and most memorable of Morley's essays appeared in The Fortnightly Review while he was editing it, yet he wrote some very good ones during the 1880's after he had left the journalistic world and confined himself to politics. Several of the lot are reprinted in prose anthologies today--the one on Macaulay most frequently--and eleven of them, he thought well enough of to include in the volume, Critical Miscellanies, when his works were being published by Macmillan and Company in 1921. Some attention paid to a number of these--those that concern major figures in English literature--is worth while both for the interest which they possess in themselves, and for their value as expressions of the critical attitude described earlier in connection with the French studies and the English biographical series. The attitude has not varied, naturally, but it is apt to appear somewhat more striking when it is directed toward English writers--closer to home and more original through contrast with the point of view, say, of Macaulay. It is individual and can always be recognized by those salient

features of it that are fixed and recurrent.

CARLYLE

"Carlyle", written in 1871, is as good an embodiment of these features as any of the other essays. Carlyle himself has already been mentioned twice: in connection with Morley's Oxford reading and in connection with his style. Just how deep Carlyle's influence on him went is only conjectural; there is no specific statement of his debt to Carlyle, as there is in regard to Mill or Meredith or Arnold, in anything that Morley wrote. What has already been said can bear brief repetition. At first the influence was twofold: on thought and on style. Carlyle awakened Morley to the problem of society and the individual's relation to it, and he showed him what vehement, prophetic prose could do in making an argument impressive. Later, when Morley met Mill, like mind met like mind. Carlyle's solution was discarded and Mill's answer to social problems was set up in its stead. But the purely literary influence survived. Morley certainly did not stoop to imitating, but the confident, pontifical tone of his brilliant declarations of the 1870's is proof that he considered himself the raiser of the fallen mantle, that he was determined to write his way to the side of the highest.¹ And qualities of phrase and figure make the kinship

1. Morley's rigorous aversion to imitation was expressed in print in the first volume of his Fortnightly (January, 1867). He deplored the fact that writers, particularly when they happened on the subject of the French Revolution,

to Carlyle even more pronounced. In 1876 Morley was still acknowledging Carlyle's "penetrating imaginative genius"¹ and as late as 1911 Carlyle was on his mind as one of the nineteenth century's "great giants," though now all confidence of emulating was gone. Morley never lost awareness of him as a writer; the kind of awareness underwent change, that was all.

The very limitations of Carlyle described in this essay in 1871 are what turned Morley away from him for good after a visit he made a year later "to the old man, with whom" he "had never had a word before." He spent three-quarters of an hour listening to praise of Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul; The Fortnightly was denounced as a "nest of cackatreeces" and there was no "instruction, or hint, or inspiration--not a jot or tittle." He was "silent and discipular," and returned to London, disappointed that there was "nothing precise or definite" about the aging scolder, because, after twenty,² "one wants that." So, in this essay, Carlyle is summed up as a "born poet," imaginatively charged, benevolently inclined, but unable to cope effectively with the

strove to be Carlylean. "It is not everybody who can bend the bow of Ulysses: and Mr. Carlyle's style, potent as it is in his own books, becomes in the hands of other people as the manna which was preserved in the wilderness until the next day after it descended from heaven. In style as in other things [notably civilization], the corruption of the best is the worst." (p. 125)

1. Biographical Studies, p. 310.

2. Hirst, I, p. 226.

complex problems of English society. With him "thought is an aspiration, and justice a sentiment, and society a retrogression."¹ In this characteristic, he is a sensiblist with the same method as Rousseau. His trust in moral earnestness, in working and being silent, is worthless. What he complains against in "Shooting Niagara: and After" as "torpid unverity of heart" is not the fault at bottom; unverity itself, insists Morley, "torpid or fervid," breeds "intellectual dimness, and it is this last which prevents us from seeing a way out of the present ignoble situation. We need light more than heat."² So speaks the rationalist. Furthermore, Carlyle deals too frequently in abstractions to be clear or reliable, and his attitude with regard to heroes comes dangerously close to a belief in might as right; here he is more reactionary than De Maistre himself. As a philosopher, all that Morley can value Carlyle for are his relatively broad moral attitude in judging men, his fight against the dogmatic temper in religion, "because this is work that goes deeper than to assail dogmas,"³ and his help in strengthening and raising "the conscious and harmonious dignity of humanity."⁴

For the rest, in its literary quality, what makes this essay so significant among Morley's works is the coincidental

1. "Carlyle," Critical Miscellanies, p. 54.

2. Ibid., p. 61.

3. Ibid., p. 78.

4. Ibid., p. 87.

frequency of phrases that in their strikingness, their picturesqueness, are Carlylean. To say the thing effectively in one place after another, Morley uses expressions that Carlyle himself might easily have struck off about a character in one of his essays. Some of these are too important in illustrating the nature of Carlyle's stylistic influence, and too brilliant in themselves, to resist quoting. Thus, Carlyle's definition of the Great Man (the "light which enlightens etc.") is summed up as "only another form of the anthropomorphic conceptions of deity" and the pronouncement comes that "in that house there are many mansions, the boisterous sanctuary of a vagabond polytheism."¹ Carlylism itself is "the male of Byronism. It is Byronism with the w and sinew, bass pipe and shaggy bosom."² And Carlyle, despite the fact that other teachers followed him who were more intelligible and more reliable, is almost apotheosized in the line: "here was the friendly fire-bearer who first conveyed the Prometh^ean spark, here the prophet who first smote the rock."³

In 1876, the very year when he wrote his essay on Macaulay,

nothing

1. "Carlyle," p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 66.

3. Ibid., p. 45. This essay is not Morley's last word on Carlyle. In November, 1885, after Froude's biography of the great Scot had appeared, he wrote an article-review in Macmillan's, "The Man of Letters as Hero." Here he states that, though ordinarily a writer's private life, like that of a statesman or any other artist, ought to be exempt from public scrutiny, it is different in the case of a man who, posing as a prophet with an invaluable message of his own, has tried

nothing was more flattering to Morley than the request of The Encyclopedia Britannica for his "little piece" on Comte, which followed close on the heels of the success of his sketch of Burke. Morley, tickled with the "hyperbole" of the Academy that Burke was the equal of Macaulay's little biographies, wrote to Frederic Harrison to say that no praise could have meant more, "considering that Macaulay's little biographies in the Encyclopedia are about the most finished things he did."¹ There is no denying Morley's envy of Macaulay's position in this particular field of biographical writing--no denying his intention of arriving at the same level of success, though not in exactly the same way. This intention comes out in numerous detached comments on Macaulay, and is made clear in Morley's detailed analysis of him in

to tell other people how to live. Carlyle deserves to have his miserable personal existence exposed, and the pitiable incapacity to make anything harmonious of his own life laid bare. His ruthless slurring of his contemporaries, his inability to penetrate beneath exteriors were to Morley unforgivable, and his "tone in speaking of a man who was so much superior to him in so many ways as Mill, is simply painful." His self-styled "serious turn of mind," Morley terms only "an everlasting torrent of inhuman scolding." His rage and his indiscriminate anathematizing of everything in the world, after he had earlier damned the French rationalists of the eighteenth century for a pack of atheists, revealed that "in many respects no atheism has ever been preached . . . of blacker dye than Carlyle's," Morley quotes, and agrees with Mazzini, that Carlyle loved "calm and silence platonically;" his teaching and character would never incite anybody to love virtue. "The life of Emerson at Concord, and of Mill at Blackheath and Avignon, tends more to edification than the life of Carlyle, with all its tumultuous emotions, and all its strange celestial imaginings."

1. Hirst, II, p. 15.

his published essay. Macaulay can never be forgotten for the stamp he set on style, style "in its widest sense, not merely on the grammar and mechanism of writing."¹ And it is for that and for his genius in narration that English literature owes him a debt. Philosophically, though, Macaulay is worthless--almost contemptible to one of Mill's school.² He had an "unanalytical turn of mind," was one of "the middle-class crowd in his heart," was complacent about the state of England, and would have voted with Anytus and Meletus against Socrates. He was arrogant and militant in his approach of Truth, used to knocking her down and dragging her after him by the hair of the head, "a prisoner of war and not a goddess."³ Alongside of the high genius of Carlyle, Macaulay is meretricious; though he gives an "appearance of dignity and elevation," he has nothing underneath it but a "resolute and ostentatious common sense of a slightly coarse sort."⁴ Spiritually, he is lacking; he never rises to the elevated music made in literature "by the repressed trouble of grave and high souls."

This is the substance of Morley's judgment. What gives it a peculiar interest as reading is that it reflects exactly what he ascribed to Macaulay: an "aptitude for forcing things

1. "Macaulay," Critical Miscellanies, p. 176.

2. See p. 174 in "Macaulay" for the brilliant comparison of Mill and Macaulay, beginning "If Mill taught some of them to reason, Macaulay tempted more of them to declaim."

3. Ibid., p. 187.

4. Ibid., p. 185.

into firm outline."¹ Macaulay's goal--strong effects--is Morley's own here, and there are vehement figures again and again that, as in the case of his essay on Carlyle, might have come from the giant predecessor. This one, for example, which is meant to sum up his flashiness and shallowness: "The wine of fruth is in his cup a brandied draught, a hundred degrees above proof, and he too often replenishes the lamp of knowledge with naphtha instead of fine oil."²

BYRON

"Byron" (1877) is memorable for the entirely different treatment of the exiled poet that it presents. There is none of the picturesque describing of Byron the individual and his influence on other individuals that appears in Macaulay's essay, and none of its lengthy analysis of Romanticism either. Nor is there any of the penetrating discussion of the purely poetic quality of Byron's verse which Matthew Arnold was to write four years later. Morley attempts to do just what he has said "synthetic criticism" ought to do: to see the poet against the background of his age, to relate him concretely to the movements of its social and political thought, and then "trace the relations of the poet's ideas, either direct or indirect . . . to the visible tendencies of an existing age."³ For him Byron is preeminently the poet of the Revolution--the chief interpreter "of the moral tumult of the epoch"--and he quotes Mazzini to show what a force

1. "Macaulay," Critical Miscellanies, p. 194.

2. Ibid., p. 194.

3. "Byron," Critical Miscellanies, p. 104.

he exerted in Italy. There is some defining of literary terms, necessary and fortunately very good, and then Morley proceeds to relate his definitions effectively to actual life --in the case of Byron, to social and political affairs. Having defined poetry as "the power of transfiguring action, character, and thought in the serene radiance of the purest imaginative intelligence; and the gift of expressing those transformed products in the finest articulate vibrations of emotional speech,"¹ he is forced to acknowledge Shelley as Byron's superior, but he can contend that the proof of Byron's genius is that his force was able to make so much of "elements so intrinsically unfavourable to high poetry as doubt, denial, antagonism, and weariness."² Moving on, he states that the greatest English poets--Shakespeare and Milton, for example--were inspired by political and social elements, above the spiritual motivation at bottom, and that Byron is allied to them in that he, too, was strongly concerned with "ideas of government and the other external movements of men in society, and with the play of the sentiments which spring from them."³ Despite his eccentricities and extravagance in behavior, it was because he had this broad social awareness and was sincere and fundamentally sober and rational enough to be kept "substantially straight, real, and human," that he

1. "Byron," p. 107.

2. Ibid., p. 102.

3. Ibid., p. 106.

made such universal appeal.

In addition to this original interpretation, there are two lesser ideas in the essay that make it significant reading. Morley commends Byron for his "sound view of the importance of form," for his avoidance of "clownish savagery" or "barbarism," which too many unfettered English poets since Shakespeare's day had fallen into, and calls it "collateral proof of the sanity and balance which marked the foundations of his character."¹ This very praise illustrates the fact that has already been urged about Morley: that he was fundamentally stable and traditional about matters of literature. And last, relating Byron more specifically to the "visible tendencies of an existing age," Morley considers that he approached the nineteenth century positive spirit in his predilection for dramatic composition. The drama, in the form and presentation of its material, must be objective; the creator must stand "apart and unseen." It deals with no final causes, but its action depends upon the interplay of character and situation, upon cause and effect, in short, and the law of self-evolution ought to operate in it just as it operates in "the greater drama of physical phenomena" which "unfolds itself to the scientific observer."² Byron's "rudimentary and unsuspected affinity with the more constructive and scientific side of the modern

1. "Byron," p. 115.

2. Ibid., p. 129.

spirit," then, as well as his revolutionary thirst for action, may account for his fondness of the drama.

Morley was never especially interested in American literature, but he was concerned about it from the days when he woke to the importance of style until the last days when he could no longer read a page. Although he made two voyages to this country, all that is worth anything as comment on American authors comes from his spare account of the first¹ trip. He met Walt Whitman in Washington in 1867 and went on several night walks with him, but Whitman's confidence in his great purpose did not convince him that Lowell and Emerson and the other New Englanders no longer held any message for the modern world. On the contrary, Morley was inclined to feel that the last words of promise might have been said by them. Revolutionary experiments in form did not appeal to him, and political liberal though he was, his aristocratic leanings in literature were strong enough to make him abhor its complete democratization. He continued to wage a fight against the barbarities of American slang and "the hideous importations from American newspapers."² The dignity and the purity of English must be preserved. There were American writers whom Morley read and admired, however; the United States was not a complete desert. Among them was Emerson, and in 1884 Morley wrote an essay on him as

1. See Recollections, II, pp. 78-9.

2. "Words and Their Glory," Politics and History, p. 197.

a preface to an edition of his poetry.

EMERSON

Emerson had crossed his path when he was an undergraduate at Oxford, but he had been too young then to be ready for the American. Now he estimates him maturely, throwing new light on him, by adding suggestions and considerations of his own that keep the essay well above the commonplace. Since Emerson as a poet was agitated by "an intellectual demand for intense and sublimated expression"¹ rather than by strong passion or what Morley distrusted as dithyrambs, and since he was an individualist, there were grounds at the outset why he should hold an interest for his English commentator. But Emerson's "pure spiritualism" imposes limits on Morley's admiration, because it marks limitations in Emerson's own intellectuality. The New Englander's unconcern with reason, his disregard of the conscious, acting will, his conviction that "impulsive and spontaneous innocence is higher than the strength to conquer temptation" are points of separation between him and Morley. One's spiritual constitution is never independent of his physical organization, and, just as surely, never independent "of the social conditions that close about him from the instant of his birth."² Morley compliments Emerson for reacting against what was artificial and spurious in the eighteenth century,

1. "Emerson," Critical Miscellanies, p. 22.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

but laments that he was blind to the great achievements of its true rationalism. Still, despite his frequent cloudiness, Emerson is superior to Carlyle in the answer he gives to the way out, for, instead of preaching "self will, mastery, force, and violent strength," he lays all his trust in the "honest, manly, simple, and emancipated character of the citizen."¹ Furthermore, his feeling for science calls for special attention. Morley finds in him an aliveness to the reality of the survival of the fittest in Nature--his very phrases hit at it, he says--and he discovers, too, that Emerson was delighted to feel that "the natural universe of force and energy" is a "One and a Whole."² Morley was at one with Tyndall in believing that Emerson was undaunted by the discoveries of science, but assimilated them "and transmuted them into the finer forms and warmer lines of an ideal world."³ Characteristically, the bulk of the criticism, then, has to do with the philosophical importance of Emerson. All that has to do with his position as an artist working with words are several early paragraphs that point out the frequent awkwardness or "uncouthness" in Emerson's lines and lead to the conclusion that his poetry is not "inevitable."⁴

1. "Emerson," p. 37

2. Ibid., p. 38.

3. Ibid., p. 38.

4. Ibid., p. 38.

GEORGE ELIOT

George Eliot is a special case. She was one of those whom, like Mill, Morley met early, knew long, and held a special veneration for. Certain remarks concerning her have already appeared. Early in the 1870's Morley was describing her to Harrison as "great and profound," and it was her own prose in 1866 which made him think seriously about the matter of style and helped him to arrive at a definition of it as the result of "brooding over ideas, not words."¹ In 1885, on the appearance of George Eliot's Life, a collection of extracts from her letters and journals in three volumes edited by J. W. Cross, Morley wrote a commemorative essay-review, much like his final published tribute to Mill. It is an excellent summary of his attitude toward her. As a poet she could not be considered successful: Morley had tried to think otherwise, yet conscientiously could not escape

1. This phrase comes from Morley's first published study of the woman, "George Eliot's Novels," which appeared in Macmillan's in August, 1866, and which has already been mentioned in this book (see ante, p. 14). This essay ought not to be forgotten; it is good for what it says about George Eliot as well as for what it reveals of Morley. In it the novelist is praised for believing that men are inherently weak rather than evil and for steering between the "charybdis of depraved realism" and the "scylla of sentimentalism;" she knows the part which debts, poverty, "uncontrolled impure desires" and "sordid or foul circumstances" play in life, but she never paints these things under the microscope "while better things are left in their bare, unmagnified dimensions." Of course, one of the greatest lessons which Morley learned from his association with George Eliot was that of which her own life was an example, that human character can never reach a wholesome fruition if it lives secluded and cut off from the active lives of men and women in society.

the conclusion that her verse was "magnificent but unreadable."¹ Although as a novelist, she was among the highest, a consideration of her as an artist in fiction is inseparably bound up with his estimate of her intellectual and moral nature as a human being. The enduring attraction between the two grew out of her alertness, receptivity, intellectual thoroughness, and her moral constancy. She was interested in all the agitating questions of the day, scientific as well as religious and social, and she was painstaking in forming definite opinions about them. Her intellectual habits developed in her "the spirit of order and proportion," which Morley always admired in writers and sought to acquire in his own prose under the name of balance or justesse, and she came to see clearly that "pity and fairness" were two virtues which would improve the lot of humanity if only they were more widely practiced. For Morley, too, in the words of Bacon, "the nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath."

In the matter of evil and pain in the world, her intellectual honesty prevented her from becoming soured by her religious disillusionment, and she was doing what Morley himself was steadfast in trying to practice; avoiding make-believe, seeing things as they are, stripped of all pretence, and living bravely through her pain "without opium . . . and with conscious, clear-eyed endurance."² Reverencing humanity

1. "The Life of George Eliot," Critical Miscellanies, p. 221.

2. Ibid., 226.

and believing in progress as she did, she did not consider that a life of renunciation of evil, of negative good, was enough; active efforts had to be made in the direction of some positive good, no matter how small, to assist in promoting the welfare of some portion of humanity. In this respect, Morley pronounced her superior to Mill himself, because she was more consistent and maintained her position unshaken, whereas Mill's admissions in his posthumous essays on religion had been a severe disappointment to his followers.¹ She has developed a sympathetic attitude toward sects and had been led to consider, as Morley himself later learned to, in spite of his early Fortnightly animosity, that, no matter what their varying theological tenents, their active efforts toward good were sufficient excuse for their being.

George Eliot's methods as a novelist were admirable in one respect, faulty in another. Morley praised her for her awareness of "the full stream of evolution, heredity, survival, and fixed inexorable law."² Her characters were not arbitrarily fashioned and led through a series of incidents, but were rooted in antecedent events and made to act through the operation of the law of cause and effect. On the other hand, according to her own admission, she always fixed a theme, a moral scheme of things, first, and then evolved her story, fitting it to her pattern. This way of creating was

1. For Mill's admissions and Morley's reaction to them, see ante, p. 131.

2. "The Life of George Eliot," p. 229.

was certainly inferior to Shakespeare's, and Morley emphasized that. Among her novels themselves, Adam Bede was one of her greatest achievements. Daniel Deronda, however, was not composed "under her brightest star;" and elsewhere Morley regrets a certain quality of mysticism in the book. Middlemarch was a triumph. Morley's comments on it to Harrison in 1872, despite their youthful exaggeration, are worth quoting in full:

What nonsense is all this about the sadness, the anatomical preparation, etc. of Middlemarch? The art seems to me indifferent in many respects--being strained, showman-like, pedantic, even pert. But the sadness! Good heavens, does not our smug grocer public need to be taught that its Protestant well-to-do optimism is a lie and a delusion. There is a kind of Pharisaism in other things than religion--and Middlemarch touches this with a drop of acid.

1

George Eliot, then, though she believed in progress, was not what Morley called an energumen about it. Material benefits were not the be-all and end-all for her; she had a historic sense, and she realized that great moral and spiritual values inherited from the past must be preserved. Even though she could have shown more "fancy, illusion, enchantment" as a novelist, it was her insistence on spiritual nobility that made her a great fictional force, and Morley closed his essay by agreeing with Mill that she would always remain a "wise, benignant soul" for all "right-judging men and women."

1. Hirst, I, p. 221.

WORDSWORTH

Like the essay on Emerson, Morley's estimate of Wordsworth appeared as an introduction to an edition of the poet's complete works in 1888. Pater's essay was already fourteen years old, and even eight years had gone by since Matthew Arnold had published his evaluation. Much that Morley says, therefore, his two great contemporaries had said before. There is some different consideration introduced, however, even though it is not nearly so extensive as was his earlier interpretation of Byron. True, Wordsworth did have some social significance for a Liberal in the 1880's: he, too, could be considered in terms of the French Revolution, but only in a negative and limited way. He was not part of its spirit as Byron was; he was the renunciation of it--a complete Tory, socially and politically. Nevertheless, the ninth, ^{and} tenth, /eleventh books of The Prelude are significant for their picture of the Revolution; they "breathe the very spirit of the great catastrophe,"¹ and Morley feels that artistically they have much of the sternness and grandeur of Greek tragedy. For the rest, though Wordsworth's attitude toward Nature was unscientifically optimistic, he possessed an extraordinarily keen eye for describing it, and, in this respect, only Byron and Tennyson among nineteenth-century poets could rank with him. In the actual craftsmanship of verse, he had superiors, even among the so-called minor poets, but in the sort of

1. "Wordsworth," Critical Miscellanies, p. 144.

verse which was not meant to intoxicate but to awaken "elements of composure deep and pure, and of self government in a far loftier sense than the merely prudential," he was paramount in his age.¹ His "special gift, his lasting contribution" was to Morley essentially what it had been to Pater before him--his genius for idealizing the natural world, for sensing the quiet life underlying the commonest objects and spiritualizing it; considering the universe an animate presence exerting a constant effect on man and "breathing grandeur upon the very humblest face of human life."²

In addition to such full-length essays devoted to a criticism of the whole work of certain authors, Morley wrote a number of excellent shorter reviews concerned with individual volumes by contemporary artists in poetry or prose. These less extensive pieces deserve mention, and even reprinting, because, though the circumstances which gave rise to them were particular, the conclusions which they reach have a general application; Morley as a critic was adept, as somebody has said, at reading the universal lesson in the separate detail.

SWINBURNE

The earliest of these minor evaluations is, one of the two best; it is "Mr. Swinburne's New Poems," an anonymous

1. "Wordsworth," p. 165.

