

2. 1826-1839:

Having returned to the comparative safety of the Potteries, Mulock courted controversy still. A meeting had been convened by the High Sheriff of the county, at the request of a number of the nobility, gentry and freeholders, for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning parliament on the subject of the mitigation and gradual abolition of slavery throughout the British Dominions. The meeting was held at the Shire Hall, Stafford, on Thursday, 2nd March 1826.

James Burton Phillips, the sheriff, having opened proceedings, Mulock - described in the news report of proceedings as "pastor of a congregation of Dissenters at Stoke-u-Trent, and whose name has been often before the public" - rose and requested permission to ask the sheriff a question. Mulock explained that he attended the meeting: *"In consequence of an earnest entreaty so to do; but according to the strict construction that the requisition to the sheriff, and the public notice that called the meeting, supposed that none but freeholders of the county could participate in proceedings and wished to be informed whether that was the case?"* The sheriff cautiously, inquired whether Mulock complained of some informality, to which Mulock replied, *"Not at all, but that he did not wish to appear in a counterfeit character and therefore was induced to ask the question."* The sheriff's polite response was that he could have no objection to hear the sentiments of Mr. Mulock or of any other gentleman, an answer that seems to have left Thomas Mulock perfectly satisfied.

Sir Oswald Mosley addressed the meeting moving resolutions in support of the premise (reproduced for information below), when other speakers, amongst them the Reverend Thomas Gisbourne, Prebendary of Durham, and E. J. Littleton, Member of Parliament for Staffordshire, addressed the audience, following upon which Thomas Mulock, never to be denied an occasion to publicly express his opinions and convictions, rose to speak, but oh! dear, at some considerable length. *"He, like the preceding speakers abhorred slavery, but it was his firm opinion that those in bondage among mankind, whether the bondage were inward or outward, could not be freed by human efforts – it was beyond the potency of parliaments; and all the combined exertions of 'philanthropic pietists' would be unavailing. Try and unfix that sun, try and un-sphere those stars, but do not attempt to check by human effort the progress of sin, in which slavery originated and by which it is continued. He could not but enter his feeble protest against the interference of a false philanthropy on this subject. Mr. Canning, the person who brought forward the resolutions to the house of commons in 1823, was my endeared friend; though I thought that step to have been the falsest he had ever taken in political life."* Mulock continued to speak until 'considerable disapprobation was manifested by the gathering, and he resumed his seat amidst very general hissing and coughing!'

The resolutions passed at the meeting (despite Mulock's objection to the fundamental principle that was expressed - though why he should have objected to something that he was apparently in favour of may mystify many - even if those around him were not as sensitised to the finer points of theological belief as he believed himself to be, and which no doubt he wished to convey in his observations, i.e. that only God and true belief can bring about complete justice) were:

‘THAT SLAVERY IS CONTRARY TO JUSTICE, TO THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR CONSTITUTION AND TO THE BENIGNANT SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY; AND WE CONSIDER IT AS A DARK STAIN ON OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER, THAT MANY HUNDRED THOUSANDS OF OUR FELLOW CREATURES SHOULD AT THIS DAY BE FOUND WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, SUFFERING THE GRIEVOUS EVILS OF SLAVERY IN ITS HARSHTEST, AND MOST DEGRADING FORM.

THAT WE CONCUR FULLY IN THE RESOLUTIONS MOVED BY MR. CANNING, AND UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THE 15TH MAY 1823, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE ABLE, PROMPT AND ZEALOUS ENDEAVOURS OF HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS TO CARRY THEM INTO EFFECT, WHILST WE LAMENT THAT THE OPPOSITION, OR NEGLECT OF THE COLONIAL LEGISLATORS HAS HITHER TO SUCCEEDED IN ALMOST WHOLLY FRUSTRATING THE BENEVOLENT PURPOSES OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.

THAT WE HAVE A FIRM CONVICTION, FOUNDED ON THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO SLAVERY, RECENTLY LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT BY HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS, THAT THERE IS NO HOPE OF THE EXTINCTION, OR EVEN OF THE REQUISITE MITIGATION OF THE CRUEL SYSTEM OF SLAVERY NOW PREVAILING IN THE COLONIES, BY ANY SINCERE AND EFFECTUAL CO-OPERATION OF THE COLONISTS, AND THAT THOSE INDISPENSABLE OBJECTS WILL NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THE DIRECT AND AUTHORITATIVE INTERFERENCE OF THE IMPERIAL LEGISLATURE.

THAT WE FREELY ADMIT, THAT IF, IN THE CARRYING INTO EFFECT THE JUST AND HUMANE PURPOSES IN WHICH PARLIAMENT, HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, AND THE PEOPLE ZEALOUSLY CONCUR, THE COLONISTS SHOULD SUFFER LOSSES FROM CAUSES AND UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM AN EQUITABLE CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION, WE WOULD CHEERFULLY BEAR OUR SHARE OF ANY AMOUNT OF INDEMNIFICATION THAT THE CROWN MIGHT DEEM IT RIGHT TO RECOMMEND AND PARLIAMENT TO SANCTION.

THAT THE PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT, IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RESOLUTIONS OF THIS MEETING NOW READ, BE ADOPTED.

THAT THE LORD BISHOP OF THE DIOCESES BE REQUESTED TO PRESENT THE PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS, AND THE MEMBERS FOR THE COUNTY TO PRESENT THE PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THAT THE HIGH SHERIFF BE DESIRED TO SIGN THE PETITION ON BEHALF OF THE MEETING.ⁱ

In the following month, on the 20th April, 1826, a daughter, Dinah Maria, was born to the Mulock's, an occasion that, no matter how welcome the infant, would have added to the family's financial expenditure, one that Thomas appears to have done so little to improve; indeed, with apparently little or no income of his own, a lost court case, and diminishing support from the congregation, there seems but little doubt that his wife may have had growing doubts as to the wisdom of their union; given the formidable reputation of mother's-in-law, Mrs. Mellard would doubtless have had far greater misgivings.

The subject of money and Thomas Mulock - perhaps ever a sensitive issue - may well have been of critical comment within the narrow community of his congregation as at this time, in April, 1827, Mulock handed over to the Overseer's of the Poor of Stoke-u-Trent, the sum of £37-2s-6d, money that had been subscribed by members of the chapel congregation who had either been excluded from the chapel services by Mulock, or had left of their own accord; departures that may have led to financial contention. Amongst the contributors had been Charlotte Astbury, Mary Reade nee Mellard, Mrs. Mellard, Jeremiah Ginders and William Davis. From this sum the Overseers of the Poor were enabled to purchase six hundred loaves of bread for distribution amongst the widows and other deserving poor of the parish of Stoke-u-Trent.ⁱⁱ

Nevertheless despite adversity Thomas Mulock appears to have extended his influence and during a six month period in 1827 appears as a minister at both Tunstall and Preston Brook, described as a travelling preacher of the Tunstall Circuit, and as such was a member of the circuit committee, his schedule involving him in preaching at Weston, Englesea Brook, Wrine Hill, Newcastle-u-Lyme, Clayton, Bidulph Moor, Talk-o'th-Hill, Congleton, Street Lane and Sandbach during the July, also at a camp meeting at Penkhull, where the event was designed to open at nine o'clock in the morning; there was also a meeting at Tunstall on the 26th August when a Love-feast was to be held in the chapel commencing at 6 in the evening; with other meetings being held in the August at Chesterton, Burslem, Kidsgrove and Norton; taking in Macclesfield and Wrine Hill in the September. A fairly busy schedule it may be thought.ⁱⁱⁱ

George Canning, Thomas Mulock's friendly acquaintance, attained the highest political office in the land during April 1827, and, according to Elihu Rich (for whom see below), on the night of his appointment by the king, wrote a letter in which he politely, even jocularly, chided Mulock at his lack of confidence in his (Canning's) ability to become prime minister. This was said to have come about through comments made by Mulock at one of his lectures in Paris, when he had expressed the opinion that Canning would never achieve his ambition and gain the highest office of the land; that said Mulock had then noticed Canning's wife amongst the audience! Further, according to Rich, Canning, now that it was in his power to do so, was prepared to gift Mulock an important office, but Mulock would not jeopardise his political principles by accepting it! Whether Elihu Rich received these anecdotes from Mulock or from Mulock's nephews, there seems some doubt as to their accuracy, for while Mulock did correspond with Canning at the time of his appointment as prime minister, first having written on the 31st March 1827, returning papers relating to an incident that he wished to forget - presumably the letters exchanged between the two men in respect of North - and assuring Canning that nothing ever fell from his pen but that which would redound to Canning's credit, while as to Mr. North, Mulock had long ceased to have any correspondence. Then some days after Canning had accepted the premiership Mulock, ever ready with advice, wrote to Canning on the 14th April 1827:

'My dear sir,

*Can you withdraw yourself, for a moment, from the clash of opinions, and the conflict of parties, to listen to the still small voice of Christian counsel, proceeding from one of the most disinterested, and not the least faithful of your friends? I am this day possessed of the fact, that you are prime minister of England, and I am, moreover, made acquainted with the rumour that seven or eight of your late colleagues in the government, have declined to cooperate with you. If the latter report be even partially true, you are in a predicament singularly perplexing – one that demands the highest boldness, secured by the deepest discretion. The sole question on which your fortunes will turn is this: have you been called to **pride of place** by the spontaneous favour of the king? If so, I solemnly affirm, that you have the supreme succour of God to calculate upon, and confide in. I assume this to be the case; for if otherwise, i.e. **if mere ambition urged you to grasp at suffered authority**, I would shrink from communication with you. I write to you, on the presumption that his Majesty has invited you to preside over his council, in the full persuasion of your superior fitness for so eminent a station. Your course is clear select from such materials, as the defection of your former associates constrain you to resort to, such an administration as you can assemble. Do not be deterred by the aristocratic array, or confederated ability of your adversaries; because the unity of purpose, which must spring from your acknowledged headship, will more than compensate for all the apparent advantages enjoyed by your opponents. And now a word of still more vigorous wisdom. If the vast influence of the recent possessors of power, shall over-sway the popular branch of the legislature, and, by consequence, thwart the peculiar policy, and just measures of government, arm your mind for a crisis requiring an energetic effort, of which the real prudence might be concealed by the seeming peril. Cast yourself upon the country, by an immediate dissolution of parliament.*

Believe me to be, your sincere friend, Thomas Mulock.^{iv}

This does not appear to me to be a reply to a letter, but one written as though Mulock had heard of Canning's appointment through normal public channels. Moreover a postscript added to the letter appears to support this construction:

"Should you desire to hold further communication with me and yet feel reluctant to write, I will, on your wish being signified to me, repair to London for a week, not as your guest, not as a suitor for others, not as even a possible sharer myself of things lying wholly out of the pale of my proper pursuits. But simply as your friend, willing to offer cheering counsel at an exigent time, to one whose permanent promotion, I (at present) conceive to be connected with the prosperity of the Empire. Let me add that I shall construe (though with respectful regret) your silence into an intelligible intimation that our intercourse can never be renewed."^v

It was Canning's private secretary, Backhouse, who responded:

London, April 17th 1827.

