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WILLIAM HURRELL MALLOCK; AN INTELLECTUAL
BIOGRAPHY.

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WILLIAM HURRELL MALLOCK: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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of the requirements for the degree of
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1877, while he was not yet thirty, William Hurrell Mallock (1849-1923) won an almost instant literary reputation with the publication of the best book he ever wrote, The New Republic, or Culture, Faith and Philosophy in an English Country House. It was an immediate popular success, went through eight editions before 1900, and was much discussed, reviewed, attacked, and praised. Disraeli placed The New Republic in a "genuinely original trio" which included his own Popanilla and Oliphant's Piccadilli. "In that department of satire and fantasy to which they belonged, I cannot recall any other works owing so little in ideas and execution to other writers of the time."¹ As late as 1950, The New Republic was still being used in courses on Victorian thought in British universities.²

The strength, interest, and value of The New Republic rested on Mallock's artful and witty attacks on various shades of theological compromise and religious liberalism which developed after faith and scientific reason collided in the Victorian consciousness. It is a document for the student of thought since it was Mallock's method to use his work as a symposium for the greatest ideas and minds of the day. He undertook to demolish logical support for positions ranging from Broad Church

theology through the Religion of Humanity to extreme materialism. He presented and reduced to absurdity leading Victorian figures like Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley. He disguised no one. His friends and his enemies poured forth their most cherished notions and, with a little help from Mallock, appeared either sublime or ridiculous. In short, Mallock's novel was a period piece in the best sense of that term.

He wrote and published almost constantly and produced over forty books and fifty articles between his first prize-winning poetry in 1871, and his final Memoirs in 1920. In addition to The New Republic, his most successful work, Mallock wrote nine novels, several volumes of poems, commentary on Lucretius, seven full length studies of religious questions, five volumes of social philosophy, and a small library of tracts against socialism and political egalitarianism.

Mallock's work is easily divisible into two large sections. The first concerned the religious and philosophical questions raised in The New Republic. Even after he had begun his lengthy, multi-volumed assault on socialism, which constituted the second portion of his work, he continued to pursue theological and religious questions. Mallock was interested in and involved in nearly every important controversy of his day and his work is a kind of

guide to some of the important questions which concerned the Victorian intellectual establishment.

Mallock had a rich intellectual background and his writing was informed, intelligent, and filled with some of the most interesting presentations of intellectual problems to appear in fiction. In his novels he dealt, in very engaging ways, with the possibility of social reform, the problem of sustaining faith in the modern world, the question of free will, the limits of democracy, the fallacies of socialist thought, and the impact of the idea of the unconscious on traditional morality. He was most closely concerned with the idea of God and religion and with his concept of the special function and value of aristocracy. His major activities, the true passions of his life, were articulating these concepts and protecting them from what he called the modern view. His life was his work and his work was writing.

After the initial success of The New Republic, Mallock began to contribute fairly regularly to such journals as Nineteenth Century, Fortnightly Review, Spectator, and others. His spirited attacks on religious disbelief in Is Life Worth Living (1879) occasioned two book length rejoinders, inspired some controversy on both sides of the Atlantic, and produced a series of lengthy book reviews. In 1889, Mallock was asked to participate

in a kind of "state of the question" debate entitled Christianity and Agnosticism with, among others, T.H. Huxley. His Aristocracy and Evolution (1898) led to an exchange of letters with Herbert Spencer, initiated by the latter.³ Mallock soon mattered enough to be attacked by G.B. Shaw, critically reviewed by T.H. Huxley, and to have his integrity questioned by the economist J.A. Hobson.⁴

Mallock's reputation as an adversary of socialism gained him an invitation from the Civic Federation of New York to come to America and speak against socialism at leading eastern universities in 1907. His lectures received considerable coverage from The New York Times and he exchanged accusations with socialist spokesmen in its pages.⁵ Mallock's appearances here led Daniel DeLeon to reveal his own shortcomings as a polemicist in a pamphlet entitled Marx on Mallock or Fact v. Fiction.⁶

In an essay on Mallock published in 1917, six years before Mallock's death, James Robinson Huneker, an historian of culture and music, remarked on both the brilliance of his reputation and his subsequent decline: "Not forty years ago, he was the most discussed author of his day His ideas were boldly seized upon by the men of the nineties, yet today it is hard to get a book of his."⁷

Mallock's prominence during the late Victorian period is evident in the fact that a collection entitled Library of the World's Best Literature, published in 1898, included Mallock in the same volume as Macaulay, Machiavelli, James Madison, Manzoni, and Andrew Marvell. Mallock's obituary in The London Times remembered him by noting that "for more than forty years his books have furnished rich intellectual entertainment, as well as instruction of a high order."⁸

The precipitous decline of Mallock's reputation and readership does not necessarily testify to any lack of ability or insight in his writing. Rather, it may reflect a change in the social and cultural realities of post World War I Britain. Mallock's last and perhaps best study, The Limits of Pure Democracy, appeared in the same year that the war ended.

The experience of the war in Britain and elsewhere had created a new attitude toward democracy. The war had been fought by the masses and they had worked, bled, and died throughout the long ordeal. The importance of the common man and woman in the factory or the trenches was irrefutable.

At the propaganda level, the victory of the allies had generated a kind of mystique about the rightness or goodness of democratic societies. There were probably few

Britons who had not heard of Woodrow Wilson's claim that World War I was fought to make the world safe for democracy. Versailles Europe, the new Europe created by the victors at the Versailles Conference, was a whole new democratic central and eastern Europe. And, in 1918, the Representation Act enfranchised all women and relaxed suffrage requirements for all British voters. All in all, democracy's time had come.

Simply put, Mallock may have written the right book, but he wrote it at the wrong time.

¹Remark made by Disraeli to T.H.S. Escott at a dinner party at which Mallock was to have been presented to Disraeli, but was not. See T.H.S. Escott, Great Victorians: Memories and Personalities (New York, 1916), p. 288. Also see Ralph Nevill, Life and Letters of Lady Dorothy Nevill (New York, 1919), p. 199. In this memoir of his mother, Ralph Nevill noted that The New Republic "created a considerable sensation" in the very fashionable circles in which his mother was a prominent hostess.

²W.H. Mallock, The New Republic or Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House, ed., J. Max Patrick (Gainesville, Florida, 1950), p. xxxi. Hereafter cited as The New Republic.

³W.H. Mallock, Memoirs of Life and Literature (New York, 1920), p. 266. Hereafter cited as Memoirs.

⁴See J.A. Hobson, "Mr Mallock as a Political Economist," Contemporary Review (No. 74, 1898), 528-40, and G.B. Shaw, Socialism and Superior Brains (London, 1910).

⁵See a reprint of these in The Mallock Wilshire Argument (New York, 1907).

⁶Considering DeLeon's stature in the American Socialist Movement, the weakness of this piece is surprising. He understood Mallock's error, but seemed unable to argue against it. That is, he detected Mallock's habit of making Marx say manual labor and it alone, had produced the world's wealth. While DeLeon denied that Marx ever said such a thing, the quotes he adduced from Marx as proof, were far off the intended mark. See Daniel DeLeon, Marx on Mallock or Fact v. Fiction (New York, 1908), pp. 2-22, passim.

⁷James Robinson Huneker, Unicorns (New York, 1917), pp. 151-52.

⁸The Times (London), April 5, 1923, p. 12.

I. THE EARLY YEARS

William Hurrell Mallock was born at Cheriton Bishop near Crediton, Devonshire on February 7th, 1849. His father was rector of that parish and his family had held land and church livings in the West Country for several generations. His ancestors and relatives included several knights but no peers or hereditary aristocrats.¹

While he was himself of the gentry class, after gaining prominence as a writer, he cultivated the acquaintance of the nobility. There are any number of Lords and Ladies mentioned as close friends in the Memoirs. He frequently visited some of them, like Lady Dorothy Nevill,² Lord and Lady Harrinton, Lord Houghton, Lady Erskine and others, and was received at the highest levels of fashionable society. Whatever his own social origins, he identified very strongly with the aristocracy and it was this class that played a central role in his novels and social philosophy.

Aside from his Memoirs, very little is known about Mallock's life. He never married, had no children, never stayed in one place very long, and certainly never inspired a Boswell. The Memoirs tell us virtually nothing

about Mallock's family³ except that it was landed, comfortably well off and had intermarried with some fine West Country families. With Richard Hurrell and James Anthony Froude as maternal uncles, he had some notable relatives; however, besides registering their existence, Mallock barely mentioned them.⁴

The Memoirs are in no way personal. They are polished, controlled, polite, interesting and witty in spots, but not revealing of the man who wrote them. As a result of his own reticence and the lack of interest in a Mallock biography by his contemporaries, almost everything we will ever know about him must come from his work.

The few attempts to write a biographical sketch of him contain almost nothing important that is not in the Memoirs. The most comprehensive search of Mallock's past was made by Professor J. Max Patrick in preparation for his excellent annotated edition of The New Republic.⁵ Some of the reminiscences collected by Patrick are informative:

W.H. Mallock was a glorious snob and incurable romantic under a dry manner. He could not recite poetry which moved him without actual tears and a break in his voice. He was amused by and interested in children - especially little girls - and loved drawing pictures and telling ghost stories. He was small,

plump, bald, with a long wisp of hair brushed upwards over his head. To this may be added a small waxed mustache, twinkling grey eyes, and a slight limp. He smoked incessantly. In the country he wore London clothes and a bowler hat. He loved good food, hated exercise, and carried a gold headed cane behind his back as he walked, whether in town or country.⁶

In the years that passed since his triumph, for the reception of his first book cannot be called less, his rather cynical temper of mind had become accentuated, until he had grown to distrust all intelligence and artistic perception, and had been turned by hardening of the arteries into a pillar of prejudice.⁷

In seeming confirmation of this observation, the obituary in The Times (London) referred to a growing loneliness that accompanied Mallock's later years.⁸

The one clear personal feeling of Mallock's which emerged despite the reticence of the Memoirs, and which was also the key to his social philosophy, was his love of the aristocracy and the aristocratic way of life. Nearly all of his novels featured titled aristocrats as the main protagonists.

One of the clearest impressions created by my (Mallock) childhood is that of the essentially correct nature of hierarchical society.... Society was presented to us in the form of two immemorial orders - the men, the women, and children who touched their hats and curtsied, and the

men, women, and children to whom these salutations were made.⁹

All of his characters were made in the same mold, that is, they were his rendition of late nineteenth century British aristocracy. They ate, drank, dressed, travelled, and talked in a special and refined manner. Mallock's pages teemed with the delicately detailed portraits of the fashionable society he preferred and the events of the various seasons, activities, and travels of the better sort (as he would have it) filled his works. However, he was not a novelist of manners. All this upper class grandeur merely served as staging for the presentation of Mallock's views on questions of the day.

He loved the aristocratic way of life but was aware of its limitations. One of his better novels, The Old Order Changes, attempted to resolve the conflict between his view of aristocratic social mission and the insensitivity of contemporary aristocracy to any mission at all. Much of his writing supported the idea that an aristocracy with clear and special perquisites was necessary to the health of any society.

References to the homes and haunts of upper class Englishmen appear in nearly everything he wrote. Indeed, one of his novels, A Human Document, was born out of,

among other things, the pleasure he got from recreating the castles and countryside he saw while on holiday in Hungary.¹⁰ Some of the warmest moments in the early chapters of the Memoirs are found in his descriptions of the country homes he had access to as a child.¹¹ We do not read very much about the people in these homes; however, there was real affection in his tableaux of the family chapel, its quarterings, coats of arms, and hatchments. Page after page is devoted to beautiful homes, grand stairways, impressive chandeliers, Italian ceilings, fine furniture, stained glass, and all of the paraphernalia of cultured, comfortable life in the country.

There was an ambiance in all these family estates which made a deep and permanent impression upon him. Nearly everything he mentioned was a creature of fashionable society, lovingly remembered: Powdered footmen, dishes once owned by Louis Philippe, pate de foie gras from the French Rothschilds, and wines from the Austrian Emperor.

However, in the warp and woof of the fabric of that fine life he loved so much, there seemed to be a profound loneliness. His parents appeared in the Memoirs only long enough to die and his sister did not appear at all. There was no great friend, cherished associate, or lover. But, there were scores of very old and very beautiful buildings. This loneliness pervaded many of his novels

which were overflowing with characters whose attraction for each other was blighted by some terrible circumstance which prevented their emotional union.

In several of the novels, the young heroes (usually just out of Oxford) were afflicted with a malaise which paralyzed their ability to love. Their central concerns were deep spiritual or intellectual problems with which they were obsessed. The New Republic established a pattern which repeated itself at least five times in other works. A young man, wounded by the materialism and skepticism he contracted at Oxford, was bereft of purpose and spent most of his time asking other people if anything meant anything anymore. Is Life Worth Living? was a nonfictional account of the same problem.

The love relationships in the books were horribly wooden and the problems always much more powerful than the people who never had a chance because they were always subordinated to the ideas. Nearly all of Mallock's novels, even the lighter ones, were essentially cerebral in content with characters tormented by all the things that tormented him. This was probably why some of the plots and story lines were rather weak. His characters were social, theological, and philosophical ideas ill-disguised as real people.

Mallock's fascination with literature, writing,

and ideas went back to his early childhood. As soon as the young Mallock could write, he discovered and devoured Fielding's novels and tried to write novelettes after his fashion. He dedicated verses to his nursery maids before he could hold a pen. While still a child, he went through Wordsworth, Pope, Dryden, and Tennyson and aspired to become a poet himself. He loved Jane Austin's work before he was ten.

One of the most personal reminiscences in the Memoirs is that of the little William stealing into his grandfather's library, locking the door, sitting upon an old rocking horse, and pouring over naughty French romances and other works which had been forbidden him. After quitting the library he would return to his room and write poetry by candlelight while he was supposed to be asleep. From the first, his books and ideas seem to have been the primary thing in his life. Indeed, he seemed to have been much more attached to his first authors than to any of his family.

In addition to the fine country homes, genteel people, and cherished books of his childhood, the other very important, formative factor in his youth was religion. His father was a rector of the Church of England, his maternal grandfather as archdeacon, his godfather a vicar, and several of his best remembered family friends were

clerics. He was looked after by "super orthodox governesses," went to the Sunday sermons regularly, and was required to write out each sermon afterwards. Even as a young lad, he found questioning of the Bible's veracity or of the authenticity of miracles to be "absurd and blasphemous." The school he attended, which he did not name, combined academic subjects with the "inculcation of the extremest principles of the High Church Anglican part."¹³

Mallock's formative years coincided with the development of the Oxford movement under the leadership of John Keble, John Henry Newman, Richard Hurrell Froude, and Edward Pusey. This High Church wing of the Church of England developed affinities for Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. Newman, the real intellectual center of the movement, stressed a return to doctrines which had been nearly abandoned in the Anglican church. He asked for a reaffirmation of the apostolic succession, the interpretation of the sacrament as the true source of grace and he advocated a return to the deep piety, self-denial, and discipline of the early Catholic Church. After Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism, the movement continued along the same lines and was known as Anglo-Catholicism. It is interesting to note that Mallock always maintained that if any form of Christianity made sense, it

was Roman Catholicism. High Anglican belief was a ubiquitous and powerful force in his earliest years.

Mallock was to have been sent to Harrow; however, while he was coming under the influence of Anglicanism, he was growing to hate football and cricket and so his father decided to send him to a private tutor. He became the student of the Rev. W.B. Philpot who had been a "favourite pupil of Dr. Arnold's at Rugby."¹⁴ Philpot first exposed Mallock to theological liberalism and shocked him with the assertions that dissenters might also achieve salvation and that all religious dogmatism was tainted with the "apostasy of Babylonian Rome."¹⁵ This theological liberalism, introduced by Philpot and later compounded at Oxford, haunted Mallock for the rest of his life.

¹His great grandfather is listed as one of the Mallocks of Cockington in Walfords' County Families of the United Kingdom (1871).

²Nevill, Letters of Lady Dorothy Nevill, p. 199.

³We have to read elsewhere to discover that Mallock had a sister.

⁴Both Richard Hurrell Froude (1803-1836) and his brother James Anthony Froude (1818-1894) were important, in different ways and varying degrees, in the Oxford Movement which began in the 1830's. Hurrell became an intimate friend of John Henry Newman and was a consistent advocate of restructuring the Anglican church so as to restore some liturgical ceremony and beliefs very close to Catholicism. James Anthony Froude was part of this circle after his brother's death, but he eventually came to deeply question Newman's faith and made his doubt public in his Nemesis of Faith (1849). He was also author of the popular History of England and a noted biographer of Thomas Carlyle. Mallock said almost nothing about Hurrell who died before his birth. However, his uncle James introduced him to Thomas Carlyle whose behavior and dirty clothing shocked and revolted the young Mallock who was then at Oxford. See Memoirs, pp. 64-65.

⁵Patrick's book was written in 1950 while he was at the University of Florida. It is valuable because Patrick went to England, interviewed people and got leads on friends and acquaintances of Mallock but there were few friends left and they had little to say about him. There were no immediate relatives and no papers or manuscripts known to anyone. My inquiry to The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts revealed nine letters from Mallock on file. Eight were sent to T.H.S. Escott in the mid 1880's and one to Sir Edmund Gosse in 1923. There are no papers, manuscripts, or diaries on record. See The New Republic, p. xxxii.

⁶Ibid., an unidentified correspondent of Patrick.

⁷Sir Osbert Sitwell, "Laughter in the Next Room," quoted by Patrick in The New Republic, p. xxxiii.

⁸The Times (London), April 5, 1923, p. 12.

⁹Memoirs, p. 27.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 278.

¹¹His favorite country home, Cockington Court, was near Torquay in the West Country.

¹²In a review of the Memoirs, one critic guessed that Mallock's special, splendid surroundings may have been one of the most important formative sources of his social philosophy. See R.M. Lovett, "The Making of a Tory," LXX, (1920), 217-22.

¹³Memoirs, pp. 37-38.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 45.

II. THE OXFORD YEARS

By 1869, Mallock's first year at Balliol College, the intellectual climate at Oxford had changed considerably. In 1830 most informed people were able to reconcile conventional religious belief with what they knew of science; but, by 1850, "Genesis and geology went to war."¹ Higher Criticism had raised serious questions about the veracity of the Bible, and soon thereafter, Darwinism had led many to doubt the story of creation. All this new information led educated laymen and clerics to reexamine their religious beliefs. Some attempted to square their old religion with the new truths of science and some simply refused to allow that one had anything to do with the other. "The resulting argument governed the intellectual history of Victorian England."²

Darwinism, because of its scientific soundness, had a catalytic effect on all these scientific and intellectual trends. The Origin of the Species (1859) precipitated the acceptance of the idea of evolution by the scientific community. It had been suggested before but had never been so well presented and documented. Darwin's account of evolution flatly contradicted the usually accepted version of providential, beneficent, and once and

for all complete creation. While Darwin himself avoided attacking the Bible, other advocates of evolution, notably T.H. Huxley, concluded that Darwin had provided the scientific sanction necessary to deny the divine inspiration of the Bible. Darwin's description of the process of natural selection as the mechanism of evolution had profoundly disturbing effects on traditional religious beliefs.³ As Darwin described it, natural selection seemed to perpetuate certain species and annihilate others because some happened to adapt successfully and others happened not to. In a word, chance lay at the heart of evolution, not preordained harmony, and not providential order. Such an idea completely changed one's idea of the creator. If the creator set the process in motion and preordained its course, then the creator must be credited with the ugliest parts of the process of evolution as well as its most desirable aspects.

If God is to be celebrated for the beauty and majesty of the natural order, he must also be held accountable for the pain, suffering, and viciousness inherent in the development of evolution. Darwin's work, as it became known and began to spawn Darwinism, confirmed so many suspicions and raised so many questions about conventional religious belief that many educated people simply abandoned that belief.

Nothing in British intellectual life remained the same after the injection of Darwinism into its mainstream. Some welcomed it as fresh support for science and positivism in general and others damned it as a terrible blow to traditional religious belief. Indeed, the publication of the Origin of Species may be the most important intellectual watershed in the later half of British nineteenth century thought. There was so much profound change in British thought as a result that the whole period can be better understood by using "before" and "after" Darwin as reference points.⁴

Yet Darwin's work was neither the first nor the last important sally in the war between orthodox faith and science. Sir Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-1833), the thrust of which was to make the Genesis story of creation seem scientifically impossible, had made considerable impact on the informed public and made acceptance of Darwin's work easier. Such scientific scrutiny of Christianity's tenets produced works profoundly disturbing to orthodox believers.

The study of Jesus' life (1835) by D.F. Strauss, the German biblical critic, whose arguments tried to reduce the whole of Christian belief to myth; the work of Ernest Renan, the French historian whose Life of Jesus (1863) attempted to reduce Jesus to merely human status with the

aid of rigorous scientific historical research; and the publication of Bishop John William Colenso's Critical Examination of the Pentateuch (1862-79) which seriously questioned the historical veracity of the five books of Moses, all made a deep and never healing wound in the body of conventional religious thought.

There was a great deal more involved here than religious ideas, but religion was what mattered most to Mallock, the undergraduate. He felt that the crisis of faith was the central event of later nineteenth century British thought.⁵ And he soon saw Benjamin Jowett, who had become Master of Balliol almost at the same time that he began his studies, as a demon of compromise who stood at the center of what Mallock sensed to be a kind of liberal conspiracy against faith, a conspiracy called the Broad Church movement.⁶

The attempt to restate Christian belief in the face of the new evidence led to the development of a school of divinity within Anglicanism usually described as the Broad Church movement. Its most prominent figures were Frederick Maurice, Arthur Stanley, Benjamin Jowett, and Baden Powell. The movement caused a considerable stir at Oxford and Maurice was driven from his position at Kings College for questioning the idea of eternal punishment. Powell may have been the most radical member of this group

in that he very early endorsed the concept of evolution while eschewing the Genesis account of creation and denied the possibility of miracles. Jowett, Powell, and others issued a kind of manifesto of their beliefs in Essays and Reviews (1860). Of all these figures it was Jowett who had the greatest effect on Mallock.

Mallock's spiritual devastation at Balliol began with a funeral sermon given by Jowett for a young man who had been driven to suicide allegedly by Oxford's religious liberalism. Jowett took a passage from the New Testament, the one about the care one should take before casting stones at others, and then, in a very singular procedure for a sermonizer, proceeded to demolish the authenticity of the quotation. He "insisted ... on how much is doubtful in what the Gospels record as the sayings of our Lord generally."⁷ He concluded by observing that since we know so little that Christ certainly said and even less that he certainly meant, we were in no position to condemn anyone. Mallock felt that the sermon betrayed a "mordant and petulant animus against the Christian religion as a whole, if regarded as miraculously revealed or as postulating the occurrence of any definite miracle."⁸ For Mallock, that sermon and its ramifications was one of the experiences at Oxford which "went to the very roots of life."⁹

Jowett epitomized an attitude Mallock discovered

everywhere at Oxford. It seemed that all the Balliol dons shared "the foregone conclusion" that traditional theology was as dead as Aristotelian astronomy. They rejected nearly all he held dear on the basis of what they usually termed science and then erected some solemn system of quasi-scientific ethics to replace Christian morality.¹⁰

Mallock was not able simply to retreat into passionate reaffirmations of his beliefs. If he had been of that temperment, his life would probably have been different. As he was exposed to more and more science, criticism, denial, and liberalism, his certainty disintegrated and the process terrified him.

Altogether, Oxford left Mallock bereft of his old faith, without a new one, and in terrible agony at having to live in such a spiritual vacuum. Perhaps Mallock's best description of his mood upon leaving Oxford lay in the words of the character who played host to the guests assembled in The New Republic, Otho Laurence. Laurence, a recent graduate of Oxford and spiritually adrift,¹¹ told an interlocuter who challenged his bleak mood, that: "[Without religion] life stares at us ... all blank and expressionless, like the eyes of a lost friend, who is not dead, but who has turned into an idiot."¹²

In time, Mallock became aware of one ramification

of the new faith which had previously eluded him. The liberals all seemed to think that the eradication of the traditional articles of Christian faith would make no significant difference in the lives of men. This was perhaps the crowning idiocy of liberals: they were unaware of what they were destroying.¹³ He always maintained that Christianity, better than any other faith or philosophy, established a framework which made life not only morally significant, but more exciting, more demanding, more emotionally satisfying, and simply more worth living. However, he was locked into a terrible dilemma: no matter how deficient liberalism might have been in replacing the Christian way of life, it was terribly effective in destroying it. He determined to expose the weaknesses of the liberalism that was undermining it. He was not sure that his sense of the value of life would survive the destruction of Christianity and his attempt to rescue it consumed his energies for the rest of his career.

¹Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church (New York, 1966), I, p. 559.

²Ibid., p. 530.

³An excellent description of Darwin's impact on accepted belief can be found in a paper presented to the 1959 meeting of the American Philosophical Society by John C. Greene. See "Darwin and Religion," European Intellectual History Since Darwin and Marx, ed. W. Warren Wagar (New York, 1967), pp. 12-34.

⁴Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (New York, 1968), p. 205.

⁵Memoirs, p. 2.

⁶Chadwick, The Victorian Church, pp. 550-59.

⁷Memoirs, p. 80.

⁸Ibid., p. 81.

⁹Ibid. In light of all this, Mallock's remark in the Memoirs that the character representing Jowett (Dr. Jenkinson) was one of the two most important in The New Republic, is easily understood.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 82.

¹¹As will become evident in subsequent discussions, a goodly number of Mallock's leading characters were young, well-to-do gentlemen fresh from school and lost in a mood of pessimism and despair tied to religious disillusionment.

¹²The New Republic, p. 52.

¹³Ibid., pp. 84-85.

III. THE NEW REPUBLIC

In his second year at Balliol, Mallock began a long series of outlines for what became The New Republic. The text was written six or seven times and each revision clarified his hatred for what he had been taught at Oxford. His years at Balliol had left him with no firm credo and had turned all values into absurdities. In fact, it left him with the Greek epigram which became the motto emprinted on the title page of the book:

All is laughter, all is dust
all is nothingness;
For all things that are
arise out of the unreasonable.¹

The book would never have been written if that were his final conclusion. There would have been no point. However, he felt sure that such a conclusion was simply not satisfactory and so he resolved to write The New Republic as a purgative by which to rid himself of this "nothing more and nothing better than a disease."² After that, he could address himself to the foundation of a more positive philosophy.

Mallock agonized over the loss of abiding and deep personal religious faith which he found to be characteristic

of some of the best informed men and women of his age. The New Republic is filled with characters speaking for the newer substitutes for the traditional faith in post-Darwinian Britain: Materialism, Aestheticism, Positivism, the Religion of Humanity, Agnosticism, Atheism, Scientism, Broad Churchism, and the idea of culture as salvation.

