JOHN STUART MILL AND THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

by

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ABSTRACT

The *Subjection of Women* was the last book by John Stuart Mill published during his lifetime. It presented a philosophical analysis of the position of women in society, as unrecognized individuals both in public and domestic roles. Mill exposed the moral and ethical shortcomings of a system which denied women legal status or moral equality, and he made a number of specific suggestions for reform, particularly respecting legal and educational rights for women. During the following sixty years in Britain, almost all of his suggested reforms were achieved. Because Mill's specific pleas were answered, the *Subjection of Women* has come to be regarded as an out-of-date argument for conditions which have been corrected. The moral philosophy contained in the book received little or no attention.

The knowledge of a present-day reader about John Stuart Mill is based chiefly upon his *Autobiography* and the essay *On Liberty*. The works which made Mill famous, his textbooks upon logic and political economy, are now read only by students of those fields. Readers of the *Autobiography* are not generally aware how skilfully Mill and his wife edited that book to remove most of the domestic circumstances of Mill's family, and to construct a textbook account of his education. Since the
tone of the Autobiography is austere and rational, there has been a tendency to transfer these qualities to Mill himself. In fact, Mill has misled his readers. In The Subjection of Women, Mill reveals opinions about the social world and makes comments about family life which are the natural complement to his Autobiography.

Like most major figures of the Victorian period, John Stuart Mill was a man of many abilities and interests—a 'generalist', rather than a specialist—and any specialist view of his work is apt to be only a partial view of the man and his work. Often these partial views become the whole view. Even Mill's biographers have been unable to avoid this difficulty. Students of Mill's essays sometimes detect inconsistencies in thought, others assert that Harriet Taylor, later Mrs. Mill, dominated his later work. However, beyond the assumption that she suggested the topic to Mill, there is very little examination of the Subjection of Women and its ideas by modern critics or biographers.

This study of the Subjection of Women argues for a line of consistent and continuous development in John Stuart Mill, and suggests that the book is pertinent to his biography. Various evidence in the thesis explains why it is not possible to accept the currently published views of the man. Accordingly
Mill's family background and early training have been rehearsed from the unfamiliar domestic viewpoint, and the development of his ideas traced from his earliest writings to the production of *The Subjection of Women*. 
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PREFACE

Certain sources, because they are repeatedly mentioned, are referred to by the following abbreviations:

**Auto**  

**D&D**  

**Draft**  

**Elliot**  

**Hayek**  

**JM**  

**JSM**  

**Letters**  

**Packe**  

**PolEc**  

**Spirit**  
*Spirit of the Age* by John Stuart Mill, ed. Frederick A. von Hayek (Chicago, 1942).

**Subj.**  
"These great men originated the thought, that, like every other part of the practice of life, morals and politics are an affair of science, to be understood only after severe study and special training; an indispensable part of which consists in acquiring the habit of considering, not merely what can be said in favour of a doctrine, but what can be said against it; of sifting opinions, and never accepting any until it has emerged victorious over every logical, still more than over every practical objection."

John Stuart Mill on Plato and Sokrates (D&D III, 284).
INTRODUCTION

John Stuart Mill's most widely read work today is his essay On Liberty. The general impression of the man himself is formed from a reading of his Autobiography. Mill's Logic and Political Economy, like all good textbooks, have been absorbed into our culture. In a sense this may also be said of his book The Subjection of Women. In 1869 this work supplied just that analysis of the problem which the Women's Rights movements of the time required. Mill's study of the woman question did not report anything new: its achievement was analogous with that of his previous textbooks—the collecting and ordering of previously known material under an informing philosophical view.

Mill regarded as his most significant and enduring work the essay On Liberty—a judgment which time has vindicated, though readers may not share the author's high opinion of the contributions made to it by Harriet Taylor. It is possible to regard it as the first of a trilogy of essays on power. Where On Liberty and Considerations on Representative Government
examined the social and political power structure, the Subjection of Women analysed the lessons of power in domestic life, arguing the need for a complete and fundamental change in the entire relation between men and women. This change would be of greatest importance in its effect upon the family environment. Mill called for a complete reform, as the only way toward real progress:

But the true virtue of human beings is fitness to live together as equals . . . the family is a school of despotism . . . the family, justly constituted, would be the real school of the virtues of freedom (Subj, 479).

Although Subjection of Women was the last book he published in his lifetime, Mill asserted that the ideas in it had been a part of his belief since his very earliest period, and that his opinions had not been weakened or modified, but had constantly grown stronger. This statement seems to contradict a number of generally-held views about Mill's life and the development of his thought. Moreover, the topic of equality appears to be a contradiction of Mill's views as expressed in other works. Most important, in his arguments in the Subjection, Mill generalises from his own experience, which he insists is typical; there is often a strongly autobiographical tone in passages of the book. The writer of the Subjection requires to be reconciled with the writer of the Autobiography, and hence with the accepted views about John Stuart Mill. It is the aim of this thesis to show that the Subjection of Women is an important part
of the canon of Mill's writings, and moreover, to show that our understanding of Mill's philosophic integrity is improved by a knowledge of how he came to write this book.

While Mill's reputation derives largely from the essay *On Liberty*, biographical studies are based upon his *Autobiography*, the account of his mental development, which is to say, his education; and this account has often been taken as almost a whole view of the man. His reviewers were frequently politically antagonistic to Mill, and helped to form an image which is based upon a number of misconceptions. The best available biographies suffer from these now traditional disabilities, a number of which will be examined in this study. Mill's ability to analyse issues and to separate personalities from principles did not endear him to ordinary readers, and his critical balance and judgment sometimes offended all parties to the controversies he examined. Political economy and philosophy were regarded as cold and rational topics, which helped to foster the impression that Mill was a logic machine, a saint of rationalism, and hence an emotionally desiccated human being. The reader who has absorbed such an idea about Mill might be startled by a reading of the *Subjection of Women*. In that work, John Stuart Mill is emotionally involved with his topics, as this study will show in Chapter Six. The opinions Mill offers and his comments about family life are a natural supplement to his *Autobiography*. 
The *Subjection of Women* analyses the position of women in the world and in society, and most particularly in the home. Since the book treats the family as the key environment for moral reform, and Mill cites freely from his own family experience as the basis of his conclusions on the topic, it becomes essential to examine that family experience. Chapter One, "Family", and Chapter Two, "People", provide some material to account for Mill's interest in the effect of environment upon the development of the moral individual. Details of his family life and his friendships and experience of other people are examined, including material not available in any of the general studies of Mill. Readers of the *Autobiography* will recall the lengthy exposition of the ideas of James Mill. This study re-examines some of the circumstances of James Mill and his wife, in order to establish some perspective by which to judge Mill's assertions about domestic life. This material is intended to support the claim that John Stuart Mill inherited many of his final attitudes towards women, and that he spent a happy childhood in a normal yet superior environment. Mill's experience of people in general, and especially his experience of women, was formed from an uncharacteristic selection of superior examples, and his expectations about women were accordingly high. The *Subjection of Women* was addressed to the better sort of persons, and Mill's expectations are confirmed by the people in his circle who are examined in Chapter Two.
Another aspect of Mill's uncharacteristic sampling is revealed in Chapter Three, "The Printed Word." His initial training as a writer taught him the distinction between holding an opinion and publishing that same opinion. The lessons of tactics as well as the lessons of careful composition were provided by his father and his father's friends. Many of these were strongly-principled men who struggled for social and political reforms, fighting unpopular battles for unrecognised causes. Mill's position in this group of journalistic reformers is made more clear, and his assertion that he was not the originator of the notions which he later propounded is supported by evidence in this chapter. This early training, as a wary adherent to minority causes, helps to explain Mill's behaviour at the end of his life, when his reputation was jeopardised by the astonishing variety of unpopular causes and writings which he championed--of which the *Subjection of Women* is a classic example. Chapter Three examines a number of possible influences upon Mill's later views on women, not only from his reading and training, but in his own writings prior to 1831, when his friendship with Harriet Taylor developed. Mill claimed that his ideas concerning the conditions of women were formed before he met Mrs. Taylor. This claim is shown to be correct.

Harriet Taylor's influence upon Mill has been the subject of considerable debate. The publication of their private correspondence, which made possible a more complete view of
Mill's personal history, tended to produce more misconceptions. Recent biographies have adopted the position that Harriet dominated Mill, and their references to the *Subjection of Women* reflect this view, a view which is still under debate. This thesis suggests that the *Subjection of Women* might well have been written by Mill even if he had not met Harriet Taylor. Mill is shown to be consistent and accurate, if incomplete, and it is suggested that Mill's appraisal of the qualities Harriet had is a more accurate estimate than most critics will allow. Chapter Four, "Harriet Taylor," explains the close affinities between Utilitarian and Unitarian ethics and teachings, which trained both John and Harriet to hold very similar views on liberty and toleration and a tradition of female education. The chapter examines the development of their opinions, and the development in Mill's writings of the themes of the *Subjection of Women*.

Extracts from Mill's writings throughout his career show that he returned again and again to the same problems, all of them relating to the condition of an individual in the social group. Chapter Five, "Joint Production," illustrates the way in which all of Mill's themes are interrelated in his later writings, with each work seen as a facet of his many-sided basic truth. Chapter Six examines the arguments and the literary techniques of the *Subjection of Women*. The intention of the whole thesis is to demonstrate that this book is completely
consistent with Mill's other writings, and that the *Subjection of Women* must be regarded as an intrinsic part of the canon of the writings of John Stuart Mill.
CHAPTER I

FAMILY

In the early draft of his autobiography, completed in 1854, John Stuart Mill included a number of remarks about his mother which were deleted from the published Autobiography. In the draft, Mill attempted to define the manner in which his mother's influence operated upon his father and upon the family, but he was apparently not satisfied with his remarks on the influence of emotion in moral training. When he wrote the Subjection of Women, around 1861, he included a number of assertions about the influence of the household environment upon the moral formation of children, claiming that his own experience was that of a typical English family. Much of the available evidence tends to support Mill's contention that his family was typical of the comfortable middle class of the time. Where the Autobiography gives readers insight into his intellectual development, Mill's statements and opinions in Subjection reveal something of his emotional and moral development. The autobiographical characteristics of the Subjection do not appear to have received attention up to the present
time; and since these opinions and intimations reveal aspects of Mill which are not illustrated by his Autobiography or his other writings, this study begins with his social development, relating the facts of his biography to his writings, where they apply.

It does not appear from the Autobiography that John Stuart Mill knew very much concerning his father's background. He says only that James Mill was "the son of a petty tradesman and (I believe) small farmer" (Auto, 2). While remarking that his father became a private tutor in various families in Scotland, he shows no particular knowledge of his father's tutoring duties in the family of Sir John Stuart. Listing those friends of his father's whom he met, he mentions a Mr. Hume,

born in the same part of Scotland as my father, and having been, I rather think, a younger schoolfellow or college companion of his . . . Of Mr. Bentham I saw much more, owing to the close intimacy which existed between him and my father. I do not know how soon after my father's arrival in England they became acquainted (Auto, 38).

"I believe"; "I rather think"; "I do not know"; these are phrases either of reticence or of ignorance. It is difficult to obtain information concerning his father's family. Bain's James Mill (1882) is the only biography, and Bain reports in various places* that John was almost entirely unacquainted

* See the Preface, and pp. 11-12, etc.
with his father's life in Scotland. Like his son, James Mill has been judged largely by his writings, and by the off-hand remarks of people who claimed to know him. The Autobiography tells in great detail what James Mill thought and describes the way in which James Mill taught, and the son's estimate of the father has been accepted. The impression is thus given that James Mill was an emotionless logician-reformer, without the feelings and behaviour which are part of any father and family man, and references to him tend to be unsympathetic. A combination of simple inaccuracies and over-generalizations from partial evidence prevents us from taking a full view of John's father. Biographies of the son show a consistent bias against the father.

Packe's The Life of John Stuart Mill (1954) is the best available biography, and is supplemented by Borchard's John Stuart Mill the Man (1957). Both authors have been influenced by Hayek's John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor (1951). Whereas Mill's Autobiography is a history of mental development, Hayek's treatment of the friendship and marriage of John and Harriet suggests that Mill was a shy and emotional seeker of security. Both Packe and Borchard draw heavily from Bain's studies, James Mill: A Biography (1882) and John Stuart Mill: A Criticism (1882). These six books contain the core of our knowledge about the Mill family, and the biographies are affected by assumptions which their authors have made. For example, Packe
speaks of "Harriet's astounding, almost hypnotic control of Mill's mind" (p. 315), and does not permit James Mill to emerge as a human being. Borchard, while giving credit to other women besides Harriet for their share in forming John's opinions, depicts him as weak-willed and in need of domination. Both Packe and Borchard write in the style of fiction, though with considerable skill, and are most persuasive where they are conjecturing most. By contrast, Bain carefully labels his speculations.* Hayek limits himself to two careful statements which will appear later. In the present examination of John Stuart Mill's domestic experience, much of the evidence is re-appraised, particularly since it is part of the purpose of this study to deny some of the assumptions made in earlier ones. The Mill household was not unusual; far from being unique, or even distinguished by some special activities or emotional stresses, the family life might be described as commonplace and comfortable.

In a suppressed passage of the early draft of his Autobiography (from which he excluded her altogether) John Stuart Mill blamed his mother for withholding affection from the Mill household, and found fault with his father for not showing sufficient affection in the family. His analysis of this cause of unhappiness, and various remarks about the inadequacy of his

* For more detailed exposition of the method and style of Mill biographies, see Appendix A, "Biographical Extrapolation."
childhood training to fit him for the world, have led speculators to assume, in spite of Mill's assertions to the contrary, that he had an unhappy boyhood. The blame has been fastened upon James Mill, who is said to have forced the little boy to learn Greek at the age of three, and to have scorned his wife and reduced her to a cipher in the household. In the extreme, this view evokes an ogre father who bullies and terrifies his family, eliminates the mother's influence, and strips the son of his will, driving him into the arms of a Platonic wife, who replaces the father as a bully. *

John Stuart Mill understood better than anyone the real greatness of his father, and the influence of his father. But he did not leave written evidence that his mother had helped to form his character and disposition. And curiously enough, his biographers have followed Mill's apparent estimation, and ignored the mother's influence on John Stuart Mill. Yet they give credit to his father's mother; observers agree that James Mill was remarkable, and they agree that a principal cause

* Such a picture appears to be easily accepted; see especially the Borchard biography.¹ To cite a simple instance, most persons accept the view that the story of John's childhood is "pathetic" (in Borchard's language), as shown by making a little boy learn Greek. They do not seem to be aware that many children of three and four years of age are today learning English and French simultaneously, not only from television programs, but from Dr. Seuss alphabet books.
for his success was his mother.*

What little is known about James Mill's mother is recorded by Bain. He shows her as a determined young woman who dominated her husband and planned the lives of her family. Her father fought for the Stuart sides in the '45 uprising and was consequently much reduced in fortune, so that she regarded herself as one fallen from higher estate. James, her eldest son, was born 6 April, 1773, when she was just eighteen.

... Her character is difficult to rescue from various conflicting traditions. All admit that she was a proud woman; her pride taking the form of haughty superiority to the other cottagers' wives, and also entering into her determination to rear her eldest son to some higher destiny... His mother's ambition resolved that he should be a scholar; by her he was nurtured and petted, and exempted from all distracting occupation (JM, 5-6).

James had special treatment. He did not help in his father's shop or do any field chores—"a very rare thing indeed" Bain calls it. Instead, he spent many hours a day working at his

* Even here, the significance of influence is personally interpreted. Where Bain wrote (JM, 5) that "it was the fancy of those that knew her that she was the source of her son's intellectual energy," Courtenay took the opposite view and began his life of J. S. Mill: "There are many points of similarity, as well as of contrast between the two Mills—father and son—both in character, circumstances, and life. But while in the one case, the parentage is an important element, in the other it has apparently, no appreciable influence. Without James Mill the career of John Stuart Mill is almost inexplicable; but though we know that the father of James Mill was a shoemaker, and that his mother, Isabella Fenton, was a farmer's daughter, it is doubtful whether any stress can be laid on such historical data."
books, and his mother prepared special meals to serve him in the study, a space formed by curtaining off the fireplace and the west end of the cottage. Her ambitions for her son were rewarded when his abilities drew the notice of local authorities. Precisely how James's education was arranged is not clear; Bain speculates concerning the years in which he attended Montrose Academy, and points out that he should logically have gone to the University at Aberdeen no later than his fourteenth year, and that to have been detained at home until his eighteenth year "shows that some powerful hand had inter­posed at an early stage" (JM, 11). It is said that Lady Jane Stuart interested herself in the young scholar, and arranged for his attendance at Edinburgh University.

Because he entered the university several years older than was usual, Mill could derive greater advantage from his studies; moreover, his three years of general reading were followed by four years of divinity. While he was foremost a Platonist, he is known to have studied the works of Fenelon and Rousseau; both of these authors propounded a number of notions concerning equality of the classes and the education of women. From his own experience, James Mill must have formed a high opinion of the capacity of girls to learn. He acted as tutor to his patron's daughter, Wilhelmina, who was very clever and very beautiful and three years his junior: as Bain said,
"she had reached an interesting age, and made a lasting impression on his mind" (JM, 24). Whether from his reading or from his experience with Wilhelmina, James Mill thought so highly of the young female mind that he prescribed Greek and Latin and mathematics as a part of the curriculum for his own daughters. Years later, James Mill gave an account of his good fortune, that Sir John and Lady Jane insisted on his attending Edinburgh University, that they would look after me, and take care that the expense to my father should not be greater than at Aberdeen. I went to Edinburgh, and from that time lived as much in their house as in my father's, and there had many advantages, saw the best company, and had an educated man to direct my education, and who paid for several expensive branches of education, but which for him I must have gone without, and above all, had unlimited access in both town and country to well-chosen libraries. So you see I owe much to Sir John Stuart, who had a daughter, one only child, about the same age as myself, who, besides being a beautiful woman, was in point of intellect and disposition one of the most perfect human beings I have ever known. We grew up together and studied together from children, and were about the best friends that either of us ever had. She married Sir William Forbes, and after producing him six children died a few years ago of a decline. Her poor mother told me with her heart ready to break that she spoke about me with almost her last breath, and enjoined them never to allow the connection which subsisted between us to be broken. So much for the old friendship with Sir J. Stuart, which it is very proper you should know, but which I do not wish to be talked about. (James Mill to Francis Place from Ford Abbey, 26 October, 1817). 3

Borchard suggests that there was a strong romantic attachment, and infers that Mill never loved anyone after Wilhelmina. He named his first daughter after her, just as he
named his first son after Sir John Stuart. But in 1797
Wilhelmina married a banker's son.

James Mill was licensed to preach in October, 1798,
and his mother heard him deliver a sermon in the parish church
before she died. She had the Scottish faith in education and
the Scottish faith in self-help, and she had persistently
catered to her scholar son. James had learned her attitudes:
education and learning are the paths to higher social station;
intelligence is the proper determination of place; the Mills
are the social equals of the squire, but have been displaced
by a political injury.

James Mill's last work, *Analysis of the Phenomena of
the Human Mind* (1829), repeated these claims. The political
improvement of man rests with his education; all people are
equal, and only environment and education make the difference.
The principal effort of Mill's life was spent both in public
and in private to further education, to improve education and
to provide more education. For Mill, equality was a political
problem. The assumption of political power by the mass of
people would be achieved by means of education. The greatest

* "For two centuries, the Scottish peasant, compared with
the same class in other situations, has been a reflecting, an
observing, and therefore naturally a self-governing, a moral
and a successful human being—because he had been a reading
and a discussing one; and this he owes above all other causes
to the parish schools." J.S. Mill's review, "The Claims of
Labour" in the *Edinburgh Review* LXXXI (April 1845), 511
(reprinted *D&D* II, 202-3).
happiness principle of the utilitarian philosophy pointed clearly to the motivation of people by enlightened self-interest; educated people would be guided by what was good for them, and having himself had an excellent education, James Mill became the tutor of his age.

His mother had set a great value upon education. She had concentrated her efforts upon the training of her eldest son. Lady Jane Stuart singled him out for special attention, both to his own education and training, and to the tutoring of her own daughter. Wilhelmina Stuart showed Mill how capable and responsive the female intelligence could be. Highly regarded and handsomely treated by these women, Mill applied his experience to the teaching of his own children; the eldest son received special treatment, and the girls in the family received the same training in mathematics and language as did the boys. Moreover, their education was the Scottish education of principles, not the English education of facts.

During Mill's tutoring of young ladies there occurred an incident described by Bain from memoirs. It was suggested of Mill that "he gave offense to the heads of the family by drinking the health at table of one of the junior female members of the house," and in consequence "gave up his situation and determined to trust to his pen and his own exertions" (JM, 29).

It seems that this overflow of spirits occurred at the end of
1801, and Mill arrived in London with Sir John Stuart by February, 1802. At once he became a working journalist. By 1803 he was editor of a new *Literary Journal* and was busy with other writings. In 1805 he assumed the editorship of the *St. James Chronicle* as well. His prospects seemed excellent.

Mill was a very persuasive and attractive man—"a youth of great bodily charms," as Bain calls him: "One of my lady informants spoke of him with a quite rapturous admiration of his beauty" (*JM*, 35). By 1804 he was engaged in marriage to the eldest daughter of a Hoxton widow. Mrs. Burrow supported her family of three girls and two boys by operating a lunatic asylum. She herself was a striking beauty, and her daughters inherited this attraction. Harriet Burrow, her eldest daughter, was a very pretty girl, fond of fun, interested in clothes, concerned with appearances. She was trained as girls were, to catch their man, and she caught James Mill, a rising young editor, to whom she was married in June, 1805. James was then thirty-two, and Harriet twenty-two. They moved into a house rented to them by Mrs. Burrow.

The new Mrs. Mill had been well trained by her mother, and became an excellent housekeeper. She was cheerful and sociable, but had no particular intellectual aspirations. James worked very hard at his writing and editing, and his social acquaintances were men of ideas, not friends to be brought into a domestic circle. Harriet kept in close touch with her
own family. The first child, born on 20 May, 1806, was named after James's friend and patron, Sir John Stuart. By this time the Literary Journal was failing, and James withdrew as editor. He had always planned to make his reputation by writing a great work, and chose to begin in 1806, with the history of British India as his topic. Such a work should only require three years, he felt, and the restriction on his income would be temporary; the family could live on a restricted budget for a few years. The following year he withdrew also from the Chronicle. Mrs. Mill was very sorry about this, since the only remaining income came from the articles James wrote, and it also meant that he worked chiefly at home.

Another baby, Wilhelmina Forbes Mill (named after James's star pupil) was born in 1808, the year that Mill met Jeremy Bentham. The two men found large areas of philosophical agreement, on law, on government, on political reform: they quickly formed an intellectual partnership. Bentham invited the family to spend a short vacation with him at his country place in 1809, and Harriet's sisters came to look after one-year-old Willie, while John accompanied his mother and father to Barrow Green. Bentham liked little John, and John liked Bentham; past sixty, he seemed like a grandfather to the boy, who had no other grandfather. James Mill did not speak about his family. His mother was dead, his brother was dead, his father died in 1808. When his old friend Mr. Barclay was down from Scotland and came to
dine with the Mills, not a word was said about their home until Harriet and four-year-old John had left the room; then James burst out with questions. These matters of his own past were not for the children to know. Besides, such knowledge formed no part of the plan for John’s education.

James Mill was practising upon his son the theory of controlled environment (spelled out in Rousseau’s Emile) wherein the environment was as important as the subjects being studied.* Bentham, who had himself been a child prodigy, was deeply interested in educational theories. He and Mill combined and adapted the monitorial and tutorial systems of education into a plan by which James became the sole tutor for John, and John in turn taught the other children. The effect was to place John more closely under his father’s supervision. However, Mrs. Mill had little Willie to look after. In 1810 Clara was born, and life for Mrs. Mill became even more restricted.

Bentham wanted to have James closer by, so in 1810, he arranged for the Mills to move into Westminster. The house

* John Stuart Mill’s curriculum was not extraordinary for his time: Elizabeth Barrett mastered a program of languages and reading quite as difficult as Mill’s. Jane Welsh studied the philosophy books in her father’s library. Mill insisted that he was not exceptional in his boyhood studies, except in logic, and that many of his friends could have achieved as much with the training that he received. In my opinion this is correct; Eyton Tooke or Charles Buller or Henry Taylor would have absorbed and mastered the materials as well as Mill did. The credit should go to the tutor, James Mill, and his son attempted in the Autobiography to show why and how his father had conducted the education of a philosopher.
was damp and affected the health of Harriet and the children, and they were forced to move again, to Newington Green, farther than ever away from Bentham. James walked across London each Tuesday to dine with Bentham, and sometimes spent other evenings there as well. Their curious partnership consumed a great deal of Mill's time and energy. Bentham had produced and continued to produce an astonishing variety of ideas and attacks upon social abuses. Mill provided essential skills in editing these writings and seeing them through the press. He became more and more involved in plotting and planning more and more reforms, and in printing and distributing Bentham's pamphlets. Sometimes Mill would be paid for articles he wrote, sometimes not. His History was not yet half written. Harriet was completely tied down with the children. Bain records that:

There is a tradition in the family that during the panic of the Williams murders (December 1811), Mrs. Mill used to sit trembling for his return from Bentham late in the evening (JM, 72).

There were not many visitors. In 1811, James met David Ricardo, who with Mrs. Ricardo, became friends of the Mills. Ricardo, a year older than Mill, had married in 1793, and his seven children were half grown up: the domestic circumstances of the two families were thus quite different. Francis Place, whom Mill met in 1812, was two years his elder, and the oldest of his ten living children were almost grown to adults. John noted years later:
My father's income, previous to his appointment from the East India Company, & his unwillingness to invite any persons to his house whom he could not, as he said, make as comfortable as they were at home, caused the habitual frequenters of his house to be limited to a very few persons, mostly little known (Draft, 185).

James worked each day at the table writing his History, and John spent some time studying Greek. Father and son took long walks each day, largely because of James's health. Little John, always in his father's company, learned to speak the ideas which he had read, and to express himself with accuracy. James not only taught John to be accurate; he was himself accurate. James praised the principles of Socratic dialogue, and practised them. James taught that influence should be made through the discussion of principles while walking; it was in just this manner that he tutored Ricardo, Place, Bentham, Hume, Grote, and all other people in his circle, by his own actions and example. John Stuart Mill recognised this, saying that

though direct moral teaching does much, indirect does more; and the effect my father produced on my character, did not depend solely on what he said or did with that direct object but also, and still more, on what manner of man he was (Auto, 33).

More and more John was in his father's company, while the girls stayed with their mother. James did his writing at home, and did not go out to work as most fathers did. The special program of education and the controlled environment were beginning to take little John away from his mother, even at the
age of six. But, while the boy may not have been conscious of the fact, her presence and her actions, and the manner in which she supported her husband's activities, may all have served as the example from which John Stuart Mill generalised in the *Subjection of Women*.

By the time his third sister, Harriet Isabella, was born in 1812, John was reading Greek, studying arithmetic, and reading books in English for his own amusement. He imitated his father in the writing of little histories, for history as a subject had attracted him from the first. The statement in the *Autobiography* that James Mill did not approve of "children's books" is rather misleading. John read every work but two published by 1800 expressly for children, and these two were religious works. James Mill did not suppress areas of literature in his choices for John.* Nor did he deprive him of the ordinary family experiences. At this time the whole family attended church, sometimes with members of the Burrow family. All the babies were baptised and grandmother Burrow was careful to see that all the children learned their catechism. James was not satisfied with living at Newington Green, but until the *History* was completed, he saw no way to

* The religious titles were Dr. Watt's *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*. Beauty and the Beast appeared in 1811, the stories about Little Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard and others in 1817. Grimm's "Popular Stories" was published in 1824, and from that time on more children's stories appeared. See Muir, Tuer, and Thackeray.6
improve his circumstances. He spoke sometimes of moving to France, where living costs were much lower. His income was now small, and there were four children to provide for.