2. Ibid., p. 167.

commentary in The Saturday Review for August 4, 1866 on Swinburne's Poems and Ballads.¹ More because of it than of any other similar treatment, the volume was withdrawn from sale by its publisher. Swinburne, who had had some contact with Morley at Oxford, knew he had written the criticism, but that did not prevent him from forming a friendship with him and becoming a contributor to The Fortnightly later. At the outset Morley lamented Swinburne's libidinous bent, but pointed out that it would do no good to preach or admonish, for the poet was set too firmly on his own path, "fixed in the attitude of revolt against the current notions of decency and dignity and social duty" and grovelling among "nameless, shameless abominations." Satirically he heaped credit on "the audacious courage" with which Swinburne had "revealed to the world a mind all aflame with the feverish carnality of the schoolboy over the dirtiest passages in Lemprière," for it was "not everybody who could ask us all to go hear him tuning his lyre in a sty." Swinburne's prurient preoccupation with such females as Sappho, Messalina, Faustina, Pasiphaë led Morley to make some remarks about subject matter for poetry; he did not, any more than anybody else, want poetry to be only "such as may wisely be placed in the hands of girls of eighteen, and as fit for the use of Sunday schools,"

1. Reprinted in The Empire Review for May, 1926 and in The Living Age, CCCXXIX (June 12, 1926), 587-92. It was Sir Edmund Gosse who, on December 20, 1923, made known Morley's authorship of the article, as well as the few facts about its appearance mentioned on this page.

but, on the other hand, was there not, he asked, "an enormous difference between an attempt to revivify . . . the grand old pagan conception of Joy and an attempt to glorify all the bestial delights that the subtleness of Greek depravity was able to contrive"? For the time being he had the consolation of knowing that most of Swinburne's readers would not understand the references to Sappho or Hermaphroditus and so would escape the taint of the "nameless and abominable;" if, however, a second and a third volume followed Poems and Ballads, then it must be admitted that English maidens would "gradually acquire a truly delightful familiarity with these unspeakable foulnesses," the excretions of a "putrescent imagination."

Apart from Swinburne's immorality, however, Morley had some discerning things to say about the craftsmanship of his verse. Its lyrical evocativeness, its music, he praised. Yet had those people taken the trouble to think, they who had used the appearance of "Atalanta in Calydon" as an occasion for proclaiming Swinburne real Greek? In the first place, whereas the Greek poets had possessed a "most remarkable distinction" of "scrupulous moderation and sobriety in colour," Swinburne was too often disgustingly extreme and extravagant, feverishly oppressive in his garish, lurid, violent palette. Furthermore, the Greeks had never lost sight of thought in their lines; Swinburne, by contrast, was meretricious and could be discovered frequently making a "trick of words and letters" and conceits do "duty for thoughts."

A comparison of his ode to "Our Lady in Pain" with an ode by Pindar or a chorus from Agamemnon would serve to expose the thinness and the imminent wearisomeness of his excessive alliteration and his reiteration of words for which he had a fondness.

As with the absence of thought, so with the lack of deep emotion. Passion in Swinburne was only counterfeit, and amounted to no more than "mad intoxicated sensuality." He was deficient indeed in his whole attitude toward life. He knew the terrifying immensity of the universe and man's pitiable insignificance and ephemerality in it, but he could not do with that realization what a great poet should: either transmute his fear into reverent awe and stir his readers to "solemn rapture" or else forge it into truly diabolical negation, jeering and mocking at human beings "like an unclean fiery imp from the pit." With his limitations, Swinburne could do no more in his best mood than rise to prolix complaints about the futility of life, and in his worst, sink sweating into "schoolboy lustfulness." "The bottomless pit," said Morley, "encompasses us on one side, and stews and bagnios on the other."

MORRIS

In 1868 soon after The Earthly Paradise appeared, Morley wrote a review of it which exhibited his feelings about another poetic purveyor of paganism.¹ Acutely he praised

1. See Fortnightly, III (June, 1868)

William Morris for his "central quality," "a vigorous and healthy objectivity; a vision and a fancy ever penetrated by the colour and light and movement of external things, just as they stir and penetrate the painter." Removed from "the turgid perplexities of a day of spiritual transition," Morris made it his concern to look with freshness and simplicity on nature in all her moods and to reproduce what he saw truthfully and precisely. He was to be commended for the absence of artificiality and strain in his descriptions, for his sparing use of simile (which had been "supposed to be the peculiar figure of the story-teller from Homer downwards"), and for his narrative, so "full of change and variety of personage and incident." Indeed, Morley did not think it too bold to predict that when The Earthly Paradise was completed, it might have "a longer duration in the minds and hearts of men than perhaps any contemporary verse," for it possessed an abundance of "those broad and unsophisticated moods that enchant men for all time."

BROWNING

In his excellent review of The Ring and the Book in ¹1869, Morley not only wrote illuminatingly about Browning, but commented on Tennyson, discussed the nature of beauty, and explained the relation of art to morality as well. About the particular poetic work, he had much to say. Technically,

1. See "On The Ring and the Book," Fortnightly, V (March, 1869), 331-42.

it was marred by "harsh and formless lines, bursts of metrical chaos . . . passages marked by a coarse violence of expression . . . nothing short of barbarous." Such "grotesque caprices," he was afraid, would lead to innumerable apings among versifying lesser lights. Had not most English playwrights persevered in considering Shakespeare great because of his prodigious defects and therefore in emulating him through abominable cultivated irregularities of their own? But if there were unforgivable perversities in Browning, there were also many passages of "sustained gravity" and noble diction that were unsurpassable. And it must be admitted that the consummate value of The Ring and the Book resided in "that wide unity of impression which it is the highest aim of dramatic art, and perhaps of all art, to produce." Considered as a whole, the work was beautiful, for did not beauty grow out of "such an arrangement and disposition of the parts of the work as, first kindling a great variety of dispersed emotions and thoughts in the mind of the spectator, finally concentrates them in a single mood of joyous, sad, meditative, or interested delight"? For its substance even more than for its form, The Ring and the Book was to be welcomed. Among the saccharine insipidities of most Victorian verse it was a "rude inburst of air from the outside welter of human realities," and Morley hoped it would shock people into a recognition of the "simpleton's paradise" in which they had been living. In it characters wrestled with circumstance and passion in the sharp, truthful outlines

of living human beings and not in the decoration of Arthurian dress-coats. In the vividness, the variety, the vigor, the fullness of their portrayal, the story was Shakespearean. Like Shakespeare, too, Browning employed his comprehensive, virile, creative mind in stimulating his readers to active thought about life; he confronted them with such a diversity of men and women and such a wide range of situations that their notions of human existence were enlarged, their curiosity stirred, and the play of their sympathies expanded. He filled men, in short, with a love of humanity, and in doing that he was more "powerfully efficacious from the moral point of view" than any dispenser of surface didacticism could ever be. Readers who criticized The Ring and the Book because they did not see any precepts in it exhorting them to be better were only pitiable illustrations after all of the fact that the widespread confusion of exalting morality with visible platitudes was "one of the intellectual dangers" of modern times. There was no system, it must be remembered, in Plato or Shakespeare; and either one of them, as a "great creative poet" probably exerted "a nobler, deeper, more permanent ethical influence than a dozen generations of professed moral teachers." Was Tennyson more influential for having slipped from his earlier artistry into a doleful strumming about "blameless Arthurs and prodigious Enochs"?

In addition to the moral strength of his creative power, Browning was distinguished by the scientific attitude of his

intelligence, for was not the "whole poem . . . a parable of the feeble and half-hopeless struggle which truth has to make against the ways of the world"? His courageous openness of mind preserved him from sterility, and, no matter how active the play of his transforming imagination became, he never lost his "resolute feeling and grip of fact."¹ Finally, though there was no grandeur in The Ring and the Book, for which reason it was not exactly comparable to the finest of Greek plays or Paradise Lost or Faust or Hamlet, still there was a near-equivalent: "a certain simple teaching of our sense of human kinship, of the large identity of the conditions of the human lot, of the piteous fatalities which bring the lives of the great multitude of men to be little more than "grains of sand blown by the wind."

PATER

The appearance of Walter Pater's Studies in the History of the Renaissance was an immediate reassurance to Morley on two counts.² First, it showed him that a new school of critics might yet arise in England who would combine German thoroughness and historic sense with French acuteness and

1. Curiously enough, only four years after this, Morley described both Browning and Tennyson as outside the "central current of European ideas." Tennyson was too provincial and "too content with moral prettinesses;" Browning, "too singular in form and too metaphysical in direction"! See "Mr. Pater's Essays," Fortnightly, XIII (April, 1873), 469.

2. See Morley's review, "Mr. Pater's Essays," Fortnightly, XIII (April, 1873).

and artistry of arrangement. Second, it let him see that, in spite of what he held an objectionable preoccupation with science everywhere, there were still to be found valuable non-scientific "manifestations of intellectual activity and fruitfulness." Morley's appreciation of Pater's work is characteristically not confined to those aspects of it ordinarily noticed and admired; his independent critical eye searches for matter which can be related to the large, general ideas of the times. To be sure, he shows himself sensitive to the style of Pater with its "flavour at once full and exquisite" and its "infinite subtlety," and he is relieved that Pater's artistic sense and his "clear, vigorous, and ordered thought" will prevent that style from falling into the special degradation to which it is liable--"bastard dithyramb." Moreover, he praises Pater's "love of minor tones," his suggestiveness, his evocative impressionism. But what was especially significant about the substance of the criticism in the Studies was that it was concrete, not metaphysical; it was "a record or suggestion of impressions, not an analysis of their ultimate composition, nor an abstract search for the law of their effects," and it was devoid of the pretentious display of "speculative and technical apparatus" that stigmatized most contemporary English art criticism and dissociated it so deplorably from life. For it was Pater's special value that he linked art with real life, that he interpreted imaginatively the significance of art in

association with "human culture and the perplexities of human destiny." He was not an interferer with morals, major or minor, but cared scrupulously only to communicate the importance of "the accentuating portion of life." The growing aesthetic vogue, of which he was the most sensitive spokesman, Morley welcomed as a wholesome benefit to England; it revealed that among the people a reaction to the mechanical uglinesses which more and more surrounded them was rife, that, in the midst of the bleakness and harshness of industrialization there existed a craving for things harmonious and beautiful.

In addition to all the essays and reviews proper, however, there are numerous comments on English authors scattered through Morley's biographical studies and published addresses. These obviously do not throw any more light on his method or his temper, but simply as additional opinions, additional reflections, they are worth noticing.

Shakespeare meant a good deal to Morley, and it is hard to understand why he never undertook a developed statement of his appreciation; certainly he could have made a contribution in discussing some of the plays singly. Measure for Measure, startlingly enough, appealed strongly to him, and his "favorite proposition" was one that not many people have come to hold even yet. The play "is one of the most modern" of all that Shakespeare wrote; there are "the profound analysis of Angelo and his moral catastrophe, the

strange figure of the duke, the deep irony of our modern time in it all."¹ He mentioned this to Gladstone, but got no response; the prime minister was "too healthy, too objective, too simple, for all the complexities of modern morbid analysis."²

Swift, Morley ranked near Voltaire as a satirist and a prose master--below him only because he was "often truculent and often brutally gross, both in thought and in phrase."³ Among his contemporaries, Morley always valued Newman's graceful, "siren" style; the Cardinal wrote "well, divinely well." Tennyson is mentioned more often than any other contemporary poet; his talent for exquisite music in verse was unsurpassed, but he was occasionally illegal in his thought, as in the implications of Maud,⁴ and on the whole, had "hardly shown that the scientific ideas of an age were soluble in musical words."⁵ Disraeli, as strongly as Morley disagreed with him in political theory, he summed up superbly as a writer whose novels were brilliant for "the spirit of whim in them, the ironic solemnity, the historical paradoxes, the fantastic glitter of dubious gems, the grace of high comedy, all in union with a social vision that often pierced

1. Gladstone, III, p. 424.

2. Ibid., p. 424.

3. Voltaire, p. 99.

4. See the footnote on page 427 of Morley's Cobden.

5. "Words and Their Glory," Politics and History, p. 202.

deep below the surface."¹ Hardy was a particular admiration of Morley's and a life-long friend as well. When Morley was a reader at Macmillan's in his early days, he came across Hardy's first novel, admired it, and, though he rejected it, got Hardy to come and see him, and was the "cause of his writing another and a better one."² He always maintained that there was a good deal of the Shakespearean in Hardy,--here again anticipating twentieth century criticism.

What, after all, is Morley's position as a critic?
 What lasting contribution did he make to the literature of

1. Gladstone, I, p. 588. In 1910 Morley wrote an article, "Disraeli," for the London Times, which was reprinted in The Living Age, CCLXVII (December 10, 1910), 643-53. There he said substantially the same things as he had stated earlier. "Disraeli was a master of words, but, as often happens to such men, he was also their slave, and a secret of his style is the unexpected, the fortuitous, the strange caprices, the fancies. . . ." Nothing that Disraeli ever wrote, Morley maintained, despite some consummate vivacity and fooling in Vivian Gray, had "sacred fire" or was a permanent contribution to literature. Later in life Morley classified Disraeli with Cavour and Bismarck as one of the three great statesmen of the nineteenth century; he was fascinated by the man, and yet, when he was approached by the executors of Disraeli's estate to write a biography, he declined because he felt the "result would not be artistic"! About Disraeli, he used to exclaim to J. H. Morgan: "Look at his vision of democracy, his Reform Bill, his views on the American Civil War. And look at his courage! His speech vindicating the Jews--." See J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67.

2. Morgan, p. 84.

criticism? If to realize literary worth the moment one comes into contact with it is the distinguishing mark of a good critic, then the fact that Morley recognized early the quality of such writers as Meredith, George Eliot, Pater, Swinburne, Morris, and Hardy stamps him as preeminent. His high honesty in research and commitment are admirable; his conscientious refusal to undertake a form of biography which he felt was alien to his powers, and his entrusting, for example, the analysis and evaluation of Rousseau's productions in music to a friend who was more adequately equipped to treat them, both testify to his rare ideals. His breadth of mind, his tolerance, in dissociating morality from art and in adhering to a judgment of the work of a writer on its own merits, apart entirely from the character of the writer's private life, place him among the first of the moderns. "Better Racine," he was always fond of quoting, "bad father, bad husband, bad friend, so that he wrote great plays, than Racine, good father, good husband, good friend, and a block-head." ¹ Indeed, the supreme instance of such disinterestedness occurred in his biographical presentation of Rousseau, to whose character, of course, he was damningly antipathetic, when, after having been on the verge of vomiting over Rousseau's vicious erotic habits, he described certain of his Dialogues (1775-76) as "masterpieces in the style of contemplative prose," unequalled in the whole of French

1. See, for example, "The Life of James Mill," Fortnightly, XXXI (April, 1882), 490.

literature for their "even, mellow gravity of tone," and their "sonorous plainsong."¹ And in "the temple that commemorates human emancipation" he did not hesitate to reserve a place for Rousseau, intellectually abortive as he was, because he had, beyond any dispute, kindled "a brighter flame of moral enthusiasm" for his generation. Nevertheless, where the effect of a work was to incite its readers one way or another, he always took a firm stand; morality in its broadest sense, morality as the conviction that life ought to possess a fundamental stability and dignity, he never ceased to cherish, and he was bound, therefore, to estimate how far the attitude toward life of the writer whose book lay before him exalted or degraded such an ideal. For him all art was experience transmuted into expression, but all parts of experience were not equally valuable and so the literary artist was to be judged for the kind of experience he wrought and the interpretation he placed on it. Such an exaction was Utilitarian. The ultimate question about any work was, what was its worth for mankind? By how much did it enrich human beings sensuously, intellectually, spiritually? How did it assist them, not only in directing their individual lives, but in harmonizing themselves socially with their fellows? The purely literary point of view, concerned with subtleties of form or mood or temperament or sensibilities, was always to be subordinated among the criteria

1. Rousseau, II, p. 153.

of criticism. With his introduction into critical practice of such Utilitarian principles, Morley was set apart from most of the critics of his time.

There are other facts, too, which help to define his significance. His use of psychology in his analyses and his acceptance of the importance of it in understanding human nature made him a pathfinder. In his peculiar combination of aesthetic sensitivity and Puritan rigorousness of mind, a combination in which the rigorousness predominated, he was distinctive; because of it, his criticism is of a tone and texture not to be duplicated anywhere among his contemporaries. His advanced conception of his own function must not be forgotten either. The great effort he made to assist, as a critic, in shaping a literary atmosphere, by which creative intellects could become impregnated, was startlingly effectual, in at least one case. No less a writer than Mrs. Humphry Ward, forty years after its appearance, declared about On Compromise, Morley's exhaustive indictment of the intellectual temper of his age, that she could "never lose the impression," which the book "with its almost savage appeal for sincerity in word and deed" made upon her--"an impression which had its share in Robert Elsmere." But it is for his historical sense, more than for any other quality, that Morley's criticism has been acclaimed. G. P. Gooch,

1. A Writer's Recollections, II, p. 3. Arnold's Literature and Dogma is acknowledged, too.

himself a historian of repute, assigns his volumes on Burke to "a place among the classics of English political literature,"¹ and lists him as one of eight nineteenth-century writers who made "precious contributions to the story of intellectual development."² Ferdinand Brunetière himself in 1886 called Morley's treatment of Rousseau a "brilliant sketch"³ and testified, thirteen years later, that although there were many volumes in French on Rousseau and Voltaire and Diderot, there were none equal to those by the German critics, Strauss and Rosenkranz, or to those by Morley.⁴ It was not until 1890, more than twenty years after Morley had undertaken his French studies, that any Frenchman embarked on a project of similar scope and purpose, in which Voltaire, for example, was revealed to his own countrymen for what he was, an extraordinary assimilator with a genius for giving unforgettable expression to all the ideas of his age.⁵ With his

1. G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century. Longmans, Greene. 1913, p. 400.

2. Ibid., p. 584. The only other Englishman among the eight is Leslie Stephen.

3. See F. Brunetière, "Voltaire et J. J. Rousseau," Etudes Critiques sur L'Histoire de la Littérature Française, III, p. 261.

4. See F. Brunetière, "La Littérature Européenne du XIX^e Siècle," Etudes Critiques sur L'Histoire de la Littérature Française, VII, p. 285. ". . . mais peut-être pas un qui vaille ceux de Strauss, de Rosenkranz, et de M. John Morley." Morley, of course, knew the work of both Germans.

5. See the review of Emile Faguet's Dix-Huitième Siècle, études littéraires (Paris: Licène et Oudin, 1890) in Brunetière's article, "Le Bilan de Voltaire," Revue des Deux Mondes, Mai, 1890. Here must be mentioned Morley's appearances in

conception, then, of the chief advance in nineteenth-century criticism as "the substitution of becoming for being;" and with his ability in "the synthetic method," Morley causes most of the contemporaries in his field to appear narrow. Only Leslie Stephen, in the amplitude of his historical perspective, the vigor of his mind, and the incisiveness of his style, can be compared to him.

The fact remains, however, in spite of Morley's importance to the growth of criticism, that his books are no longer alive today. It is true, of course, that, for volumes like his, the emphasis to be placed on what has been said diminishes from decade to decade. Ceaseless research unearths new facts, new sources of information about characters of the past, or proves old sources less reliable than was thought formerly. But, apart entirely from what was said, how it was said must be considered. Gilbert Murray, the scholar-admirer of Morley's, holds that, with all its philosophic consistency, his criticism is not illuminating. This has over-strained the truth. Much that

translation. In 1895 a number of his Critical Miscellanies were translated into French by one G. Art, the volume appearing with the title Essais Critiques and containing an introduction by Augustin Filon (Paris, 1895. 346 pp.). In 1879 On Compromise was translated into German by one Dr. Ludwig Haller and called Überzeugungstreue (Carl Ruempler, Hannover). Morley's success as editor must not be overlooked in a study of his critical activity. At Leipzig in 1880 a German edition of his English Men of Letters Series (opened in 1878) was announced as in progress, the translator and editor being one L. Katscher. This same series, J. J. Jusserand acknowledges, was what inspired him to inaugurate his own series of Les Grands Ecrivains Français in 1887. See his What Me Befell, p. 78.

1. See Murray's excellent commentary-tribute, "John Morley," The Nation (London), XXXIV (January 12, 1924), 540-2.

Morley wrote, even in his literary studies, is illuminating. But it cannot be denied that he is never evocative as Walter Pater so often is. Though there is intellectual suggestion in abundance and broad historical relation, too, in his essay on Wordsworth, for example, there is no such intuitive insight, no such affinitive comment in it as there is in Pater's, for the reason that Pater is imaginatively absorbed by Wordsworth in his attempt to feel the poet's peculiar essence and recreate it, whereas Morley characteristically estimates Wordsworth in terms of ideas. But to this difference between their techniques, he would have been the first to own; the subtlety which he admired in Pater, he never pretended to in himself. Probably more sympathetic attention to what he thought were secondary to ideas, but what Carlyle held first and foremost, the human touches about his characters, would have benefited his work. In his prose, one wants less sharp outlines and a suppler, softer texture occasionally; he too often radiated heat rather than light. Undoubtedly his volumes raised what he called "the temperature of thought" of his own times, but to a generation

1. On maturing young men he was "a great power." H. W. Massingham, in his "Morley the Humanist," Fortnightly, CXIV (November, 1923), 713-21, is one of many to admit this. We cannot comprehend, he says, "the devotional relationship which Morley established with the young manhood of the 'sixties and 'seventies. It reached all sorts and conditions of men, whose faith neither began nor ended with his." Massingham then goes on to quote an Anglican canon who had written him as follows: "In my life history Morley has meant so much that I cannot weigh him and his work in just balance. His Compromise marked an epoch in my mental and moral development, and in many ways he seemed to me more Christian than the average Christian." For additional testimonies see p. 139.

removed from the special circumstances surrounding the issues over which he fought, many of his once strongest passages read dangerously like declamation. There is not enough of the very quality which he knew to be so influential in moving people morally--even goodnaturedness. At his best, in the French studies and the critical essays, he is liturgically grandiloquent, and grandiloquence today has gone out of fashion.

THE MAN OF ACTION (1883-1914)
Gratifying a National Instinct in Politics

When in 1883 Morley was elected Member of Parliament by a constituency at Newcastle, he was only making a move for which he had carefully prepared long in advance. Twice before, in 1867 and 1868, he had tried to get himself adopted as Parliamentary candidate in Lancashire towns but with no success. And twice before, in 1868 and 1880, after he had been accepted as candidate by Blackburn and by Westminster, he had failed to win the election. Campaigning and vote getting, therefore, were not new procedures to him. His entrance into politics at the end of his Fortnightly service was only the consummation of a desire which he had nursed for almost twenty years--to gratify the national instinct of activity and energy by casting his lot in "the conflicts of the political arena." At last he had obtained an opportunity of satisfying himself, and of proving to his friends, that the man of action, the politician and statesman, is always superior to the man of letters, the writer and thinker. And how carefully timed his embracing of his new career was! For, indispensable as "time and industry, and the maintenance of a thoroughly open mind" were to the attainment of success, and invaluable as a "large and serene internal activity" was in the quest for happiness, one could not indefinitely keep postponing the

hazards and uncertainties of the future to the comfortable fixities of the present. He was forty-five, and forty-five is a critical age! Had he not preached all along that there are two momentous stages in the life of every "grave and sensitive nature"--the first, "on the threshold of manhood," when the youth examines himself, shapes his creed, and establishes ideals, and the other "towards the later part of middle life," when the mature man has been buffeted, his creed tested, and his ideals strained like young saplings in a strong wind? And had he not pronounced the second of these crises "the time of the grand moral climacteric," insisting that the decision which one makes in the face of it is final and irrevocable because it "parts him off among the sheep on the right hand or the poor goats on the left?" It is the course on which a man embarks at forty-five that will determine whether rampant selfishness, cynicism, and despondency are to choke out that "generous resolve of a fancied strength . . . not yet tried in the furnace of circumstance." In his own way, then, although he might not have liked to consider it so, Morley had crossed a Rubicon.