Mallock called the representatives of these different schools together and set them to discussing the nature of the model society or the New Republic. This inquiry occasioned a wide range of religious and philosophical discussions. Mallock told us a good deal about the genesis and method of the book which was consciously modelled from Plato's Republic.³ The main speakers were figures representing prominent contemporaries of Mallock and some members of the symposium presented nearly verbatim speeches from the works of John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, John Tyndall, T.H. Huxley, and William Kingdon Clifford.⁴ In his Memoirs, Mallock identified the most important characters of The New Republic:

The principal speakers were drawn without any disguise from persons so eminent and influential that a definite fidelity of portraiture was in their case essential to my plan. Mr. Storks and Mr. Stockton, the prosaic and the sentimental materialists, were meant for Professors Huxley and Tyndall. Mr. Luke was Matthew Arnold. Mr. Rose was Pater. Mr. Saunders, so far as his atheism was concerned, was suggested by Prof. Clifford....

and finally more important than the others -- Dr. Jenkinson was Jowett, and Mr. Herbert was Ruskin. All these people I set talking in polite antagonism to one another, their one underlying subject being the rational aim of life, and the manner in which a definite supernatural faith was essential, extraneous, or positively prejudicial to this.⁵

A word or two about each of these men may clarify Mallock's inclusion of them in his select group of characters. From Mallock's point of view, each of these individuals represented different answers to the basic question posed in The New Republic: can morality and individual significance survive the eclipse of religious belief?

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895) is probably most immediately recognizable as "Darwin's Bulldog." He was a first rate scientist, popularizer of scientific findings, and advocate of the theory of evolution. He was probably most important to Mallock as the originator of the term agnostic. John Tyndall (1820-1893) was a brilliant physicist who won a considerable reputation for his work in theoretical physics. He was an associate of Huxley's and they undertook several joint projects. He took a position more radical than Huxley's regarding the existence of God. Whereas Huxley felt that it might be possible, without damage to the principles of logic and science, to posit some kind of creator at the point in time prior to the

evolutionary process, Tyndall asserted that ignorance of the "cause" of evolution was no justification to call that cause God.

One cannot define Matthew Arnold in a few words, but Mallock's interest in him can be briefly stated. Arnold (1822-1888) was a poet and a literary, social, and religious critic. Mallock was most concerned with his religious writings which concluded with the same kind of compromised theology (from Mallock's point of view) that made Broad Church theology useless.

William Kingdon Clifford (1845-1879) was a very gifted mathematician and pioneer in the theory of geometry. He became interested in applying the logical and critical method of science to social problems and believed that organized religion was the most persistent obstacle to the discovery of truth in all areas. He was an unabashed and vocal atheist with considerable faith in the power of science to rescue society from its difficulties. Mallock's choice of such a figure as an object of satire reflected his life-long and passionate debate with atheism and with the apostles of science.

Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893) was a cleric, theologian, student and translator of the Greek classics, especially Plato, and one of the leading lights of the Broad Church movement. Mallock, who attended Oxford during Jowett's tenure

as Master of Balliol College, met Jowett and was exposed to his theology. Mallock passionately disliked the man and his ideas.

Mallock also met John Ruskin (1819-1900) while at Oxford. Ruskin enjoyed success as an historian and critic of art and later, as a critic of modern British capitalist society. Mallock believed that he and Ruskin shared the same feelings regarding the disintegration of religious belief.

Walter Pater (1839-1894) was an Oxford tutor of art history whose most notable published work, The Renaissance, expressed an attitude usually rendered as art for art's sake. His aesthetic hedonism, as some have called it, had a following among young Victorians. Mallock resented Pater's reduction of Roman Catholicism to an aesthetically pleasing mixture of bells, incense, and candles.

Mallock gave his readers hyperbolic extensions of the main ideas of his protagonists. His criticism emerged as he forced the ideas to conclusions more extreme, but, he felt, "more strictly logical, than any which those who proclaimed them either realized or had the courage to avow."⁶ His material was the stuff of refined religious and philosophical propositions, argument, point, and counter-point. As such, The New Republic could have been deadly dull; how-

ever, it stimulated rather than sedated and was alive with Mallock's youth, anger, commitment, and wit. It was a sharp and masterful satire blending into one dialogue theology, social and cultural criticism, scientific sophistication, morality, and bits of philosophy and history. But it was neither polite academic debate nor pedantry parading as insight. It was Mallock's very passionate transcript of his personal spiritual crisis. The mood which informed his writing was evident in the remarks of one of the satire's main characters Otho Laurence: "I feel in my life as a child does in a dark room; and I must have someone to talk to."⁷

The book's animating spirit was Mallock's belief that "without religion life is reduced to an absurdity and [all] purely natural substitutes [are] as absurd as those dogmas of orthodoxy which the naturalists are attempting to supercede."⁸ The New Republic was Mallock's testimony to that truth and it presented all the latest ideological edifices which, for him, failed to replace the house of the Lord. In his opinion, perhaps the greatest failure was that of Broad Church thought or Latitudinarianism, or whatever one calls the thought of Benjamin Jowett.⁹ Seeing in the Broad Church movement the death of God within the church itself, Mallock aimed his most vitriolic criticism at people like Jowett.

Dr. Jenkinson is given a great many preposterous things to say in The New Republic. In fact, Jenkinson delivered an uninterrupted sermon of several pages which one reviewer saw as the most finely honed mockery in the book. This sermon, on good and evil through the ages, left the reader with the feeling that, by comparison, Dr. Pangloss was a very gloomy soul. Jenkinson blended higher criticism with what Mallock sensed to be moral decreptitude and said that in the end, somehow, through God's ordinance and wonderous ways, all the seeming evil in the world would "come right in God's own time and the apparent dualism of good and evil [would] at last become a glorious unity of good."¹⁰

The novel's sermon announced:

Is it not also the part of the devil not to see good in the germs of evil. May we not say with St. Augustine, that absolute evil is impossible, because, if we look at it rightly, it is always rising up into good? And so may we not recognize in all things the presence and providence of God? Perhaps this may at first seem difficult. Some of us may have a certain amount of pride to swallow before we can cheerfully acquiesce in it. It is not an uncommon thing to find persons who secretly flatter their vanity by cherishing gloomy views of the world and of mankind. But if we can only get free from this littleness and attain to that view which I have indicated, [it will bring peace to us]. Evil will then appear to us simply as undeveloped good -- as something which we may acquiesce in without complaining. Indeed, by the eye of faith, even

in the present day, may we not discern the well being of the rich and the misery of the poor and again the honest industry of the poor through the idleness of the rich? ... For we cannot escape our age nor need we wish to do so. Our age is for us the best age possible. Let us therefore, with a cheerful contentment with the present, be willing to leave the world in the hands of God.¹¹

For Mallock, this was the theodicy of the proverbial ostrich. Dr. Jenkinson had taken the certainty out of religion and drained it of all courage, faith, and commitment. Altogether, his remarks and his long sermon evinced a doctrinal position clouded over with a fog of verbosity and compromise.

One of the exchanges of the symposium centered on the question of afterlife. Throughout his writing, Mallock maintained that the belief in afterlife was essential to any personally meaningful and compelling faith. Jenkinson was asked: "Is whatever evil and sorrow we patiently suffer a thing which, if it does not bring reward to us here, will never bring us any reward at all?"¹² He responded: "Dear me! Dear me! These sort of questions ought never to be asked in that hard abrupt way. You cannot answer them -- you cannot answer them."¹³ Mallock's own estimate of that response was indicated by the fact that he devoted at least ten years of his life's work trying to answer precisely such questions. If one could not answer such questions there was little point in asking others.

The novel's characters reacted to Jenkinson with some of Mallock's own feelings. Mr. Stockton remarked that "the whole teachings of that school have always seemed to me nothing more than a few fragments of science imperfectly understood, obscured by a few fragments of Christianity imperfectly remembered."¹⁴ Mr. Leslie (whose actual identity no one has been able to establish convincingly but who probably speaks for Mallock some of the time) observed: "You forget that Dr. Jenkinson's Christianity is really a new firm trading under an old name."¹⁵ For Mallock, the end of the spiritual peregrination taken by people like Jowett was evident in this remark of Jenkinson: "and Christianity really embraces all religions, even any honest denial of itself."¹⁶

Mallock's Jenkinson and Benjamin Jowett shared a rejection of some of the most basic elements in traditional Christianity. They also shared a certain vagueness regarding important religious and moral questions which is evident in the lines from some of Jowett's preliminary notes on religious questions:

This is the age of facts, and facts are too strong for ideas. And this is the age of criticism, and criticism is too strong for dogma. The conception of miracles may become impossible and absurd. The personality of God, like the immortality of men, may pass into an idea. Every moral act may be acknowledged to have a physical antecedent. Doctrines

may become unmeaning words. [The new Christianity will include] the idea of law in the world answering to (a) resignation and (b) to cooperation in the human mind. The abatement of self-assertion, and the acknowledgment that in some way there will be or has been a partaking of Christ's kingdom. [sic] Our forms of worship, public and private, imply some interference with the course of nature. We know that the empire of law permeates all things.¹⁷

To Mallock, this meant that all dogma was unacceptable and whatever remained was without clear meaning. The ambiguity in Jowett's remarks provided a huge, broad target for Mallock's criticism and mockery.

Looking at these ideas, especially those concerned with the morality of the new Christianity, it is easy to understand, if not necessarily agree with, Mallock's presentation of Jowett's ethics in the Jenkinson sermon. Jowett tried to do what Mallock considered impossible -- to synthesize modern criticism with Christian belief and still respect both. The attempt to blend the two might have created the kind of uncertainty in Jowett which Mallock implied when he had Jenkinson respond to a question about immortality by flatly stating that such questions simply could not be answered.

However, if Jowett was uncertain, it was not because, as Mallock implied, he tried to mix two mutually exclusive ideas, failed, and found himself with no clear ideas at all.

This was not the case with Jowett. He believed that of all religions, Christianity had the greatest moral value; indeed, he believed that comparative theology led to the conclusion that Christianity was "what the world was aiming at through many cycles of human history."¹⁸

Benjamin Jowett would never have said what Mallock made him say, that Christianity really embraces all religions, even an honest denial of itself. Further, he believed that the essence of Christianity lay "not in the scriptures, nor in the church, nor in a system of doctrines, nor in miracles -- but in the life and teaching of Christ."¹⁹ It seems that Jowett finally decided that the best kind of religion possible was an earnest, continuing attempt to imitate Christ's life and self-sacrifice. This was entirely possible without mysticism, miracles, or involved institutionalized religiosity.²⁰

Jowett wrote that men would probably always need a church and religion; but, he felt that it was impossible to dogmatise religious practice and belief. The effort was counter-productive and would drive thoughtful people from the church.²¹ It was this belief that led him to suggest that the Bible be read like any other book, that while it might be more significant than other books, its value would be lost if the reader put aside reason in deference to faith. Thus, like Matthew Arnold, he was convinced of

the great value of Christianity and that it would be forever lost unless it was made intellectually respectable.

Whatever Jowett's intentions, from Mallock's point of view, he was no longer a Christian in any meaningful way. This was the Jowett that Mallock caricatured.

Jenkinson was one of the two most important figures of The New Republic's characters because, unlike any of the others, he had left the church spiritually but lingered to devastate it from within. Jowett was, in Mallock's view the ultimate Broad Churchman whose reason and liberalism would finally corrupt the faith and the church.

The New Republic was not devoted to the crucifixion of Benjamin Jowett only. When Mallock stopped pillorying higher criticism and theology, he turned to modern science. The most prominent figures were T.H. Huxley, W.K. Clifford, and John Tyndall. With some very important exceptions, the treatment of Tyndall was close to the mark. The portraits of Clifford and Huxley, again with important exceptions, were considerably distorted caricatures.

Clifford, Mr. Saunders in the novel, is made into an archetypical materialist, atheist, and dogmatically optimistic herald of the socially curative powers of science and technology. He was the aggressive enemy of theism and measured progress in terms of pounds, pence, concrete, and inventions. In fact, he asserted that when science and

and economics had solved all other problems, the one remaining task would be the elimination of religious belief and the "eradication of [faith that would] afford unending employment to all enlightened minds."²² He then established a unique criterion for the superiority of primates: they were free from theism.²³

In a general discussion of progress, Mr. Herbert, who was John Ruskin, assailed Saunders with his distaste for a generation which preferred cotton mills to a Titian. Saunders, undaunted, replied:

Not only do I consider a cotton mill but I consider even a good sewer, to be a far nobler and a far holier thing -- for holy in reality does but mean healthy -- than the most admired Madonna ever painted [and in general] other things being equal,... I apprehend that the generation that travels sixty miles an hour is at least five times as civilized as the generation that travels only twelve.²⁴

Mallock answered through Mr. Herbert

But other things are not equal,... and the other things, by which I suppose you mean all that is really sacred in life [has] been banished or buried by the very things which we boast of as our civilization.²⁵

Mallock sensed that the most potentially ominous development of scientism was the erosion of traditional

Christian morality. Saunders (Clifford) and Storks (Huxley) converged on Christian morality like a pair of highly literate vultures ready to pick clean its spiritual body and bury the bones under a microscope and fuming retort. Saunders was concrete and certain. Storks equivocated and hedged. They both destroyed. Saunders demolished the entire moral edifice rather abruptly: "Science has shown that right and wrong are terms of a bygone age ... [and we are] mere automata, clock work machines, wound by meat and drink."²⁶

Saunders' ideals manifested Mallock's distaste for Positivism and the Religion of Humanity. This topic occasioned a considerable flow of words from Mallock. (His The New Paul and Virginia was entirely devoted to the ridicule of the Religion of Humanity). Mr. Saunders outlined the truths of the new faith: its first truth was that there was no truth in Christianity. In a Comtian rhapsody, he allowed that until the advent of Positivism, the human race was collectively incapable of passing a reasonable judgment. Now that the truth was at hand, mystery, mysticism, Christian morality, priests, and "that most treacherous handmaid of priestcraft, poetry"²⁷ would wither and die. Within fifty years there would be a new religion, one which tolerated no dissent, and in which all men would concoct a faith that required no faith.²⁸ Comtism and the Religion of Humanity were to Mallock what Mr. Luke

(Arnold) described as the "sunrise of universal Philistinism."²⁹

This does no justice to Comtism or the Religion of Humanity. The founding principle of the latter was borne of a deeply ethical concern for the welfare of man. Mallock's assertion that the Religion of Humanity would eventually eschew all religious practice and ritual reflected either his ignorance of the movement's history in France or willful distortion.

As he had done with Positivism, Mallock misrepresented Clifford. True, Saunders said many things that Clifford believed about the pernicious influence of Christianity, and it was probably not possible to exaggerate the hostility to organized religion of the man who wrote: "The priest is at all times and in all places the enemy of all men."³⁰ However, the resemblance between Saunders and Clifford vanished beyond their common hatred of Christianity. Saunders was too shallow a character to truly represent Clifford and this was most apparent in Mallock's implication that Clifford believed that, in the future, categories of right and wrong would perish. If there was any truth in what Mallock implied about Clifford's morality, it was only that the traditional religious categories of right and wrong would be best forgotten.

Clifford said that moral injunctions did not need the imprimatur of some divine authority. He believed that

referring morality to some eternal, supernatural force had done more harm to human society than good: "Those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire."³¹

He deeply felt that men did have a definite sense of right and wrong and that the clearest guide to determining the difference between the two was to consider the interests of society before those of the individual. "It is Ourselves, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."³² Clifford believed that completely honest and scrupulous enquiry into ethics would produce a workable and reasonable morality. He also believed that the possibility of a clerical resurgence of power would prevent men from seeking the truth, knowing it when they discovered it, or acting upon it.³³ In fact, his hopes for a moral future helped generate his intense animus against priests and religion in general.

In reference to Clifford, Mallock used words very nearly identical to those of the original; however, he distorted and exaggerated until only a rough caricature remained. Indeed, in the final text of The New Republic, Mallock may have tacitly admitted the distortion by modifying the finished Mr. Saunders so as to distinguish him from Clifford. The kind of mischief in Mallock's treatment of Clifford is evident in a comparison of the following remarks.

Saunders is made to say: "Mere automata as science shows we are clockwork machines, wound up by meat and drink."³⁴

Clifford actually wrote:

Thus we are to regard the body as a physical machine which goes by itself according to physical law, that is to say, automatic. An automaton is a thing which goes by itself when it is wound up, and we go by ourselves when we have food ... But it is not merely regarded as a machine, because consciousness goes with it The freedom of will, according to Kant, is that property which enables us to originate events independently of foreign determining causes; which it seems to me, amounts to saying precisely that we are automata, that is that we go by ourselves, and do not want anyone to push or pull us.³⁵

The very different intentions of the authors are clear in these two passages.

It also should be noted that Mallock closely identified Saunders with Clifford only "so far as his atheism was concerned"³⁶ and in this he seems to have been accurate. Perhaps Mallock's feeling toward Clifford can best be understood by first appreciating Mallock's profound religious commitment, and then, by remembering that it was Clifford who said of Man: "Before Jehovah was, I am."³⁷

Storks was T.H. Huxley, portrayed as an intellectual Frankenstein. He was the consummate, thoroughly objective man of science who was no longer able or willing to make a choice independent of laboratory verification. He was very

sure that we could not be sure of anything. Mallock's Huxley, however, was certain that the traditional categories of right, wrong, and sin were pernicious and wrongheaded.

Storks argued that science would establish a new basis for morality. Until it did, from Mallock's point of view, such moral procrastination amounted to a very carefully considered question mark constructed of the most fastidious kind of intellectual hedging. Mallock was sure that waiting for science to deliver us a new morality was not only misdirected but dangerous.

First, he argued, science did not admit of the kind of certainty that effective morality demanded. Mallock was familiar with the history of science from the early Greek materialists (he edited and wrote essays on the work of Lucretius) through the Copernican and scientific revolutions, and the developments of the nineteenth century. He understood the fundamentals of modern science, wrote at length about its strengths and weaknesses, and was certain that it could not answer life's most important questions.

Secondly, Mallock was unable to accept any position which left moral questions pending. The vacuum of uncertainty seriously degraded the quality of human existence. If all of Mallock's work were considered an opera, its leitmotif would be the restatement of the necessity of the

idea of free will and the very real existence of right and wrong. Indeed, as Laurence says for Mallock: "It is on the recognition of this mysterious and unfathomable gulf [between right and wrong] that the whole of the higher pleasures of life depend."³⁸

Storke's morality was contained in his announcement: "Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Science will establish an entirely new basis of morality; and the sunlight of rational approbation will shine on many a thing overshadowed by the curse of a hypothetical god."³⁹ To an extent, this reflected the thinking of Huxley, who once wrote that "the man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification."⁴⁰ He coined the term agnostic and threw out spiritualism and materialism as beyond proof and therefore without value. "Materialists and Spiritualists agree in making very positive assertions about matters of which I am certain I know nothing, and about which I believe they are, in truth, just as ignorant."⁴¹

If these were the only kinds of things Huxley wrote then Storke could be his intellectual twin. However, Huxley was not so smug about science and its promise for morality as Mallock would have us believe. He was deeply aware of the limits of scientific certainty,⁴² and this, after all, was preliminary to embracing something like agnosticism.

He would not have announced that "science will establish a new basis for morality" and left it at that.

Mallock made Storks argue that evolution would make the best basis for morality.⁴³ However, Huxley believed that ethical, civilized life was first possible only when the dynamics of Darwinism, that is, the struggle for existence, had been overcome by social cooperation. "Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on limiting the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combatting it."⁴⁴ In general, the thrust of Huxley's Evolution and Ethics was strongly to reject any assertion that natural selection provides a suitable model for a system of ethics.

Furthermore, Huxley was not willing simply to erase the Christian tradition and was not an enemy of religion per se; indeed, he favored the use of the Bible in schools as a moral tonic. Perhaps the essence of Huxley's ethical thought, and the motive for Mallock's anger, lay in these lines from Evolution and Ethics: "The safety of morality lies neither in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, or in this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of nature which sends social disorganization upon the track of immorality."⁴⁵ This was really a sociological axiom, not a forceful and personal motive for individual morality.

Mallock demanded an immediate and completely personal basis for morality. After all, if one had reached a kind of spiritual despair, why should one really be concerned with social disorganization?

As with some of the characters in the novel, Mallock made Storks faithful to the original in only a very limited way.⁴⁶ In Mallock's defense, I should reiterate that his primary intentions were not to show exactly what these people thought so much as what the ramifications and impact of some portions of their thought might be. At this he was very good. He was not trying to be fair or balanced so much as he was trying to make his readers realize what, in his view, were the awful implications in nearly every line his characters spoke.

Matthew Arnold travelled through The New Republic as Mr. Luke, a perfectly drawn culture snob. He devoted nearly all his remarks in the group discussions of the essence of the New Republic to adumbrating his idea that western civilization could be saved if only everyone read enough. It was quite clear that Luke would draw up the syllabus. This in itself would not have moved Mallock to mockery; however, beyond this supreme confidence in the socially curative powers of great literature, Arnold subverted Christian faith and religion with an enthusiasm for the right books. Culture, in his vision, became a

permanently capitalized concept which enabled its possessor to discern the good and bad in everything, even traditional morality. (It was clear that culture was something a person could have as well as something that was made by creative forces.)

Culture is the union of two things -- fastidious taste and liberal sympathy. These can only be gained by wide reading guided by sweet reason; and when they are gained ... we are conscious, as it were, of a new sense, which at once enables us to discern the Eternal and the absolutely righteous, wherever we find it, whether in an epistle of St. Paul's or in a comedy of Menander's. It is true that culture sets aside the larger part of the New Testament as grotesque, barbarous, and Immoral.... And in Christianity -- such Christianity as true taste can accept -- culture sees the guide to the real significance of life.⁴⁷

Making Christianity a function of true taste aroused Mallock's indignation. Arnold made two thousand years of faith and commitment into a piece of literature with only limited merit whose value could only be realized by throwing most of it away. Form replaced faith and a well turned phrase became more valuable than the Apostles' creed. Mallock's Arnold shared with Clifford that great sense of being very right:

We, the cultured, we indeed see what the world at large does not. It will not listen to us ... our ears are perpetually being pained and deafened by the din of two opposing Philistinisms -- science and orthodoxy -- both equally vulgar and useless.⁴⁸

We get the distinct impression that Mallock's Arnold will deal with the very deepest questions of morality, faith, and society by reading a poem.

The best Mr. Luke could leave us with was a God who was "that great verifiable tendency of things -- that great stream."⁴⁹ Given that definition, Lady Grace, one of the less verbose characters in the novel, asked: "But surely it must matter something whether God can hear our prayers, and will help us, ... and will judge us. [Mr. Luke confidently replied] Not two straws."⁵⁰ Here was a God whose presence made us lonely.

There was a great deal of the real Matthew Arnold in Mr. Luke. Arnold concluded his Literature and Dogma with a strong indictment of people who lacked the cultural and literary background to truly understand the Bible. He argued that dogmatic theologians, primarily because they lacked culture, mistook the real value and truth of the Bible. "Simple as the Bible and conduct are, still culture seems to be required for them, -- required to prevent our mishandling and sophisticating them."⁵¹

Arnold maintained that the theologian who tried to

defend popular religion actually forced a lot of blatantly unverifiable history and unsupportable metaphysical fudge into a relatively simple and very valuable book of Christian conduct.⁵² Such theologians tried to convince readers of the Bible that to accept any of it, one had to accept all of it including the miracles, virgin birth, resurrection, the ascension, etc.. Arnold rejected all these as unverifiable and not germane to the most valuable truths in the Bible.⁵³

Thus far, Arnold and Mr. Luke were similar. Indeed, when Mr. Luke spoke of God as that "great verifiable tendency of things" he sounded very much like Arnold's description of God as "the eternal, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness ... the eternal tendency outside us."⁵⁴ There was also something of Mr. Luke in Arnold's confident assertion that Jesus never intended his followers to believe in literal resurrection. This was the supreme self-confidence one needed to make very convincing arguments against the veracity of traditional religious beliefs and then present one's own beliefs as the real truth of the matter.

Luke and Arnold shared a great deal; however, Mr. Luke was only half the original. Luke conveyed the impression that Christianity was a system of values subordinated to the greater truth ascertained by cultured people. And, in such a hierarchy of values, the Bible was

merely another important book. Arnold did not view either Christianity or the Bible in such a manner. He felt that Christian morality, properly understood, was the capstone of the development of western morality. "Nothing but righteousness will succeed, and nothing is righteousness but the method and secret and sweet reasonableness of Jesus Christ."⁵⁵ Of course, his Jesus was not the Jesus of popular Christian belief -- he called popular Christianity a fairytale. However, Arnold did feel that once one had delivered the truth of Jesus and the Bible from the metaphysics and superstition of popular theology, it was supremely valuable.

In both Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible, Arnold tried to rescue the truth and value of the Bible from the growing discredit heaped upon it by higher criticism.⁵⁶ He was convinced of the indispensability of the Bible, and before criticism had eroded its authority completely, he hoped to "maintain it, to make it continue to prevail, to hinder its giving way and dying out."⁵⁷

Mr. Luke was not Matthew Arnold because he lacked the profound earnestness of Arnold's belief in the enduring value of Christianity.

From Mallock's point of view, Mr. Luke was Arnold because his critique of Christianity had rendered it useless as a compelling and motivating force in the moral life

of men. Arnold rejected a personal God, Christ's divinity, miracles, and immortality and without these Mallock felt, Christian morality became just another set of maxims. Mallock wrote that Christianity was attractive and forceful because its founder was considered to be of divine origin. If the quality of divinity were withdrawn, the authority and meaning of Christianity vanished. Arnold argued that, once stripped of the supernatural, Christianity made more sense than ever. Mallock believed that Christianity, stripped of the supernatural, finally became useless.

Clearly, Mallock's Arnold said many things which sounded exactly like Arnold. Actually, Mallock wrote some of what Arnold said but not all of what he meant. In every word of hundreds of pages by Mallock on the question of faith, he rejected the kind of solution suggested by Arnold and Jowett because when they were done, they were left with only an intellectually respectable skeleton of Christianity. Mallock much preferred the body of faith. Obviously, Mallock was sensitive to what Arnold had in mind; but, that very sensitivity frightened him away from having his Arnold seem to make sense.

If Arnold were right, Mallock's whole spiritual kingdom collapsed. He could not write what Arnold meant.