In 1813, Bentham took James and John on an excursion which included Oxford, Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth and Portsmouth. Here they met the family of Bentham’s brother, Sir Samuel Bentham. The following year, when his fortunes improved, Bentham bought a property touching his own in Westminster, and rented it to the Mills. Thus he gained the company of the Mill family, and James and John Mill gained access to Bentham's extensive library. Bentham also rented Ford Abbey to serve him as a country seat, and invited the Mill family to stay with him. James and John went down with him to take possession, and Mrs. Mill followed with the other four children and her maid as soon as she recovered from the birth of her second son, James Bentham Mill.

Bentham quickly established himself with his neighbours, and the Mill family fitted well into the pattern of life at Ford Abbey.

The church-going part of the household went to Thorncomb church, and the vicar and his family became friendly visitors. Several years afterwards, Mill received into his house, in London, the Vicar's widow and daughters, and shewed them every kindness (JM, 150).

During the next few years, the Mill family always joined Bentham at Ford Abbey in August, returning to Queen Square in January.
Mill and Ricardo carried on a steady correspondence whenever either was away from London. Francis Place would send long letters each week to Mill and Bentham concerning activities in London. Mrs. Mill wrote to her mother. She also became a friend of Mrs. Place. Sometimes Place included kind messages from his wife and daughters to Mrs. Mill: "She is their favourite acquaintance, the more so as she, poor woman, as well as my wife, has 'a grumpy husband who bites her nose off'."  

In her study of Mill, Borchard describes life at Ford Abbey, remarking how the atmosphere and grandeur of the place contributed to the emotional growth and the romantic ideas of young John. The family had the advantages of living half a year in the city and the other half in the country. John's remark later in life, that he was never a boy, is misleading; his one lack was boys of his own age to play with. He always had the company of his sisters and brothers, and met most of the adults who were friends of his parents. Certainly his father dominated the family, as was the custom of the times; Place admits to the same charge in the passage cited above. And his father was busy, with his writing and planning and tutoring programs; perhaps - such a failing is ordinary enough - too busy to appreciate his wife. Evidence of the commonplace happenings and circumstances of the Mill household tends to correct the notion that there was anything abnormal or freakish in family relationships or in John's domestic experience.
When Mill took the house from Bentham, he was able to pay only £50 rent, and Bentham undertook to secure the remaining £50 to allow Mill to move next door. Always reluctant to incur any obligations, Mill was relieved when an old friend from Scotland, the chemist Thomson, sub-let half the house, allowing Mill to pay the entire rent without assistance. Mrs. Mill was as pleased as anyone to have the Thomsons for neighbours; she immediately became a good friend of Mrs. Thomson and her sister Miss Colquhoun. The children played outdoors both at Ford Abbey and in Bentham's garden at Queen Square. James wrote away at his History and tutored John: at the age of eight, John began to learn Latin, which he taught in turn to Willie, and Euclid and algebra, which were not taught to the girls until they became eight years of age. Mrs. Mill looked after the younger ones. In 1816 James was writing to Ricardo, "I only expect my wife and the crowd of children tomorrow. She has had a very good convalescence"—that is, after the birth of another daughter, Jane Stuart.

In 1817, Place came down to Ford Abbey to study, with the notion that he might help to edit some of Bentham's papers. Mrs. Mill wrote to Mrs. Place:

My Dear Mrs. Place, - I will take all possible care of your lord and master, and see that his clothes return from the wash regularly. I am much pleased to hear that he admires the Abbey. He will pass his time very pleasantly here, I have no doubt. I have recovered my youth now. I was more fatigued than usual, owing to the child not going to the new servant. I think she will answer very
well, as there is less to do on account of the washing all being put out. I am very glad, as I brought a great deal of work to do. Give my kind love to Miss Place, and best remembrances to all the rest of the family. —Yours truly and sincerely, H. MILL.

"The child" was little Jane, by this time more than a year old. It was a part of Mrs. Mill's program of infant care to give her children a secure start in life and the personal attention which contributes to emotional stability.

Place's long letters to his wife give glimpses of life in the Mill family. Mill, Place, Bentham and Colls (a secretary) dined with Mrs. Mill. Apart from the maid and Bentham's cook Mrs. Stoker, Harriet was the only woman in this society of philosophical radicals. The men and John pursued their assorted studies. Place wrote:

Mrs. Mill marches in great style round the green in front of the house for about half an hour before breakfast and again after dinner with all the children, till their bedtime.

Mrs. Mill is both good-natured and good-tempered, two capital qualities in a woman; she is, however, not a little vain of her person, and would be thought to be still a girl.

Indeed she seemed a little girl, compared to her husband and his philosophical friends. John, aged eleven, was now taken over by the men, leaving nine-year-old Willie as Mrs. Mill's companion. But Place's tone is preserved in a passage from the *Subjection*:

Think what it is to a boy, to grow up to manhood in the belief that ... by the mere fact of being born a
male he is by right the superior of all and every one of an entire half of the human race (Subj, 522-3).

Place admired the control which their parents had over the Mill children, especially that there was no crying, a feature to which he alluded in two letters:

As for crying and bawling, it may be said to have no existence here; some of them cry when scolded or cuffed over their lessons, but it is all but unknown on other occasions. Mrs. Mill is a patient, quiet soul, hating wrangling, and although by no means meanly submissive, manages to avoid quarrelling in a very admirable manner. 13

Since I have been here there has not been one single instance of crying among the children, who certainly give less trouble, and have fewer ridiculous propensities and desires than any I every knew; notwithstanding they have a plentiful lack of manners, and as much impertinence, sometimes called impudence, as any children need have. You would be surprised to see little Jim trundling a hoop nearly as tall as himself round the Great Hall, going as fast as the others, and turning the corners with admirable dexterity. 14

It appears that not only John, but all of the Mill children, were assertive youngsters who challenged the authority of adults and excited comment about a need for respecting their elders. Little Jim, just three years old when this letter was written, "spells words of four syllables well." 15 Willie and Clara had schooling from John between the hours of seven and nine. After breakfast, they repeated their lessons to their father, and studied until one. Then they had to correct their work in the afternoon. Effectively, they spent little more than five hours in 'school', as children ordinarily do today. John had extra work, in helping his father correct
proofs. The program was operated with flexible regularity, and the children were quite happy with it. Moreover, the Mills did not use any form of physical punishment on their children; James corrected them through speech. Place thought him beyond comparison the most diligent fellow I ever knew or heard of: almost any other man would tire or give up teaching, but not so he; three hours every day, frequently more, are devoted to the children, and there is not a moment's relaxation. His method is by far the best I have ever witnessed and is infinitely precise; but he is excessively severe. No fault, however trivial, escapes his notice; none goes without reprehension or punishment of some sort. When Willie and Clara got a word wrong, they went without their lunch, and John also, because he had sent them up to their father to be heard in their lessons when they were not ready.

The severity with which James Mill corrected his family always impressed visitors, and most people thought it excessive and insensitive. But they did not understand the extent of Mill's scheme. His standards were shaped to the theory that all aspects of the environment must work together, in order to provide the best possible training for the children. His own mother, Isabella Mill, had concentrated her attentions in this way, arranging the domestic activities to free James from irrelevant duties and giving him the best available physical comforts. Such a plan required the support of her husband, to whom the loss of James's labour must have been a
It was equally necessary for James, a man so scrupulous in his attention to influence and environment, to explain to his wife the scheme of training he had undertaken for their children. Her portion of duties included household management and the proper care of the family, neither easy when the family income was so confined. It is significant that Place describes Mrs. Mill as "by no means submissive, but manages to avoid quarrelling." It indicates what we might expect of James Mill, that he married a woman with some mind of her own; and it suggests that James and Harriet Mill were more of a team than their son realised. Anyone who tutored the Mill children remarked upon their docility, which is to say, their teachableness. Of all his abilities in later life, John Stuart Mill was most proud of his ability to learn from criticism, without rancour. Mill wrote in a number of places about the importance of example. His mother's behaviour under the criticism of his father was the example most constantly before John; her example may have been influential upon him.

A letter from John to his grandmother Burrow 27 October, 1817 (Letters, No. 3) indicates that he was supervising the studies of Willie and Clara, and starting Harriet upon music. Willie and Clara wrote letters under John's care. James's History was finally completed, and John was helping his father
with the proofs from the printers. James looked forward to financial success; he was uncomfortable when under any obligations. When Ricardo teased him about being rich, and about living in such a mansion as Ford Abbey, Mill replied:

Even here, though I have all my family about me, and though by consenting to come here, I am conferring an obligation,* not receiving it, yet I am less happy than at home, and could enjoy the country more in a very poor cottage of my own—"?

In January, 1818, the Mills returned to Queen Square, and John began to study logic. Ricardo came frequently to visit Bentham and Mill, and John was allowed to walk with him and talk about economics. He was continuing in higher mathematics and instructing Willie and Clara in Latin and arithmetic. James's book was a great success; he was marked as a coming man, and began moving in higher political circles. His friend Thomson suggested him for a post at Glasgow University, but Mill replied that there was a good chance for a job at India House, remarking that

Mrs. Mill which rather surprised me, would be delighted to go to live in Glasgow, to which her friendship with Mrs. Thomson seems naturally to contribute.

* It is interesting to see Bentham planning Mill's life and using Mill's abilities, and apparently discarding him in later years when other writers such as Bowring undertook to serve the old man. Bowring was an avowed enemy of Mill's, and has unfairly prejudiced the world against Mill. See also John Stuart Mill's note, "statements have been made exaggerating greatly my father's personal obligations to Mr. Bentham" (Draft, 68), and Mill's letter to the Edinburgh Review LXXIX (January 1844), 267-271.
She is highly delighted, and so am I, to hear such good accounts of her and her fine boy (JM, 168).

In May, 1819 James Mill was appointed an Assistant to the Examiner of Correspondence at India House, salary £800 per annum. This meant attending his office between 10 and 4, which in turn meant hearing the children in their lessons in the evening, an arrangement which everyone disliked, not less because the subjects were Latin and mathematics. Up to this point James had prevented any contact between John and other children. Certainly the boy was kept busy enough with his own and his sisters' lessons, and all of the children were company for each other. But he was at the age where direct supervision was no longer necessary. James began to think again about France.

On 30 July, 1819 John wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Bentham, (Letters, No. 4) thanking him for his interest in John's studies and summarizing the progress he had made since their last meeting. James conferred with Jeremy Bentham, and Sir Samuel proposed that young John come and stay with him and his household in France. An excellent account of this part of Mill's life is given in Anna Jean Mill's book John Mill's Boyhood Visit to France. 18

It would have been difficult to find a better environment for John than the domestic atmosphere of the Samuel Benthams.
Lady Bentham was the eldest daughter of a physician and medical lecturer. She had been given an excellent education, and was thoroughly competent to explain her husband's mechanical inventions. Her four living children were all at home; Mary, Clara, George, and Sarah. George was twenty, Sarah sixteen, when fourteen-year-old John Mill joined the Benthams. In the Bentham tradition, "all the young Benthams were forward children, George beginning Latin before he was five."¹⁹ Their early instruction at home had been continued by private tutors in England from 1807 to 1814 when they had moved to France. The moral and intellectual environment was certainly superior, but it must have seemed to young Mill merely a continuation of the high standards of his own home. In the *Subjection of Women* Mill addressed himself to 'better' people; he had no experience of any other kind during his formative years.

Lady Bentham understood precisely how to supplement young John's education. In addition to his mathematics, philosophy and French lessons, the boy was taking lessons in singing, pianoforte, fencing, riding and dancing; his book studies were often interrupted by household moves, special trips, or botanizing expeditions. John kept a Journal of the visit to France, and reported by letter to his father. He missed his own family, and inquired about the progress of his pupils, Willie and Clara, daring to suggest to his father that he must repeat things a few extra times to Clara, since
she seemed to require it. Mrs. Mill inquired about his music and dancing lessons, and asked had he bought a new hat and got his hair cut. John replied that the dancing went pretty well, but requested that Willie and Clara be told not to bother practising their music until he returned, since he now saw that he had been teaching the wrong system. Like any boy, he neglected to mention the hat and the haircut.

John was perfectly conscious of the advantage he enjoyed, that the whole Bentham family corrected him instantly and explained why.* John observed the behaviour of the family, and recorded it. Miss Sarah Bentham herself coloured the floor in a staining experiment, rather than have a servant perform the labour; only in this way could she make an accurate estimation about the value of the stain. There was no false delicacy about manual labour by women. Mother and daughters joined George and John in a climb in the Alps, and it was Lady Bentham who explained the geology. Years later, Mill described her as

a woman of strong will & decided character, much general knowledge, & great practical good sense in the Edgeworth stile: she was the ruling spirit of the household, which she was well qualified to be (Draft, 69).

* See Lady Bentham's letter to James Mill, 14 September, 1820: "Upon all occasions his gentleness under reproof and thankfulness for correction are remarkable; and as it is by reason supported by examples we point out to him that we endeavour to convince him—not by command that we induce him to do so and so, we trust that you will have satisfaction from that part of his education we are giving him to fit him for commerce with the world at large" (JSM, 22).
She and her daughters demonstrated the great abilities which a woman could exercise if she were only granted the opportunity, and young John could view her as an individual rather than a functioning member of his own family. Lady Bentham wrote to James to request that they keep John an extra six months, since they had not quite finished him. He still had to learn to brush his hair. Permission was granted, and James wrote to Ricardo: "John is at Montpelier and now attending classes in the university, with other sorts of lessons which have not yet all been reported to me." John's new brother Henry was born in the summer of 1820, and James Mill spent his vacation that year with Ricardo in Gloucestershire. Little James was six that year, almost ready to begin his formal schooling, which had to wait until John returned from France. John's early schooling was completed by his trip abroad, and he was henceforth to come under the instruction of other people: his boyhood was almost over. In the Subjection of Women Mill makes a number of generalizations concerning the differences in typical behaviour between French families and English families; some

* The Ricardo correspondence gives a good deal of information about the domestic happenings in the Mill family. It also reveals much more about James Mill, the man who kept almost every friend he made throughout his lifetime. "But for the last fortnight Sir John Stuart, one of the oldest and best of my friends, has been in town, not very well and very lonely, and I thought it my duty to spend with him almost every evening."
of these ideas were probably formed from the experience of living in France away from his own family at an impressionable age.

In many ways John was an ordinary boy in a conventional church-going family, whose parents provided him with good shelter and a variety of vacation experiences; there is no hint of deprivation in his circumstances. Both James and Mrs. Mill enjoyed the admiration of their friends, and they were respected for their methods of raising their children. James restricted his social life chiefly to philosophical persons who paid little attention to Mrs. Mill. While she may have regretted her diminished social life, Mrs. Mill was increasingly occupied with the care of her family, particularly the infants, whom she weaned with great care. All of her children were normal healthy youngsters with "as much impertinence" as any children need have.

Years later John Stuart Mill wrote that his mother had failed to provide adequate affection to the household. It may be that she had concentrated her attention upon the infant children who continued to arrive at two-year intervals. The lack which John sensed was partly for himself and partly for his father. When the Autobiography was written, John had not yet clarified his analysis of the emotional climate in family life. In his Subjection of Women he came very close to autobiographical analysis, and the relevance of his domestic experience becomes
obvious. If Mrs. Mill had been more nearly equal to her husband, and been able to show him more affection, her influence would have brought out the affection which James Mill suppressed in his own nature: this was one moral lesson to be learned from Mill's study of the family.

The foregoing examination of James Mill's domestic history indicates that his son, through a combination of ignorance and the suppression of details, has given a partial and inaccurate account of his childhood. It seems surprising that readers can gather as much information and understanding about John Stuart Mill's emotional development from the *Subjection of Women* as they can from his *Autobiography*. But Harriet Taylor helped Mill to edit the *Autobiography*, while the *Subjection* was written after her death. Examination of the *Early Draft* reveals that much of the family and social experience was removed from the *Autobiography*, in order to adhere to the account of Mill's mental development. Moreover, his statements are sometimes misleading. Because of the general misunderstanding of the character and nature of Mill, it is necessary to stress how ordinary and normal his family life was— an assertion which Mill himself made both in the *Autobiography* and in the *Subjection of Women*. 
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


5 See Piero Sraffa, ed., The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, 9 vols (Cambridge, 1952). Vols. VI to IX are correspondence. See also Wallas, Life of Place.

Wallas, p. 72.

8 See Memories of Old Friends, Being extracts from the Journals and letters of Caroline Fox, etc., ed. by Horace N. Pym, new and revised edition (London, 1883), entry for 10 April, 1840.

9 Sraffa, VII, 62 (Mill to Ricardo, 14 August, 1816).

10 Wallas, p. 73.

11 Ibid., p. 76.

12 Ibid., p. 75.

13 Ibid., p. 73.

14 Ibid., p. 75.

15 Ibid., p. 73.

16 Ibid., p. 74.

17 Sraffa, VII, 182 (Mill to Ricardo, 24 August, 1817).

18 (Toronto, 1960). This work reproduces the text of the Journal which John kept, and also contains many valuable comments and corrections to Packe and other biographies.

19 Dictionary of National Biography.

20 Sraffa, VIII, 293 (Mill to Ricardo, 13 November, 1820).

21 Sraffa, VIII, 105 (Mill to Ricardo, 13 October, 1819).
CHAPTER II

PEOPLE

During his boyhood years, John Stuart Mill was successfully confined by his father to a program of study and training under close personal supervision. James Mill's profession as a writer allowed him to work at home, where he could control the environment and the instruction of his children. In the years following John's return from France, such supervision was no longer possible. Yet James Mill was able to contribute enormously to the development of his son, by exposing him to the influential and highly moral adults in his own spheres of activity. In April, 1821, Mill's salary was increased and he was given greater responsibilities at India House; but he did not relax from his efforts at political reform. He published his Elements of Political Economy that year, and the articles for the Encyclopaedia Britannica occupied much time. In his correspondence he complained about various bodily ailments, and confessed to being rather short-tempered, "fit for nothing of an evening but my own fauteuil [armchair], with my wife
and children, whom I can keep as long as they amuse me, and then send away."

James sent the family off to the family summer cottage at the beginning of July. John arrived back from France to join them there, and immediately resumed his post as teacher of his sisters and little James, now seven years old. His father found him "nearly as shy and awkward as before." Ricardo requested that James come and visit and bring John with him. Mill temporised, and by the end of November wrote that John was engaged with masters, and would have to come another time. John was studying Roman law under John Austin, the law scholar, and learning German from his wife Sarah. The Austins were welcome neighbours, particularly to young John; he could visit them freely, and was treated like a young adult, and he could escape from his own sisters and brothers, who were a constant responsibility to him. John did meet another boy his own age, during a visit with his father in October: Eyton Tooke was the son of Thomas Tooke, who with Ricardo, Malthus, James Mill and others, founded the Political Economy Club that year, and Eyton became one of John's best friends.

In 1822, Mrs. Mill bore her eighth child, Mary Elizabeth. John travelled with the Austins on vacation to Norwich, while James and Mrs. Mill and the other children were at Dorking for the summer. As usual, James spent his vacation writing for more books and articles. When James was appointed First
Assistant Examiner in May of 1823, John was taken on as a clerk in the same office. The other members of the Mill family remained together as a unit. Mill wrote to Thomson (22 May, 1823):

Mrs. Mill and the children are all down at Dorking, very happy, and where they will be for the rest of the summer, I going down pretty regularly on the Friday evening and remaining until Monday morning (JM, 207).

In response to an invitation from Ricardo, he replied (8 August):

My wife prays me to say every thing to Mrs. Ricardo expressive of her sense of her kindness, in her wishes to see her and her girls. With respect to her however, she hardly proposes to wean her little one so soon, and would not be easy at leaving her in the hands of those she has at Dorking. We must look forward to a future time.

It is noteworthy that Mrs. Mill made the circumstances of her infant children the determining factor; she knew Mrs. Ricardo and the older daughters, and would have enjoyed such a visit. Ricardo replied to Mill, "then bring some children and come yourself"—but Mill could not manage it. The ninth and youngest of the Mill children, George Grote Mill, was born in 1824, Mrs. Mill being then forty-two years of age.

In rejected leaves of the Early Draft John wrote a passage about his family life, a passage which appeared in
substantially revised form in the Autobiography, with no reference to his mother. The original passage began with his father:

I once heard him say, that there was always the greatest sympathy between him & his children until the time of lessons began but that the lessons always destroyed it. Certainly his children till six or seven years old always liked him & were happy in his presence, & he liked them & had pleasure in talking to them & in interesting and amusing them; & it is equally true that after the lessons began, fear of his severity sooner or later swallowed up all other feelings toward him. This is true only of the elder children: with the younger he followed an entirely different system, to the great comfort of the later years of his life. But in respect to what I am here concerned with, the moral agencies which acted on myself, it must be mentioned as a most baleful one, that my father's children neither loved him, nor, with any warmth of affection, anyone else. I do not mean that things were worse in this respect than they are in most English families; in which genuine affection is altogether exceptional . . . I believe there is less personal affection in England than in any other country of which I know anything, & I give my father's family not as peculiar in this respect but only as a too faithful exemplification of the ordinary fact. That rarity in England, a really warm hearted mother, would in the first place have made my father a totally different being, & in the second would have made the children grow up loving & being loved. But my mother with the very best intentions, only knew how to pass her life in drudging for them. Whatever she could do for them she did, & they liked her, because she was kind to them, but to make herself loved, looked up to, or even obeyed, required qualities which she unfortunately did not possess.

I thus grew up in the absence of love & in the presence of fear; and many and indelible are the effects of this upbringing in the stunting of my moral growth (Draft, 183-4).

It must be remembered that Mill wrote this passage after his marriage, which estranged him from his family. He offers
his own experience as typical of the English family; in the *Subjection of Women* we find the same sort of evidence, of reasoning based upon his personal experience. In the above passage Mill seems to blame his mother for the lack of love in the family. He may have detected the essential inconsistency of this argument, since he modified it in the *Autobiography*. If, as he held, his mother was the key to domestic affection, how to explain the behaviour of the younger children, without different behaviour from his mother? James Mill's improved financial position is the most obvious cause of better domestic conditions. In any case, Mill spoke in the Draft (183) of his father's "ill-assorted marriage & his asperities of temper;" moreover, a marriage "to which he had not, & never could have supposed that he had, the inducements of kindred intellect, tastes or pursuits."  

A man who is married to a woman his inferior in intelligence, finds her a perpetual dead weight, or, worse than a dead weight, a drag, upon every aspiration of his to be better than public opinion requires him to be (*Subj*, 534).

In the *Autobiography*, we read that James Mill's deficiency was his lack of tenderness to his children, but that the younger ones, with whom he was less severe, loved him tenderly. But even that severity, thought Mill, was "not such as to prevent me from having a happy childhood." Nonetheless growing up in the presence of fear may have given him some insight into 'subjection'.

As between father and son, how many are the cases in which the father, in spite of real affection on both sides, obviously to all the world does not know, nor suspect, parts of the son's character familiar to his companions and equals. The truth is, that the position of looking up to another is extremely unpropitious to complete sincerity and openness with him. The fear of losing ground in his opinion or in his feelings is so strong, that even in an upright character, there is an unconscious tendency to show only the best side, or the side which, though not the best, is that which he mosts likes to see (Subj, 455).

Mill's sister Harriet recalled those years from another point of view:

My poor mother's life must have been a frightfully hard one, from first to last. . . . Here was an instance of two persons, a husband and wife, living as far apart under the same roof, as the north pole from the south; from no "fault" of my poor mother certainly; but how was a woman with a growing family and very small means (as in the early years of the marriage) to be anything but a German Hausfrau? how could she "intellectually" become a companion for such a mind as my father? His great want was "temper", though I quite believe circumstances had made it what it was in our childhood, both because of the warm affection of his early friends, and because in the latter years of his life he became much softened and treated the children differently (Hayek, 286).

Mill himself suggested the atmosphere of pressures:

Even the commonest men reserve the violent, the sulky, the undisguisedly selfish side of their character for those who have no power to withstand it (Subj, 469).

Whoever has a wife and children has given hostages to Mrs. Grundy. The approbation of that potentate may be a matter of indifference to him, but it is of great importance to his wife (Subj, 535).

In Packe's phrase, Mrs. Mill "had to wage a thankless struggle for respectability in an impoverished and overcrowded
family." The case was not as Packe suggests. The Queen Square House was large, and accommodated the household with ease. While prudent domestic economies were practised, there was no lack of proper care or provisions and no lack of any needful item or attention. Moreover, there was never any doubt that the Mills were respectable church-going folk, who performed their community duties and their share of good works. Harriet Grote reported of James Mill that he "married a stupid woman 'a housemaid of a woman' & left off caring for her & treated her as his squah but always faithful to her." Yet in his Autobiography John Stuart Mill cuts through all the history and all the explanations, to assert that what his family lacked was affection; and that he suffered because of this lack. He says of the family, "What is needed is, that it should be a school of sympathy in equality, of living together in love, without power on one side or obedience on the other"(Subj, 479). A reader is compelled to believe Mill; but the reader may not realise that Mill measures human performance against the abstract standard of perfection which his father taught him: no person achieves the balance and happiness which Mill postulates as the aim of society, that is, perfect happiness. From the foregoing account one might expect evidence of unhappiness in the reports of domestic life in the Mill household; but no lack of affection was apparent, to some visitors at least. As the family grew up, there were more and more visitors.
By the time that James Mill was appointed Examiner in 1830, his youngest child was almost ready to begin schooling. For the first time in twenty-five years, Mrs. Mill was free of infants. She had not had much opportunity of meeting her husband's friends, since most of them did not come to the house. Ricardo had died in 1823, and communications with that family ceased. Mrs. Place died in 1827. Place was greatly upset by her death.

They had been married for thirty-six years, and she had borne him fifteen children, of whom ten were then alive. She had always been busy in household affairs, and had never attempted to share his intellectual interests, so that he found it difficult, when his grown-up sons and daughters were at home, to prevent her from feeling excluded from their talk.

Mrs. Place felt left out of things because she had not had an education which developed her interest in politics and philosophical matters; she had been too busy bringing up her children and attending to domestic duties. This was Mrs. Mill's case exactly; but where Place had been conscious of his wife's feelings of estrangement, Mill seems to have ignored his wife altogether in any intellectual discussion.

The energy of the mothers was expended for their children. It seemed that only childless women could spend the time to understand or take any interest in political questions, or to have James Mill to dinner for a discussion about political economy. Sarah Austin had one child, Lucie, who was a playmate of the younger Mill children, but Sarah was interested in
intellectual salons, and not in home-making, which she could do with half a mind. Harriet Grote was altogether an extra­
ordinary person, busy in politics and economics; in 1820 she had lost her only baby, which was premature and only lived a week.
And she and Mrs. Austin "managed" their husbands, a thing not to be conceived of with James Mill.

The new post at India House brought a salary of £1900, and the Mills moved early in 1831 to a large villa in Kensington. James still worked all the time; he had spent all his vacations for six years writing his Analysis of the Human Mind. John was working at India House, and tutoring the younger children. The older girls were arriving at marriageable ages; Willie was twenty-two, Clara twenty, Harriet eighteen. James was enrolled at University College, and sometimes brought his friends home. Mr. Mill still persisted in correcting his children the moment he detected error; he seemed to use up all his patience in the course of his daily work, and was irritable and moody at home.

His entering the room where the family was assembled was observed by strangers to operate as an immediate damper. This was not the worst. The one really disagreeable trait in Mill's character, and the thing that has left the most painful memories, was the way that he allowed himself to speak and behave to his wife and children before visitors (JM, 334).