My dear sir,

*Mr. Canning directs me to acknowledge, in his name, your letter of the 14th instant and to assure you that he takes your counsel in very good part – not excepting the concluding portion of it. The measure to which it alludes, had already occurred to Mr. Canning's mind; but he trusts that the extreme case which could alone justify it, will not arise. He is placed in his present difficult situation **by the spontaneous favour of the king***; and he is determined not to shrink from the arduous duties which are thus imposed upon him. You will easily suppose that Mr. Canning's time is too much occupied at this conjuncture, to admit of the possibility of his finding leisure for private correspondence – and will accordingly excuse his availing himself of another hand to thank you for the friendly interest which you express in his welfare.*

**Mulock thought Canning a little short of the truth in this statement.^{vi}*

Three days after the date of Canning's reply, Mulock travelled to London, staying at Duke Street, off Portland Place, from where he wrote to Canning, offering to render any assistance – compatible with Mulock's own views – that might be desired; adding that he would not be slow to testifying the grateful respect that he cherished for the statesman. Mulock further stated that he would not seek or solicit an interview during his stay, but that he was prepared, in all readiness, to obey any summons that Canning might be moved to honour him with and that in a few days would be published: 'Christian Counsel, the Light and Safeguard of Nations: A letter to the Right Honourable George Canning, on the present crisis of the country,' by Thomas Mulock.^{vii}

This letter did not receive an immediate acknowledgement, which irked Mulock who, despite not having solicited an interview may have expected that his proximity would have revived the comradeship of 1812, and lead Canning to welcome him with the same enthusiasm that Mulock plainly continued to experience for the statesman. It

was not to be and on the 30th of April, Mulock again wrote to Canning respectfully requesting whether the note that had been written by Backhouse in reply to Mulock's of the 17th was to be considered as strictly private and confidential. There was no immediate reply to this letter either, and on the evening of the 2nd of May, Mulock wrote yet again, his soreness at having been ignored plainly showing:

*"Ere Mr. Canning can receive these lines, Mr. Mulock will have quitted London for Staffordshire. With due respect, and without any interruption of regard, Mr. Mulock desires to suspend all communication with Mr. Canning. As Mr. Canning has lightly esteemed a faithful friend, Mr. Mulock leaves Mr. Canning to try, for a season, the seeming supporters which now perfidiously crowd round the chief minister of England. **Before many weeks elapse**, Mr. Canning will find – in the midst of peril and perplexity – of open enmity and unsuspected treachery, that there is but one sure succour for the mightiest – the sadly slighted succour of the only wise God."*

The response to this letter came in a note dated the 11th May 1827, when Backhouse again replied on Canning's behalf, advising that due to pressing business and the present political crisis Mulock's two letters had lain unnoticed in Canning's tray, and that the minister, while he was sorry that Mulock had taken offence at not having been admitted to a personal interview, was unaware of having given any cause for offence as Mulock had specifically stated that he did not seek an interview, and that even had he done so, the unceasing occupation of time with which Canning was continually faced would have prevented him from receiving Mulock even if he had so requested. As regards the previous letter, it was to be treated as private and confidential. There was then a further letter from Mulock to Backhouse in which Mulock set out the reasons why he had written in such a fashion and that appears to have closed the contact between Mulock and the statesman:

*"I am not fully persuaded that I shall succeed in clearly conveying to you my true thoughts on the subject to which your letter of yesterday's date so obligingly refers. But whenever I do not write lucidly, give me credit for thinking uprightly. When I intimated to Mr. Canning (I trust respectfully and properly) my arrival in London, and the intentions by which I was strongly and abidingly influenced, I sought to express precisely what I meant and felt. I had, and have (strange as the assertion may sound, when coupled with my avowal of uninterrupted regard for Mr. Canning), a decided disinclination to maintain my communication with Mr. Canning for the present. And as a man of truth, taught to abhor every crooked way, I boldly disclose the grounds of my repugnance. I see Mr. Canning accepting the aid of his ancient enemies, and thus deluded (I mean no offence) by the dangerous support of men, as void of public principle, as they are destitute of private friendship for Mr. Canning. When I behold the standard bearers of infidelity, the trumpeters of revolution, and the advocates of anarchy and spoilation – the B.....'s, and the B.....s, and the H....s, crowding round the man, who has hitherto overthrown their embattled energies, I discern plainly that they now attempt to obtain by **guile**, what they could not achieve by **force**. Moreover, when I mark Mr. Canning admitting to confidential intercourse, a person whose perfidiousness is proved to him – a man whom I would scorn to recognise as an acquaintance, and specially on the score of his wicked enormity towards Mr. Canning; I write his name at length, - The contemplation of these contrarieties makes me desirous of shunning communication which, for the present, would be more likely to cause pain than to yield profit. Such being my real views, how, my dear sir, should I feel offended that Mr. Canning did not command me to his presence? For without a mandate I never would have approached him. I freely confess that I felt hurt ("and yet more in sorrow than in anger") that no notice was taken of the question I proposed to Mr. Canning. It was important to me (and give me leave to add to Mr. Canning also) that I should learn Mr. Canning's view of the nature of the letter written to me by his direction. But it may be satisfactory to Mr. Canning to be answered that I have not acted as an "offended man," though I may have been considered as such. Though it has been necessary to acknowledge* that I received a communication from Mr. Canning – private to all intents and purposes, **that** communication, up to this moment, remains – nor shall any consideration induce me to reveal the contents of a letter that the writer, be he who he may, deems private and confidential. With renewed respect to Mr. Canning, and with every kindly sentiment towards yourself.*

*P.S. Permit me to add that I am as perfectly satisfied with the explanation you kindly offer for **yourself**, as with that so condescendingly communicated by **direction** of Mr. Canning."*

The asterisks substituted for letters was a decision made by the editor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*. George Canning died on the 8th of August 1827.^{viii}

This correspondence was sent for publication to the *Staffordshire Advertiser* in October 1828, with a rather incise, presumptive instruction; but as they contained Canning's name, may have proved of interest to readers; however, I cannot but think that Mulock, in publicly emphasising his relationship with Canning, derived some status that otherwise might have been denied him:

*"I confide to you, for early and accurate insertion in your journal, the following copies of communications to and from the late Mr. Canning, immediately subsequent to his acceptance of the first commissionership of his Majesty's treasury. **Why** I publish these documents now, or at all? are questions which I do not feel myself constrained to answer in detail. Mr. Canning's death – the total discomfiture and dispersion of his political associates – the annihilation of the vain and impracticable system of policy that Mr. Canning was lured to adopt – and the certainty that all **hidden things** must sooner or later come to light: these considerations influence me to present to the public view, the several letters herewith made known to you. With this subject, I do not wish to mingle my thoughts concerning Mr. Canning's successors. Let it suffice to say, that our actual rulers are as infatuated with their peculiar follies, as was mister Canning, with his special schemes – and that from a thousand conspiring causes, this gigantic empire is now reeling under the stroke of doom. Nothing can avert, nothing can mitigate the natural calamities which now fearfully impend over Great Britain, and I may add over Europe and the world."*^{ix}

Meanwhile the publication addressed to Canning, referred to above '*Christian Counsel, the Light and Safeguard of Nations: A letter to the Right Honourable George Canning, on the present crisis of the country,*' had been published, the date ascribed to it being the 25th April 1827, with Mulock described as a Minister of the Gospel at Stoke-upon-Trent. While the extensive content is too much to include here the pamphlet cannot be ignored. It began:

"Sir,

*Among the startling novelties teeming in our times and in our country, I am disposed to assign a peculiar, if not prominent place to the undertaking which now engrosses my thoughts, and will somewhat severely task my pen. A Christian pastor addressing a philosophical statesman upon subjects which are deemed to be the exclusive province of the latter, will appear, at first view, rather the product of presumption, than the fruit of wisely-directed good intention. Armed, however, with a just confidence, not in my own powers, but in the energy and efficacy of truths with which I am blessedly familiar, I am not careful of the hostile judgement of my fellow-men. My sole desire is to set forth what I know to be true, and to leave the matter, as to the enforcement of the same, with the **only wise God**. When I freely avow to you my full persuasion that Christianity will achieve, what philosophy toils in vain to accomplish, you must not for a moment suppose that I scornfully disparage yourself, or your intellectual friends. I have not **so learned Christ** as to undervalue others for not attaining by effort what I possess by gift – nor am I perversely disinclined to discern the superiority you manifestly enjoy over the mass of mankind. I admire, none more admires, your varied, graceful, and commanding talents. I own the sweet influence, and chaste splendour of your captivating eloquence. I refer to portions of your political life with almost un-chequered satisfaction; and I am happy to bear my un-swayed testimony to the kindness and consistency of your private character, which I once socially studied, and now with mellowed candour, distantly respect and regard. But I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away. While I grant that you have a mind capable of comprehending much, if not all that human faculty glories in grasping, I cannot render you the unholy homage which would be implied in preferring your brilliant powers, - the shining mental energies of a man **wise in his generation** to the **wisdom that cometh from above**, the application of divine verities to the affairs of this lower world. The station to which you have been recently called, has, it may be, pre-eminent attractions; but sure I am that it is vexed with many and conflicting cares, and cares too, let me predict to you, which will multiply with disquieting force and frequency, until a wisdom other than your own shall be sent to soothe and to succour you. I am constrained to use all **plainness of speech**, from my very earnestness to serve you – and boldness is becoming where truth is the theme. I know not fear, and you know that I seek not favour; and this distinct exposition of my feelings and motives will constitute a fitting and immediate introduction to the important things which I entreat your sustained attention to.*