The most important figures who represented views which Mallock held were Mr. Herbert and Otho Laurence, the

host of the weekend during which the New Republic was discussed. The identification of Laurence is a matter of induction from the many similarities between his ideas and those of Mallock. As for Herbert, Mallock told us in the Memoirs that Ruskin was the only human being who held views close to his own.⁵⁸ An again, "So did I seek to show that Ruskin's principles, despite their superficial absurdities, ended, if carried far enough, in the nearest approach to truth which under modern conditions of thought and knowledge is possible."⁵⁹ Perhaps the most consistently and profoundly disturbing apprehension felt by Mallock was caught in these words of Laurence, describing himself and Herbert: "Herbert and I, you see, are two fools. We both of us want to pray, and we neither of us can."⁶⁰

Mr. Herbert was the vessel containing a good deal of Mallock's reservations about the modern human condition. His closing soliloquy agonized at the spiritual temper of contemporary man. He addressed himself to the assembled company who had built a mountain of words and ideas in their attempt to structure the New Republic. With all their sophistication, modern verities, compromises of old truths, and bold new projects, with all that, they were still not sure of anything worth being sure of. After the tremendous effort involved in the intellectual trip from Copernicus to Darwin which had shattered the surety of God's

being, man was not only left without certainty of glory, but was reduced to seeking truth and its power in science and in the "rotting bodies of dead men or the writhing bodies of live cats."⁶¹

Now I can pray no longer. You have taken my God away from me, and I know not where you have laid him. My only consolation in my misery is that at least I am inconsolable for his loss ... though you have made me miserable, I am not content with my misery.... I have said there is no God ... yet there is one folly I will not give tongue to. I will not say peace, peace, when there is no peace.⁶²

These feelings never completely left Mallock.

The New Republic was a popular success which ran through multiple editions. While nearly every reviewer remarked on Mallock's cleverness, wit, and skill at imitation, the book was not universally well received. Even the critics who realized the serious intent of the book considered that Mallock had shown poor taste in the treatment of some of his figures. He was taken to task especially for his treatment of Jowett and Pater.⁶³

"There are touches in one character which cannot but be regarded as the gravest possible offense against good

taste."⁶⁴ The reviewer obviously considered that to identify the character would only compound Mallock's original unfairness and so he gave no name.

Mallock made literary capital of the physical limitations of some of his characters (Jowett and Pater) and critics were more angered at this lapse in taste than at anything else.⁶⁵ Some of them decided that the book was nothing more than a nasty parody and dismissed it. Consequently, as the reviewer in Contemporary Review said, they missed the point of the book: "It is spoken of as a capital squib and this prevented our recognizing this brilliant book."⁶⁶ This same reviewer described the intent of the book in language almost identical to Mallock's own appraisal in the Memoirs fifty years later: "Without personal faith in a personal God there is no longer ground for morality."⁶⁷

Poor taste alone is not always enough to sell books. And, aside from serious purpose, The New Republic appealed to contemporary critics because it was very well written and the imitations were highly skilled. None of the critics had anything but praise for Mallock's literary ability. The respect for Mallock's ability and the distaste for what was perceived as his misapplication of that ability are evident in these lines from the Academy review: "The New Republic is a book that is certain to

to be widely read, but it is not too much to say that it should never have been written. It is only a vehicle for exceedingly clever and exact imitations."⁶⁸

Not everyone understood the book and some people hated it; but many read it. Judging from the continued and prominent advertisements in 1877 and 1878, which included laudatory blurbs from reviewers and from the series of new editions of The New Republic, it would seem that Mallock's first book was a great success. It gave him an instant literary reputation. Soon after the publication of The New Republic, Mallock was invited by the editors of *Nineteenth Century* to participate in a debate with T.H. Huxley and others on the possible conflicts between modern science and traditional morality. Thereafter, he continuously published articles on leading questions in various journals.⁶⁹ The New Republic lifted Mallock from obscurity and gave him entree into the intellectual society of Victorian Britain and convinced people that Mallock was worth reading.

All critics commented on Mallock's talent and the cleverness of his imitations. However, it seems that many reviewers were unable to see past his poor taste and perceive his intentions. Eventually, people got beyond the cleverness and parody of The New Republic and realized what Mallock was trying to do. Once his aim was clear,

the book was no longer just a capital squib and it and Mallock were taken seriously.

¹The New Republic, frontpiece.

²Memoirs, p. 89.

³Ibid., pp. 87-90.

⁴For an excellent study of the novel's characters and their prototypes, see the introduction and notes of J. Max Patrick to The New Republic.

⁵Memoirs, pp. 87-88.

⁶Ibid., p. 88.

⁷The New Republic, p. 52. Otho Laurence was the host of the weekend gathering during which the dialogue of The New Republic took place. Judging from his age, social status, and comments, it would seem that Laurence closely resembled Mallock.

⁸Ibid., pp. 168-69.

⁹Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 77-80.

¹²Ibid., p. 199.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 209. Robert Browning told Mallock that Jowett was very angry at this last. When apprised of this anger, Mallock remarked that "Jowett had an excellent reason for it -- this being that Jowett's position was false and that my method of criticism had brought out its absurdity." Memoirs, p. 88.

¹⁷Evelyn Abbot and Lewis Campbell (eds.), The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett (New York, 1897), II, pp. 310-14.

¹⁸Lewis Campbell (ed.), Theological Essays of Benjamin Jowett (London, 1906), p. 117.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Campbell, Life and Letters, II, p. 273.

²¹Ibid., I, pp. 154 and 384.

²²The New Republic, p. 18.

²³Ibid., p. 17.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 33-34.

²⁵Ibid., p. 34.

²⁶Ibid., p. 44.

²⁷Ibid., p. 138.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 136-39.

²⁹Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰W.K. Clifford, The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sir Frederick Pollock (London, 1947), p. 116.

³¹Ibid., p. 119.

³²Ibid., p. 118.

³³Ibid., p. 113.

³⁴The New Republic, p. xviii. Mallock wrote The New Republic several times over with the first partial publication in the magazine "Belgravia" in 1876. The final text was completely revised.

³⁵As quoted by Patrick in The New Republic, pp. 44-45.

³⁶Memoirs, pp. 87-88.

³⁷Clifford, Ethics of Belief, p. 121.

³⁸The New Republic, p. 144.

³⁹Ibid., p. 45.

⁴⁰T.H. Huxley, Lectures and Lay Sermons (New York, 1910); p. 53.

⁴¹T.H. Huxley, Evolution and Ethics (New York, 1897), p. 128.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 130-40, passim.

⁴³The New Republic, p. 86.

⁴⁴Huxley, Evolution and Ethics, p. 83.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 146.

⁴⁶In light of this, Professor Patrick's conclusion that Huxley's portrait was "accurately drawn" is overly generous.

⁴⁷The New Republic, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 181.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Matthew Arnold, Literature and Dogma, The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R.H. Super (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1968), p. 409.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 408-09.

⁵³Ibid., God and the Bible, p. 144.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 159.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 145.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 148.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 143.

⁵⁸Memoirs, p. 85.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 89.

⁶⁰The New Republic, p. 224.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 219.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 221-22.

⁶³See reviews of the book in: Quarterly Review, No. 144 (1877), 515-39, Spectator, No. 50 (1877), 542, and Contemporary Review, No. 30 (1877), 1998.

⁶⁴Antheneum, No. 2578 (1877), 377-78.

⁶⁵See Quarterly Review, No. 144 (1877), 515-39 and Academy, No. 11 (1877), 316-17.

⁶⁶Contemporary Review, No. 30 (1877), 1998.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Academy, No. 11 (1877), 316-17.

⁶⁹See bibliography for dates and topics of Mallock's reviews and articles.

IV. THE BASICS OF FAITH AND BELIEF

"Life as it is, aside from religion, is a bad thing at best."¹ This thought could introduce and conclude nearly everything Mallock wrote before he turned his energies toward the problems of socialism and egalitarianism. It lay at the creative center of Is Life Worth Living? (1879), Religion as a Credible Doctrine (1903), Contemporary Superstition (1895), The Reconstruction of Religious Belief (1905), An Immortal Soul (1908), The Veil of the Temple (1904), The Heart of Life (1895), A Romance of the Nineteenth Century (1881), Christianity and Agnosticism (1889), Lucretius (1878), Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption (1908), Atheism and the Value of Life (1884), The New Paul and Virginia (1878), and of course, The New Republic (1877). These works were not simply repetitions separated by a few years. Whether they were satires on Positivism or essays on pre-Christian materialism, they all, somehow, supported his belief in the necessity of faith. As he said:

In order to live, not merely a life that is good, but a life that is healthy, vigorous, civilized, and even enjoyable, everyone must have in his mind some background of belief with regard to the

nature of man and the meaning of man's existence.²

For Mallock, the three fundamental beliefs which both ordered the universe and established a moral framework for human existence were (a) a supreme intelligence ruled the universe and was interested in the moral goodness of man; (b) each man was a self-directing personality and was, at the same time, answerable to that supreme being; and, (c) life here had special importance because it was to be prolonged and completed for better or worse hereafter.³

Mallock believed that the combination of these basic beliefs in the form of Christianity had not only profoundly changed the nature of western society but had also infinitely increased the importance of religion in the spiritual life of western man. As a special creation of God, made in his image and subject to his will, man became a more significant creature than he ever was before. At the same time, his awareness grew of his own sinfulness and imperfection. Man's image of himself, his responsibility and his place in the universe, changed profoundly. God was much more and man much less than either had been before.⁴

When modern man rejected the supernatural, his loss was unique and incalculable. In one of his best passages,

Mallock described the effect of this loss:

And the practical result is this: when we, in these days, deny the supernatural, we are denying it in a way in which it was never denied before. Our denial is beyond all comparison more complete. The supernatural, for the ancient world, was like a perfume scenting life, out of a hundred different vessels, of which only two or three were visible to the same men or nations. They therefore might get rid of these, and yet the larger part of the scent would still remain to them. But for us, it is as though all the perfume had been collected into a single vessel: and if we get rid of the scent altogether, our air will be altogether odorless.

In Mallock's view, Christianity had become so important that the value of modern life could not be maintained without it. As he said in his study of Lucretius, while the ancients, like Lucretius, developed complete materialism, their rather vague supernatural beliefs never focused sufficiently for them to be aware of the barrenness of materialism. In the modern age, Positivism invited materialism, but the cost and the sense of loss had become immeasurably greater. The modern skeptic, who had lost the ability to retain his belief in the reality of God, but who also was sure that reason alone could never replace it, could say little more than: "let us do our best ... and live by what light we have. But these lights

are very feeble, and their strongest rays are lost in the gloom beyond us."⁶

Mallock's religion was based on the twin assumptions of human responsibility to God and of human moral freedom. These two conditions rendered life, its choices, feelings, and opportunities, replete with significance. Indeed, belief in God, for Mallock, carried with it a belief in the cosmic significance of the individual -- every individual. He put it best in a speech by Rupert Glanville in The Veil of the Temple:

The entire religion of the theist is based on the passionate belief that the individual is the object on which all his [the supreme being] care is concentrated.... His perfect care and wisdom are present in his dealing with each single human life.⁷

Every aspect of the individual's life attained a special kind of passionate wholeness which, for Mallock, was impossible without theism. The core inside the expanded body of argument was that everything that mattered was enhanced, made truly worthwhile, and even beautiful, by religious faith. For example, religious commitment was essential to truly complete love and affection. Mallock alluded to this in many ways; but, he never really made it concrete or clear. Indeed, he referred to it as

as a kind of mysticism. It was an idea basic to his view of life, pleasure, and fulfillment. To fully appreciate Mallock's religion, his idea of God and love must be explored. He dealt with the connection between belief in God and ideal love in A Human Document, The Old Order Changes, and A Romance of the Nineteenth Century. He explained this connection in the Memoirs:

In the higher forms of affection a religious belief is implicit which connects the lovers with the ALL, and establishes between them and IT something conscious and veritable The moral of this mysticism is that no affection is complete unless it is in harmony with some cosmic will which takes cognizance of the doings of the individual, and gives to them individually something of its own eternity.⁸

Mallock never made the connection between human love and God precise or clear; however, the thought appeared often enough to make some solidly educated guesses possible. For Mallock, the existence of God was the only possible guarantee of moral freedom. He saw only one alternative -- materialist determinism.⁹

Moral freedom was an article of faith with Mallock. He never tried to prove it and he attacked those who claimed to have done so. However, the existence of this freedom, tied as it was to the existence of God, made human relationships more meaningful. He felt that love, however

deep and blind it might be, was meaningful only when it was a matter of personal and free choice, a matter of will. If love was a result of purposeful and willing actions, it meant a great deal more than if it were a union borne of necessity in ignorance of that necessity. In the latter case, the lovers' declaration "I love you" amounted to roughly the same thing as a recitation of the law of gravity. This is what Mallock meant when he had Rupert Glanville say: "Very little will be left behind [if we cannot agree that] if [the lover] does not see the light of what you would call God, he sees BY it, or by the light of freedom, which is practically the same thing."¹⁰

In A Romance of the Nineteenth Century and The Old Order Changes, the main characters were linked in relationships exemplifying the connection of God, love, and man. Mallock wrote that in A Romance of the Nineteenth Century, the "hero's love for the heroine resembled the affection of St. Augustine for Monica, a love whose consummation was contingent on a mystical union of both with the Self-same, the Everlasting One."¹¹ In these two novels, the main characters lost their ability to believe and their ability to love and Mallock established a causal connection. And, in several cases, the recovery of faith facilitated the recovery of love. In one of many attempts at reconciliation

between the lovers in The Heart of Life, Mallock had Tristram Pole write to his lady:

I will not even make use of the word love, stained as it is by the blood of many sorrows. I will only say -- and this is quite true -- that if I knew how to pray, and if I were married to you, I could kneel down with you by your bed, and without any false shame or embarrassment, say 'Our Father' with you. From a disposition such as this, a new flower might arise.¹²

Mallock argued that the most important human feelings like love, heroism, a willingness to endure, and conscience would be transmogrified into weak and passionless mechanical impulses without the essence and force of religious belief to vivify and elevate them. He discussed the low quality of life without faith in Is Life Worth Living? and in the Memoirs. His fiction was filled with examples. In several of the novels, the main characters (young, aristocratic gentlemen) were lost in a kind of horrible ennui borne of a loss of faith. They could not work. They could not love. They were only half alive. Rupert Glanville, the chief character in The Veil of the Temple, underwent a process (again begun at Oxford) of spiritual devastation. He lost his faith and in time was left with only a trinity of denials. "There is no God, there is no soul, there is no will."¹³

This last passage touched on another of Mallock's personal values, that of holiness. It was the adhesive and feeling part of his morality. In a discussion of the impetus behind moral behavior, Mallock described the motivating feeling in theistic morality. He refused to accept the greatest happiness of the greatest number as a proper moral incentive.

The virtuous appetite is not satisfied that these human beings should be happy. Their happiness should be of a special kind of holiness. [If a man is capable of it] it at once becomes his duty to labour for man's existence. The one cause and source of this feeling is the vision and fruition of God, and the Saint, when he exclaims 'My Lord, I desire nothing but thee'. is exclaiming in the same breath and that my brother may desire thee also.

In this desire, says the theist, though it often does its work in secret and in ways past finding out, is the real motive for all those painful [self-denying] acts which the positivists praise as virtues because of their ... lifeward tendency meaning only by this that they conduce to the general comfort. The theist values life, and he values lifeward tendencies, not as subserving comfort, but as subserving holiness. It is thus that the theory of lifeward actions is for him married to the emotions and so sways the motives that underlie conduct.¹⁴

Thus, the highest kind of happiness was possible only within the framework of theism. Without God, holiness happiness, and the freedom to act morally disappeared.

For Mallock, freedom was contingent upon the existence of God. Without God, the universe was little more than the scientist's imperfectly understood mechanism of matter, physical laws, action, and reaction. Moral choice disappeared in a murky interaction of body chemistry and physiology. Either God existed as the origin and guarantor of our moral freedom or we were so many cosmic accidents tossed about in the ancient, partly determined, partly accidental atomic swirl.

The certainty of moral freedom linked to the presence of God in the universe also contributed to the highest satisfaction of art and drama. For Mallock, our interest in drama came from witnessing the resolution of a moral struggle. Without the moral element of choice,

Antigone's heroism would evaporate; she would be left obstinate only. The tales of Macbeth and Hamlet [would] be tales of little meaning.... The subtraction of the moral sense [would] not revolutionize human purposes, but simply makes us listless. Vice and virtue [would] be before us in the same grey light.¹⁵

The last of Mallock's cardinal religious tenets was the postulate of immortality coupled with the certainty of the necessity of this belief. Mallock, whatever mystical ideas might appear here and there, was decidedly practical

and realistic about the effect on life of his beliefs. In the case of immortality, the necessity of belief and the salutary effects of that belief both stemmed from the fact that human immortality was the only possible theodicy that worked. Perhaps immortality could not answer the suffering (to use Mallock's example) of Voltaire's Lisbon earthquake, but it could reward goodness (thereby attesting to God's goodness), make moral behavior meaningful, and make reunion with loved ones possible.¹⁶ This was practical in the sense that it could motivate a certain kind of ethical behavior and also could leave the individual's sense of distinction from rodents and seaweed intact. Again, Mallock did not attempt to prove immortality; he knew he could not.

Immortality considered as a theodicy was limited. It could not, for example, answer Dostoevski's awful inquiry into the justice of God in a universe where children suffered. Mallock never pushed at this very hard. His one clear statement on the problem was rather unconvincing. He argued that belief in the goodness of God led to orderly development and progress in human civilization; without this belief such progress would not be forthcoming. Since we have seen such progress, "the presumption is inevitable that the affirmative belief is in harmony with some cosmic fact."¹⁷ Of course this was not strictly or logically the case. Altogether, this was one of Mallock's least convincing

arguments. Perhaps, he sensed this weakness because, in a body of work run through with repetition, he never repeated this view.

¹W.H. Mallock, The Old Order Changes, (London, 1888), p. 213.

²W.H. Mallock, The Reconstruction of Religious Belief (New York, 1905), p.3.

³Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁴W.H. Mallock, Is Life Worth Living? (London, 1879), pp. 36-37.

⁵Ibid., p. 37. Also see W.H. Mallock, Lucretius, (London, 1878), p. 154.

⁶Lucretius, p. 156.

⁷W.H. Mallock, The Veil of the Temple (New York, 1904), p. 236.

⁸Memoirs, pp. 278-79.

⁹His path to this conclusion will be discussed later.

¹⁰Veil of the Temple, p. 398.

¹¹Memoirs, p. 218.

¹²W.H. Mallock, The Heart of Life (London, 1895), III, p. 184.

¹³Veil of the Temple, p. 48.

¹⁴W.H. Mallock, Atheism and the Value of Life (London, 1884), pp. 343-48.

¹⁵Is Life Worth Living?, pp. 150-57, passim.

¹⁶Reconstruction of Religious Belief, pp. 110-17, passim.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 225.

V. THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE AND THE LIMITS OF THEOLOGICAL COMPROMISE

Mallock developed an early aversion to clumsy clerical attempts to defend the faith. He worked to refute both the arguments of religious apologists who attempted to prove articles like free will, the existence of God, etc., and the pretensions of those who felt that science could definitely disprove them.

He wrote a series of articles for Fortnightly Review entitled "Religion and Science at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century" in which he established the limits of both religion and science and examined the fallacies involved in trying to resolve the tension between the two. In these articles and in some of his longer essays, Mallock took a view compounded of Hume's sharp skepticism regarding the ultimate nature of matter and causality and of Kantian epistemology (distinguishing between the realms of phenomena and noumena).¹

Altogether, Mallock was very clearly aware of the limitations of science. For example, one of his favorite hammers with which to beat Clifford and company was the mystery which remained at the innermost core of modern sophisticated materialism. As Rupert Glanville said in

The Veil of the Temple: "In one sense science, instead of explaining anything, merely conducts us into deeper depths of the inexplicable."²

Mallock took pains to catch men of science betraying their own ground rules. For example, he attacked Herbert Spencer's "unknowable first cause" as an attempt by Spencer to have things both ways. In a general discussion of science and religion, Mallock revealed what he considered to be Spencer's weakness by following the logic of Spencer's own works: "[A man], like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause and when the Unknown Cause produces in him certain beliefs, he is thereby authorized to profess and act on this belief ... it is not for nothing that the Unknowable has implanted in man certain impulses."³

For Mallock, this was a very old argument indeed and this idea of design (implanting) was properly part of theology if one wanted to ascribe positive values to those implanted beliefs. After all, if the implanted impulses were not moral and positive, then the impulse of a frog to jump was the same as a man's belief in God. Unless the Unknowable was good as well as purposing, then we could ascribe greed, lust, and murder to the omnipotent Unknowable. If, of course, the Unknowable was moral, then he was also

known as God and the difference in terminology stemmed from little else but a lack of candor.

Spencer had enthroned atop his essentially materialist universe an inscrutable first cause, and by capitalizing its first letter, Mallock argued, Spencer was trying to sneak God quietly in the back door after loudly throwing him out the front.

He [Spencer] has only sunk it [God] below the level of language. He has forced it, instead of speaking, merely to hum or mumble; and assured by these comforting noises that it still remains alive, he leaps to the conclusion that it still effects us.⁴

In Christianity and Agnosticism, Mallock took aim at T.H. Huxley in an article entitled "Cowardly Agnosticism-- A Word with Prof. Huxley." In the first place, Mallock refused to accept any real difference between agnosticism and atheism. "Agnosticism is to theologic religion what death is to life."⁵ If this was not fair to the spirit of inquiry which animated agnosticism, it was also the case that agnosticism, in forever dismissing the case of God because of lack of evidence, left the soul of the theistic man with the thin sustenance of a question mark. For Mallock, at any rate, there was no real difference. Indeed, he felt the whole thing was a sham. He viewed agnosticism

and the attitude which it represented as intellectual cowardice.

Huxley and Spencer banished the traditional God, but, at the same time, they felt that moral behavior was still necessary and proper to the health of society and the individual. Spencer tried to do this by importing some kind of morality into his Unknowable. Huxley tried to leave room for freedom of individual action by postulating, what was in Mallock's view, spurious distinction between the terms must and will. He referred here to Huxley's example of the falling stone. If we drop a stone, everything we know about the physical world, science, and everyday life permitted us to say that the stone would fall. However, there was no demonstrable reason why the stone had to fall. We could never say, with the certainty of geometry, that the stone must fall. Therefore, the degree of uncertainty about the inner core of the physical world left a break in the prison of materialist determinism.

Mallock said that this distinction between must and will was actually only a description of science's limited ability to pierce the inner core of physical reality. It was a quibble which harked back to ignorance, not freedom. In denying the truth of anything that could not be demonstrated and then building a foundation for freedom on the one thing that could never be demonstrated, the possibil-

ity of freedom in a determined universe, agnosticism was cowardly. It "[would] not look fixedly at the body of life it has pierced."⁶ It was cowardice to destroy the basis of theism and then refuse to accept the consequences, (the loss of freedom), by postulating dubious Unknowables or building morality on tenuous verbal distinctions. It was characteristic of Mallock to force these people beyond their own meanings. He tried here to trounce Huxley with a bifurcation which Huxley would never have granted. He was forcing Huxley to say that there was either God and freedom or science and determinism and if one accepted any of the latter, he had to accept it all. It was precisely the agnostic point that there never would be adequate support to make either statement. We could assume certain things or act as if certain things were true; however, we could never know that we were demonstrably correct.

Mallock locked Huxley into such a position because it was the only possible conclusion he, Mallock, could reach using agnostic principles. The only thing which mattered to Mallock was that agnosticism began by dismissing Christianity and theism as mythology. Once this was done, wherever else their premises may have led them, they could never again talk of freedom. Mallock would not consider the possibility of freedom apart from the possibility of God.⁷

If we based our moral behavior on Spencer's Unknow-

able, or Huxley's missing link in the chain of determinism, agnosticism took us to terrible places.

Agnosticism will supply us with a religion which, if we describe it in theological language, we may with literal accuracy describe as the religion of the devil -- the spirit which denies.... Instead of telling us we are responsible for our actions, it will tell us that if anything is responsible for them, it is the blind and unfathomable universe.⁸

Mallock did not leave the matter here. He granted that there was a perfectly valid principle in agnostic epistemology. It led to a discovery of a vast body of truth; but for Mallock, there were other more significant kinds of truths. "Agnosticism says nothing is certain which cannot be proved by science. Theological religion says nothing which is important can be."⁹

Mallock was aware of the antinomies which emerged following the assumption of free will and a beneficent, purposing God.¹⁰ In admitted imitation of Kant, Mallock postulated the cardinal points of his religion in spite of, or more precisely because reason, relentlessly pursued, bred absurdity.¹¹ He quoted Huxley and Spencer to the effect that science itself rested on certain assumptions which were nothing more than acts of faith.¹² For example, he cited the scientists' assumption that there was a

uniform and predictable order in the physical world. Such an assumption was certainly useful, and it could not be shown to be demonstrably false; however, it was Mallock's point that neither could it be shown to be demonstrably true. The limitations of human senses and faculties did not permit us to prove that what we thought in this regard was in fact the case. His point in all this was that both the scientist and theist kept the faith; they merely called it different names. And as was always the case with the faithful, both were sure that the other fellow was a heretic.

The tension between these faiths was nicely put in an exchange between two of the interlocutors in The Heart of Life:

Tristram Pole: And as for praying, we shall all of us pray again when a Royal Commission reports upon what to pray to.

Lord Wargrave: A night like this is creed and a religion itself. What makes religion is feeling

Tristram Pole: Yes and it lasts while the feeling lasts. Religious beliefs in these days is a Penelope's web, which is woven by the soul in emotion, and which the minds unweaves in meditation.

Lord Wargrave: And in spite of the mind, the soul weaves it again.¹³

This dialogue between faith and reason was kept alive in all the earlier novels and essays. There were many long and tortured debates. The points under discussion were never exactly the same but the concluding argument brought us to what could be very aptly called a "leap into faith." That mood, or where it led, is found in the following questions addressed to the scientist:

Do you ask proof? Do you ask for verification? I can give you one only.... Deny the certainties which I declare to be certain -- deny the existence of God, deny man's freedom and immortality, and by no other conceivable hypothesis can you vindicate for man's life any possible meaning, or save it from degradation. [The scientist asks:] Must I put my lips, in shame and humiliation, to the cup of faith I have so contemptuously cast away from me? Is there salvation in no other? And, to this question, without passion or prejudice, the voice of reason and logic pitilessly answers, 'No.' The only way by which, in the face of science, we can ever logically arrive at a faith in life, is by the commission of what many at the present will describe as an intellectual suicide. I do not for a minute admit that such an expression is justifiable, but if I may use it provisionally, because it harmonizes with the temper at present prevalent, I shall simply be pronouncing the judgment of frigid reason in saying that it is only through the grave and the date of death that the spirit of man can pass to its resurrection. Man must choose one alternative or the other.¹⁴

Certain as he was that there was no other answer, no third option, and certainly no compromise between the

two, Mallock relentlessly and mercilessly pursued the compromisers and intellectual bargain makers. There was no bargain to make between faith and reason. This essentially was the animus behind his attack on agnosticism. This was also his basic objection to Broad Church theology or theological liberalism because he felt that such clerics tried to make faith fit reason and lost its essence in the process. At least that was what Mallock's treatment of Benjamin Jowett would indicate. On the other hand, Mallock also dismissed religious apologists who attempted to refute scientific thought by simple denials, or by counter-arguments against the reason and data of science. Neither could work.

