

Thomas Mulock, ageing as he was, continued to solicit attention and give his opinion on many matters. At the Epiphany Quarter Sessions of 1864, an attempt was made by the chairman of the Visiting Committee at Stafford Prison, to secure payment for a Roman Catholic priest who attended the Roman Catholic prisoners, a motion that was defeated. In the light of the discord that had enveloped these churches over the centuries, the very thought of such a *paid* appointment antagonised a local Protestant minister, the Reverend Harrison, of Christ Church (situated opposite the prison wall near to the south-west tower). In protesting against such a measure, Harrison, in a letter to the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, attacked the Roman Catholic Church, its doctrines and its local priest. Mulock, despite his frequent and protracted animadversions against the Catholic Faith, considered the reverend minister's protest to be misplaced and denounced Harrison's response to the proposal:

"A letter from the incumbent of Christ Church, Stafford, brimful of somewhat prosy polemics, having recently appeared in your journal, it may render a little service to the cause of common sense to state impartially the question which he raises as to the heretical guiltiness of the proposed appointment of a Roman Catholic priest to minister, after his own ritual, to Roman Catholic prisoners in one of her Majesty's gaols. The Protestant controversialist evidently writes under the alarming impression that the Established Church is in danger, and it is to be hoped that the following brief remarks will tend to allay his apprehensions without quenching his orthodox zeal.

*The Reverend Mr. Harrison, who seems versed in all the lore of Papal history and casuistry, ignores oddly enough a rather memorable event in the annals of the British Empire, namely, an Act of Parliament passed in A.D. 1829, whereby Roman Catholics, subjects of the British Crown, were made plenary partakers of every constitutional right, privilege, immunity, and eligibility (the latter with only two exceptional offices) of which Protestant lieges were in full, possessory, or prospective enjoyment. This settled the point of political equality – and this is the only point with which Protestants can properly concern themselves. With Roman Catholic peers and commoners in Parliament, in the Privy Council, on the judicial bench, in high offices of the state, and eligible to commands in the Army and Navy, it is sheer ignorance and absurdity to dread any peril to ecclesiastical Protestantism from giving some styled Popish priests an official sanction to visit paupers and culprits of their own communion in workhouses and gaols, where the indigent and the lawless are respectively received, be their form of religion what it may. A late statute permits (and these permissive Acts of the legislature are foolish and pernicious things) the magistrates in Quarter Sessions to appoint at their pleasure, **not** a Roman Catholic Chaplain to the gaol at large, but a Chaplain, with a reasonable salary, whose sole function is to attend stately on the Roman Catholic transgressors of the law justly cooped up in prisons, where they (in England) constitute a minority, shut out by their religion from the public and private ministrations of the Protestant Chaplain. The Reverend Mr. Harrison is almost beside himself in angry declamation against any such appointments for Stafford gaol, and vindicates his wrath by dwelling on what he considers the anti-Christian errors of the Roman Catholic theology, which, he thinks, will gain portentous strength by the appointment of a Roman Catholic Chaplain with an insignificant salary. (Now let me ask the Reverend Mr. Harrison – How comes it that his Protestant zeal has been for so many years in quiet abeyance? Was he not aware, during his long incumbency and enjoyment of a pair of Chaplaincies in this town, that Romish priests were constantly afforded access (by order of the Visiting Justices) to their captive co-religionists in Stafford gaol? And during this dark interval of permitted Popery did a single word of conscientious denunciation proceed from the Protestant pluralist snugly ensconced in Christ Church parsonage? Here then let me venture to cast a little light on Mr. Harrison's mysterious silence. So long as Popish priests were allowed to go in and out of the County prison and to perform their work without direct appointment, and without public pay, Mr. Harrison was content that all the monstrosities of the Romish ritual and the abominations of the Romish casuists should be freely imported into the cells of Stafford gaol; but no sooner does the chairman of the Visiting Justices – and a clergyman, too, of higher **status** in the Establishment – take action as to the carrying out of an existing permissive law, than Mr. Harrison wakes out of his crafty sleep, and discovers that the Church of England is assailed by remorseless enemies, and totters to its eternal fall! Some*

unreflecting zealots may be led astray by your clerical correspondent's argumentative array of anti-Papal allegations, but wiser folk will be reminded of the ominous postmark TOO LATE, on tardily deposited letters. Before 1829 Mr. Harrison, or any other theological disputant, might have declaimed as violently as he would on the impiety of granting Catholic emancipation, and the consequent relief from all disabilities; but the comprehensive concession being finally made, all puny and puerile efforts to renew antiquated restrictions only serve to excite bitterness, without rendering any earthly benefit to the Church of England. A real church will find its strength to consist in the permanent proclamation of faith, hope and charity; and when these great elements of Christianity are deserted, and penal restrictions are imposed upon religionists other than those of the church established by law, depend upon it that the latter institution has lost all the life, power, and love of Christ's glorious Gospel. Hatred of Popery denotes of itself no proof of a true Christian profession; and the spirit of persecution is the spirit of Satan, not of Christ.