The vicissitudes of political life in a time of drastic social change and radical speculation about government and labor are apparent. But, because Morley exemplified "vigilant

1. See, for example, "Mr. Mill's Autobiography", Fortnightly, XV (January, 1874), 13.

tenacity," because he had taken pains with his character and kept himself "in moral training," he could walk with a stalwart stride that enabled him to weather the turmoil and the apprehensions of the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. His was a long professional life, yet during all of its thirty-one years he never ceased to show himself to the public, steady, judicious, human, indomitable. His career, however, was not continuous; it was broken, from time to time, by interludes in which he resumed the life of private citizen, having lost his seat in Parliament. There were three such losses occasioned by his admirable refusal to modify his convictions on certain challenging problems; he stood resolutely individual in 1886 in clinging to his advocacy of Home Rule, in 1895 in opposing an eight-hours bill for labor, and in 1898 in damning English Imperialism in South Africa. These acts were incidental highlights in a political life distinguished from beginning to end by its honesty and courage. On the whole, his thirty-one years in the arena of public affairs consisted of three chapters: the first, from 1883 through 1895, the Irish chapter, in which he was principally concerned with the struggle for Irish self-government; the second, from 1895 through 1910, fifteen years devoted to denouncing capitalistic Imperialism and later to governing India; and the third, from 1910 through 1914, in which, comparatively

inactive, he was senior member of the British cabinet and served as its Lord President.

Politics, Morley had declared, "ought after all to be nothing more abstruse than good common sense." ¹ And in no other division of his political activity was the application of his own illuminating common sense more unceasing and long-lasting than in his concern for Ireland. ² Common sense had told him early, as it had told Burke in 1775, that the only means of keeping any colonial dependency contented and healthily cooperative was through governing it for its own best interests. So it had been an administration of Ireland for the Irish that Morley had called for summarily in his first pieces written as Fortnightly editor. English statesmen should consider the racial differences of the Irish people, the peculiarity of Ireland's history, the fundamental and ineradicable influence of Catholicism in the land, the special features of Ireland's geography and climate, and then they should

1. "The Plain Story of the Zulu War", Fortnightly Review, XXV (March, 1879), 328.

2. Apropos of the Irish question, Morley had written in The Fortnightly for September, 1868 ("Old Parties and New Policy"): "Underneath the surface of this, and wrapped up in it, are nearly all the controversies of principle which will agitate the political atmosphere for our time. . . . The functions of the state, the duties of property, the rights of labour, the question of whether the many were born for the few, the question of a centralized, imperial power, the question of the preeminence of morals in politics--all these things lie in Irish affairs."

desist from attempting to impose on her a harassing alien social pattern and intellectual mould simply because they felt that what was good for themselves was best for their subject peoples. Morley's knowledge of Irish history was deep and thorough, and his candor compelled him to admit that it was a lamentable record of English crimes and follies. The worst of the counter-atrocities produced by Irish rage and fanaticism could be extenuated, for theirs was a fanaticism born of desperation. What poverty, what humiliation, what anguish they had been forced to endure decade after decade! The hunger of centuries gutted their stomachs, the thorn marks of generations stained their brows. The wrongs of Ireland must be redressed, and now, cried Morley. He swore to himself that her "voice of lamentation" and her "steaming tale of social ill" should never find him "with ears stopped by comfort and arms folded in selfish ease."¹

Ireland for the Irish, however, had not always been Ireland by the Irish. Indeed, in 1867,² Morley was convinced that "her installation as a corporate member of the Empire" was "the only position permanently possible for her," and he was full of praise for the efforts of

1. "An Address to Some Miners," Fortnightly, XXI (March, 1877), 409.

2. Edmund Burke, 165.

William Pitt the Younger in 1785 to make her that.

¹
 Twelve years later, actuated by this strong sense of political continuity, this hallowed feeling for the tradition of English statesmanship which were to characterize him for the rest of his life, he was still measuring the policies and capacities of contemporary judges of Ireland in the light of the conduct and opinions of Burke, Pitt, and Fox. After conceding that the behavior of Parnell and his confederates in the House of Commons was more likely obstructionism of English legislation than vehemence for Irish, even though he was willing to dismiss such factional blocking as no discredit under the circumstances, he nevertheless maintained that the only feasible solution of the problem of Anglo-Irish relationship lay in more and closer cooperation between the Parnellites and English Liberals, and he considered it ominous that "centrifugal forces" were "in the ascendant." In 1881, the next-to-last year of his Fortnightly incumbency, Morley could still state explicitly that he was one of those who believed separation to "be a distinct step backwards, . . . a disadvantage to Ireland itself."² Although it would result in certain benefits,--in endowing the Catholic clergy, for example, in denominationalizing education, and in ridding the country of foreign landlords, it would at the same time entail

1. See "The House of Commons," Fortnightly, XXVI (August, 1879).

2. "Conciliation with Ireland," Fortnightly, XXX (July, 1881),
 3.

grievous inconveniences, in the necessary levying of a heavy tax to support an independent army and navy, and in the inescapable adoption of high tariffs, whose restrictions, for a land poor in natural resources, would ultimately prove disastrous.¹ Harking back to Macaulay, whose words he quoted, Morley declared that if a fair trial revealed England and Ireland unable to "exist happily together as parts of one empire, in God's name let them separate."² But a fair trial had never been granted; no honest attempt had ever been made to govern the Irish "as a distinct nationality, with views, traditions, interests, a religion, a character, all of its own."³

Morley's first opportunity to do a real service to the Irish cause, to conduct a journalistic campaign solely in its behalf, came during the last three years of his Fortnightly editorship. It was not the pages of The Fortnightly, however, which were devoted to his purpose, but those of a London newspaper, The Pall Mall Gazette,⁴ whose leadership he assumed in 1880. Morley had gradually

1. Of course, Morley, with ingredients in his Liberalism from Cobden, hated any system of high protective tariffs as an "evil economic policy," and he regretted that a preference for such a scheme existed in the United States and in some of England's own colonies.

2. "Conciliation with Ireland," 4.

3. Loc. cit.

4. The Pall Mall Gazette Morley had described back in 1867 (see "Causeries," Fortnightly, I, May, 1867), as "a journal which is exerting so very wide and admirable an influence upon the public mind that it is almost ungrateful to fasten on an incidental shortcoming." By 1880, however,

become intimate, in the five or six years preceding, with Joseph Chamberlain, the aggressive and personable Liberal from Birmingham, destined to become one of the leaders of his party. Ever since Morley's hard-fisted editorial fight for National Education in 1873, Chamberlain had been interested in him; and now the two, fast friends, determined to collaborate in an undertaking of vigorous protestation against the policy of coercion currently being followed by the English administrators of Ireland. Chamberlain held a position in Gladstone's cabinet, and so once Morley secured the reins of the evening Pall Mall Gazette, the colleagues felt themselves wielders of formidable power, which they began immediately to use in directing broadsides at the English secretary for Ireland, and the foremost advocate of coercion, William E. Forster. It was during these three years that Morley, whose Pall Mall headquarters were a hive of activity, got to know personally, Parnell, Timothy Healy, his lieutenant, and the rest of his henchmen. He ate and slept Ireland. In addition to holding continual conferences with all Irishmen who amounted to anything in Parliament, he began making frequent trips to Ireland so that he could confer with leaders there and keep his eye more closely on the pulse of conditions. Nevertheless, anxious as he was over

it had grown conservative, and its sudden change of color, when Morley was appointed editor and made it an organ of Liberalism, was a shock to many. Morley resigned from control of it in 1883. For a short and only slightly informative chapter on Morley's Pall Mall editorship see Syed Sirdar Ali Khan, The Life of Lord Morley, 37-53.

the Irish cause and self-dedicated as it was to it, he retained his old confidence in friendly conciliation of Ireland as the only practicable solution of her difficulties; he was unable to see the efficacy in "a separatist and independent Government" for her.

As an active member of Parliament in 1883, Morley's independence showed in his first vote, which was cast with Parnell and the Irish members against Gladstone and the English Liberals on an amendment to the last Irish Land Act.¹ Early in 1884, when an attempt to reduce the number of Irish members in Parliament was proposed, Morley was firm in his depreciation of the measure.

We should lose far more by irritating the people of Ireland than we should gain by taking seats from her for our own use. Ireland was entitled to exceptional representation, not so much on the score of geographical distance, and the disadvantage under which her members laboured from the ignorance and prejudice of Englishmen about them, arising out of the differences of race and religion. 2

1. The Land Act of 1881, which, for the first time had guaranteed freedom of sale, fair rent, and fixity of tenure (the "three F's") to Irish farmers. A year before the passage of the act Morley had informed Gladstone that a certain commission investigating the land question was going to advocate legislation for the three F's. Gladstone said such a report would be incredible. Morley replied that "it was only a step from the incredible to the indispensable." See W. J. Johnston, "Mr. Morley and Ireland," Westminster Review (May, 1906), 475-92, for an excellent condensation of Morley's Irish record.

2. Ibid., 486. It must be pointed out that much of Burke's noblemindedness in his policy toward America had been assimilated by Morley and was constantly being used by him as a groundwork of political principle in the construction of his whole attitude toward Ireland. Foremost among Morley's assimilated Burkean dicta were "Nobody shall persuade me, where a whole people are concerned, that acts of lenity are not means of conciliation." and "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people."

Sometime between the occasion of this pronouncement, however, and 1886, Morley had encountered enough abuses in Ireland, and enough smoldering, swelling discontent, to make him realize that his belief in conciliation without the concession of independent government was no longer tenable. The skies were lowering and the storm was about to burst. He changed his mind decisively; it must be Home Rule or catastrophe. And so fervent was he in his conviction, so agitating in communicating it to others, that he was no small force in the conversion of the great Gladstone¹ himself to this most radical of platforms.

Assiduously, apprehensively, eagerly, he continued to move back and forth between England and Ireland, alert to the slightest shift in the wind of sentiment. "The more...I see of Irishmen--and I have some friends who are called Loyalists, as well as a great number who are called Nationalists--the more convinced I am that there are no people who would be more speedy to profit by a free parliamentary government."² On one of his trips he was descending the winding drive from the administrative castle through Phoenix Park on the route to Dublin. It was dusk and he was on foot, alone and ruminating. He was near the spot where, four

1. The charge that he was the sole converter of Gladstone, Morley dismissed curtly as "moonshine."

2. W. J. Johnston, "Mr. Morley and Ireland," Westminster Review (May, 1906), 489.

years earlier, the blood of an English chief secretary had been spilled in a brutal murder by Irish fanatics, and his thoughts were bitter. What merciless anger in those subordinated, what blind prejudices in those dominating! What annihilating passion and ferocity and stupidity in the endless strife! Suddenly Healy, Parnell's lieutenant, loomed in front of him, and a question, asked with a hateful smile, shattered the silence: had he come from the lair above? "Yes," answered Morley, "and I shall never set foot in it again."¹ Several months later, however, he reentered it as governmental minister, chief secretary for Ireland, pledged to achieve reform through an undoing of the work of William Pitt.

Morley's secretaryship, unfortunately, was brief. The epochal Home Rule Bill advanced by Gladstone in 1886, a bill in whose drafting Morley was largely instrumental, was defeated in its second reading, whereupon the prime minister resigned and his government abandoned office. But, although the struggle in behalf of Home Rule cost him his Parliamentary seat and seriously strained his friendship with Chamberlain, who had stood for a modified form of coercion in the crisis,² Morley did not let himself be

1. Augustin Filon, "John Morley," Revue des Deux Mondes (November, 1891), 181.

2. Morley had no use for modified coercion. The only effectual alternative to Home Rule, he insisted, was coercion rigid and thorough, a policy which would try, though perhaps wrongly, to get to the root of the malady and not stop with a blundering attempt to suppress what were supposed to be its symptoms.

discouraged by his defeat. There were no obstacles to deter him from continuing the fight save only the fears which his own imagination might create, and the soil of his brain was uncongenial to their growth. "Time and industry and the maintenance of a thoroughly open mind," he had pledged to himself to, and they would see him ultimately to victory. Even before the Parliamentary vote on Gladstone's bill, he had warned the House to beware of thinking "that the Irish Sphinx would gather up her rags and immediately depart" from their midst.¹ The ensuing six years were, in one sense, a time for reconsolidating his energies for a further attack on the obdurate prejudice of Parliament. It was anything but a quiet breathing space, however. His zeal was redoubled, his speeches multiplied, his campaign itinerary expanded. All over England he went, and again and again to Ireland, strong in his denunciation of pseudo-reform bills meant to placate the Irish with "merely mock powers and a delusive responsibility." To nervously complacent, effete British aristocrats, "with the politest and gracefulest kind of woman to wife" and with their spurious culture of "drawing room prejudice plus literary impertinence," he protested that smooth hands and a sweet tongue were no indications of any man's ability to make laws. An Irish parliament undoubtedly would be grosser-mannered than the polite body at Westminster, and

1. W. J. Johnston, "Mr. Morley and Ireland," Westminster Review (May, 1906), 490.

coarser-spoken, too, but its fund of sturdy common sense, its directness, and its passionate eagerness to get things done would enable it to govern as effectively for its purposes as any other similarly constituted body in the world.

Morley's incessant activities between 1886 and 1892 showed him in a variety of moods and against diverse backgrounds. He could be humorous when he wanted to be. Only the day after the reversal of Gladstone's Home Rule plans he presided and spoke at a banquet of the Eighty Club in London, a Liberal enterprise for organizing young men to assume political responsibility. Easily, simply, charmingly he diverted his listeners with a parody of Antony's funeral oration from Julius Caesar, in which Gladstone's umbrella, pierced with a thousand holes, took the place of the corpse of Caesar.¹ Often on tour he was dazzled by an extravagance of pageantry. On February 1, 1888, when he and a political colleague were making a triumphal entry into Dublin, they were officially escorted by a corps of guards from fifteen quarters of the city, and found themselves the chief spectacle in a procession led by fifty masters of ceremonies and lighted by two thousand torches, with more than twenty thousand--choristers, gymnasts, merchants, athletes, fishermen--taking part. The tortuous stream of color and noise, the bonfires, the bombastic speeches from high balconies, all testified that Morley was the man for Ireland.² There were grimmer occasions,

1. Filon, "John Morley," Revue des Deux Mondes (November, 1891), 183.

2. Ibid., p. 185

too. In September, 1890, he visited Tipperary. In characteristic Irish fashion, although there was less pomp, there was no less hullabaloo. Before he could avoid it, Morley was suddenly engulfed by a seething mob, on the verge of riot through the brutality and clumsiness of the police. He saw men clubbed without provocation and driven from a spot where the law allowed them to be; he saw clusters of women and children charged by mounted, helmeted guardians of Tipperary peace. Blood was spilled and his own hat was knocked off. In spite of himself and in spite of the fact that he was later to tell the House of Commons smilingly, a propos of riot measures, that the sight of broken heads did not frighten him because he had been raised in his father's surgeon's office, he was indignant at the fracas and nettled by his awkward reception. When the current chief secretary for Ireland, Mr. Balfour, got wind of Morley's dissatisfaction, his lip curled with the dry comment that he liked¹ Mr. Morley better when he was writing history than when he was making it. Morley's only profit was in realizing again, and more forcibly, what he declared he had known for years: that to succeed in politics, three things are necessary--an ardent heart, a hard head, and a thick skin!

1. Filon, "John Morley," Revue des Deux Mondes (November, 1891)

Meanwhile, in respites between lectures and tours Morley might have been found enjoying the tranquillity of his home in South Kensington. Inside his house, not at all different from a hundred others in its regular exterior, there was an atmosphere of collectedness and restfulness; the cool silence that prevailed, in the absence of children, was so profound, said an acute observer,¹ that Ben Jonson's Morose would have welcomed the place as his habitation. Upstairs was the library, Morley's retreat for meditation and study. There, with one wall wholly occupied by his books, and surrounded by no bibelots, no vivid colors, not a single trace of affectation or the exotic, Morley rested, steadied his mind, fortified his will. The severity of the room was one midway between banality and elegance, a severity distinguished by its harmony of fine, pale nuances. His predilection for a soothing whiteness, discreet and somewhat gray, was evident, and it was not to be overlooked either that for him, the thinker, such a whiteness might possess "the symbolic charm of a synthesis of colors."

In 1892, however, a new call to arms was sounded; Gladstone and his Liberals were returned to office. No time was lost. A committee of six was appointed from the Cabinet to draw up a new Home Rule Bill; and in this,

1. Augustin Filon. This whole paragraph derives from his article, "John Morley," 155-6.

Morley, acknowledged by Gladstone to be "about the best stay" he had, took a leading part. After stirring debate, the new Bill passed in its second reading before the House of Commons. In the House of Lords, unfortunately, it was damned and killed by an overwhelming majority; and with the consequent dissolution of the Cabinet that had framed it, the cause of the crusaders for a free Ireland was dealt another discouraging blow. Morley, however, although disappointed by the failure of the Act, was unshaken in his resolve to labor on. He warned the Lords not to delude themselves with the idea that the question of Home Rule was "going to slumber," and he added with flaming words in Parliament that Irishmen all over the world were looking to him and his co-leaders, and that their trust should not be deceived. The Home Rule principle had "now rooted itself; the justice of the demand" was immutably established. And so, rather than sever any administrative connection with the cause, in the aftermath of the Parliamentary defeat, Morley strove on for three more years in a second term as Chief Secretary for Ireland. His efforts were doomed to bear no fruit, however; his energy was, for the most part wasted. In his headquarters in Dublin Castle, a "grim apartment"

1. W. J. Johnston, "Mr. Morley and Ireland," Westminster Review (May, 1906), 492.

where he could only spend "unshining hours in saying No to impossible demands, and inventing plausible answers to insoluble riddles," his conscience troubled him; he could not forget the pledges he had made as Home Rule champion, and he was too sharply aware of the ugly contradiction between them and his present executive position in which he bore more than he wanted of the burden of responsibility for coercion. His isolation irked him, for his Nationalist friends had forsworn his company socially and bound themselves by oath not even to dine with him. Day after day, surrounded by numbers of complex advisory boards, and with an unsurpassable, English-created constabulary force at his disposal, he was tormented by the sight of Irish representatives who were condemned to standing idly by with never the slightest chance of being entrusted with the minutest responsibility and so of fitting themselves for the simplest services in the government of their own country. In 1895, it was with more relief than regret that Morley accepted his removal from office and withdrew once more to the activities of private citizenship.

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The relinquishment of the Secretaryship and the willing departure from Dublin Castle marks the termination of a chapter in Morley's political life. He was turning his back on what were, in many respects, the golden years of

his career. Certainly no other time would see him so conspicuous in the front ranks of the battle, so much the leader in demand, so excitingly acclaimed by those for whom he fought. Never again would the future shine before him with such golden promise; never again would his hand be so foremost in the shaping of state policy intended to determine what that future should be. Those had been years when reason had seemed an infallible guide, when it had been impossible to put down the conviction that diligent application of reason would be the sure solution to the most perplexing of national problems. After 1895 the wheels of Britain's destiny rolled on other courses, and Morley's attention, willy-nilly, was drawn more and more from Ireland and made to bear on more remote places of the globe.

In the last half of the decade of the 1890's imperialism was in the ascendancy, and much of Morley's strength was spent in predicting the disgrace, the disaster in store at the summit of its rise. His speeches were struck off with no less defiance of the bad, no less zeal for the good than had marked his fearless exposures of imperialism during his Fortnightly tenure, when he had denounced England's war against the Zulus in 1879, and warned against using the Suez Canal as a pretext for exploiting Egypt in 1882. Then, in addition to abhorring it for its inhumanity, he had belittled imperialism as a

"silly policy;" now he stigmatized it as a "filthy^h rag." He refused to give even one hurrah for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and he desisted, even more scornfully, from voting for a Parliamentary grant to Kitchener, after the victory of Omdurman in 1898, maintaining that the general had "violated the Mahdi's tomb." These acts of indignant opposition did not spring at all, however, from any narrow, peevish desire to be in "a complacent minority of one;" thirty-five years earlier he had set himself to avoid falling into just that. They were prompted by the same high-souled yearning for justice that led him to inveigh against the conquest of the Sudan in 1896 because he knew that it would lead to the permanent occupation of Egypt. But it was the era of Kipling and Rhodes, and Morley's words were lost in the wind to a society kneeling "prostrate before the idol of Empire."² In September, 1897, he defined bitterly and ruthlessly for his constituents at Arbroath, Scotland, the five steps in The "Forward" Rake's Progress;³

1. G. P. Gooch, "Lord Morley," Contemporary Review (December, 1917), 546.

2. Loc. cit. In Punch, in 1899, Morley was caricatured as Diogenes searching, with his lantern, for a true Liberal.

3. "First, to push on into places where you have no business to be, and where you had promised you would not go; second, your intrusion is resented, and in these wilds resentment means resistance; third, you instantly cry out that the people are rebels and their act is rebellion, in spite of your assurances that you had no intention of setting up a permanent sovereignty over them; fourth, you send forces to stamp out the rebellion; fifth, having spread bloodshed and confusion and anarchy, you declare with hands uplifted to heaven, that moral reasons force you to stay, for if you were to leave, this territory would be left in a condition no civilized power could contemplate with equanimity and composure." --This whole speech (September 28, 1897) can be found in the appendix of Morley's Speeches on Indian Affairs.

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and in January, 1899, before another Scottish audience, he branded "manifest destiny" as "moonshine" and "war for commerce" as "murder for gain," pointing out how only three years before, Lord Roseberry, and only ten years before, Lord Salisbury, both at present leading charioteers for Imperialism, had defined, respectively, a march on the Sudan to be an outrage to France, and an attempt at civilizing Africa to be a futile waste of blood and treasury. After castigating all those who believed General Gordon's death to have been avenged by the slaughter of 10,000 Moslems at Omdurman (as though Gordon were "some implacable pagan deity who needed to be appeased by hecatombs of human sacrifice"!), Morley went on to deride the clergy, Christian apologists for the war in Africa. A "Sinister clerical army of 28,000 men in masks," he had called them years before. And indeed here they were now declaring that there were, after all, worse things than war, that even a Christian could not afford to stand for peace at any price! What if a doctor simply shrugged his shoulders and sat down apathetic in front of his patient with the remark that what was, was, and that there were worse things than smallpox and delirium tremens! Morley had no difficulty at all in imagining the clergy

1. This speech is known as the Brechin Manifesto. An account of it can be found in the article, "Mr. Morley Strikes," The Saturday Review, LXXXVII (January 21, 1899), 69, as well as in the article "John Morley's Warnings" by R. Ogden, The Nation, LXVIII (February 9, 1899), 103.

in company with the Forty Thieves and in hearing them say that they were for the Ten Commandments, to be sure, but that it was still a work-a-day world, and, since they could not stand "aloof from the practical business of life," they could hardly be for the Ten Commandments at any price.