James Mill was not unkind to his children, although he seemed to take little notice of them except John . . . I could not help being rather pained at his manner occasionally to Mrs. Mill. She was a tall, handsome lady, sweet-
tempered, with pleasant manners, fond of her children: but I think not much interested in what the elder ones and their father talked about (Packe, 76).

James Mill died in 1836, and his daughter Harriet later wrote "I hope and think that the following eighteen years . . . were years of satisfaction and enjoyment" to Mrs. Mill, with John as head of the family (Hayek, 286).

Two fellow-members of James Bentham Mill's class in University College recorded their impressions of 1830-31; noting

the impression he made on us by his domestic qualities, the affectionate playfulness of his character as a brother in the company of his sisters, and of the numerous younger branches of the family (Hayek, 32).

John Mill always seemed to me a great favourite with his family. He was evidently very fond of his mother and sisters and they of him; and he frequently manifested a sunny brightness and gaiety of heart and behaviour which were singularly fascinating. His three eldest sisters, also, were very nice, unaffected, pleasant girls, rather handsome, especially the youngest of the three, and talked on interesting subjects (Hayek, 32).

"Unaffected" girls, in a cheerful atmosphere provided by their mother rather than their father. Another witness con-

firms that

In these days John was devotedly attached to his mother and exuberant in his playful tokens of affection. Towards his father he was deferential, never venturing to controvert him in argument nor taking a prominent part in the conversation in his presence (Hayek, 33).

From evidence of later years, the Mills presented a happy family picture. Early in 1840 young Henry Mill was
taken to Falmouth by his mother and sister Clara to catch the mail boat to Madeira, in an attempt to arrest his tuberculosis. Missing the boat, the Mills were assisted by John Sterling and the Fox family of Falmouth. Caroline Fox, the youngest daughter, became a life-long friend of Clara Mill, and Caroline's diary offers glimpses of John Stuart Mill and the family. The entry for 19 May, 1840 records:

... Returned with Harriet Mill from Carlyle's lecture to their house in Kensington Square, where we were most lovingly received by all the family. John Mill was quite himself ... Walked in the little garden, and saw the Falmouth plants which Clara cherishes so lovingly, and Henry's cactus and other dear memorials. Visited John Mill's charming library, and saw portions of his immense herbarium; the mother so anxious to show everything, and her son so terribly afraid of boring us ... Mrs. Mill gave us Bentham's favourite pudding at dinner!

Again, on 3 June, 1840:

Spent the evening at the Mills', and met the Carlyles and Uncle and Aunt Charles [C. J. Fox],

and Mill closes a letter to Caroline's brother Barclay:

express for me my warmest regards to your father and mother—and for your sisters and yourself; remember that you have not only as many additional "blessings in disguise" as there are sisters in Kensington, but also (unless it be peculiarly a feminine designation), one more, namely, yours affectionately, J.S.MILL. (Letters, No. 290).

Perhaps Mill is not wrong to suggest that the "mother so anxious to show everything, and her son so terribly afraid of boring us" constitute a typical family. For visitors, at any rate, there were evidences of affection. It must be
remembered that Mill was taught to judge behaviour by absolute standards of perfection, standards to which each person must aspire.* If his mother was just an average woman in superior company, she must have appeared the more inadequate. Perhaps Mill came to realize that such comparisons were unfair. In any event, the passages about his mother in the Early Draft did not appear in his Autobiography.

The Autobiography records: "The two friends of my father from whom I derived most, and with whom I most associated were Mr. Grote and Mr. John Austin." Austin (1790-1859) was a scholar in jurisprudence, "a man of great intellectual powers which in conversation appeared at their very best" (Auto, 52), whom Mill compared with his father. Austin was "moral in the best sense," and helped young John avoid the "prejudices and narrowness" of a sectarian training. Austin's wife Sarah (1793-1867) was the youngest daughter of John Taylor of Norwich, whose family were all given excellent educations, the two girls receiving the same instruction as the five boys, as was the custom among Unitarian families of

* It was characteristic of Mill to explore the limits of any topic, and to attempt definitions of ultimate attainment. The chapter on "The Probable Futurity of the Working Classes" in his Political Economy is an example. Mill's attempt to describe the perfect union of man and wife in the Subjection of Women is perhaps his best attempt to illustrate perfect happiness.
the time. "Accomplished and beautiful," Sarah surprised the
world by marrying serious John Austin, the law scholar, early
in 1820. "The marriage . . . was a union of rare intellectual
sympathy, and one to which she brought an unusual share of
devotion." Their only child, Lucie, was born in June 1821.
Sarah had taken over the lessons of the Mill girls while John
was in France; the families were neighbours in Queen Square.
James Mill allowed John to go on vacation with the Austins
to Norwich in 1822: from his point of view, Sarah was as
reliable company for young John as her husband was, since she
understood John's education program, and held responsible
opinions.* Because of her husband's poor health, Sarah Austin
necessarily became the manager of their household affairs.
Borchard's biography of Mill notes (p. 19): "John became
attached to her at once, he soon called her his 'Mutterlein'
. . . from her personality John finally evolved his ideas about
equal rights for women."** While he grew up to hold some
different political opinions, Mill maintained a friendly
correspondence and contact with Sarah Austin until his marriage.

* A diary of the period records: "Dined with Bingham, at Gray's Inn; company, Mrs. Austin, a Mr. Gattie, and another gentleman; all Benthamites, and quite different from other people. The lady talked about political economy; told me she had taken a young Frenchman in hand: had tried to get Mill and Bentham into his head, but that he said they were too clear for him."10

** Sarah was teaching John German; Mutterlein is appropriate for a woman with an infant daughter.
Yet in 1854 he wrote:

Having known me from a boy, she made a great profession of a kind of maternal interest in me. But I never for an instant supposed that she really cared for me; nor perhaps for anybody beyond the surface (Draft, 148).

It happened that the Austins went to Germany for the sake of John Austin's health just at the time of Mill's "crisis" in the Autobiography. Here again, in a suppressed passage, he asserts that mothers do not give enough affection; in the Austin family, the moral force was John Austin, whom Mill compared favourably with his own father. Mill speaks of Austin's highmindedness,

which did not shew itself so much, if the quality existed as much in any of the other persons with whom at that time I associated (( not even in my father; although my father was as high-principled as Mr. Austin & had a stronger will; but Mr. Austin was both a prouder man, & more a man of feeling than my father))

Draft, 81). [Passage in double brackets deleted by Harriet.]

Unlike Austin, George Grote was regarded by Mill as a "pupil of my father." Grote (1794-1871) was the son of a banker and "though actively engaged in the business of banking, devoted a great portion of time to philosophical studies" (Auto, 51). Like John's father, Grote provided an example of the successful man of business who also pursued another career as a writer and reformer. He is remembered for his History of Greece, and served as a radical Member of Parliament.
Grote's wife Harriet (1792-1878) was at least his intellectual equal. Enormously energetic and rather unconventional, she was the chief hostess of the radical coterie, and was much valued by them all. As Mill noted:

The headquarters of me & my associates was not my father's house but Grote's, which I very much frequented. Every new proselyte & every one whom I hoped to make a proselyte, I took there to be indoctrinated (Draft, 79).

Both Harriet Grote and Sarah Austin made a career out of managing their husbands, and both seemed in every respect the intellectual equals of the gentlemen whom they entertained in their political salons. The opinions of these ladies on social and political matters were accorded full attention. Mrs. Grote contributed articles to the Westminster Review, and was very highly regarded as a member of the Radical group council.

Mrs. Grote's lists of regular visitors in the period 1822-1830 include John Austin, Mrs. Austin, Charles Austin, James Mill, John Mill, Charles Buller, and Eyton Tooke. Buller and Tooke were part of what Mill called "a younger generation of Cambridge graduates;" both were born in the same year as John. Tooke was working as a clerk in India House. Buller's father was in the revenue department of the Company, and his mother, one of the four beautiful and intelligent Kirkpatrick sisters, is described in the Dictionary of National Biography as a "graceful, airy, and ingeniously intelligent woman of
the gossamer kind . . . once very beautiful, still very witty."

Another sister married Edward Strachey, who was displaced by James Mill's promotion at India House in 1823. In his review of the Autobiography in 1874, Henry Reeve, nephew of Sarah Austin and visitor to Queen Square at various times, suggested that in removing all references to women from the account of his life (except his wife and step-daughter), Mill had misrepresented his formative influences:

Nor can we omit to note, although it has escaped Mr. John Mill's memory, that the accomplished wife of John Austin, no unworthy companion of those strong intelligences, had, from Mill's early years, been to him as a mother and a friend (he always addressed her by the affectionate term of 'mutter')—that she had continually lavished upon him that touching regard which plays the noblest part in education—and that he owed to her the culture of the most amiable part of his character . . . 12

In early life, the houses he most frequented were those of Mrs. Grote, Mrs. Charles Buller (the mother of his friends Charles and Arthur Buller), and Mrs. John Austin; and although all the society he met there was rather too congenial to his own opinions, yet the friendships he formed in them, the gaiety and culture which pervaded them, and, above all, the influence of these highly gifted women, might have been of signal influence to him, and we believe he was not insensible to it. But from the moment he devoted himself exclusively to what he calls 'the most valuable friendship of my life,' these ties were broken. Whatever may have been their regard for Mill, these ladies found it impossible to countenance or receive a woman who had placed herself in so equivocal a position.13

In contrast to the arid atmosphere of work and study which the Autobiography suggests, this passage indicates an active social life for young Mill. The quotations above apply to the 1830s as much as the 1820s. Yet there is little evidence that in the 1820s Mill visited homes other than those
suggested, for the simple reason that his friends were young men, and young men living not with their families, but in lodgings or apartments. This was the case with the first two young men with whom he formed a close friendship, George Graham (1801-1888) and J. A. Roebuck (1802-1879). When they met in 1824, Roebuck was twenty-two and John eighteen, a fact which might account for Roebuck's appraisal: John was utterly ignorant of what is called society; of the world, as it worked around him, he knew nothing; and above all, of woman, he was as a child. He had never played with boys; in his life he had never known any, and we, in fact, who were now his associates, were the first companions he had ever mixed with.

In the Mill household, the girls and boys were given the same education, and the same expectations seemed to be held of them.

His father worked ceaselessly to study and to reform the world, and John followed the example. In the Debating Union, he engaged Roebuck in debates over the merits of poetry, and attracted the attention of Frederick Maurice (1805-1872) and John Sterling (1806-1844). Eyton Tooke introduced Mill to Maurice and Sterling, who styled themselves "Coleridgians", as distinguished from the "Benthamites". R. M. Milnes reported home 26 February, 1829 that "Sterling spoke splendidly, and Mill made an essay on Wordsworth's poetry for two and three-quarter hours, which delighted me, but all the rest was meagre in the extreme." Maurice and Sterling were also founder members of the Cambridge group called the Apostles.
Young John Kemble was a member, and his sister reported him to be a 'fanatic' admirer of Bentham and Mill, who were 'near neighbours'. Miss Fanny Kemble made her theatrical debut 5 October, 1829 in the role of Juliet, and Mill along with all the young men of London, paid his respects; but he is not mentioned in her Recollections.¹⁶

Mill apparently met Lady Harriet Baring in October of 1830. Greville alleged in the Memoirs¹⁷ that John Mill was sentimentally attached to Lady Harriet, and for a long time devoted to her society - an allegation for which there is no other evidence. Greville himself, and Mill's friends, Charles Buller and Thomas Carlyle were powerfully attracted to this lady. She had one child, which died in infancy, and she devoted her life to maintaining intellectual and artistic salons, an avocation to which she brought intelligence and charm, as well as beauty.

Mill was also attracted by Jane Carlyle, whom he first met in October 1831; it was not long afterwards that Jane wrote of Charles Buller and Mill arriving for "a pleasant forenoon call of seven hours and a half."¹⁸ By this time Mill was interested in Harriet Taylor. Until 1838 he continued to visit the Carlyles once or twice a week, with or without Harriet, many times to dine or meet friends, and regularly on Sunday mornings for a walk with Carlyle. He dined out with the
Taylors, and with the Austins, and visited a number of homes. Thomas Carlyle wrote to his brother 27 February, 1835:

The party we had at the Taylors' was most brisk and the cleverest (best gifted) I have been at for years: Mill, Charles Buller (one of the gayest, lightly sparkling, lovable souls in the world), Repository Fox (who hotches and laughs at least), Fonblanque, the Examiner editor, were the main men. It does one good (Hayek, 82-83).

It was 1835 before Mill attracted general attention to his liaison with Harriet by escorting her to a party at the Bullers. Until 1840, when he sold the Review, Mill was socially 'in circulation', as a man would be who worked daily in the India House, and occupied himself with the manoeuvrings of radical politics, the journalistic exchanges with editors and contributors, breakfast meetings, dinner meetings, and management of his domestic household.* He continued to supervise the education of the youngest children, taking Henry and George with him on a Continental trip in 1836. His correspondence with his family during his leaves of absence for health always shows interest in the children, and his letters to his mother are always signed "affectionately." Mill even attended South Place Chapel at times in order to hear W. J. Fox's sermons. 19 Packe concluded that

* See Letters, No. 190 to Nichol in 1837 describing his work at India House and his "occupations, pecuniary, preceptorial and other connected with my several trusts as executor, guardian, and so forth" plus editing and writing for the Review.
gossip about Mill and Harriet was a principal cause of John's retirement from social life in the 1840's (Packe, 320). Ill health* and money problems, and the natural withdrawal of a bachelor whose friends are married and involved in mixed social and domestic circles, are equally strong explanations.

All the evidence seems to indicate that he was happy enough at home in Kensington. Caroline Fox's diary indicates many happy visits and visitors in the early 40's. Another visitor noted:

They were a remarkable family. When they were all together you saw, at the time I speak of, besides Mill himself, then thirty-eight years of age, his mother, a widow since 1836, still a comely lady for her years, and a kindly and most competent hostess; four daughters yet unmarried; and one younger son,—all these five looking up to John now as their head, and their link of honour with the rest of the world; but all of them, even to the youngest, remembering also their dead father, by whom to the very last days of his life, they had been carefully and even rigorously educated. Not one of the five but bore the stamp of their upbringing in a certain superiority both of character and intellect (Packe, 291).

Mill's sister Willie was married before 1840, and James was in India for the Company; Henry had died in 1840. In 1847 both Mary and Jane married, and Mrs. Mill had only John and her girls Clara and Harriet to look after. A letter from Mrs. Mill to Clara and George in Madeira in 1849 reveals how

* "From the winter of 1835-6 illness becomes a constant feature in the lives both of Mill and Mrs. Taylor, never again quite to disappear" (Hayek, 100).
well she took care of John when he suffered a temporary blindness (Hayek, 133). All the evidence from friends and visitors agrees that it was a happy household and a pleasant one. Pappe points out that James Mill attracted many of the best people of the time, and all of his friends became an integral part of John's education; his education in personal relations was "outstandingly good". Moreover, John

made friends with Richard Doane when he was fourteen, with A. J. Balard at fifteen, with Hoebuck, Graham, Ellis, and Tooke when he was still in his teens, and with Sterling, d'Eichthal, and Carlyle in his early twenties; in short, he did extraordinarily well in this respect. 20

It seems apparent from the foregoing account of Mill's childhood and early social life that he did not view the incidents in his 'mental development' in the same light that his friends and associates seem to have done. Because of his father's care to conceal family history and confine personal affection, John was genuinely ignorant of motives and circumstances affecting his own training. Because of his father's dominance in the family, and the scrupulous personal supervision of education and environment, John did not immediately perceive the nature of his mother's contributions to the formation of his character, and the characters and personalities of his sisters and brothers. We have noted Mill's propensity to generalise from his own experience, to claim his own example as typical, and Mill's experience (like his father's before him) seems to have involved a great
number of women. John's opinion about the abilities of women was drawn from his experience. One forms the impression that his sisters were intelligent and attractive. So indeed were the Mill boys; perhaps the phrase "sweet-tempered" best conveys their tractability and responsiveness, the legacy of Mrs. Mill's training and upbringing.

It is not difficult to account for Mill's apparently high opinion of women and their capacities, as he outlines them in the *Subjection of Women*, when we examine the list of women whom he knew personally. He seldom seems to have met any women who did not offer proofs of intelligence and good looks. Samuel Bentham's wife and daughters; Mrs. Buller, who had two children; Mrs. Austin, who had one daughter; Mrs. Grote, whose child died in infancy; Lady Harriet Baring, whose child also died in infancy; the childless Jane Carlyle; these ladies were all attractive, intelligent helpmeets for their husbands. Moreover, the energy, which John's mother had channelled into the bearing and raising of a large family, was available to these gifted women for the development and display of their intellectual abilities and practical command of world affairs. Clara Fox he did not meet until 1840; she was strongly attracted to Mill, and to Sterling.

John Sterling became perhaps Mill's closest male friend in a friendship which strengthened until the early death
of Sterling in 1844. Even Mill's alliance with Mrs. Harriet Taylor did not interrupt their friendship, although it resulted in the severance of most of Mill's other social ties. Packe describes the frame of mind of young John Mill in 1829-30, financially secured by £600 per year and looking about for his own intellectual and spiritual helpmeet. Mill is described as inexperienced with women.

When he encountered Harriet, those feelings which linked him to his other friends fell away before the over-riding impulse of a craving for feminine comradeship and love. Plain affection was scarcely known to him in relation to women. His love for his mother, mangled in their chilly home, became an incoherent pity so intense, that all feeling became unbearable, he had no feeling left for her at all. His sisters were his pupils: between him and them stood the insuperable code of family duty which enclose them all (Packe, 129).

While this is effective writing, it forces interpretations upon the unwary reader. Sufficient evidence is lacking for any such conclusive appraisal of Mill's emotional condition. His friend Roebuck reflected that a young man like Mill, unacquainted with women or the world, "would be a slave to the first woman who told him she liked him."21 But there were a number of re-adjustments to be made by John in the year 1830. In January, his close friend Eyton Tooke killed himself over a misunderstanding with a girl. John Sterling suddenly married, in November. The Mill family moved away from Queen Square and the Austins and Bentham, in January, 1831. Perhaps his expanded view of the world allowed Mill to see more clearly the role
of affection in domestic life. But, while he was very strongly attracted to Harriet and fell in love with her, Mill did not thereby suddenly become aware of the 'condition of women'. This will become evident as we examine the articles and books which Mill read and wrote in the years prior to his meeting Harriet.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II


2 Sraffa, IX, 43 (Mill to Ricardo, 23 August, 1821).

3 Sraffa, IX, 107 (Tooke to Ricardo, 13 October, 1821).

4 Sraffa, IX, 334 (Mill to Ricardo, 8 August, 1823).

5 See Stillinger's remarks in his preface to the *Early Draft*.


13 Ibid., 121-122.


21 Leader, p. 39.
CHAPTER III

THE PRINTED WORD

John Stuart Mill grew up convinced that there was imperishable power in the printed word. While still a boy, he attempted the writing of histories in imitation of his father, and learned how to make citation slips. He was taught to be precise in expression, and to polish and complete his ideas before sending them to a reader. By the time he began work at India House, preparing despatches to India, the habit of drafting his writings was ingrained in him. There were two important consequences: first, he formed the habit of writing everything at least twice, in order to improve it; second, he transferred into his writings that tone of conviction which a considered second writing produces. He considered that he learned much during his editing of Bentham's *The Rationale of Judicial Evidence*.

Mr. Bentham had begun this treatise three times, at considerable intervals, each time in a different manner, and each time without reference to the preceding: two
of the three times he had gone over nearly the whole subject. These three masses of manuscript it was my business to condense into a single treatise: adopting the one last written as the groundwork, and incorporating with it as much of the two others as it had not completely superseded (Auto, 80).

The controversial part of these editorial additions was written in a more assuming tone than became one so young and inexperienced as I was; but . . . I fell into the tone of my author (Auto, 51).

It was just this oracular tone which charmed the circle of younger apostles of liberty and emancipation during the last years of Mill's life.

He meditated upon the distinction between writing and speaking and concluded that he could learn from the excellent examples offered by his first instructors:

The influence which Bentham exercised was by his writings. Through them he has produced, and is producing, effects on the condition on mankind, wider and deeper, no doubt, than any which can be attributed to my father (Auto, 71).

James Mill was sought out for his conversation; he excelled in speaking. But speech was not the son's best weapon. A diary extract from 1830 describes him in conversation:

Young Mill . . . has written many excellent articles in reviews, pamphlets, &c, but though powerful with a pen in his hand, in conversation he had not the art of managing his ideas, and is consequently hesitating and slow, and has the appearance of being always working in his mind propositions or a syllogism.1

Bain contradicts this account, saying
Any one that knew him twelve years later would not recognize the smallest resemblance in this picture. He had no want of the art of managing his ideas; quite the opposite: he was neither hesitating nor slow" and there was nothing in the order of his statements that suggested syllogisms (JSM, 187).

In a letter 3 April, 1832 Mill wrote:

I learn every day by fresh instances that only when I have a pen in my hand can I make language and manner the true image of my thoughts . . . wishing to write nothing for its own sake, but always because I am led to write it by the course of my habitual pursuits, and in execution of the general purposes of my life (Letters, No. 49).

Caroline Fox recorded in her diary for 20 March, 1840:

I remarked on his writing being much more obscure and involved than his conversation even on deep subjects. "Yes," he said, "in talking you address yourself to the particular state of mind of the person with whom you are conversing, but in writing you speak as it were to an ideal object."2

In a letter to Barclay Fox 16 April, 1840, Mill said:

We scribblers are apt to put not only our best thoughts, but our best feelings into our writings, or at least of the things that are in us, they will not come out of us so well or so clearly through any other medium (Letters, No. 282).

Bentham's techniques reappeared when Mill was writing his Logic, and they set the pattern for the composition of all his books.

They were always written at least twice over; a first draft of the entire work was completed to the very end of the subject, then the whole thing was begun again, de novo; but incorporating, in the second writing, all sentences of the old draft, which appeared as suitable to my purpose as anything I could write in lieu of them (Auto, 155-56).
This method was preserved in Mill's correspondence, as Elliot points out in his preface to the 1910 edition of Mill's letters:

Painstaking and assiduous to a unique degree, he rarely wrote a letter even on unimportant matters without a liberal sprinkling of erasures and interlineations, which often made its deciphering a task of some difficulty. He therefore formed the habit of transcribing every letter he despatched to his correspondent, while he himself carefully preserved the rough draft.

Stillinger describes how the Early Draft manuscript was folded carefully down the middle: Mill wrote on the left side, and made emendations (as Harriet also did) on the right side.3

The writing of his thoughts was thus scrupulously controlled. The publishing of these same ideas necessarily came to receive careful consideration. Both from his father's circles and from his own experiences, Mill learned gradually the tactics of presenting ideas to the public. His father brought him up not to believe in religion, but "in giving me an opinion contrary to that of the world, my father thought it necessary to give it as one which could not prudently be avowed to the world" (Auto, 31). Mill comments also on the benefits of India House experience:

"I was thus put in a good position for finding out by practice the mode of putting a thought which gives it easiest admittance into minds not prepared for it by habit; while I became practically conversant with the
difficulties of moving bodies of men, the necessities of compromise, and art of sacrificing the non-essential to preserve the essential. I learnt how to obtain the best I could, when I could not obtain everything; instead of being indignant or dispirited because I could not have entirely my own way, to be pleased and encouraged when I could have the smallest part of it; and when even that could not be, to bear with complete equanimity the being overruled altogether (Auto, 60).

Moreover, John noted the way in which James Mill cultivated editors such as John Black and Albany Fonblanque, and political figures in Parliament such as Ricardo, Hume and Grote, making his opinions tell on the world through conversation and personal influence, "a power which was often acting the most efficiently where it was least seen and suspected" (Auto, 63). Like his father's teachings about Athenian oratory, these examples of the construction and presentation of ideas "left seed behind, which germinated in due season" (Auto, 15). Mill's habits of writing and his tactics of publication are explained in the following chapters.

The Subjection of Women was written in 1861 but was published only in 1869. The Autobiography, first drafted in 1853-4, was published after Mill's death in 1873. In one way or another, Mill managed to write and re-write virtually everything which he published. The Subjection of Women was his last book, and he regarded it as a book of morals; the notions which he expressed about the influence of family environment can be traced from almost all of his other writings. It is necessary to study the canon of his writings to appreciate the integrity of Mill's
opinions, and the complex manner in which all his special areas of interest were related. Readers who are familiar only with the essay On Liberty may be surprised to what extent Mill's concept of the individual informed all of his other writings. Mill never regarded himself as original or unique in any way, but chose to see himself as just one of his father's pupils; or, as just one of a school of political economists; or, as just one of a school of moral philosophers. His great ability lay, not in his understanding of any one field, but in the interrelating of a number of specialist fields in such a way as to point to a new synthesis, a broader view. But from his earliest experience he was able to distinguish between the holding of a view and publication of this view.

It is significant that Mill began his career as an active propagandist for reform and a champion of unpopular causes, among men much older than himself, men who may have served as his model. Such an education by example helps to explain the active program of reform and the leadership for reform which Mill provided in later years. He frequently presented views which the public regarded as extreme, but which he offered as mild and moderate statements of the case—how moderate, can be judged from an examination of the works of some of the other reformers in print with whom he was connected. Mill remarks in the Autobiography that it was much safer to hold unpopular opinions in his day than it had been during the
times in which his father wrote. What would now be called 'the liberty of the press' did not exist at the beginning of the nineteenth century,* and the winning of publishing freedom was a major pre-occupation for almost all the Mill-Bentham circle. Bentham's books on jury-packing and parliamentary reform were as dangerous to distribute as Paine's writings, except that the government was unwilling to risk the prosecution of a distinguished legal reformer. James Mill advised printing, but not selling these works, and in fact the Introduction to the Rationale of Judicial Evidence, printed by Thomas Wooler in 1817, was not sold until 1821. From this and from several other works of the Bentham circle, young Mill could learn important lessons in the tactics of publication.

The writings of Jeremy Bentham had an important and permanent influence upon the thinking of John Stuart Mill. The impact of Bentham's examples in composition has been noticed; John also laid very great emphasis on the ideas of Bentham, saying that the reading of his book on legislation was "an epoch in my life; one of the turning points in my mental

* The struggle for liberty of the press was still active in the middle of the century; see On Liberty, Chapter II; also George Jacob Holyoake, Sixty Year's of an Agitator's Life 2 vols. (London, 1906), I: 274-5 for an account of the Stamp Acts and the efforts to repeal them.
The direct knowledge . . . which I obtained from this book . . . was imprinted upon me much more thoroughly than it could have been by mere reading (Auto, 81).

It is possible to assert that Mill found in the writings of Bentham both the vocabulary and the notions which he later employed in his 'power trilogy'. The following citations from Bentham's Plan for Parliamentary Reform and his Theory of Legislation should be compared to Mill's arguments in On Liberty, Representative Government, and the Subjection of Women.

Individual interests are the only true interest. Take care of the individuals; never molest them, never suffer any one to molest them, and you will have done enough for the public.5

To live under the perpetual authority of a man you hate, is of itself a state of slavery; but to be compelled to submit to his embraces, is a misfortune too great even for slavery itself.6

Inequality is the natural condition of mankind. Subjection is the natural state of man. It is the state into which he is born . . . Absolute equality is absolutely impossible. Absolute liberty is directly repugnant to the existence of every kind of government.

All human creatures are born and remain, says the declaration of rights, equal in rights. The child of two years old has as much right to govern the father, then, as the father has to govern the child.

Without the subjection of either the wife to her husband, or the husband to the wife no domestic society could subsist. Without the subjection of the children to the parent, no domestic society, as between parent and child, could subsist; all children under a certain age must soon perish, and the species become extinct. But the persons thus placed in subjection by non-age are at least half the species, and those placed in a similar state by marriage not less than a third of the remaining
Bentham argued for universal suffrage and the secret ballot, and could find no reason to exclude women; he cited custom, against which he argued, "from custom comes prejudice." He remarked that women participated in the election of directors for the East India company, and could not see why they would not equally well elect members to Parliament. In discussing the Distribution of Property, he argued for no distinction between the sexes; what is said of one extends to the other: "but the stronger have had all the preferences. Why? Because the stronger have made the laws."  