*I conclude with a few observations which go to show the error of Mr. Harrison's onslaught against the magistrates who voted in favour of the proposition moved by the Honourable and Reverend Mr. Talbot. If it be deemed right and expedient to allow a Roman Catholic priest stated access to Roman Catholic prisoners, then I confidently allege the propriety of placing him openly and officially under the controlling authority of the Visiting Justices, who are not inquisitors of religious creeds, but civil upholders of the order and discipline of the County prison. To discharge their duties efficiently, the Visiting Justices should not, in my opinion, allow any priest, Protestant or Roman Catholic - (for the Established Church has its pet priesthood as well as the ousted Romish hierarchy) - to repair regularly to the interior of the gaol, except as recognised and responsible officers of the prison, obedient to rule in the strictest sense of that useful word. To appoint an officer, whether warder or Chaplain, implies **pay** - for unremunerated services never secure implicit subjection; such fancy functionaries are, generally speaking, little inclined to obey authorities. Therefore, I maintain that there is no middle course between the Reverend Mr. Harrison's repudiation of Popery in all its parts - in short, a revival of the penal laws - or a frank and generous adoption of a permissive statute which empowers the magistracy to have a Roman Catholic Chaplain under their direct control, instead of winking at the constant admission of a priest on sufferance, entering without official recognition, and working without the receipt of official wages. Whether the teachings of a paid priest of another persuasion would be "worth the money" is decided by the Reverend Mr. Harrison in a very off-hand negative style; but I really think that the incumbent of Christ Church is upon tender ground, except he is prepared to prove that himself and his fellow-workmen in the Establishment are supremely excellent preachers and teachers of Divine Truth. As payment is indispensable in the Church of England, it is to be hoped that her ministers give adequate value for their stipends, which, by the way, would more signally strengthen the said Church than a railing opposition to some paltry pittance to Roman Catholic priests for visiting Roman Catholic outcasts in public prisons."¹*

The place of Dinah, Mulock's daughter, in British literary society was assured when, in the Civil List of 1864, she was awarded a pension of £60 a year. The money was of little moment to her, but royal recognition was an honour that added greatly to her prestige.²

Thomas Mulock now became quite unnecessarily embroiled in a divorce action between William Henry Chetwynd and his wife, Blanche. Chetwynd was a member of an established and highly respected Staffordshire family, of some members of which Mulock had, in previous times enjoyed less than popularity. During the early proceedings when Blanche Chetwynd sought divorce (there were counter allegations), Mulock was introduced to William Chetwynd by a mutual friend at a chance meeting; when Chetwynd was referred to as a person in some trouble and distress. Now anyone who has managed to plough through my account will by now have realised that a call of distress was always likely to bring Mulock's gallantry to the fore, and so it proved. Whatever details were imparted at that meeting cannot now be known, but Mulock, armed as he believed with salutary ammunition, wrote to Blanche in endeavour to persuade her to withdraw from her action; when he received a negative response he returned the compliment, as it were, and published a sequel:

Stafford, July 16th 1864.

“Madam,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I pity you from my heart. You are terribly deceived, and your crafty law advisers have fostered your deception. You seem unaware of the abyss opening before you. However, I must act as befits a Christian man to whom an appeal has been made, and I now inform you that if, on or before Wednesday next, the 29th instant, your suit in the Court of Divorce be not withdrawn, I will, on my own responsibility, apart from Mr. Chetwynd or anyone else, publish the full truth of your case, founded upon my own various communications with your own friends, and accompanied with a statement of facts concerning yourself from before your marriage up to the present time, borne out by irrefragable documents.