By 1904, however, the temper of the imperialists had cooled considerably, and the star of imperialism was itself sufficiently on the wane to enable Morley to relax in his vigilance against it. An invitation from his good friend Andrew Carnegie urged him to visit America, not only to deliver the Founder's Day address at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburg, but also to observe the coming presidential election and to accompany the Carnegies to the World's Fair in St. Louis. Inasmuch as it had been thirty-seven years¹ since his other Atlantic crossing, Morley accepted eagerly. In the United States he met Elihu Root, whom he found "the most satisfactory American statesman" he had yet seen, and spent several days with Theodore Roosevelt in the White House, the president and Niagara Falls remaining in his mind as the "two wonders" in the land.² Publicly he distinguished himself by his Founder's Day address at the Institute established by his host.³ With no pretense of

1. See "Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce in America," Review of Reviews, XXX (November, 1904), 548.

2. Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1920, 325.

3. "Some Thoughts on Progress," Educational Review, XXIX (January, 1905), 1-17. The speech is provocative, timely and timeless for any democracy, and written in Morley's best later-day style. It should be disinterred and brought to light in a new publication.

being apocalyptic, with none of the pose of the seer, he nevertheless let his mind range over the centuries and tried to discern the growth in values of the civilization that had evolved. For his theme was progress, and the relation to it of democracy--old subjects, both, but no less profound for all his years of preoccupation with them, and touched this time with a newness of phrase, a questioning sympathy of tone that revealed his complete humanity. The assimilation of so many heterogeneous alien groups and the fusion of them into such a great and industrialized and apparently pacifically ordered society was an accomplishment of the United States not to be rivaled by the most celebrated acts of the Roman Church or the Byzantine Empire or Russia or any of the most powerful despots who had ever lived. But the enabling of millions of hitherto incompatible foreigners to speak English was not in itself progress. What was tragically essential was that the Anglicized millions all over the world, in striving "with peoples of other tongues and other stock for the political, social and intellectual primacy among mankind," strive only "in lofty, generous, and never-ceasing emulation." Progress was not a certainty, ^{and to think of it as such was} a fatalism that could not but be weakening to the sense of individual responsibility. As for defining it, who could fathom its secret? Morley was "not bold enough to try;" the complicated and delicate relationship of moral advance

to material improvement was baffling. Too often, when physical hardships of living were removed, intellectual or nervous harassments usurped their place. In the sphere of government, where democracy was already being challenged and its claim to supremacy among political forms denied, Morley was standing his ground, however, against all pat mathematical objections that it was a violation of liberty because under it half a community plus one could oppress half a community minus one; all he could answer was that, "so far as experience has yet gone, a modern community as a whole is likely to be a great deal better off under the rule of half its numbers plus one than it would be under the rule of one minus the half." Whether democracy would make for peace, however, everybody had yet to see; it could not be denied that in Europe it had done little to retard "the turbid whirlpools of a military age." What human beings everywhere must remember was that, though "all politics are a rough second best," human effort must not slacken and allow them to degenerate into a third best or no best at all. Above all, men and women should "keep free of that fatal source, even in superior minds, of mental impoverishment, that comes of expecting more from life and the world than the world and life have to give;" year after year they should inexorably "demand the uttermost" from themselves.

Back in England in 1905, Morley soon found himself raised to the threshold of a new chapter in his political career. A Liberal cabinet was being formed by his friend Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and he was appointed to the important post of Secretary of State for India. India was more and more being regarded England's insoluble problem, but Morley held insoluble problems to be only problems wrongly stated, and he undertook his new duties with confidence and enthusiasm. Besides, he was not unacquainted with India's history and the peculiar difficulties she introduced for England, for, more than a quarter of a century before, he had shown that, although there was indisputably "boundless room for improvement" in England's methods of control, nevertheless her government of India had not been an impoverishing one. ¹ Indeed, it was at that time he had declared that he had been "listening to Indian officials of all kinds . . . and reading sheafs of Indian documents" for years and so was "quite prepared for the most sombre view of Indian prospects." Always, however, preoccupied as he was with the idea of progress and improvement in human relations, he had faced the facts of English domination in India and wondered: was it for good or for ill that Britain earlier had imposed on herself

1. See "The Impoverishment of India not Proven," Fortnightly, XXIV (December, 1878).

the burden of ruling that most alien of lands?¹ After a hundred years there it was significant that she still allowed (1878) no native to command a regiment.

In what Morley did as Secretary for India, in the positive additions he made to the record of the conduct of Indian affairs, it must be admitted that this second chapter in his political life is superior to the first; it bore fruit immediately, directly, and tangibly. Still, without fulfilment as the first, and Irish, chapter was, it had possessed an excitement, a vigor of movement and speech, a quickening assurance that the Indian period was never to manifest; it had been a drama against a background with a strength of color not to be imitated.

The story of Morley's Indian secretaryship is well known and needs no detailed retelling here. There were two parts to it: the first concerned with Morley the policeman and the second with Morley the law-maker. Both can be outlined in brief. Early in 1907 extreme disorder broke out in India. Agitators, hostile to English rule, were inciting natives to revolt and sowing dissatisfaction among Hindu regiments. Bombs were thrown, lives were lost,

1. In 1878 ("The Impoverishment of India not Proven," 867) the question had been put--was England's experiment, "the most daring . . . that any government ever yet attempted, . . . a beneficent success or a cruel and destructive failure?" In 1909, at a dinner in Oxford for Civil Service Probationers, Morley said he was "quite candid" in not knowing at all whether it was a "blessing" for either Britain or India that the "great responsibility fell upon England." (See Speeches on Indian Affairs, 278)

widespread anarchy was imminent. Alarmed by the possibilities of rapidly aggravated dissension, Morley had the two chief spreaders of sedition captured and deported immediately, without trial. To do this he had recourse to an old law, the so-called Regulation of 1818. The riots were quelled and anarchy averted; sporadic outbursts of animosity, however, continued and in 1908 the rusty Regulation was again called into service to deport nine more potential native subverters. This was one of the divisions of Morley's activity; the second was more constructive. Soon after taking office he had announced to Parliament that he and his colleague, the Governor-General, were planning to institute reforms in Indian administration; he was still of a mind that there was "boundless room for improvement." And true to his word, in 1906 he laid a bill for certain corrections "on the anvil." After three years of debate, reconsideration, and reshaping, the legislation became law and the Morley-Minto Reforms inaugurated a new era for India. In four years Morley had succeeded in bettering the personnel of the councils for both the Secretary of State in Whitehall and the Viceroy in India by the addition of qualified natives (to his own he appointed a Mohammedan as well as a Hindu), and in making the various provincial legislative councils in India more truly representative through an enlargement of them and an abolition of the hitherto invariable majority held by their "official,"

English-appointed members.¹

For both the disciplinary and legislative parts of his achievement during his five years in office, Morley was unsparingly criticized. On the one hand, his stifling of subversive plotters was denounced as tyrannical licence, and on the other, his initiated reforms were viewed apprehensively as "the first step down that slippery slope at the bottom of which lies a parliamentary government for India,"² even though he himself had earlier said that if his act contributed "directly or necessarily" to such an end, he would "have nothing to do with it."³ One political critic sardonically dismissed Morley's appointment of natives to his council as a "careful selection of nullities."⁴

It would be easy, however, to defend Morley's conduct in both parts. At the outset one could excuse it without justifying it, if it were admittedly inconsistent or unwise,

1. The function of the councils was not altered. For the most part they remained advisory, recommending bodies, and the governor's veto remained final. The new Indian "unofficial" majorities, however, were popularly elected. There were other details in the reforms, to be sure, such as the provision of a separate register for the large Mohammedan minority during elections, but an enumeration and discussion of all of these is beyond the purpose of this book. For contemporary comment on all the particulars of the Bill see E. Major, Viscount Morley and Indian Reform. Nisbet, March, 1910. 190.

2. "Lord Morley and Indian Reform," Quarterly Review, CCX (April, 1909), 694.

3. Said in Parliament, December 17, 1908. See C. A. Elliott, "Lord Morley's Indian Reforms," Nineteenth Century, LXV (February, 1909), 177-90, for an account of that speech.

4. "India Under Lord Morley," Spectator, CCXIV (January, 1911), 203-24.

by citing in his behalf his own extenuating dictum formulated in his twenties, more than forty years before: "It is better to hold a good theory, with occasional deflections, than a bad and cynical one, up to which one can always act in its integrity."¹ But such excusing is not at all necessary. To all of those who sensationalized what they considered the falling-off of the old Liberal who had fought so hard for self-government for Ireland, it could have been shown that Morley had never for a minute prescribed for Hindus or New Zealand aborigines what he had authorized for the Irish. There was no inconsistency in his policy. The most important principle he had learned from Comte almost a half century ago had been that of relativity: societies exhibit varying degrees and qualities of civilization, from place to place and age to age; they must therefore be studied according to the stage of development which they have reached, and no one set of recommendations can be applied as a universal solution to human difficulties. It was this conviction which prompted him, in condemning the Zulu War in 1879,² to berate the British for their stupidity in not seeing that the Zulus actually did have, although crude, a moral code and a polity, and in not realizing that it was impossible to change overnight a simple, semi-savage system of living into the complex pattern of a highly civilized nation.

1. Studies in Conduct, 69.

2. See "The Plain Story of the Zulu War," Fortnightly, XXV (March, 1879), 351.

Equally conspicuous and equally important in Morley's Indian administration was his allegiance to Burkean principles. Nobody who criticized him in 1909 as a Liberal apostate should have forgotten that in his historical study of Burke, his first real literary creation, in 1867, he had revealed a natural bent toward conservatism which his fondness for Burke's grand utterances on the subject served only to strengthen. The lifelong admiration for Burke, exemplified continually by quotations from his works, was inescapable and far too significant to be overlooked. Even in the most heated and shortest-tempered of his Fortnightly controversies he had been quick to refute charges of nihilistic sans-culottism and explain what he, as a "most ardent" and "advanced Liberal" really believed; his "practical and political reason" had taught him "that the antiquity of an arrangement or a prevalent idea is no reason for assailing it, but that it is a very good reason, so far as it goes, for leaving it where it stands." ¹ Although he never approached the extremes of Burke's reverence for the past, for Burke

1. "The Chamber of Mediocrity," Fortnightly, IV (December, 1868), 686. In "Sir Henry Maine on Popular Government," Fortnightly, XXIX (February, 1886), 173, Morley wrote that "Those nations have the best chance of escaping a catastrophe in the obscure and uncertain march before us, who find a way of opening the most liberal career to the aspirations of the present, without too rudely breaking with all the traditions of the past. That is what popular government, wisely guided, is best able to do."

had supernaturalized it, he nevertheless had learned from him how imperative a connection with it is, and he developed what, only because of his untiring awareness of the fallibilities of the past, fell just short of a faith in it. As for order, he shared Burke's valuation of it; only a year before he had succeeded to the Indian secretaryship he had decreed to Americans,¹ implicitly, that a free community without order might just as well have its freedom removed. What order would obtain if India were suddenly endowed with freedom? As early as 1867 he had answered that question for himself: no matter how noble England's motives might be, if she withdrew from India, she would "be leaving the country and its inhabitants to disaster and confusion far worse than any" she had ever inflicted upon it.² Not once in his career had Morley even whispered home rule for India. How, then, could disparagers accuse him of being a turncoat?

Although such facts, in the explanation of Morley's administration, should have been apparent to all observers who pretended to know him, they were, on the contrary, widely overlooked. Morley himself was alert to the failure to understand his conduct and was amused, if occasionally stung, by the misrepresentations of it that were rife. Condemned, after his deportations of seditious Hindus, as

1. In his "Some Thoughts on Progress" delivered on Founder's Day at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburg, 1904.

2. See Edmund Burke, 200.

a violator of the Magna Charta, a tyrant of the stamp of Charles the First, an iron-fisted extirpator like Strafford "or even Cromwell in his worst moments," he could laugh and rejoin that "in historical parallels" he was "really¹ fairly prepared." To be sure, he confessed, what he had done had amounted to a suspension of habeas corpus; it had been "arbitrary power" that he had wielded and he would be the first to forswear it as a regular daily or weekly procedure. But after all, the circumstances had been exceptional, and it must be remembered that if his temporary policy of "Reason of State" was "full of mischief and full of danger," so was sedition. Like Burke he was willing to bear with grievances until they had festered into crimes, but in criminal extremes he believed in swift recourse to severe action. Peace and order must be maintained. If, under the conditions he had faced, the Indians had been governing themselves, their leaders would have done just as he had done--put down any attempt at insurrection with a heavy hand.² Besides, if anybody took the pains to

1. See the speech for the Indian Civil Service Probationers, Speeches on Indian Affairs, 276 et. seq.

2. On the subject of the justification of British government of India, Morley could quote Mill reverently and vindicatingly: "Government by the dominant country is as legitimate as any other if it is the one which in the existing state of civilization of the subject people most facilitates their transition to our state of civilization." See Speeches on Indian Affairs, 64.

investigate the plight of the deported agitators, to whom he confessed he denied trial because he did not want them to loom as martyrs before their people, he could find that they had been humanely treated; their detention had lasted only six or eight months, they had been subjected to no harsh treatment, their families had been carefully "looked after" and maintained in their accustomed circumstances, and their cases had come up for periodic reconsideration by an official board of inquest.¹ The deportation, then, had been dictated by common sense. Suppose a commandant of a fort discovered ignorant men lolling and smoking their pipes alongside powder magazines--! But if politics were after all "nothing more abstruse than good common sense," it was equally important to remember that "common sense is a kind of humanity." One had only to survey the practice of native chiefs in non-British India to see what kind of punishment was habitually meted out for misdeeds much less objectionable than inciting revolt. And though Morley never for a moment flattered himself that Indians loved England, he did know that the more enlightened among them were thankful for her preservation of law and order, and he could cite numberless telegrams testifying to that which he and the viceroy had

1. One of Morley's friends and observers later said that Morley had to be "persuaded" to employ the Regulation of 1818 in the first place and that he was so self-conscious about having done it that he wrote to his viceroy Minto in India urging him to secure the liberation of the deportees and to abandon the policy of "imprisonment without charge or trial." See G. P. Gooch, "Lord Morley," Contemporary Review, CXXIV (November, 1923), 545-55.

received. The Indian leader Gokhale, for example, had declared publicly that his country had been saved from toppling into chaos, and among appreciative Indian newspapers there was at least one which did not doubt for a second that, had there been German or Russian overlords in Morley's place, it would have been "a case of decapitation and not deportation" for the inflammatory nationalists.¹ Morley himself liked to think of his whole behavior in terms of the figure with which a sympathetic journalistic colleague had described it:
 ". . . this swings on the tide but the anchor holds."²

Like Burke and Macaulay before him, Morley held that a public man who spent much time in vindicating his consistency was making a mistake. He was not going to apologize. Still, he could not resist the urge to point out from time to time, in addresses before Parliament, in speeches to his Scottish constituency, in articles for magazines, some essential facts about his relation to India. The size of India--the vastness of its land and the immensity of its population, its heterogeneity and its maze of minorities, its inherent mysticism, its too numerous and conflicting religions, its caste system--inconceivably graduated and intricate, its perpetual misery and discontent

1. The Empire, May 26, 1907. This and additional similar testimonials can be found in Morley's Indian Budget Speech for June 6, 1907, reprinted as "Signs of the Times in India," Edinburgh Review (October, 1907).

2. Quoted in Speeches on Indian Affairs, 81.

resulting from the ravages of annual plagues (from which, mysteriously, Europeans appeared to be immune), and its growing intellectual unrest, produced and nurtured by compulsory contact with an educational curriculum of Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Burke, and Mill--all of these things led an administrative secretary to realize doubly the profundity in Burke's observation: "How weary a step do those take who endeavour to make out of a great mass a true political personality." ¹ What in the English government of India during the past was especially reprehensible to Morley was that it had amounted all along to nothing more than an alternation of moments of spasmodic concentration and energy with long hours of neglect and stagnation. He had determined in taking office that the time had come for translating into at least partial fulfilment the promises made earlier in the century in the two greatest steps in the British rule of India since 1784: the Act of 1833, about which James Mill had said, "For the future, fitness is to be the criterion of eligibility;" and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, in which Victoria herself had stated that it was her will that Indians "so far as may be . . . of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices" ² in the Royal service. Those words, "so far as may be," had been misinterpreted, Morley felt; he would interpret them "in a liberal and generous sense"

1. Quoted aptly in Speeches on Indian Affairs, 96.

2. See Speeches on Indian Affairs, 32 and 200.

henceforth. To be sure, Macaulay had been right in saying that India in the nineteenth century was India in the fifth century, and that advancing her through fourteen hundred years was "a stupendous process." With that, Morley concurred; but stupendous though it was, the task, in the challenge it contained, was "one of the most glorious . . . ever confided to any country." What must be ever kept in mind was the necessity for raising India slowly, stage by stage, and degree by degree to a modern utilization of her incalculable capacities.¹ Her growth must, above all else, be gradual and regular, "in strictest measure even." For Morley, who nearly fifty years before, had realized the unfruitfulness of a human life built on a philosophy of short cuts, could affirm with equal conviction that invaluable for administering India, too, were "time and industry, and the maintenance of a thoroughly open mind." So, averse to the label "impatient idealist," although, he admitted, there was a time when he had been one,² and unsympathetic to the charge that he had been "hurried into the policy of repression," he defined his reforms as "a prudently guarded expansion of popular government in India,"³ and summarized his whole conduct as one "of firmness, of slow reform."⁴

1. Morley, of course, knew and always took care to remind others, that it is absurd to argue the superiority in every point of Western civilization to Oriental; there are strata of barbarism in Europe and America, too.

2. Speeches on Indian Affairs, 89.

3. See "British Democracy and India" (Signed Morley of Blackburn), Nineteenth Century, CXIX (February, 1911), 189-209, for Morley's justification of his phrase.

4. Speeches on Indian Affairs, 103.

Finally, in vindicating his consistency, Morley answered those critics who charged him with having usurped authority that belonged by rights to the Viceroy and having ruled India willfully, autocratically from Whitehall. He made not the slightest pretence of disbelieving himself the chief instrument in the Indian government, but he was not at all, he said, a self-constituted autarch. He had adequate authority for his awareness of his position, for Queen Victoria herself, in her Proclamation of 1858 had specified that her newly created Viceroy was to be "subject to such orders and regulations as he" should "from time to time, receive through one of" her "Principal Secretaries of State," and that this particular one of her Principal Secretaries was to take over all powers formerly held (since 1772) by the

1. J. H. Morgan, Morley's younger intimate friend and partial biographer, maintained ("The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI, January, 1924, 175-92) that much of the agitation in India during Morley's regime "was in a large measure directly due to a persistence continued too long and carried too far in the policy of his governing India from Whitehall." He says that he criticized Morley in print for this (see his review of the Recollections in The Nineteenth Century for January, 1889) but that Morley made no attempt at refutation. It is Morgan, too, who tells that Morley, sometime after his acceptance of the Viscountship, announced, "I think my fellow Peers welcome me since they have discovered I can govern India." ("More Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI, March, 1925). According to another associate, Morley extended himself with his first Secretarial dispatch and then passed it enthusiastically across his desk with a gesture: "There! What do you think of that? Not quite so bad for the poor theorist and rhetorician!" (J. A. Spender, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX, November 3, 1923, 207-10).

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Directors of the East India Company. Quite apart, however, from the question of the validity of Morley's assumption of supreme responsibility is the fact that inside his office in Whitehall his "tyranny" recommended itself to his colleagues and the members of his staff. He deprecated the curtness and the hard "ultra-official" tone of most of the administrative correspondence and pleaded for more easiness and sympathy, assuring his co-workers that "Benevolence is not other than a virtue, even in a great public office." After long days of Cabinet or committee meetings, official conferences, and interviews, he often would urge his secretary and his various subordinates to go on home and leave him there to finish his tasks alone, which took him not seldom until late at night to do. But these were labors of love, and if Morley sometimes erred on the side of assiduity himself, he was never slow in reminding the others that he did not believe in their "killing themselves with zeal."²

The Indian chapter in Morley's life cannot be closed without a citation from it of one of its most talked-about occurrences, his withdrawal from the House of Commons in 1908 and the entrance into the House of Lords with a Viscountship. The act was fully as unexpected and as seemingly

1. All quoted by Morley in his article, "British Democracy and India," Nineteenth Century, LXIX (February, 1911), 189-209.

2. See "Lord Morley: An Appreciation" (Reprinted by permission from Civil Service Opinion, October, 1923) in the appendix of Percy Dumbell, Loyal India. Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York, 1930, 218-225.

contradictory of all Morleyan principle as the earlier official deeds of deportation had been. Many of his adherents were thrown into consternation by the news that suddenly confronted them in the newspapers. Here was proof to confirm their worst fears that the buck had lost his horns, that democratic "Fighting John" had become a renegade reactionary, an impotent aristocrat. Was he not collapsing into exactly the kind of man he had derided more than a generation earlier, the unstable democrat "whose wings fall off in middle age and leave him to flop down in the House of Lords?"¹ Even his oldest devoted friend, George Meredith, was plunged into "some turmoil" by the notice of his title, but he managed finally to conclude that it was good for both Morley "and the country."² How could a man who, with professed conscientiousness, had all his life described "the institution of hereditary rank" as "the most singular" among "all ways of gratifying a democratic community,"³ jibed incessantly at the antics of the House of Lords, and coined the phrase "mend them or end them" about that same body, permit himself to become identified with nobility and take his place among its exponents? Was he recanting and disavowing all

1. "Young England and the Political Future," Fortnightly, I (April, 1867), 492.

2. Letters of George Meredith. New York. Charles Scribner & Sons, 1912., 616.

3. See, for example "The Expansion of England," Macmillan's Magazine, (February, 1884), 248.

his old strictures against it? Had those who worried, known the circumstances surrounding the move, they would have seen that it was only a surface deviation. For a foolish consistency Morley had no more use than Emerson himself, and he refused to have one squatting like a hobgoblin in his mind. Practical considerations dictated that he protect himself. He was old, and his diminishing strength and increasing deafness persuaded him to accept a seat in the upper House, where the debate was less rigorous, the tone quieter, the tempo slower. Moreover, to his own constituency in Scotland, he confided that he was finding himself less and less able to represent them adequately; he could not do justice to their claims and at the same time transact Indian affairs with the fullness of attention they demanded. He must concentrate and spare his energies, and he could do that only by resigning his seat in the House of Commons and moving in among the more leisurely Lords.¹ He had an admirable historical precedent--almost a vindication itself--for his change: in the eighteenth century, William Pitt the elder had gone over to the upper chamber, and for similar reasons.