In An Immortal Soul, Mallock dealt with the impact on traditional religious belief of the then recent discovery of the dual personality. The chief figures in the novel were a traditionalist clergyman, an eminent scientist, and a woman who manifested a dual personality. The cleric, Reverend Barton, was nearly overwhelmed by the theological implications of such a phenomenon. If there was such a being, with two distinct characters, then the concept of the single, individual, and immortal human soul was brought sharply into question. The existence of the soul was a precondition of immortality. For Mallock, if there was a real possibility that an individual could have two truly distinct personalities, then the soul perished. Whether

or not this really was the case was not the basic issue here. Barton exhausted himself trying to establish scientifically that such a personality was not possible. He borrowed books from the scientist and became obsessed with the question. He studied, reflected, and argued. In several cases he seemed to have beaten the agent of science with his own ground rules. In each case however, he had not fully grasped the scientific facts and arguments at hand.

In brief, Mallock drew this man through all the tortures of grave doubt, renewed his optimism with the belief that he could reason his way out of the dilemma and then brought him down hard with the realization that he could not erect a reasonable bridge between faith and reason. It nearly destroyed the man.

Barton was probably the least likeable of any of Mallock's leading characters, and was narrow, opinionated, and very controlled. The reader almost enjoys his discomfort, loss of confidence, and tribulation. Mallock made him into that smug, sure, overly confident country cleric so that his struggle, his loss of certainty, would be even more instructive and illustrative of Mallock's point. A man with less certainty to begin with would not have had to struggle so hard to hold on. Barton's rigidity forced him to pursue the question relentlessly and every

fresh attack renewed his defeat. With Barton's agony and loss, Mallock informed the reader that science could not be turned on itself, it could not be beaten with its own weapons. But, it was also true that "in the case of men like Mr. Barton, faith is beyond the reach of wounds. It may be stunned, but it will not die.... If the churches and men like Barton ... were not ready, in defiance of reason and evidence, to protect the existing bottles while the new are being slowly fabricated ... the world's higher life would be broken."¹⁵

In Religion as a Credible Doctrine, Mallock took to task those who would amalgamate science, reason, and religion to find new bedrock for the faith. Reading Mallock denuding his fellow believers of chimerical proofs was an odd thing. The oddity of a devout theist caning his fellows for their intellectual puffery disappeared with the realization of Mallock's purpose: the resurrection of a truly Christian church through faith, not theological quackery. For example, he would not allow apologists to establish the reality of the human soul and a spirit by pointing to alleged differences between mind or consciousness and matter. Even if consciousness was non-spatial and non-extended, and matter was contrary in its being spatial and extended, there was still no reason to assume the spirituality of the mind. After all, if this

were so, Mallock noted, the same distinction could be made between the "consciousness and material organism of an animal .. and so [this argument] either shows that pigs have immortal souls, or it does nothing to prove that men have."¹⁶

Mallock also did not accept claims for man's spiritual identity based on some proposed superiority to animals. Animals had to make judgments; many were infinitely more clever than human infants, and the most important consideration in such a thesis was that we could not really know what was inside an animal's brain anymore than we could know what was ultimately inside an atom. Further, Mallock argued that embryology showed marked similarities in human and anthropoid development and therefore, the closer we looked, the less the differences seemed to be.

Mallock was usually scrupulously logical and was principled enough to combat even the defenders of his faith if they were intellectually careless. For example, he refuted the argument that tried to prove God's existence by positing God as the only possible first cause in the chain of being. If such a premise might actually establish the necessity of God as a cause, it did nothing to establish God as necessarily good, benevolent, or predictable. Also, the related argument that the process of evolution itself was testimony to a beneficent God fell of its own weight.

For every wonderful accommodation in evolution, there is a horrible and cruel death, deformity, or painful loss. For similar reasons, Mallock would not allow theologians to point to the perfection of the human brain as evidence of God's friendly handiwork in evolution and then evade the crude and repulsive parts of the process by reciting "God works in wondrous ways." In one of his stronger passages, Mallock noted:

If, the fact of the spermatozoon duly finding its ovum [and each one was seen as the spark of life] affords any evidence of God's success in adapting his means to his ends, the fact that for every one which develops into a human being several millions do not, but find their way into the gutter, is evidence that his means, as a rule, are a wanton and miserable failure.¹⁷

Altogether, Religion as a Credible Doctrine was an almost complete rejection of the possibility implied in its title. It isolated, analyzed, and destroyed supposedly scientific and philosophical proofs of human moral freedom. For example, it rejected the assertion that an individual's awareness of self-imposed moral restraint was proof of true moral freedom.¹⁸ In Mallock's estimate, the existence of any such restraint merely showed that one predetermining factor was stronger than another. "In every moral struggle, we shall find some external circumstances presented to us

as the determining factor."¹⁹

If we were not coerced, we could choose one of two opposite courses. But this simply meant that "if I am thirsty, and will to drink, I am free to drink; Or if I am hungry, and will to eat, I am equally free to eat. This proposition the psychologic opponents of determinism invariably confuse with a proposition totally different -- namely, that whether I am hungry or thirsty is a question I can decide for myself ... the last word of psychology is determinism."²⁰ Mallock believed that the latest discoveries in physiology, heredity, brain surgery, and research into the unconscious, all made assertions of free will flimsy. He refused to believe free will could be proved; but, that never stopped him from believing in it. It could not be disproved either.²¹

Pure philosophy did not escape determinism with free will intact any more than science. Here Mallock refuted the Idealism which asserted the reality of freedom on the basis of Kantian ontology. If Idealists could posit freedom in the unbridgeable chasm between noumena and phenomena, they still could do little to destroy the determinism which seemed implicit in the uniformity of human sensual perception. Most people experienced these things in the same way, i.e., they were all predisposed to see roses as red. In the noumenal realm, roses might be alto-

gether different than they appeared. For Mallock this consideration did not prove very much. Alleged differences between noumena and phenomona notwithstanding, we all experience the later in the same predetermined way. There is no freedom in that.²² Philosophy was no better able to make religion intellectually comfortable than was science.

The argument of the Idealists was not very different from Spencer's concept of the Unknowable, Huxley's fine distinction between must and will, or the clergyman's assertion that God worked in wondrous ways. Simply put, religion was not a credible doctrine, and attempts to make it so created foggy arguments or weakened faith. Mallock found that proving freedom, like proving God, was impossible. However, since he believed that faith was the sine qua non of any conception of dignified and meaningful life, he simply postulated the reality of freedom and the existence of God.²³

For Mallock, when reason finally had exhausted itself and surrendered to a logically groundless faith, freedom was one of those articles which made that faith most attractive "for, any religion [with] which the pure reason and the practical reason can be satisfied, the first necessity is that men should accept freedom as fact."²⁴

Common to his rejection of all these arguments was his belief in the impossibility of compromise for a theist.

There was no safe middle ground. His growing disdain for the Anglican establishment was rooted in his aversion to compromised faith. His feelings were manifest in his analysis of Mrs. Humphry Ward's Robert Elsmere, one of the most popular books in Britain in the 1880's.

Mallock considered Mrs. Ward to be the best educated and most capable literary spokeswoman of liberal Anglicanism. If he could undermine the beliefs of one of Broad Churchism's most able defenders, he might weaken the movement itself. He wrote that whatever else it might mean, the central theme of the novel was: miracles do not happen.²⁵ The impact of that assertion was forceful enough to reduce what had been sacred scripture to simple literature. Indeed, for the liberals, the authority of inspiration had been usurped by the critical insight of Higher Criticism. Mrs. Ward and the others helped to popularize the idea that modern criticism and science had "deprived the Bible of the power to substantiate the truth of Christianity."²⁶ The Bible then had to be purged of superstition, and Christianity had to be rationalized. Mallock might have accepted the rationale this far; however, as he pursued the arguments he discovered that Mrs. Ward, for one, would not accept the logic of her own position. For example, she rejected Christ's divinity, but continued to claim that he would somehow, to use Mallock's phrase, receive the account of every Christian.

That is a considerable task for a man dead two thousand years. Mrs. Ward had rejected the miraculous but still wished to take communion to achieve a "mystical union." A union with what? God was nothing if not a miracle.

Mallock insisted that what Mrs. Ward must have meant was that she would believe in only certain selected miracles. Thus, while she rejected the inspiration of the Bible, she retained belief in the authority of something she called an inner light connected to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was by definition miraculous and Mallock adduced this last instance to make his point: so called non-dogmatic Christianity was a ruse, that is, it was selectively dogmatic and the result of its mixing of formerly sacred truth with modern criticism was a bastardization of both.

At the end of his discussion of Mrs. Ward's article, Mallock made an interesting point regarding her special treatment of the figure of Jesus. She identified him as the best exemplar of God's standard of behavior in history; however, he was still only a mortal man. In this sense he was not very different from Gautama or Mohammed. Mallock viewed this as a mistaken account of Jesus' appeal. His power, influence, and duration in history came not primarily from his ideas but from the belief that the origin of these ideas was divine. His divinity established an awful authority

behind his ethics. It was this belief in the divine origin of Christianity that helped to make it such a forceful factor in western history. From the practical point of view, following Christian rules made much more sense if they were believed to originate in divine will. If they were in fact God's law, eternal reward or punishment was at stake. Whatever intellectual harmony there was in a system like, for instance, Confucionism, Mallock felt that such a system could never have the appeal and force that divinely inspired ethics did.

For Mallock, the core problem in Broad Churchism was the attitude implicit in the assertion that "miracles did not happen." This modern, intelligent, scientific frame of mind choked its own spirituality in the tangles of reason. In modern Anglicanism, it bred a very selective prejudice against the supernatural. Thus Mallock found a convocation of Anglican Bishops rejecting some miracles while holding on to the "essential four."²⁷ Mallock felt that once one decided that miracles did not happen, the decision had been made, the faith compromised, and any new articles or selective purges of tradition were only various ways of avoiding the recognition of that decision.

Mallock presented the supernatural and holy aspects of theism as a kind of seamless web, whole, and indivisible. One could not rearrange it -- move one of the pillars of

belief and the House of the Lord collapsed. Liberal Anglicanism was only one example of the spiritual dismemberment of Protestantism. Mallock felt that Protestantism, ever since its inception, had been slowly destroying itself.

[Protestantism] is at last beginning to exhibit to us the true result of the denial of infallibility to a religion that professes to be supernatural. We are at last beginning to see in it neither the purifier of a corrupted revelation, nor the corruptor of a pure revelation, but the practical denial of all revelation whatsoever. It is fast evaporating into a mere natural theism.²⁸

For Mallock, Protestantism had ceased to be of any value. It had dissolved "into the nebulous tenets of the Broad Churchmen; the tenets of Broad Churchmen dissolved into Deism, Deism into Pantheism and the cult of the unknowable, and the last into Optimism."²⁹ (Optimism was one of Mallock's sobriquets for the Religion of Humanity). He argued that Protestantism had almost dissolved into nothingness because it had lost its authority. In the end, because it had dispensed with some ultimate source of truth, a Pope, or an acceptedly certain Bible, it had disintegrated into almost as many beliefs as there were Protestants. Protestants made the grave error of seeking verification for

faith. Some sought scientific or critical endorsement for their traditional wisdom. Failing to find such support in the chilly judgment of higher criticism, they broke all the bones in their body of faith. Each Protestant group was left with some fragment or some splinter of what used to be a complete faith. Protestantism's moral force declined as its certainty disintegrated and it became spiritually moribund.³⁰

The Church of Rome did not share in this declining fortune. Roman Catholicism remained vigorous because, in the final analysis, it had an unassailable foundation for its authority -- papal infallibility. Mallock was convinced that papal infallibility was the true taproot of the enduring vitality of the Roman church.³¹ Indeed, when questioned by modern critics, the church has the great refuge of belief: "Instead of declaring she is true because she agrees with the Bible, she declares that the Bible is true because it agrees with her."³² The Roman Catholic church is a continuously developing organism. With the passage of time, "the church authenticates the Bible, not the Bible the church."³³ Eventually, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church comes to accept and assimilate truths which it may have first rejected.³⁴

In most of his writing, Mallock expressed respect and affection for the Roman Catholic church and he always

made a great deal more fun of Anglican clerics than of Catholics. It was reported in the Times obituary that Mallock may have been received into the Catholic Church upon his death bed. In Professor Patrick's research for his edition of The New Republic, he investigated the veracity of that report. Most of the people who knew him seem to have doubted such a possibility, although they nearly all alluded to Mallock's deep respect for the Church. Probably the best clue to his most profound feelings about this was in a line from The Old Order Changes: "[Roman Catholicism] was not true, but no other view was tolerable."³⁵

In this connection it is interesting that Mallock created a certain Father Stanley for two of his novels which dealt with social issues. Father Stanley was the best informed and most effective adversary of Marxist belief in any of Mallock's fiction. He also delivered the keenest commentary on social issues to be found in Mallock's novels. It is no accident that he was a Roman Catholic.

¹See W.H. Mallock, "Religion and Science at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century," Fortnightly Review, Vol. 76, (July - December, 1901), 395-414 and in the same journal see Vol. 77 (January - June, 1902), 277-96. Also see W.H. Mallock, Religion as a Credible Doctrine (New York, 1903), pp. 14-20; Reconstruction of Religious Belief, pp. 20-48, passim; and, Christianity and Agnosticism, (London, 1889), passim.

²Veil of the Temple, p. 298.

³Christianity and Agnosticism, p. 268.

⁴Reconstruction of Religious Belief, p. 127.

⁵Christianity and Agnosticism, p. 252.

⁶Ibid., p. 280.

⁷Ibid., p. 282,

⁸W.H. Mallock, Contemporary Superstition (London, 1895), pp. 89-90.

⁹Ibid., pp. 90-91.

¹⁰Reconstruction of Religious Belief, p. 272.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 248-50 and 270-72.

¹²Ibid., p. 248. Also see Contemporary Superstition, p. 91.

¹³Heart of Life, I, p. 154.

¹⁴Contemporary Superstition, p. 91.

¹⁵W.H. Mallock, An Immortal Soul (New York, 1908), p. 473.

¹⁶Religion as a Credible Doctrine, p. 51.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 101-14, passim.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 118.

²⁰Ibid., p. 120-23.

²¹Ibid., pp. 130-48, passim.

²²Ibid., p. 211.

²³Memoirs, p. 285. Mallock did this in conscious imitation of Kant.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 273.

²⁶See an article entitled "The Logic of Non-Dogmatic Christianity," Fortnightly Review, Vol. 398, (February 1, 1900), 273-89.

²⁷See an article entitled "Free Thought in the Church of England," Fortnightly Review, Vol. 56, (1904), 386-401.

²⁸Is Life Worth Living?, p. 279.

²⁹Contemporary Superstition, p. 45.

³⁰Is Life Worth Living?, pp. 275-320, passim.

³¹Ibid., p. 284.

³²Veil of the Temple, p. 166.

³³"The Logic of Non-Dogmatic Christianity," 292.

³⁴W.H. Mallock, The Old Order Changes (New York, 1888), pp. 472-73.

³⁵Ibid., p. 140.

VI. AGAINST POSITIVISM

With Is Life Worth Living? Mallock began a task which he never really set aside. He attempted to deal with the question posed in its title by examining Positivism's effect on the quality of life. Could Positivism replace Christianity as the basis of morally worthwhile life? First, Mallock's unique definition of Positivism must be made clear. From his remarks in the introduction to Is Life Worth Living? it is clear that he used the term loosely. He flatly stated that for him, Positivism did not necessarily apply to the beliefs of Comte or his followers but rather to what he called "the views of the whole scientific school."¹

In the ensuing discussion, the reader should keep in mind that for Mallock, a Positivist was any thinker who shifted the basis of morality from God to another referent and did so with the aid of science. It was only in this way that Mallock could lump together figures like J.S. Mill, Comte, Harrison, Huxley, Eliot, and Clifford. He seized upon certain propositions in their thought and attempted to demolish their plausibility.

While Mallock mixed all kinds of people together

when he attacked the positivist school, nearly all of his quotations and sharpest comments concerned Clifford, Tyndall, Spencer, and Huxley. This was not consistent since Clifford can probably be accurately described as aggressively materialistic and Huxley certainly cannot. Thus, Mallock's definition of Positivism was a singular one. His criterion for identifying a Positivist was that person's adherence to either or both of the following ideas: (1) When examined with the standards and objective procedures of modern science and criticism, traditional Christian belief and scripture had no objectively verifiable historical referents. Less elegantly put, they were not real or true. (2) Since traditional morality had no basis in fact, it could and should be superseded by a new socially oriented ethics which derived its moral impulse from concern for others rather than a concern for God's will.

Mallock believed that Positivism eroded and undermined traditional Christian belief and made the retention of faith increasingly difficult. If Positivism extinguished serious Christian belief and practice, would there be any effect on the quality of life?

Mallock quickly admitted that a sharp decline in accepted religious belief was not new to the history of western man. Ancient Roman civilization experienced the

death of centuries-old rites before the society itself collapsed. Mallock insisted that what was happening to his generation was not simply more of the same. He refused to agree with Clifford that the death of Christianity would merely duplicate what was the normal state of affairs in, for example, the vigorous and productive Athens of the Periclean age. He rejected this comparison. Modern man could not shake hands with ancient man over the vast gap of the Middle Ages. Christianity had intervened and the rest of human history could never again simply repeat itself.

Positivism would be a sorry substitute for Christianity. Mallock believed that the whole system was poorly grounded and the ethics of Positivism were essentially self-contradictory. Therefore, it could never have the power that Christian morality had in western society.

Mallock's basic objection to the whole system of Positivist ethics was that, having discarded Christian morality because it could not be verified scientifically, Positivists then developed new ethics even less susceptible of verification than Christianity. Mallock suggested that Positivists started with science and ended with nonsense. A good part of his literary output following publication of The New Republic was devoted to exposing what was for him, nonsense.

In Christianity and Agnosticism Mallock used the words of Huxley and Spencer to indicate their admission that "life, in some very practical sense, will be ruined if science, having destroyed theologic religion, cannot put, or allow to be put, some other religion in place of it."² Some moral incentive conducive to a sense of duty was essential to the welfare of mankind. Mallock's feelings about Huxley's agnosticism and Spencer's unknowable have already been indicated and it remains to develop his ideas regarding the other serious Positivist alternative, the Religion of Humanity.

The Religion of Humanity which is usually associated with August Comte, developed out of the Positivists' attempts to find a religion which did not clash with the canons of scientific truth as the Positivists understood them. Comte replaced the Judeo-Christian God with "this mighty Being, i.e., Humanity at its unselfish best."³ Comte hoped to make social concern and sacrifice for humanity the emotional center of his church. "The aim of all should be to become incorporate with this mighty Being."⁴ As a substitute for what had become an intellectually dubious Christianity, the Religion of Humanity attracted many Victorian intellectuals including Frederick Harrison, George Eliot, and Harriet Martineau.

Measured by the number of words and pages, the

Religion of Humanity was easily Mallock's favorite target. He wrote a very clever satire on it, tried to expose its major weaknesses in one of his novels, attacked it in several of his works on religious thought, and tried to engineer the destruction of its rational basis in a long section of Is Life Worth Living? The name Religion of Humanity was the clearest indication that God as the religious focal point was to be subverted but religion itself was to be preserved. For Mallock, the name itself was the strongest argument against the Religion of Humanity. It was an admission of the necessity of religious faith, not demonstrable propositions.

The Religion of Humanity may have had its roots in Positivism, which in turn started with science; however, it was still not scientific. If it was born in a laboratory, fathered by skepticism, and nurtured by reason, it had matured into as fuzzy a set of notions as any theologian ever spun. Verification was the watchword of science and it was Mallock's self-appointed task to demonstrate that there was no verification of the most important articles in the Comteian catechism. Mallock felt that it was the most obvious and absurd characteristics of positivist thought to relegate unproved assertions to the realm of mythology and then eschew the test of verification for its own central tenets.⁵

Mallock devoted a large part of Is Life Worth Living?, Atheism and the Value of Life, and other books and articles to illustrating how Positivists evaded their own epistemology. As a case in point, he presented Professor Tyndall's attempt to resolve the problem of free will without betraying materialistic principles. Tyndall's materialism strained, and in the end, failed to resolve the question of consciousness and will. Mallock stated the materialist case for his adversary: "Human consciousness, which is essentially molecular, cannot ... separate itself from itself, and cause itself to do things. What we do ... as conscious acts, are really naught but part of the ... molecular flow -- thus there is no will really -- we decide via molecular collision."⁶ Further, consciousness could not analyze itself. And so, the debate as to its essential nature -- spiritual or physical -- could never be resolved. Mallock used Tyndall's attempt to resolve this problem to manifest the basic dilemma of the positivist school. When faced with the question of the final identification of human consciousness, Tyndall, with great verbosity, built a fence and sat upon it. "But the production of consciousness by molecular motion is quite as unpresentable to the mental vision as the production of molecular motion by consciousness. If I reject one result, I reject both. I, however, reject neither, and thus stand

in the presence of two incomprehensibles, instead of one incomprehensible."⁷

The logical premises were sound, but the conclusion was only one man's opinion. The retention of both incomprehensibles was simply a statement of the positivist dilemma. Tyndall chose not to reject the second mystery because its rejection entailed the rejection of the first. He liked the first enough to keep the second. He had no other choice. This was not cold-headed scientific thought but a matter of taste.⁸ "To reject neither [incomprehensible] is to eternally beg the question -- in the one argument where Positivism must be positive, it fails, it rides the horns of the dilemma. Altogether, as for proof, the nature of the case does not admit of it."⁹

Mallock reduced all this to the following: theism made as much sense as Positivism or as much nonsense. If one chose to embrace either, it could not be on the basis of superior rational precision. To choose either, Mallock believed, one had to determine two things: which was in tune with human nature and, the related question, which would make life worth living? Mallock was certain that Positivists did not understand human nature and their moral imperatives would never work.

The Religion of Humanity replaced the incentive of heaven and adoration of God with the embrace of the human

community and its posterity. And in this Mallock sensed some major weaknesses. Christian virtue was enmeshed in an eternal scheme. Its rewards were ultimate, eternal, and final. The Religion of Humanity could offer no such promise.

You speak of Humanity as a corporation which never dies. Well, I admit it may last for some time yet, just like our Welsh coal. But if anything's certain, it's certain that, like our coal, it will die out some day.¹⁰

This may seem an insensitive rejoinder since it appears to counsel social indifference because the sun may some day burn out. However, Mallock meant a great deal more than this. Humanity as a moral object had more against it than its limited lifespan. Humanity as an object of reverence and duty lacked the clear and present force which attended the concept of an omnipotent, punishing, and rewarding God. The moral tone of human existence would degenerate if Positivism became very popular. Indeed, Mallock felt that the spiritual quality of life among the educated classes had already been deeply affected since the growth of Positivism.

Community oriented ethics had no precise referent. "In the positivist Utopia, we are told, each man's happiness is bound up in the happiness of all the rest, and is thus infinitely intensified. All mankind are made a mighty

whole by the fusing power of benevolence."¹¹ Mallock claimed that positivist ethics operated in a kind of perpetually revolving door: "I am glad that you are glad that I am glad ... all this gladness must be about something besides itself."¹²

Establishing the welfare of the community as the moral desideratum was a blunder because it could give no direct reward or punishment to the individual. Mallock strongly believed that all morality ultimately rested with the single individual. No one acted in any preconceived moral way unless the preconception included some definite result (reward, punishment, happiness). Mallock was sure that acting upon the stimulus of benefiting the community could never provide any tangible result for the individual. If I were to leap into the sea to make room in a lifeboat for others, they would be recipients of moral consideration but I would be drowned. They lived on as a result of my goodness; I would be no more.

In the Christian scheme, God might smile at my generosity and the gates of heaven might open the way to eternal bliss, while in the positivist scheme, I died only to deter briefly the permanent and complete disintegration of those people. Christianity was a more forceful concept because it established clear choices, rewards, and punishments for the individual.

For Mallock, individual happiness, borne of the individual's awareness of obeying God's law, became a state of holiness. And this sacred happiness was qualitatively different from anything the Positivists might have hoped to achieve. That was because, said Mallock, the Positivists had never been able to define or establish the basis of individual happiness. Ethics moored solely in considerations of group welfare always betrayed a kind of circular logic which left the question of individual motive and incentive begging.

Mallock pictured positivist ethics as making an individual's pleasure necessarily derivative from someone else's. Thus the content of my bliss was the awareness of yours and vice versa. We could only come first by putting ourselves second.¹³ This was how Mallock described the basic weakness of positivist ethics. Here was the mystical haze which clouded all their moral arguments. The individual was forever immersed and lost in the community and it was theoretically possible that everyone in the group could be perfectly miserable making everyone else happy. Obviously, Mallock oversimplified what adherents of the Religion of Humanity advocated; however, his strongest point, that the individual was always to be subordinated to some hazy idea of group happiness, was accurate enough. The lynchpin of Mallock's moral conception was the individual considered as

the basic and most important unit in any social arrangement or ethical system.

Even if we suppose such corporate progress to be a reality, it cannot be invested with any practical meaning unless we postulate the individual, and consider his fortunes first. We have here the Asses Bridge of all philosophy whatsoever, and until the philosopher has crossed it he can do nothing but bray.¹⁴

In Mallock's estimate, the Positivists made their biggest mistake in assuming that their ethical system would eventually work because there was a strong instinct of benevolence and sympathy in human nature. Mallock was certain that for most people, most of the time, the individual was always considered first and the community second, and measurably later.

Mallock betrayed a kind of Hobbesian low estimate of human nature. For example, in a discussion of George Eliot's views of human nature, which he considered to be one with the positivists, he sketched an ugly creature indeed:

Humanity, regarded as a single being is a being without any aspirations that are not selfish, and without any duties at all. It has been bestial at its infancy, savage in its youth, utterly impure in its manhood and ... it is to slipper through an unrepentant doctage into a hopeless and unremembered grave.¹⁵

Altogether, Eliot, Harrison, and the others simply did not understand the object of their veneration. For Mallock, Eliot was the first legitimate fruit of our modern atheistic pietism. Her philosophy was the best description of a path to salvation without God.¹⁶ And for all her rationality and literary ability, her actual observations of life were so hazy that she had no foundation for a scientific theory about the realities of life. She and her fellow believers were very competent design engineers with no grasp of the materials they intended to use.¹⁷

The idea that certain pleasures were greater if one suffered to get them was, when discussing humanity in general, only slightly less foolish than the associated idea that most average men would dedicate their moral life to cultivating such pleasures.