*The monarch of this great and leading empire has by virtue of the discretion righteously vested in him, summoned you in a season of actual national need, and of much probable peril, to preside over his councils – for you have yourself assured me that you are indebted for your elevation solely to the "spontaneous favour of the king." I assume this to be an unquestionable fact – because if it were otherwise – if ambition had urged you to intrigue for the possession of unoffered power – your short lived usurpation would hardly afford me time to anticipate the details of your destruction. The just and sure foundation of your prosperity as chief minister of England, must be laid in the choice exercised by the sovereign, who hath said unto you **come up hither**. Men who know not God may scoff at this, the true doctrine of delegated power – but it is nevertheless the immutable principle of good government to which individuals and nations will be made to bow. How little is at this moment known of the will of God with reference to the matters of men, may be gathered from the event that quickly ensued on your acceptance of highest office. Eight of your previous colleagues, by their respective acts, but I have no doubt, with a common, conspiratorial consent – flung back upon their King the responsibilities which he had graciously confided to them, and thus clearly manifested by their deeds the unuttered thought of their hearts – **we will not have this man to reign over us**. I do not impute to the retired and resentful ministers any designed deposition of the safely seated Sovereign of these realms – for the manual labour of high treason is generally executed by harder and humbler hands – but I affirm with all certainty, that those*

misguided men are as guilty of rebellion in the sight of God, as any transgressors against royalty who have ever perished on the field, suffered on the scaffold, or withered in the dungeon. **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers**, is the ordinance of the eternal God to the haughtiest sons of men. I cannot stoop to examine, for the purpose of special refutation, the idle sophistry of babbling politicians upon this point. It is enough for me to be filled with the assurance that kings are not meant to be crowned puppets, but to be rational rulers of submissive subjects. With such subjects I cannot class the titled and distinguished personages, who fled from the service of their Sovereign, because he persevered in placing at the head of his Government, the man he conceived most capable of discharging the vast duties of a British Statesman, I have no hesitation in saying that your late colleagues have proved themselves unworthy of trust, and unfit for function. They are, to my thinking, high delinquents, and though not liable to human attainder, they are assuredly amenable to that tribunal from which there can be no appeal."

Mulock continued with his counsel:

"I know, with a fullness of sad certainty, that no land ever presented such an aspect of suffering and peculiar wretchedness as England exhibits at this moment. I use emphatically the term **peculiar**, because I can trace no memorial in the records of long-perished empires, which attests the past endurance of such strange and contrasted calamities as are now plainly beheld in this island. Famine, pestilence, the sword of traitors within, or of hostile aggressors from without, - all these scourges have many times avengingly visited many lands, and our land among the number. But who ever heard or read of a nation teeming with riches, and stricken with pauperism? Of a people, one large portion of which is saturated with abundance, while another and a larger class pines or menaces as it sinks deeper or more despairingly into utter poverty and destitution? That individuals should occasionally know the gnawing of unsupplied hunger, while gazing wistfully on prohibited plenty, every one acquainted with human life must sorrowfully set his seal to, as a truth experimentally established: But that thousands upon thousands should be in so fearful a condition, in the heart of the most opulent and richly stored state of modern times, - this is at once woeful and wonderful. It is, however, as true as it is marvellous. The activity of profitable pursuits is palsied. Trade, manufactures, agriculture, the all-pervading energy of a commerce that tracked every ocean, and disgorged its cheap or costly burthens on every shore, - these darling glories of England, how disastrously are they dimmed! **Who is the wise man that may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?**"

Having indulged answers to some of the questions posed, Mulock then passed some derogatory comments on bankers (have we not uttered disparaging sentiments in more recent days?), condemned the policy of Free Trade, disparaged the Corn Laws, but whispered *that the supply of a nation's subsistence is the act of Almighty God, and as much beyond human competence as the distilling of heaven's dew, or the dispensation of heaven's sunshine*; lectured Canning on the choice of a Lord Chancellor, citing what that personage should and should not be; commented that the Reformation was a counterfeit temple set up by Satan, that Luther was a talented talker on the scriptures while Calvin was a subtle scribe, then turned attention to Catholic Emancipation, a subject he intended to treat as a political one which immediately embraced Ireland:

"I will not sully the splendours of Christianity by admitting for a moment that religion - true and pure religion - can have any place in the secular feuds of Protestants and Catholics - the long continued contention between intolerant masters and insurgent slaves - for such are the two classes into which the inhabitants of Ireland are divided. And ye religion is the watch-word and the war-whoop with both parties. But the clamorous pretensions of both sects and establishments are lost upon me."

Mulock then set out, in a brief tirade against Catholicism and Protestantism, his view of Irish development:

"Ireland, when first ravaged rather than conquered by English military violence, enjoyed or endured (let the antiquarians decide which) a superstition, which from the unnumbered memorials, I consider to have been the worship of **Baal**: for the very names of a hundred towns and villages prove the honour in which the false god was held by the Irish Aborigines. Popery was one of the English gifts imparted to Ireland, and three centuries of unrelenting outrage were sorrowfully spent in exacting acceptance of the proffered boon. The kindred-ness of Popery with the unspeakable corruption of human nature, at length reconciled the Irish to an exchange of errors - and then burst forth the craftiest of all Satan's permitted devices - the fresh and vigorous delusion of the Reformation. As England, partly from fear, and partly from mutability, quickly embraced the new opinions, and clothed them with the influence of power, tithes and temporalities, it soon became a state principle to effect a uniformity of what was denominated true religion, because it was the religion of those who ruled. It was though expedient to sever Popish Ireland from the superstitions of papal Rome, and to effect that object, the reformers were constrained to adopt a system somewhat different from that pursued by their Catholic predecessors in persecution."

And so the lecture continued with Mulock posing Canning the question the very subject of which was at the root of Canning's political problems:

"As the consistent advocate of Catholic Emancipation, You will now more than ever be looked up to for effectual interference, and I trust you will be led rightly. Whether it be consistent with your present function to originate a legislative proceeding on behalf of the Catholics, is a point which I do not think myself called upon to decide, though I am not afraid of encountering the question. But my earnest expectation and my hope concerning the matter is this, that no measure will pass the Imperial Parliament with reference to the Catholics, until the mind of the country is fully prepared for a simple Bill of recital and unqualified repeal."

This was followed by Mulock's views on the condition of the colonial possessions, amongst the comments:

"As our hold of India has been gained by the grasp of commercial enterprise, it is but natural that the tact of traders should for the most part, supersede enlightened principles of government, in the actual management of our Indian empire. The counsellors of India constitute a congress of counting-houses, possessing neither the responsibility of statesmen, nor the advantages commonly accruing from the intense intelligence of individual interest. And yet the singular state of society in those rich regions, where the infancy of the human race may be said to have been cradled, requires a wisdom to regulate, cherish and restrain it, far above all that men of merchandize can be expected to furnish. Hindustan exhibits a curious contrast of vicissitude and immobility. Dynasties of despots have vanished, generations of slaves have gone down sorrowfully to the grave – but the same usages, the same idolatry, the same crimes, stamp successions of sinners with the same impress of iniquity. I seem to see a kind of Herculaneum in the moral world – with the vestiges of ages, and the freshness of today!"^x Enough!

Meantime in November of 1827, to further add to the Mulock family expense, for which his poor wife appears to have been virtually the sole provider, another child, a son, Thomas Mellard was born, dutifully named after the father and, as was not unusual in those days incorporating the mother's maiden name.

When immediately after the publication of the letters exchanged with Canning, Mulock submitted for publication correspondence that he had initiated with the Earl Talbot, the editor (of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*), indicating perhaps a little impatience with the wordiness that Mulock adopted, was content to insert a summarised paragraph:

"Mr. Mulock has forwarded to us a 'copy of correspondence with Earl Talbot, on the subject of a local place of confinement for offenders.' As the substance of it may be stated in a few words, and as our room is valuable, we consider it unnecessary to give the 'correspondence' entire. Mr. Mulock writes to Lord Talbot^{xi} acquainting him with the fact *"that there is, at present, no place of custody for offenders in Stoke-u-Trent."* His lordship lays Mr. Mulock's letter before Sir Oswald Mosley, chairman of the Quarter Sessions, who, with reference to it, states that if a place of the above description is wanted, it must be at the expense of the inhabitants of the parish – "the county are not bound to provide for them." Mr. Mulock, in a second letter to Lord Talbot, observes that, according to his apprehension of the law, it is a matter, not of *choice*, but of *compulsion*, that such a place shall be provided by the inhabitants of every township. Mr. Mulock concludes by expressing his confident anticipation of his lordship's further interference in the subject."^{xii}

Mulock was at about this time producing a periodical or newspaper titled 'Public Inquirer at Stoke-upon-Trent and Oxford.' This publication received notice from the *Morning Chronicle* in May of 1829 when Mulock was politely derided over an article that had appeared in the *Inquirer*:

"Amongst the other great men of our day who have raised their prophetic voice against the back-sliders in high places, is the Reverend Thomas Mulock, who publishes a periodical....Mr. Mulock is not behind a boldness of assertion or extravagance of phraseology, the most distinguished of our contemporaries in the same cast in this Metropolis. In the fifth number of his 'Public Inquirer, dated April 25th he indulges in the following strain:

"A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes and upon her wise men. A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon the mighty men and they shall be dismayed! In those awful words of the only wise God, I beheld as imaged in a terror of heavenly truth, the present condition of this once mighty, but now prostrated and powerless empire. Let him that readeth understand, when I proclaim with all God-given authority, that the doom of Great Britain was sealed, with her own suicidal hand, on the very day that her Monarch gave effect to the wishes of her legislature; by assenting to the bill for finally allying Popery

to the institutions of this Protestant state. Something of this kind has been babbled by the Earl of Eldon, and a few of his lordship's lackeys; but it is perfectly plain by their contingent if's and buts,' that they do not believe one word of what they attempt to affirm. Very different are my convictions concerning this matter for I believe, as surely as I trust in Christ for everlasting life, that the Three Estates of this realm have concurred in admitting Popery, which is a form of anti-Christ, to more than equality, with that form of religion which for three centuries had been recognised as the Truth by the King, Parliament, and People of Great Britain. By this act, the grave of legal liberty hath been dug by the pretended friends of freedom – and total slavery – the just bondage of sinful betrayers of truth – must be the future heritage of all English generations. The Duke of Wellington (his Grace cannot pistol me for this) is an Atheist – a man walking after his own ungodly lusts – incapable of shame and as yet unaffected by fear. Of the private life of his confederate in guilt, Mr. Peel, I know nothing; but my knowledge of the Scriptures leads me unequivocally to aver, that he must have sunk into some tremendous turpitude, ere the depraved apostasy of heart and penal blindness of mind which he has so fully manifested, could seize so suddenly upon the HOME SECRETARY – be sure thy sin will find thee out. Under the auspices of these unrighteous Rulers a stature has been hurried into perilous perfection, by the tenor, scope, and even wording of which, this nation hath formally renounced the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The deed is done with ruinous certainty. No after measures, to which (an alarmed and awe-struck government and legislature will assuredly resort), can possibly avert the judgements of the Lord God Omnipotent, now ready to be poured upon the condemned population of this self-destroyed country.