Justified as his conduct was, however, Morley did not escape being self-conscious about it. Among his companions

1. It has also been suggested that Morley was perhaps embarrassed by being a senior in the House of Commons without being a party leader. See J. A. Spender, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-10.

he almost invariably referred to his new location as "the other place" and he was obstinately opposed to being addressed with his new title. In the House of Lords itself he never became wholly at home, if the account of one of his associates who observed him there can be trusted.¹ He was almost pathetic to watch, creeping in stealthily "as though he were afraid of meeting the ghost of his former self," stiff personally except for the moment "when his old friend the Lord Chancellor, whom he used to know as 'Bob Reid'" nodded to him and called him John, shivering and looking around uneasily whenever he was addressed as the Noble Viscount, sitting immobile and detached from everything about him, his face "steeled with an expression of weariness and disappointment," except when "the old lion" in him was aroused by challenging speeches on Indian affairs or his eyes were lighted up by "ironical reflection on the wastefulness of Parliamentary procedure and the insincerities of partisan politics." In the long run, however, Morley's healthy sense of humor through the whole affair proved to be a reassurance to his closest friends. Not long after his Viscountship had become public, a newspaper wit celebrated it:

When Morley said, "Let's end the Lords,
Or, at the least, let's mend 'em,"
We little thought what pregnant words
Composed that vague addendum.

1. See I. N. Ford, "John Morley in Politics," The Outlook, XC (September 26, 1908), 210-15.

Today we learn how much they meant:
 His Majesty, as I count,
 Improves the peers by ten per cent
 In making John a Viscount. 1

When one of his staff showed him these lines in The Pall Mall Gazette, Morley read them with relish.

The resignation of the Indian secretaryship in 1910 and the subsequent appointment in the same year to the Lord Presidency of the Council mark respectively the conclusion of the second chapter in Morley's political life and the opening of the third and final period, the shortest and the least active of the several. He had become by this time almost a venerable figure in English politics and most of the honors that were being paid to him were in the way of tribute to his past experience, or out of deference to his seniority. During 1911-12, for example, after having had The Order of Merit conferred upon him in 1902 and after having served as minister-in-attendance on the king during a royal visit to Scotland, he was one of four chosen to administer the affairs of the realm while King George travelled in India. But there were two occasions when he assumed a larger stature and acted again with assertion and effect. In 1911, to break down their opposition to a bill which would leave them only a suspensory veto and remove entirely their jurisdiction over money matters, Morley had the satisfaction of standing before his fellow peers and assuring them that if they did not vote for the

1. Quoted in "Lord Morley: An Appreciation," in the appendix of Percy Dumbell, Loyal India. Richard R. Smith Inc., New York, 1930.

passage of the bill, he would arbitrarily see that the royal patents in his hand, already signed by the king for the creation of new peerages, were put into swift execution. This was one of the supreme moments in his life; certainly it was that in which he felt himself most strongly the man of action, the wielder of power. The second demonstration of will came only three years later in his resignation from the Cabinet over the crisis of the World War. He could see no reason for England's declaration of hostilities against Germany and he was sure that for the future the consequences of any large-scale continental struggle would be catastrophic. He saw himself enmeshed and duped by what he had declared as Indian Secretary he had no gift for, "artful diplomacy." The old dream of England as the high-minded and benignant guardian of European peace was shattered forever. Bitter and sadly resolute, he withdrew to his private life, content there to let the rest be silence.

In the summing-up, Morley's stature as a politician is not difficult to discern, and his contribution as a statesman does not forbid appraisal. In spite of that, however, much nonsense has been written about him. Anti-pathetic moderns who dismiss him as a rhetorical but pale stamp of Mill are no less unintelligent than sentimental eulogists who exalt him as Honest John, a name he wincingly

disliked, and uphold his entire career as one long exhibition of self-effacing devotion to the cause of humanity. To the end he was attentive to fame and as suspicious as he had been in the days of The Saturday Review of all self-styled "philosophers" who would contemptuously leave it for fools. During the last twenty-five years of his life he was subject to much misunderstanding at the hands of a new generation. Sometimes it was near-abuse through impugnments of his personal integrity, as when, in 1911 he was denounced in Blackwoods as "a Jacobin who is always willing to bend to the storm of popular fury" and his Indian policy was branded in The Spectator as hypocritically "blended conciliation and repression," artfully concealed in his speeches by their wealth of "unfair imputation, of artificial antithesis, of avoidance of issues by a turn of irony."² More often it was censure of his "outworn" political creed by hasty young Liberals of the "new" school who had not taken the pains to discover what he really stood for. In 1898 he was attacked by an anonymous writer in The Fortnightly as "a cast-iron adherent of Manchesterism," a die-hard who had not "shed the skin of his economic adolescence,"

1. "Viscount Morley in Good Company" (part of "Musings without Method"), Blackwoods, CXC: 846-51.

2. "India Under Lord Morley," Spectator, (January, 1911), 203-24.

a "disintegrationist" in opposing Imperialism, in short, one of the "two philosophers in the British Empire capable of learning anything and everything except the secrets of that Empire."¹ The Saturday Review in 1905 labeled his attempt to rally English youth to his banner as futile and lamented his fondness for the "old watchwords" as senile;² the puniness of the writer's authority was exposed, however, by his contending that to Morley political reform had always been more "than social reform, a vote . . . better than bread; pulling down lords and bishops and disestablishing churches . . . better work than protecting workmen against dangerous trades . . ." And in 1906 an Oxford graduate, lawyer, and author who should have known better, after making an admirable exposition of Morley's temperament, went on to deplore that his Liberalism should have upheld "principles of unchecked individual liberty and unchecked competition," and then deprecated "its hastiness, its overconfidence in its own judgment, its scanty respect for other creeds and philosophies and methods of work, its³ readiness to substitute the artificial for the natural"!

1. "Mr. John Morley," Fortnightly, LXIV (August, 1898), 249-62. The other of the "two philosophers" was Goldwyn Smith. This article is adroitly put together and is not at all negligible as a criticism. It is a survey of Morley's political thinking up to 1898 and makes effective use of artfully chosen quotations.

2. "Mr. Morley or Lord Roseberry," The Saturday Review, XCIX (March 25, 1905), 369-70.

3. Algernon Cecil, "Mr. Morley," Living Age, CCXLIX (May 26, 1906), 451-58.

If consistency is the criterion of political greatness, then Morley was among the greatest. To the last his Liberalism was faithful to the sources from which it derived. He retained his belief in the value of the voting franchise, drawn from John Bright, and he never outgrew his loyalty to Free Trade or his anti-militarism, developed in him by his biographical absorption in Cobden. More important, however, in actuating him politically, were the principles he had inherited from Mill: his moral Utilitarianism; his confidence in disciplined, "ethicalized" reason; his trust in an enlightened minority; his faith in the democratic pattern as the best means for producing leaders. Most important of all was the groundwork of convictions constructed out of Burke: his breadth of attitude and vision; his sympathy with the people ("I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people."); his hatred of abstracts, in particular, of "rights;"¹ his aversion to panaceas; his insistence on patience and slow change; his love of order. He was eclectic, it is true; he originated nothing. But he was eclectic in the highest sense;

1. In 1867 in his first study of Burke, Morley wrote that no figment of metaphysics "is more monstrous than this of the final and absolute existence of a Right. As if Right in the highest sense of all were something beyond a test and, still more absurd and mischievous, as if any given right were possessed of qualities beyond those of a measurable, fluctuating, and conventional value, assigned to it by its greater or less conformity with the conditions of the general convenience." (145-6) See footnote on page 121 for his confirmation in 1904 of this same attitude, made with specific reference to the South American republics.

after assimilating ideas, he gave living force to them and was an active, inspiring embodiment of them.

If prescience be the sole determinant of political rank, Morley must again be assigned to a station not far from the top. He always marvelled at Burke's incomparable "feat of sagacity" in predicting, a decade or so before it arrived, the dictatorship of Napoleon. In the light of what has happened in 1940, was his own prediction so much less extraordinary--his prophetic warning, uttered in 1867, that, if strife between France and Germany was not extinguished, Germany would one day achieve a "monstrous pacification" by overrunning Belgium, the Netherlands, and France? To be sure, prognostication was not his forte and he laid no claim to the role of prophet, but, unfortunately, many things have been forgotten by dissenters who deny that he had any vision for the signs of the times. He was so outraged by England's brutal seizure of the Zulu's lands in 1878, on the pretext that the Zulus were a trouble-making inferior society and needed adoption, that he could declare an eventual German seizure of Czechoslovakia on the same grounds no more incredible and no more criminal! If he could not foretell with certainty the duration of it, at least he knew in 1880 that civilization was in "a great armed period, an era of violence and the sword," and he could speculate honestly whether that period was partially¹ past or whether it had just been entered. Although now, in

1. "The England of Today," Fortnightly, XXVII (January, 1880), 149.

the light of the African wars of the last fifteen years of the century, his pronouncement of 1878 appears somewhat premature, that in the future a prime minister could wage a long war only if the English people were convinced that "the very independence of the country" was in danger,¹ still it is being borne out dramatically in 1941 by Winston Churchill and his nation. More significant and more demonstrable from the time when it was uttered, is his eloquent admonition that England would never enjoy the fruits of a high-minded peace through a pitiful isolation from the affairs of the continent. Was the "Versailles armistice" (1918-1939) after all only the first for England in that series of armed truces which he decreed would be the lot of western Europe if England persisted in refraining from using her potentially great moral power to conciliate continental antagonists and point the way actively to peace? It is true that Morley's reading of the Book of Empire for the future was only half true; he was right in 1884 when he maintained that England's colonies would oppose "artificial centralization" and that they would increasingly desire "expansion . . . along lines and in channels which they may spontaneously cut out for themselves,"² but he was wide of the mark, if the War of 1914 is any evidence, when he

1. "A Political Epilogue," Fortnightly, XXIV (September, 1878), 331.

2. "The Expansion of England," Macmillan's, XLIX (February, 1884), 258.

stated that close Imperial cooperation in the event of war was unbelievable, for who could imagine Australian legislatures reconciling "their constituents at the other side of the globe to paying money for a war, say, for the defence of Afghanistan against Russia, or for the defence of Belgian neutrality"! Again he remained so whole-hearted in his belief in the advantages of the democratic system that he came near maintaining that for any Western European nation, representative government would, among other things, arbitrarily increase "the state of national self-respect" to the point where it would become a protection against "unreasonable jealousy of other nations."¹ The experience of Germany after 1918 under the Weimar Republic, of course, offer all-too-unhappy proof to the contrary.² Finally, as specimens of

1. Stated thus in 1867 in Edmund Burke

2. Morley's admiration of German efficiency and systematizing intelligence, and his confidence that a strong, unified Germany would become a Liberal, civilizing power, an indispensable insurer of peace on the continent, were long-lived and have been commented on earlier (see p. 225). Undoubtedly his faith in her, and his feeling that England's fundamental interests were more closely tied up with hers than with those of France or Russia, blinded him to the menacing growth in the twenty-five years before the War of militant, anti-democratic, anti-British ultra-Germanism. Heinrich Treitschke (1834-1896), whom authorities today recognize as one of the foremost inculcators of that dominating autocratic spirit, Morley refused to take seriously. In a lecture on democracy at the University of Manchester on June 28, 1912, he dismissed Treitschke's doctrines as "twenty times as little tending to edification" as Machiavelli; "No Professor in this University could keep a class for a month upon Politik of that stamp." (See Sirdar Ali Khan, The Life of Lord Morley, 323). It has certainly been commented on elsewhere, how ironic this failure to estimate German forces was, in the face of his youthful acumen for revealing in his French Studies just what cataclysmic, though slow, growth was achieved in France more than a hundred years earlier by the ideas sown among the people by the pre-Revolutionary philosophers.

his prescience, are his statements about labor and industry. "The wisest statesman," he had written in 1877, "The wisest statesman--unless he is over sixty--is he who keeps his mind most on the alert for new economic forms." Measured¹ by his own definition, he does not appear very far-sighted in his unrelenting castigation of the Eight Hours Bill in 1895 as an infringement upon workers' rights. But he was clear-sighted in foreseeing that sooner or later a "great economic revolution would convulse the earth," that no occidental nation could escape it, and that the great problem confronting every country was, therefore, the devising of the best kind of industrial organization for withstanding it.² If capitalism for the whole of western civilization is doomed, if socialism is inevitable, then³ Morley's resolute stand against the Socialists and his

1. "A New Work on Russia," Fortnightly, XXI (February, 1877), 264.

2. Ibid., 264-5.

3. Before the Eighty Club on November 19, 1889, Morley had said he was no Socialist if Socialism meant the abolition of private property, the appropriation and management of land and capital by the state, and equal distribution of products. Under such a system, he maintained, human stupidity, apathy, sloth, and brutishness would be just as likely to "continue to strew the way with wastrels and wrecks." (See "Mr. John Morley," Fortnightly, LXIV, August, 1898, 260). In 1898 and 99 his opposition was more often stated and hence became generally known. After all, the line between individual initiative and privilege and state direction had to be drawn somewhere. He was not, however, a die-hard with regard to state control. In 1866 he was modern enough not to consider centralization a "bugbear" and to be amused by the number of people for whom it was. (See "Social Responsibilities," Macmillan's, XIV September, 1866). Even in 1882 he could declare Herbert Spencer in his social thinking behind the times because he could not tolerate the idea of increasing state intervention.

firm belief in a modified, enlightened capitalism as the solution for England must be acknowledged as inadequate. It may always be asked, nevertheless, whether the humane capitalism which he advocated, with workers and employers both guided by "moral and social motives," has ever been tried.

Actually what defines Morley's place in political history is neither consistency nor prescience. It is capacity for leadership; and in that, after a quarter of a century, he shows up strikingly deficient. More things than one testify to the shortcoming. In the first place, he did not possess the irresistible assurance about himself which a successful politician needs and which, if he is to lead others, he must possess in abundance in order to communicate it to them. Morley never transmitted such driving conviction, never compelled people through the contagion of his enthusiasm, to follow him. He was prey to doubts about himself and nocturnal misgivings about his offices and policies. Time after time, in dejection, he drafted and mailed letters of resignation, which were invariably consigned by his superiors to the fire; "how many burnt offerings" they had made, according to an intimate friend,¹ not even Prime Minister

1. J. H. Morgan. This fact is told in his "The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-192, and it is substantiated by J. A. Spender in his "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-210. Morgan adds that the letters of resignation began during Gladstone's last ministry (1892-94) when Morley was so painfully inconvenienced by his Irish secretaryship.

Asquith could tell. Moreover, Morley was not a powerful, commanding speaker. In Parliament, after a stumbling failure in his maiden speech, he managed to recover and become an effective "solo performer" in carefully prepared addresses, but he never mastered the spontaneous give-and-take of debate. In Asquith's words, he was always "oppressed by the difficulty of satisfying his literary conscience in impromptu speech."¹ Outside, on the lecture platform, though through perseverance he gained a certain competency of delivery, enough to make him one of the most reputable speakers between 1887 and 1900, the influence he exerted was through his transparent conviction, and, in later years, through his "awkward gestures," "husky voice," and "ragged sentences." He impresses listeners and he won sympathy, but he never swayed

1. The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections (2 vols.) Little, Brown, and Co., Boston, 1928, I, 289. Sir Henry Lucy ("Lord Morley's Memories," Living Age, CCXCVI, March 16, 1918, 652-60), heard Morley's maiden speech in Parliament and could not forget him "standing with parched lips and strained eyes stumbling through recitations of his sedulously prepared essay." According to Lucy, Morley later learned outside to discard "heavy notes" and to talk in "a frank, hearty manner." An anonymous "Member of Parliament" ("John Morley," Century Magazine, XXXVI (October, 1899), 874-80) testifies that Morley's conviction and use of homely phrases now and then made his speeches "the most widely read of any of his time, and the most keenly enjoyed." Another witness, I. N. Ford ("John Morley in Politics," Outlook, XC, September 26, 1908, 210-15), maintains that Morley, certainly in the House of Lords, was never eloquent or impressive. "When he is not stooping awkwardly to keep the run of his notes, he is swaying from side to side and flinging out his arms to emphasize points. There is no distinction of manner." He was always making over sentences: "He catches his breath and gropes for them the right words while his auditors' hearts are in a flutter of expectation."

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vehemently, never impelled, never excited. Nothing, however, more tellingly reveals his inability to lead than his conduct during the outbreak of the first World War. Active leadership means the power to make others do and follow, and that by nature he did not have. A general must generate. His decision to resign from the Cabinet rather than violate his principles was lofty and laudable. But it was only a subdued departing gesture of the hand where a bold, challenging sweep of the arm was needed. Why did he not speak in Parliament condemning what he knew to be the growing intention of his colleagues to declare war? Why did he not make at least one attempt to stem the tide by exposing before the assembled Houses some of the ministerial duplicity he had discovered, and so prompting an investigation? To be sure, he was old and weakened, but what a cause he had to plead, and what a moment it would have been! What a seizure Burke --or Gladstone--would have made of the opportunity! Why, at least, did he not take the offensive and wrestle with his Cabinet associates to dissuade them from their purpose? The whole story of his resignation, with its sequel of the subsequent years of silence and the posthumous appearance

1. "His was not a personality to kindle enthusiasm, but he never failed to command respect . . ." W. L. and Janet E. Courtney, "John Morley," North American Review, CCXVIII (December, 1923), 765-75.

of his own self-vindication, shows Morley too content to desist from any further effort, once he had satisfied his own conscience by acting according to his convictions.¹ His action was intellectual and as such was wholly confined to the arena of his own brain. Setting an example, indispensable as it is in political leadership, is not enough; other men must be prevailed upon and drawn to imitate it. The withdrawal from the Cabinet thus remains a fitting final gesture in Morley's public life; it was at once the consummation of his career and the supreme revelation of its deficiency.

1. The posthumous self-vindication is, of course, Morley's Memorandum on Resignation, composed in August, 1914, and published by Macmillan's in 1928. He was not in a noble minority of one, however, in his exit from the cabinet; a Mr. John Burns left it, too, conscientiously opposed. J. H. Morgan says that he urged Morley in 1922 to make public the Memorandum, but in vain. Moreover, according to Morgan, Morley's strenuousness in trying to free himself of complicity in the diplomacy that resulted in the war was foredoomed. Condemn Lord Grey as he would, he should have scented the outcome of the government's foreign policy, since he himself had been, from at least 1910, a member of the Committee for Imperial Defence. The fact is that in his old age his memory failed and he would forget such important occurrences as that in 1910 he had been present at a meeting of the British and French General Staffs and had written in some agitation on the outside of an envelope containing certain military plans, "Doubtful if I ought to approve of this. But I suppose it's in the interests of European peace." See, for additional remarks about Morley and the War, Morgan's two articles, "The Personality of Lord Morley," Parts I and II, Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-192, and CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67, and "More Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI (March, 1925); G. P. Gooch, "Lord Morley," Contemporary Review, CCXXIV (November, 1923), 545-55; and R. Beazley, "John Morley and the War," The Nation, CXXVIII (March 13, 1929), 307-9. Beazley calls Morley's long post-war silence an "unheroic

Men of action, Morley always held, must be judged by the standards of men of action, yet under such judgment, he, who all his life strenuously liked to think himself a man of action, emerges inferior. His own achievement, measured alongside that of such leaders as Walpole, Pitt, and Gladstone, is third rate at best. And he had set his heart at twenty-five on the highest rank, for to be a second-rate politician was to be poorer than a second rate writer! It is undeniable, however, that he lacked physical impetus and could not initiate.¹ What he remains admirable and memorable for is his insistence on humanity and morality in politics, for his own personal adherence to high ideals. The character of Lord Morley's power, as has been rightly said, was the power

self-effacement" and says that in 1917 he was asked by Lord Lansdowne to cooperate in leading a movement to end the war, his cooperation to mean, among other things, a publishing of his Memorandum, but that "through lack of courage, like the poor and timid Pope in Dante, he made the great refusal." Morgan's John, Viscount Morley: An Appreciation and Some Reminiscences (Boston & New York. Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1924) is, of course, invaluable for all the later years of Morley's life.

1. It must not be forgotten that the pioneering Indian reforms originated in Viceroy Minto's brain and not in Morley's; Morley was, however, never remiss in acknowledging that. On the other hand, it is equally true that the final form in which they appeared was Morley's, and that the responsibility for seeing them through Parliament was borne by him. Apropos of what was almost a constitutional need in him of a stimulus from without, it is characteristic that even in earlier days his most penetrating examination of his own religious attitude--at any rate, so far as its appearance in print is concerned--was conducted only after Mill's posthumous essays on religion had come out and he was conscientiously driven to protest and refute their conclusions. See "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion," Parts I and II,

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of Lord Morley's character. He demonstrates, with his fortitude, his independence, his healthy disbelief in panaceas, and his conviction that legislating must be done with a view to human nature rather than an eye for a system, what the best kind of Liberalism, the Liberalism that is the liberating "fruit of education and thought" and not the "half accidental" creed of a transitory political party,² can effect in an individual life.

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Fortnightly XVI (November, 1874) and XVII (January, 1875). This whole tendency of his has led Philip Guedalla to call him Gladstone's fidus Achates who "had developed a dangerous capacity for singing seconds." See his "Lord Morley" in his A Gallery (G. P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., 1924), 169-77. Guedalla does feel, too, that Morley's failure to make the highest mark was considerably due to the stupid British opposition to statesmen who could write as well as read.

1. Said by Sidney Brooks in his "Lord Morley and India," The Independent, LXX (January 26, 1911), 197-200.

2. See footnote, p. 6

PRIVATE LIFE AND LAST YEARS
A Comparison and a Summary

The last nine years of Morley's life gave him an opportunity to savor uninterrupted what he had been so careful to preserve through his long public career, the precious "delicacy and bloom" of life. Once in his youth he had written that these qualities were unobtainable through living simply, because simplicity was at best a negative virtue; but this early simplicity, one discovers by an observation of his own mature domestic and social habits, might better have been called frugality. The tranquillity, the cool quietness, the unobtrusive immaculateness, the restful, discreet whiteness which so attracted an admiring French visitor in 1891 remained distinctions of Morley's household to the end.¹ His wants were never multiplied; his tastes never complicated. Refinement was hyper-discriminating, rarefied, in him; among the increasing distractions of a mechanical age he could not endure that the constituents of his routine should become dominating absorptions. He desired comfort but never coveted a large "establishment." He kept no butler, never owned an automobile, and spoke with amused self-depreciation about "We middle-class people

1. See page 287 for Augustin Filon's reaction to Morley's domestic surroundings.

disguised as Peers--." ¹ Most important in his ordered, gentle domesticity were his books, his confessed "genial, instructive, fortifying comrades," and his wife. About the exact character of her place in his scheme of things there can be only conjecture, as futile as in most cases, owing to the lack of information about her, it tends to be suspicious. In his own words, the relations between a man and his wife "are those of which even the nearest friend must know least," for success or failure in them, rightness or wrongness about them, are dependent on "elements too delicate to be capable of being either fully divulged or fairly seized." ² Who can gainsay him? He took no delight in prying open cupboard doors on other men's skeletons, and so, in his own marital life, he merits the consideration of de mortuis nil nisi bonum. Rose Ayling, whom he married in 1870, was a sweetly charming girl, a cyclist, a walker, a country-lover; who, in spite of not being a philosophic conversationalist or a cosmopolitan winer-and-diner, could talk interestingly with John Stuart Mill in his last years about flowers and birds, and draw the affection of her husband's oldest friends. Certainly the note of assurance later on in Morley's line to his warm French friend J. J. Jusserand on the subject of the latter's approaching marriage--"This, I trust, is to prove the happiest event of your life." ³ --indicates nothing but happy

1. See J. H. Morgan, "More light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI (March, 1925).

2. "The Man of Letters as Hero," Macmillan's, LI (November, 1884), 65 (unsigned).