The foregoing passages contain the seminal ideas and the vocabulary of Mill's later works: individual interests, inequality, oppression by prejudice, slavery, subjection, distinctions between the sexes, suffrage, "half the species"; these ideas tend to support Mill's statement in the opening paragraph of his Subjection of Women that the book explained "the grounds of an opinion which I have held from the very earliest period."

Wooler, who printed a number of Bentham's works, also was the editor of the Black Dwarf, a radical periodical which the government considered seditious. The freethinker Richard Carlile distributed this publication and various other "offen-
sive" works, including the works of Paine, for which he was arrested by the government and imprisoned. Carlile wrote 14 volumes of *The Republican* while in jail, and with the assistance of Bentham's group had his periodical published, in spite of government harassment. Francis Place, who also had a history of pamphlet-printing, was deeply impressed by Godwin's study *Of Population* (1820), and wrote *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principles of Population* (1822), from which he extracted a pamphlet *To Married Working People*, containing specific suggestions regarding the practice of birth control.9

James Mill and the Bentham circle concerned themselves, as all journalists did, with infringements of the liberty of the press. Thus, in 1823 when John Black took over management of the *Morning Chronicle*, he strongly defended Carlile. Young John Mill sent in a series of five letters "under the signature of Wickliffe, going over the whole length and breadth of the question of free publication of all opinions on religion" (*Auto*, 62). Three were published, two rejected as overly outspoken: an important lesson on the value of appropriate expression in the public press. John continued to have material published, commenting on defects of law or misdoings of the magistracy. Towards the end of that year he was arrested for distributing Place's little pamphlet on birth control, and persisted in defending his point of view to the
magistrate. He seems to have served a day or two of his fourteen-day sentence, emerging unrepentant, but more cautious about the tactics of free utterance. He contributed a series of letters to Wooler's *Black Dwarf* at the end of 1823 on "checking population".10

One of John Mill's earliest published letters was addressed to Richard Carlile in prison, and printed in the *Republican* of 3 January, 1823. It is not known whether Mill read Carlile's *Republican* for 1825 and 1826, devoted to the discussion of love and birth control. Carlile believed in the equality of the sexes, and in monogamic free love, mating in terms of honest contract and mutual consideration, without permit from church or state. He remarked upon the disproportionate influence which women had in the raising of children, and insisted that women should have as much knowledge of every kind as men. Carlile's thoughts on such subjects were collected into his 1838 publication *Every Woman's Book: or, What is Love?* of which his biographer says, "The practical birth control details of this book are worthless today, but the essential philosophical approach is sound."

Every healthy woman, after the age of puberty, feels the passion of love. It is a part of her health, and as natural a consequence as hunger or thirst.11

The real old bachelors, as well as the old maids, belong to a sort of sub-animal class; for to be without the passion of love, or to prevent it, argues a sad mental defect.12
Warning young women not to trust the teachings of the Church in these matters, Carlile observed "... that cross is but the mathematical symbol of that Phallus." Among his contemporaries, Carlile claimed James Mill as an ally:

The best and wisest of men labour with zeal to promulgate secretly or covertly a knowledge of this plan. Women are also secretly engaged in it, after having got over the prejudices of old customs, by giving it a full consideration. It is alluded to in Mill's "Elements of Political Economy," and still more plainly in the article "Colonies" in the supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, from the pen of the same gentleman.

But it may be that Carlile only noticed this after James Mill's writings had been attacked by other writers.

James Mill, always interested in freedom of speech and thought, wrote an article for the Britannica on Liberty of the Press in 1821. In a letter 20 November, 1820 he requested permission to print 1,000 copies of his Government article, not for sale, but to be given away. Place distributed these from the large library at the rear of the premises. This article was included in the 1824 supplement to the Britannica. Particular comment by critics was directed to a paragraph in Section VIII, which discussed the mechanics of the franchise:

One thing is pretty clear, that all those individuals whose interests are indisputably included in those of other individuals, may be struck off without inconvenience. In this light may be viewed all children, up to a certain age, whose interests are involved in those of their parents. In this light also, women may be regarded,
the interest of almost all of whom is involved either in that of their fathers or in that of their husbands.\textsuperscript{15}

One public response to this paragraph was a book by William Thompson ("Britain's Pioneer Socialist"): \textit{Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to restrain them in Political and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery}; in reply to a paragraph of Mr. Mill's celebrated article on Government (London, 1825). The \textit{Autobiography} recounts the debating sessions with 'a society of Owenites' upon such topics as population and the general merits of Robert Owen's system.

We who represented political economy, had the same objects in view as they had, and took pains to show it; and the principal champion on their side was a very estimable man, with whom I was well acquainted, Mr. William Thompson, of Cork, author on a book on the Distribution of Wealth, and of an "Appeal" in behalf of women against the passage relating to them in my father's Essay on Government. Ellis, Roebuck, and I took an active part in the debate (\textit{Auto}, 87).

Thompson (1775-1833) was an Irish merchant who inherited an estate upon which he constructed a model farm, and around which he conducted social experiments on the village.\textsuperscript{16} He corresponded with Bentham on educational matters in 1819, and came to England in 1822. During the period from 10 October 1822 to 22 February, 1823, he stayed with Bentham, meeting Hume, Black, Torrens, Bowring, James Mill, John Austin, and
Anna Wheeler.*

It is difficult to tell whether Anna's behaviour or her opinions more scandalised the critics of the day. Her acknowledged great beauty does not seem to have prevented intellectual engagement with the social thinkers whom she met. Thompson's Appeal was dedicated to Anna Wheeler, with her portrait as frontispiece.

In his dedication Thompson declares that part of his book was the exclusive product of "her mind and pen;" the remainder was their "joint property." he being her "scribe and interpreter" who had endeavoured to express feelings which "emanated" from her mind. Though he himself had long reflected on them, she had actually suffered from "the inequalities of sexual laws;" he was therefore indebted to her for "those bolder and more comprehensive views, which perhaps can only be elicited by the concentration of the mind on one darling though terrific theme." He declared that he had long hesitated to publish their common ideas in the hope that she would herself take up the cause of her sex, and give to the world what she had so often stated in her conversation "and under feigned names in such of the periodical publications of the day as would tolerate such a theme." 17

* There is no evidence that John Mill met Anna Wheeler; at that time he was only sixteen years old. Mrs. Wheeler was an attractive and intellectual woman, described in the Disraeli correspondence as "something between Jeremy Bentham and Meg Merrilies." The youngest daughter of the protestant Irish Archbishop Doyle, she was born in 1785. Her early and unhappy marriage to an immature alcoholic produced six children, of whom two lived. In 1812 she ran away from her husband, taking the children. By 1816 she was in Caen, meeting Fourier and the group later known as the Saint Simonians. Anna had studied social and political philosophy as a girl, and she was familiar with the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Robert Owen, and others. 18
This extravagant tribute is curiously similar to the claims which Mill made in his *Autobiography* about the assistance of Harriet Taylor.

The casual reader of Thompson's *Appeal* might gather from its title that the book and the theme were provoked by James Mill's Essay on Government. In fact, the *Appeal* is more correctly to be regarded as an extension of the book which Thompson wrote in 1822 and published in 1824, *An Inquiry into the Principles of The Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness*. It is a utilitarian text on political economy, and a great deal more than that. Thompson anticipates almost everything which was said in the century on the subject of rights for women. He follows the 'greatest happiness' principle, and adheres to the theory that improvement must come only from the culture of the mind. The thesis he pursues is one in which the whole world co-operates, under "a system of voluntary equality" which must include women, one-half of the human race.19 "But if every man should provide all his own wants, why should not every woman provide also hers?"

The only and the simple remedy for the evils arising from these almost universal institutions of the domestic slavery of one-half the human race, is utterly to eradicate them. Give men and women equal civil and political rights. Apply the principle of security impartially, to all adult rational beings; and let
property on the death of parents be equally divided between all the children, male and female. Then would be seen a double emulation of knowledge, and consequently of virtue; an emulation between the two sexes at school and in after life, and an emulation on the part of women, in adding their influence to the rewards of public opinion, in the general encouragement of intellectual qualities, instead of their general depression; and sexual pleasure to both parties, instead of being diminished, would be increased a hundred-fold, inasmuch as they would be stripped of all their grossness, and associated with intellectual and expansive sympathetic pleasures (p. 216).

For women to be more respected, they must be more useful.

If women are allowed to work and take their place as equals, they will have pecuniary equality; at this point, the brutalities of ill-assorted marriages would disappear,

because every woman and every man . . . are equal, as to wealth; joint possessors of all wealth and all social advantages, private individual possessors of nothing. Personal qualities alone, therefore, would decide the attachments of love; good qualities of body and mind. From the progress of education and just views of happiness, mental qualities would be continually gaining on the mere animal (p. 303). 

Now, the one sex, being degraded into a mere puppet, deprived of almost all civil, and of all political rights, for the amusement of the other, operates as an eternal, countervailing force, to all expansion of mind and enlarged benevolence; love is the seal of mental imbecility and indolence; and nature, as the poets would say, stands avenged on the despotism of man, by linking him with the abject creature of uncalculating sensuality which he has made. But, under the proposed arrangements, woman being in every respect as equal participator with man in all the blessings of education, as well as in all the other benefits which the combined exertions of the community can command, the two sexes would operate, in a new and mutually beneficial way, on each other as friends and equals (p. 304).

Prostitution could not exist in such communities. Thompson
goes on to discuss the social problems of the time; birth control by the social pressures of late marriages; sexual enjoyment denied to those in poverty; the ill-treatment of women; sex as a pleasure; sex as a commodity. His treatment appears surprisingly modern.

Of course, much of what Thompson wrote was also the developing philosophy of the French socialists. He may have been reporting a literal truth when he asserted that he had heard Anna Wheeler speak these ideas; she spent a number of years with the French socialists. It appears extremely likely that Mill read Thompson's books, the more so since he gives the titles. Mill also engaged Thompson as a chief opponent in the meetings of the London Debating Society: one subject of debates against the Owenites was "Is it desirable in the formation of a social community to place the females in a state of perfect equality as to rights and powers?" Thompson's books must certainly have been in Bentham's library, and also in the possession of Place. It may be that the delicate subject of birth control made any clearer references impossible by the time the Autobiography was drafted. In any case Mill's treatment of women in his Political Economy was conservative when placed beside Thompson's book, which was re-published in 1850, after the second edition of Mill's work. Mill understood how much the public would willingly read, even
though they might not accept it, and repressed from his books material which would have prevented widespread sale of his works. While he held views about the economic, legal, and moral position of women very similar to Thompson's, Mill carefully avoided references to the physical aspect of sex.

John's espousal of Malthusian doctrines (as population questions came to be called) was regarded as the following of his father's lead.

Mill, the elder (James), was full of what we should call the fanaticism of Malthusianism; to such a degree that he risked his own fairly-earned reputation with decent people and involved in the like discreditable danger the youth of his son, by running a Malay muck against what he called the 'superstitions of the nursery' with regard to sexual relations, and giving the impulse to a sort of shameless propaganda of prescriptions for artificially checking population. We should not even have alluded to this grave offense against decency on the part of the elder and the younger Mill, had it not been forced upon our notice by recent events.\(^{21}\)

The impetus of John's excursions into family planning was provided by Francis Place, not James Mill. But the public, from the understanding of his writings, had already convicted James Mill of Malthusian propensities. Richard Carlile noted them, as we have seen. So did Macaulay, in his attack on the Essay on Government which was published in the Edinburgh Review for March 1829.

Mill in the Autobiography uses the occasion of the Macaulay review to show how his own mind was developing
separately from his father's, and asserts that the confrontation between the two writers showed him that the truth was shared between them. Macaulay asked, as Bentham had, why women were not to have the vote? Quoting the offending paragraph which lumped the interests of women with their husband (page 80 above), Macaulay continued:

If we were to content ourselves with saying, in answer to all arguments in Mr. Mill's essay, that the interest of a king is involved in that of the community, we should be accused, and justly, of talking nonsense. Yet such an assertion would not, as far as we can perceive, be more unreasonable than that which Mr. Mill has here ventured to make. Without adducing one fact, without taking the trouble to perplex the question by one sophism, he placidly dogmatizes away the interest of one half the human race. If there be a word of truth in history, women have always been, and still are, over the greater part of the globe, humble companions, playthings, captives, menials, beasts of burden. Except in a few happy and highly civilized communities, they are strictly in a state of personal slavery. Even in those countries where they are best treated, the laws are generally unfavourable to them, with respect to almost all the points in which they are most deeply interested.22

Mill himself described the offending paragraph in his father's Essay on Government as "the worst in point of tendency he ever wrote",23 and continued:

From this doctrine, I, and all those who formed my chosen associates, most positively dissented. It is due to my father to say that he denied having intended to affirm that women should be excluded, any more than men under the age of forty, concerning whom he maintained, in the very next paragraph, an exactly similar thesis. . . . But I thought then, as I have always thought since, that opinion . . . is as great an error . . . that the interest of women is included in that of men exactly as much and no more, as the interest of subjects is included in that of kings; and that every
reason which exists for giving the suffrage to anybody, demands that it should not be withheld from women. This was also the general opinion of the younger proselytes; and it is pleasant to be able to say that Mr. Bentham, on this important point, was wholly on our side (Auto, 73).

Mill continued in this passage to outline his father's opinions:

In ethics . . . he looked forward, for example, to a considerable increase of freedom in the relations between the sexes, though without pretending to define exactly what would be, or ought to be, the precise conditions of that freedom. This opinion was connected in him with no sensuality either of a theoretical or of a practical kind. He anticipated, on the contrary, as one of the beneficial effects of increased freedom, that the imagination would no longer dwell upon the physical relation and its adjuncts, and swell this into one of the principal objects of life; a perversion of the imagination and feelings, which he regarded as one of the deepest seated and most pervading evils in the human mind. In psychology, his fundamental doctrine was the formation of all human character by circumstances, through the universal Principle of Association, and the consequent unlimited possibility of improving the moral and intellectual condition of mankind by education. Of all his doctrines none was more important than this, or needs more to be insisted on (Auto, 75).

Not only did Mill read his father's *Analysis of the Human Mind* (1829) in manuscript, but he and his associates studied the work closely in their morning seminars. The passages cited above described the distinctions which Mill seems to have made throughout his life between the physical and the intellectual aspects of marriage. Bain remarks concerning the *Analysis* that James Mill did not make the error of
slightly the private affections, in aiming at a lofty regard to the public weal. The Section of the Family affections is replete with the ideal of perfect domestic happiness: and if the author did not act up to it, as he did to his ideal of public virtue, the explanation is to be sought in human weakness and inconsistency (JM, 415). John's comments tend to support the claim that he held these views prior to his friendship with Harriet Taylor. However, Mill's dissent from his father's paragraph on the interests of women is indirectly evident much earlier than 1829.

The Westminster Review was founded in 1824 by Bentham and his circle to be the voice of the radical utilitarian party. In preparation for the opening feature article by his father, John Mill read through all issues of the Edinburgh Review, the Whig periodical. James then composed his devastating analysis of the Edinburgh for the January 1824 Westminster, and John wrote the follow-up article for the April issue. In the course of his reading, John probably examined an early article by Sidney Smith on "Female Education" (this article was cited in a long note by Harriet Mill in her 1851 essay on Enfranchisement). John Mill seems to have taken Smith's position, attacking the morality which makes it desirable for women to be helpless, ignorant, and incapable of forming an opinion. But Mill's tone is one of strong indignation, where Smith's is urbanely philosophical.

Essentially, Smith assumes that training and
environment make all the difference between the performance of the sexes, citing boys and girls at play—the same illustration used in the 1851 essay. He makes five points:

When learning ceases to be uncommon among women, learned women will cease to be affected . . . A great part of the objections made to the education of women are rather objections made to human nature, than to the female sex . . . Then women have, of course, all ignorant men for enemies to their instruction who being bound (as they think), in point of sex, to know more, are not well pleased, in point of fact, to know less . . . Uneducated men may escape intellectual degradation; uneducated women cannot . . . If the education of women were improved, the education of men would be improved also.24

These are similar to the arguments which Mill used in his 1867 Parliamentary addresses. But in 1824, he wrote:

To be entirely dependant upon her husband for every pleasure, and for exemptions from every pain; to feel secure only when under his protection; to be incapable of forming any opinion, or of taking any resolution without his advice and aid; this is amiable, this is delicate, this is feminine . . . Even they who profess admiration for instructed women, not unfrequently select their own wives from among the ignorant and helpless.25

While Mill continued to feel strongly about the condition of women, he learned to express himself more smoothly. During the next few years he wrote a great deal: articles for the Westminster Review, notes for Bentham's Rationale, articles for a Parliamentary Review, even his Debating Society speeches.
It is not established that John Mill wrote the article "On Religious Prosecutions,"* which uses the Carlile prosecutions to demonstrate how futile it is to prosecute non-conformist ideas or opinions and how essential it is to have freedom of discussion. Certainly he must have studied it, and he did write the follow-up article "On Liberty of the Press." He described the literal interpretation of the law, showing it to cause an oppressive and harmful situation, and then dilated upon abuses of power and the bad effects upon the public morals:

But if men will abuse all other powers, when unrestrained, so they will that of controlling the press: . . . And perfect freedom of discussion is, as we have already proved, the only alternative.\textsuperscript{26}

Both the techniques and the sentiments are employed in the Subjection of Women. In his essay "On Emancipation of Catholics" in the 1826 Parliamentary History and Review,\textsuperscript{27} Mill exhibits developing skill in rhetorical exposure of public fallacies: the public is

willing to degrade five or six millions of their country-men to the condition of an inferior caste . . . What they have in their minds is an indistinct feeling that

* Bain's identification is followed by Bernard Wishy in Prefaces to Liberty (Boston, 1959). But Mill's own bibliography does not list it, nor does he mention it anywhere else. The article might more easily have been written by W. J. Fox, who was a Unitarian minister as well as a reformer-journalist, and who wrote for the Westminster Review.
the Catholics are dangerous persons: and this being assumed, it never occurs to them to consider, whether the Catholics not emancipated are not fully as dangerous as the Catholics emancipated would be.\(^28\)

In the same essay Mill explores the idea that the Irish peasant is in a worse legal position even than a Negro slave. The techniques of comparison and the arguments are very similar to those which he used in *Subjection*.

\[\ldots\] whatever the end of government in Ireland may be, it at any rate is not the protection of the weak against the strong: that government and law exist in that country solely for the benefit of the strong: that, while the Negro slave is at least protected against the encroachments of all masters except his own, the Irish peasant is at the mercy, not only of a whole series of landlords, from the proprietor of the soil down to the lowest middleman, but moreover of the tithe-owner and the tithe-farmer or proctor, to say nothing of the vestries or grand juries: that against undue demands on the part of all these persons he has no remedy: that there is no law, no administration of justice for him; the superior courts being at all times inaccessible to him, and those of the country magistrates who do not take bribes, being for the most part leagued together to deny him redress; which is in general the less difficult, as the defects of the law are such, that he who would oppress under colour of the law must be exceedingly unskilful if he cannot accomplish his object without incurring the penalties of the law.\(^29\)

The argument which Mill presents here can be regarded as the rehearsal for passages such as the following from *Subjection*, where he outlines the position of a housewife who lives under the very eye, and almost, it may be said, in the hands, of one of the masters—in closer intimacy with
him than with any of her fellow subjects; with no means of combining against him, no power of even locally overmastering him, and, on the other hand, with the strongest motives for seeking his favour and avoiding to give him offence. In struggles for political emancipation, everybody knows how often its champions are bought off by bribes, or daunted by terrors. In the case of women, each individual of the subject-class is in a chronic state of bribery and intimidation combined (Subj, 439).

Mill argued in Subjection that women were worse off than slaves, just as he did respecting the position of the Irish peasant. The abuses of power in the Catholic question are given a legalistic examination in a manner similar to Chapter II of Subjection. Characteristically, Mill never abandoned his vigorous attack upon abuses in Ireland; the theme is only one more example of the consistency with which he battled throughout his career for causes which were espoused in his earliest years.

In the Autobiography Mill analyses the reasons for the success of the Westminster Review: the periodical appeared during an era of political upheaval and was characterised by a spirit of opposition to abuses. The air of strong conviction, its boldness and the talent of the writers combined to give the impression of a whole school in philosophy and politics. It was tactically perfect. Yet without proper editorial direction, such an organ cannot continue to be effective. Both Mill and his father ceased to write for the Westminster in 1828, and for two years he read much and wrote little.
Some time in 1829 Mill first encountered French socialist principles through the writings of August Comte, and he continued to read Saint Simonian publications, comparing their ideas favourably with those of Robert Owen:

It was partly by their writings that my eyes were opened to the very limited and temporary value of the old political economy . . . I honoured them most of all for what they have been most cried down for - the boldness and freedom from prejudice with which they treated the subject of family . . . In proclaiming the perfect equality of men and women, and an entirely new order of things in regard to their relations with one another, the St. Simonians, in common with Owen and Fourier, have entitled themselves to the grateful remembrance of future generations (Auto, 117-118).

The 'subject of family' was a major one, in Mill's system of re-working the complex and many-sided business of social philosophy. Mill suggests that the debate between Macaulay and his father opened his mind to the complex nature of political philosophy, and he began relating French literature to English, the eighteenth century to the nineteenth. From these speculations he evolved the idea of political matters in a state of flux, which was expressed in his "Spirit of the Age" articles in the Examiner in 1831.

The Spirit articles are significant for two reasons. They are the first independent work which Mill produced, offering some of his "new opinions," at a time before he could have been influenced by Harriet Taylor. Second, they spell out the basic philosophy by which Mill carried out his program of writings after his marriage. This is important,
because it shows that Harriet did not help Mill to form his plan for human betterment; rather, she assisted Mill by discussing it with him, and helped him to separate the component parts.

Probably the reason why Mill diminished the importance of these articles was that he repeated his ideas in more effective and more palatable form in later work. The 1836 essay on "Civilization" covered much of the same ground. But the roots of a great many of Mill's later notions are touched upon in the Spirit essays. Mill points out the need for textbooks to guide society, studies the sources of social and moral power, and admires the Scottish Church and English Dissenters, as people trained to self-government. He notes that people are unequal, after education. And he postulates a theory of elite leadership which accorded very well with Carlyle's 'Hero' principle:

if the multitude of one age are nearer to the truth than the multitude of another, it is only in so far as they are guided and influenced by the authority of the wisest among them (p. 16).

the age of physical sciences is continually growing, but never changing . . . for them the age of transition is past . . . how different . . . from this, are the sciences which are conversant with the moral nature and social condition of man (p. 20).

It is therefore, one of the necessary conditions of humanity, that the majority must either have wrong opinions, or no fixed opinions, or must place the degree
of reliance warranted by reason, in the authority of those who have made moral and social philosophy their peculiar study (p. 31).

Learn, and think for yourself, is reasonable advice for the day... the first men of the age will one day join hands and be agreed: and then there is no power in itself, on earth or in hell, capable of withstanding them.

But ere this can happen there must be a change in the whole framework of society, as at present constituted. Worldly power must pass from the hands of the stationary part of mankind into those of the progressive part. There must be a moral and social revolution, which shall, indeed, take away no men's lives or property, but which shall leave to no man one fraction of unearned distinction or unearned importance (p. 33).

Society may be said to be in its natural state, when worldly power, and moral influence, are habitually and undisputedly exercised by the fittest persons whom the existing state of society affords... persons better qualified than any others whom the civilization of the age and country affords, to think and judge, rightly and usefully (p. 35-36).

The Subjection of Women speculates upon the moral and social revolution which changes "the whole framework of society."; and it is written by one of "those who have made moral and social philosophy their peculiar study."

Packe suggests that these articles included two doctrines 'foreign' to Mill: that the natural condition of mankind is to be ruled by the proper people (aristocracy of worth) and to obey them; and that achieving this natural condition will require a revolution. The articles were stimulated in part by Mill's visit to the continent after the French revolution of 1830. While it is probably true that Mill was uniquely qualified among English writers of
the time to interpret French affairs, he had no monopoly of the subject. Southey adopted the *Quarterly Review* tone of good-humoured tolerance of lesser beings, when he reported that

the rights of women are fully acknowledged by the Saint Simonites . . . their definite enfranchisement, their complete emancipation . . . so that the social individual, which has hitherto been the man alone, henceforth shall be the man and wife . . . what the religion of Saint Simon puts an end to is that shameful traffic, that legal prostitution, which so often, under the name of marriage, consecrates the monstrous union of devotedness with selfishness, of intelligence with ignorance, of youth with decrepitude.30

In *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, Mueller concludes that

with the exception of the influence Mill felt under the tutelage of his father and Jeremy Bentham, Mill's study of French political movements and French thought had most to do with determining the nature of his final attitude toward government and individual liberty expressed in such culminating works as *On Liberty*, *Considerations on Representative Government*, and his last essays on socialism.31

If this is so, it is because Mill chose to stress to his English readers those features of social development which were not apparent from English experience. That Mill chose to write on certain subjects is not a reliable index of his opinion: his speeches in the House of Commons are examples of his insistence upon attending to areas of general neglect. Moreover, Mill formed the habit of returning again and again to selected themes, touching on them in an article, returning
to them in a chapter of a book, repeating them in a later work.*

In the Subjection of Women, Mill presents his readers with an examination of principles and ideas which are unpopular if not unacceptable, which he claims to be the product of his reflections over the greater part of his life. The ideas, while not original, are given his own original treatment. He knows that the ideas are unpopular, and he suggests that they may continue to be unpopular, giving good reasons. Mill's claim, that the ideas were examined during most of his life, is borne out by extracts from his writings, as we have seen. In the next two chapters, a number of these themes will be illustrated from Mill's books and articles. They tend to refute Packe's label of 'foreign'; even his Spirit of the Age articles forecast in some ways Mill's interests until his death. But from 1831 on, Mill was able to discuss his plans with the woman who shared his life for some twenty-seven years, Harriet Taylor.

* Mill's letters often contain a treatment of some topic which later emerges in an article or a book, with the same sentiments and frequently in the same words. See especially Letters and the extracts from Caroline Fox's diary.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III


3. Early Draft, pp. 4-5.

4. Bain explores this subject at some length—see James Mill, p. 34, and pp. 427–447. See also the article on Thomas Muir in the Dictionary of National Biography.


6. Ibid., p. 224.


8. Ogden, p. 178.


12. Ibid., p. 67.

13. Ibid., p. 77.


96
17 Pankhurst, p. 76.


20 Pankhurst, pp. 97-98.


23 Early Draft, p. 98, deleted in the Autobiography.


27 An extract from this essay is reprinted in Prefaces To Liberty, ed. Bernard Wishy (Boston, 1959), pp. 149-159.

28 Wishy, p. 152.

29 Ibid., p. 157.


31 Iris Wessel Mueller, John Stuart Mill and French Thought (Urbana, 1956), vi.
Harriet Taylor was twenty-three years old when she met John Stuart Mill. Her marriage was successful enough, but she seems to have wanted a greater intellectual stimulation than her husband offered her. W. J. Fox, her Unitarian minister, decided that Mill would provide it. His reasons are not known, but one result was to obtain Mill as a contributor to Fox's *Monthly Repository*: another was the friendship, spiritual union, and finally, marriage between John and Harriet. They met in 1830. By 1835 their friendship had become a social scandal; but they persisted, withdrawing from society. John Taylor died in 1849; his widow married Mill in 1851. She died in 1858, and Mill lived on with her daughter, Helen Taylor, until 1873.