The *Chronicle* continued with a comment that the people of England might be consoled with Mulock's further declaration that their ruin would not be as complete as that of the people of Scotland:

"As Scotland was the cradle of Atheistic Political Economy, so do I fully expect a commercial convulsion in that country, transcending in calamity all that has ever been experienced here. The Scotch traders are a community of Kirk-going religious robbers, in whom selfishness, or, as that theological infidel, Dr. Chalmers, styles it, 'an enlightened self-interest,' is the sinful stimulant to every modification of knavery. I cannot but compassionate the miserable thousands now enduring unspeakable privations in this land, in consequence of the mad policy which Mr. Huskisson engendered, which that canting hypocrite, Mr. C. Grant, followed up, and which Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, helped by Mat o' the Mint, Mr. Herries, avows his determination to uphold. Nothing but evil can be expected from evil councillors – when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."^{xiii}

Sometime in this or the following year Mulock attempted to gain possession of the chapel in Thomas Street, by persuading Thomas Simpson and Francis Wilson (both men having contributed money in the founding of the chapel, and who with George Plant had established a trust to deal with issues), to give the building and the ground on which it stood, over into Mulock's name. The chapel had been built on ground owned by a young man named Davenport, who had recently come of age and was able to execute the sale of the ground. Simpson and Wilson having fallen foul of Mulock, had had their subscription refunded, but neither was prepared to surrender their interest in the trust, claiming that they had expected to make a financial gain from their original outlay. To thwart them Mulock turned to an action at a Court Leet, hoping that any problem to do with the transaction would be settled in his favour. The case was not settled at the time but while he was at the court called the trustees 'thieves and sodomites.' Simpson and Wilson attempted to gain an apology from Mulock's outburst through a solicitor named Astbury, and his clerk, Williams, but no apology was forthcoming, although their threat of prosecution was not immediately proceeded with.

The affairs of the parish of Stoke-u-Trent and its church were, during this period, coloured with a dispute between the Reverend John Tomlinson, the incumbent of Stoke Church, and the churchwardens and overseers, respecting the clergyman's avoidance of paying the poor rate. The dispute, having first been involved in litigation that held to be in the clergyman's favour, was now to be revived with fresh legal proceedings. Thomas Mulock once again rose to the occasion and while he had no objection to proceedings being taken against the clergyman, wrote a letter citing his objections to the manner in which they were to be conducted. The editor of the *Staffordshire Mercury* thought that the paper's readership would not, by and large, be all that interested in Mulock's letter (or perhaps his opinion), but Thomas was adamant that the letter should appear, the editor duly publishing them at a charge, as he would have done any advertisement:

To the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Parish of Stoke-u-Trent:

Gentlemen,

I am this day informed, that you have instructed Mr. Hugh Brown, attorney, to commence a fresh course of legal proceedings against Mr. John Tomlinson, of Cliffe Ville, in consequence of that gentleman's avoidance of the

payment of the poor rates. As I write advisedly and confidently, when I declare that this step on the part of the churchwardens and overseers is not only highly inexpedient, but (to my thinking) wholly illegal; I beg to suggest the propriety of convening a general meeting of the lay payers of this parish, to consider the justice and prudence of employing an irresponsible individual (however respectable, zealous or talented), to discharge any portion of the duties hitherto confided, and lawfully appertaining, to messieurs Fenton, the parish solicitors.

I am gentlemen, yours respectfully, Thomas Mulock.

There was also support from Samuel Ginders, the proprietor of the earthenware factory at Lane Delph, who very possibly met the expense involved on Mulock's behalf:

To the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Parish of Stoke-u-Trent:

Gentlemen,

As my friend Mr. Mulock informs me that this parish is about to be involved in a fresh litigation with Mr. Tomlinson, and, as a consequence of such proceedings, it is more than probable, will be saddled with additional burdens, I, as an individual lay payer, ask, why Mr. Tomlinson is not dealt on the same footing as persons of less note in the parish? And why an attorney other than the parish solicitor should be called in to swell the amount of the parish expenditure, which is already sufficiently heavy, while the great bulk of the lay payers are totally unacquainted with your measures.

Under these impressions, I beg respectfully to suggest to you the expedience of convening a general meeting of the lay payers of this parish, for their concurrence and sanction.

*I am, gentlemen, respectfully yours,
Samuel Ginder.*

Lane Delph, September 16th 1828.^{xiv}

Mulock had attended another parish meeting on the 9th October 1828, and came away dissatisfied with the overall outcome of the meeting. Anxious to clarify to all and sundry that he had not acquiesced in everything that met with the approval of the meeting, Mulock wrote a public letter in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*:

To the Lay Payers of the Parish of Stoke-u-Trent:

*"I am desirous of informing such lay payers as did not attend, or could not obtain access to, the parish meeting held yesterday, in the Vestry Room, that the first and second resolutions passed unanimously by that meeting, were proposed by me and seconded by mister Samuel Ginders; and that I strenuously opposed the **third** resolution, as being an indirect attempt to rob the parish funds, under the cheating pretext of indemnifying the parish officers from contingent losses. If the parish officers act uprightly and according to law, they need no indemnity, for they cannot incur any risk – and if they act otherwise (as I fully demonstrated at the meeting) they should be left to abide the consequence of their own folly."^{xv}*

Mulock's involvement with other communities continued however, and during 1828 he was also involved with a Primitive Methodist assembly at Boston, then in 1829 with another at Brotherton.^{xvi}

At some stage in this overall period Mulock had produced, *The Public Inquirer*, and in issue 4, published on the 11th April 1829, launched an attack on the national government and some of its ministers, under the general title 'The March of Atheism,' in which the policy to enable citizens of the Roman Catholic faith to enjoy a status that for so many years they been denied, was derided. The article commenced with a scathing commentary on Henry Brougham, in those days considered a somewhat radical liberal, but who, in Mulock's view, "*was one of the ushers of a widely extending satanic school.*" Mulock then, in referring to the third issue of the *Inquirer*, that had been published on the 6th December 1828, stated (and in doing surely ostracised himself completely from those who were not his most blinded, fervent supporters, such was the egotism of the comments):

*"I assumed boldly and rightfully an office which none but the possessor's of Christ's truth can ever justly claim, that of **predicting** with all confidence and certainty the general future, course and complexion of human affairs, and at a time too when men, wrapt in the false security of present ease derided and despised the foreteller of coming calamities."*

Mulock ridiculed the Duke of Wellington, the Prime Minister, and Robert Peel, the Home Secretary, for what was alleged to be their surrender to the Catholic claims, writing that Peel's speeches on this subject:

"Were uniformly directed to the establishment of one great point, viz. the exclusive possession of ability, zeal, candour and consistency, by a person of peerless perfection – the Right Honourable Robert Peel!"

The article continued in the same vein until, switching to a subject of local contention, the tithes and the poor rate, Mulock made reference to Spode and Broade, then two of the churchwardens of Stoke, commenting that they might soon choose to relinquish that office, as Spode would be too busy concerting with Minton to reduce the wages of their respective work forces, and if two new churchwardens were required, Mulock could propose two erstwhile members of his own congregation:

"One an insolvent cobbler, the other a wiper of ware at Spode's works, these men being as much opposed to Christ's gospel as could be desired by any reprobate parish under the sun, and had endeavoured to obtain fraudulent possession of the chapel that had been built at Stoke with Mulock's money, cheered on in their endeavours by the occupant of Cliffe Ville!"

There was also reference to Reade, Mulock's sometime benefactor, who by now had moved further north in the country *"and was endorsing the doctrine of the devil with the practice of sodomy!"* The occupant of Cliffe Ville, the Reverend John Tomlinson, incumbent of Stoke church, (noticed above) had published a pamphlet in 1824, insisting on his right to collect Easter Dues, at that time a matter of sensitivity to many and about which there had been court cases in different parts of the country. Tomlinson's involvement in litigation and on non-contribution to the poor rate, over the course of a number of years led Mulock to take delight in pointing an accusing finger in Tomlinson's direction.^{xvii} Mulock's article, however, contained under a sub-heading 'The Parish of Stoke-u-Trent,' a further passage in which Simpson and Wilson - clearly identifiable to many people of the locality - were held to ridicule and accused of dishonesty:

*"On the approaching Easter 'I reckon' as the Yankees say, that the present churchwardens will feel desirous to relinquish their offices. Mr. Broade is, I am informed, up to the ears in his freshly formed coal-pits – and Mr. Spode cannot comfortably make any further cash advances to the parish **contrary to law**. Besides the pressure of this conscientious scruple, it is rumoured that mister Spode will be much engaged during the ensuing summer in concerting with his old crockery friend, Mr. Minton, a truly popular project for lowering the rate of wages! Now in the event of vacancies, "I hope I don't intrude," in starting a couple of spic and span, new churchwardens, utterly removed from all suspicion of being my friends. One of them is an insolvent cobbler at Stoke, and the other is a penniless wiper of ware at Mr. Spode's pot works. Both of these worthies are as much opposed to Christ's gospel, as could be desired by the most reprobate parish under the sun, and they have moreover evinced an extraordinary degree of zeal on behalf of the Established Church, by endeavouring to obtain fraudulent possession of the chapel built at Stoke with my money – abetted in this their pious enterprise by a sham attorney with **two** wives (his own wife and another man's), and cheered by the friendly chamber counsel of that eminent lawyer and disinterested churchman, the occupant of Clift Ville! Here's a couple of churchwardens, o people of Stoke, **bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh** "sure such a pair were never seen. But the greatest is behind." It is now about four and a half years since the great captain-general of apostasy "he that runs may read" withdrew the lustre of his presence from this region and retired to a famed northern seaport, where he has led a life in happy harmony with his creed, endorsing the **doctrines of the devil**, with the practice of sodomy – but showing for all his little errors by his implacable hatred of the **saviour of the world**. Now if this satanic saint could be induced to forego his occupations elsewhere, to return hitherwards, and rejoining his old apostate friends, to become the **Peel** of the party – why not give the whole gang an opportunity of manifesting their merits as parish officers? The sham attorney, by the aid of a little chicane might creep in as parish solicitor, and his services might prove invaluable, forasmuch as his domestic relations must afford him a peculiar insight into complicated cases of bastardy. Another hint; as an apostate virago has found favour in the eyes of her Stoke neighbours by rebelling against the just authority of her husband - and as it appears clearly by a late decision of the Stafford bench of justices, that married women (Catholics included) are eligible to all offices in the state – suppose you were to appoint the aforesaid daring dame chief constable? She might cast an additional awe upon all the hen-pecked husbands in the parish – besides lending a hand to crazy Bakewell in horse whipping refractory pauper lunatics? What think ye of these arrangements? If they be followed up I am bold enough to predict a new era for Stoke. Instead of the present minor malversations, fractional frauds, and petty peculations once admit these persons to your confidence (as I admitted them to mine) and I pledge myself to you that they will rob the parish at all points, with the most impartial villainy, and upon the most approved principle of antichrist.*

But according to some tabernacle authorities, I am disqualified (though I pay nearly £8 per annum poor rate) in interfering in any parish concerns, seeing that "nobody knows who I am." It will again be said of me, as was affirmed by some Nithamite Jews concerning my lord and master Jesus Christ, as for this fellow we know not from whence he is. What is it really come to this? Is all creditable celebrity forestalled and engrossed by preaching potters – trading professors of religious radicalism and underhand supporters of scurrilous newspapers? Are these your only "great men?" Well if it be so, it is become "the one eyed are proverbially kings amongst the blind."