3. J. J. Jusserand, What Me Befell. Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1933. 158.

compatibility in his own home.

Outside his house music and friendly companionship remained inexhaustible delights. Morley, who, as a youth "used to hate going to St. John's on Good Friday . . . because there was no organ,"¹ continued partial to organ music and "reveled" in it for an hour every morning when he visited at Skibo, the Scottish estate of his American friend, Andrew Carnegie. In his social intercourse, however, the war was a temporary interruption. He withdrew from the Cabinet in 1914 convinced that Hell was raging on earth and men had gone mad, and his resentment, his deep indignation led him for a time to be brusque and stern in his answers to letters of sympathy from those devoted to him; he seemed to have severed all his ties with the past. But gradually he returned to the world, and with him his historical sense, his eagerness over international events, his affectionateness, and his charm. For it was charm. His personal relationships had all along been distinguished by inimitable grace and warm sincerity, and innumerable testimonies have been made by men and women who were enriched by his company. Once at a party when a group of ladies and gentlemen decided to write down on a piece of paper the name of the man they would prefer to have as a companion on a desert island, the choice² was unanimous for John Morley! Even in the give-and-take of

1. Hirst, II, 76. From a note to his sister Grace, written April 10, 1879.

2. See "Mr. Morley: a Study by a Member of Parliament," Century, XXXVI (October, 1899), 874-80.

politics, the effect of his personality was unmistakable. When a bystander remarked to a young Scotch conservative, fresh from a talk with Morley, that he seemed to get on well with the English politician, the answer came back: "If all Radicals were like Morley they would be easy to get on with. --And perhaps there would be fewer conser-¹vatives." It was true, as Mrs. Humphry Ward was later to attest,² that Morley knew "all through his life what it was to be courted, by men and women alike, for the mere pleasure of his company." He was captivating, and the impression he made was "immediate and lasting." In addition to the high moral atmosphere in which he moved, he possessed a "singular personal power," a "personal magic" which "winged" his words and gave them force. He had succeeded, as he early set out to do, in capturing "the genuine air and manner of distinction."

In his old age Morley's connoisseurship in wines and foods was something for younger men to marvel at and profit by, yet he was as fastidious in his affections as in his tastes and delighted in relating one with the other. "If he invited you to lunch alone with him at a restaurant," said one of the younger men who profited, "he would be there

1. See G. W. Smalley, "Recollections of Morley," McClure's, XX, (November, 1902), 56-8.

2. See her chapter, "London in the Eighties," A Writer's Recollections (New York. Harper & Brothers. 1915), II, 1-10. Margot Asquith, too, in her More or Less About Myself (New York. E. P. Dutton & Co., 1934), 87, characterizes Morley as "a fascinating companion."

a quarter of an hour before the time carefully choosing from the menu and ordering the wine. Often his greeting would be: 'You're a red-wine man, and I remember that you liked that Margaux, and see, I have got it again.' It was delight-¹fully flattering and ever so kind."

But it was in his conversation that his charm was supreme. In no other aspect of his social behavior was he so much the artist. If his mere presence cast the spell, it was his speech that sealed and sustained it. A three hours' talk with him was an unforgettably happy experience,² and you knew, once you had shared in one, that "to be banned from his presence was a real bereavement."³ It was exactly that early sought "quiet, easy flow" in his conversation that set him apart from other men, enlivened as it was now and then by "pungent bits of absurdity," but never conspicuously pointed by flashy paradoxes or strained by disputatiousness. His voice was soft, courteous, urbane, yet tinged sometimes with delicate irony or almost imperceptible superciliousness. And so deferential⁴ was he, so intent on avoiding wrangling that he became more and more

1. J. A. Spender, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-10.

2. See Austin Harrison, Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories (London. William Heinemann Ltd. 1926), 177.

3. J. A. Spender, op. cit. F. W. Hirst, too, in his "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 211-12, adds that Morley's charm as a conversationalist was inimitable, because it depended so strongly "on expression and on modulation of voice, or perhaps on a gesture."

accustomed to yielding point after point, fact after fact, to his companions. Yet it was not deference alone which prompted him to do this. It was as much true Socratic humility; when he saw truth in an idea, he was compelled to concede it. He argued for truth rather than victory, and often he went so far in his concessions that there was no retracing; he could do nothing but throw up his hands with an "Ah!" and let the subject disappointingly drop.¹ Frequently, too, his silence, his willingness to listen,² worked an unintentional deception on men who were over-eager to persuade him; what was patient, receptive disinterestedness, they were too ready to construe as tacit acquiescence. Not all, however, who talked with Morley found him wholly satisfying. His life-long fondness for neat terminations with freshly phrased commonplaces or

1. See J. A. Spender, op. cit. Austin Harrison in his Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories, 114, describes the long discussions he listened to between his father and Morley. Morley, he says, remained "dissolvent and dubious," while Harrison, who generally won, soared pontifically, "all contention, a sabreur in thought." "Lord Morley was economic with adjectives and constitutionally chary of generalizations. His brow would dome and his lips curl. 'Well! Well!', he would say, 'I envy you your turmoil. You are like a tankard of old sack.'"

2. Augustin Filon, in 1891, noticed that Morley "has one quality rare in a master of speech: he listens admirably." See his "John Morley," Revue des Deux Mondes, CVIII (November 1, 1891), 156. This philosophic dispassionateness was as marked in Morley's official, as well as in his personal, discourse. In his Indian office he was exceptional for it. See "Lord Morley: An Appreciation" in the appendix of Percy Dumbell, Loyal India (Richard R. Smith Inc., New York, 1930), 218-225.

epigrammatic quotations, some companions thought handicapping. What he called his "elegant extracts," chosen from the vast stores of his commonplace books, were habitually intruding upon his own thoughts, breaking their flow, and, while they often imparted a brilliant coloring, they were too likely to convey the impression of a man walking on crutches rather than his own legs.¹

During the latter part of his active political life, although he was not a party leader, Morley relished playing Nestor to his colleagues. Year after year he gave a dinner at Elm Park Gardens just before the opening of Parliament, and there he "entertained and admonished his younger and more mutinous friends."² After his withdrawal from politics, he was content to be the Nestor of journalism. And indeed he was considered just that by all rising journalists of any account; at one time or another they all sought counsel from him--it was the "first rule of the game in the eighties and nineties."³ As long as he lived, he was proud of his own journalistic past and

1. See J. Ramsay MacDonald, "John Morley," The Contemporary Review, CXXXI (March, 1927), 282-9.

2. The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections (Little, Brown, and Co. Boston, 1928), I, 197.

3. See J. A. Spender, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-10, and J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-192, for corroborations of this. Spender says that in his first interview with Morley in 1886, he blundered, but that Morley "was all kindness and geniality," advising him "to go to the provinces and learn" his business.

both curious and eager to know what progress the press was making in other countries; a question about it was among the first things he asked of visitors from abroad.

Removed as he was from public life, his interest in politics remained avid to the end; and there was no flagging in his zeal for fame or his attachment to the "secondary adjuncts" of place and ceremony.¹ In the long months of strife between England and Ireland in 1921, he looked back regretfully on the failure of his own efforts to bring about Home Rule more than a quarter of a century before. At one point, after the rejection by the House of Lords of a new bill for Irish independence, Morley confessed

1. It has been said that when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was forming his Liberal government in 1905, "Morley applied to be appointed to every post in the Cabinet, except that of Prime Minister," and "it was with a feeling of being ill-used that he subsided with a coronet into the Secretaryship of State for India"! See "Morley's Fears for his Life," The Literary Digest, LXXX (January 12, 1924), 29-30. In the passing of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (the Morley-Minto Reforms), Morley followed the Archbishop of Canterbury into the House of Lords, all the chandeliers glowing in half-light, and took his seat next to the bishops--"in visible appreciation of the propinquity of so much saintliness"! See "Lord Morley: An Appreciation" in the appendix of Percy Dumbell, Loyal India. J. H. Morgan, too, admits Morley's zealousness in the pursuit of high place, but reminds us that he never bought it and never fawned upon his superiors or played up to the press for publicity. See his "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part II), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67.

in agitation to a friend,¹ "I should like to have been there if only to have got up and said, 'If Mr. G.'s Home Rule Bill had been passed thirty years ago could Ireland have been worse than it is now? Would it not have been better?' --And then fallen dead like Lord Chatham." On December 16, 1921, when peace between England and Ireland was finally reached and a treaty signed, Morley had his last moment of public glory. Supported by his nephew, he went down into the House of Lords, and tottering slightly and in a cracked voice which, pathetically, could not be heard more than a few feet away, placed his benediction upon the measure. He had lived to see the consummation of the old dream, and true to his pledge, he had never forsaken the cause.

Morley's last days were days of a gradual euthanasia. His gout, his growing deafness, his weakness of memory had all been the first symptoms of a general decline. Inside his home he spent much time in a chair with one of his books always in his lap, for moving from room to room, even with the support he had to have, was too taxing a strain for his worn frame. There was little reading done, however; close observation of his face revealed that his eyes were not looking at the words on the page before him, but through them to the invisible past beyond. He spent many of his

1. J. H. Morgan. This incident comes from his "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part I), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-192.

waking hours in reminiscent reverie, always with quiet, gentle satisfaction to himself, for the lines around his mouth were relaxed and the frailest shade of a smile lightened his lips. Outside of retrospection, his thoughts were much on death, to which he resigned himself with tranquil patience, and he would read aloud the passage from Dante's Convito, where death is compared to the haven which the soul, like a battered mariner, reaches after all struggle is past.¹ What he had set himself forty years earlier to avoid, there was becomingly not a trace of--"those unmanly repinings or any of that garrulous self-pity which not seldom, even in the case of men who have done good work in their noontide, rob the close of life of its becoming dignity and fortitude."² His "large and serene internal activity"³ protected him to the end.

1. See J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley," (Part II), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67.

2. From "The Life of James Mill," Fortnightly. XXXI (April, 1882), 499.

3. According to J. H. Morgan ("More Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI, March 1925, 486) Morley, as a result of his life-long respect for thrift, that "wise and careful outlay of money" which involved "a really lofty moral excellence," left a fortune of some sixty thousand pounds, the bulk of it the product of his literary life, prudently invested by a friend.

With his characteristic aversion to biographical exploration and revelation, Morley was explicit in his will about his collected papers. He sent all his "correspondence, diaries, and written fragments" to his nephew, Guy Estell Morley, "to be dealt with as he may think fit at his own discretion." His executors were enjoined "to refuse to aid and encourage" anybody in writing a biography of him, "and not to allow any such person to have access to any of" his "papers, whether personal or acquired in the course of official duty, either for perusal or otherwise." See "Morley's Fears for his Life," The Literary Digest, LXXX (January 12, 1924), 29-30.

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Morley's last twenty-five years found him preoccupied with the old antiphonal, equi-vocal questioning themes. Indeed, in one light, a sharp and narrow one, his whole mental life might be said to appear a series of conflicts or irresolutions never, with finality, straightened out. Human nature--was it good or bad? Which was superior, the man of letters or the man of action? What were the bounds between public and private morality? To be sure, sobering experience enforces a modification and moderation of any man's ideas, and to be sure, the radicalisms of today are the platitudes of tomorrow. But even so, Morley's intellectual progress cannot be graphed by an even, regular curve from left to right. His mental equipoise was never destroyed; his philosophic comprehension never broken. Unfortunately, the war and its aftermath tinged his tone with bitterness, with something, at times, of hopelessness; and so the effect of that cataclysm, wholly out of proportion to anything else, must always be taken into account in surveying the field of his aged mind. Still, what remains remarkable is the continuity of direction of his thought.

The man of letters, he had decided at twenty-five, is always inferior to the man of action, and to his death he maintained that decision. No number of publisher's royalties in the world could swerve him from preferring the indescribable satisfaction of saying "Yea" or "Nay"

in vital questions of state to "the solitude, the nervous¹ exhaustion, the introspection of the life" of writing.

This, contradictorily, from the man whose conscience in politics had worried him into writing innumerable letters of resignation! The truth is that he took pleasure in endlessly debating the balance between the two professions; although he had exalted politics above literature, he never, for that reason, forsook literature.² A "favorite catechism" of his was which, if one had had his choice, would one rather have been, Gibbon or Pitt; Macaulay or Palmerston;³ and his remembrance of the pleasure of writing was so keen that until he was incapacitated, he toyed periodically with the notion of doing biographical studies of Cavour, Disraeli, Strafford, Calvin, Lucretius, and Goethe! His young friend Gilbert Murray tried to draw him back to "exercising" his pen, but the pull was not strong enough. And when Thomas Hardy remarked that if only he "had let politics alone, he might have been the Gibbon of his age," he was "visibly disquieted."⁴ His

1. J. H. Morgan, "More Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI (March, 1925).

2. It might have interested Morley to know that his American contemporary, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., whom he called "the greatest judge of the English-speaking world," had made the opposite choice for himself: the world of today is for the man of action, but the world of tomorrow belongs to the thinker.

3. J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley (Part I)," Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924).

4. J. H. Morgan, John, Viscount Morley: An Appreciation and some Reminiscences, 31. Morgan himself (p.67) does not hesitate to call Morley's "the tragedy of a man who in middle age exchanges his own vocation for another which is both new and alien to him."

persistence in attempting to embrace a duality of achievement was a discomfoting preoccupation, and he was once heard expressing the wish that he could "walk along the House of Lords with Aristotle on one arm and Machiavelli on the other"¹! It is true that, much as he condemned Machiavellianism, he was irresistibly attracted to men of blood and iron and relished being in their company. His expression of his pleasure in the vivacity of Kaiser Wilhelm, on the few occasions when he was with the German monarch, is at least² ingenuous.

"In a moral aspect," Morley had written in 1867,³ "the fineness of the material of which a friend's character is made, is surely far more important to me, than the correctness of his intellectual impressions." Throughout the Fortnightly epoch it was because he believed this so firmly that he preached the need of more history in schools to offset the exclusive emphasis on science; history, properly studied, would result in an enrichment of character, always "a higher thing than mere intellect," and make human beings "continually alive with the spirit of beneficence." Even in introducing the French Encyclopedists to England he was careful to remind his readers from time to time of the

1. See "Viscount Morley in Good Company," Blackwoods, CXC, 846-51. The remark is supposed to have been made in a speech at a dinner in honor of the British School at Athens in 1911.

2. See Recollections, I, 247, and II, 199 and 298.

3. Edmund Burke, 256.

falseness in the belief "that only physical science can improve the social condition of man."¹ And in 1911 at seventy-three, with the eloquence of anxiety, he exhorted students at the University of Manchester to shun that "exaggerated and misshapen rationalism that shuts out imagination, distrusts sentiment, despises tradition."² Certainly no man's life could have been a more noble illustration of his convictions on such a question than was the life of Morley, with its sympathy and benigance.

The effect of science on literature was a problem about which he had been deeply concerned for several decades. In 1873 he had welcomed this effect for the increase in seriousness and thoroughness which it would make. As the years went on, however, an apprehensive question formed: "Is the pure scientific impulse--to tell the truth with all the necessary reservations--easy to combine with regard for artistic pleasure?"³ And in his old age Morley himself answered it, chiefly in the negative: it was true that science had developed the desire for truth in men and taught them to be patient in their quest of it, yet in fiction it had given rise to a vogue for bold, unsparing analysis, in prose style itself it had led to increasing complexity, and in history it had imposed a tremendous

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1. Diderot, I, 4 (1878).
 2. Politics and History, 3.
 3. Politics and History, 205. This question occurred in a speech, "Words and Their Glory," given before the English Association in 1911.

burden of documentation on the author. Along with the reasoned depreciation of science and intellect, lasted his preference for the company of churchmen. The older he grew, the more fully he exemplified the truth in his dictum, "it is certainly not less possible to disbelieve¹ religiously than to believe religiously." Christian morality, he had always counselled and practiced himself;² but more than this he had always aspired to, and in his old age reflected, that exalted, sublimated state of soul called "holiness." This was an "inner grace of nature" by which man's spirit was to commune with the "seen and the unseen Good,"³ a "deep feeling for things of the spirit that are unknown and incommensurable, a sense of awe, mystery, sublimity . . . ,"⁴ the equivalent, probably, of Matthew Arnold's special kind of emotion by which morality was to be touched. In his own experience Morley knew well the agitation of beauty such as one feels

1. On Compromise, 105.

2. As Secretary of State for India, Morley denied that Orientals "inevitably and invariably interpret kindness as fear." "The founder of Christianity arose in an Oriental country," he stated, "and when I am told that Orientals do not appreciate kindness and are only influenced by fear, I will say that I do not believe that any more than I believe the stranger saying of Carlyle that, after all, the ultimate question between any two human beings is--Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me?" See "The Religion of Kindness," Spectator (London), CI (December 26, 1908), 1090-1.

3. Politics and History, 100.

4. Rousseau, II, 275.

in Shelley's "Skylark" "or a piece of ineffable, heart-searching melody by Beethoven or Handel,"¹ and he could be appropriately reverent in the presence of it. Once, as a guest in Ireland of the Countess of Aberdeen, although he had been considerably excused by his hostess from participating in them, he insisted on joining family prayers every morning "to renew his own sense of littleness amid the mysteries of life, and to begin the day with a feeling of fellowship in service with the humblest member of the household."² Again in Scotland, where his host was a Highlander, he surprised and delighted other guests by standing with them at the piano on Sunday evenings³ and singing hymns as heartily as anyone in the company. Very late in his life, on one of the last trips he ever made to Rome, he left the train specifically to see two men and two men only--the Pope and the Vicar-General of the Jesuits! Neither one was accessible, and in disappointment,⁴ unobserved, he made his departure.

The nature and limits of compromise never ceased to concern Morley. Where must frankness leave off and reticence begin? In the preparatory Saturday Review days he had

1. Hirst, I, 320.

2. "John Morley, a Study by a Member of Parliament," Century Magazine, XXXVI (October, 1899), 874-80.

3. "John Morley, a Study by a Member of Parliament," Century Magazine, XXXVI (October, 1899), 874-80.

4. J. H. Morgan, "More Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, CCXXI (March, 1925), 486.

decried unremitting, extreme self-assertion. Tact was not to be identified with hypocrisy; and a certain willingness to hear other people's opinions, in spite of a burning itch to controvert them, was imperative if the world was to be preserved from degenerating into a "sheer bear garden." All that he, as a Millite, could say in behalf of the relentless self-speaker was that, although his habit of "continually quarreling" with whatever his neighbors did and thought was "fully as objectionable as a habit of mentally bowing and scraping before them," it was "probably not so bad for the man himself." The famous On Compromise (1874) was Morley's fullest exposition of his opinions on the subject, and ⁱⁿ it was explained in detail how the bear garden could be averted. It commanded men to allow their minds no compromise with strict truth, to be merciless toward themselves in their search for it, no matter how discomforting the results of their inquiry might be. At the same time it advocated a considerate restraining of tongues in company with others. On points of belief, in all matters of individual conscience, any evasion or misrepresentation of facts was insupportable, but in the proprieties of social intercourse, to escape the antagonizing ferment which ruthless frankness in small matters would create, a discreet skirt-ing of argumentative declarations was necessary. In the

1. Studies in Conduct, 87.

patient gentleness of Morley's old age, nothing was further removed from his speech than promiscuous and universal sneering. No man could have practiced better the gracefulness he preached.

To what extent were principles of individual conduct reconcilable with public life? Were the bounds of private and public morality the same? In 1867, "impatient idealist" though he was, Morley knew that holding public office entailed the need "of temporizing, of compromise, of aiming not too high, of conciliating masses of opposing interest,"¹ but at the same time he could not refrain from asking the question: "Have moral considerations, again, any place in political transactions; or are we to learn that though it is atrocious for a man to cheat, lie, and murder for his personal profit, these actions become harmless or even laudable when they are committed for the benefit of a government or a corporation?"² Because he vigorously denied through his Fortnightly association that immorality and inhumanity on the part of the state could be extenuated, he condemned English imperialism. As a politician, however, he learned that some modifications of the Christian code were inescapable; politics began for him as simply common sense, they changed intermediately to "a rough second best,"

1. Edmund Burke, 245. In 1873, in his third installment of "The Struggle for National Education" (Fortnightly, XIV, October, 1873, 431), when he had occasion to mention "Chesterfield's religion," Morley wrote that it was "a religion which was that of every wise man but which no wise man ever told; to have to compromise, to conciliate, to struggle, to submit to defeat, to face facts."

2. Ibid., 201.

and they ended as "a matter of expediencies." He would not pose as an exemplar and developed a strong dislike for the nickname that had been coined for him, "Honest John." In his old age he confessed that public morality had to be separate from private, and admitted that he had never known a Cabinet meeting where anyone had discussed a question as a Christian, not even Gladstone himself.¹ Still, a second best in political morality was better than no best at all, and after more than thirty years of unrest in trying to adjust his conscience to it, he refused to yield to an additional lowering of standards from second to third. His Cabinet resignation spared him further, deeper pain.

In the genuineness of his attitude toward labor, however, and in the enduring clarity of his thoughts on panacea, Morley remained "Honest John" to his death. As Fortnightly editor he had never patronized workmen, never simulated fond friendship for them, never talked as one of them. His bearing in front of them had always been one of man-to-man respect, of sympathetic understanding. In his decline he was no less straightforward. Labor intellectuals, more and more in fashion, he despised. And not for a minute did he lose sight of what constituted real gains, real improvements for those who worked. When it was pointed

1. Mentioned by J. H. Morgan in "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part II), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67.

out to him what increases in wages, what reductions in hours, what multiplication of conveniences the twentieth century had brought "the masses," he asked anxiously and somewhat sharply whether they were better men and women than they had been; so far as he could see, they cared no more for things of the mind, and husbands only squandered their money on betting, wives on "meretricious finery." For panaceas his inveterate reasonableness had little regard. About Socialism he never altered his skepticism; he would make no stronger statement for it than that he delivered in 1911, that it was "still a secret" whether, "in any of its multitudinous forms," it could be "the assured key to progress." To the end he maintained that the survival of civilization depended on a readjusting of the scales for a harmonious, equitable balance between individual initiative on the one hand and state control on the other. As for the Covenant of the League of Nations, it was dismissed, in spite of his deep-rooted anti-militarism, with withering contempt. What would a scrap of paper do by way of keeping the world from war? There would be no peace until there were ministers in all countries bent on peace. Did he recollect at all his own plan, advanced almost fifty years before, for a league of powers to maintain peace, led by England and so constituted as to enforce diplomatic decisions by economic and military sanctions?