Even before Mill died, his friends had come to regard his devotion to his wife as an enormous aberration in
judgment. His behaviour was thought to be extraordinary and inexplicable. His response to comment was to withdraw recognition of those friends. The passages in his Autobiography only made matters worse. Mrs. Taylor was described in language which seemed very extravagant, and was praised for having supplied most of the ideas published by Mill. But all contemporary evidence denied her the attributes which Mill gave her. Their personal correspondence was not available for study until 1951, when Hayek published his careful examination of all the letters that he could discover. His book is a history of the romance and marriage, just as the Autobiography is a history of the mind, of Mill. Carefully avoiding any judgments or attitudes in his book, Hayek makes only two remarks:

I may perhaps here express the conclusions I have formed on the significance of Harriet Taylor in Mill's life. They are, that her influence on his thought and outlook, whatever her capacities may have been, were quite as great as Mill asserts, but that they acted in a way somewhat different from what is commonly believed. Far from it having been the sentimental it was the rationalist element in Mill's thought which was mainly strengthened by her influence (Hayek, 17).

... how far Mrs. Mill's ideas continued to guide her husband's work after her death. I believe that a careful study would show that in some degree he withdrew a little from the more advanced positions which he had taken under her influence and returned to views closer to those he had held in his youth (Hayek, 266).

It is not difficult to believe that the friendship,
and indeed the marriage, were Platonic and celibate. Packe concludes (p. 319) that "inclination was sapped by intellectual prejudices." Borchard explains that Harriet was repelled by the sex act, and treats John as a spineless man who was starved for affection. Adhering to Mill's own testimony Packe says:

except for the Logic, the principles underlying the more important works of John Stuart Mill were defined, although not actually composed, by Harriet Taylor. And whatever in them cannot be ascribed to his lucid reasoning must be attributed to the sheer force of her personality (Packe, 317).

In reaction, more recent articles have reduced such alleged mental influence, claiming instead that Harriet supplied the companionship required for Mill's emotional stability.¹

Packe explores the personality of Harriet Taylor in depth and detail, making a strong case for his views. Borchard goes into greater detail concerning the education and training of Harriet. The third of seven children and the first girl among several boys, she was somewhat catered to. The family received a good education: Harriet, besides possessing the usual accomplishments, excelled in Italian, and took an interest in religious controversy.

The significance of her family religion is demonstrated by Mineka, in his study of the e Monthly Repository.² Almost all of the Utilitarian causes were Unitarian causes. Many
of the writers for the Westminster Review were Unitarians. Both Priestley and Bentham believed that man and society could be improved to perfection. Unitarians laboured for the passage of the Toleration Act and the Reform Bill: no other nonconformist sect was so consistent a supporter of political freedom.*

The Monthly Repository, which for years had been a Unitarian review, had a tradition of articles upon education and liberty. Harriet Martineau contributed an article in 1823 entitled "On Female Education" which may have supplied Harriet Taylor's main beliefs. Miss Martineau touched on the usual arguments, and included allusions to sensual gratification. Before Christianity women

were either sunk almost to the level of the brutes in mental darkness, buried in their own homes, the slaves instead of the companions of their husbands, only to be preserved from vice by being excluded from the world, or, not being able to endure these restraints, employing their restless powers and turbulent passions in the pursuit of vicious pleasures and sensual gratifications.

It must be allowed by all, that one of woman's first duties is to qualify herself for being a companion to her husband . . .

If we consider woman as the guardian and instructress of infancy, her claims to cultivation of mind become doubly urgent.

* See Appendix B, "Logical Religion."
I only wish that their powers should be so employed that they should not be obliged to seek amusements beneath them, and injurious to them. I wish them to be companions to men, instead of playthings or servants, one of which an ignorant woman must be.

When woman is allowed to claim her privileges as an intellectual being, the folly, the frivolity, and all the mean vices and faults which have hitherto been the reproach of the sex will gradually disappear.  

In 1827 W. J. Fox became the editor of the Repository, and he took over the magazine completely in 1831. Harriet Taylor was a member of the personal inner circle of Fox "in an atmosphere busily intellectual and strongly feminist." Fox was unhappily married; this perhaps focussed his attention upon the question of marriage and divorce. In any case, Fox aroused controversy by publishing various articles by himself and other writers, on the condition of women. Mill reviewed one of Fox's star contributors, being particularly enthusiastic that Junius Redivivus [W. B. Adams] was not a dry reformer, but alive to "the importance of poetry and art, as instruments of human improvement on the largest scale." The talented Flower sisters were precisely the right type of instructors for such a philosophy; Eliza kept house for Fox after he separated from his wife; Sarah married Adams. From correspondence it is known that Mill was well acquainted with Adams and the Fox circle. Part of their attraction he described in a letter to Adams, 20 October, 1832:*

* Mineka identifies the addressee of this letter as Adams from internal evidence.
We two [that is, Mill and Adams] possess what, next to community of purpose, is the greatest source of friendship between minds of any capacity: this is, not equality, for nothing can be so little interesting to a man as his own double; but, reciprocal superiority. Each of us knows many things which the other knows not, & can do many things which the other values, but cannot himself do, or not so well. There is also just that difference of character between us which renders us highly valuable to each other in another way for I require to be warmed, you perhaps occasionally to be calmed. We are almost as much the natural complement to one another as man and woman are: we are far stronger together than separately, & whatever both of us agree in, has a very good chance, I think, of being true. We are therefore made to encourage and assist one another. Our intimacy is its own reward, & we have only to consider in what way it may be made most useful to both of us (Letters, No. 60).

This passage by Mill might stand as a partial description of the attraction which Harriet Taylor held for him. While she remained married to John Taylor, Harriet became the intellectual companion of Mill.

In his eulogy of Harriet, Mill says that her teaching lay in two main regions: ultimate aims, and immediately useful and attainable goals. The undefined areas were his, the real certainties were hers. But these guiding influences did not change him—they strengthened him. "The only actual revolution which has ever taken place in my modes of thinking was already complete" (Auto, 133). Both by background and by training, Harriet and John had already formed similar attitudes respecting liberty and the condition of women.*

* "One can, to an almost laughable degree, infer what a man's wife is like, from his opinions about women in general" (Subj, 455).
She had the poetic sensibility which he sought. He had the masculine pen which she required. She was his Sappho. He was her Milton. Mill included a footnote in the Autobiography:

It might be supposed for instance, that my strong convictions on the complete equality in all legal, political, social and domestic relations, which ought to exist between men and women, may have been adopted or learnt from her. This was so far from being the fact, that those convictions were among the earliest results of the application of my mind to political subjects, and the strength with which I held them was, as I believe, more than anything else, the originating cause of the interest she felt in me. What is true is, that until I knew her, the opinion was in my mind, little more than an abstract principle. I saw no more reason why women should be held in legal subjection to other people, than why men should. I was certain that their interests required fully as much protection as those of men, and were quite as little likely to obtain it without an equal voice in making the laws by which they are to be bound. But that perception of the vast practical bearings of women's disabilities which found expression in the book on the "Subjection of Women" was acquired mainly through her teaching. But for her rare knowledge of human nature and comprehension of moral and social influences, though I should doubtless have held my present opinions, I should have had a very insufficient perception of the mode in which the consequences of the inferior position of women intertwine themselves with all the evils of existing society and with all the difficulties of human improvement (Auto, 173).

Since the Autobiography was written after his marriage, it is not possible to extricate John's opinion from Harriet's. Hayek's study reveals the astonishing extent to which she edited his work. Perhaps the earliest example preserved of their shared opinion is an 1834 letter to W. J. Fox from Paris, concerning Harriet's trial separation from her husband:
I had written thus far before receiving your letter, and I am glad of it. I have now taken a larger sheet and copied the above onto it . . . [more than a page recopied, —and the letter ends]. . . She has seen and approves all that precedes, therefore it is as much her letter as mine (Letters, No. 89).

One of the first written exchanges between John and Harriet is reproduced in Hayek's book, Chapter Three, "On Marriage and Divorce": in separate essays, written probably about 1832, they state their position. Pointing out that these essays antedate The Subjection of Women by about thirty-seven years, Hayek adds

It tends to confirm his claim in the Autobiography that contrary to what an uninformed person would probably suspect, this was not one of the subjects on which he was mainly indebted to her for his ideas (Hayek, 57).

Mill's letter covers the following points: Since marriage is the means by which women obtain their livelihood, women are trained for marrying; this is a matter of custom and education, not of law. Because marriage cannot be dissolved, the social position of women has been elevated. But the laws are made by men, not by men and women, and furthermore, laws are made by sensualists, to bind sensualists. Women believe that their power over men is chiefly derived from sensuality. The highest natures recognise that it is immoral that there be any motives to marriage other than mutual happiness, but highest natures are in the minority. If
marriage could be dissolved, women's circumstances would be entirely changed.

There is no natural inequality between the sexes; we should remove the artificial feelings and prejudices. The first step to enfranchisement is through education. When a woman can earn her own living, she will be free. Educate women to be financially independent, then they need not marry for support, only for love, by choice. Then, when women no longer clung to the indissolubility of marriage (which they now hold to be their greatest protection) we could consider divorce. Couples should give their marriage a long trial before having children. This of course is an ideal condition which only the highest people could attempt, and the arrival of children makes divorce impossible. A further argument against divorce is that much of the protesting that there is not happiness in the marriage is merely a shortcoming of the partners, who mostly have a very moderate capacity for happiness. Time would adjust this view to an acceptance of moderate happiness. However, divorce should still be possible if to continue the marriage is "positively uncomfortable to one or both parties to live together, or in case of a strong passion conceived by one of them for a third person." The great occupation of women is to beautify life, and their great contribution is the training of
children. Woman is no longer a slave, but a person; she is now ripe for equality, but it is absurd to talk of equality while marriage is an indissoluble tie.

The themes of the Subjection are here, almost in order: custom, laws made by men, the influence of sensuality, artificial inequities between the sexes, educational and occupational equality, women as slaves, the impediments of marriage to equality. (Mill deliberately removed the consideration of divorce from the Subjection). Harriet's draft is much shorter. Men have all the pleasure from marriage, women all the pain. Women are now educated solely to gain their living by marrying. The quickest, wisest way to improve matters is through education. Let us elevate women to make them equal to men. If women were legally responsible for children, women could not have children without maintaining them. All the difficulties in divorce are occasioned by children. It would be in a woman's interest not to have children—where now it is thought that children form ties to the man who feeds her.

The striking feature of Harriet's letter is her adherence to ultimate aims and reachable goals: Mill examined legal and philosophical ramifications of the subject. This pattern persists in the years which followed. The ideas are largely similar to the teachings of the Owenites and St. Simonians,
and in places, of Bentham.

Similar arguments were put forth by Fox and others in the *Monthly Repository*. Mill's close interest in this periodical is revealed in his own bibliography of his writings: article after article he wrote for the *Examiner* praised material from the *Repository*, drawing attention to Eliza Flower's music, and commenting upon various articles and issues. Mill was himself contributing heavily to the *Repository* at the same time. One series of articles reproduced his own annotated translations of a number of the Dialogues of Plato. The translations were probably completed by 1830; the articles appeared during 1834. Mill speculated upon moral influences:

> The love of virtue, and every other noble feeling, is not communicated by reasoning, but caught by inspiration or sympathy from those who already have it; and its nurse and foster-mother is Admiration. We acquire it from those we love and reverence, especially from those whom we earliest love and reverence.

Two articles in particular, which illustrated the *Repository*'s continuing interest in women's rights, were given special reviews by Mill in the *Examiner*.

* Hayek notes (p. 29) that Mill was at one time supposed to be an aspirant for Eliza Flower's hand. It should be remembered that Fox was literary editor of the *Examiner*, and requested Mill to write some of the articles about Eliza's songs (See Packe, p. 136, and Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox*, p. 153).
The first was Fox's article, "A Victim", being the life of Mehitabel Wesley (sister of John and Charles Wesley):

Mehitabel Wesley was the victim, as woman is yet continually the victim of bad education, perverted religion, and unequal institutions...

Savage man kicks and beats woman, and makes her toil in the fields; semi-civilized man locks her up in a harem; and man three-quarters civilized, which is as far as we are got, educates her for pleasure and dependency, keeps her in a state of pupilage, closes against her most of the avenues of self-support, and cheats her by the false forms of an irrevocable contract into a life of subservience to his will. The reason for all of which is 'that he is the stronger'. And the result of which is that he often lacks an intelligent and sympathizing companion when most he needs one; a high-minded helpmeet to cheer him in noble toils and bitter sacrifices; and a mother for his children who will take care that the next generation shall advance on the mental and moral attainments of the present. Truly he makes as bad a bargain as he deserves.9

Both the tone and the logic of this article are echoed in Mill's Subjection of Women.

The second article of special interest, "On the Condition of Women in England" by Junius Redivivus [W. B. Adams], appeared the following month (April, 1833). Adams goes over the ground thoroughly, arguing the importance of women as the educators of children, insisting that women are slaves, that marriage is a mercantile transaction, and divorce a much needed reform. Moreover:

the marriage which is entered into by a female for the consideration of wealth or station, is at best but prostitution clothed in the robes of sanctity.10
It is clear that the improvement of the physical condition of the poor must precede the improvement of their minds, and when that is done, the education of the women should take place. But in the other classes of society, there must be an entire change of system. Women must be regarded and treated as the equals of men, in order to work the improvement of man himself. I merely advocate the giving to females the same education as to males.

Watch an election, and behold the power of women exerted for mischievous or absurd purposes on account of their ignorance, and then think how much good their influence might accomplish, were they rightly instructed.

Women must be made morally the equal of men.

Acknowledge women for political as well as moral beings, by making them responsible personally for their own acts, and their acts would cease to be evil. At present, all married women are irrevocably tied to those who are not tyrants, only when they do not choose to be so. Take away the tyranny, and the slave will walk erect in dignity and moral worth.

Adams concludes by picturing what glorious creatures women will become, showing how love will then become an ennobling passion.*

In the same issue of the Repository, Mill himself wrote the review of "Writings of Junius Redivivus", applauding the author as a moral writer in the tradition of Plato and Milton:

Our author is a radical, because he is convinced both from principle and from history, that is both from the experience of men and of nations, that power, without accountability to those over whom, and for whose benefit

* For a curious public statement on moral marriage, and divorce, see Appendix C.
it is to be exercised, is for the most part a source of oppression to them, and of moral corruption to those in whom the power resides. On the same principle we are radicals also . . .

the peculiar 'mission' of this age . . . is to popularize among the many, the more immediately practical results of the thought and experience of the few.\textsuperscript{12}

the staple of all popular writing in the present crumbling condition of social fabric must be politics.\textsuperscript{13}

This article repeats and amplifies Mill's notions in \textit{Spirit of the Age} that the duty of the gifted few is to lead and guide the many, and that the practical tool of reforms must be politics, and a politics which learns "from principle and from history". He pursued this philosophy as the editor of the \textit{London Review}.

In the opening issue of this new review in April, 1835 Mill contributed one of his strongest essays, "Professor Sedgwick's Discourse - State of Philosophy in England", in which he attacks a wide variety of forums and opinions. Mill was already considering the broad subject of the philosophy of morals:

\begin{quote}
Clear and comprehensive views of education and human culture must, therefore, precede, and form the basis of, a philosophy of morals . . . the materials . . . are not complete . . . a large proportion are to be gathered, on the one hand, from actual observers of mankind: on the other, from those autobiographers, and from those poets and novelists, who have spoken out unreservedly, from their own experience, any true human feeling (D&D I, 131).
\end{quote}
Young children have affections, but no moral feelings; and children whose will is never resisted, never acquire them. There is no selfishness equal to the selfishness of children, as every one who is acquainted with children well knows (D&D I, 138).

These sentiments may account for the similarity in tone between the Subjection of Women and the Autobiography. In the next issue, Mill's review of Samuel Bailey's "Rationale of Political Representation" discusses the indefensible exclusion of women from the franchise, and explores this theme in an extended passage from which this extract illustrates Mill's theme of the abuse of power (these are Bailey's words):

"The interests of the female sex are so far from being identified with those of the male sex, that the latter half of the human species have almost universally used their power to oppress the former. By the present regulations of society, men wield over women, to a certain extent, irresponsible power; and one of the fundamental maxims on which representative government is founded is, that irresponsible power will be abused. The case before us presents no exception: the power of man over woman is constantly misemployed; and it may be doubted whether the relation of the sexes to each other will ever be placed on a just and proper footing, until they have both their share of control over the enactments of the legislature . . ."

Mill then refers to the "disgraceful state of the English law respecting the property of married women." The review article on the same book in the Monthly Repository shows Bailey quoting Bentham to support his argument in favour of women suffrage, and employs this telling passage:

On this subject, doubtless, abundance of sneers will be indulged in, and a thousand sarcasms uttered; but when
the happiness of human beings is concerned, and, as in this case, that of half the human race, the subject is rather too important and sacred to be sacrificed to the fear of ridicule.  

This interrelation between the condition of women and the suffrage was and continued to be a major theme of Mill's, which received an extended examination in his Representative Government. Mill found it increasingly difficult to keep separate the various themes of education, political franchise, public morality, and the condition of women, and his writings reflect a complex intermixing of these notions, focussing upon one subject or aspect in the context of the surrounding influences. As he expressed it in the Early Draft, "the true system was something much more complex & many sided than I had hitherto had any idea of" (p. 136). In the London Review for April, 1836 Mill contributed "Civilization: Signs of the Times" which in part continued themes from Spirit of the Age and in part looked forward to the discussion in later works such as On Liberty. Mill complained that

this growing insignificance of the individual in the mass, is productive of mischief. It corrupts the very fountain of the improvement of public opinion itself; it corrupts public teaching; it weakens the influences of the more cultivated few over the many (D&D I, 184).

"The individual is lost and becomes impotent in the crowd," Mill complained. He pleaded for cooperation, "most of all wanted among the intellectual classes and professions," and made cooperation a test for civilization.
Various articles in the *London & Westminster* continued to reflect an interest in the condition of women. In "Letters from Palmyra" (January, 1838), the reviewer* comments upon the influence of the new books and novels upon the education of children,

as if science and religion were to be taught, not by imbuing the mind with their spirit, but by cramming the memory with summaries of their conclusions. Not what a boy or girl can repeat by rote, but what they have learned to love and admire, is what forms their character. The chivalrous spirit has almost disappeared from books of education . . . . and, for the first time perhaps in history, the youth of both sexes of the educated classes are universally growing up unromantic (*D&D* I, 284-5).

The same article refers to the great women of the feudal period. An article on Guizot also mentions the experience of women in feudal times. Harriet Martineau's "The Martyr Age of the United States" rehearses the women's anti-slavery movement in Boston, noting the connection between women and slavery:

> It does not appear that the parties most interested would have thought of mixing up the question of the Rights of Woman with that of the Rights of Man in Slavery: but the clergy thus compelled the agitation of it.16

Because of references to the Queen in this article, Mill wrote to the nominal editor, John Robertson,17 that it was

* Since Mill reprints only the last two pages of this review in *Dissertations & Discussions*, it may be that he wrote only those pages. The Review version was signed, "S.", rather than Mill's customary "A." or "A.B."
all very well from a woman to a woman, but not such as should be addressed by a body of men who aim at having authority to a woman and the public of that woman (Letters, No. 218).

Robertson wrote and published an article in the April, 1839 number on "Criticism of Women", which Mill had requested him to omit.

I certainly never contemplated making any work in which I was engaged a vehicle for either attacking or defending the reputation of women, and in whatever way it has been done, it must make the Review consummately ridiculous (Letters, No. 255).

It was important to distinguish between the rights of women as a social group and the reputation of individuals; Mill had no wish to confuse principles with personalities. His rebuke to Robertson is a matter of tactics; to be ridiculous is to lose the confidence of your readers, and therefore to lose your power over public opinion. Mill sold the Review in 1840. The first edition of his A System of Logic was published in 1843. It is after his account of the Logic that Mill introduces Mrs. Taylor into his Autobiography, as an influence on his writings.

This is rather misleading; both John and Harriet could more precisely be said to have strengthened the convictions they shared about the abuses of power, the oppression of minorities, and the degraded status of women; the first opportunities to express their ideas were the newspaper
articles and books Mill wrote after the completion of the Logic.

In his article on Guizot for the October 1845 Edinburgh Review, Mill underlined the way in which Guizot demonstrated the importance of women in the feudal society,

women who fully equalled, in every masculine virtue, the bravest of the men with whom they were associated; often greatly surpassed them in prudence, and fell short of them only in ferocity (D&D II, 263).

This is only one example of the way in which Mill would read a book or an article and extract from it material which would be produced as his own thoughts later on. The ideas from Blanco White's article on Guizot in the London and Westminster Review are reproduced here more cogently and with a broader scope. An example of Mill's personal refurbishing of material is afforded by his studies of Jeremy Bentham; the first was the death notice Mill wrote for the Examiner of 10 June, 1832; the second essay was an appendix to Bulwer's England and the English in 1833; and the 'final' draft became Mill's essay in the London and Westminster Review of August, 1838. Even then, he was not completely satisfied, since he wrote a long section on Bentham in the Autobiography. Wishy's study of Prefaces to Liberty traces Mill's continuous development in the expression of ideas about liberty and toleration from his earliest writings to the publication of On Liberty, and shows how Mill continually returns to these themes, with increasing skill. From the passages presented in these chapters it is possible to see Mill
accumulating materials for the *Subjection of Women*, although the *Subjection* treats aspects of slavery rather than liberty.

Harriet never lost sight of her goals, and Mill interspersed their shared notions throughout his later writings. The "women question" came up in the correspondence which Mill had with August Comte in the 1840's, and the subject was discussed in very long letters by both sides.* Mill copied these out, possibly for publication, but they were never released. However, this exercise fixed the topics and their special treatment in his mind. In the period between 15 June and 30 October, 1843, (in *Letters* 398, 400, 401, and 410), Mill rehearsed in French, almost all of the arguments in Chapters II and III of *Subjection*. The core of social studies in the family, he asserted, and any reform of the family, centres around marriage and divorce. He referred to women as *subordonée* and stressed their *servitude*, dealing with arguments about women's physiological differences, cranial sizes, the notions of arrested development, excitability, faulty education, and even the explanatory parallel between the women writers following men as the Roman writers followed the Greeks. Comte protested strongly against Mill's calling women "slaves." Harriet summed up her feelings about Mill's part in this debate when she wrote:

* Mill insisted on "the rights of women (not Woman)"; see Elliot I, 187.
Do not think that I wish you had said more on the subject, I only wish that what was said was in the tone of conviction, not of suggestion ... .

You are in advance of your age in culture of the intellectual faculties, you would be the most remarkable man of your age if you had no other claim to be so than your perfect impartiality and your fixed love of justice. These are the two qualities of different orders which I believe to be the rarest & most difficult to human nature (Hayek, 114).

When Mill came to write the Subjection of Women, he imparted a much stronger tone of conviction.

Through sporadic letters to editors, Harriet and John attacked specific abuses of power against minorities, women, Catholics, enlisted men; one topic of sustained interest was the problems of Ireland and her people. On these issues, Mill was stimulated many times by Harriet's insistence upon treating the individual instance: this accorded with his notion in the Logic, of forming principles from particulars, not general theory, and of reasoning from particular to particular. In the area of specific examples, Mill had his greatest difficulties. Bain was able to help Mill with the Logic:*

The main defect of the work, however, was in the Experimental Examples. I soon saw, and he felt as much as I did, that these were too few and not unfrequently incorrect. It was on this point that I was able to render the greatest service. Circumstances had made me

* Mill fully acknowledged Bain's assistance in a note (Auto, 174).
tolerably familiar with the Experimental Physics, Chemistry and Physiology of that day, and I set to work to gather examples from all available sources... One way or other, I gave him a large stock of examples to choose from, as he revised the Third Book for press (JSM, 66-7).

Where Bain could present examples of scientific application, Harriet could suggest examples of social abuse.

The first edition of the Political Economy appeared in 1848 prior to the French revolution of that year. The second edition of 1849 reflected Mill's interest in socialism; the third edition of 1852 was further revised, to strengthen the comments about women. Mill asserted that his Political Economy differed from previous works in that he treated existing arrangements of society only as provisional, and as liable to be much altered by the progress of social improvement. I had indeed partially learned this view of things from the thoughts awakened in me by the speculations of the Saint Simonians; but it was made a living principle pervading and animating the book by my wife's promptings. This example illustrates well the general character of what she contributed to my writings. What was abstract and purely scientific was generally mine; the properly human element came from her... her mind invested all ideas in a concrete shape, and formed itself a conception of how they would actually work (Auto, 175).

The Political Economy was the first work in which Mill claimed the benefit of Harriet's thinking. In some presentation copies, he had a dedication to her pasted in. The correspondence of the period shows how truly he spoke in his claims for Harriet's contributions to that work. In particular,
she suggested the chapter "On the Probable Futurity of the Working Classes," which urged equal opportunity of industrial occupation to both sexes.

The ideas and institutions by which the accident of sex is made the groundwork of an inequality of legal rights and a forced dissimilarity of social functions, must ere long be recognized as the greatest hindrance to moral, social, and even intellectual improvements (PolEc, 765).

In other passages, Mill claimed that women at work are far more versatile than men, that the lower wages offered for the same work was evidence of the prejudice against women. For Mill, the position of women is a matter of political economy, which in turn is a branch of the social study of mankind. Discussing the fact that the wages of women are generally lower than men's he points out that

when the efficiency is equal, but the pay unequal, the only explanation that can be given is custom; grounded either in a prejudice, or in the present constitution of society, which, making almost every woman, socially speaking, an appendage of some man, enables men to take systematically the lion's share of whatever belongs to both (PolEc, 395).

These are precisely the sentiments of Bentham.* Mill urges

the openings of industrial occupations freely to both sexes. The same reasons which make it no longer necessary

* See Ogden, Theory of Legislation p. 178, where under Distribution of Property CH III Article One is headed, No distinction between the sexes; what is said of one extends to the other.
that the poor should depend on the rich, make it equally unnecessary that women should depend on men, and the least which justice requires is that law and custom should not enforce dependence (when the correlative protection has become superfluous) by ordaining that a woman, who does not happen to have a provision by inheritance, should have scarcely any means open to her of gaining a livelihood, except as a wife and mother. Let women who prefer that occupation, adopt it; but that there should be no option, except in the humbler departments of life, is a flagrant social injustice. The ideas and institutions by which the accident of sex is made the groundwork of an inequality of legal rights and a forced dissimilarity of social functions, must ere long be recognized as the greatest hindrance to moral, social, and even intellectual improvement (PolEc, 765).

In another passage, discussing Property, Mill employs the exact vocabulary of the Subjection:

The generality of labourers in this and most other countries, have as little choice of occupation or freedom of locomotion, are practically as dependant on fixed rules and on the will of others, as they could be on any system short of actual slavery; to say nothing of the entire domestic subjection of one half the species, to which it is the signal honour of Owenism and most other forms of socialism that they assign equal rights, in all respects, with those of the hitherto dominant sex (PolEc, 209).

Mill protested against the barbarism that one person should have a right to the person of another. In the third edition he added a strong section urging legal sanction against too many children, and claiming that when women are admitted to the same rights of citizenship as men, the difficulties would disappear. The following citation explains the qualification by which James Mill and Francis Place could defend the consistency of large families and the pursuit of birth control:
One of the most binding of all obligations, that of not bringing children into the world unless they can be maintained in comfort during childhood, and brought up with a likelihood of supporting themselves when of full age (PolEc, 221).

To be relieved from it [an excess of family] would be hailed as a blessing by multitudes of women who now never venture to urge such a claim, but who would urge it, if supported by the moral feelings of the community. Among the barbarisms which law and morals have not yet ceased to sanction, the most disgusting surely is, that any human being should be permitted to consider himself as having a right to the person of another (PolEc, 372).