P.S. *The Stoke attorney and his beastly clients shall mount the pillory of public scorn in the next number.*^{xviii}

A fortnight after the publication of the March of Atheism, in the next issue of *The Public Inquirer*, and with the Catholic legislation having received the royal assent, Mulock launched another attack that again derided the policy of the Duke of Wellington, "*an atheist, a man walking after his own ungodly lusts*" and Robert Peel, Wellington's "*political jackal*" in 'The Wellington Quick-Step to Anarchy,' in which the opportunity was taken to decry the religious sincerity of the nation's bishops, particularly the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, a close relation of the Earl of Harrowby.^{xix} The political purpose behind the emancipation of Catholics was to avoid what appeared to be inevitably looming, civil war in Ireland, and the change of opinion on emancipation came, perhaps quite naturally to politicians when it was realised that the granting of civil rights, denied to Catholics over some three centuries, was the only hope of averting what would have been a terrible situation. The only immediate remedy to be found was in the removal of Catholic disabilities, but Mulock, no doubt in company with many others, could not agree and expressed his view simply and plainly: "*What the mendicant peasantry of Ireland understand by emancipation is the Catholic possession of Protestant property.*"^{xx}

Faced with the need to take steps to avoid further humiliation and with the opportunity to bring a case both of libel and slander, Simpson and Wilson commenced separate actions against Mulock.

Shortly before Mulock appeared at the Summer assizes of 1829 - and surely he did not anticipate his own appearance in court as a defendant when he first promulgated his thoughts on a prison for Newcastle - his second son, Benjamin Robert was born; and while it cannot be said that Dinah Mulock, with her new-born baby and two other young children was ignored, nevertheless it seems that Mulock's attention was riveted upon other matters. He was now the defendant in two actions for libel that had been brought against him, which were heard before Baron Vaughan. The issues brought before the court alleged, amongst other matters, accusations of sodomy, and these were considered too sensitive for female ears, so that ladies were cleared from court before the cases commenced. Without counsel, Mulock insisted upon representing himself, he at times floundered in the court procedure and those in court - and others through the subsequent newspaper reports - were occasioned some humour at his expense; at one point the judge warned Mulock that he was damaging his own cause, at one point threatening to commit Mulock for contempt of court. The outcome was that Mulock lost both actions and in each case £50 damages was awarded against him. Indeed, once the first case was settled Mulock insisted that the second amount should be for no less a sum than the first.^{xxi}

Perhaps it would now be more appropriate to observe how Mulock was regarded through the eyes of the reporter during the trial, and though the editor of the newspaper quoted seems scarcely a devotee of Mulock and his religious views, it does not appear to have been necessary for him to add any derogatory comments, the actual report of proceedings was all that was necessary:

"Mr. Mulock then commenced his address to the jury: stating, "*That he stood in a trying, and, at the same time, a triumphant situation, for he appeared before the jury, as an aspersed individual, the victim of a foul conspiracy.*" After complimenting the learned judge and Mr. Campbell, for their forbearance, and his lordship for stopping him when putting improper questions, he proceeded in the most violent and disgusting terms to state, that certain individuals had confessed to him the most horrible propensities, and that he was not guilty of the libel, for he had not accused them of acts, but of propensities, which he said were inflicted on them as a punishment for their apostasy in forsaking his congregation and ministry, and thereby the true belief. His address was throughout delivered with the greatest fluency and volubility, accompanied by the most violent gestures. His rhapsodies and filthy asseverations frequently called forth the animadversions of the judge, who at last threatened to commit him. At these times Mulock replied by reminding his lordship that there was a judge above judges, before whom all would appear ere long! But we must now decline to follow him any farther, for we fear we have infringed too much on the strict rules of delicacy in what we have already reported. We cannot refrain from a declaration, that a more disgusting trial we were never at in any court of justice. The most horrible offences were in almost every sentence, imputed to persons having no concern with the case at issue, and these imputations frequently called forth the hisses of the audience who could not be retrained from thus manifesting their abhorrence."^{xxii}

Mulock's compliments to the judge, Baron Vaughan, and Campbell, the prosecuting counsel was no doubt intended as a sarcastic comment.

Mulock afterwards refused, or was unable, to satisfy the parties,^{xxiii} and at the suit of one of the plaintiffs' a writ was issued for the amount owed, execution levied and Mulock's effects were ordered to be sold by auction, an advertisement of the sale appearing in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*.^{xxiv}

‘Sale at Oak Hill Cottage
To be sold by Auction by W. and J. Audley,
On the premises, at Oak Hill Cottage near Stoke-u-Trent, in the County of Staffordshire,
On Monday and Tuesday, the 14th and 15th of December 1829:

All the neat and useful household furniture, bed and table linen, glass, china, wine, plate, books and other effects belonging to the Reverend Thomas Mulock, under an execution from the sheriff of Staffordshire, particulars in hand-bills.

Sale to commence each morning at ten.’

The sale was not an event that Mulock considered at all desirable, certainly not legal, and perhaps even less so did his wife, who now had three children to care for and precious little financial assistance from her husband, who moreover appears to have progressively become a burden. For all of Mulock's religious fervour there appears little in his actions to show that he had much regard for his family responsibilities, so occupied was he with the prospect of the world to come and his perceived place in it and, perhaps more tellingly, his status in the present. The sale - to Mulock it was ‘the robbery’ - did not realising sufficient to settle both the court's award and the attendant costs, and in the meantime a further writ had been issued for money due for the rent of the cottage where the family lived. Mulock was conveyed to Stafford prison as a debtor prisoner.

In losing the court cases Mulock convinced himself that, though the decision was by a jury verdict, it was really the Staffordshire Justices who had conspired against him, and his wrath became particularly directed towards Sir George Chetwynd, chairman of the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions. Mulock's response to the decision of the court was now to give vent to his feelings in a literary output that vilified the members of the commission of the peace: ‘*Armageddon or the final overthrow of Antichrist in the British Babylon.*’ General William Dyott, a member of the commission, described it as ‘a most filthy, blasphemous pamphlet, filled with abuse of the laws which Mulock had violated, and of the Staffordshire magistrates in particular,’ and was decidedly hostile in his view.^{xxv} Mulock's article opened in the form of a letter addressed to James Hunt, at Oxford – who was also Mulock's publisher on this occasion and one of the men who had earlier suffered the chagrin of the mob at Oxford - and was offered for sale at one shilling a copy, available from James Hunt at Oxford or George Plant, at Stoke:

Just Published, Price One Shilling:
Armageddon,
Or THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF ANTICHRIST IN THE BRITISH BABYLON:

A letter from Thomas Mulock to James Hunt. With an appendix, on the blasphemous application of the law of libel to the Truth of Christ – Details of the recent robbery, committed under the colour of law, at Oak-Hill, near Stoke-upon-Trent, together with the names and particulars of the crimes, of *baptised* professors of the Gospel, who apostasised from Thomas Mulock's Ministry of Christ.

Revel. Xviii, 2. Revel xvi, 16. Lam iv, 22.

Oxford, printed by Henry Holder, George Lane; sold (exclusively) by James Hunt, Amsterdam Court, Oxford; and George Plant, Stoke-upon-Trent.^{xxvi}

In this article Mulock stated that:

‘He had found himself moved to execute an office for which he was duly fitted by the revelation of Jesus Christ – the awful office of declaring and drawing down in the name of the son of God the uttermost wrath and destroying curse of the Most High on the unbelieving gentile world,’

Attacking whatever did not fit in with his views, Mulock, seemed to have tortured his conscience with his own self-righteousness as the messenger of Jesus Christ, and assailed the trial as the ‘*blasphemous application of the law of*

libel to the truth of Christ,' but, not content to stop there and amongst the many vindictive passages that the article carried opined that:

'England was the chief seat of Satan – the synagogue of antichrist – throne of iniquity, the pestilential plague spot amongst the proud kingdoms of the world.' Within a short period of time, he predicted, *'the British monarchy and all of its arrogant adjuncts, riches, renown, dominion – it's nobility, church, parliament, legal institutions, seats of learning, commerce, colonies, manufactures, all, all will be swept away with the besom of destruction and subsequently swallowed up in a whirlpool of blood.'*

To Mulock *'The thing called the 'Church' formed in this land of liars, was a second-hand Popery stripped of some of it's more glaring and evident abominations – but fashioned into a form of Antichrist far more damnable than ever appeared in the long line of papal blasphemers.'* Of Josiah Spode: *"a one-handed drunken ruffian never suspected of tenderness **but towards his sisters,**"* and of the Mintons: *"a family of Antichrist named Minton, a cursed crew of evangelical haters of God, whose hypocrisy, covetousness and mean malignity I had fully fathomed."* If this was indeed the Mintons' of Pottery fame (and would Mulock have taken much notice of anybody of lesser status?) it may be that financial support, assumed to be forthcoming from the earlier invitation to settle and preach in the vicinity, had not been forthcoming, other perhaps than the upstairs room in a china factory.