1. See J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part II), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67.

2. Politics and History, 59.

3. See ante, p. 126

The debacle of the war and the folly of the Versailles settlement led to serious doubts about the nature of man and ominous conjectures about his future. Were human beings, after all, bad? Was his life-long assurance that they could be taught to be good, proven false at last? In the late 1890's, alarmed by the unchecked growth of "the turbid whirlpools of a military age," he had re-examined the whole ground of human character and human history. In his essay "Machiavelli,"¹ he vindicated men and judged the Italian's view of things unsound; Machiavelli possessed intellectual strength but he was short-sighted because he lacked "moral grandeur." The growth of the Machiavellian spirit among nations in modern times could be explained without attributing it to an inherent rightness in the philosophy underlying it; what made it so fearfully prevalent was "that Science, with its survival of the fittest" was unconsciously lending it "illegitimate aid." Machiavellianism could be interpreted, then, as natural "energy, force, will, violence," which are hostile to man unless harnessed and controlled. It was not at all a figment to be laughed away but a power at large in the universe, against which civilized men and women everywhere must be ceaselessly on guard. In his "Guicciardini," soon after, Morley was relieved to be able to quote another Italian historian, who, he said, had given a truer view of the case. According to Guicciardini, men are not naturally

1. Delivered first as the Romanes lecture in the Sheldonian theater at Oxford, June 2, 1897.

bad but only naturally weak, so that even when they incline toward the good, their frailty, aggravated by worldly distractions, prevents them from doing what they have set out to do. At least this way of looking at human nature left room for hope: worldly distractions from virtue might still be transformed into worldly inducements toward it, and human reason and will strengthened through education. And so, as late as 1908, Morley denied any truth in Carlyle's Machiavellian verdict: that "the ultimate question between any two human beings is--Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me?" Shaken, however, by the desperate plight of the world after 1918, by the mockery of what was termed peace, and in a siege of despondency, he exclaimed to a friend that "to the end of time" it would "always be a case of 'Thy head or my head,'"¹

What of progress through the long range of centuries? Had civilization advanced or retrogressed? Never one to desire an "instantaneous and unimpeachable millennium" or to believe in a progress that was automatic and certain without the efforts of men, though, to be sure, his tone

1. Said in 1919 during a condemnation of the League of Nations to J. H. Morgan. See his "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part II), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (April, 1924), 342-67. Hirst, however, in his preface to The Early Life and Letters of John Morley (see p. xxiv) prints a very late commitment by Morley, to the effect that Carlyle's pronouncement put "the case too bluntly;" it was "only an extreme form of mercantile competition."

in speaking of it in The Fortnightly had not always been temperate, Morley gazed wonderingly, somewhat quizzically at the great notion in 1904. He was unable to define it, but, since he had recently read in an American book a story about a father who had wanted fifteen things, got ten, and worried about five, whereas his son wanted forty, got thirty, and worried more about the ten remaining, he was willing to suggest that "one clause in any definition of advance in civilization might be that progress lies in the constant increase in the number of things wanted, in the number of those who want them, and the greater worry if the things wanted are not got."¹ From that time on it was his habit to describe a belief in the certainty of progress as a superstition, a radiant fatalism. In 1911, as Chancellor of the University of Manchester, he was perturbed and dubious: the track, he urged his students to see, was not all upward; Progress was an "eternal riddle" and its meaning "extremely diverse;" and he confessed that he was "content with something far short of Mill's assumption" that there was at least "great progress in feelings and opinions."² In 1919, in a moment of depression,

1. "Some Thoughts on Progress," Educational Review, XXIX (January, 1905), 1-17.

2. Politics and History, 54. So, too, in Gladstone in 1903 (Vol. II, 109), Morley had sighed regretfully over the death of the 1860's, for in those days "there were idealists; democracy was conscious of common interests and common brotherhood; a liberal Europe was then a force and not a dream."

he could only ask tragically, "As for progress, what signs of it are there now? And all we Victorians believed in it from the Utilitarians onwards."¹

This darkening skepticism cast its clouds inevitably over his attitude toward history and toward literature in general. In 1913, before the storm of the war had broken, Morley could still celebrate history, in his accustomed way, as the queen of all studies. "It is history that matters," he told the members of the Historical Congress at Oxford, "It is history that matters more than logic, forces, incident, and the long tale of consummating circumstances."² And he could go on to contrast the historian, who, like a bird, soars aloft over mountain ranges and sees that all the peaks are not of the same chain, with the politician, who, like a sailor, moves along the base, and to the side, of the same towering masses and fancies them all interconnected. Only a year before he died, however, he was lamenting that the truth could never be known and maintaining that history was always misleading because "far more depended on the conversations of half an hour, and was transacted by them than ever appeared in letters and dispatches."³ Deprecatingly he called his own attempts

1. J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part I), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-92.

2. Sirdar Ali Khan, The Life of Lord Morley, 318.

3. J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part I), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-92.

at history "all the greater reason why he should sin no more." All his life, moreover, he had abhorred and cautioned against vulgar style and cheap taste in literature; yet the older he grew, the more alarmed he became by the observation that more and more the vulgar style was the democratized style and the cheap, sordid taste the democratized taste. Newspaper standards were accepted as final criteria, and the influence of a "defiling flood of hideous trans-Atlantic vulgarisms" was carrying everything before it. Slang and sensationalism ruled the day.¹ Fiction, in particular, taking its cue from French models, was being degraded; writers were wallowing in mud for its own sake. Once on a train to Calais he had found two French novels so disgusting that he had flung them out of the window.² Everywhere brutalizations of the literary ideal! Democratizing books, teaching all people to read, was entirely different from democratizing writing, allowing anybody to become an author; that, he had always held. Yet he was discovering that everywhere the urge to write was following the experience of having read. Had he not sinned, too, then, in helping to make

1. Both slang and sensationalism can be qualified. Professional and high-flown jargon were as detrimental in their own way as slovenly barbarisms were in theirs. In 1911 Morley made an appeal to the members of the English Association to help "preserve the dignity and the purity of the English language," which had never before been exposed to such dangers. "Domestic slang, scientific slang, pseudo-aesthetic affectations, hideous importations from American newspapers all bear down with horrible force upon the glorious fabric which the genius of our race has reared." See "Words and Their Glory," Politics and History, 197.

2. See Recollections, I, 277.

the satisfaction of that urge possible? His ground for his conduct as a Liberal all along had been that, for things aesthetic and moral as well as for things political, he had faith in human intelligence, in the power of "a grand reserve of wise, thoughtful, unselfish, longsighted men and women" to raise standards in larger areas around ¹ itself. Was it to be true, on the contrary, that the leavening power of an intelligent minority would dissipate itself and the few succumb to the lower level of the many? Had he been wrong all the time in estimating the capacities of human beings and in considering a democratic system most adaptable to those capacities? Were discipline and taste and ideals in all activities to be thrown to the winds? ² Whether he was mistaken, time and changing circumstance have not yet shown. What must be admitted about him, and remembered, is the great truth he had laid down in his youth about Burke, that the next best thing to being right with humanity and breadth is being wrong with

1. See, for example, Politics and History, 73.

2. The relation between Morley's own moral integrity and temperamental fastidiousness was once expressed epigrammatically by Ramsay MacDonald: "To him honour and honesty belonged to the sentiments of taste; they were artistic essentials." See his "John Morley," Contemporary Review, CXXXI (March, 1927), 282-89.

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humanity and breadth.

Despite attacks of perplexity and doubt and dejection, Morley was not engulfed by despair in his last five years. The breadth and equal-voicedness of his brain sustained him. Although to one young friend at one time he could confess that he would no longer tell electors "how to think," because he believed "in the regiments of parties"

1. Edmund Burke, 256. "To be in the right as measured by wise definition and logical standard, is not all: it is necessary to be in the right with humanity and breadth. Is not the next best thing to this, to be in the wrong with humanity and breadth?"

Apropos of this whole question is the judgment of Paul Elmer More, which makes Morley out an invidious, though unrevolutionary, Jacobin because, intellectual aristocrat that he was, he devoted his life to the political undoing of the aristocratic class which had produced him, which had made possible his Oxford education and afforded him intercourse with her best minds. More than that, he deliberately and irrationally incited the growth to power of the vast lower classes, whose stupidity and whose standards in art and morals he had despised from the start. He had no right, says More, to tamper thus with the wheels of so complicated a mechanism as society when he did not believe in the destination that he was making society inevitably move on to. This criticism, stated thus and with such neat, comprehensive reference to the whole of Morley's life, seems valid, but actually its very patness is its falseness. It is true that with a certain youthful bumpiousness and impatience in the Saturday Review days he had been disdainful of the thousands of middle-class Troglodytes, and it is true that in his correspondence of the Fortnightly period there are brusque dismissals of the "smug grocer public" of Britain for its "brutal, stubborn Biblicalism," but youthful indiscretions and epistolary exaggerations do not constitute the groundwork of a mature creed. In thinking hurriedly that they do, one misses Morley's "No class has a monopoly of nonsense" and neglects entirely his reasons for his confidence in enfranchised workmen as well as his affirmations of faith in the "grand reserve." It is only by considering these things that one discovers what the motive for Morley's conduct was. For More's point of view, however, see his "Viscount Morley" in A New England Group and Others, Shelburne Essays, 11th series, 1921.

and disliked "that hateful heresy, proportional representation,"¹
 to another disciple on another occasion he could address a
 letter recalling that what had pulled England out of the
 post-Napoleonic morass was Benthamite-Cobdenian Liberalism
 and suggesting that a reintroduction of something like it
 into human activity might prove to be the salvation again.²
 And in his personal life he remained resolute in affirming
 that life was worth living. He had walked with a stalwart
 stride, seen his share of the deeds of men, and reconciled
 himself in his decay, as he had early learned he must do,
 to the way of nature. There was no corrosive peevishness,
 no self-pity, no sullen complaining, no loudmouthed railing
 against humanity. What for a while, under the shock of the
 war, was a silent, smouldering, resentful defiance became
 at last a mellowed stoical resignation, a high-minded
 Lucretian serenity.³ His own share of noxious elements did
 not overtake him until the end, yet even then his thankful-
 ness for a life-long freedom from them enabled him to con-
 front them with dignity, to yield to them with that "inner

1. J. H. Morgan, Viscount Morley: An Appreciation and some Reminiscences, 95. Morley admitted that this was a "doctrine of authority" and then asked, "Well, why not? One must govern."

2. See Hirst, preface, xxv. The letter was addressed to one Sir Francis Webster, President of the Arbroath Liberal Association, in the spring of 1923.

3. At bottom, of course, Morley had been a follower of Lucretius from his early manhood (see ante, p. 30), and some of his favorite Latin quotations were from the De Rerum Natura. For superb expressions of his preoccupation with Lucretianism, see his Recollections, II, 41, and 89-101.

grace" of Holiness. For his bearing, testified one who was¹ near to him in the final days, was Christlike, and the "essential quality of his soul . . . loving-kindness."

Only a week or so before his death, Morley was asked whether consistency was a valuable virtue in politics. He didn't think much of it, he replied; and then, in answer to the question why he had practiced it for so long, he said² calmly, to save himself trouble. In spite of his depreciation, however, the truth is that one distinction of his life is the consistency of it all--consistency not only in the single threads of his thought but in the double strands as well. Was it not this very philosophic equi-vocalness of mind, this intellectual disposition to see both sides of an argument and weigh them heavily and long which accounted for his moderation, his equity, his patience, and his sympathy? But, though they saved him from fanaticism, was it not these very traits, too, which kept him from political leadership? He knew indeed, with Pascal, what it was to seek truth with many a sigh.³

1. J. H. Morgan. See his "The Personality of Lord Morley," (Part II), 41, and 89-101.

2. F. W. Hirst, "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 211-12.

3. Pascal's Il faut chercher la vérité en gémissant, Morley quoted often and lovingly. Apropos of his own devotion to truth, he wrote in a letter to J. H. Morgan (February 12, 1921): "For myself I would fain add passion for Freedom and passion for Justice. Don't think me vain if I covet the whole trinity of them." See J. H. Morgan, "The Personality of Lord Morley" (Part I), Quarterly Review, CCXLI (January, 1924), 175-92.

Joseph Chamberlain, Morley once said, had a genius for friendship.¹ The remark is no less applicable to himself. Just as he had written some of his most eloquent paragraphs on the subject in his youth,² so through the rest of his life he lived that eloquence. He was as susceptible as Henry James "to demonstrations of regard," but he took no more pleasure in receiving than in bestowing esteem. He had a deep capacity for affection which, never prodigal, he gave unstintingly to those of whom he was fond. One reason why he was so successful in preserving his long chain of friendships was that he never debased the ideal, never feigned devotion or intimacy, or prostituted them once they existed, for political advancement. His personal life, he kept independent from his public, and inviolable by it; the encircling tides and currents of petty intrigue never sucked him in. He was not one to give parties to buy over high-priced opponents, not one to play bridge or golf to ingratiate himself among his enemies. Furthermore, he knew that friendship was an art, and he had early measured the degree to which mastery of it depended upon awareness and refinement of subtle intuitive communication between temperaments. Rationalist though he was, he was sensitive to affinities, respectful of them; for him always, the essence

1. In speaking in the House of Commons on February 8, 1904, Morley said about Chamberlain that, among other things, "he possesses in a most marked and peculiar degree the genius of friendship." See The Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections, Boston, Little, Brown, & C., 1928. I, 182.

2. See ante, p. 55

and solace of friendship resided in a "consciousness of an occult sympathy" and he never ceased to cherish, Aladdin-like, the glowing "air of magic" that surrounded the responsive play of personalities.

Both in the number and quality of his attachments Morley¹ was extraordinary. Among nineteenth century English writers, he numbered as special and life-long intimates, Harrison, Stephen, Meredith, Arnold, and Hardy; among contemporary British statesmen, Chamberlain, Harcourt, Roseberry, and Asquith; among foreign statesmen and writers, Mazzini, Clemenceau, Taine, and Jusserand; among American thinkers, E. L. Godkin, C. E. Norton, and Andrew Carnegie. Statements still survive in their letters or biographies to bear witness to the depth of the bond that bound them to him.

In Meredith's correspondence, the most unreserved and most poignant expressions of affection are those addressed to

1. Morley's own description and estimate of them can be found, of course, in his Recollections; it is not the object of this book to impair what he has said by venturing to paraphrase it but to give some indication of the regard in which he was held by some of those whom he wrote so feelingly about. It is unfortunate that no compilation of his correspondence exists or, considering the terms of his will, is likely to exist. The letters of his that can be found, apart from Hirst, are few indeed; once in a while, in somebody's reminiscences, one will appear. Letters addressed to him are almost equally scarce.

1
 Morley. He made so secret of it: Morley was a "great delight" to him and he was rejoiced and refreshed by seeing him. When his wife died, it was Morley alone who was asked to her funeral to back him "on this forlorn march of dust." Leslie Stephen was no less explicit in his avowals. Morley was one of two with whom he could "be sure of finding thorough sympathy in such conversations" as they had had; there was no other

1. See The Letters of George Meredith, edited by his son (2 vols. New York. Chas. Scribner and Sons. 1912), for such testimonials as the following:

June 21, 1885 - "As I said, I live with you; absence cannot put a soiling finger on the love. That will last."
 (II, 369)

October 11, 1904, on the occasion of Morley's second leaving for America - "Again it is 'Farewell to you,' and after so many years the love and the trust are the same. . . All blessings of earth be with you, and a safe coming back to him who loves you, and would give up a good part of his time for breathing to see you here safe." (II, 560)

These volumes contain, in addition, some eight or nine laudatory notes by Meredith on various books by Morley.

In the fall of 1867, when Morley departed for his first sight of America, Meredith wrote a poem wishing him Godspeed. It appeared in The Fortnightly for December, 1867 (Vol. II, 727) as "Lines to a Friend Visiting America," and although it was over-long and poetically bad, it left no doubt of its author's genuine devotion to his friend. Morley was hailed as "One of my dearest, whom I trust," England's "worthiest," able to "revive" her "lost kinsfellowship" with the United States.

Adieu! bring back a braver dawn
 to England, and to me, my friend.

According to a remark in one of his notes (see The Letters, I, 192), Meredith managed The Fortnightly while Morley observed the United States. And according to his biographer, R. E. Sencourt (see his The Life of George Meredith. New York: Scribner's, 1929, preface, ix), Morley, as one of the trustees of Meredith's estate, applied in vain after his death to Sir James Barrie to be allowed to write a biography of him.

friend in England whom it gave him "such pleasure to meet."¹
 And after the tragic death of his first wife, he assured
 Morley that he would remember him thenceforth "as a man who
 has been through a cruel operation would remember the kind
 friend who stood by and spoke words of encouragement and
 affection."² The relations between Morley and Prime-Minister
 Asquith were so close that, at the time of the outbreak of
 the World War, in answer to Asquith's repeated appeal to
 withdraw his resignation and retain his place in the Cabinet,
 Morley, in anguish over the impossibility of continuing his
 loyalty to his friend and obeying his conscience, wrote,
 "I am more distressed in making this reply than I have ever
 been in writing any letter of all my life."³ And Asquith did
 not hesitate to declare that Morley's death meant "the dis-
 appearance of the last survivor of a heroic age,"⁴ though
 his knowledge of Morley's character led him to admit that

1. See F. W. Maitland, The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen. London: Duckworth & Co., 1906. These remarks about Morley come from two letters to C. E. Norton, on May 10, 1873 and October 12, 1874 respectively (see pp. 235 and 246). Through their long association, and in spite of his own success as a historical writer, Stephen always held an admiration for Morley's authorship. On September 10, 1879, for example, he wrote again to Norton: "Morley has just done Burke for his own Series The English Men of Letters, and done it, I think, exceedingly well. To read Morley always makes me envious, and then I try to choke down the bad passion, and hope that I succeed." (p. 338)

2. Ibid., p. 255.

3. Asquith, Memories and Reflections, II, p. 14.

4. Quoted among other obituaries in The Literary Digest, LXXIX (October 27, 1923), 30-31.

literature was more impoverished than politics by his loss; he always lamented that Morley had not remained what, by temperament and intellect, he was meant to be, a man of letters.¹

J. J. Jusserand, French diplomat and literary historian, at the end of his life could look back so appreciatively on his years of warm association with Morley that he termed him whole-heartedly "one of the best friends I made along the path of life."² In 1904, when he was ambassador to the United States, he had relished Morley's warning him in Washington that, since the Liberals were going to win the coming election in England, he would ask to be appointed Foreign Secretary when he returned home so as to be able to declare war against France if Jusserand was not sent ambassador to London.³

And in 1917 he had been stirred by a reminiscent letter from Morley: "It would be sorrow indeed for me to leave the world without being followed by your good will, that has so long been one of the prizes of my days. Let me remain, in spite of my negligence of a rather distracted life, your affectionate friend."⁴

E. L. Godkin in 1867 found Morley, on his brief visit to America, "a very sensible and good fellow, though not

1. See, for example, his Memories and Reflections, I, pp. 289-90.

2. J. J. Jusserand, What Me Befell, p. 48.

3. Ibid., p. 281.

4. Ibid., p. 143.

hilarious," and "liked him very much." When he learned that Morley "was not likely to see anybody in Boston of any particular value," he wrote him a letter of introduction to Charles Eliot Norton there.¹ Both meetings ripened into lasting friendships. When Godkin was in London in 1889, he rejoiced at seeing again, after twenty-two years, "the good delightful, wholly-satisfactory John Morley;"² and Norton, who later, when he, too, was in London, in 1872 and 1900, saw much of Morley and agreed with him "in belief and opinion . . . more nearly than with most men" because he was "eminently sincere, and clear-minded" and free from "narrow hard-and-fastness," was fortified by Morley's brief return to Boston in 1904, even though the two got to see each other only once, because it proved to him that after almost forty years, their "old friendship remained firm."³ The attachment between Morley and Andrew Carnegie, though it was formed later than either of those with the other two eminent Americans, was to become more strongly developed and to reveal more strikingly certain of the essential, actuating sympathies

1. See Rollo Ogden, The Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1907, I, p. 303. The quoted phrases are from the letter, in which Godkin also mentioned that Morley was "well dressed and mild mannered," and had undoubtedly "come out here," since he was eager to go into politics, "for the usual preliminary training."

2. Ibid., II, p. 156.

3. See The Letters of Charles Eliot Norton (edited by his daughter). 2 vols. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1913, Vol. I, pp. 351 and 431-2, and Vol. II, pp. 194, 294, 349.

¹
 within Morley himself. For was not Carnegie, if not a man
 of letters, at least an author in his own right, with his
 social and political essays, his industrial and economic
 analyses, and his biography of James Watt? More than that,
 was he not a man of action, a builder, a doer, a power-
 wielder? Morley's admiration and sentiment went out to
 the great capitalist, in spite of the amusing fact that
 he had once evaluated any great capitalist, granting his
 high ability and capacities, as "below even a second-rate
 statesman or a second-rate general"²! It was not only that
 Carnegie had had the providence, the will, and the industry
 to amass a great fortune; it was that he possessed the bene-
 ficence and the understanding to distribute it wisely. And
 what congeniality of thought there was in him! His com-
 prehension of true thrift, his belief that the interests of
 capital and labor were the same, his suspicious incredulity
 with regard to socialism, his staunch confidence in the
 workableness of democracy, his love of peace, his active
 international-mindedness (in particular, his interest in

1. See The Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie. Houghton
 Mifflin Co. New York, 192- and Burton J. Hendrick, The Life
 of Andrew Carnegie for information regarding the attachment,
 as well as for a number of letters from Morley to Carnegie.
 Carnegie's first contact with Morley occurred in 1884 when
 his article, "An American Four-in-Hand in Britain," came
 out in The Fortnightly: and the two men later met through
 the efforts of Matthew Arnold, a mutual friend.

2. "An Address to Some Miners," Fortnightly, XXI (March,
 1877), 396.

Anglo-American relations)--did not all of these mark him out as an exemplar of the broad-minded, wide-visioned, cooperative industrial leader on whom the future depended? In 1902, in real man-of-action fashion, he showed his affection for Morley by presenting him with the sixty-odd thousand volumes of the vast personal library of the late Lord Acton,¹ and in his will, no less characteristically, he left a testimonial to the extent of an annuity of ten thousand dollars.²

1. The library had been bought some years before, when Carnegie heard through Gladstone of the declining Acton's straightened circumstances, but had been left considerably in Acton's hands for use until his death. (See Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie, p. 325). Acton, a friend of Morley's, a man of deep erudition, and a brilliant talker in his own right, was a Catholic who spent his lifetime trying to reconcile Catholicism with Liberalism and accumulating volumes in order to write a history of Liberty, which never appeared. It was he who characterized Morley with the remark, "He has the obstinacy of a very honest mind," by which he meant one "of singular elasticity, veracity, and power, capable of all but the highest things." See Algernon Cecil, "Two Distinguished Gladstonians," Quarterly Review, CCXXIX (January, 1918), 205-221.