Urging legal sanctions against too many children, Mill wrote:

There would be no need, however, of legal sanctions, if women were admitted, as on all other grounds they have the clearest title to be, to the same rights of citizenship with men. Let them cease to be confined by custom to one physical function as their means of living and their source of influence, and they would have for the first time an equal voice with men in what concerns that functions: and of all the improvements in reserve for mankind which it is now possible to foresee, none might be expected to be so fertile as this in almost every kind of moral and social benefit (PolEc, 372-373).

His continued stress upon population did not go unchallenged. One alert trans-Atlantic reviewer of the 1848 edition labelled Mill a follower of Malthus to the full extent, and noted that his opinions all tended to "the discouragement of marriage, on the ground that it is necessary to check the growth of the population." Moreover,

he insidiously attempts to allure the women over to his side, by advocating their 'emancipation' and their right to receive as high wages as men, saying that the
law and custom which ordain that a female 'shall have scarcely any means open to her of gaining a livelihood except as a wife and mother, is one of those social injustices which call loudest for remedy'.

And to John Jay of New York, who sent him a copy of the review, Mill replied

On the population question my difference with the reviewer is fundamental, and in the incidental reference which he makes to my assertion of equality of political rights and of social position in behalf of women, the tone assumed by him is really beneath contempt. But I fear that a country where institutions profess to be founded on equality, and which yet maintains the slavery of black men and of all women, will be one of the last to relinquish other servitude (Letters I, 139).

Concurrently with revisions to the Political Economy, Harriet was planning a little book about women's rights. Immediately after publication of the first edition of the Political Economy, she wrote to W. J. Fox in her customarily informal style, referring to

the cause to which for many years of my life & exertions have been devoted, justice for women. The progress of the race waits for the emancipation of women from their present degraded slavery to the necessity of marriage, or to modes of earning their living which (with the sole exception of artists) consists only of poorly paid & hardly worked occupations, all the professions, mercantile clerical legal and medical, as well as all government posts being monopolized by men. Political equality alone would place women on a level with other men in these respects (Hayek, 122).

The condition of women question goes deeper into the mental and moral characteristics of the race than the other . . . I fear that if the suffrage is gained by all men before any women possess it, the door will be closed upon equality between the sexes perhaps for centuries (Hayek, 124).
Extracts from the correspondence between Mill and Harriet show their continuing interest in the women question. In July, 1848 Harriet protested against the exclusion by law of women from clubs! The last is so monstrous a fact, & involves so completely the whole principle of personal liberty or slavery for women that it seems to me a case of conscience & principle to write specifically on it . . . true & JUST meaning of Universal Suffrage (Hayek, 127).

In February, 1849, Mill criticised a bad article about women, which laid down the pernicious doctrine that women always are & must always be what men make them . . . I do not think that anything that could be written would do nearly so much good on that subject, the most important of all, as the finishing of your pamphlet - or little book rather, for it should be that. I hope you are going on with it - gone on with it & finished & published it must be, & next season too (Hayek, 138).

Mill drew Harriet's attention to the report from the New York Tribune concerning the activities of the women's rights movement in the United States. He is pleased at the common sense, the fact that women were chief speakers, the tone,

* In the Athenaeum No. 1174 for 27 April, 1850, the column "Our Weekly Gossip" noted the second annual meeting of the Whittingdon Club and Metropolitan Athenaeum: " . . . and the Club is not set up--as the Cloister was--as a refuge from, amongst other things, women. The presence of female members brings something of the charm of home into this training ground for the work of life; while this innovation gives to woman herself, for the first time on even terms, her share in the full, ungrudged advantage of such intellectual training."
outspoken like America, not frightened & senile like England - not the least iota of compromise - asserting the whole of the principle & claiming the whole of the consequences . . . I really do now think that we have a good chance of living to see something decisive really accomplished on that of all practical subjects the most important - to see that will be really looking down from Pisgah on the promised land - how little I thought we should ever see it (Hayek, 166-7).

Harriet's "little book" finally appeared as an article which Mill offered to the Westminster Review early in March, 1851. It was printed in the July issue as "The Enfranchise-ment of Women." This essay hailed the meetings of the Women's Rights Convention in the United States, reported that women, not men, were acting for the movement, and listed the principal demands: education, work opportunities, and the ballot at all levels of government. Applauding these demands, the essay examined the possibilities of the emancipation of women in a tone which attempted to be severely rational throughout. The writer can be classified as a Utilitarian radical, knowledgeable in Bentham's writings, in civil liberty, and in some theory of moral sentiments. There are echoes of James Mill's essay on Government, fragments of J. S. Mill's early writings, particularly those of 1824, an attack on literary women who do not support the movement, and a demand for total rationality, not "spiritual views." The writer concluded uncompromisingly, "What is wanted for women is equal rights, equal admission to all social privileges; not a position apart, a sort of sentiment-al priesthood."21
This essay was not intended as a final statement on the subject. It contained nothing new; but it was possibly the most complete discussion of the whole area of women's rights, embracing many aspects which had been separately taken up in various journals and publications during the previous twenty years. Not brilliantly written, it made no sensation among the readers of the reviews. But it was hastily (and poorly) reprinted in a cheap edition, and sold in thousands of copies to the working classes (without permission). Phrases and ideas contained in it reappeared in a steadily increasing flood of periodical articles over the next twenty years, until it was finally superseded, first by Mill's speech on the Reform Bill in 1867, and then by the Subjection of Women in 1869. The essay was a blow struck at exactly the right moment.

Yet no reference was made to English experience, not even to Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), which was well known and widely read as the most able summary of the topic. A reader of Harriet's essay would never guess that any previous word had ever been uttered on the subject of women's rights. The opening lines suggested that the subject of women's rights was a new thing for public meetings. There had in fact been a considerable public interest in two particular areas of women's rights, which produced in
one case the Custody of Infants Act of 1839 (which Mill in his *Subjection of Women* referred to as Serjeant Talfourd's Act), and in the other case the founding of Queens College, London, in 1848. An excellent examination of the subject is given by Killham in his study of Tennyson and *The Princess*; two long chapters are devoted to the feminist controversy in England prior to 1847. In *The History of Women Suffrage* it is suggested that the English women's rights movement was crystallized by events at the 1840 World's Anti-Slavery Convention, in London.22 The striking parallels between the condition of women and the condition of slaves was publicly noted at that time.*

It is impossible that Mill could have been unaware of the many individual disputes and discussions, particularly prior to 1840, when he sold the *Westminster Review*. Yet the 1851 article in dealing with enfranchisement, makes no mention of English activity. Even in the *Subjection of Women*, references to English activity were confined to the few years prior to 1869. There are two reasons for such an omission. First, Mill had learned how to publish just so much of a topic as the public would countenance, and no more. This lesson is well illustrated in the contrast between his book on political economy and Thompson's book on the same subject. After the

* Caroline Fox recorded in her diary for 13 June, 1840: "Went with the Mills to the Anti-Slavery Meeting at Exeter Hall" (Pym, p. 133).
second Reform Bill of 1867, Mill felt able to press the case for women with all the rhetorical skill at his command; but in 1851 it was tactically proper to confine the argument to a severely logical treatment of the position of women as non-voters. Mill pointed out in Chapter IV of the *Autobiography* how he had learned the principles of timing in reform movements. The original *Westminster Review* articles all carried an air of strong conviction and boldness, and were presented with talent; the *Review* gave the impression of being backed by a whole school in philosophy and politics. Much of the opinion of this 'school' derived from the seminal essays of his father, chiefly those written for the *Britannica*, which were reprinted separately. To John Mill the value of those reprints seemed enormous. They seemed equally valuable to Alexander Bain, who tells in detail how he read the copy presented to the Aberdeen Mechanics Institute, and consulted it frequently. The one thing needful, in the phrase of the period, was a short statement of the philosophy of goals; this would afford the basis for practical persons to effect the necessary reform. The Enfranchisement essay was a competent summation; it contains the core of many of Mill's arguments in the *Subjection of Women*. But where Mill's book is almost impassioned in tone, Harriet's essay is austere and controlled. The evidence of this essay seems to support Mill in his estimation of the values which Harriet brought to their intellectual partnership, through her rational balance between practical examples and ultimate goals.
Writing the *Early Draft* in 1854, Mill concluded his account of selling the Review, then wrote

From this time, what is worth relating of my life will come into a very small compass; for I have no further mental changes to tell of, but only, as I hope, a continued mental progress... the results of which, if real, will best be found in my writings (*Auto*, 155).

He then completed his account of the development of the *Logic*, and discussed how Harriet assisted in "the third period" of his mental progress, in their joint production of the *Political Economy*. At this point, he and Harriet were in full mental agreement, said Mill. The inadequacy of education had made him less of a democrat;

the social problem of the future we considered to be, how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action, with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour (*Auto*, 162).

In fact, all of these problems, of education, of legal rights, of freedom or slavery, representation or taxation, all were questions of political economy. The remedy for any social questions must ultimately be rooted in political and economic solutions. Slavery was economic, not social; the subjection of women was to be solved through education, precisely as the elevation of the working classes was to be solved by education. To strike at the
root of social evils one must act through political agencies, through Acts of Parliament, and through new laws. To any person suffering under a particular disability, or burdened with a personal inequity, this remote philosophical view has not any immediate value. Yet, no amount of scattered and unrationalised improvement will lead toward real progress without some philosophical schema. Or, at least, progress will come too slowly.

There is nothing more in Mill's statement about "the social problem of the future" than William Thompson had written in his 1824 book on the Distribution of Wealth; both men viewed social problems as economic problems. Yet while Thompson spelled out the remedies, he did not specify the political form of action. Mill and Harriet in the Enfranchisement essay called for equal rights in property, occupation and family status, but they asserted that these things could not be accomplished without self-determination, namely, by enfranchisement. The 'self' would develop in its effort for expression. It was not enough for men to give women these things; women must themselves act, think, speak, and earn their position. In this approach, Mill was the only English voice of that time. The rationale behind his view of emancipation was that same argument which De Tocqueville had used in his study of democracy; the strength of the
system lies in the self-development of all its individuals. And Mill never ceased to insist upon "the greatest individual liberty of action."
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV


3 Monthly Repository XVIII (1823), 77-81.


5 Hayek, pp. 57-78.

6 See MacMinn, pp. 16, 17, 19, 23-26, 32-34.


8 Ibid., p. 170.


10 Ibid., p. 218.

11 Ibid., pp. 219, 226, 227 and 230.

12 Ibid., p. 268.

13 Ibid., p. 266.

14 London Review I (July, 1835), p. 353. Mill purchased the Westminster Review at the end of 1835, and issued a combined London and Westminster Review, so that the issue of April-July, 1836 was Vol III and XXV.


18. See Mill's letters to Carlyle (Letters, No. 72 and No. 82).


CHAPTEr V

JOINT PRODUCTION

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor were married 21 April, 1851. Six weeks before the marriage Mill wrote out a formal disclaimer of any rights which the law of marriage would give him:

... the whole character of the marriage relations as constituted by law being such as both she and I entirely & conscientiously disapprove, for this amongst other reasons, that it confers upon one of the parties to the contract, legal power & control over the person, property, & freedom of action of the other party, independent of her own wishes and will; I, having no means of legally divesting myself of these odious powers (as I most assuredly would do if an engagement to that effect could be made legally binding on me) feel it my duty to put on record a formal protest against the existing law of marriage, in so far as conferring such powers; and a solemn promise never in any case or under any circumstances to use them. And in the event of marriage between Mrs. Taylor and me I declare it to be my will and intention, & the condition of the engagement between us, that she retains in all respects whatever the same absolute freedom of action, & freedom of disposal of herself and of all that does or may at any time belong to her, as if no such marriage had taken place; and I absolutely disclaim & repudiate all pretensions to have acquired any rights whatever by virtue of such marriage.

6th March 1851  J. S. MILL  (Hayek, 168)
After the marriage, the Mills withdrew almost completely from society, to their home in Blackheath Park.* Mill had worked out a tentative list of topics which in combination would cover the entire field of social behaviour. Long before this time he had begun listing in his Bibliography the titles of various letters to the press upon assorted specific social evils, some titled a 'Joint Production', some labelled, 'very little of this was mine'.** Quite a number dealt with brutality to women, children, or animals, and were the work of Harriet; some were written by John. He wrote the leading article for the Daily News of 2 January, 1850 which

praises the work done by the framers of the Constitution for the state of California, particularly the provisions that women be guaranteed a right to their own property and that there be a superintendent of public instruction.\(^2\)

The Morning Chronicle of 28 August, 1851 published an article submitted by Mill on the need for protection of wives and children from brutal husbands and fathers. This was reprinted in 1853 for private distribution under the title Remarks on

* "It is a painful fact that his marriage was the occasion of his utter estrangement from his mother and sisters. He had been the joy and the light of the house, while he lived with the family. Some very slight incident was laid hold of as a ground of offense, and all communication was thenceforth broken off, excepting on essential matters of business" (JSM, 172). See also Hayek, Chapter VIII.

** See Hayek pp. 158-161 for examples of Harriet selecting social abuses and directing John to write on them.
Mr. Fitzroy's Bill for the more effectual Prevention of Assaults on Women and Children.

The publication of the Political Economy stimulated his correspondence, and he continued to use the strongest terms concerning the status of women; the following letter of 8 April, 1852, preceded the publication of the Third edition of the Political Economy:

... you appear to think that no one ought to be blamed for having an inordinately large family if he produces, and brings them up to produce, enough for their support: now this, with me, in only a part, and only a small part of the question; a much more important consideration still, is the perpetuation of the previous degradation of women, no alteration in which can be hoped for while their whole lives are devoted to the function of producing and rearing children. That degradation and slavery is, in itself, so enormous an evil, and contributes so much to the perpetuation of all other evils by keeping down the moral and intellectual condition of both men and women, that the limitation of the number of children would be, in my opinion, absolutely necessary to place human life on its proper footing, even if there were subsistence for any number which could be produced. I think if you had been alive to this aspect of the question you would not have used such expressions as "your wife has made you a happy father rather more frequently than you are pleased to remember." Such phrases are an attempt to laugh off the fact that the wife is, in every sense, the victim of the man's animal instinct, and not the less so because she is brought up to think that she has no right of refusal, or even of complaint (Elliot I, 171).

The third edition of the Political Economy appeared in the spring of 1852. Both John and Harriet were in poor health, and Mill felt compelled to complete as much writing as he
could, with Harriet assisting him in the revising and reworking of their ideas. Mill wrote to Harriet 29 August, 1853:

I am very much inclined to take the Essay on Nature again in hand & rewrite it as thoroughly as I did the review of Grote - that is what it wants - it is my old way of working & I do not think I have ever done anything well which was not done in that way (Hayek, 184-5).

The Early Draft of Mill's autobiography was written between the spring of 1853 and the spring of 1854, much of it during the very depressing period January through April, 1854, when Mrs. Mill was at Hyeres and Mill at London, both dangerously ill from tuberculosis. Confronted with the shortness and uncertainty of life, Mill wrote to Harriet that two years would allow them to prepare for print the things which they wished to say,

if not in the best form for popular effect, yet in the state of concentrated thought - a sort of mental pemican, which thinkers, when there are any after us, may nourish themselves with & then dilute for other people. The Logic and Pol. Ec. may perhaps keep their buoyancy long enough to hold these other things above water till there are people capable of taking up the thread of thought & continuing it. I fancy I see one large or two small post-humous volumes of Essays, with the Life at their head, & my heart is set on having these in a fit state for publication . . . by Christmas 1855 (Hayek, 191).

The 'thread of thought' was to be embraced and developed by the list which Mill outlined in his letter of 7 February, 1854:
I finished the 'Nature' on Sunday as I expected. I am quite puzzled what to attempt next - I will just copy out the list of subjects we made out in the confused order in which we put them down. Differences of character (nation, race, age, sex, temperament). Love. Education of tastes. Religion de l'Avenir. Plato. Slander. Foundation of Morals. Utility of Religion. Socialism. Liberty. Doctrine that causation is will. To these I have now added from your letter, Family & Conventional (?). It will be a tolerable two years work to finish all that. Perhaps the first of them is the one I could do most to by myself, at least of those equally important (Hayek, 192).

As these letters suggest, Mill treated all of these subjects as branches of the study of human activity, to be comprehended under the general heading of Ethology: the term originated as 'the science of ethics'; he employed it as 'the science of character formation'. Mill's diary of the time reflects his preoccupation with death, the writing of the Early Draft, and a compulsion to express himself before he died. Three entries in particular deal with the topic of women, one remarking on the equivalence between religious vows and marriage vows, both of which bind young women under age to an irrevocable engagement. The other entries point to the Subjection:

March 22. The upholders of the vulgar doctrine that women are not equal in intellect to men sometimes declare with an air of triumph that the writings of women are not original. The same thing is said of the Latin writers and for the same reason. The Greeks had written first, and the Romans, having received the whole literary education from them, remained to a certain extent their pupils. But if Roman civilisation had lasted a little longer, Roman literature would have
out-grown its leading-strings. In the same manner women's literature is younger than men's. Men having long written and written well, before women wrote at all, women naturally fell at first into the old paths which men had made, adopting men's opinions and men's forms of art. But before this is set down as want of originality, it should be known how many of the most original thoughts of male writers came to them from the suggestion and prompting of some woman (Elliot II, 381).

March 26. As I probably shall have no opportunity of writing out at length my ideas on this and other matters, I am anxious to leave on record at least in this place my deliberate opinion that any great improvement in human life is not to be looked for so long as the animal instinct of sex occupies the absurdly disproportionate place it does therein; and that to correct this evil two things are required, both of them desirable for other reasons, viz., firstly, that women should cease to be set apart for this function, and should be admitted to all other duties and occupations on a par with men; secondly, that what any persons may freely do with respect to sexual relations should be deemed to be an unimportant and purely private matter, which concerns no one but themselves. If children are the result, then indeed commences a set of important duties towards the children, which society should enforce upon the parents much more strictly than it does now. But to have held any human being responsible to other people and to the world for the fact itself, apart from this consequence, will one day be thought one of the superstitions and barbarisms of the infancy of the human race (Elliot II, 382).

The compulsion to help better the human condition is expressed in a later entry (April 14):

The misfortune of having been born and being doomed to live in almost the infancy of human improvement, moral, intellectual, and even physical, can only be made less by the communion with those who are already what all well-organised human beings will one day be, and by the consciousness of oneself doing something, not altogether without value, towards helping on the slow but quickening progress towards that ultimate consummation (Elliot II, 386).
The chosen topics of reform seem to have been constantly present in Mill's mind. He met an English barrister, also suffering from consumption, at Brest, 24 June, 1854:

I tried him on religion, where I found him quite what we think - on politics, on which he was somewhat more than a radical - on the equality of women which he seemed not to have quite dared to think of himself but seemed to adopt at once (Hayek, 208).

In the Early Draft, Stillinger cites what evidence he has, to determine Harriet's qualities, concluding that the Harriet of the incomparable intellect - the Harriet of the dedication, the memorial inscription, and the Autobiography - was largely a product of his imagination, an idealization, according to his peculiar needs, of a clever, domineering, in some ways perverse and selfish invalid woman; such an idealization was better thought about and remembered than lived with (Draft, 27).

Max Lerner remarks, by contrast, that Harriet was Mill's star pupil for more than twenty-five years, and that what she did was to re-enforce his views, give them sharpness of outline, and give him the moral bolstering to go on in the direction he had already planned. Stillinger considers Harriet to have been a helpful editor.

Mill's successive revisions within the early draft show the same kind of progress from private to public, and from public to more public, voice. Often at the

* Carlyle said something like this to Morley about Harriet, "She was a woman full of unwise intellect, always asking questions about all sorts of puzzles—why, how, what for, what makes the exact difference—and Mill was good at answers." Such stimulation may be just what a philosopher requires, in order to make practical application of principles.
suggestion of Harriet, he suppressed personal and family details, that, had they been kept in the later draft, would have made the Autobiography a more recognizably human document, and less of a purely expository account of "thought processes and psychic states": . . . Again frequently with Harriet's help, by curtailing or emending comment on his "various deficiencies," he gave in many places a better account of his abilities (Draft, 15).

Stillinger concludes that Harriet's alterations in the Early Draft show her to have had some sense of style and propriety of tone, but they do not confirm Mill's estimate of her intellectual qualities . . . What significantly does emerge from their correspondence, especially from letters, and parts of letters omitted by Professor Hayek, is Mill's fantastic dependence upon Harriet's judgment and approval in practical matters. He was virtually helpless in household affairs - having everything done for him was a "fatal" defect in his upbringing (Draft, 25).*

The fatal defect of John's upbringing would seem to be the fault of his mother, who looked after the Mill household so well. But equally it must be the fault of his grandmother, Isabella Mill, who relieved her son James of any and all involvement with domestic matters, and trained him to expect

* Readers must guard against confusing the influences of Mill's physical circumstances with influences upon his intellectual performance. Stillinger's remarks may be tempered by the omission of adverbs: "fantastic" dependence may be merely the normal solicitude of any wife for any husband, as reflected by the husband's show of agreement; "virtually" helpless indicates the normal scorn, of a practical mind which is taken up with train-seats and rat-catchers, for a philosopher who appears not to see the train in front of him. In any case, being dependent upon one's wife for meals has no necessary relation to being dependent upon her for ideas.
a wife to attend entirely to household matters. Mill had previously dilated upon the iniquities of a system which denied women outlets for their abilities and feelings, and he explained in a rejected passage from the *Early Draft* how he and Harriet were first attracted, and how he became her voice and her pen.

It is less obvious what even in the immaturity of her powers & of her experience, could attract her to me, than me to her; or what, peculiarly valuable to her, she could find in such a type of character as mine: but a thorough agreement in opinion is to any one, especially to a young person opposed to the reigning opinions, always a support, especially when the concurring minds have been very differently formed & trained & have arrived at their conclusions by very different paths. To her who had reached her opinions by the moral intuition of a character of strong feeling, there was doubtless help as well as encouragement to be derived from one who had arrived at many of the same results by study & reasoning. It was also a strong link between us that we felt alike on that most vital question, the social position of women: whose subordination, by law & custom, to men, we regarded as the last remaining form of primeval tyranny & serfage, & whose equal admissibility to all occupations & equal participation in all rights, we deemed not only to be the clear dictate of justice, but to be an essential condition of any great improvement in mankind either individually or socially . . . .

. . . The importance she attached to the social independence & equal rights of women, arose from two of the principal features of her character, her love of justice & her sense of dignity. How indeed can either of these feelings . . . tolerate that a human being should be marked out from birth to be the mere appendage of some other? . . . social ordinances prescribing that one half of all human character . . . shall have no development at all . . . If the commonest laws of human nature did not prove it, my wife is a sufficient proof by example that whoever has the greatest & fullest measure of the feelings that produce self devotion to another or others, is also the best qualified for any
other field of action, great or small, & must ever protest inwardly . . . against the stupid & selfish social arrangements which compel her, if she acts at all, however the planning & originating mind & the commanding faculties may be on her side, to act solely through another (Draft, 196-198).

These rejected leaves of the early manuscript were reduced to a footnote in Mill's later revision* for the Autobiography, wherein he stated that the practical illustrations and experiences for women's disabilities were supplied by his wife. It is interesting that he claims Harriet's experience as typical; in Subjection, he makes a similar claim about his own family experience, as typical of every English family.

On Liberty was published in February, 1859, without the final revision which John and Harriet were to have given it. Volumes I and II of Dissertations and Discussions were published in May, 1859, and the pamphlet Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform appeared about the same time. The echo of Spirit of the Age and Mill's reflections on Plato can be heard in the tone of this pamphlet.

If it is asserted that all persons ought to be equal in every description of right recognised by society, I answer, not until all are equal in worth as human beings, It is the fact, that one person is not as good as another; and it is reversing all the rules of rational conduct to attempt to raise a political fabric on a supposition which is at variance with fact (D&D III, 19).

* In the final version of Mill's Autobiography, almost all accounts of his social life are omitted, thus presenting a skilful mis-impression of his experience.
Mill asked for a plurality of votes to be given not to property, but to proven superiority of education, which he held would recognise opinions grounded on superiority of knowledge.

The suggestion, however, was one which I had never discussed with my almost infallible counsellor, and I have no evidence that she would have concurred in it. As far as I have been able to observe, it has found favour with nobody (*Auto*, 180).

As Mill suggested, the inadequacy of education had made him less of a democrat. The 'infallible counsellor' had helped him to select the essays for reprinting in *Dissertations & Discussions*, but she died before proper revisions could be made. He wrote a prefatory eulogy to the *Enfranchisement* essay, saying that

> the following Essay is hers in a peculiar sense, my share in it being little more than that of an editor and amanuensis. Its authorship having been known at the time, and publicly attributed to her, it is proper to state that she never regarded it as a complete discussion of the subject which it treats of ... the question, in her opinion, was in a stage in which no treatment but the most calmly argumentative could be useful (*D&D* II, 411-412).

However, the essay *On Liberty* was the work which best represented Harriet, as Mill explained at length in the *Autobiography*: Harriet kept him right where he was right, and helped rid him of errors. *On Liberty* was more directly and literally our joint production than anything else which bears my name ... the whole mode of thinking of which the book was the expression, was emphatically hers (*Auto*, 176).
As regards originality, it has of course no other than that which every thoughtful mind gives to its own mode of conceiving and expressing truths which are common property (Auto, 178).

On Liberty was in fact the product of joint discussion between tutor Mill and pupil Harriet, with each line, each sentence, each idea taken up and adjusted to a proper public understanding. It was the same process which had produced James Mill's Elements of Political Economy in 1821, Mill had repeated each section to young John, who had written it all down. Bain described the Elements as "the summing up and methodizing of all Mill's reflections, discussions and writings upon the subject for nearly twenty years" (JM, 198). And the parallel is strengthened by the following extracts from James Mill's Preface:

I am, myself, persuaded, that nothing is more necessary for understanding every part of the book, than to read it with attention; such attention as persons of either sex, or ordinary understanding, are capable of bestowing . . .

... In a work of this description I have thought it advisable not to quote any authorities, because I am anxious that the learner should fix his mind upon the doctrine and its evidence, without any extraneous consideration ... I cannot fear an imputation of plagiarism, because I profess to have made no discovery; and those men who have contributed to the progress of the science need no testimony of mine to establish their fame.5

When James Mill was writing a textbook, he concentrated upon principles. When his son wrote his text-books he followed the same course. The lack of reference to current
articles or current discussion contributes to the ex cathedra tone of John Stuart Mill's writings. At the same time, intellectual honesty and the acknowledgement of the work of others was engrained into Mill by his training, and was a principal reason for the writing of the Autobiography.

Mill repeats his disavowal of originality in the Preface to Representative Government:

Those who have done me the honour of reading my previous writings, will probably receive no strong impression of novelty from the present volume; for the principles are those to which I have been working up during the greater part of my life, and most of the practical suggestions have been anticipated by others or by myself. There is novelty, however, in the fact of bringing them together, and exhibiting them in their connexion; and also, I believe, in much that is brought forward in their support. Several of the opinions at all events, if not new, are for the present as little likely to meet with general acceptance as if they were.

This passage is an accurate description of both On Liberty and the Subjection of Women. Mill knew that the ideas were not popular and probably would not be accepted by most readers; yet, as the product of his reflections over the greater part of his life, these ideas, while not original, were given an original arrangement. It is as true today as it was when Mill wrote the line, that several of the opinions are for the present little likely to receive general acceptance. The Preface goes on to explain his motives for publishing; that both parties
have lost confidence in the . . . creeds which they nominally profess, while neither side appears to have made any progress in providing itself with a better. Yet such a doctrine must be possible; not a mere compromise, by splitting the difference between the two, but something wider than either, which, in virtue of its superior comprehensiveness, might be adopted by either . . . without renouncing anything which he really feels to be valuable in his own creed. When so many feel obscurely the want of such a doctrine, and so few even flatter themselves that they have attained it, any one may without presumption offer what his own thoughts, and the best that he knows of those of others, are able to contribute toward its formation.