One of Mallock's insistent complaints against the Religion of Humanity was the retention of the traditional moral categories accompanied by the rejection of the one factor, God, which could not, in his opinion, be rejected if the new system was to work. For Mallock, the highest state of happiness was holiness and, as indicated earlier, it was the most important kind of happiness which could be directly meaningful to the individual in and of itself. It did not have to refer or relate to posterity or the rest of humanity to have appeal, to direct, or to motivate.

To say "Our Father" and "Amen" was the simplest, most concrete, and meaningful ethical system there was.

Of course there was a great deal of special pleading here. After all, any ethics tied to some outside, absolute, punishing deity could be described as just as unrelated to the inner and actual happiness of the individual as community oriented ethics. However, Mallock was sure of the reality of the spiritual realm, the soul, and the deity. God and the individual soul, neither of which could be demonstrably disproved, were aspects of the same holy substance and linked together.

From his point of view, moral behavior was only a manifestation of the finer part of the self tied as it was to God. The existence of the soul might or might not be certain but, the existence of benevolence and sympathy, which were the gears and pulleys of positivist ethics, could be fairly certainly shown not to exist now or to have existed at any time in recorded human history. Let the Positivist demand verification from the theist: the latter was probably as well equipped to provide it as the priest of the Religion of Humanity.

With all the method and logic of positivist science, Christian heaven had been banished from the realm of serious consideration. The here, the now, the human race, and its future had been combined into articles of devotion. Progress

had replaced holiness and afterlife. For the system to work, Mallock insisted, the Positivists had to be able to demonstrate that either Utopia existed or it was in the process of creation; but, "when pressed closely, their Utopia evaporate[d] ... and this fact shipwreck[ed] the Positivist vessel."¹⁸ Without God, heaven, eternity, and holiness, Positivism was bereft of a vital inner core.

All scientific moralists deprive the word morality of one half of [its] meaning. Morality, as we understand it, is a conduct of three dimensions. [They] regard it as having only two. Height and depth are wanting. Now the ordinary sense of mankind, though it does not condemn good dinners, does, without doubt, rank the propensities of the philosopher essentially higher in kind than those of the most temperate gourmet. It measures the two by a kind of vertical scale; but in [their] Utopia this vertical scale is gone. [One] has moral efficiencies, but [one] has no moral elevations. The citizens of Utopia...prophesy the evolution of society into a perfect organism -- a perfect social animal; but, for all [one] can tell us to the contrary, the animal may be a healthy pig.¹⁹

In a general discussion of where science and Positivism had taken modern man, Mallock noted a growing sickness of the spirit. Man's increasingly scientific view of himself and his past had cast him from the special position he held as God's ultimate creation. Man had become ever more knowing but the price of his knowledge was "the discovery that he [was] a lesser and lower thing than he

thought he was."²⁰ The more we know, the less we are. Positivism made truth, or the seeking of it, an almost absolute value. The Religion of Humanity, a child of Positivism, made happiness one of its most important goals. As Mallock argued, truth and happiness were often mutually exclusive. Truth, for some of Mallock's adversaries, was the only thing left which approached what used to be called sacred. Truth was a terrible solvent and as science was the first to admit, we probably will never know all the truth. We have paid an awful price for the little bit we think we have.

Heaven, eternity, divine goodness, sin, evil, punishment, reward, the soul, the spirit, and the Lord had all been bubbled away in science's stinking laboratory. The devastation was almost complete. The Positivists had suggested the concept of progress to replace all that; but, it was a tremendous burden for any idea to support. It was not enough -- it would not work. The ideal man, whose existence was necessary to the positivist utopia, was wanting.

The only human being who will, apart from religion, ever be able to describe himself as co-extensive with the human race will, as Nietzsche puts it, ...be the last man alive when the rest of the human race is frozen. He, and only he, will be able to say truly: Homo sum Humani nihil a me alienum puto.²¹

Mallock was not always so somber. In some of his best writing he had great fun at the expense of his ideological opponents: Comteian disciples, Democrats, and Socialists. In The Individualist he created silly characters who were united in the effort to rescue humanity from its present discomfort. At the pinnacle of pretentious and affected reformism was a certain Mrs. Norham who was introduced as being in "full career of what may be called ethical dissipation, spending all her energies in one reform movement or another, and just as a frivolous young lady is miserable if she is not going to a ball, Mrs. Norham was miserable if she was not in some reforming movement."²²

Mrs. Norham was a woman characterized by galloping condescension. "My aim is to elevate, by culture, thought, by various and multitudinous knowledge, that great blind, dumb, helpless, unthinking, piteously brutalized multitude by whom [all is created]."²³ She intended to rescue the entire mass of humanity from its misery by, among other things, "the diffusion amongst all of equal tastes, equal aptitudes, and equal culture."²⁴ To show that such a project was both feasible and productive of useful results, she undertook to create a great proletarian poet from a certain Mr. Squelch, a tailor with poetic proclivities. When freed from his cutting and sewing, he produced a book of poems so dreadful that the description of its quality in

the first reviews led him to throw himself in front of an oncoming train. Mallock's conclusion to all that was that "whilst three or four months of duty towards our neighbour is enough to make seven hundred cottagers comfortable, altruism in as many years can do nothing but kill one tailor."²⁵

Mrs. Norham was in league with several conspirators who shared Mallock's most despised intellectual villanies. Their beliefs, subsequent plans of action, and final failure were really only a restatement of Mallock's basic theme in Is Life Worth Living? Mrs. Norham's fellows shared a "passionate brotherliness" of man, which hitherto had been consumed in the "beautiful, but useless" aspirations of the Christian. This passionate brotherliness would be the social cement of their Utopia. Mrs. Norham described the content of the new and revised golden rule:

If I give to myself a glass of the rarest wine, the staisfaction which it gives me is contemptible. If, instead of drinking it myself, I pour it down the throat of my brother, his sensations are for me a sacrament. A pleasure which for me is as valueless as a forged bank-note, becomes a genuine one, when I palm it off on my friend.²⁶

Mallock's prejudices are familiar enough by now so that we all know that none of his characters will ever be able to live up to all this fine sentiment. They did

launch an association dedicated to the realization of their new ethic. At the inaugural meeting, the new organization almost collapsed because of the animosity generated in deciding who should speak first and for how long. Each speaker was so intently dedicated to delivering his truth about his fellow man, that he would not allow the others their chance. Mallock's picture of the pettiness that came with exaggerated self-importance was authentic and funny. The whole movement nearly collapsed under the weight of its collective ego. The association was to do its work with finances from the royalties of a device invented by one of its members. But, the original subscriptions to the society were consumed by the inventor and his cohorts installing themselves in an expensive suite of offices where the furniture took nearly all the money that had been ear-marked for research and development. With the association in ruins, Mrs. Norham decided that a final sacrifice might be necessary.

Some of them [the rich] have great houses, with rooms made for meetings. They lend them for such purposes. What sounding boards for the new gospel would assemblages such as these be. One would have, not doubt, to get over some of one's nearest prejudices, but in the cause of altruistic equality one must be prepared to sacrifice what is nearest to one.²⁷

Mallock's broadest satire and most engaging swipe at Positivism was in his short novelette, The New Paul and Virginia, or Positivism on an Island, written in 1878. The immediate cue for the creation of The New Paul and Virginia was a debate in the pages of the 1877 Nineteenth Century dealing with the "Influence of Science on Morality and a Decline in Religious Belief." The debate was carried on by members of the Metaphysical Society. Mallock was not a member, but because of the furor created by The New Republic, he was invited by the editors to reply to the debate. His formal reply was Is Life Worth Living?, but his immediate response was a satire of the debaters' views.²⁸ As in The New Republic, he used nearly verbatim passages from the debate and by change the context and just a few words, he made utter nonsense of what the people had written.

There is not a serious word in The New Paul and Virginia and it is great fun to read. Every word and ludicrous event is used didactically. The book reduces the human race to a handful of shipwrecked survivors, and the central figure, a Professor Paul Darnley, was a funnel through which Mallock poured the splendid nonsense he made of the words of Huxley and Tyndall. The Professor was identified as the author of a three volume work on the origin of life, written after searching seven years for it "in infusions of hay and cheese."²⁹ He was the consummate

skeptic, taking "nothing on trust, except the unspeakable subliminity of the human race and its august terrestrial destinies."³⁰ He gave sermons on the ship with references not to the New Testament but to the sublime Tyndall and Huxley.

In some arch silliness, delivered by the Professor in one of his sermons, Mallock gave us his view of the promise of the Religion of Humanity:

Since that God we once called holy is a fable, that humanity is all holy must be a fact. Since we shall never be sublime, and solemn, and unspeakably happy hereafter, it is evident that we can be sublime, and solemn, and unspeakably happy here....It [the Religion of Humanity] is founded on exact thought. It is the gospel of the kingdom of man. Had I only a microscope and a few chemicals, I could demonstrate its eternal truth to you.³¹

On hearing this, some of the assembled company started to weep since they were not so unspeakably happy just then. On detecting this, the Professor explained that happiness right now was not essential and that whatever happiness one may or may not have now, it was better to consider the overall effect of one's acts five hundred years hence.³²

This might seem to be so much idle caricature; it was not. Mallock's point of departure in this satire was the real words and sentiments of leading scientific figures of his day; for example, Frederic Harrison had written in

the previously noted debate on science and morality in
Nineteenth Century:

As we read the calm and humane words of Condorcet, on the very edge of his yawning grave, we learn from the conviction of posthumous activity [not posthumous fame], how the consciousness of a living incorporation with the glorious future of his race, can give a patience and happiness equal to that of any martyr of theology.... Once make it [this sense of posthumous participation in the life of our fellows] the basis of philosophy, the standard of right and wrong, and the center of religion, and this [the conversion of the masses] will prove, perhaps, an easier task than that of teaching Greeks and Romans, Syrians and Moors, to look forward to a life of ceaseless psalmody in an immaterial heaven.³³

This passage focuses on the targets of all of Mallock's slings and arrows. A scientist postulated an intangible, and rather fuzzy concept called posthumous activity and from the center of this verbal haze he tried to extract a new basis for philosophy, for right and wrong, and for religion. The New Paul and Virginia was merely a commentary on the thinking in the above passage.

With satire, articles, essays, and full length treatises, Mallock exposed the hidden assumptions and, what for him were serious errors of judgment, implicit in the positivist view of man and society. It is clear in every-

thing he wrote on the subject of theism versus Positivism that he was also keenly aware of the traps and compromises of the logic involved in theism. He was perhaps too keenly aware of the problems of the theist position. Even in his Memoirs, written across the space of the nearly half a century which separated him from his undergraduate years at Oxford, there remained the angst, the doubt, and the wrenching uncertainty. Mallock concluded the Memoirs with a discussion of literature as a form of action. He described his own novels, or a good number of them, as a form of social action motivated by a serious desire to make religious faith once again possible for educated people. He hoped, as he put it, to help launch a "counter revolution" against what is usually called advanced thought.

There is something Mallock did not say, but which lingered in the last few pages of the Memoirs. He knew very well what he wanted to believe, but it was not clear in the Memoirs or any of the novels which dealt with the question of faith, whether he was finally able to believe. In the closing pages of the autobiography, he discussed a translation he did of Lucretius. He became immersed in the ancient materialism, atheism, and deep pessimism of Lucretian poetry. He felt almost converted to belief in its final meaning. He implied that he rejected this bleak truth and wrote of those who accepted it: "I can only hope that I am

entitled to the truly charitable satisfaction of regarding them as a class to which I do not myself belong."³⁴ This sounded more like a fervent hope than a statement of faith.

All his pain, intellectual agonizing, relentless investigation and writing seemed finally to lead him to one clear cry: "My Lord, I desire nothing but thee."³⁵

¹Is Life Worth Living?, p. xiv.

²Christianity and Agnosticism, p. 254.

³Franklin M. Baumer, Modern European Thought (New York, 1977), p. 316.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Is Life Worth Living?, pp. 224-25.

⁶Ibid., p. 229.

⁷Ibid., p. 236.

⁸Ibid., p. 239.

⁹Ibid., p. 242 and 243.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 200.

¹¹Ibid., p. 81.

¹²Ibid.

¹³W.H. Mallock, Atheism and the Value of Life (London, 1884), p. 333.

¹⁴Memoirs, p. 370.

¹⁵Atheism, p. 358.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁸Is Life Worth Living?, pp. 176-77.

¹⁹Veil of the Temple, pp. 388-89.

²⁰Is Life Worth Living?, p. 208.

²¹Memoirs, pp. 370-71.

²²W.H. Mallock, The Individualist (London, 1899),
p. 21.

²³Ibid., p. 26.

²⁴Ibid., p. 275.

²⁵Ibid., p. 316.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 273-74.

²⁷Ibid., p. 356.

²⁸See an article entitled "Voltaire Among the
Positivists: A Study of W.H. Mallock's The New Paul and
Virginia" by P.M. Yarker in Essays and Studies of the
English Association, 1955, pp. 22-23.

²⁹W.H. Mallock, The New Paul and Virginia or
Positivism on an Island (New York, 1878), p. 8.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 22-23.

³²Ibid., p. 24.

³³Ibid., p. 139 as quoted by Mallock.

³⁴Memoirs, p. 368.

³⁵Atheism, p. 345.

VII. THE SOCIAL QUESTION

Mallock candidly admitted that during his Oxford years and for a time thereafter, he simply did not pay much attention to social issues. He was too absorbed by religious questions. As he put it, "what is now called social unrest" forced his attention to shift to economic and political questions. The impact of Henry George, the founding of the Social Democratic Federation, and disturbances in the Scottish Highlands all diverted his interest from the problems of faith which had previously consumed all of his energies.

Even when he was deeply exercised by social problems, he finally concluded that the real solution to such problems was essentially religious. His attention to the social problems merely underscored the main concern of his earlier religious writing -- Mallock dearly wished to rout the progress of what he called "advanced thought."

In Mallock's estimate, if "advanced thought" overcame traditional theism and acceptance of hierarchical society, then life simply would not be worth living. Theistic religion made life worth the trouble because it, and it alone, gave man a sense of dignity, freedom, and immortality. Conservative social and political practices made life worth-

while because they valued and rewarded the exercise of talent and ability.

In the sense that civilization is the product of the best efforts of the best people, truly civilized life was possible only in a conservative hierarchical society which nurtured the elite. Theism made the individual more meaningful than any competing idea and conservatism allowed that individual to develop himself and his unique capabilities to the utmost. Mallock defined the thrust of his life's work when he wrote: "The implication of all the writings by which I have attempted [to discredit advanced thought] is that the mischief, religious, social, political, which 'advanced' thought has done may in time, by a rational development of conservative thought, be undone, and the true faiths be revived on which the sanctities, the stabilities, and the civilization of the social order depend."¹ Thus, when Mallock took up the social question, he was not so much assuming a new task as continuing his old battle against advanced thought.

"Every age has its riddle, and this riddle is ours."² How could the very real misery and degradation of the lower classes of modern industrial society be remedied without destroying the foundations of civilized life? This question became one of Mallock's chief concerns from the mid 1880's until his death. While he was deeply sensitive to the

difficulties faced by the working classes in Victorian England, he was also sure that the varieties of socialism embraced and advanced by his contemporaries could effect no lasting change in the conditions of the masses and would probably destroy those elements of British society which could, if preserved and encouraged, solve the riddle of the industrial age.

In the period between his first social commentary, Social Equality (1882), and his novel, The Old Order Changes (1888), the careful reader can almost watch Mallock's concern with the social question grow. Social Equality was a vivisection of pure democratic and socialist thought. Its tone was that of a letter to The Times from an expert who felt called upon to set the record straight. In this early work, Mallock was cool and formal and there was no hint of any regard for the material difficulties of the masses.

Social Equality was intended as a kind of manual of conservatism which would supply the scientific arguments, facts, and figures which Mallock felt were so sorely missing from conservatism. He undertook to establish the science of conservatism.³ The book came into being because Mallock felt that conservatives were on the defensive everywhere and were using rhetorical blunderbusses to repel the seemingly superior oratorical weaponry deployed by socialists.

He feared that many conservatives had already given up. They had inspected the rusty weapons in their armory, felt sure there were no better to be found, and resigned themselves to the belief that "there is nothing left for us but to wait till the crash comes."⁴

There is an odd quality about Mallock's picture of the forces threatening British society. Ireland was never mentioned. The Irish nationalist leader Parnell, the violence, the constant upheaval and the resultant fragmentation of the Liberal Party were all missing from Mallock's account.

The activities of the Irish rebels, Gladstone's Irish Land Acts and proposed home rule bill led many a liberal to join the conservative ranks. In this sense, Mallock's alarms about the decay of conservatism were misleading. However, the influx of disaffected liberals into the Conservative Party because of the Irish question, and the Reform Act of 1867, did not make conservatism any better to deal with the serious questions raised by democratic and socialist agitators. It is in this sense that Mallock understood conservatism to be on the defensive.

Mallock's anxiety about the decay of the conservative fortress began with a holiday trip to Scotland in the early 1880's. During his trip he heard grave rumblings about agitation and imminent revolt in the Highlands and, once there, he heard all kinds of charges against Highland land-

lords. His own research into local conditions and discussions with his friends convinced Mallock that the agitators were presenting gross distortions as statistical fact. However, the more he considered the problem, the more troubled he became by the paucity of reliable data about the land question. He determined to find the facts and figures with which to refute the agitators.⁵

On a subsequent trip to Scotland, while going through literature on local conditions housed in his host's library, Mallock happened upon a huge government report entitled The New Domesday Book which dealt with the number, extent, and rental value of all the land holdings in Great Britain, and, which he believed contradicted the claims made by the Highlands' agitators.⁶ The discovery of this mine of statistical data gave Mallock the precision which he so dearly wished to lend to his arguments. The timing of the find coincided very neatly with a request from conservatives at the University of St. Andrews for Mallock to stand as a conservative candidate for St. Andrews Borough in east Scotland. He accepted but subsequently withdrew his candidacy in favor of a local notable but not before he was able to develop an effective presentation of the facts found in The New Domesday Book for his campaign.

Since this particular contest centered on the land question, Mallock had only to present a simple exposition

of the statistical information contained in The New Domes-Day Book to counter the arguments of his opponents. His basic speech was accompanied by huge diagrams which were lowered into place at his cue. The diagrams presented the proportions of wealth derived from land rent exacted by holders of large parcels of property. He showed what the facts were according to John Bright (1811-1889)⁷ who was Mallock's favorite enemy in this particular debate, then what they were according to Henry George, and finally, what they were according to The New Domesday Book. The speeches were effective enough to elicit invitations to repeat them at Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Manchester. However, for a number of reasons, he decided to forego further direct political action and rhetoric to do something he felt more important: "providing facts and principles for politicians."⁸

Before quitting political stumping altogether, he was induced to campaign for his cousin Richard who was standing as the conservative candidate for the Torquay division of Devonshire. In the course of his duties, he was asked to speak at various rural gatherings under the auspices of the Primrose League, an important conservative association. Mallock noted that even with attentive audiences "Conservatism ... was no more than a vague sentiment, healthy so far as it went, but incapable of aiding them in any controversy with any glib Radical."⁹

His subsequent appearances in the area frustrated him further for the same reasons. When he spoke of serious economic matters bearing directly on local affairs, Mallock was met with puzzled smiles. No matter how clear or lucid his oratory might be, the only guarantee of an audience response was to make any kind of friendly reference to "this great Empire on which the sun never sets."¹⁰ This experience doubled his resolve to provide conservatism with a strong riposte to the propagandistic thrusts of the socialists.

Mallock certainly did no fancy himself the only articulate conservative in Britain but he did feel that even informed conservatives were not making their case strong enough or sufficiently attractive to counter the growing socialist campaign. He recognised the meretricious quality of Marxism's claim to be scientific; but, meretricious or not, the aura of scientific certainty which glowed around the apostles and creed of Marxism put conservatism at a distinct disadvantage.

From their being the only party that has professed scientifically to defend itself, a superstition has gone abroad that they are the only party capable of scientific defense ... Not only does it strengthen the Democrats, but it troubles the Conservatives; and many of the latter entertain dark misgivings that it represents, after all, the actual truth.¹¹

It was not simply his trip to Scotland and some first hand experience with Highland agitators that led Mallock to begin his war on socialism. His first social tract, Social Equality (1881), appeared at a time when Britain's halcyon days of economic growth and increasing material well being were coming to an end.¹² Between 1850 and 1875, Britain experienced rapid economic growth and relative social peace. After the decline of Chartism and despite the attacks on Mammonism and capitalism from Arnold, Carlyle, and Ruskin, the basic beliefs of economic liberalism, laissez faire, the naturally harmonious and efficient nature of a market controlled by the invisible hand of supply and demand, and the beneficent effect of free competition, were accepted by most Englishmen who cared to think about such things. The British marketplace seemed to thrive under the influence of economic liberalism. Even the trade unionists in this period appeared to accept the system and merely tried to extract more from it for themselves.

After 1875, and intermittently throughout the 1890's, Britain experienced severe economic depressions which began in agriculture and textiles. Refrigeration, improved transportation, and the absence of tariffs produced an avalanche of foreign beef and grain which so undercut agricultural prices that landlords began to evict tenants because it no

longer paid to farm their land. Very high unemployment and very low agricultural wages were both indices of the overall decline in the value of farm land which fell over fifty percent by 1900.

British industry, especially the metal trades, engineering, shipping, and chemicals also suffered increased competition from more efficient and innovative German and American producers. In both the agricultural and industrial sectors, prices fell steeply. Despite all this, productivity increased as did real wages. England even produced more very wealthy people than she had had before the industrial age. The creation of joint stock and limited liability companies created a comfortable rentier class which now looked to industry to provide a safe source of investment income. However, a limited increase in productivity, a rise in real wages which reflected falling prices more than prosperity, and a new parcel of millionaires and investors did not alter the depressed state of the British economy.

The condition of the industrial working class was becoming ever more critical because somewhere in the third quarter of the century, Britain ceased to be an agricultural country with a growing industrial sector -- it became an industrial country with a failing agricultural sector. There were now more people and more jobs in the cities than in the country. The population of the cities grew apace

between 1850 and 1875.

The difficulties of the British working class in this period may be most succinctly stated by noting that the term unemployment first appeared in the Oxford dictionary in 1888. In the mid 1880's, there were severe periods of unemployment and there were riots and demonstrations in London. One of these, the Social Democratic Federation's march from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park with its attendant violence and stone throwing was recounted, with some fictional fillips, by Mallock in The Old Order Changes.

Large scale unemployment, extremely low wages, and unhealthy and crowded housing for workers created a desperate reality for the British worker. In the eighties, there was a great outpouring of newspaper exposes, journal articles, pamphlets, and studies which focused public attention on the squalor in the cities. Studies indicated that probably more than three quarters of the workers of London were earning less than what was necessary to support a family and that most of them were living in awful housing. The accuracy of such figures matters less than the fact that the public was becoming increasingly exercised by what was, they now perceived, not an episodic economic difficulty, but a basic flaw in the British economic system.

Somewhere in the decade of the eighties, the concept of strict laissez faire lost its great influence. It was

honored in the breach. More and more Royal Commissions were appointed to look into things like housing, public health, and municipal services. The mere existence of such commissions attested to a changed perception of governmental responsibility or, if it is too much to say this, then, the creation of such panels manifested a loss of faith in the invisible hand to do its work alone. It became increasingly difficult to be a humanitarian and an economic liberal. One can get a real sense of what happened in the minds of concerned Englishmen in the various discussions of the social question in The Old Order Changes.

Amidst the economic difficulties and shifts in thought of late Victorian Britain, new forms of British socialism appeared. Tremendous public response to Henry George's Progress and Poverty (British publication 1881) was a clear indication of the decay of popular faith in liberal economics. George, who was not really a socialist, sold more than 60,000 copies of his tract in the eighties. It is interesting to us here to note that in her study of England in the Eighteen Eighties, Helen Lynd tried to indicate the influence of Progress and Poverty by mentioning that Mallock had written a refutation of it called Property and Progress in 1884.

George's idea of land reform and the remedy of the single tax had been current in England before, but the

realities of British economic life in this period combined with George's easily accessible writing style and his simple solution, led many people to consider socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism. H.L. Hyndman later remarked that nearly all late Victorian British socialism owed some debt to Progress and Poverty. Some estimated that eighty percent of all British socialists came to socialism after being initiated by Henry George.

Throughout the eighties socialist organizations appeared. In 1881, H.L. Hyndman founded what became the Social Democratic Federation which was based on Marxist principles. The Socialist League, led by William Morris, composed of apostate members of the SDF including Marx's daughter, was founded soon thereafter. Neither of these meant very much when measured by the size of their membership or actual influence on events. Of much greater importance was the Fabian Society (1884) and the Independent Labour Party (1893). The Fabian Essays, their tracts and pamphlets were very widely read, some of the reforms they advocated were adopted, and their influence on legislation continued into the post World War I period. Along with these socialist organizations, what has usually been called municipal socialism became increasingly popular in the cities of England. Municipal socialism, pioneered by Joseph Chamberlin, inaugurated public ownership of waterworks, tramways,

and other such services.

While various socialist proposals were gradually adopted by Parliament, socialism never had the impact in Britain that it had on the Continent. Indeed, in the period under discussion, the average Englishman was probably more concerned with the vicissitudes of the Empire than with the socialist nostrums. If socialism did not really become a mass movement in Britain, and if Trade Unionism was always more important than socialism to the British worker, it is also true that the traditional liberal economics lost its influence in the late Victorian period and the British public came to expect and accept government action to solve the problem of the industrial working class.

The death of orthodox economic liberalism and the reciprocal rise in the influence of socialist ideas and measures, was probably most clearly indicated when someone as prominent as Sir William Harcourt (1827-1904)¹³ said in 1888: "We are all Socialists now." Regardless of the actual membership and power of socialist organizations, by 1890, socialism was in the air.

¹Memoirs, pp. 364-65.

²The Old Order Changes, p. 218.

³W.H. Mallock, Social Equality: A Short Study in a Missing Science (New York, 1882), p. 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 23.

⁵Memoirs, pp. 181-83.

⁶Ibid., p. 187.

⁷John Bright was a Liberal MP for Manchester and one of the most important forces behind the repeal of the Corn Laws, extension of the franchise, and reform of the tax structure. He is important to Mallock because he was a strong advocate of imposing greater taxes on land.

⁸Memoirs, p. 193.

⁹Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Social Equality, p. 22.

¹²The following account is drawn from: R.K. Webb, Modern England (New York, 1969); Henry Pelling, Modern Britain (New York, 1966); George Lichteim, A Short History of Socialism (New York, 1970); Willard Wolfe, From Radicalism to Socialism (New Haven, 1975); and Helen Lynd, England in the 1880's (London, 1945). Willard Wolfe's recent study of the development of Fabianism notes in his bibliography that Lynd's portrait of British society in the 1880's, despite its age, has not yet been superseded by any similar work.

¹³Sir William Harcourt was the leader of the Liberal Party in the House in the 1880's, Home Secretary in one of the Gladstone administrations, and a Parliamentary reformer.