2. No account of Morley's friendships should be terminated without at least a mention of some of the young men on whom, in his old age, he exerted an affectionate influence: G. P. Gooch, the nineteenth-century historian, who was proud to admit himself among "those of a younger generation who have learned wisdom from his books and been honoured by his friendship" (see his "Lord Morley's Recollections," Contemporary Review, CXII, December, 1917, 628-35); J. A. Spender, another historian and biographer, too, who considered that "to be banned from his presence was a real bereavement." (See his "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX, November 3, 1923, 207-210.); J. W. Hirst, whose tributes are unreservedly contained in his two-volume "The Early Life and Letters of John Morley;" W. L. Courtney, who described his respect in his "Lord Morley: 1838-1923," North American Review, CCXVIII, December, 1923, 765-75; J. H. Morgan, soldier-historian, whose volume, John Viscount Morley: An Appreciation and Some Reminiscences, is a commemoration, and to whom Morley wrote agitatedly in his last note, "I should never forgive either you or myself if we did not meet." (See his "More

Not even the firmest of Morley's friendships endured, however, without occasional tension and rupture, usually the mischief of misunderstanding. In his high seriousness and with his sleepless responsibility to truth, he sometimes had trouble in knowing where to suspend rigorous judgment and defer to easy geniality. Chamberlain, whom he loved and whose death in 1914 left a painful void in his life, was the cause of many struggles with his conscience, for Chamberlain was fond of voicing the phrase "natural rights," and Morley, who, as Lord Acton wrote, would allow man no rights since he had denied God any,¹ was thrown into as much perturbation on hearing it as if he "had seen a deinotherian shambling down Parliament Street to a seat in the House of Commons"²! When he and Chamberlain parted company politically over the questions of Home Rule and imperialism, his misgivings about continuing their private intimacy were so strong that it was some weeks before he could convince himself that it would be all right to accept Chamberlain's

Light on Lord Morley," North American Review, 221, March, 1925; as well as his "The Personality of Lord Morley," Parts I and II, Quarterly Review, CCXLI, January and April, 1924, 175-192 and 342-67 respectively.)

1. "As there are for him no rights of God, there are no rights of man--the consequence on earth of obligation in Heaven." The sentence comes from a strong paragraph on Morley in Acton's correspondence. See Algernon Cecil, "Two Distinguished Gladstonians," Quarterly Review, CCXXIX (January, 1918), 205-21.

2. See J. Ramsey MacDonald, "John Morley," The Contemporary Review, CXXI (March, 1927), 282-9.

usual Christmas gift of a barrel of oysters.¹ Frederic Harrison, too, knew how chary one had to be about trespassing on Morley's strict conscientiousness. In 1902, soon after Morley had been given his O.M., Harrison, as a joke, sent him a worshipful, servile letter, with his title printed boldly on the envelope; he got back a sharp protest, written in unmistakable annoyance.² George Meredith, perhaps more than anyone else, felt the rebukes of Morley's fitfully severe reasonableness. This might have been expected, since in certain essentials the two were temperamentally repellent. At any rate, Morley was often irritated beyond patience by what it seemed to him Meredith's brilliant, flaring talk became--artful affectation--, and he left his company indignant and resentful.³ But if Meredith felt rebukes, he knew the happy reassurance of apology, too. Morley invariably came back, subdued, reattuned, warmly eager to go on. Even in 1902, after a recent "delightful give and take" at dinner, Meredith could glow at receiving a letter from him asking

1. J. Ramsey MacDonald, op. cit.

2. Austin Harrison, Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories, p. 152. About the O.M., however, one further thing must be told. Ten years after this exchange (July 26, 1912) when he was making a speech in his home town, Blackburn, after having been presented with the Freedom of the Borough, Morley exhibited his badge and read aloud the words on its face, "For Merit;" then he added, "If we were all in the palace of truth and I had to amend the badge, I would put on the obverse . . ." and for luck!"! See Sirdar Ali Khan, The Life of Lord Morley, p. 306.

3. See, for an example of Morley aggrieved and Meredith restoring, Sencourt, The Life of George Meredith, p. 157.

"to renew the past."¹ What is significant, of course, about all these strains and breaches is not that they occurred but that they were all healed. In spite of what seemed at times a "waywardness in his disposition" to make him alternately charm and vex his friends,² Morley never lost sight of the lasting and paramount value of human affection; to the end he kept himself unsullied by that "gratuitous perversity" which sows alienation for no reason and to no end.

"No one should write his own life," Morley had decided in his middle twenties, "who cannot conscientiously invite the world in general to come and be edified."³ In this conviction he persisted to his death. Not only that; he laid it down as a law that the biographer, in handling the life of a man already dead, should keep himself as much as possible in contact with the features of that life that were approvable and ennobling. If there were intellectual errors or mistakes in belief, to be sure they should be exposed and corrected, but it could only be unwholesome to poke among the incidental pettinesses or faults or moral deviations of a subject who, in most respects, was good. For Morley, records of lives exist not only to convey information

1. The Letters of George Meredith, p. 525.

2. The expression is J. A. Spender's. See his "Lord Morley, Last of Victorian Liberals," Living Age, CCCXIX (November 3, 1923), 207-10.

3. See his early anonymous article, "Autobiography," in The Saturday Review for April 22, 1865.

but to impart encouragement and offer example. Human beings, in order to give their best, need to be shown that other men and women before them have lived successful, ordered lives, need to be exhorted to employ their own intelligences and wills in meeting the trials of existence with dignity. If they are to be disheartened at the outset by pseudo-scientific, sensationalizing records of the secret pigsty which at bottom every human character is supposed to be, then society may as well immediately abandoned. Attempts to reduce biography to an analysis of animal functions and glandular excretions, Morley hated as "depraved realism." Not that he advocated or even condoned falsification or misrepresentation or evasion of facts. He simply believed, like other intelligent men before and after him, in the virtue of occasional restraint and reticence, in the desirableness of discrimination and proportion.

It is with a consideration of these things that a study of Morley's own life is edifying. In a world torn as much by the doubts of those who live within democracy as by the attacks of those who have disclaimed it, the great liberating Liberalism which he embodied, with its substance the enlightened staunchness of individual thought and character, not the slippery, hypnotic catchwords of political slogans, appears more and more a last, but a disappearing, hope. What more inept criticism of him could be made than that, in his ignorance of what democracy really is, he made

the mistake of refusing to identify himself with the tastes and ideals of the majority after willingly subscribing to its political judgment?¹ To be sure, what he had written in Edmund Burke in 1867, ". . . the claims of the multitude are sovereign and paramount, just because it is the multitude," he adhered to until the end. But these were claims in the political and social sphere only. The multitude never became a colossal idol before which he bowed down and worshipped. It was endowed with common sense and he believed in its capacity for improvement, but it had to be taught and led; its ideas and tastes and moral conceptions, simply because it was the multitude, amounted to nothing. The incomparable advantage of a democracy lay in the ⁱⁿcreased number of avenues which it opened to leadership, in the greater means

1. Something much like this criticism has been levelled, and by a reputedly intelligent man, Algernon Cecil. (See his "Mr. Morley," Living Age, CCXLIX, May 26, 1906, 451-58.) Why, he asks, if Morley believed in Democracy, "Which is as much as to say that men are the best judges of their own interests," did he think he had the "right," when outvoted, to "continue to exhort them to choose the more excellent say"? He should have welcomed "the popular verdict" and striven to bring "his own opinion into conformity with it." The contention here is so absurd that it needs little answer. Morley never once said that any mass of men, untutored and uncounselled, is the best judge of its own interests. What he always maintained was that a body of working people, accurately informed, will usually be able to choose for itself, after listening to them, the best of the candidates who come before it. This "usually" was not "invariably;" no group, like no individual, was infallible. If Morley, who all his life considered himself an informer of the public, considered after an election that it had made a mistake, it was his function to show it where it had gone wrong.

for producing educated, superior men and women. For Morley's Liberalism and scientific-mindedness were not at all incompatible with goods and the rigorous pursuit of them. As a historian, he knew well the value of relativity, but that did not prevent him from insisting on standards. That Eskimos, of a different race and in a different climate, lend their wives is no reason why western Europeans should not retain theirs. Being a Liberal was never allowed to mean with him what it does for so many today, fostering an indolent, insolent complacency, in which everybody shall have the "right" to say there are no standards and to flaunt his own lack of them; it meant assuring everybody of his freedom of opportunity to work up to the topmost level, and encouraging him to test what powers he had for the climb. Morley's was a liberalism which, along with its intellectual clear-sightedness and its human sympathy, knew the necessity for discipline; it faced the fact that good habits can only be made, made by sustained effort of the will. As he manifested the liberal spirit, he revealed that democracy after all need not be incompatible with aristocracy. He showed

1. Morley was always fond of pointing out that often in countries where the force of the government is strongest felt, the inhabitants are surprisingly better natured as a whole than elsewhere. So, too, in domestic life, while he never sanctioned tyrannizing household autocrats, he did believe in a modified absolutism: "A certain austerity of parental discipline is no bad preparation for encountering the assured and inevitable austerities that nature and circumstances have in store, as we emerge from youth to fight the battle of life in earnest." "The Life of James Mill," Fortnightly, XXXI (April, 1882), 490.

that the fruit of liberating thought and education is a character equipped to grapple manfully not only with the problems of politics and social science but with the more grievous ones of personal existence as well. The consummation of his own efforts was aptly what he had set his heart as a youth on achieving--"an air of dignity and size and grandeur."

The sad loss in Morley's life, so far as posterity is concerned, is that the whole print of it was never left in his books. The vigorous mind has been set down, the unflinching will, the boldness and breadth of purpose, and the unimpeachable honesty, but where are the quiet voice, the urbane demeanor, the slight gentle smile, the gracious sympathy, the disarming readiness to listen--in short, the charm, the magic which in person he exerted? Important as his literary work is for the information it contains, and influential as it had been for its critical and historical procedure, the volumes which compose it will always remain, in spite of the effect of some of them on a past generation, books of knowledge rather than of power. Perhaps there is no better way of realizing the limitations of his writer's stature than to place him alongside that eminent contemporary and friend of his, Matthew Arnold.

In the very early 1870's, in utter disregard of the fact that his own essays back in 1865 and 67 had been more than negligibly charged with his thought, Morley was cocky in his dismissal of Arnold, and described his criticism to

Harrison as "nonsensical flummery about sweetness and light."¹ Harrison himself laughed at Arnold as "dilly-dallying stuff" after Morley's early volume of critical miscellanies.² Arnold, the older and at the same time the more sober of the two, was unperturbed by several "severe attacks" that Morley made on his things and wrote calmly to his sister in 1871 of the Fortnightly scourge "who has certainly learnt something from me and knows it."³ Later, however, Morley came into closer contact with Arnold and, as

1. Hirst, I, p. 192.

2. Ibid., p. 180.

3. Matthew Arnold's Letters, Macmillan & Co., 1896, II, p. 59. What the "attacks" were is not specifically stated. It is interesting, however, that Morley, even in drawing closer to Arnold, continued to criticise his work whenever there was need to. Two samples of this criticism can be found in two Fortnightly articles: one, "A Recent Work on Supernatural Religion," XVI (October, 1874), 505; and the other, "Mr. Mill's Three Essays on Religion" (Part II), XVII (January, 1875), 121. In the first, Morley praised Arnold's Literature and Dogma for its high ethos, its sincerity, and "its gracious feeling for the holy things," but said that these "singular gifts" were "misdirected from the true issues of the modern time." "The important thing for us is not to find out how benign, graceful, and reasonable an element in life Christianity can be made, if it be true, but to convince ourselves on good ground either that it is true, or that it is not true." Arnold's book was helpful for a season "in mitigating the harsh crudities of dogma," yet it did "not in any sense push to the heart of the matter." Its "literary point of view" kept it from doing that. Arnold read this article and mentioned it dispassionately in a note to his sister (Letters, II, p. 135). On the second occasion for criticism, Morley, in discussing the value for modern men of Christ as an ethical teacher, said he was not for "coercing the record," and was unwilling to assume, as he found Arnold doing, that Christ was so far "over the heads of his reporters," and then to proceed to develop an "anthology of sayings, which we choose to accept as Christ's on the strength of this assumption."

his own experience continued to temper him, he could acknowledge more easily Arnold's aims and form a clearer estimate of his character. In his Recollections he confesses that from his "Oxford days onward" he owed Arnold much and knew¹ it. Certainly by 1876 the two were more than respectful acquaintances, and Arnold could be delighted by Morley's relaying to him what George Sand had said to Ranon about Arnold when she saw him years before as a boy--that he looked like a young Milton traveling. In the early eighties² Arnold thought enough of Morley's books to recommend them, and of Morley himself to address him in his letters as "my dear Morley." His affection was reciprocated; Morley made himself such a gracious friend that Arnold, though he had known him earlier through his writing as "a bitter political partisan," described him in company as "the gentlest and most charming of men."³ Nor was Morley a laggard in his tributes to the poet-critic. It is said that he once told Arnold that in traveling he always carried along one of his volumes which he read, before making a speech, for inspiration, and afterward, for consolation.⁴ In print, at one time, he

1. I, p. 117.

2. To one M. Fontanes, intent on familiarizing himself with English political history, Arnold suggested Morley's volume on Burke ("very suggestive") and his Life of Cobden. See Letters, II, pp. 192 and 251.

3. Ibid., p. 231.

4. See "Mingling Letters and Statescraft," Literary Digest, XLVI (February 1, 1913), 232-3.

quoted lovingly "those admirable closing lines" of the "thrice lovely Sohrab and Rustum,"¹ and, at another, proclaimed their author "among the foremost poets of his period, . . . quite its greatest literary critic, . . . the 'most distinguished' figure in the literature of the age and country to which he belongs."² Indeed Arnold's death,³ in his own admission, left a "painful void" in his life; and years after it he could single out Arnold as one of the few men he had known who had actually possessed charm.⁴

But what is so remarkable in the relationship of the two men is the closeness of their minds, the more-than-coincidental similarity in the conclusions they reached, on a number of important problems. In the sphere of morality, the standards of conduct which they fought to preserve are those that will save the individual from dissolution as well as secure the existence of society. They are the elements that prevent life from collapsing into a chaotic welter, an idiot's tale. They alone give it meaning. Hence, for Morley as well as for Arnold, human relationships had sanctity, and "let us be true to one another" was a first commandment, not because the Church had ordained it, but because his own experience had shown that there was no civilized

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1. "Some Recent Travels," Fortnightly, XIX (May, 1876), 757.
 2. "Genius and Versatility" (unsigned), Macmillan's, XLIX (December, 1883), 87.
 3. Hirst, preface, p. xiv.
 4. See Morgan, p. 84. Said in 1918.

living without it.¹ Even "in matters of feeling," Arnold confessed to Morley that he had an instinct that they were "apt to be in sympathy," and he hesitated about accepting a government pension because he wanted to be "fortified" by Morley's opinion beforehand. In their attitudes toward a good many authors--Burke, George Sand,² Macaulay, Emerson, and Tennyson--they were in agreement; and Arnold knew that in his heart, Morley, despite his preoccupation with political liberalism, believed as sincerely as he himself did in³ the value of classical studies.

Equally parallel were their beliefs in what literature should do. For both of them it was the vehicle of culture. Morley's "multiplicity of sympathies and steadiness of sight" is close to Arnold's "sweetness and light." And, as has⁴ been shown, Morley developed a conception of the purpose of criticism as broad as that which Arnold described in his

1. See ante, p. 187 for the discussion of promiscuity in La Pucelle.

2. Arnold was a reader of Burke and a quoter of him; in "Ecce Convertimur ad Gentes" (Fortnightly, XXV, February, 1879, 250), he agreed with the earlier statesman's definition of the state as nothing but "the nation in its collective and corporate character;" and in "An Eton Boy" (Fortnightly, XXXI, June, 1882), he cited Burke's confidence in "the ancient and inbred integrity, piety, good-nature, and good-humour of the English people." As for Macaulay, Arnold wrote to his sister in July, 1876: "Macaulay is to me uninteresting, mainly, I think, from a dash of intellectual vulgarity which I find in all his performance." (See Letters, II, p. 155).

3. Letters, II, p. 231.

4. See ante, p. 159.

The Function of Criticism at the Present Time, when he said that it ought "to create a current of true and fresh ideas" and establish an intellectual atmosphere for the creative mind to become ignited by. In its substance, however, a good deal of Morley's journalistic criticism shows up more narrow, in some respects more insular; it has too much to do with what Arnold erringly thought should be omitted entirely--"those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas."¹ And The Fortnightly Review as an "organ of criticism" was in many ways what Arnold considered the bane of criticism in his time, an organ of "men and parties having practical ends to serve." Much that Morley wrote was too polemical to live. Not that it was intentional on his part to put the stamp of partisanship on his critical writing, but simply that a great deal of it was turned out in the heat of controversy and could not escape the tinge. Arnold made it his purpose to avoid heatedness; the militant attitude was repugnant to him.

Temperamentally, the something in Morley that was harder,

1. There was often to be sure, a certain snobbishness, a hyperfastidiousness in Arnold's holding himself aloof from what he patronizingly labeled the practical, and it was precisely this which justified Morley in feeling that his excessively "literary point of view" prevented him, in his critical analysis of certain subjects, religion, for example, from penetrating "to the heart of the matter." (See footnote 3, ante, p. 372.) Yet if Arnold went too far in one direction, Morley was liable to be even more extreme in its opposite.

more austere at the core, predominates in his style, Though it more than conforms to what Arnold thought were "the needful qualities for a fit prose . . . regularity, uniformity, precision, balance," it is never winning as Arnold's was. It could be forcefully brilliant, it could reach gravity, sonority, dignity, and could contain memorably striking phrases, yet it remained always formal and tense. It needed to be more pliant and flexible, more graceful, more intimate on occasion--more what Morley in his own person was, what he revealed himself to be in his letters. Arnold's prose attracts and establishes a sympathetic bond, and so does Pater's, but Morley's never does, unless it be in the Recollections, where it is shortened, more economical, with something of the easiness of his conversation, and equally vivid without being so rhetorical.¹ And if the first volume of the Recollections is the product of his meridian and not his decline,² as has been said, then it is regrettable that he did not continue active writing in this vein which is a complete departure from the vehemence and grandness of the French Studies, where he was indelibly influenced by Carlyle and Macaulay before him. Here for the first time,

1. Along with the Recollections must be considered Morley's later-day addresses, some of which can be found reprinted in his Politics and History, in Sirdar Ali Khan's Life of Lord Morley (though only in part), and in periodicals. Even "Machiavelli," delivered as early as 1897, is distinctive for its personalness, its relaxedness.

2. Morgan, p. 59.

he is adopting a "quiet style." Strict balanced constructions, antithesis, picturesque figures, apostrophe--all of them have disappeared. Yet the French Studies and the miscellaneous critical essays written about the same time are the bulk of his durable work, and their style will have to be the style that he is judged by. The man who is revealed in them will have to be the man we think of and feel as John Morley.

Arnold as a critic, said Morley, was "more at home in a velvet glove."¹ Yet the grace, the discernible humanity in Arnold make him readable today; the sharpness of edge, the austerity in Morley repel. After a thorough reading of him, one cannot erase the picture of a warrior from his mind. Inflamed by the doctrines of Mill, he discarded the gown of the saint for the weapons of the soldier and girded himself for war. None of Mill's humility in the face of Truth is in his militant declarations. Like the brothers in David's Oath of the Horatii,² he stands defiant and taut, on guard to defend his vows in the cause of Liberalism. And like them, he has his sword drawn to fight for his spiritual convictions, too. One senses that he is steeled constantly against the tragedies, the uglinesses of life, sorrowful, to be sure, but intent on revealing no shock,

1. Recollections, I, p. 117.

2. Morley, incidentally, loathed "David and his hideous art of the Empire." (Diderot, II, p. 71.)

no revulsion, out of contempt for softness. There is no time for tears. He looks at death, at the inevitable end of all existence on this earth, and holds himself scornfully above any "shivering mood" of doubt, any "sentimental juvenilities of children crying for light,"¹ as Lucretius held himself on his serene plane above the futilities of the world. He strives for a limitless perspective, "figures the merciless vastness of the universe of matter sweeping us headlong through viewless space," "hears the wail of misery that is for ever ascending to the deaf gods," "counts the little² tale of the years that separate us from eternal silence," and annihilates any interest in bodies as bodies, in flesh as flesh. They are ephemeral, and their decay must mean nothing to him except an incidental fact in an unstoppable process, the ceaseless operation of Nature. His somberness is like the tone of a mediaeval sermonizer in sackcloth, or of the ascetic Marcus Aurelius meditating on death.

For, like Marcus Aurelius, Morley saw a death's head underlying almost everything human beings do. The Easter Meditations in the second volume of the Recollections, or certain passages from some of the French Studies--Rousseau, for example--will bear this out eloquently. The same preoccupation with death is in them, and the same attempt to confront it and dispel its horror by looking it full in the

1. See Voltaire, p. 56.

2. See On Compromise, p. 112.

face. At thirty-five, Morley had brought himself to be dispassionately candid about "the millions who come on to the earth that greets them with no smile and then stagger blindly under dull burdens for a season, and at last are shovelled silently back under the ground."¹ He bolstered himself and went on declamatorily to add that human consideration might be more widespread if more men held his own courageous, unfalsifying realization that there is no "perfect companionable bliss" in other worlds to come, but "that the bleak and horrible grave is indeed the end of our communion."² It is this too-frequent mortuary cast to Morley's thinking, even in his best criticism, that is unattractive, and it is this Davidian sternness and militancy of tone, traceable to some inherited Evangelical hardness at the bottom of his character, that repels. What he said about Diderot, that he never wrote "as if his spirit were quite free,"³ describes more aptly the deficiency in his own work. The very quality of mind he had early placed a premium on and dedicated himself to cultivating, he succeeded in transmitting flawlessly to his pages; but, ironically, if intellectual strenuousness is their supreme distinction, it is their ineradicable detriment, too.⁴

1. Rousseau, I, p. 174.

2. Ibid., p. 211.

3. Diderot, II, p. 39.

4. This essential, intellectual strenuousness, must have made J. A. Spender characterize Morley as being as much unlike other writers as he was other men; indeed, he was not so much

Thus one leaves John Morley in that attitude which he himself described as the only admirable one, convinced that there "is no solace obtainable except that of an energetic fortitude," striding into life "not in a softly lined silken robe, but with a sharp sword and armour thrice tempered."¹

a writer as "a moralist with a pen." (See Asquith, Memories and Reflections, I, p. 290.) The trait in him was so marked that Mrs. Humphry Ward, without knowing it, used his own word to define it; his demeanor, she said, betrayed a "tragic strenuousness" of mind. (See her A Writer's Recollections, II, p. 3.) Gilbert Murray's excellent phrase, the "sleepless austerity of his critical attitude," strikes, of course, at the very same quality in Morley.

1. See Voltaire, p. 56.

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