This Preface sums up Mill's notions about the value of an informing philosophy, the need to reach for improvement, the right of individual choice of the best alternatives through co-operative consideration. His Preface describes the goal of Moral Philosophy, or Political or Social Philosophy: in Mill's system of thought, all of these areas impinged, the one upon the others. Again and again during his career Mill returned to the topics of liberty and oppression, and the balance of power between groups and between individuals.

In Prefaces to Liberty, Bernard Wishy collected a number of letters and articles written by Mill between 1823 and 1849; he concluded that On Liberty may be regarded as an essay which Mill wrote and re-wrote all his life. Wishy's analysis of the book is interesting:

On Liberty is not, then, a sudden effort de novo to analyze certain aspects of freedom and authority in the
coming age of democracy. Nor is it, as too often assumed, a logical theory or clear definition of the limits of individual freedom and social power. By the time Mill published *On Liberty*, he had become so sensitive to alternative views of the relation of the individual to society that a theory of individual liberty consistent with all recognized possibilities seemed impossible. Rather, he takes up many lines of attack. In pursuing a seemingly fruitful argument . . . he will suddenly come upon an attractive side path or hit a roadblock. When he returns to his main road, after taking a detour, his argument has shifted so as to include the new information from his foray. New terms, new definitions, new nuances have entered that do not fit the categories with which he started. *On Liberty* thus epitomizes the very process by which Mill believed civilization advances. The play of mind back and forth over competing ideas defines the issues and reveals the choices and possibilities open to men, with their advantages and their costs.

*On Liberty* and its reception are an obvious fulfillment of Mill's statements that he had no system and that any adequate system would have to be more many-sided than we can yet conceive.8

The *Subjection of Women* also exhibits such a wandering line of argument, around roadblocks and attractive sidepaths, as it attempts to embrace all aspects of the topic; but the resulting lack of apparent logical structure must not be mistaken for confusion in the mind of its writer. On the basis of writings which seem to point to the *Liberty*, Wishy has suggested that Mill's development was consistent and not the product of conflict of opinion.

Another editor of Mill's essays, Gertrude Himmelfarb, takes a contrary position, explaining how Mill deliberately misled his readers into accepting Mill the archetype liberal,
when there was also a 'conservative' Mill—in her terms, a "later" and an "earlier" Mill. This classification refers on the one hand to the writings of the 1840's and 1850's, culminating in On Liberty; and on the other to the point of view expressed in the 1830's and revived after the death of Harriet Taylor in 1858, when Mill reverted, in many ways, to the philosophical temper of the earlier period.

When Mill describes the work as a book with one very simple principle, he is denying his many-sidedness; in fact, contrasting the liberal and conservative Mill, Himmelfarb asserts that "the drama of Mill's life was the alternation of these two Mills." She feels that Harriet's influence was dominant during the time in which the Autobiography and the Liberty were written, and that influence reveals itself in "unmodified, unqualified individualism in social affairs."

Neither Wishy nor Himmelfarb makes any reference to Subjection. Appropriately Mill himself wrote a passage which explains how his critics get into such difficulties.

What led them wrong at first, was generally nothing else but the incapacity of seeing more than one thing at a time; and that incapacity is apt to stick to them when they have turned their eyes in an altered direction. They usually resolve that the new light which has broken in upon them shall be the sole light; ... whether men adhere to old opinions or adopt new ones, they have in general an invincible propensity to split the truth, and take half, or less than half of it; and a habit of erecting their quills and bristling up like a porcupine against anyone who brings them the other half, as if he were attempting to deprive them of the portion which they have (Spirit, 15).
It is possible to regard *On Liberty* as the first of a trilogy of essays on power: where *On Liberty* and *Representative Government* examine the social power structure, *Subjection* analyzes the lessons of power in domestic life. *On Liberty* demonstrates that from the greatest variety stems the greatest power. *Representative Government* develops that power so that all individuals in the system gain the most and develop the farthest. *Subjection* exposes the abuses of power over women. Bain called it "the most sustained exposition of Mill's lifelong theme--the abuses of power" (*JSM*, 130).

*On Liberty* points out that the tyranny of the majority can be as dangerous as the tyranny of the state, and that liberty is an essential part of the growth environment which will develop strong individuals; in a society led by a creative intellectual elite, the greatest variety will produce the greatest power. Mill makes a large number of remarks about religion and toleration, and attacks the despotism of custom, including the custom of teaching women to think marriage the one thing needful. He glances at marriage contracts as they affect personal liberty, and protests "the almost despotic power of husbands over wives." He cites Humboldt as stating that marriage, having the peculiarity that its objects are frustrated unless the feelings of both the parties are
In harmony with it, should require nothing more than the declared will of either party to dissolve it (p. 126).

The State, while it respects the liberty of each in what specially regards himself, is bound to maintain a vigilant control over his exercise of any power which it allows him to possess over others. This obligation is almost entirely disregarded in the case of the family relations, a case, in its direct influence on human happiness, more important than all others taken together (p. 128).

Mill directed his readers to become more aware of the number of times that women were comprehended in the word "he"; and took pains to illustrate distinctions:

But the man, and still more the woman, who can be accused either of doing 'what nobody does', or of not doing 'what everybody does', is the subject of as much depreciatory remark as if he or she had committed some grave moral delinquency (p. 84).

This distinction was amplified in Representative Government:

Suppose that what was formerly called by the misapplied name of universal suffrage, and now by the silly title of manhood suffrage, became the law; the voters would still have a class interest, as distinguished from women. Suppose that there were a question before the Legislature specially affecting women; as whether women should be allowed to graduate at Universities; whether the mild penalties inflicted on ruffians who beat their wives daily almost to death's door, should be exchanged for something more effectual; or suppose that any one should propose in the British Parliament, what one State after another in America is enacting not by a mere law, but by a provision of their revised Constitutions—that married women should have a right to their own property. Are not a man's wife and daughters entitled to know whether he votes for or against a candidate who will support these propositions? (p. 307-8).

Mill argued for extension of the suffrage to women, remarking "It would already be a great improvement in the moral position
of women, to be no longer declared by law incapable of an opinion", and goes on to discuss the influence of the wife on the husband. He also referred to his own remarks in the Political Economy concerning the improvement of the position of women.

Times

It is not clear from the Autobiography precisely when Mill wrote Subjection:

The work of the years 1860 and 1861 consisted chiefly of two treatises, only one of which was intended for immediate publication. This was the "Considerations of Representative Government".

The other treatise written at this time is the one which was published some years later under the title of "The Subjection of Women." It was written at my daughter's suggestion that there might, in any event, be in existence a written exposition of my opinions on that great question, as full and conclusive as I could make it. The intention was to keep this among other published papers, improving it from time to time if I was able, and to publish it at the time when it should seem likely to be most useful (Auto, 185-86).

Mill's attention was directly drawn to the topic by his preface remarks in Dissertations & Discussions to his wife's essay of 1851 (p. 144 above). This essay must have been in the mind of the writer of "Mr. Mill on Representative Government" in the Westminster Review for July, 1861.

* The Subjection of Women does not appear in his bibliography.
The review contains two significant passages:

To Mr. Mill's eloquent advocacy of the justice of granting the suffrage to women, nothing can be added. The only answer that can be offered reposes on a theory of the family, which though it is sometimes still appealed to, is every day losing its force.12

The question of women's rights has been too often damaged by rhetorical treatment and ill-considered proposals; the cause has been more injured by its partisans than by its adversaries. It is deeply to be regretted that the accomplished author of a paper in this Review on this subject no longer lives to give the aid of the most powerful intellect and the widest knowledge that have yet been devoted to the immediate consideration of this subject.13

As a professional journalist, Mill read reviews as a matter of course; the strong support given him here, coupled with a compliment to his wife, would have intensified his attention to this review. And the reviewer seems to have anticipated just the way in which he treated the matter of 'family' in Subjection. Or perhaps Mill was stimulated to consider the matter from this angle after reading this review. The reviewer was not alone in associating him particularly with a campaign for women. During the debates in the House of Commons in 1867, two years before Subjection was published, a member noted in reply to Mill that "all who were familiar with his writings knew that the suffrage of women was a favourite hobby of his."14

In fact, Mill was only reflecting the activity around him on behalf of women's rights, not least the disputes over
the Married Women's Property Bill of 1857. He was sensitive
to any comment connected with his wife's essay. When Mrs.
Gaskell published her *Life of Charlotte Bronte*, Mill was
very annoyed at a critical passage from Charlotte's corres-
pondence, which generally agreed with "The Emancipation of
Women" article, but remarked

> I think the writer forgets there is such a thing as
self-sacrificing love and disinterested devotion. When
I first read the paper I thought it was the work of a
powerful-minded, clear-headed woman, who had a hard,
jealous heart, muscles of iron, and nerves of bend
leather; of a woman who longed for power and had never
felt affection. To many women affection is sweet, and
power conquered indifferent—though we all like influence
won. I believe J. S. Mill would make a hard, dry,
dismal world of it; and yet he speaks admirable sense
through a great portion of his article . . . In short
J. S. Mill's head is, I dare say, very good, but I feel
disposed to scorn his heart."

This resulted in correspondence between Mill and Mrs. Gaskell
in the summer of 1859 (when Mill had already published his
explanatory preface regarding the need for "calmly argu-
mentative" treatment). Charlotte's appraisal of Harriet
supports the idea that Mill was the romantic, Harriet the
rationalist, in their collaboration for the writing of
textbooks for a future society. Mill must have felt the
irony of this judgment, if he recalled a passage from a letter
Harriet wrote him about 1836:

> No one's mind is ever satisfied, not their imagination
nor their ambition—nor anything else of that class—but
feeling satisfies—All the qualities on earth never give
happiness without personal feeling—personal feeling
always gives happiness with or without any other character(?).. The desire to give & receive feeling is almost the whole of my character (Hayek, 98).

In his article, "Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill: Artist and Scientist," Robson explores the range of appraisals given to Harriet by Mill students over the years, identifies the important question as: "In what way did she contribute significantly to his work? and answers:

She was in and of his intellectual and emotional life in an unusual degree, but not in an unexampled way, and she was not, in any meaningful sense, the "joint author" of his works.16

As Robson points out, Mill is truthful but incomplete in his statements, and a part of the puzzle for his readers is to reconcile Mill's appraisal of Harriet with the written evidence she left.

Mill explained Harriet's contribution more fully in rejected leaves of the Early Draft:

The influence of this most precious friendship upon my mental development was of a twofold nature. The first . . . was her effect on my ideal standard of character . . . The second was the direct operation of her intellect & character upon mine, & this came to its full height only gradually with an increasing maturity of her own thoughts & powers . . . I had always wished for a friend whom I could admire wholly, without reservation & restriction, & I had now found one. To render this possible, it was necessary that the object of my admiration should be of a type very different from me own; should be a character preeminently of feeling, combined however as I had not in any other instance known it to be, with a vigorous & bold speculative intellect. Hers was not only all this but the perfection of a poetic and artistic nature (Draft, 198-199).
Very much the sort of description James Mill gave of Wilhelmina Forbes,

who, besides being a beautiful woman, was in point of intellect and disposition one of the most perfect human beings I have ever known. We grew up together and studied together from children, and were about the best friends that either of us ever had. ¹

Both father and son came to understand their beautiful women from the point of view of tutors, and both participated in the development of a feminine mind. In addition, while James Mill had tutored many of the friends around him, including daughters of Place and Ricardo, John Stuart Mill had the responsibility of tutoring his own sisters and brothers. His advice to other people usually grew out of his role as editor, and all his life he was willing to read manuscripts and help young writers with their publications. But Harriet excited him to strive for the future and reach beyond the current political horizons. As he replied to Bain, "stimulation is what people never sufficiently allow for" (JSM, 149).

Those who feel that Mill was over-adulatory about his step-daughter should recall that she gave up her own life, with whatever motives, to devote herself exclusively to the service of Mill from 1858 to 1873; such action entitles Mill to speak of her in eulogistic terms. Helen Taylor served as his secretary and in particular handled his voluminous correspondence, and she naturally assisted Mill
by discussion of the Subjection of Women.

As ultimately published it was enriched with some important ideas of my daughter's, and passages of her writing. But in what was of my own composition, all that is most striking and profound belongs to my wife; coming from the fund of thought which had been made common to us both, by our innumerable conversations and discussions on a topic which filled so large a place in our minds (Auto, 186).

We have now examined much of the preliminary evidence and experience which enabled John Stuart Mill to write the Subjection of Women, the book which he published in 1869, "written some years before, with some additions by my daughter and myself" (Auto, 221). The substance of this book is examined in the following chapter.

The account of Mill's return to public life and his career in Parliament and in a number of protest movements, belongs to the years after he wrote the Subjection, and is outside the field of this thesis. If one may judge from the journals of the period, Subjection became his most discussed work. Public reaction was mixed; male reaction was negative. Mill's remark about the critics of his essay On Liberty would have applied equally well to the critics of the Subjection of Women, that they did not know what they were arguing for. As with so many of Mill's comments, this one remains true
What Mill argued for in the *Subjection of Women* is the topic of Chapter Six.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1 Ney MacMinn, J. R. Hainds and James McNab McCrimmon, eds., *Bibliography of the Published Writings of John Stuart Mill* (Evanston, Illinois: 1945).

2 Ibid., p. 72.


4 Guy Linton Diffenbaugh, "Mrs. Taylor Seen through Other Eyes than John Stuart Mill's," *Sewanee Review Quarterly* XXXI (1923), p. 204.


6 The Oxford University Press edition includes *On Liberty*, *Representative Government*, and the *Subjection of Women*; page citations for these three works will refer to the OUP edition.


8 Ibid., p. 33.


10 Ibid., vii.

11 Ibid., xviii.


13 Ibid., 110.


CHAPTER VI

THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

The object of the Essay is to explain, as clearly as I am able, the grounds of an opinion which I have held from the very earliest period when I had formed any opinions at all on social or political matters, and which, instead of being weakened or modified, has been constantly growing stronger by the progress of reflection and the experience of life: That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

With the above sentence, Mill begins his book. The development of his expressed opinions "from the very earliest period" has been traced in the previous chapters of this study, and it has been shown that Mill was accurate in his assertion that his opinions did not waver nor modify, that he was not altered by domination or external influence. He chooses to attack the legal position of women, as capable of correction and immediate action. The subjection of women as a moral problem
and a chief hindrance to moral improvement can only be dis-
cussed; remedial action will follow education and social
reform.

The *Subjection of Women* contains no significant ideas
which Mill had not written at least once before. The arguments
are based upon a number of assumptions Mill had always made;
that individual liberty is a basic strength; that the principle
of greatest happiness is a desirable foundation for a system
of morals; that society is advancing and progressing with
time. Having argued these notions in many previous writings,
Mill regards them as proven, assumes that his readers are
familiar with them, and uses them in arguing the case for
women. The work is divided into four chapters, which can be
summarized as follows:

Chapter I. The argument against custom. The inferior
position of women is founded in custom and general feeling.
This is no reason at all. Not having tried any other system,
we cannot defend the present inequities. History has shown us
how regard for a person is directly proportional to his power,
and history also shows us the trend toward abolishing the sub-
jection of minorities or slave groups (Mill forces an analogy
between slaves and women). Men do not know women; we are
dangerously ignorant regarding the influences which form
human character. Remove the necessity for women to marry and
give them education to support themselves, and they can become equal in performance to men.

Chapter II. The legal position of women. The legal position of women is incredibly bad, relieved only by the accident of men's behaviour. "Laws require to be adapted to bad men," and the laws must be changed. The moral position of women is low, in servitude to brute appetites and whims. The power men now have over women corrupts society, and the influence women have over men is generally selfish and contrary to social progress. Great good would arise from equality, and women must be given occupational and economic equality.

Chapter III. The abuses of power and its moral harm to the family. At the present time the power of property is being displaced by the power of earnings. Women are now denied access to public life and the professions. Who knows what women are able to do, since they have never been allowed to compete? Half the people in the world are women, and society needs this half. Physiological differences are no impairment for thinking. Women have not made a showing in the arts, but statistically this means nothing; besides, how many of the most original thoughts put forth by male writers were suggested by a woman? The education of women does not make them fit helpmeets and equals of their husbands, and thus the system is perpetuated.
Men must assist women to improve, and the whole of society will benefit.

Chapter IV. The benefits accruing from change. Women are said to be better than men, which only shows how power corrupts men. Since woman is a slave, she must have her master's permission to work for her emancipation, and men must assist. Only education will make women's public influence a moral one; now, women hold men back. Equal citizenship, equal employment, through equal education, will make women's influence moral. In this way women will cease to sacrifice everything to social considerations and the dictates of 'society', and our civilization will achieve greater happiness for all its individuals.

Mill seems to have reasoned out the position of women in the following manner: clearly, the present position of women is an inferior one, morally and legally in subjection to men. A study of the principles of power reveals how in times past men were in ascendancy, but the current position is an historical anomaly, an instance of retarded development in the general progress of society. More and more society tends toward a democratic structure, the requirement of which is that people become more equal. The present attitude which men have toward women can be explained by studying the social power structure, and the wish for power over other human beings is connected with the amount of liberty one has oneself.
The desire of power over others can only cease to be a depraving agency among mankind, when each of them individually is able to do without it: which can only be where respect for liberty in the personal concerns of each is an established principle (Subj, 544).

The subversive influence of power operates in both public and private life.

Mill shows the family to be a school of despotism, with women being dictated to by public opinion and ignorance, and having a bad influence over their husbands and their children, and fostering the continuance of their own state of subjection and inferiority. The domestic problem can be solved by making men and women equal partners in marriage, through education and through legal correction. As women are educated and fit themselves for equality, they will be greater helpmeets to their husbands and better mothers to their children, and men, women and children will all be individually happier. By making the necessary changes in the marriage laws, to provide equal rights for wives with their husbands, a marriage of equals will remove the present morally disastrous state of subjection.

The improvement of women's position in public life also depends upon education. Equal education will provide the possibility of equal employment and opportunities for economic independence. Economic control of their income and the right to own property will train them to adequate responsibility as citizens and prepare them to vote intelligently, and these new
equalities in citizenship, economic employment and education will raise women to a status equal with men. This will in turn allow women greater equality in the event that they marry, which will improve the moral environment of the family circle.

Because of the complex way in which all of these factors interact, Mill chose to deal with various aspects of the problem in turn, while constantly relating his discussion to the other connected aspects—producing an essay whose structure seems circular and involuted. One natural consequence was that he repeated himself several times on most of the principal arguments. As he had done in previous books, Mill combined with his philosophic exploration of the topic a number of stated remedies. He understood very well that his specific suggestions were largely a matter of legislation and legal action, and he attempted to stress that even if all the direct remedies were applied, the core of the problem would continue to be the marriage relationship. The attitudes of men toward women, being a matter of habit and custom, would most stubbornly resist any alteration.

Mill's concern was well-founded. Women today are entitled to cast their ballot as men do, and girls are given the same educational opportunities as boys. Many of the practising professions allow or tolerate women among their ranks, in medical, legal, educational and technical activities. A woman is recognized as a legal person, which affords her most of the
rights which were denied to women in 1862. The public today, if it thinks about the question at all, concludes that Mill's objections have been completely answered, and that the topic is closed. His examination of the family as a school of morals in our society is overlooked, although this may be the aspect of Mill's thought from which we can learn most.

In the development of his study of subjection Mill makes a number of assumptions about the attitudes of men and women in society. He assumes (as his father did) that intelligent people will agree with his arguments, and makes continued references to stupidity and intelligence. He identifies many of the problems of women as economic problems, and connects economic freedom with liberty. He assumes that most men prefer that women be kept in subjection:

Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments . . . They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds . . . they turn the whole force of education to effect their purpose (Subj, 443-4).

I believe that their disabilities elsewhere are only clung to in order to maintain their subordination in domestic life; because the generality of the male sex cannot yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal (Subj, 485).

In his examination of power, Mill develops a remark from his essay on "Civilization": "There are two elements of importance and influence among mankind: the one is, property; the other, powers and acquirements of mind" (D&D I, 163). He particularly notices the transfer of power in society to Custom--
the tyranny of English social discipline, as it affects and reduces the individual expression of women in both public and private life. (Subj. 506 & 544). He describes

the common tendency of human nature; the almost unlimited power which present social institutions give to the man over at least one human being—the one with whom he resides, and whom he has always present—this power seeks out and evokes the latent germs of selfishness in the remotest corners of his nature—fans its faintest sparks and smouldering embers—offers to him a licence for the indulgence of those points of his original character which in all other relations he would have found it necessary to repress and conceal (Subj. 470).

This power of men over women

comes home to the person and hearth of every male head of a family, and of every one who looks forward to being so. The clodhopper exercises, or is to exercise, his share of the power equally with the highest nobleman. And the case is that in which the desire of power is the strongest: for every one who desires power, desires it most over those who are nearest to him, with whom his life is passed, with whom he has most concerns in common, and in whom any independence of his authority is oftenest likely to interfere with his individual preferences (Subj, 438).

In the case of women, each individual of the subject-class is in a chronic state of bribery and intimidation combined (Subj, 439).

Above all, a female slave has (in Christian countries) an admitted right, and is considered under a moral obligation, to refuse to her master the last familiarity. Not so the wife: however brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to—though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him—he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations (Subj, 463).

Both the tone and the topic here make it easy to understand why Victorian reviewers should have reacted strongly and often
negatively to this book. ¹

Mill analyses the manner in which "an active and energetic mind, if denied liberty, will seek for power" and points out that "where liberty cannot be hoped for, and power can, power becomes the grand object of human desire" (Subj, 544).

The principle of the modern movement in morals and politics, is that conduct, and conduct alone, entitles to respect: that not what men are, but what they do, constitutes their claim to deference; that above all, merit, and not birth, is the only rightful claim to power and authority (Subj, 525).

But with the present education and position of women, the moral principles which have been impressed upon them cover but a comparatively small part of the field of virtue, and are moreover principally negative (Subj, 531). and hence, Mill points out, women pattern themselves after the dictates of society, "in that mediocrity of respectability which is becoming a marked characteristic of modern times" (Subj, 536). The man who has unpopular opinions is at war not only with the world, but with his wife. The full force of this condition might have been observed by Mill in his own family, during the years when his father had given up secure and lucrative editorial positions to write his History of India, but interrupted his work on the history to further the various reform causes of the Bentham circle, while his mother had to struggle to maintain her household at the proper standards. And the greatest evil in domestic circumstances is the one least detected, the influence of that subjection of women upon the children.
All the selfish propensities, the self-worship, the unjust self-preference, which exist among mankind, have their source and root in, and derive their principal nourishment from, the present constitution of the relation between men and women. Think what it is to a boy, to grow up to manhood in the belief that without any merit or any exertion of his own, though he may be the most frivolous and empty or the most ignorant and stolid of mankind, by the mere fact of being born a male he is by right the superior of all and every one of an entire half of the human race: ... how early the notion of his inherent superiority to a girl arises in his mind ... how early the youth thinks himself superior to his mother, owing her perhaps forbearance, but no real respect; and how sublime and sultan-like a sense of superiority he feels, above all over the woman whom he honours by admitting her to a partnership of his life (Subj, 522-23).

The remedy for this is to make women equal partners in the marriage, so that the family may become "a school of sympathy in equality, or living together in love, without power on one side or obedience on the other" (Subj, 479). At the same time, society, which is now oppressive, will become educated, and become a desirable medium for the expression and involvement of its individual members.

Many of the details which Mill uses in his exploration of the topics in the Subjection of Women have been illustrated by material which he encountered or produced in earlier years (as we have seen in earlier chapters of this study), material which he amplified and to which he gave a fuller treatment, sometimes by repeating himself. Mill's approach to the legal position of women, and the legal remedies, reflects the influence of Bentham. The remarks about men's attitudes towards women
are reminiscent of Sydney Smith. The treatment of women's problems as economic echoes William Thompson as well as Mill's own Political Economy, cited in Chapter IV. The fullest treatment of the abilities of women was given earlier by Mill in his series of letters to Comte, and still earlier in his letter to Harriet on marriage and divorce. The topic of divorce was specifically excluded from the Subjection; it was too far from his topic of "existing social relations between the sexes," and would have made it more difficult than it was to gain a rational hearing for his arguments for equality.

As Mill pointed out, the real obstacle was "opinion strongly rooted in the feelings," which, since it was irrational, could not be overcome by rational discussion. It was not that people had too little faith in argument, but they had too much faith in custom and general feeling. General feeling was uneducated and incompetent to judge, and in the Subjection of Women Mill did not address himself to the general reading public, but to the 'better' people; both the tone and the contents of the book are different in this respect from Mill's other works. He discusses at length the negative resistance of custom and the result that "unnatural generally means only uncustomary, and that everything which is usual appears natural" (Subj, 441). This thoughtless acceptance of the status quo Mill equates with stupidity, and his eloquence and rhetorical delivery extend the connection between education and attitude, as the following
extracts reveal:

I have not yet shown that it is a wrong system: but every one who is capable of thinking on the subject must see (Subj, 439).

... it will be said by no one now who is worth replying to (Subj, 475).

To see the futurity of the species has always been the privilege of the intellectual elite (Subj, 478).

men, with that inability to recognize their own work which distinguishes the unanalytic mind (Subj, 452).

It is easy to know stupid women. Stupidity is much the same the world over (Subj, 454).

That there is always among decently conducted people a practical compromise (Subj, 475).

A liberal sprinkling of Latin and French phrases and (for Mill) a large number of literary allusions indicate his intention to interest only the better-educated reader. Equally striking are the extended use of irony, even of sarcasm, and the extreme language and unwontedly strong expression. The passages quoted earlier on page 168) are specimens of emotion-laden language; an example of a very strong statement is his assertion that "in the case of women, each individual of the subject-class is in a chronic state of bribery and intimidation" (Subj, 439).

Not since his article of 1835 on Professor Sedgwick (D&D I, 95-159) (one of his early attempts in the definition of moral studies,) had Mill published passages like the following:

If an appeal be made to the intense attachments which exist between wives and their husbands, exactly as much
may be said of domestic slavery. It was quite an ordinary fact in Greece and Rome for slaves to submit to death by torture rather than betray their masters. In the proscriptions of the Roman civil wars it was remarked that wives and slaves were heroically faithful, sons very commonly treacherous. Yet we know how cruelly many Romans treated their slaves. But in truth these intense individual feelings nowhere arise to such a luxuriant height as under the most atrocious institutions. It is part of the irony of life, that the strongest feelings of devoted gratitude of which human nature seems to be susceptible, are called forth in human beings towards those who, having the power entirely to crush their earthly existence, voluntarily refrain from using that power. How great a place in most men this sentiment fills, even in religious devotion, it would be cruel to inquire. We daily see how much their gratitude to Heaven appears to be stimulated by the contemplation of fellow creatures to whom God has not been so merciful as he has to themselves (Subj., 466).

The vocabulary contrasts with the language of Political Economy:
ordinary, heroically, commonly, cruelly; intense, luxuriant, atrocious, strongest, devoted; faithful, treacherous, cruel, gratitude: a selection of words proper to the expression of moral horror.

Even if every woman were a wife, and if every wife ought to be a slave, all the more would these slaves stand in need of legal protection: and we know what legal protection the slaves have, where the laws are made by their masters (Subj., 488).

I do not know a more signal instance of the blindness with which the world, including the herd of studious men, ignore and pass over all the influences of social circumstances, than in their silly depreciation of the intellectual, and silly panegyrics on the moral, nature of women (Subj., 519).

Added to the polemic ideas in some passages is an oratorical construction:

But was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it? there was a time . . .
No less an intellect, and one which contributed no less to the progress of human thought, than Aristotle, held this opinion. . . . But why need I go back to Aristotle? Did not the slave-owners of the Southern United States maintain the same doctrine, with all the fanaticism with which men cling to the theories that justify their passions and legitimate their personal interests? Did they not call heaven and earth to witness that . . . Again, the theorists . . . Nay, for that matter, the law of force itself . . . (Subj, 440).