There were scathing remarks passed upon the ability and integrity of both the trial judge (who had sought to persuade Mulock that his only defence appeared to be one of justification - which Mulock as a practising Christian did not believe that he could pursue), and who was alleged to be disturbed and prejudiced by imputations concerning sodomy, imputations and allegations that continued through-out the article – and of Campbell the counsel for the plaintiffs. Indeed the entire legal profession was derided. Throughout Mulock, in a declamatory style and with insistence on claiming that he was the messenger of Jesus Christ, referred to the enforcement of law by the acquisition and sale of his property as:

"The recent robbery, committed under colour of law, at Oak Hill near Stoke-u-Trent' together with the names and particulars of the crimes of baptised professors of the gospel who apostatised from Thomas Mulock's ministry of Christ."

While the annoyance at the loss of his property may readily be understood, the vindictiveness of his comments extended beyond the main volume, and in appendixes Mulock, while defending his situation in respect of the money he had been advanced by Reade, addressed him through his brother:

"I must beg of you to be the medium of arranging this matter, as I am enjoined by the God of Israel to renounce all communication with your brother from henceforth, and for evermore."

In a further appendix Mulock published the names of some sixty persons who *"having been baptised into Christ's death under Thomas Mulock's ministry of the Everlasting Gospel – which persons have **drawn back unto perdition** – and are eternally damned."* Amongst them was Samuel Ginders who earlier had sought, and no doubt given financial and moral support.^{xxvii}

Mulock's spell in the gaol lasted for some three weeks but his observations on the condition of the prison and the debtor prisoners' procedure are of interest. On being asked his age by the turnkey at the 'Porter's' Lodge (prison gate lodge), Mulock invited the man to guess it, as it was a question that it was not right to put to him. On entering the gaol itself he described being ushered over a filthy, unpaved, yard, then into a gloomy and dirty series of passages which were intersected with large iron-grated doors, having dingy apertures on either side, then into cells constructed for convicts having two fire places and a window perversely placed so that it was out of reach of the inmate(s). Debtor prisoners were locked in their cells, either singly or sometimes two together, from nine o'clock every evening until six o'clock the following morning. Of Thomas Brutton, the prison governor, Mulock thought him *'a prodigious liar'* with little or no knowledge of God and who, for weeks on end, might not see the faces of his debtor prisoners. Some degree of bitterness in Mulock's opinion of Brutton may have crept in on a personal level, as Brutton, who had privately rented Mulock a boarded room at a rate of approximately a penny-halfpenny a day - this was a common practice in respect of debtor prisoners, if they could afford it, and a legitimate perquisite of the governor's - in which Mulock was able to 'keep a fire,' had then turned him out onto the 'common-side' of the prison because Mulock had given a copy of the pamphlet 'Armagedden' to another prisoner. Mulock was then compelled to occupy a stone cell lacking the warming comfort of a fire and it was early in February!

Of Elizabeth Fry, the well-known prison reformer, Mulock was particularly scathing:

"Mrs. Fry is one of the smoothest, but deepest impostors of our day. I know her tricks thoroughly, for I once accompanied the present Marquess Cholmondeley to one of her exhibitions, 'Mrs. Fry at Home' in Newgate. The female convicts were assembled behind an iron-grating; and the Quakeress read a portion of scripture, like a mad Methodist - then popped down upon her knees to babble an impious parody on prayer, in which the Duchess of Beaufort, and other aristocrats, were compelled to join. When all was over, I heard the 'reformed' convicts cursing her for not giving them tobacco."

The High Sheriff of every county was to Mulock nothing more than: *"a nose of wax, a thing to swell the pageant of an assize judge's procession,"* and as to the legal profession, well virtually everybody connected with it was a fraudulent practitioner!

Mulock appears to have been discharged from the prison during the third week of February, though where the money came from to settle his debt, and settled surely it would have to have been for him to secure release, is by no means clear; perhaps his wife, or one of her relations supplied the necessary funds. Then on the 1st of March following his release Mulock was faced at his home by a sub-constable in possession of a warrant for Mulock's arrest. The warrant, issued by a Staffordshire magistrate named Adderley, alleged that an attorney's clerk named Williams (cited by Mulock in a derogatory manner in his most recent article) had been hurt, injured, vilified and prejudiced by the same. Never a man to allow things to be taken for granted, Mulock took leave of his wife and with the constable went to Lane End where he found and confronted Adderley, who was then dining at an inn with a brother magistrate, and after some polite argument, satisfied him that the grounds upon which the warrant had been issued were illegal. Mulock gave promise that he would attend the county Quarter Sessions that were to commence two or three days later, to appear before the bench of magistrates, a compromise that appears to have been satisfactory to both justice of the peace and Mulock, and for the moment the matter ended; Mulock writing to the justice to confirm that he would indeed attend the court:

To: Ralph Adderley, esquire, J.P.,

Sir,

I trust you will not impute any lack of courtesy to me – when I apprise you, that I shall redeem the pledge, I gave you this day at Lane End – by appearing before the bench of magistrates, at Stafford, on Thursday next, for the purpose of arraiging your conduct, as one of the King's justices of the peace for Staffordshire.

I am sir,

Yours respectfully,

Oakhill, March 1st 1830.

Thomas Mulock.^{xxviii}

Mulock's article on the abuses in the Stafford gaol having been printed, two of his friends, Robert Taylor and George Plant, arrived in Stafford on the 4th March 1830, this being the first day of an adjourned Epiphany Sessions meeting, to offer copies for sale, choosing to set up a stall outside the very doors of the Shire Hall, where the sessions court sat. Unfortunately for them the attorney's clerk, Williams, one of the persons named in the pamphlet, and who had taken exception to the distinction bestowed upon him, had already preferred a charge of libel against Plant who, with Taylor, was taken into custody and deposited in the gaol, while Mulock, who was on his way to the sessions to confront the bench of magistrates concerning the alleged illegal arrest that he had suffered at his home at Oakhill, was served with a writ for debt while in the street at Stafford, and returned to custody in the prison for a sum totalling some £109.^{xxix}

A summary of these events was given in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, and in referring to Mulock's pamphlets described them as "forming a mass of scurrility and blasphemy, and which it is barely possible to conceive could have emanated from any mind." There was further comment that the newspaper had excited Mulock's wrath by declining to give publicity to his "abominable productions." In doing so no mention was made of *The Public Inquirer*, so whether the prohibition on his advertising also extended to his earlier outpourings is vague.^{xxx}

The arrest of Plant led to other developments at Stoke and gives rise to wondering just how many of Mulock's congregation remained, though no doubt those who were left did not remain very long. Plant, undoubtedly zealous in his obligations to Thomas Mulock, on being arrested had requested a friend named Shelley to take possession of his (Plant's) house and shop; this Shelley tried to do, but Mrs. Plant took exception to the situation, deeming that she was the one best suited to look after family matters. One thing led to another and to Mrs. Plant sought to evict Shelley from the premises, during which fracas Shelley was unceremoniously bundled down the steps of the house, with neighbours coming to Mrs. Plant's assistance. Shelley was then charged with assaulting Mrs. Plant and for this escapade was fined

£2 by magistrates at Trentham, when non-payment of the fine (on the principle that he could not be bought with gold or silver) led Shelley too into the confines of the county gaol.^{xxxii}

The following month James Hunt, the printer of some of Mulock's pamphlets, appeared on the scene. He too had been distributing the pamphlet *'Enormous Violation of the Laws by the Ministers of the Crown, by Judges of the Land and by Magistrates of Staffordshire'* and was brought before the borough magistrates on a charge of seditious libel. The magistrates decided that Hunt must enter into his own recognizance of £100 with two sureties in £50 each, but Hunt demurred; he must first confer with Thomas Mulock (then in the gaol) and the court - it might be thought somewhat generously - allowed him to write to two of the county justices, then officiating in an adjacent room, to solicit permission to visit Mulock, at the gaol, to obtain his advice; the county justices refused; Hunt declined to enter into recognizance, and he too went along to take his place in the gaol amongst Mulock's disciples.^{xxxiii}

Mulock meanwhile, was availing himself of this latest, if unwanted opportunity for introspection, by writing to various ministers, judges and magistrates giving them his unvarnished opinion of their respective value to society. The King too was favoured with a communication being advised that he was about to lose this throne by an act of the Most High God.^{xxxiii}

At the Staffordshire Easter Quarter Sessions that commenced on the 20th April, 1830, Plant and Taylor were ordered to be re-committed for want of sureties, they were then brought back to court on the 23rd, the prosecutor expressing the wish that the utmost lenity be shown them, when they were bound over and released. James Hunt appeared before the court on the 24th April, when he paid a fine of one shilling and entered into his own recognizance to be of good behaviour for twelve calendar months. Whether Mulock, or the experience of the gaol, had exercised the most persuasion on him may never be known. As for Mulock, he was discharged from the gaol on the 5th May 1830 and by the following year his ministry at the chapel at Stoke had come to an end, the chapel building disposed of. But the question of ownership of the chapel continued to vex Mulock, as he clearly considered that it was his by right, and having been informed by a solicitor (Ward, of Newcastle-u-Lyme, who had dealt with the proposed sale of Davenport's land) that the chapel had been disposed of, wrote to Toft Chorlton, of Leek, the person who had taken charge of the building:

"Mr. Ward, solicitor of this town, having this morning informed me that you are the person to whom an unlawful surrender was made of a chapel at Stoke-u-Trent, built with my money, and upon which no human being had any sustainable claim, but myself – in the Name, Presence, Power and Majesty of Jesus Christ, the Righteous – I hereby call upon you to restore the said chapel to me, that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God may be renewedly proclaimed therein." The appeal was in vain.^{xxxiv}

It may be thought that as he believed himself to be a minister of Christ, Mulock was slow to ensure that his children were baptised into the Christian faith, as it was not until the 29th April 1832, that this took place at a church at Stoke, though whether Mulock was actually present or active in the arrangements is not clear.^{xxxv}

Mulock was admitted, more accurately perhaps, committed, to the lunatic asylum at Stafford on the 4th December 1832,^{xxxvi} where, in the admission register, he was described as a pauper of Stoke, a condition that infers that he might have lost whatever support had previously been forthcoming from his marital relations. It has been suggested that his confinement in the asylum was as a consequence of the malignity of a Staffordshire magistrate. Be that as it may, and Mulock may well have thought so, for it can scarcely be denied that he had caused sufficient annoyance locally amongst many influential persons for somebody to exercise authoritative muscle had they chosen to do so; but surely the available evidence indicates that, by and large, the county magistracy had dealt as tolerantly with him as law and circumstance allowed. The political state of the county, as with the country at large, if not on a knife-edge, was nevertheless one of industrial discontent, simmering towards the Chartist troubles of the following decade, and the peace of the county was clearly foremost in many minds. A man of Mulock's undoubted oratorical skills and written ability might well have roused many to his banner, had he been more of a political, rather than a religious zealot, and had it been seriously thought that his written outbursts had a seditious motive - other than as they were often patently received, as those of a man who had become unbalanced with religious fervour – proceedings against him could have been taken at an earlier stage, such as when he left the prison in 1830. Social conditions in Staffordshire had sufficiently deteriorated for the military to be called out to suppress riots in the county in May 1831.^{xxxvii}

That Earl Talbot was further concerned in the matter of a prison at Newcastle-under-Lyme (see above) goes without question, as in 1832, the county quarter sessions court considered a memorial from the Mayor, Recorder, Justices of the Peace, clergy, gentry and other inhabitants of Newcastle-u-Lyme, directed to Earl Talbot, seeking the erection of a prison at Newcastle^{xxxviii}.