VIII. ARISTOCRATIC RESURGENCE AND THE NEW MONASTICISM

In Mallock's earlier works (Social Equality, Property and Progress) his tone reflected concern, irritation, and fear. If limited to these samples, a reader might quickly conclude that Mallock was, after all, just another irritable reactionary using intellectual mortar to build a fortress of rationalizations for his very comfortable life. He was not. In his novel The Old Order Changes there was a passionate earnestness in his concern for the misery of the poor and a realization that the upper classes and the church had failed in their social mission. Indeed, the title, The Old Order Changes, announced Mallock's conviction that traditional hierarchical social arrangements simply could not accommodate the new social and economic realities of Victorian Britain. Some change, something new was necessary.

Carew, the central character of The Old Order Changes, conveyed Mallock's concern in his reaction to seeing an angry mob vandalize a men's club in the heart of London:

Blame the people -- Poor Devils. Why as I watched the crowd just now, I was more inclined to cry over the sight than to be angry at it. As for Foreman [the socialist agitator], I would willingly string the lot of them up to a lamppost. But the others --

even the rough and thieves -- sunt lacrymæ rerum. They are the tears of things, and they are the riddle of things.¹

The concern behind those words gave birth to The Old Order Changes. The novel was a continuing dialogue after the fashion of some kind of learned seminar. The members were a well born aristocrat, a very well informed Roman Catholic priest, a professional socialist agitator, a young Roman Catholic woman with what is today called an intense social conscience, and a middle-aged, upper class, very traditionalist Anglican woman. Mallock's deepest concerns emerged in the speeches and experiences of Carew, the aristocrat, Miss Burton, the young woman, and Father Stanley.

While Mallock, like his character Carew, devoted considerable time and effort to the study of social questions, he never, again like Carew, put aside religion and theology; rather, he came to view social problems in a religious light. His social philosophy was built around the idea that the solution to the most pressing social difficulties was to be found in a special kind of religious revival of faith. And it was in The Old Order Changes that his clearest statement of this solution is found. He indicated in the Memoirs that the novel represented this new turning point in the development of his ideas.²

Mallock created an interesting synthesis of his faith, his concern for the future of the aristocracy, and his recognition of the terrible problems of industrial society. Father Stanley, the engagé, articulate and informed priest of The Old Order Changes, had an exchange with Miss Burton, the intense, reformist young Roman Catholic, which pulled all of Mallock's interests together:

Miss Burton: I am richer than other people.
 Have I any right to be so? Am I a
 Robber? Are we all of us robbers?
 ... I have always felt when I heard
 of popular politics that there was
 something in the background which no
 one had the courage to recognize....
 We are the cause, we and the world
 we live in, of all the blight we see
 in the lives below us.... Where does
 our duty lie -- in renouncing our
 position or in using it? There is the
 question which seems to me ... to
 come before those questions which are
 commonly called religious. Am I wrong?

Father Stanley: You are profoundly right. Political
 economy, and the social conditions of
 labour, have become in our day indeed
 a part of theology....Yes, this question
 that troubles you is the one great
 question for those whose hearts God has
 moved to ask it. Every age has its
 riddle and this riddle is ours.³

Mallock felt that the religious establishment,
 Roman Catholic or otherwise, had failed to meet this great
 problem head on. In The Old Order Changes, Mallock created
 Elfida Burton, a character whose clichés about Christian

charity as an approach to the social problem reflected a pious ignorance of the realities of the misery of industrial urban life. Mallock asked her, through one of his other characters:

How shall they [the poor] be pure and temperate? How shall they have any kind of the virtues which a good Christian prizes, so long as they have no knowledge, and no leisure, and nothing from their childhood that so much as suggests happiness, except drink, and things far worse than drink. How shall we tell them to be clean when they have only sewage to wash in?

Elfia retorted: Surely it is the mission of the church to bring them water.⁴

Elfia's sister responded that such typically charitable Christians usually felt "more pleased at seeing two hundred people in the chapel than pained at seeing twenty families in one house."⁵

Mallock's concern for the church was the concern of a friendly critic. He felt that the most pressing material problems could be resolved finally through a spiritual revival and he was interested in provoking a nascent Christian spiritual duty to the poor.

While Mallock thus attended to the reformation of the church, he was also intensely interested in the salvation of the aristocracy. He was at this point, chiefly concerned with the great landed families. The landed nobility

of England has suffered a continual diminution of wealth and power from the Reform of 1832 onwards.⁶ While it is true that because of their wealth and traditional status they were able to maintain a majority in the House of Commons until the Reform Act of 1867, a number of factors combined to erode their wealth and consequently their power. The repeal of the Corn Laws of 1846, by removing tariffs on foreign grain, started the deterioration of the economic position of the great agricultural estates. The economic crises which so distressed the entire British economy from 1875 on, hit the landed interests especially hard.

With the tariffs gone and the improvements in overseas transportation, a wave of foreign grain from the United States and elsewhere drove the prices of agricultural goods down. The price of wheat fell fifty percent by 1900. The value of agricultural land fell precipitously. It became incredibly difficult to maintain agricultural enterprise. More and more wealth came from industry and the emporium trades rather than land. Mortgage rates on encumbered estates, which amounted to one half or more of all estates, were driven up by the higher return investment available from railroad debentures and other such investments.

The wealth of many of the old families was eaten away. The newly wealthy industrialist either married into landed families or bought them out. In any case, it was

becoming difficult to maintain aristocratic status based on the ownership of land alone. Land still meant position and social importance and for these reasons the landed nobility tried to hang on to estates they could no longer afford. "There was no escape from the dilemma of wealth and status."⁷

The political power and local authority of the aristocracy declined with the value of their land. Even those landed families who were wealthy enough to survive the devaluation of land, saw their power diminished through the introduction of measures like the Corrupt Practices Act which eliminated the use of bribery and the purchase of votes. The various reform bills extended the franchise and nearly equalized the size of constituencies, did much to lessen the great power that the landed families had had in the House of Commons. Even their traditional local powers, such as serving as Justice of the Peace, were curtailed after the introduction of manhood suffrage. Their usual occupations in the army, clergy, and government were now very often lost to the elite of the universities who were brought to power through the introduction of the civil service system. Competence replaced family as the most important credential. All in all, while the nobility managed to preserve its social position into the twentieth century, "in political, economic, and administrative essentials, the

landed interest had surrendered the keys of power before 1880."⁸ Mallock's title The Old Order Changes was a terse summary of what happened to the British aristocracy in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Mallock believed that the fate of the aristocracy and the lower orders was interlocked. The continued misery of the masses would eventually foment a revolution which would destroy the aristocracy. If as Mallock said, the conditions of the people was the saddest of things, the aristocracy was the best of things. He had sympathy for the masses, but he loved the aristocracy and he felt that the only possible future for them was one of service and dedication to social duty for which he felt they were specially qualified.

Mallock's sympathy for the people, his great concern for the future of the aristocracy, and his deep religious faith led him to conceptualize an aristocrat of the future who would serve the cause of the people as a religious duty. This was the concept of the rededicated, spiritually driven palladin who led because he was better suited to serve God, and therefore, man better than anyone else.

He felt the aristocracy to be qualitatively different from the people, indeed, made from "different clay."⁹ Aristocrats were a product of time and breeding, had a special past, and could "hear the past speak to them in

[their] own private language which the people can never hear."¹⁰ The past became a "second conscience -- an added moral duty."¹¹

Mallock saw an inbred sense of duty as a defining characteristic of the aristocracy. He believed, much as did Disraeli, that one of the central problems of the late Victorian aristocracy was that it had lost its sense of duty. Indeed, Carew came close to hating his own existence because he was unable to arrive at some clear notion of duty.¹² Mallock hoped to rekindle the aristocratic sense of mission with the catalysts provided by a "sudden re-illumination of faith and new acquisitions of knowledge."¹³ To recapture their place in society, they had merely to resurrect the finest qualities of the aristocracy of the old order.

Mystical and extravagant as his description of the aristocracy was, Mallock was not simply dabbling in some kind of romantic, class conscious sentimentality. He was establishing his moral definition of the aristocracy at its best; however, he was aware that the definition did not apply to most Victorian aristocrats. He knew they no longer were what they had to be to justify their existence. He was referring to what the aristocracy could be if it mobilized its best elements and chose to do what it alone could do. In this light, The Old Order Changes was a subtle indictment

of a class whose sense of purpose and very existence was in question. The old order had to change or vanish.

Aside from frequent allusions to their history, rootedness, and importance in local areas, Mallock never was precise about exactly what aristocrats had to offer. However, he clearly asserted that they were inherently different from the modern day aristocracy of coal, iron, and shipping. The modern plutocrat collected the property and trappings of old aristocracy but could not collect the influence of centuries on his view of society and his place within it. The modern baron of commerce bought centuries-old manors, villas, and chateaux so that all that traditional splendor could speak for him and what he had become. With the aristocrat, his property, his home, and his past spoke to him, that is, they were not ornaments but were part of his identity.¹⁴ At the core of that identity, built through the centuries and nurtured by his special surroundings, was the concept of noblesse oblige.¹⁵ It was this sense of the past and of duty that was the sine qua non of the aristocracy.

The gold and glitter, town houses and country estates, were almost genetic material in the historical gestation of the special aristocratic impulse - noblesse oblige. As Mallock would have it, "they are different from the rest of the world, not because they are rich, they are

rich because they are different from the rest of the world."¹⁶ The aristocrat defined and justified himself in the performance of the social duty dictated by his sense of noblesse oblige. In what seemed a rather odd concept at first, Mallock believed that since the aristocrat used his power to contribute to the order and well-being of society, he cheapened himself when he abdicated his responsibility. As Carew remarked: "[The people] are dirt only when they seize on power. We are dirt when we relinquish it."¹⁷

Mallock knew that the aristocratic impulse, with its implicit sense of mission or purpose, was dying or already dead in the hearts of the British nobility. Carew's biggest problem in The Old Order Changes, aside from actually determining the new duty of the traditional aristocracy, was trying to get them to remember their past strongly enough to save themselves from being destroyed in the future. Mallock was concerned that the aristocracy might simply be swept away by the forces and pressures which were erupting in late nineteenth century British social and economic life. The aristocrats were beset by two awesome powers: "a savage, mad proletariat armed with axes and firebrands; and an impertinent middle class entrenching itself in villas, and devastating the aristocratic solitudes with sandwich papers and the claws of lobsters."¹⁸

A terrible thing had already happened to the aris-

ocracy in Mallock's lifetime. In order to maintain the trappings of their position, they had to mortgage their past and their identity to the socially ambitious bourgeoisie. Mallock feared that the interest owing on that mortgage was so great that the fine homes might be saved but there would be no real aristocrats left inside them. The line between the "Manchester slave driver" and the gentleman with an eight hundred year old pedigree had become harder to draw. "A man once had a stately dinner because he was a great man. Now he is a great man because he has a stately dinner."¹⁹

Mallock seemed to have had the most faith in the Roman Church as the proper agent for the spiritual resurrection both of Christendom and the aristocracy. There were any number of clergymen in Mallock's novels and like the clerics described in his Memoirs, most of them were Anglican and rather vacuous, prolix, and uninteresting people. Yet, clearly, one of Mallock's favorite characters was a Catholic priest, Father Stanley, who appeared in The Old Order Changes and A Romance of the Nineteenth Century. Father Stanley was given some very fine speeches and was Mallock's intellectual knight errant used to overwhelm the fire-eating socialist agitator of The Old Order Changes. He was the best informed enemy of Marxism in any of Mallock's works and was also the most sensitive advocate of the spirit-

ual rededication of the church and the aristocracy.

It was Father Stanley who adumbrated Mallock's vision of a newly dedicated Christian society, apparently based on the spiritual strength of the Roman Catholic Church.

[The church] is assimilating this new truth -- her spiritual duty to the material condition of men; and just at a time when the nations are declaring her to be dying, she, against whom the gates of hell shall never prevail, is giving to the nations new life.²⁰

The church would enable men to serve God by serving men. And Father Stanley reiterated Mallock's contention that the motivating force of the idea of the welfare of a human humanity could never be strong enough to drive people to the efforts necessary to achieve that goal. But, faith alone, with the agency of the church, could inspire man to help his fellows.

Father Stanley's remarks restated things Mallock had been saying about Positivism for years. There was nothing new in his rejection of the positivist idea of instinctual benevolence; however, The Old Order Changes was novel in its concern for the present and material welfare of humanity and this mirrored some of the basic goals of positivist thought. He could accept their goal but he felt that they were pursuing it in the wrong manner. If positivists could amalgamate their love for humanity with the

power of faith, just as the church was becoming evermore attentive to the solution of social problems as religious duty, then they might become successful in their task.²¹

Roman Catholicism provided a model for one aspect of Mallock's vision of a better society: a new monasticism. He envisioned a monasticism dedicated to the relief of the masses, but consecrated to the service of God. Naturally, as with its medieval forerunner, it would appeal to a relatively small number of people. Mallock felt it would be more successful than modern attempts at co-operative or communitarian ventures because it would have the tradition, experience, discipline, and, most importantly, faith of the Catholic Church. Its overall goal would not be the equal sharing of wealth, but rather the use of most of the commonly produced wealth to aid the victims of the modern industrial system. Such "conventual"[sic] labour in modern industrial factories would bring the Catholic Church and the modern economic system into contact. As Carew put it: "Fancy, over the gate into the factory yard, if we saw a crucifix placed there with real meaning."²²

It may be a great disservice to Mallock to pick this particular idea out of all of his writing about society and give it such prominence. After all, he never repeated it and, save for a brief passage in the Memoirs, he never even alluded to it again. However, he never renounced it

and he noted in the Memoirs that The Old Order Changes, which concluded with the presentation of this idea, ended on a note of "emotional optimism."²³ The tone of his comments indicated that perhaps this optimism waned by the time he composed his Memoirs. However, he seems never to have broken with the belief that the solution to social problems was essentially religious.²⁴ He continued to write about problems of faith and religion even when he was producing a steady stream of books and articles devoted primarily to social problems. He also retained and further developed his view of the social significance of the aristocracy. Nearly the last word in The Old Order Changes was Carew's belief that hierarchical society was both salutary and essential to the civilized well being of modern society.

Let the monastic orders do all that we could dream of their doing -- I still hold that if the world is to recover its health again, if there is to be any increase of happiness amongst the labouring classes -- the classes whose content is the cornerstone of civilization, another thing must revive besides the monastic orders: there must be revival of class feeling. The class feeling I mean is a feeling possible only when classes are acquiesced in as stable and natural institutions, and movements from one to the other is looked upon as exceptional.... And as the aristocracy, their whole life should be guided by a sense of duty to the great multitude that is connected with them by the difference of its lot, not by the sameness of it. It is very possible that I am only a dreamer, but still I cannot help indulging the dream, that the obligation

of acknowledged position, that high breeding
and even family pride, have a mission still
in the world, if only we can find it.²⁵

¹The Old Order Changes, p. 357.

²Memoirs, p. 223.

³The Old Order Changes, pp. 217-18.

⁴Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

⁶The following remarks are drawn from F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1963), passim.

⁷Ibid., p. 291.

⁸Ibid.

⁹The Old Order Changes, p. 66.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 87.

¹³Memoirs, p. 223.

¹⁴The Old Order Changes, pp. 363-64.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 177.

²⁰Ibid., p. 175.

²¹Ibid., pp. 476-77.

²²Ibid., p. 444.

²³Memoirs, p. 222.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵The Old Order Changes, p. 449.

IX. THE INDESTRUCTIBLE FEW

Mallock believed that social inequality was the fuel and fire of civilization and progress. This idea was the central thesis of Mallock's Social Equality (1882), Labour and the Popular Welfare (1893), and Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study of the Rights, the Origin, and the Social Functions of the Wealthier Classes (1898). This last title, Mallock's most elaborate treatment of the subject, indicated a shift in his thought which developed as he continued to study the process of production. His early novels manifested a studied deference for the traditional, hereditary aristocracy and usually betrayed an animus against the nouveaux riches of the business and commercial world. However, his later work seemed to equate wealth and aristocratic stature. Whereas he had once identified aristocracy with titles, land, and family history, he now altered the definition to include great portions of the wealthier classes.

Part of the reason for this redefinition of aristocracy came from his conviction that the modern captains of industry were the creators of the wealth on which the modern world depended.¹ Also, Mallock's reappraisal might be partially explained by the fact that various changes in

size and complexion of election constituencies had brought more and more men of commerce and industry to seats in the House.² Perhaps, as they gained political power, Mallock afforded them greater social status.

The maintenance of civilized life and the prosperity necessary for social peace depended, in the industrial age, on these captains of industry. The more Mallock studied modern production, the more he became convinced that the crucial factor in the vast increases in production and efficiency in the nineteenth century was the ability of the directors of industry. And, Mallock strongly resented the socialist charge that the industrialists came to power by dint of shady and exploitative business practices rather than as a result of superior ability. Because of his great ability, the modern business genius was an aristocrat -- perhaps not Mallock's favorite kind, but an aristocrat nonetheless. To a certain extent, his interest in preserving the idea of aristocracy in general led him to defend the new industrial aristocracy. He respected and attempted to protect modern capitalists; but, he also loved and cherished the traditional, landed aristocracy. If he redefined aristocrat to include middle class mogul, it did not demean the aristocrat, it complimented the mogul.

If we leap to the center of the argument that Mallock had with socialists and democrats for fifty years, and ignore the details, we find that Mallock believed that

history and progress were made by men who were individuals with great and special talent. Modern industrial society was not the product of some kind of grand and pseudo-mystical dialectical process, nor was its central feature class struggle. Above all, the people who built the vastly productive industrial base were not the forever toiling masses but the men who invented and perfected the means of production. They did not steal the means of production; they created them, and they knew, better than anyone else, how best to use them. History did not happen to people; people happened to history.

Mallock wrote that there were great men who made great things happen. Civilization and progress were not products of some eternally churning, inhuman evolutionary process. To render his meaning in terms of the title of his book, aristocrats affected evolution in a unique way. They were not the whole process but they made an essential difference in that process. In Aristocracy and Evolution, Mallock rejected the implication that he found in the works of Herbert Spencer, Benjamin Kidd, Edward Bellamy, and Sidney Webb, to the effect that individuals make little or no difference in the progress of human society, and that individuals differed very little.³

He fought the tendency of people, known as social scientists, to discuss, for example, the Napoleonic Wars

without mentioning Napoleon. Mallock believed that if we examined the essence of the mechanism of progress in society we would "find that it consists partly of results intended by particular great men whose past actions ... produced them and partly of results neither foreseen nor intended by anyone."⁴ Progress came not only from the act of a great man, or an invention, or a technique, but also from that man's ability to impress it on others. Progress resulted from the struggle of great men and had nothing to do with the greater part of the community.⁵ In many instances, inventors and innovators had to fight the will of most of the community in order to bring their projects to fruition.⁶

It was Mallock's belief in aristocracy, in the sense of meritocracy, which led to his sharpest attacks on socialism. As he understood it, socialism either denied the existence of recognizably superior people or else grossly misunderstood what motivated such people to exercise their talents. He sensed a mistaken egalitarianism in the socialist idea that all economic development was essentially a social product in which individual efforts were neither significantly different nor uniquely important. Simply put, he felt that socialists were ignorant of the realities of the productive process; indeed, he wrote that such ignorance seemed to be requisite to being a socialist.⁷

Worse than that, he felt that socialism was bent on destroying the creativity of the very people on whom the prosperity of the industrial world depended. While he was aware that groups like the Fabian Society had conceded the special importance of ability in production, he felt that most forms of socialism shared an aggressive egalitarianism which conspired against talent, ability, and distinction and therefore, by extension, the idea of aristocracy. His books, tracts, and articles were a barrage aimed at the great blimp of socialist-democratic verbiage which, being without a captain, would never be able to land because all aboard were equally incompetent.

In sum, Mallock's entire social theory rested on the belief that there was a "certain number whose capacities set their possessors apart as indubitably greater than the majority and progress depended on the actions of this minority."⁸

¹Memoirs, p. 224.

²See J.P. Cornford, "The Parliamentary Foundations of the Hotel Cecil," Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain, ed. Robert Robson (New York, 1967), p. 283.

³W.H. Mallock, Aristocracy and Evolution: A Study of the Rights, the Origin, and the Social Function of the Wealthier Classes (New York, 1898), pp. 63-65.

⁴Ibid., p. 105.

⁵Ibid., pp. 140-50, passim.

⁶Ibid., p. 216.

⁷W.H. Mallock, A Critical Examination of Socialism (New York, 1908), p. 171.

⁸Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 117.

X. A CRITIQUE OF SOCIALISM

One of the problems with Mallock's treatment of socialism was that he did not always identify those with whom he was arguing. At times, he lumped all socialists together as if they were all the same. He claimed, for example, that a major plank in the platform of all socialists was a simple and equal distribution of wealth. Marx, for one, never advocated such a thing, and Mallock's implication that he did points up one of the weaknesses in his analysis: he occasionally mixed Fabians, Marxists, and Hyde Park orators and imputed the same qualities to all of them.

He had little respect for the intellectual capacities of people he considered socialists and he used the term socialist and agitator interchangeably.¹ While he respected Marx because he considered him profound and extremely dangerous, he viewed most socialists as only slightly talented, greatly bitter people whose defining characteristic was an inability to succeed in the real world with a corresponding wish to create a utopian one.²

Mallock pictured most socialists as "inefficiently exceptional" whose limited intellect had been inflamed by the superficial learning that the proliferation of education

had produced. He believed that the combination of only slightly above normal capacity and limited education prepared these people to do little but make everyone else miserable about their own material circumstances.³ The most dangerous quality about a socialist was that he was essentially an agitator. Mallock felt that most socialists confused "arson with progress" and he felt most strongly that they were totally irresponsible in fomenting a revolution of expectations which could never be met. He was convinced that whatever revolution the socialists might bring about, in the final analysis, they would not be able to make any real change in the condition of the masses. In the end, after upheaval and violence, only their clients, the people, would suffer.⁴

Whatever Mallock felt about the intellectual shortcomings of socialists as a group, he took several of their most prominent spokesmen seriously enough to treat their arguments without the condescension he usually affected when discussing the movement as a whole. His treatment of socialist ideas and spokesmen was not evenhanded. He chose to take issue with some exponents like Marx or some of the Fabians, and others, like Henry George who probably had more impact in England than Marx, were dismissed rather quickly.

In the case of Henry George, Mallock refused to

treat George's central arguments with much respect. He wrote a study called Property and Progress which was obviously addressed to George's Progress and Poverty but he did not make much of an argument against George. He said George seemed honest and well motivated but his statistics were all wrong since rent had been declining rather than rising since the Middle Ages. He devoted more than half of this book to refuting ideas he identified with H. M. Hyndman and Marx and the arguments used seemed more substantial than those directed at George. He pictured George and some of the others as dangerous agitators while representing Marx and some of the Fabians as serious thinkers.

The following discussion of Mallock's attack on socialism focuses primarily on Marx and the Fabians and almost ignores the others because that, in fact, was what Mallock did. He considered Marx to be the founder of modern socialism and its most able exponent. His notes, arguments, and comments indicated that he was familiar with the main arguments of Capital; and, one of the characters in The Old Order Changes observed that Capital "was the profoundest piece of imperfect reasoning I have ever met."⁵

In his Critical Examination of Socialism, Mallock attacked what he considered to be the heart of the Marxist

position: the labor theory of value. He recognized that this idea had lost its authority among many British intellectual socialists by the late 1880's, but he believed that it was still a powerful tool in the hands of socialist agitators. His argument began with a rejoinder to J.S. Mill's assertion that when two conditions were equally necessary to the production of something, the relative importance of the two could not be determined. Mallock believed that one could comparatively evaluate the importance of the factors of production and assign primacy to one of them.⁶

Mallock argued that the idea that the value of things derived primarily from the amount of labor necessary to their production was accurate only when applied to very primitive levels of life and production. He quoted Adam Smith to that effect and then observed that "the Socialists err from the singularly unscientific procedure of taking a barbarism that is essentially stationary as a type of civilization of which the very essence is movement."⁷

To make his case against the labor theory of value Mallock analyzed the vast increases in wealth and production in nineteenth century Britain. He argued that these gains could not have accrued from the increased efficiency of manual labor; indeed, he believed that there was no significant change in the application of muscle to material

since the days of Nero.⁸ Since the efficiency of labor was relatively constant, the remarkable productivity of this period stemmed from the development of machines, and most importantly for Mallock, from the "application of exceptional mental powers, not to the manual labour of the man by whom these powers [were] possessed, but to the process of distributing and co-ordinating the labour of others."⁹ Ability and machinery were the key factors involved in this greatly increased productivity and Mallock emphasized that machinery was not "as Marx declared it to be, a crystallization of labour but a crystallization of the ability by which labour has been directed."¹⁰

Mallock described production in the industrial age as qualitatively different from earlier productive processes. As machines and technology became evermore complicated and specialized, the nature of production changed in that the contribution of the laborer, while still necessary, was no longer the most important element in the process. "In complex production, there is more than just a division of labour, there is a fission of the process into two kinds of activity: the men who labour and those who direct."¹¹ Direction was not simply an extension of the skills involved in labor, but was essentially and qualitatively different.

With this assertion, Mallock directly countered the Marxist view of the origin and meaning of the division of

labor in modern production. Whereas Mallock saw the division of labor as the product of the superior talents of his men of ability, in Capital, Marx located the ability and talent of the process in the minds and hands of the craftsmen whose labor was subsequently divided by the men whom Marx simply called the capitalists.¹² In the whole detailed analysis of the division of labor in Capital, Marx said very little about the details of its origin beyond:

Manufacture takes its rise ... by the assemblage, in one workshop, under the control of a single capitalist, of labourers belonging to various independent handicrafts, but through whose hands a given article must pass on its way to completion.¹³

In Mallock's view, Marx's implication here was that there was no essential difference in the worker and the manager and the subordinate position of the former was only a product of the institutionalized exploitation first made possible through the division of labor in capitalistic manufacture. Mallock insisted on the difference and traced the roots of economic growth back to the intellectual superiority of his men of ability. While Mallock granted that manual labor was indeed fundamental to any level of production, it was not progressive.¹⁴ He felt that some of the highest forms of labor were "morally and artistically" superior to some forms of directive ability;¹⁵ however, in

any advanced state of manufacture, labor was not the essence of production but was one of the means. From Mallock's point of view, the Marxist idea that workers had been made into something less than they potentially were through the constantly dehumanizing process of the division of labor was to put the cart before the horse.

He admitted that workers truly lost something of themselves through the routine and drudgery of factory production. Indeed, he recommended increases in wages to compensate laborers for that loss. However, he always argued that a man became one of the means of production primarily because that was what he was suited for in the first place. The division of labor was a testament to the difference in capacity of people and it was inaccurate to dismiss the development of the division of labor as some kind of accident made possible only by the possession of capital.