Mill makes a number of generalizations, and argues in either-or terms:

Any society which is not improving, is deteriorating: and the more so, the closer and more familiar it is (Subj, 540).

Men who have been much taught, are apt to be deficient in the sense of present fact; they do not see, in the facts which they are called upon to deal with, what is really there, but what they have been taught to expect. This is seldom the case with women of any ability. . . . A woman seldom runs wild after an abstraction (Subj, 495-6).

One can, to an almost laughable degree, infer what a man's wife is like, from his opinions about women in general (Subj, 455).

Throughout the book there are passages which invite an autobiographical interpretation, and passages which might be read as a tribute to Harriet Taylor, or an explanation of how she stimulated Mill in his study of the problems of life. The style of the book seems to resemble Mill's earliest writings in the 1820's, prior to his meeting Harriet; which may have suggested to some critics that Mill 'reverted' to his 'own' style after Harriet's death. There are a number of muddled sentences, in which Mill interrupts himself to qualify and over-
qualify his thought, precisely in the manner which he found to be the great offense of Bentham's latter works. Two long passages of this kind occur on pages 431 and 467, and a short specimen of the same sort is given here:

That there is always among decently conducted people a practical compromise, though one of them at least is under no physical or moral necessity of making it, shows that the natural motives which lead to a voluntary adjustment of the united life of two persons in a manner acceptable to both, do, on the whole, except in unfavourable cases, prevail (Subj, 475).

Mill seems in the Subjection of Women to be saying too much about too little, and taking far too long to make his case. The material was covered in the letters to Comte in 1843 and the Emancipation essay of 1851. Mill added his reflections concerning the moral corruption by family circumstances, but readers do not appear to notice it; the book is dismissed because, as the Concise Cambridge History of English Literature says, it "states a convincing case for rights now conceded."2 Because women today have the vote and are permitted greater access to education and the professions, observers tend to conclude that Mill's arguments are no longer relevant. However, many complaints are still made by women concerning their legal and social circumstances. It is significant that Mill in 1861 described the mode in which "one or two of the most advanced nations of the world today now live;" a century later, the women of the so-called "emerging nations" seem to undergo similar experience in assuming their modern roles in society.
Another reason for the neglect of the book is that it continues to touch the core antipathies of men against women; for reasons which Mill presented, men do not wish to know how great and good women may become. Moreover, the book is difficult to fit into the accepted pattern of Mill's philosophy. One problem continues to be the influence ascribed to Harriet Taylor. Mill shared many notions with Harriet. There is plenty of evidence to show that he held almost all of his key ideas before he met her, and it is equally probable that she held similar notions prior to meeting him: after 1834 they seem to have shared most of their important beliefs. The chief problem for some critics is their belief that Harriet was responsible for much of Mill's later work. They then construe Mill's response to Harriet's suggestions as weakness, leading to inconsistency. This theory of domination by Harriet stimulates comments regarding the way in which Mill "changed" or "retreated from radicalism" or went through periods of "reaction". This study is intended to suggest that, quite to the contrary, Mill pursued a consistent line of development, acquiring new views without abandoning the old ones; he continually modified his viewpoint, and did not 'retreat' or 'react' so much as grow and expand. What he did perceive was that his father's dependence upon rational behaviour was not wholly a secure expectation; that one could not count on society to act in its own best interest, even when properly educated. Never-
theless, in his *Subjection of Women* Mill finds it necessary to address himself to the 'better' people, to appeal to education as a reforming force, and, since there were no better alternatives, to count on the same influences as his father had counted on.

The evidence of the foregoing chapters shows that Mill was from an early age interested in the subject of women's rights and the social circumstances of the family. He had considerable opportunities of observing men and women and children in the world. Because *Subjection* analyzes the influences upon moral life, and stresses the environment and training of the earliest years, years in which children are under the care of women, Mill quite frequently follows his phrase, "if I can judge from my own case," (*Subj*, 511) and borders upon the autobiographical. And where Harriet Taylor had edited the *Autobiography* to remove Mill's lapses into revelation and domestic detail, her daughter Helen Taylor, though able to prompt Mill, did not keep him from personal involvement with his writing of *Subjection*. Just as Mill had described himself defending poetry against Roebuck, who was much better equipped emotionally to take Mill's own side of the debate, so we find Mill at the end of his life arguing a question for women, and, being affected by the values he attempts to discuss, falling sometimes into
passages of clumsy expression, which he did not manage to revise.

A reader of his works would naturally assume that, of all Mill's topics, the one to which his wife had contributed the most would be the subject of women. It is surprising to realise that Mill may not have been indebted to her for any of the principles of his discussion. Harriet Taylor probably had less influence upon the *Subjection of Women* than she had upon the essay *On Liberty*. Mill was interested in most aspects of the position of women before he met Harriet, and it is likely that he would have introduced some form of public discussion of the subject. He demonstrated throughout his life a consistent adherence to the causes of youth, causes as disparate as Irish land reform, birth control, and the ballot. His characteristic intermingling of topics would have led him at least to an examination of the legal position of women, their right to the ballot, and probably to aspects of the abuses of power over women. Apart from her role as pupil in a constant Socratic dialogue, and the attendant stimulation upon Mill, Harriet's great contribution to Mill's writings was her editing ability, best revealed in recent detailed studies of the *Political Economy* and the *Early Draft*, and supported by her correspondence with Mill. Almost certainly Harriet would have made substantial alterations to the
Subjection of Women. These changes would have included deleting most or all of the self-revealing remarks which Mill makes about family life and behaviour, and moderating the tone of the book to accord more closely with that rational quality of discussion so well known to readers of On Liberty. Indeed, Mill's study of the position of women would have more closely resembled Harriet's 1851 essay on Enfranchisement.

The Subjection of Women is not as easy a book to read as the Autobiography. Both deal with environment: Autobiography examines the environment of the mental self; Subjection examines the training environment for the moral self. That these two are related seems clear from Mill's comments in 1835 on the problem of forming a philosophy of morals:

Clear and comprehensive views of education and human culture must, therefore, precede, and form the basis of, a philosophy of morals; nor can the latter subject ever be understood but in proportion as the former is so. Even the materials, though abundant, are not complete. Of those which exist, a large proportion have never yet found their way into the writings of philosophers; but are to be gathered, on the one hand, from actual observers of mankind; on the other, from those autobiographers, and from those poets and novelists, who have spoken out unreservedly, from their own experience, and true human feeling (D&D I, 131).

Examination of the whole canon of his writings, including materials which he rejected and his correspondence, shows Mill working out problems with greater and greater acuity, as he follows his career of self-development; revising, adding,
revising, rejecting, never far away from the problems which he had tackled in his earliest years, pre-occupied with the balance between the individual and the mass of society, between the citizen and the state, between the supplicant and the Church, between idiosyncrasy and Custom: and for all these cases, attempting to define principles and write out tentative instructions, in some temporary textbook for improvement.

It is for those in whom the feelings of virtue are weak, that ethical writing is chiefly needful, and its proper office is to strengthen those feelings. But to be qualified for this task, it is necessary, first to have, and next to show, in every sentence and in every line, a firm unwavering confidence in man's capability of virtue. It is by a sort of sympathetic contagion, or inspiration, that a noble mind assimilates other minds to itself; and no one was ever inspired by one whose own inspiration was not sufficient to give him faith in the possibility of making others feel what he feels.3

These lines lend force to Mill's reply, when Bain asked him about the contribution Harriet Taylor made to his writings: "Stimulation is what people never sufficiently allow for."

As the middle chapters of this study suggest, the effect of Harriet Taylor's influence upon Mill was to support and strengthen convictions which Mill already held, and to encourage him in the expression of their shared ideas. Mill's formative years were shown to be much more normal than prior studies have suggested, and influences from his earliest years inclined Mill to become a champion of proper recognition
for women and their abilities. As well as tracing Mill's lifelong study of the abuses of power and the influences on moral development, these chapters have illustrated some of the ways in which Mill has misled his biographers. Perhaps most important, it has been shown that the *Subjection of Women*, through its autobiographical tone and the assumptions and biases it reveals, illustrates the character of the man Mill, in a way that his familiar writings do not do, as a man of feeling as well as of intellect.

John Stuart Mill followed his father in being a man "whose numerous intellectual interests and practical pursuits shatter the neat boundaries of modern specialist scholarship." The integrity of Mill's thought and behaviour, and the consistent manner in which he engaged social problems, can only be understood by an attempt to bring together all aspects of the man. Readers of Mill's more popular writings, and of the extant biographies, are not presented with any adequate overview of Mill himself. This study has attempted to suggest a number of ways in which readers have underestimated John Stuart Mill, by constructing a kind of 'Prefaces to Subjection', similar to the study made by Wishy of Mill's best-read work, *On Liberty*. Readers today find the discussion on liberty very topical. If they enjoy discussion about fundamental human problems, they should be directed to read the *Subjection of Women*. 
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI


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APPENDIX A

Biographical Extrapolation

In the preface to his biography of James Mill, Bain explains that the evidence was so scanty that "instead of making a selection from a copious mass of documents, I have been obliged to use almost everything that came into my hands." This difficulty concerning biographical evidence has affected every study published about the Mills. James Mill left as little evidence as possible about his own early life, and his eminence was the eminence of private, not public life. While John Stuart was much more of a public figure, his Autobiography confined itself to the account of his mental development. As Stillinger has shown in his analysis of the early draft, Mill suppressed most of the material which revealed details about the personal life of his family. Since there is very little direct evidence about family matters, students of the Mills look first to their published writings. To supplement these writings we have some correspondence, and private anecdotes from memoirs of people who knew or claimed to know James or John Mill and their family.

There is a serious difficulty in appraising anecdotes, the more so when they concern men who challenged the public mind and the public morals by their opinions and their behaviour. An overwhelming portion of the review articles and criticisms of
such men, while they are alive and at their death, are hostile, from political or religious or social motives, when they are not personal retorts. The public opinions about such men are thus generated by hostile interests, and by the adverse response to their ideas. more than to their persons, against their writings rather than their actions. An example of how 'reputation' will impair the truth is the case of Thomas Malthus, the mild- mannered parson whose economic theories turned his name into obloquy, generating the term, or epithet, "Malthusian," which was applied to all those who dared to entertain discussion about birth-control or population control. The publicity given to a man's opinions become confused with the man, and inevitably comes to affect the 'received' opinion about him. Even the anecdotes tend to support the adverse opinions. Because of a lack of information about their family life, this is particularly true of James and John Stuart Mill.

Bain, in his studies of the two men, presented all the evidence he could, and speculated concerning causes; but he clearly labelled his speculations as such, as befits a Scottish logician. The more recent biographers seem to have been compelled to explain John Stuart Mill, to supply him with motives and 'flesh him out', but without evidence. Imagination has been used to reconstruct the man, but it is not clearly labelled as imagination. The consequence has been that readers have formed an incorrect picture of the Mill family and their private lives, to the point where Pappe can refer to the "Harriet Taylor myth." There is also a James Mill myth, and a Mrs. Mill
myth: these latter two have not yet been identified, but they reveal their influence in the biographies. Citations from various sources will illustrate how easily the reader can be misled.

It was Gladstone who dubbed John Stuart Mill the "saint of rationalism," a label which was not attractive to some people. Courtenay, in his 1889 biography of J. S. Mill, criticized James Mill, explaining

how the logical mind of the eighteenth-century rationalist failed to correspond with the many-hued panorama of human life, how it produced a picture with clear, hard, positive outlines, which was untouched with the grace of flowing contours, and unsoftened by the changing effects of mist and cloud (p. 24).

Such prose is not sympathetic to any plain recital of facts. Courtenay summed up John's life by saying:

Let us make the full acknowledgement of our debt, and also add that while all that is worst in him belongs to the eighteenth century, all that is best is akin to the highest best spirit of the nineteenth (p. 174).

Concluding a long discussion about the extravagant praise which Mill gave to Mrs. Taylor, Courtenay explains the attraction of the Mill-Taylor mystery:

The paradox of the situation is that Mill's character has been generally regarded as somewhat cold and impassive: a character, therefore, in which it was antecedently improbable that we should find anything of the nature of a romance. As a matter of fact, he had a considerable depth of feeling, which was hidden behind a mask of icy reserve; he was not deficient by any means in sentiments and emotions of a warm and generous character. But if we may judge from his published writings, he habitually underrated the strength of passion as it exists in the majority of men (p. 115).
Courtenay exhibits in these passages the bias against rationalism, the taste for the romantic, and the propensity to "judge from his published writings;" strong disqualifications for any proper appraisal of James Mill, and almost as strong disabilities for attempting a fair portrayal of John Stuart Mill. In fact, he describes how Mill's character has come to be regarded as cold and impassive: from published writings.

More recent biographies illustrate the extent to which a reader may be persuaded through the skilful use of phrase and the careful selection of adverb. Packe (p.28) depicts friends of the Mills congratulating the family "hoarsely" on the birth of another child, and employs phrases such as "It is certain," and "in truth," to clinch a doubtful assertion. "John stepped quietly back into his old position, and his resumption of responsibility smoothed away most of the frayed contacts in his over-concentrated family" (p. 32). Here Packe conveys a variety of impressions: some not susceptible of demonstration, some at variance with the facts, some debatable, some misleading. His style is forceful: "Place, a fair-minded hard-working tailor of nearly fifty" (p. 31).

Borchard is a little more obvious:

The pathetic story of John Stuart Mill's extraordinary education is well known (p. 7).

Little did anyone suspect the thoughts that were hidden in the elegantly dressed, dark, small head, the turmoil that was stirring under Harriet's shapely bosom (p. 41).
Giving the reader a picture of Bentham seated at the organ in Ford Abbey, while John Mill absorbed the music, Borchard remarks:

By these musical hallucinations his imagination granted him intervals of self-forgetfulness that probably saved his balance at this tender age (p. 14).

The following extended citations from Bain, Packe, and Borchard show the way in which each of these authors handles factual and speculative material, and how Packe draws from Bain, Borchard from Packe. These passages incidentally illustrate how difficult it is to present a fair character of James Mill, and how convenient it is to ascribe to him the character of his writings.

Whatever may have been Lady Jane's intentions as to bringing Mill forward for the ministry, this much is clear, that for many years the principal bond of connexion between him and the Stuart family was the education of their only daughter. We do not know when Mill entered on this task, nor how it was reconciled with his private studies and his attendance at the University. The family resided in Edinburgh in winter and at Fettercairn House in summer. In Edinburgh, Mill had his own lodging, and probably went to Miss Stuart during certain hours each day. In summer he lived much at Fettercairn. It is possible that he may have been Miss Stuart's tutor before he went to Edinburgh, and may have ceased attending the Montrose Academy for some time before entering the University; in which case, he would be resident the whole year at Fettercairn, excepting the portion of time that the family may have been in Edinburgh. All this is completely in the vague. The one thing certain is that the Stuarts took him to Edinburgh instead of allowing him to proceed to Aberdeen, like the other young men of the neighbourhood, and that their only motive was the education of their child. It is also true that both Sir John and Lady Jane contracted a liking for himself that lasted with their lives; they were never tired of his company (JM, 13).
It is no easy matter to trace Mill's movements and occupations from 1790 to 1802, in that part of his time not spent at college. That he acted as private tutor in various families must be received as a fact, but the particulars handed down are very confusing. The best attested of these engagements is that connected with the Fettercairn family. We know that he acted as tutor to Miss Stuart. She was three years younger than himself; being fourteen at the time he went to college. In the year 1797 she was married, being then twenty-one; and we may reasonably suppose that her connexion with Mill as a tutor may have ceased some time before that event. If she was done with him at eighteen, in 1794, he must have taught her from the beginning of his college life, if not also before; either at Fettercairn House, in his vacations, or partly there, and partly in Edinburgh while attending classes. At any rate it must have been at an early period of his studies. She had reached an interesting age, and made a lasting impression on his mind. He spoke of her in later years with some warmth; putting it in the form of her great kindness to him; although, if we believe the traditions, the first source of all the friendship displayed towards him by the family was her mother .... In marrying the son of the banker, Sir William Forbes, .... (JM, 23-24).

Bain continues for several pages to speculate about the continued association of Wilhelmina Stuart and James Mill. As we have seen, he goes over the ground twice and more: this lends great force to his phrase, "made a lasting impression on his mind." Packe shrinks this material down:

Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart, who every year moved from Edinburgh to spend the summer in their mansion at Fettercairn, not far from Logie Pert, decided that the time had come to take some steps to educate their only daughter, prior to projecting her into Edinburgh society. As Lady Jane Stuart was a principal contributor to a fund for training suitable young men for the Church, she asked her minister to name one as a tutor. He in turn asked Mr. Peters, who promptly mentioned his special protégé. Young James Mill, now seventeen, created a favourable impression by his handsome appearance, his reserved manner, and his clear grasp of knowledge. He was sent to the great University of Edinburgh, and was provided with lodgings and with his tuition fees. In return, it was required only that he should study for the Ministry, devote his spare
time to teaching the beautiful and noble girl three years younger than himself, and spend his summer vacations at Fettercairn. These not uncongenial tasks he fulfilled unexceptionably. His young charge, when taken from his care at the age of eighteen, was so well versed in all the graces, that on her début in Edinburgh she rocked the heart of Sir Walter Scott into a romantic passion. She then married the son of a banker, bore him a son who afterwards became a Professor of Natural History, and died (Packe, 5-6).

Apparently from some other sources, Packe has determined more accurately than Bain that Mill did not teach Wilhelmina until he was seventeen, and that he only taught her for four years. And Packe gives no hint of any interest by Mill in his pupil.

Borchard sketches in gratuitous details:

When he was seventeen Sir John and Lady Jane engaged him as tutor to their only daughter, Wilhelmina, aged fourteen. For four years James taught her, at Edinburgh during term time, and in the summer at Fettercairn. The intelligent, poetical girl became James' first and only true love. It is not known what her feelings were for the handsome, blue-eyed young tutor. Later, she inspired romantic passion in Sir Walter Scott. James Mill had strong, even vehement, feelings, which he early learnt to bridle by an iron will. But all his life he softened at the thought of the small cottage by the North Water Bridge from which he used to make his way across the brightly tinkling burn through the green meadows sweet with thyme and broom, to the old Scottish Manse of Logie. There, warmly welcomed by the frank, boisterous Sir John and gentle and pious Lady Jane, he taught his young lady-love and browsed in the library to his heart's content (Borchard, 4).

"Boisterous Sir John" is described by Bain in a footnote:

It is not easy to find out what sort of man Sir John Stuart was. Few people can give any account of him. He was not even honoured with a newspaper paragraph on his death. The popular tradition makes him out haughty and ill-tempered; but, after hearing all that could be said in his own locality, I was led to the conclusion, that he was a just-minded and really generous man, though somewhat imperious; he could not bear to be thwarted. Lady Jane was revered for every virtue. Sir John's steady attachment to James Mill entitles him to honourable remembrance (JM, 10).
The necessity of drawing these biographical styles to the attention of the reader is underlined by such appraisals as those of Maurice Cranston, whose *John Stuart Mill* (London, 1958) is Number 99 of the pamphlet series *Writers and Their Work* published for the British Council and the National Book League. Cranston calls Packe's book "the definitive biography: a substantial and richly documented work." Borchard's is "a short book, which supplements, but in no way replaces M. St. J. Packe's biography." Cranston also continues to list Mill's date of death, incorrectly, as 8 May, 1873, instead of 7 May, as Hayek, Packe and Borchard do.

H. O. Pappe, in his *John Stuart Mill and the Harriet Taylor Myth* (Melbourne 1960) attacks the assumptions of Packe and Borchard regarding the influence of Harriet, dealing among other works with the *Political Economy* and how the changes in it need not reflect the influence of Mrs. Taylor.

None of Harriet's arguments, however, touched on the core of the *Political Economy*. They concerned changes of emphasis as they are natural in subsequent editions of a monumental work. These arguments are dramatized or rather melodramatized by Packe out of all proportion. Mrs. Borchard's account must be described as misleading (p. 41). Pappe concludes (p. 47) that "the wide claims made by Mill's new biographers for Harriet's intellectual ascendancy cannot be substantiated".
APPENDIX B

Logical Religion

Harriet Taylor was seventeen when Milton's translated *De Doctrina Christiana* was published. Milton was much quoted, in prose and in verse. He was the pioneer philosopher for many of these people, in ecclesiastical liberty and in domestic liberty; in the education of children, marriage, and divorce, and the liberty of the press: these were the proper concerns of any practical philosopher. Those who did not read Bentham read Milton. Many people read both: the essays on religious prosecutions and toleration in the *Westminster Review* cite freely from both Bentham and Milton.

Bayle's Dictionary concisely explains Milton's concern about liberty and his books.

Domestick and Civil, which were of no less Importance [than Ecclesiastical Liberty]. That he made use of his Pen for the Domestick Liberty while the Magistrates were labouring very earnestly for Civil Liberty. That having consider'd that Domestick Liberty related to three things, Marriage, the Education of Children, and the right of Philosophizing without restraint, he wrote upon Divorce, and show'd that the Gospel had not chang'd the Law under which the Jews liv'd as to this matter; and that it would be in vain to cry Liberty, Liberty in the Publick Assemblies, if a Man was a Slave at Home to that Sex which is inferiour to ours. That afterwards he wrote about the Education of Children, and lastly about the Liberty of the Press, that a small number of unjudicious Men, and who most times are resolv'd to suppress every thing that
is not consistent with popular Opinions, may not deter­mine by a final Judgment what ought, and what ought not to be Printed.\textsuperscript{1}

In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton was revealed to have discarded the Trinity; he gave up the Holy Ghost, questioned the phrase "Original Sin", while holding the doctrine of Atonement and of Homogeneity of man, and of the extinction of the whole man at death. Milton was hailed by a reviewer in the *Monthly Repository* as a Unitarian—the first Unitarian, before John Locke, whom they also claimed.\textsuperscript{2}

As the 1844 article in *Dial* explained, Unitarianism was a logical religion:

> If one deny innate ideas, he adopts a system of philo­sophy that is sensuous, for it traces the origin of all ideas to the senses; - it is empirical, for it teaches that we can know nothing except by experience; - and it is mechanical, for it ascribes to nature a casuality different from that of God. If he have a logical con­sistency in all his opinions and feelings, he is a Unitarian in his theology, a Whig in his politics, and a conservative in everything.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary* ran through four English editions, the latest in 1826, and was core curriculum for philosophy students.

\textsuperscript{2}See *Monthly Repository* XX (1825), 609-613; 687-692; etc.

\textsuperscript{3}"The Unitarian Movement in New England," *Dial* I (1840-1), 417.
This philosophy, by making the soul a mere tabula rasa, a mere capacity, denies the possibility of innate depravity or original sin. It denies all spontaneity of soul. It denies that there is a tendency of any kind, and maintains that we sin through the influence of bad education, example, and so forth... this philosophy denies innate depravity, and consequently we need no Saviour... Man can effect his own regeneration.

This religion is near to the dry philosophy which young John Stuart Mill tried to supplement by turning to poetry, in his effort to find something more than logic in life.

APPENDIX C

Decency

In his letter to Harriet Taylor on marriage and divorce, John Stuart Mill cited in a note the following definitions by Robert Owen:

Chastity, sexual intercourse with affection;

Prostitution, sexual intercourse without affection.¹

The socialist thinkers in both France and England expressed similar notions. Richard Carlile seems to have followed these definitions literally. He formally separated from his wife in December, 1832, and published the following statement in The Gauntlet for 22 September, 1833:

Many months did not elapse before we stood pledged to a moral marriage, and to a resolution to avow that marriage immediately after my liberation. I took the first opportunity of doing it, as I now take the first of explaining the introduction. As a public man, I will be associated with nothing that is to be concealed from the public. Many, I know, will carp upon my freedom as to divorce and marriage; and to such persons I say, if they are worth a word, that I do so because I hate hypocrisy, because I hate everything that is foul and indecent, because I will not deceive anyone. I have led a miserable wedded life through twenty years, from disparity of mind and temper; and, for the next twenty, I have resolved to have a wife in whom I may find a companion and helpmeet. . . . I will make one woman happy, and I will not make any other woman unhappy. RICHARD CARLILE.

P. S.—I would not have intruded this matter upon the public notice had it not been intended that the lady, as

¹Hayek, pp. 74 and 291.
well as myself, will continue to lecture publicly. We are
above deception. Our creed is truth, and our morals nothing
but is morally and reasonably to be defended. Priestcraft
hath no law for us; but every virtue, everything that is
good and useful to human nature in society, has its
binding law on us. We will practise every virtue and war
with every vice. This is our moral marriage and our bond
of union. Who shall show against it any just cause or
impediment?

Carlile's new wife wrote her own defense in 1834:

There are those who reproach my marriage. They are
scarcely worth notice; but this I have to say for myself,
that nothing could have been more pure in morals, more
free from venality. It was not only a marriage of two
bodies, but a marriage of two congenial spirits; or two
minds reasoned into the same knowledge of true principles,
each seeking an object on which virtuous affection
might rest, and grow, and strengthen. And though we
passed over a legal obstacle, it was only because it could
not be removed, and was not in a spirit of violation of
the law, nor of intended offence or injury to any one.
A marriage more pure and moral was never formed and con-
tinued in England. It was what marriage should be,
though not perhaps altogether what marriage is in the
majority of cases. They who are married equally moral,
will not find fault with mine; but where marriage is
merely of the law, or for money, and not of the soul, there
I look for abuse.  

In his study of Victorian morality and sexual mores,  
Cyril Pearl speaks (p. 12) of "the myth of Victorian purity"
which was exhibited in novels written or edited to accommodate
Mrs. Grundy: "The Victorian biographer was a willing accom-
plice in this conspiracy against truth. He suppressed or
distorted secretly and shamefully" (p. 15). The taking of

2 Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, Charles Bradlaugh, 2 vols.
(London, 1902).

3 Cyril Pearl, The Girl with the Swansdown Seat (New York,
1955).
mistresses was a commonplace. Pearl cites Charles Buller and many other notable Victorians having mistresses (pp. 81-83). "The more cultivated Victorian, of course, had no illusions about the paralysis of the contemporary novel" (p. 14).

Michael Sadleir's biography of Bulwer-Lytton illustrates a number of the social pressures of the period. Bulwer married Anna Wheeler's youngest daughter Rosina, and the marriage was a spectacular failure from 1833 on. Sadleir gives his summary of the situation as follows:

The secret of Bulwer's extra-marital love affairs has been well kept. The liaison which provoked Rosina's letters was the first of a considerable series and one of the longest-lived. The woman with whom he formed a connection in 1835 was still with him in the early forties, and it is to her that reference is made in a private diary quoted by Lord Lytton and written about 1840. As the years passed, other mistresses came and went. Without the sympathy and companionship of someone who would cheer him in times of depression, allow him to forget the world in enjoyment of her uncritical affection, Bulwer could never have survived the years of drudgery and loneliness which were the four remaining decades of his life. Such private relaxation was necessary to him, and that he procured it was no concern of anyone but himself. It is even comprehensible that he should more than once have deliberately denied the existence of his left-handed amours. One may regret the falsehood, while appreciating its impulse. Bulwer was never a person of great moral courage, and the society in which he lived was based on the assumption that, even if irregularities existed, they must never be admitted.4

Mill had occasion to know quite a number of unhappily married persons. John Black, the editor of the Morning Chronicle,

had a disastrous marriage to a friend's mistress, and left his wife to take a home in the London suburbs where he lived out of sight socially with his common-law wife. Albany Fonblanque, editor of the *Examiner*, was also unhappily married. It was Carlyle who said "How delicate, how decent is English biography, bless its mealy mouth," and a medical text of 1857 asserted that "it was a vile aspersion to call women capable of sexual feeling." Just this sort of attitude provided the censorship which has made holes in Victorian biography.