“In which not only the offenders within that particular jurisdiction might be confined with safety, and kept under due regulations until the times of their respective trials, but to which the county magistrates might commit persons from the whole of this populous district; as well as those detained temporarily for safe custody, as vagrants and persons committed for misdemeanours, and small offences, which are punishable in a summary way, would be a great relief and convenience to the inhabitants of that district, and at the same time would afford great facilities for checking the progress of crime and disorder.”

To what extent Mulock had been involved in bringing forward this memorial, if at all, is not clear; when he wrote to Earl Talbot he may have revived an earlier suggestion of which he had heard, or taken up what was then conjectured in the neighbourhood; the expense of conveying prisoners to the county prison at Stafford would have been borne by the local district, but by the time that the sessions court dealt with the request and rejected it, though the court did allow that the borough of Newcastle could set up a prison at its own expense if it so wished, Mulock had become a figure of ridicule, almost of notoriety.

There is, unfortunately, no record available as to the treatment afforded Mulock during his stay in the asylum, so that medical opinion as to his condition appears to be lost or at least beyond my acquisition. In the early period of his confinement he may well have met with the Reverend John Langley, formerly the chaplain at Stafford prison, who had suffered mental derangement during his term of office but who, having earlier been retired from the prison, was discharged from the asylum during 1835, and there could have been some interesting theological exchanges, but of this we may never know.

Confined in the asylum as he was Thomas Mulock was not entirely lost to the public. In 1834, during a case of criminal conversation held before the Shrewsbury Assizes, counsel for the defence (Mr. Whateley) in seeking to establish mitigation for his client's behaviour, expressed:

“It was a fact that some persons had notions of religion so at variance with truth and reason, that everyone must pronounce them deluded. There was, a few years ago, a gentleman named Mulock, who had such immense influence over many other persons, that they actually sold their property, turned away their wives, and abandoned their children, merely because he told them to do so; but if any person did not come into his notions, he published the most dreadful libels of him: and it happened, at the Sessions at Stafford, that a person was brought up for disseminating some of the libels. That person, on his trial, said that a gentleman present knew him, and he named, “Mr. Whateley,” and upon his (the learned counsel) turning his head, he saw that this person was one whom he well remembered as having been a respectable chemist at Oxford at the time he (the learned gentleman) was a member of the University. However, upon this person no persuasion had the least effect, as he said he was told by his pastor, Mr. Mulock, to disseminate those libels, and he would do so. What was the sequel – Mr. Mulock was convicted of a libel, and treated by the medical men as an insane person, and happily, by the blessing of Heaven, he* recovered his reason, and no one was more sorry for what had occurred; could any case be more applicable to the present than the one he had related?

Mr. Justice Park, the presiding judge, commented, “That the present case was attended with most unusual circumstances. He happened to know that the gentleman alluded to (Mr. Mulock) was as mad as a man could be, for during the last assize at Stafford, where he was confined as a lunatic, he had called out that he would have a writ to remove the learned judges from their situations.”^{xxxix} Mr. Justice Park appears to have been speaking from personal experience as he was one of the two judges at the Staffordshire Lent Assizes of 1834.^{xl} The reason why Mulock would have been at the Assizes is not clear; there is no trace of him in the *nisi prius* list for that time and he was not reported in the newspapers (other than quoted above). It could be that there was ongoing contention as to who should foot the bill for his maintenance (see below in the mention of his letters), or matters to do with his wife's inheritance that caused him to be brought to the court.

In June of 1837, Mulock sought and was given permission from the visiting committee of the asylum to be allowed to write, through the hands of his wife, to a cousin in Ireland and also to Backhouse,^{xli} then under-secretary of state, who had risen to his situation through his appointment to Canning; however, the nature of the contents of those letters are not known to me, but that to Backhouse may have touched upon information in relation to Canning and the subject of a possible biography. Mulock's confinement in the asylum appears to have extended to some seven years, as it was not until the 31st December 1839^{xlii} that it is recorded that he was discharged. Indeed, I am tempted to wonder if there were not those amongst his marital relations who may have found relief in his prolonged absence. That he was admitted to the hospital as a pauper may indicate that he had ceased to receive support from either his wife or her mother and as he appears not to have contributed financially to the support of his children - very probably was never in a position to do so - pragmatism within the family may have prevailed into becoming a relief at his departure to the

compulsory sanctuary. There may also be another factor that leading to his confinement: had his relationship within the family deteriorated to the point that food was no longer provided him – not too difficult to imagine – when the shortage of nourishment, coupled with the loss of prestige due to the collapse of his congregation and chapel, and also that of his newspaper, the *Public Inquirer*? These factors may have genuinely affected his mind and led him to behaviour that warranted the intervention of the authorities.

While little may be known about Mulock's treatment or 'progress' within the asylum he certainly appears to have had access to pen and paper, albeit not for external purpose, and addressed to Doctor Knight, one of Staffordshire's leading physicians of the time, a gentleman associated at times with both the county prison and the county asylum, some poetical lines on the political state of the country, dated 1st December 1834, from which it would seem that Mulock had access to newspapers and exchanged conversation with the medical authorities of the asylum:

The Premiership:

A familiar epistle to doctor Knight from Thomas Mulock.

Dear doctor, you're right, I've had much cogitation
On the present most critical state of the nation,
The Whigs are kicked out, yet the popular roar is
By no means a shout of applause for the Tories;
The duke 'shows no fight' – and some folks feel abhorrence
That a premier elect, should be lounging at Florence.
Just when starting to quiz the old ruins of Rome,
Peel's called to rule over new ruins at home!
The fact is we're bothered we want something fresh,
Love of change, since the fall, is the sin of the flesh!
Whigs and Tories and radicals, rogues great and small
Let us tell the plain truth, we're sick of you all!
The Whigs are reformers – but still the strange elves
Never hit on the knack of reforming themselves!
Those super fine sages forgot in their plan
Of reforming mankind – to begin with a man;
The Tories though burning with zeal for the church
Have left the poor parsons and tithes in the lurch!
But none like the Tories kiss royalty's hem
And they'll all serve the king if the king will serve them!
The radicals pant for a Jacobin job
'Equal Rights' and to what! Why to murder and rob.
Such reformers undoubtedly strike at the root,
For they pluck up the tree to make sure of the fruit.
As all parties are weighed and found wanting 'tis fair
To look out for a cabinet council elsewhere!
I throw out the hint for suggesting my trade is
To cast off the men and apply to the ladies!
Be the fact as it may, still the rumour is rife
That our monarch is lovingly led by his wife
And 'tis known that the nominal heads of all houses
In England in all things are swayed by their spouses.
The reform o'er which Commons and Lords talked so glib,
Means – that every ten pounds is ruled by his ribs.
Could my wife be persuaded to take the command
She's a premier in petticoats made to our hand;
Should king William be restive means soon can be had
To make Adelaide Regent – poor hubby is mad!
But 'delusion' 'excitement' I think we must style them
Till they've popped the poor man in the Stafford asylum,
There the sovereign can learn for the good of the nation
How to bear to be henpecked with due resignation,
Cut off from all ties, he'll infallibly mend,

As a husband, a father, a master, a friend!
All refractory subjects will soon change their carriage
And conform like their king to the new law of marriage!

Thomas Mulock.^{xliii}

Whether the views he expressed here contributed to his continued confinement is a matter for conjecture.

Robert Mulock, Thomas's father died at Bath, in April, 1837; saddened, without doubt, by his son's circumstances.^{xliv}

As for Mulock's wife and children the cottage that they had occupied at Oakhill was given up and the family removed to Newcastle-u-Lyme, living for some time at Lower Street, then at 2, Mount Pleasant, in a house that had formerly been the residence of a schoolmaster named Hurley. During some of the time that Mulock was confined in the asylum Mrs. Mulock maintained a small school for boys, with daughter Dinah, thirteen-years of age or so, assisting with the lessons.^{xlv}

Little is known concerning Mulock during the time of his confinement in the asylum; he did correspond with his mother and his wife, albeit infrequently and in an undated letter to his mother he expressed hope to obtain a Frank from Earl Ferrers to avoid burdening her with the cost of postage. In this letter (in which he claimed to have been thirty years in England, indicating that he might have come across earlier than has been thought), he believed his mother erred if she imagined that he wanted her to interfere between his wife and himself; that his mother had been deceived by Dinah's comments about their circumstances; that when she spoke in terms of her 'poor husband,' it was cant, mere fudge to portray her in the best possible light while at the same time she treated him worse than a beggar's dog! Mulock thought Dinah's attention to her children merely satisfied her pride and that she should instead reverence her husband. Mulock then went on to describe the English as the worst of all people under the sun; that they prized 'character' above salvation; that his exposure of the national corruption of England that made him the most hated of men; finishing with a tirade:

"These are the considerations that make me glory in being deemed a lunatic by this wicked and adulterous generation. I love the Lord Jesus Christ and triumph in his holy truth. That is my insanity in the eyes of my wife and of the infidel crew who patronise her precisely because she has abandoned her husband, and forsaken her God!"