Mallock would grant that, in its earliest stages, the division of labor may have been inaugurated by manual laborers. However, such development was limited to the earliest stages of production, and Mallock admitted that, in those areas of the world where innovation still depended on spontaneous improvements from the workers themselves, the level of technology was still relatively primitive.¹⁶ So, while Marx may have been partially correct in his

analysis of the origins of the division of labor, Mallock felt he was either silent or inaccurate about its subsequent development.

Marx implied that the origin of ownership and control of business enterprises did not attest to any basic difference in the ability of the owner. He viewed man, before the degrading and dehumanizing effect of modern industrial employment, as essentially equal in capacity, or, at least, he denied that the division of labor implied any real difference in the faculties of man.¹⁷ Indeed, he felt it was the division of labor which first began the development of markedly different capacities among men, that is, the mass of men were diminished in their basic, creative abilities through the alienating process of factor labor.

The socialists did not understand what Mallock took to be the fundamentally natural origin of oligarchy in human society and because of that misunderstanding they mistook the origins of wealth and power. Oligarchy was the social manifestation of the inherent differences in human capacities. It was made manifest by a continuous struggle for the best rewards and everything novel, useful, and socially productive was the result of highly talented people competing for the wages of excellence. The key to understanding the progress of civilization was the knowledge

of what drove the best people to compete. Mallock denied the assertion that men, highly talented or not, would naturally labor if they were not compelled to do so. Although he probably never encountered it in exactly these terms, Mallock rejected the Marxist view of man as homo faber or universal producer.

Labor was not instinctual or natural; it was merely "the outward index" of various motives which drove people to labor in the first place. Thus, for Mallock, the central factor in the production of wealth was not labor itself, but rather the motives which induced labor.¹⁸ In his estimation, perquisites, financial rewards, and power motivated the most talented people to compete. In a word, social inequality or graded rewards, produced the best kind of social and economic intercourse. "If talent and ambition commanded no larger a share of these [rewards] than a minimum which rewarded the lowest idleness and stupidity, all men would be equally idle and stupid."¹⁹

The right to accumulate capital and property, earn interest, and inherit and bequeath wealth were all conditions necessary to entice gifted people to apply themselves. Beyond that, heritable wealth was an important factor in the establishment and development of truly civilized life. As Mallock put it: "The wealth that ceased with the men that actually made it would produce a society of

beasts."²⁰

People's acquisition of these rewards in the form of land, capital, and power was merely the external manifestations of their natural endowments. Thus, Marx was wrong. Ownership of the means of production was not theft of the worker's accumulated labor, it was an index of ability. Capital, as wage capital, which enabled one man to hire another was not fossilized labor but rather fossilized business ability.²¹ Mallock saw wage capital as a tool of progress since it ensured the control of the hands of the many by the talented minds of the few to create the most efficient application of human energy.²²

The socialists' hopes for a better future were essentially illusory because they did not understand the past. In particular, he saw the Marxist vision of historical development as inaccurate. This inaccuracy arose from Marx's mistaken conviction that truly fundamental changes had occurred in western social history.²³ Mallock granted that great and numerous changes had taken place, the most notable being the successive development of slavery, feudalism, and capitalism. However, so far as Mallock was concerned, these changes never altered the fundamental social reality of oligarchy.²⁴

The origin of power remained exceptional ability whether this ability expressed itself as the military effect-

tiveness of a tenth century baron or the manufacturing genius of the nineteenth century captain of industry. Socialists made the error of supposing that because extensive change had taken place, fundamental change was possible. It was not. No system, constitution, or revolution ever eliminated oligarchy. If all the ruling classes were swept away in one violent stroke, Mallock was sure that fairly soon thereafter a new minority would develop whose rule would be just as arbitrary as that of the deposed masters.²⁵ Thus, the catch phrases of socialism about the emancipation of the worker could never hold the promise they were supposed to. "Emancipation of the average man would merely be the emancipation which a blind man achieves when he breaks away from his guide."²⁶ Mallock believed that social structure could be "progressively and indefinitely improved" but only by those who "abandoned altogether every dream of fundamental revolution."²⁷

The artificial manipulation of laws and institutions to achieve a society of material equality would fail its basic objective because hierarchical social structure reflected the very real and natural difference in the talents and capacities of people.²⁸ There was not any way to change that or legislate against nature. Social institutions which mirrored and protected those differences were merely legal testament to their reality. Mallock felt it perverse and

dangerous to argue that hierarchical society was an artificial creation of people who were accidentally powerful enough to institutionalize their perquisites. Such arguments convinced the masses that capitalistic society was a kind of perpetual legal hoax on them and that they were entitled to every bit as much of everything as anyone else.

Mallock believed that the existence of social inequality, if the people at the bottom of the pyramid were not subject to extreme and crude conditions, was a generally salutary thing. It did not in itself create human unhappiness since most people did not really experience a felt loss or deprivation when they contemplated the great wealth of others. Mallock felt that men rarely missed things they considered unattainable. If, however, agitators insisted that wealth was possible for all, then those without it felt suddenly deprived.²⁹

Regardless of the extent of social changes, Mallock predicted that there would always be a residuum of poverty and economic hardship; however, such wretchedness was not necessarily attributable to the nature of capitalist society but rather it was "idiopathic, that is, primarily due to the character of those who suffer themselves."³⁰ While he refused to accept the idea that revolution was either just or necessary, Mallock was sympathetic to the claims of the working class. He seemed to have been convinced that

capitalism was productive enough to pay relatively high wages to workers and he believed that it ought to. He argued that wages based on calculations of productivity alone were not sufficient compensation for people subjected to factory labor conditions.

He argued that when a worker became a factory hand he lost an important part of his independence and, in justice, he ought to be paid some kind of premium to compensate him for that loss. Further, Mallock said that the ideal minimum wage should assure not only economic survival but an income which was really morally human and elevated above a simple struggle for existence.³¹ Also, there were very practical reasons for paying a man something beyond the mere value of what he produced. Mallock believed that simply paying a man something extra to compensate him for his loss of independence would produce little more than a shaky state of industrial peace, or what he called the wages of industrial equilibrium. Such wages were not really satisfactory since most of the workers were still relatively indifferent to the preservation and improvement of the system. Because of this, Mallock advocated a "second increment" which so situated the workers financially that they would be very much interested in preserving the system and their part of it. This second increase, termed wages of industrial stability, would be high enough to make

any sabotage of the system too personally costly to contemplate. "[This] would join the self interest of the worker and the owner and would also answer the cry for justice but only because it worked practically to the advantage of both, and not primarily because it was based on the sentiment of justice."³²

Mallock's whole position was threatened by the Fabian idea that superior talent might be purchased with remuneration other than money. He rejected the Fabian concept that once a society proscribed huge cash payments, then the people of exceptional ability would work just as hard for other kinds of rewards because they were the only rewards available. Faute de mieux was not the slogan of excellence. Mallock believed that the alternate rewards advocated by the socialists (in this discussion of rewards he focused primarily on the ideas of Sidney Webb), -- the joy of excellence, the joy of creative work, the satisfaction bred by benevolence, and the pride of recognition or honor bestowed with medals or diplomas³³-- were not commensurate with the amount of energy and labor expended to gain large financial rewards. He felt that one of the basic drives to wealth was that it invariably entailed power.³⁴ None of the proposed substitutes for wealth could promise anything as enticing as power and so they were qualitatively different and qualitatively less for anyone dedicated to the accrual of power.³⁵

As for the socialist idea that the will to wealth could be replaced by the wish to be benevolent and do good works, Mallock believed that such activity was usually restricted to redistributing already extant wealth and, while such motives might "flutter the wings of fancy and suggest Utopia [they could] never awaken the creative imagination which shall grasp a scheme of conquest in any of its practical details."³⁶ Ultimately, Mallock held that human nature was fixed and social schemes that were spun around the possibility of reordering basic human motives were self defeating. As Father Stanley put it in The Old Order Changes:

The severest discipline ever devised for any handful of monks does far less violence to our average human nature than the change in it which your [socialist] system would require to be universal. It would be easier, far easier, to make men Trappists than Socialists.³⁷

Further, Mallock said that the socialists were not even consistent in their ambitions. That is, they hoped to alter or eradicate the power of the profit motive in exceptional people, while at the same time gaining the support of the masses by appealing to that very same motive. Thus, for Mallock, the most talented people in society must become angels so that the masses might remain exactly as

they were, only richer.³⁸

To an extent, Mallock believed that the socialist objective was reasonable and humane; however, their plan of action was misguided and would not work without men of ability to direct it. They hoped to make life what it ought to be, without firmly understanding what it really was. Mallock maintained that the socialists simply did not know the facts of human and industrial life and because of this ignorance, their projections for the future would create a society both less free and less productive than capitalist society. He asserted that most socialist proposals shared the logic of the following quote from Fabian Essays:

The only truly socialist scheme is one which would absolutely abolish all economic distinctions and the possibility of their again arising by making an equal provision for the maintenance of all, an incident and indefeasible condition of citizenship, without any regard whatever to the relative specific services of different citizens. The rendering of such services, on the other hand, instead of being left to the option of the citizen, with the alternative of starvation, would be required under one uniform law of civic duty, precisely like all other forms of taxation or military service.³⁹

For Mallock, this was "an escape into complete slavery"⁴⁰ and confirmation of his belief that all socialist schemes would engender a degree of state discipline much harsher

than present industrial discipline.⁴¹

Mallock disagreed with the idea, which he attributed to G.B. Shaw, that in a socialist state most people would work without compulsion. A socialist state would presumably guarantee a higher wage level for the average worker than capitalism; however, Mallock felt that the only way to generate the income to finance such wages would be to further refine the division of labor. Increasing sophistication in the division of labor entailed further simplification and fragmentation of the process of production. As a result, Mallock argued, most work in a socialist state would be just as lifeless and dehumanizing as under a capitalist regime. So, for the plan to work, most people would have to work, just as they do now and they would have jobs just as dull or more so than they do now.⁴²

Mallock argued that the collapse of all modern attempts at socialistic or cooperative life had only made his point for him. He believed that the primary reason for the failure of Brook Farm, New Australia, the Owenite project, and the others, was a lack of discipline. Without owners, or bosses, or clear direction, each of these disintegrated. The Owen experiment survived only after Owen himself stepped in and took a firm hand.⁴³ Thus, visions of freedom in a socialist state were illusory and those very visions tended to make the state less efficient. Mallock

said that all socialist states, in the beginning at least, would operate on democratic principles and would eliminate economic competition. Therefore, the purgative effect of economic competition on industrial leadership would be missing. Captains of industry would be chosen by elected officials and in a thoroughly democratic state, Mallock insisted, the leadership would not proceed with any novelty which could not be fully grasped by the mass of the electorate.⁴⁴

Without the incentive of wealth to attract superior ability and without the free market mechanism to reveal its presence, socialist enterprise would have to depend on state bureaucracy and the kind of people who thrived in such power establishments to make its most important industrial decisions. In short, very little would be done in a very complicated way.

For Mallock, the ultimate aim of all kinds of socialism was a redistribution and equalization of income.⁴⁵ Nearly everything he wrote on socialism included a section on the inaccuracy of socialist estimates of private wealth and he devoted at least two full length studies, The Nation as a Business Firm and Social Reform, to a statistical battle with what were primarily Fabian estimates of great private wealth and especially their reckoning of the huge amounts of money held by the idle class. His statistical work was

drawn from nearly a dozen different statistical compendiums issued by the British government (Census of Agricultural Production, Board of Trade Yellow Books, 1911 census report, etc.,) and was accompanied by graphs, charts, and tables. Some of his demonstrations were convincing while others were complicated enough to generate little more than confusion.

Determining the accuracy of his estimates would require a separate study in itself, and would also not make any real difference because Mallock operated on the assumption that all socialists greatly exaggerated the amount of private wealth available for distribution. Because they greatly distorted this figure, they agitated themselves and the masses with the idea that a redistribution of all this wealth would significantly improve the actual financial position of the mass of Britons.⁴⁶

Mallock believed that the revolution of expectations created by their statistical sophistry was the most dangerous element in socialist agitation and that any wholesale seizure and redistribution of wealth would make almost no real difference to the average Briton.⁴⁷ Further, the essential condition necessary to the redistribution of that money, the erection of a socialist state, would permanently deprive talent of its proper incentive, thereby sabotaging production and probably reducing gross national wealth in the long run.

Not only would redistribution not work, it was not justified. Mallock recognized that the Fabians had dropped the labor theory of value from the highly visible position it held in early Marxism. Instead of arguing that all wealth was directly attributable to the manual labor necessary to its production, socialists now claimed that wealth was a social product, the creation of which was equally dependent on all members of the productive team.⁴⁸ If this were true, then redistribution of income could be justified. However, for Mallock this was just another way to fudge the important issue because it submerged the importance of talent in a social collectivity with equally important parts. He attacked Edward Bellamy, Benjamin Kidd, and Herbert Spencer, among others, for creating a sociology which attributed a man's creative output more to his "social inheritance and environment,"⁴⁹ than to his own unique strength. Mallock believed such reasoning would make a Leonardo little more than a slightly gifted housepainter and would so diminish the difference among people that the socialists would get away with paying Issac Newton at the same hourly rate as a sixth grade mathematics teacher.

By making everything a social product, Mallock argued, the socialists were denying what they had accepted when they admitted they had to hire talent (albeit for something other than money). Ability made the difference -- the

essential difference -- in creation, production, and progress. To spin sociological constructs about the relative unimportance of the individual was to avoid the reality of human creativity. While it was very true that ability could not produce a pin without labor's cooperation, it was also true that superior ability could tremendously enhance labor's productivity and efficiency. Mallock believed that one could weigh the relative contributions of the two and when this was done, ability would be shown as the more important. Labor could always go on without ability, it just would not go anywhere. Mallock said that if labor, in an attempt to restore its original independence, simply left industry and returned to the land, for example, its lot would be harder and less rewarding. However difficult it might be, workers might conceivably choose to withdraw from the industrial factory system and consequently Mallock believed they must be given some advantage as inducement to remain.⁵⁰

¹W.H. Mallock, Property and Progress -- A Brief Inquiry into Contemporary Social Agitation in England (New York, 1884), p. 217.

²For Mallock's development of this idea see the following: W.H. Mallock, Enchanted Island (London, 1889), p. 144; Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 342; The Individualist, p. 188; and W.H. Mallock, The Limits of Pure Democracy (London, 1918), passim.

³Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 344.

⁴The Old Order Changes, pp. 355-56.

⁵Ibid., p. 147.

⁶A Critical Examination, p. 184.

⁷Property and Progress, p. 162.

⁸W.H. Mallock, Labour and Popular Welfare (London, 1896), pp. 182-87.

⁹Critical Examination, p. 28.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹Ibid., p. 130.

¹²Karl Marx, Production of Surplus Value in Capital, IV, Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York, 1906), passim.

¹³Ibid., p. 369.

¹⁴Property and Progress, p. 157.

¹⁵Labour and the Popular Welfare, p. 331.

¹⁶Limits of Pure Democracy, p. 94.

¹⁷See Capital, pp. 368-95, passim and Karl Marx, Early Writings, Trans. and Ed. T.B. Bottomore (New York, 1964), pp. 181-88, passim.

¹⁸Social Equality, p. 67.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 75.

²⁰Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 319.

²¹Ibid., p. 315.

²²W.H. Mallock, Capital, War, and Wages (London, 1918), pp. 60-63.

²³Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 376.

²⁴Ibid., p. 377.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 378-80.

²⁶Ibid., p. 379.

²⁷Ibid., p. 378.

²⁸Social Equality, p. 30.

²⁹Ibid., p. 208.

³⁰W.H. Mallock, The Nation as a Business Firm, An Attempt to Cut a Path Through the Jungle (London, 1910), p. 256. Also see Mallock's Classes and Masses: A Handbook of Social Facts for Political Thinkers and Speakers (London, 1896), p. 6.

³¹Limits of Pure Democracy, pp. 246-47.

³²Ibid., pp. 247-48.

³³W.H. Mallock, A Critical Examination of Socialism (London, 1908), p. 120.

³⁴Ibid., p. 152.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 120-21.

³⁶Social Equality, p. 166.

³⁷The Old Order Changes, p. 208.

³⁸A Critical Examination of Socialism, pp. 132-36.

³⁹Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 166.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Labour and the Popular Welfare, pp. 22-23.

⁴²Ibid., p. 22.

⁴³Limits of Pure Democracy, pp. 216-17.

⁴⁴A Critical Examination of Socialism, pp. 85-87.

⁴⁵W.H. Mallock, Social Reform as Related to Realities and Delusions: An Examination of the Increase and Distribution of Wealth from 1801 to 1910 (London, 1914), p. 87. Also see "The Intellectual Bankruptcy of Socialism," Living Age, Vol. 274, (September 28, 1912), pp. 771-78.

⁴⁶Social Reform, p. 87.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 280.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 321.

⁴⁹A Critical Examination of Socialism, p.98.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 293-97.

XI. DEMOCRACY EXAMINED

For Mallock, pure democratic theory, like socialist theory, was wrong about the present because it rested on a mistaken view of the past. Mallock took Rousseau's "man is born free, and is everywhere in chains" as an insane proposition and as "indicative of the root error in democratic theory."¹ Much like the Marxist use of the labor theory of value, Rousseau's proposition created the impression among the masses that they had been cheated of something rightfully theirs and were entitled to recover it. The idea of all people being naturally entitled to some portion of rights and power was the foundation of the great faith in the correctness of the democratic principle. Mallock believed that this faith induced a kind of ideological myopia which prevented the democrat from seeing the weaknesses of the democratic process.

Whatever else Mallock believed about democratic politics, he was sure it could never work the way it was supposed to. He felt that some of the articles of the democratic manifesto doomed democratic governments to perpetual mediocrity. For example, in the phrase "of the people, for the people, and by the people," there was no clear informative proposition: its only distinctive meaning

resided in the word people.² For Mallock, this enfranchised the individual "in virtue of his manhood alone [and thus] true democracy must be government determined by faculties which have been artificially reduced to their lowest common denominator."³

For Mallock, then, democratic politics could never function above the ordinary and common quality inherent in its founding principle. The operations and accepted rationale of democratic government could never be more sophisticated than the least sophisticated citizen. Democratic politicians could never rise above the mediocrity of their clients, the people.

In a society of mixed talents, strengths, and intelligence, a man who shared perhaps nothing but his upright posture with his brighter fellows had an equal voice in government. Mallock believed that democratic thought pursued itself relentlessly until it elevated the dolt above the sage because there were always more dolts around.

True democracy might recognise in Newton a master of all mathematical science, but it would not allow, in examining the business books of the nation, to impose on his fellows any conclusions with regard to them which his washer woman could not arrive at just as well with simple arithmetic.⁴

Mallock believed that true democracy could never be realized because, in most instances, most people were either ill-informed or uninformed on most questions. At best there could be broad agreement on what Mallock called Fundamental Questions, but, beyond these simple problems, the popular will did not exist. Mallock claimed that what really existed in modern society was a "general wish for welfare," that is, massive support for the idea that things could be better. However, in most cases, the average citizen did not have the vaguest notion of how to improve what he knew he wanted to improve. In short, democrats revered and hoped to carry out a will that did not exist.⁵ Because democratic politicians always spoke and acted as if there actually were an identifiable and workable program manifest in some general will, the people acquired impossible expectations.⁶

For Mallock, the essence of democratic politics was the acquisition and manipulation of public support by an oligarchy. The distinctive characteristic of an oligarch was that he had the intelligence and vision to conceptualize a solution to social problems and, equally important, he had the talent to present his program so that it was assimilated by the masses. Public policy was always developed by a handful of talented men who, to get and hold power, had to sell their plans to the public. The term

was not current when Mallock wrote but what he meant was that democratic politics was public relations. Mallock maintained that democratic governments survived by administering a steady dose of propaganda to the electorate. He did not intend this analysis as an indictment of the leaders who practiced such arts. He simply stated that democratic politics, in any large society, had to work this way. It was not a defect in the constitutional mechanism, that is, it was not a problem that could be solved with more elaborate procedural safeguards. Indeed, it was only perceived as a problem because democrats imagined that there was some kind of perfect politics which could work without such manipulation.

Mallock described democracy as a "disease of the imagination" which, like socialism, was symptomized by strenuous intellectual efforts to reorder a reality which democrats did not understand in the first place. Mallock held that the average citizen was highly susceptible to such diseases because socialist-democratic aspirations promised him much more than he could ever hope to obtain for himself. Such susceptibility was due, in part, to modern education. Mallock condemned the trend he detected in modern education which tended to create equal expectations among all levels of students and thereby guaranteed the frustration of most of them. Education should tailor

learning to the different needs of different groups; and, it should be available to all, but not all should receive the same education.⁷

Most people would remain in the class into which they were born and since this was so, most should be taught to try and improve their position rather than expect to escape from it. Attempts to equalize opportunity by equalizing education merely generalized the idea that everyone was entitled to everything.⁸ Thus, the democratic theory of education led to great expectations for people with only ordinary talents. Mallock believed that the mythology generated by such educational practices helped to prepare a great many people to accept what he considered to be the gross distortions of socialist economics and the hopelessly impractical ambitions of pure democratic theory.

Mallock's political views always revolved around what he once called the "indestructible few." However, his thinking on oligarchy and democracy was greatly reinforced by the work of Robert Michels (1876-1936), a German born sociologist, protégé of Max Weber, and a friend of Gaetano Mosca. Michels' reputation rests primarily on his Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy (1911). Essentially, the book denied that large organizations, whatever their nominal affiliations, could retain really democratic procedures. "Who says organ-

ization says oligarchy."⁹ Michels studied the workings of the German Social Democratic Workers Party and found that even in an organization founded on democratic principles, democracy and socialism became a farce in which the electorate did little but effect a "change of masters."

Mallock devoted a chapter of The Limits of Pure Democracy to a laudatory exposition of that work. Political Parties documented Mallock's earlier belief that democratic practice always did and indeed had to, violate democratic principles. Although Michels dealt with the deterioration of democratic ideals in a large labor organization, Mallock felt that his findings about the destructive effect of largeness and membership inertia on democratic practice were easily applicable to national democratic politics. Michels helped him to conclude that even the most rigorous kind of democratic procedure -- constant referendum or plebiscite -- would merely make the indestructible few work harder. They would not disappear.

Democracy is not and can never be a government system of any kind. It is simply one principle out of two, the other being oligarchy, which may be combined in very various proportions, but neither of which alone will produce what is meant by government.¹⁰

Mallock wrote that civilized life was shaped by six

main processes, divided into two kinds of activity: those of fruition (the intellectual, the aesthetic, and the religious, etc.) and the subservient processes (war, government, and industry, etc.). Oligarchy lay at the heart of all those processes and in the subservient activities it was clearly predominant.¹¹ However, with the passage of time, oligarchy lost itself in its own results.¹² Thus, the religious leader lived in the democracy of his converts, just as the industrial magnate thrived in a market in which he presented products to a democracy of consumers. Neither oligarchy nor democracy could stand alone. "In the process of social intercourse ... only through oligarchy does civilized democracy know itself."¹³

Fundamentally, Mallock was more concerned with the social implications of democratic theory than with the false political promise. He felt that eventually democratic thought would create a society in which difference, distinction, taste, and individual rights would be impossible. His fear was most clear in his introductory remarks to Social Equality: "The Democrat would overturn everything. It is hard to imagine any existing arrangement of a household, any existing style of furniture, any habits, manners, modes of thought, or amusements which would be left."¹⁴

Democracy was a diseased idea, the ambition of which was to make any other idea impossible. Democracy would

relentlessly subvert the material and spiritual underpinnings of individualism.

While Mallock believed that great improvement in social conditions was both necessary and proper, he also believed that a rigidly democratized society would snuff out the flame of ambition by destroying the incentives that drove great people to do great things. Thus, democratic practice would neutralize democratic society's best resource for improvement: its remarkable and gifted people. Pure democracy had no place or reward for excellence.

¹The Limits of Pure Democracy, pp. 3-5.

²Ibid., pp. 6-7.

³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., pp. 15-16, 70, and 72.

⁶Ibid., pp. 72-73.

⁷Aristocracy and Evolution, p. 349.

⁸Ibid., pp. 280-81.

⁹For a discussion of the enduring importance of Michels' conclusions see Seymour Martin Lipset's introduction to Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York, 1966). The book has invited assent and controversy in both the communist and non-communist worlds and is still held in great esteem by modern students of democratic politics.

¹⁰The Limits of Pure Democracy, p. 45.

¹¹Ibid., p. 350.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 351.

¹⁴Social Equality, pp. 7-8.

XII. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As Mallock defined it, conservatism was not a protest against change so much as it was a protest against "attempted change in the organic structure of society."¹ All social arrangements entailed some injustice and suffering, but the source of this evil was "imperfections inseparable from human nature."² Human society, precisely because it was human, was not perfectible.

Mallock was sensitive to the social problems created by a rigidly capitalistic and individualistic society and he was afraid that conservatives were not always willing to accept fully the gravity of these problems.

The main difficulty which Conservatives have to face lies in the fact that a variety of very real evils have been so identified by extremists with demands for impossible remedies that the necessity for opposing and exposing the latter gives rise to a diffidence in admitting the full seriousness of the former.³

Conservatives had to confront the real problems generated by the kind of society they believed to be best. Mallock believed it both unfeeling and highly impractical to underestimate the difficulties inherent in capitalistic society. There was no perfect solution. But, social peace and

limited justice were possible even if they had to be bought. If there was justice in the concept of the right to property, there was justice also in the demand that men were entitled to a life befitting human beings.

Mallock hoped to achieve social peace and meet the demands of justice by establishing a minimum wage which actually rewarded a worker beyond his actual productive input so as to compensate him for the spiritual loss which industrial detail work involved and at the same time, make his work so rewarding that he could see no advantage in sabotaging the system. Mallock admitted that such payment might be a kind of surrender but it was rational and functional.⁴

Mallock's suggestion for a humane and pacifying minimum wage was the only special change he ever suggested for the society of his age. While he believed nearly endless refinement of a laissez faire capitalist economy and society was possible, he was not interested in sweeping change. None was really necessary. Most of his writing on society and economics focused on what was wrong with the proposed substitutes for capitalist, individualistic society. He felt that his job as a social critic was to expose the errors in the socialist position and suggest tactics by which the conservative statesmen and businessmen might retain the system they preferred. He was not an advocate of

the capitalist system so much as he was a champion of any socio-economic system which would preserve, protect, and reward talent and ability. Indeed, he had no taste for modern, industrial capitalism or for its factories, mines, railroads, and masses of workers.

Mallock clearly preferred a cultured, well-bred, quartered aristocrat to the average business tycoon. However, as he indicated in his remarks on the anti-capitalist bias in The Old Order Changes, for good or evil, the material future of the western world was in the hands of its great business men. In a sense, society's health depended on them. They were necessary, though perhaps, not entirely desirable.