A further letter, dated July 1836, was addressed to both his parents when *"after a long, painful cessation of correspondence he broke silence to renew assurance of the reverential regard and unabated affection which he bore towards them."* Circumstances had conspired to mar their intercourse, but before God he had never swerved from dutiful feeling to them. Why had he not written? Mulock answered due to his wife and went on to bewail that he had renounced friends and relatives for her sake – and should still continue to do so, if he could entertain hope of seeing her restored to her him and their God! That hope and expectation he had given up, his wretched wife no longer valued and loved him! Mulock then went on to say that not having received an answer to the letter that he had written in May, 1833 (could that be the previous letter quoted?) he drew the conclusion that their minds were prepossessed by representations made by his wife, who had consigned him to the asylum. Whatever they may have heard in the name of God he assured them that no saner man existed on earth than their son, Thomas Mulock. He then went on that in November 1832, his wife had turned him out of doors, *"thereby manifesting a spirit of envy, discontent and disobedience, which utterly astonished and grieved him."* He had then taken lodgings but when he returned to make a Christian remonstrance to her, he was given into the charge of a constable by her sister, and kept in custody before being conveyed to Stafford Asylum as a 'pauper lunatic'. Mulock had no misgivings that the parish should maintain him in the asylum but he was not as a pauper and had some £60 at interest in the bank. There was complaint that his wife had made no effort to visit him, for the first sixteen months no communication. *"Since then her few letters have been daggers to my heart, while not a single token of kindness to the value of a farthing had I received from her although my appeals had been innumerable!"* Mulock had now come to the conclusion that he married a woman who deceived him by her false profession of true religion; who had irrevocably departed from the Truth of God, but he felt no resentment, leaving God to deal with the miseries, indignities and wrongs she has caused, just solemnly withdrawing affection from her; renouncing her forever!

In the letter Mulock then shed light on his time in the asylum; he had turned his time to good account, reviving and enlarging the branches of his former knowledge – Latin and French he had perfected; had instructed two 'pupils' to enable them to read with him correctly and even gracefully, and was mastering the pleasing difficulties of the Italian language while having also possessed himself of other attainments, not previously paid attention. The best portion of

the periodical literature of the day has been supplied him by the kindness of Mr. Garrett, the superintendent and had he (Thomas) been at Oxford, he could not have read more to the purpose and more thoughtfully and intellectually than he had done in the Asylum. Mulock then appealed to his parents to make some effort to restore him to society; he was willing and able to earn a livelihood; ready to begin life again, with two important reservations – he would never again engage in preaching the Gospel, nor would he return to his apostate wife! Pleading that he had not seen the face of a friend or acquaintance during more than three and a half years he appealed for a visit from some member of the family, before concluding with a comment that public affairs were dark and perplexing and that the country was reaping the reward of Peel's Catholic Relief Bill!

A further letter, some two years later, dated July 1838 and written at six o'clock on the Saturday morning, was addressed to his now widowed mother, in which Mulock wrote that during the times at night when he lay awake, he had pondered on asking her to visit him with the view of his eventual release; before breaking into what was foremost on his mind, the disdain of his wife who had declined every overture of accommodation with him. In part this he attributed to her being English and he Irish. Mulock felt that he was detained in an asylum because his wife preferred the company of other men, though he did not impugn her chastity! What course would he pursue when he was eventually released? He could not be induced to again live with his wife or interfere in the least degree with her or her children; they were aliens to him; he wanted nothing from her; let her have the management of her 'non-property' which he was ready and willing to settle upon her. The letter continued "*My heart's desire if the Lord please, would be to return with you to Bath and there quietly complete for publication a work on which I have been mainly employed for three years past and for the copyright of which I would not take one thousand pounds. The title stands thus: 'The Advocate with the Father: or Christ's Love as a Supplicating Saviour, Spiritually Unfolded in a series of Discourses on the Seventeenth Chapter of St. John's Gospel.'*" Politely exhorting his mother to visit him, Mulock finished the letter with information as to railway travel from Bath to Stafford.

The final letter, written from the asylum, dated June 1839, found Mulock indignant that his mother had been charged with his maintenance there. This he had discovered when he received a letter from his wife informing him that his mother would make a half-yearly payment by a Banker's Order. When such payments started was not stated, but Mulock's wife thought Mulock might have learned from Garrett, the superintendent of the Asylum and that the arrangement would be pleasanter for him. Mulock on tackling Garrett about the matter was told the Superintendent knew nothing about it. Infuriated, Mulock once again launched into a tirade about injustice; repeating the details of his commitment to the Asylum and how "*from the 20th January, 1833 until the 18th May, 1835, he had been herded among pauper maniacs and idiots.*" Mulock went on to say that he had frequently challenged the right of the authorities to hold him as a 'pauper lunatic,' but that his representations "*were construed as frenzy or morbid excitement and did not avail him. He was indifferent to what men thought of his state of mind, but pauper he never was; he had been.*" Deprecating his wife's attitude and behaviour towards him over these long years Mulock continued, *if my wife insists upon exercising the privilege of detaining her husband in a Lunatic Asylum, let her pay for the privilege,*" and so Mulock's rant about his wife continued until reverting to general topics he adding that he had entertained the intention of writing to his cousin, Thomas of Kilnagarna, and consulted the Asylum Committee upon the matter, and that of writing to the 'old friend' Backhouse, the Foreign Under Secretary of State, but changed his mind.^{xlv}

Mulock's mother-in-law, Mrs. Mellard, had moved from Hartshill to Bucknall and there she died in August 1839, aged 84.^{xlvii} Coincidentally Mulock was released from the asylum less than six months after his mother-in-law died. As can be seen from the letters quoted above, Mulock had little contact with his family during his prolonged stay in the asylum. The fifteen, sixteen miles or more that separated them would, have been a deterrent to anybody; there was little public transport and it does not seem that the family finances were sufficient to maintain a horse and carriage; even had they hired one for a day that may have proved more than they could afford; and would Mulock's wife have wished to have made that journey even if she could have done? It was not until almost the end of his stay at Stafford that Mulock's wife did make the journey, and then it was to do with finalising matters concerning her inheritance. It seems that during those formative years of the children - seven long years - the influence of the father was minimal; a shadowy figure at best, perhaps not seen by them at all during this time.

As for Mulock while he endured his confinement, did he ever, I wonder, recall his earlier satire on Burdett, Cobbett and Hunt? Or further ponder his contemplated prison establishment for Newcastle-u-Lyme?

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- ² Staffordshire Advertiser 4th March 1826.
- ³ Staffordshire Advertiser 14th April 1827; WSL ‘Armagedden etc.’
- ⁴ ‘Directory of Primitive Methodist Ministers and their Circuits,’ W. Leary, and Primitive Methodist Connexion, 1827, SRO D5345/E/3/5. I am greatly indebted to Randle Knight for these – and many other references.
- ⁵ Staffordshire Advertiser 17th October 1828; Leeds Archives WYL887/46/15.
- ^v Leeds Archives WYL887/46/16.
- ^{vi} Staffordshire Advertiser 28th October 1828.
- ^{vii} The advertisement for this appeared in the Staffordshire Advertiser of the 5th May 1827.
- ^{viii} See Rich; Staffordshire Advertiser 28th October 1828.
- ^{ix} Staffordshire Advertiser 28th October 1828.
- ^x Christian Counsel, the Light and Safeguard of Nations.’
- ^{xi} Then lord lieutenant of Staffordshire.
- ^{xii} Staffordshire Advertiser 25th October 1828.
- ^{xiii} The Morning Chronicle, 2nd May, 1829; The Public Inquirer may have been issued at fortnightly intervals as the 4th appeared on the 11th April, 1829, the 5th on the 25th April, 1829.
- ^{xiv} Staffordshire Mercury and Pottery Gazette, 27th September 1828.
- ^{xv} Staffordshire Advertiser 11th October 1828.
- ^{xvi} ‘Directory of Primitive Methodist Ministers and their Circuits,’ W. Leary.
- ^{xvii} ‘Easter Dues,’ Enoch Wood’s scrapbook, Stoke-u-Trent Museum.
- ^{xviii} The Public Inquirer 11th April 1829, see Enoch Wood’s scrapbook, Pottery and Arts Museum, Stoke-u-Trent.
- ^{xix} Public Inquirer, V 25th April 1829, See Enoch Wood’s scrapbook, Stoke-u-Trent Museum.
- ^{xx} See above, The March of Atheism and The Wellington Quick-Step to Anarchy.
- ^{xxi} Staffordshire Advertiser
- ^{xxii} Staffordshire Mercury, Pottery Gazette, Newcastle Express & Cheshire Advertiser 15th August 1829.
- ^{xxiii} Staffordshire Advertiser 15th August 1829.
- ^{xxiv} Staffordshire Advertiser 12th December 1829.
- ^{xxv} William Salt Library, ‘Dyott Diaries, 18??’
- ^{xxvi} Oxford Journal, 30th January, 1830.
- ^{xxvii} WSL ‘Armagedden or the Final Overthrow of Antichrist,’ Thomas Mulock.
- ^{xxviii} The full end of all Security, for Persons or Property in Christian England. WSL.
- ^{xxix} Staffordshire Mercury, Pottery Gazette, Newcastle Express & Cheshire Advertiser 13th March 1830.
- ^{xxx} Staffordshire Advertiser 6th March 1830.
- ^{xxxi} Staffordshire Mercury, Pottery Gazette, Newcastle Express & Cheshire Advertiser 13th March 1830.
- ^{xxxii} Staffordshire Advertiser
- ^{xxxiii} Staffordshire Advertiser
- ^{xxxiv} See ‘Old Newcastle,’ T. Pape.
- ^{xxxv} See The Birth Centenary of the Author of ‘John Halifax, Gentleman,’ T. Pape, Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club, 1925-26, volume ix, pages 82-95.
- ^{xxxvi} SRO D550/4, Minute Books, St. George’s Hospital.
- ^{xxxvii} Staffordshire Advertiser 28th May 1831; two men Swatkins and Lloyd, sentenced to death for arson at the March assizes had at one stage claimed that their act had been committed at the instigation of political agitators, Staffordshire Advertiser 16th April 1831.
- ^{xxxviii} Stafford Prison 1793 – 1916, William Salt Library (unpublished) A. J. Standley.
- ^{xxxix} Derby Mercury, 2nd April 1834.
- ^{xl} WSL Assize Calendars 1834
- ^{xli} Backhouse was the under secretary of state for foreign affairs, had gained his situation through the influence of George Canning. It was Backhouse who had replied to Mulock, on Canning’s behalf, in 1827.
- ^{xlii} SRO D550/5, Minute Books, St. George’s Hospital.
- ^{xliii} WSL/CB/Politics/1
- ^{xliv} Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette, 22nd October 1835.
- ^{xl} Notes and Queries, Alleyn Lyell Reade, 1924.
- ^{xlv} This material comments I owe to Karen Bourrier, but any errors that may have occurred, either inadvertently or through data being being misconstrued, are entirely mine.
- ^{xlvii} Old Newcastle, T. Pape.