The aristocracy of ability, the gifted few, was the center of Mallock's social thought. While capitalism gave talent its chance, its traditions and trappings were too new and too coarse to produce the kind of cultured, educated, mannered, religious, and dedicated traditional British aristocrat whom Mallock treasured above all else.

In a sense, Mallock's writing on society and politics defended a system, a way of life, and a group of people he never fully accepted or liked. But, capitalism, if controlled intelligently, could produce enough wealth to protect society from the truly unnatural and destructive ambitions which Mallock detected in socialism.

If Mallock had a grand design or a great hope for the future, it was the solution he offered in The Old Order Changes: the concept of the religious, devout aristocrat, the man of great ability who served man because he wished to serve God. Mallock's idea that a religiously re-dedicated aristocracy might be instrumental in solving the worst problems of industrial capitalistic society was neither new nor completely derivative. Similar ideas can be found in both Carlyle and Ruskin. Even beyond the special concept of aristocracy, Mallock and Ruskin shared certain ideas. Various proposals in Ruskin's discussion of the Roots of Honor in Unto This Last resemble Mallock's suggestion for a minimum wage sufficient to ensure stability. In that essay, Ruskin's insistence that workers and employers do not have to be antagonistic seems very close to Mallock's insistence that class warfare was not necessarily inherent in a capitalist economy. However, in this same discussion, Ruskin defined the role of the worker and employer in strongly moral categories and spoke of the value of affection as a motivation for workers.

Further, Ruskin insisted that merchants had a duty under certain circumstances, to lose money and it was their duty to suffer a kind of market place martyrdom. This focus on duty as a forceful motive in the market place led Mallock to reject Ruskin's social philosophy as little

better than a kind of vague moral sentiment.

All this underscores what was perhaps the clearest differences between Mallock, Ruskin, and some others who criticized capitalist society. Ruskin disliked and inveighed against the competitiveness and Gospel of Mammon which he saw as the animating idea of capitalist society. Mallock was also repelled by the spiritual hollowness of arriviste capitalists and nouveaux riches industrialists who bought the trappings of culture and breeding by the pound. However, he did not understand the basic motives of competitive, acquisitive, capitalistic society as some kind of fall from grace. Capitalism was not a departure from the best that human beings could be. It was simply a social and economic expression of what they really were.

Mallock's concept of a saving aristocracy was a statement of his belief that some people might put aside the acquisitiveness and lust for power and wealth which drove capitalism forward. Only a few people could aspire to such a renunciation and probably because of their history and breeding, it was only aristocrats who could both do such a thing and at the same time be talented and skillful enough to make such a renunciation worthwhile. Thus, a special kind of human being, the aristocrat, might rise above ordinary human nature and help his fellows. He would do so because he would serve his fellows as his

duty to God, not to man. This kind of duty, with a clear origin in God, made much more sense to Mallock than what he considered Ruskin's vaguely rooted sense of duty. Only a few people would choose such a life, and only from clear religious vocation and that is why it was easier to make some men trappists than all men socialists.

In the final analysis, social problems were merely an extension of the religious. A religious solution might work, if for no other reason that because it could emerge from impulses, values, and traditions which had been part of western man since the days of Abraham. Thus, the religious solution did not depend on a thorough overhauling of human society and institutions, rather it depended on some of the oldest, most reliable elements of human nature. It did not have to await the unfolding of some questionable dialectical process and in that sense was less utopian than the self-proclaimed scientism of Marxism.

Mallock believed that socialism could only succeed if its inventors could effect a fundamental change in human nature, in human motivation, that is, socialism could not emerge without the development of a new Adam, a socialist man. On the other hand, Mallock's conservatism could achieve the socialist objective, the amelioration of mass misery, without awaiting a basic shift in human character. Mallock could solve the problem of the future modern industrial

society by drawing on the finest thing in the past of the old Adam: his faith. The strongest revolutionary slogan Mallock ever wrote was Amen. Only faith could provide the sense of duty, purpose, and reward which alone could inspire man to rescue his fellows.

¹Social Reform, pp. 375-76.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Labour and the Popular Welfare, p. 332.

XIII. MALLOCK AND VICTORIAN CONSERVATISM

Between 1832 and 1885, British political life was revolutionized. What had been a system in which wealthy peers and landlords had predominant control, in which large sections of the population in industrial cities were simply not represented, and in which Members of Parliament were elected for boroughs which no longer had any inhabitants, became nearly fully democratized in the series of acts culminating in the Reform Act of 1884. Except for the enfranchisement of women, Great Britain had achieved a uniform suffrage system and with the Redistribution Act of 1885, nearly equal single member constituencies were created.

These last reforms roughly coincided with the onset of hard times in British economic life described earlier. The fall of agricultural and industrial prices led to serious rural economic collapse and urban unemployment. The resultant difficulties precipitated a cluster of socialist organizations like H.M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation (1881) and the Fabian Society (1883).

Any discussion of Victorian attitudes toward democracy and socialism must include mention not only of the reform in suffrage between 1832 and 1874, but also the impact

of the Irish Land Acts of 1870 and 1881. The overall effect of this legislation was to limit the rights of landlords to evict tenants, to give tenants compensation for improvements, the possibility of purchasing his lot, secure tenure, and the right to have rents set by land courts.

The landlord classes were startled and furious at not only the actual content of these measures but the awesome precedent they established -- the restriction of landlords' rights. All of the writers involved in the ensuing discussion of Victorian attitudes toward democracy interpreted the Irish Land Acts as a gravely serious threat to traditional British values. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, one of the most prominent Victorian enemies of democracy and socialism, feared the Irish Land Acts as tokens of a "dominant intolerant socialism in which we the haves will be handled roughly by the have nots."¹

For many educated and landed Victorians, democracy always entailed socialism because they believed that democratic politicians would try to win votes by promising to give away other people's estates. The extension of the franchise was threatening enough in and of itself; however, when the enlargement of suffrage rights was followed by the Irish Land Acts, landed Englishment became alarmed. All in all, the question of property was paramount in many of the

attacks on democratic theory written in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.²

The coincidence of manhood suffrage, economic distress, and socialist activity deeply concerned Mallock and other social observers. What Mallock believed to be the incendiary potential of depression, democracy, and Marxism led him to investigate and criticize the theory and practice of democracy and socialism. The awesome social possibilities created by the economic desperation of the newly enfranchised lower orders led many other writers and critics to war English society of the defects and dangers in the social democratic idea and a conservative critique of democracy emerged.

It is something of a problem to place Mallock within the spectrum of late nineteenth century British conservatism because it is difficult to define conservatism in a manner which would suit all Victorian conservatives. There is also the related problem of trying to distinguish between the Victorian liberal and conservative critiques of democracy and socialism, the two social questions which most concerned Mallock. Thus, a figure like Albert Venn Dicey, who in some ways could be described as a liberal (his attitude toward free trade might be cited), expressed opinions very close to those of Mallock or other conservative critics of democracy like James Fitzjames Stephen and Henry Maine.

There probably were few substantive differences between the Victorian liberal and conservative attitudes toward democracy and socialism. Thus, in the following comparison we may consider critics of democracy, whatever specific party label they may have used then, to be essentially conservative in disposition.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Henry Maine, Albert Venn Dicey, Lord Salisbury, and William Edward Hartpole Lecky were Victorians who, in varying degrees, shared Mallock's views on democracy and socialism. Each of these men were prominent in their own fields and all of them, save Lecky, probably had more impact on British political and intellectual life than Mallock.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen (1829-1894) was a jurist, historian of the law, and a regular and major contributor to The Saturday Review and Pall Mall Gazette. He served as legal member of council in India; and, while he once stood for a liberal seat in parliament, his authorship of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity (1882), a strong tract against democratic theory, made him a champion of conservatives. Stephen was a close associate of Sir Henry Maine.

Sir Henry Maine (1822-1894) was a professor and historian of law at Oxford and later Cambridge. His scholarly reputation rested especially on his Ancient Law:

Its Connection with the Early History of Society and Its Relation to Modern Ideas (1861), Village Communities (1871), and Early History of Institutions (1875). In his Popular Government (1885) he claims to have aspired to apply "historical and comparative method" to democratic theory and practice. According to a recent biographer, Maine's intentions were more complicated than simple scholarly zeal. He apparently wanted to use history to argue against some of the specific legislative measures of the second Gladstone administration.³

Albert Venn Dicey (1835-1922) was a constitutional lawyer and political theorist. His two most important works were Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution (1885) and Lectures on the Relation between Law and Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century (1905). His interpretation of the rise of collectivism in the later work had considerable influence.

Lord Salisbury (1830-1903) was the leader of the Conservative Party from 1881 until 1902 and was Prime Minister on and off for nearly fourteen of those years. He may have been "the most formidable intellectual figure that the Conservative Party has ever produced."⁴ Succinctly put, Lord Salisbury detested democracy and devoted considerable energy to fighting it.

William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838-1903) was a

distinguished Irish historian whose reputation rested on his History of the Rise of Influence of Rationalism in Europe (1865), History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne, and especially History of England in the Eighteenth Century (1892). He was interested in public affairs and wrote against the extension of the franchise and Home Rule for Ireland. His Democracy and Liberty (1896) was a sharp attack on democratic politics and theory and although he was a liberal by affiliation, he fits easily into this group of conservative critics of democracy.

In the aforementioned group, Lecky is the only one who Mallock mentioned and, in this regard, it may be worth noting that Mallock quoted Lecky, Lecky quoted Maine, and Maine quoted Stephen. Various biographies and collections of letters of Lecky, Maine, Dicey, and Stephen show no written correspondence or contact between Mallock and any of these figures.⁵

For all the truth and wit in either Stephen's Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, or Maine's Popular Government, there is very little attention to theory or serious inquiry into the roots of the thing they were attacking. That is not necessarily a defect, rather, it is to Mallock's credit that he usually provided the reader with an excellent idea of the origins of what he was analyzing before he undertook to destroy it. This was especially true

of socialism.

While everyone under discussion here managed to say something about socialism, no one, save Mallock, gave any serious attention to socialist ideas and no one so much as mentioned Marx. Mallock devoted large parts of several of his works to refuting Marx in particular. And, while everyone in this group said something about socialism, no one, except Mallock, seemed moved to devote very much attention to it beyond noticing that it and democracy shared some of the same defects.⁶

When Mallock discussed democracy, he introduced figures like Aristotle, Rousseau, Babeuf, and Proudon into the discussion. When he discussed socialism, he dealt with Marx, Fourier, Henry George, and Utopian Socialism. While Mallock was not necessarily any more original or profound than Dicey or Stephen, his writing seems more informed and somewhat more convincing because of it.

However well he may have presented them, Mallock's views seem to have been essentially the same, with an important exception, as the conservative figures under consideration. While he seems to have understood certain defects in democratic politics better than other critics, it is also true that he failed to see some of the weaknesses in the socialist and democratic credos that were perceived by other commentators. Mallock's critique never included the

possibility that socialist theory and democratic practice could be at odds.

A.V. Dicey, in his introduction to Law and Public Opinion in England, captured the conflict between democratic ideology and the socialist belief in experts. In short, he detected the authoritarian nature of socialism. "[Socialism] suggests the very dubious idea that in a democracy the wish of the people may often be overruled for the good of the people."⁷

For all of Mallock's insight into the mechanism of democratic government and politics, he seems to have missed the tendency, alleged by Maine, Salisbury, and others, of democratic politics to destroy the balance of constitutional government. Lord Salisbury, of all the conservatives under review, made the clearest statement of this defect in democratic politics. He felt that democracy would inevitably become the rule of one class. The legislative power would overwhelm the other branches of government and power would not be shared. Salisbury saw an essential identity between democracy and despotism.⁸

However, Salisbury shared with Mallock and with most of the others, a pessimistic view of the potential for real social reform. Salisbury's contempt for optimism regarding human nature and the possibility of true social change was stronger even than Mallock's. He felt such

optimism to be "the first falsehood of a sincere democratic believer."⁹ His appreciation of the state of human affairs in general led him to suggest that some social and political problems simply might have no solution. It was the fault of the optimist, Salisbury argued, that they assumed that solutions did exist for all problems and because of that belief continued to meddle and tinker with things until they became worse.¹⁰ Indeed, his were the politics of "pessimism and disillusion." Salisbury had no hope for things getting better. Rather, he held the "conviction that they were steadily getting worse."¹¹

It would seem that for all these critics, the biggest barrier to progress was human nature itself. Henry Maine spoke for everyone in asserting that the greatest single obstacle to the success of democracy was "the constitution of human nature."¹² James Fitzjames Stephen's low estimate of human nature rivalled that of Thomas Hobbes¹³ and his language when referring to the masses was strong, smug, and almost vicious. He referred to the "stupid herd" or something similar often and easily.¹⁴ In like manner, much of Salisbury's polemics against democracy were "high pitched invective, tinged occasionally with hysteria and brutal sarcasm."¹⁵

In Salisbury, Stephen, and Maine there is a smugness and sense of superiority which is absent from Mallock's

writings on democracy. However, for all of Mallock's apprehensions about democracy, he did not manifest that boundless disdain for the masses found in other Victorian critics of democracy.

Each of these men held the belief that the essence of social and political intercourse was the drive and conflict of self interest and that the schemes built on the belief that self interest could somehow be overcome with legislation were absurd.¹⁶ All these conservative spokesmen refused to accept the proposition that men were substantially equal and in language similar to Mallock's they emphasized the importance of what Mallock called the men of ability. Maine and Stephen were especially strong on this particular point.

Maine argued that there always had been a natural meritocracy which alone had been responsible for the progress of the human race -- "history is a sound aristocrat."¹⁷ Salisbury shared this opinion and wrote that every age and every culture produced an aristocracy which in a "healthy state of feeling" naturally led their communities because their superior talents were recognized. Everyone under consideration here felt that such an arrangement was essentially proper and it was one of the most potentially destructive elements of democracy that it threatened, indeed prided itself on, overturning the rule of the natural aris-

tocracy.

Maine and Mallock both believed that democratic societies would breed mediocre politics and politicians and endanger the development of science and intellectual progress. Mallock's assessment of this problem appeared in his Social Equality in which he predicted that democratic society would annihilate difference and distinction and eventually would extinguish talent. Maine, again like Mallock, was convinced that universal suffrage would actually retard the progress of society. Society's progress became dependent on a perpetual democratic lottery in which most of the participants did not really understand what was at stake. Indeed, it would produce "a mischievous form of conservatism."¹⁸

In language very similar to Mallock's, Maine contended that if full democracy had been achieved in England in 1600, it would have prohibited the spinning jenny, power loom, and the Gregorian Calendar. Finally, in its infinite wisdom, the people would have restored the Stuarts.¹⁹ If we change the words to steam engine and locomotive, we have here exactly what Mallock said in Aristocracy and Evolution.

Stephen's Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity forecasts the same dire consequence in language somewhat more direct of the fully democratized society. He wrote that

the assumption that the people, once given the vote and allowed to choose from among various policies, would actually choose the wisest course is "the wildest romance that ever got possession of any considerable number of minds."²⁰ Again, in language similar to Mallock's, Stephen envisions democratic politicians proposing nothing that cannot be made obvious to the "very lowest capacities." He implied that programs which are so simple that they can be grasped by nearly everyone were very often not worth the completion because they had been promoted to the very lowest reaches of the body politic. They could not be stopped. The whole problem was neatly put by Lecky when he suggested that the biggest problem in modern politics was whether the world was to be governed by its intelligence or its ignorance.²¹

This last observation raises a related issue which nearly every critic of democracy discussed: the nature of public opinion or the general will. Mallock maintained that there was no such thing as a real and identifiable general will on most public questions. As he put it, there was little more than a general wish for something better. Dicey's analysis of the role of public opinion in the development of law started with roughly the same premise, that is, on most important issues, the public simply does not, and very often cannot, understand the problem at hand. Further,

in most cases, most people came to accept one authority or another as a means of settling complicated debates.²²

Maine and Stephen shared this belief and the former went so far as to doubt that the masses were even capable of understanding even their own direct interests. Stephen rejected the concept of a palpable general will because there simply were not very many people able to "carry on a systematic train of thought."²³

All these critics believed democracy to be a weak system. Salisbury doubted if any democratic system would survive severe economic pressure.²⁴ Part of the vitality of a democratic system stems from what Maine called "an expectation of blessedness."²⁵ If this promised bliss is not forthcoming, the people feel cheated and, as Mallock noted, a group of angry leaders will emerge from the disillusioned ranks of the masses. Democracy breeds socialism and neither can deliver what is promised by both.

Everyone concerned here predicted that the promise of democracy was always betrayed by the practice of democracy. Stephen and Maine explored one aspect of mass politics to which Mallock paid very little attention. Both writers argued that democratic politics would destroy any real competition on issues or public questions and tend rather to operate by manipulating mass blocs of votes through the appeal of banners, symbols, party slogans, and fabricated

loyalties. Eventually parties would have no difference between them except the identity of the master "wirepuller."

Salisbury wrote that democratic politicians would play the strings of foreign policy; Lecky maintained that the wirepuller would simply purchase the votes he wanted; and, Maine asserted that the wirepuller could succeed simply by wrapping himself in the party banner.²⁶ The net result was a perversion of democracy and as Dicey observed, surrender of authority by the people to the wirepuller allowed democracy to become another form of elitist politics.²⁷

Finally, the people would probably have less real power than they had under traditional constitutional government because even their legal rights were subject to withdrawal due to a sudden popular fiat. As Stephen observed: "Equality, like liberty, appears to me to be a big name for a small thing."²⁸

The opinion of all was that the essential natural activity characteristic of the political process, that is, the development and implementation of beneficial public policy through the exchange of enlightened opinion and the give and take of practical politics would simply degenerate into a perpetual power play in which the public lost interest, while always appealed to, would never really be considered by the democratic chieftans. All political systems involve individual power struggles and a betrayal of the

public interest, however, it was characteristic of democratic politics that the final referees of the process were the people, unable to decide what politics were best. They were usually sold a package for the wrong reasons and accepted it without clearly understanding why.

In the kind of politics valued by Mallock and these others, the competition of elites would continue with the corruption and distortion implicit in power struggles; however, once one of them won, society itself would be governed by wisdom rather than the everlasting lottery of ignorance. In the final analysis, democracy is all mechanics and process and no essence. It cannot deliver anything but votes.

Mallock made no really original contribution to the Victorian conservative critique of democracy; however, his The Limits of Pure Democracy was a more substantial analysis of the inherent limitations of democracy than either Stephen's Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity or Maine's Popular Government, the two most comparable studies.²⁹ Both of the latter works have the character of lectures written for audiences of friendly auditors, that is, certain things are flatly stated and simply left. Mallock's work is more precise because it anticipates and answers objections and pursues its main point, the persistence of elites in any political setting, in a detailed and convincing manner. The

durability and value of The Limits of Pure Democracy was attested to by Raymond Williams in his Culture and Society: "The mood of [Mallock's] later books is skeptical and critical, and Mallock is not to be recommended to socialists, or even democrats, who have merely received a doctrine and want to keep it. The Limits of Pure Democracy anticipates, and is better written than, those many books presenting a similar thesis which have appeared since 1945."³⁰

¹See Stephen's letter to Lady Grant Duff as quoted by John Rich in "Liberalism and the Victorian Intelligentsia," The Cambridge Historical Journal, XII, p. 73.

²See Benjamin Lippincott's Victorian Critics of Democracy (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1938), passim.

³George Feaver, From Status to Contract: A Biography of Sir Henry Maine (New York, 1969), pp. 223-26.

⁴From Robert Blake's Disraeli as quoted in Lord Salisbury on Politics, ed. Paul Smith (Cambridge, 1972), p.1.

⁵Robert Rait, Memorials of Albert Venn Dicey: Letters and Diaries (London, 1925); George Feaver, From Status to Contract: A Biography of Sir Henry Maine (New York, 1969); Elisabeth Lecky, A Memoir of W.E.H. Lecky (New York, 1909); and, Leslie Stephen, Life of James Fitzjames Stephen (London, 1895).

⁶R.B. McDowell, British Conservatism (London, 1959), pp. 131-32.

⁷A.V. Dicey, Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century (London, 1948), p. lxxiii.

⁸Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, Political Thought of Lord Salisbury 1854-1868 (London, 1967), pp. 108-115.

⁹Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁰Robert Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill (London, 1968), p. 133.

¹¹Smith, Lord Salisbury on Politics, pp. 11-12.

¹²Henry Maine, Popular Government (London, 1886), p. 88. Also see Pinto-Duschinsky, Political Thought of Lord Salisbury, p. 106 and James Fitzjames Stephen, Liberty Equality, and Fraternity (New York, 1882), pp. 244-46.

- p. 135.
- ¹³Lippincott, Victorian Critics of Democracy,
p. 135.
- ¹⁴Stephen, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, passim.
- ¹⁵Smith, Lord Salisbury on Politics, p. 11.
- ¹⁶Dicey, Law and Public Opinion, p. xc.
- ¹⁷Maine, Popular Government, p. 12.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 34.
- ¹⁹Ibid., pp. 34-36.
- ²⁰Stephen, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, p.244.
- ²¹W.E.H. Lecky, Democracy and Liberty (London, 1899),
p. 25.
- ²²Dicey, Law and Public Opinion, pp. 24-25.
- ²³Stephen, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, p.245.
- ²⁴Smith, Political Thought of Lord Salisbury, p. 106.
- ²⁵Maine, Popular Government, p. 25.
- ²⁶See Smith, Political Thought of Lord Salisbury,
p. 108; Lecky, Democracy and Liberty, pp. 22-23; and, Maine,
Popular Government, pp. 32-33.
- ²⁷Dicey, Law and Public Opinion, p. 54.
- ²⁸Stephen, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, p. 253.
- ²⁹See Lippincott, Victorian Critics of Democracy,
p. 174 in which the author notes that compared to his legal
work, Maine's Popular Government was "rather weak" and "did
violence to his [usual] method of history and high standard
of criticism."

³⁰Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (New York, 1958), p. 163.

XIV. AN ESTIMATION OF MALLOCK'S ABILITIES

Mallock hoped to develop a science of conservatism, that is, he wished to articulate the principles and arguments, facts and figures which lay at the root of what had become a kind of reflexive and intellectually passive British conservatism. He made a prodigious effort and with all his pamphlets, articles, speeches, novels, and tracts he probably came closer to a systematic point by point, statistic by statistic, refutation of socialism and democratic theory than any conservative writer of his generation. If, perhaps, all this does not add up to science, it does amount to a more precise, better statistically documented and detailed statement of conservative views than was generally available in turn of the century Britain.

Despite all of his precision and care, Mallock was hoisted on his own petard. In Social Equality, and elsewhere, he made allusions to a "science of human character" which would refute the fallacies of socialist and democratic theory. Mallock had attacked Marxists for involving the term science and he always argued that one of the attractions of an otherwise weak theory was its claim to being scientific. Having sounded the alarms of the false science of socialism, Mallock himself undertook to develop a science of human

character which, in its pretentiousness and lack of scientific evidence, matched socialism.

In Social Equality (which carried the subtitle: A Study in a Missing Science) he attempted to analyze the motives and drives behind productive human activity. As the first axiom in his science of human character, Mallock suggested that the root cause of all effort in superior people was their desire for wealth and power. This may or may not be so. Mallock did not take the trouble to tell how he knew it to be true. There were no facts, figures, percentages, expert witnesses, or statistical support. It was, in short, Mallock's opinion and despite his best effort, the science he spoke of as missing still is. Since most social philosophy is usually presented without any pretension to rigorous scientific proofs, this lack of verification for Mallock's major premise would not be especially damaging to his position. However, he chose first, to attack Marx for claiming scientific support which did not exist, and second, he promised to provide the scientific truth which socialism lacked. He did not.

In this same vein, Mallock is open to attack for resting most of his argument against socialism on his assertion that socialists simply did not understand human nature, especially the nature of his precious people of ability. Mallock never built a bridge, designed a machine, ran a

factory, commanded an army, or created a masterpiece. Yet, he wrote as if he had an intimate knowledge of the drives which motivated the people who actually did such things.

Mallock was a man who spent his entire life in the rather rarified atmosphere of the fashionable goings on of the London social season, endless visits to aristocratic country homes, and trips to the watering places of the rich. The quality of his existence was such that he noted with some disdain that he once had to spend an entire weekend without a man servant. By his own admission, he spent most of his time with people who had inherited their wealth and position and whose only contact with power was pulling the bell cord at tea time. In light of this background we are hard pressed to discover why Mallock thought he could speak for the people of ability or better understand their nature than the socialists.

Altogether, Mallock's treatment of socialism was sometimes careless and oversimplified. He more than once implied that the sum and substance of Marxism and Fabianism was a burning ambition to seize all the wealth of society and distribute it on a permanently equal basis for all, because they, as socialists, believed that happiness was a function of wealth. In one of his essays on the goals of socialism, he drew a satirical sketch of the difficulties involved in trying to equally share railroad trains, steam-

ships, and bathtubs and finished by pointing out the great difficulty of cutting the last locomotive in half to share it. In such instances, he reduced Marx, or the Webbs, or G.B. Shaw to the level of Hyde Park orators whose program it was to go and loot the nearest department store. By setting up these beliefs as the "basic principles" of socialism, he made some very easily toppled straw men and also did a disservice to his own credibility.

However, Mallock was an expert dialectician and on those issues he chose to pursue seriously, he developed rigorous and convincing arguments which brought some of the fundamentals of socialist and democratic theory into question. His refutations of the idea of surplus value, the labor theory of value, Marx's view of the origin of the division of labor, and of historical development, and his analysis of the realities of pure democratic theory and practice are all prime examples of the strength of Mallock's best polemics. Most of his arguments were not original, that is, they were part of the conservative stock of his generation. However, his special treatment of the importance of men of ability in society and politics and economics, especially in Aristocracy and Evolution, was an impressive chapter in the history of that particular idea.

Judged by the criteria of originality, precision, depth of analysis, and forcefulness, The Limits of Pure

Democracy may be the best thing Mallock ever wrote about society and politics. While he relied on Michels' Political Parties to help him make his case, some of the essay's best arguments derived from Mallock's own view of human nature and were refinements of assertions he had been making for twenty years. Mallock's view of the vital relationship between oligarchy and democracy, a kind of de facto and highly functional symbiosis, has the virtue of novelty for the period in which he wrote.

William Hurrell Mallock had no lasting influence on British conservatism; however, he seems to have had measurable impact on late Victorian British conservatism. He had hoped to develop a science of conservatism. If he was not able to do quite that, he made the conservative case against socialism considerably stronger with his effort. And, he certainly earned the title given him by one of his American socialist opponents: "the most formidable of professional Socialist killers -- Mr. W.H. Mallock."¹

¹Morris Hillquit, Mr. Mallock's Ability (New York, 1907), p. 4.

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