I am, madam, your obedient servant,

T. Mulock.³

Blanche Chetwynd’s response was to place the matter in the hands of her solicitor leading to Sergeant Ballantine, her counsel, making an application to seek a rule citing Mulock and his extraordinary conduct in writing to Mrs. Chetwynd, as “seeking to destroy her comfort and peace of mind and seriously to impede the course of justice and to compromise her suit.” Mulock, so Ballantine claimed, was a gentleman of high position in the County of Stafford (the effrontery of legal practitioners at times has no bounds), and an intimate friend of William Henry Chetwynd⁴, and in view of this Blanche Chetwynd appealed to the court for protection⁵:

Appearing before the court, “Mulock, with great volubility, complimented the Judge on the manner in which he had conducted himself on the bench, but reminded him that he had himself stated, as in the case of “Masters v the Queen’s Proctor,” that he was powerless unless persons who were acquainted with facts that ought to be brought under his knowledge would come forward. That was what he (Mulock) proposed to do. He denied that he had the smallest desire to intimidate Mrs. Chetwynd. If he had written her a letter as long as the “Histriomastix” for which Prynne lost his ears, it would not in the least prevent her from going on with her suit. He protested against the terms in which he had been spoken of the other day by Mr. Serjeant Ballantine. To “gentlemen” alike by birth, by education, and he hoped by conduct, he pleaded guilty; but he denied that he held any high position, or any position at all, in the county of Stafford. He was a humble individual, and, he suspected that the learned counsel had exalted him in order that he might make him a better mark for his arrows. It was stated that he was an intimate friend of Mr. Chetwynd, whereas till the 4th June last he had had no knowledge of him whatever. Mr. Chetwynd was introduced to him by a common friend as a man who was in trouble and distress, and who placed no great reliance upon lawyers, in which respect he (Mulock) confessed that he entertained a kindred sentiment. The Judge with much difficulty interrupting him, said that “Mr. Mulock had not filed counter affidavits; he could not be allowed to enter upon any question of fact.” Mulock said he “was quite ready to be sworn, which would be better than making an affidavit. He did not know what was the practice in London, but in Staffordshire an affidavit was anything but a cordiphonia – an utterance of the heart. Affidavits were, in fact, manufactured by attorney’s clerks.” The Judge again, with much difficulty, stopping Mr. Mulock’s speech, said “that the only question was whether he would withdraw his threat to Mrs. Chetwynd.” Mr. Mulock: “Most entirely! He had made no threat. If his counsel were felt to be distasteful to Mrs. Chetwynd, let her disregard it, and go on with her suit, by all means. *Macte nouth virtute!* But as to his publication, he knew of no law against that.” The Judge: “You will find that there is a law against it, though.” Mulock: “Then I must take the consequences. I have been a public writer for the last forty years, and the liberty of the press would cry out against me if I gave up my right to publish whatever I pleased. I will not listen to any mortal man that tells me I am not to publish what I know to be true.” The Judge was of opinion that a rule should be granted as the plea to the court showed that a third person, who had nothing whatsoever to do with the suit, had sought by threats to prevent the plaintiff from bringing an action: “You have been guilty of an act of contempt; and unless you withdraw your threat, the court is prepared to order you into custody.” Mulock: “You are at perfect liberty to do so.” The Judge: “However, to give you an opportunity of calm reflection, I will adjourn the sitting of the court to Friday morning.” Mulock: “When you will find me stronger in

my determination not to make any further concession.” The case was adjourned and Mulock was required to appear before the court at a later hearing.⁶

Undismayed by his situation in a letter to the *Globe* Mulock explained that he was “*Incapable of even contemplating a contempt towards any of her Majesty’s Courts*” and having received due notice that a rule to show cause had been obtained by Mrs. Chetwynd he would appear in person before the Judge Ordinary.”⁷

Mulock appeared at court on the Friday having been allowed an opportunity for ‘calm reflection’ when Sir J. P. Wilde, taking his seat said: “On Tuesday last I gave you an opportunity of appearing here this morning and saying that you would not proceed with your threat; are you prepared to give the court an assurance that you will not do so?”

Mulock: “My lord, before I say a word, I wish to offer your lordship an apology. I see from the reports that I may have been guilty of some rudeness to your lordship. The fact is I am rather hard of hearing, and your lordship’s dulcet tones did not reach me.” (Laughter)

The Judge: “You have committed no sort of incivility to me. I only want you to answer to my question. Will you abstain from executing your threat?”

Mulock: “No, my lord.

The Judge: “Then it only remains for the court to pronounce judgement. Mrs. Chetwynd is a petitioner for a judicial separation from her husband, and she has charged Mr. Mulock with writing the following letter”:

Here the judge read out the letter to Blanche Chetwynd, that Mulock had written and published:

“From the pressure of this threat Mrs. Chetwynd seeks protection; and she claims the right to approach this court free from all restraint or intimidation. It is a right that belongs to all suitors. Mr. Mulock has appeared to show cause against the imputation thus made against him. He did not deny the fact that he sent this letter; and although he disclaimed all desire to threaten the petitioner, he distinctly reiterated his intention to make the publication referred to. Mr. Mulock, therefore, in the face of the court, practically adheres to the threat he has made. No one can doubt that the very offering of such a threat to a suitor in this court, for such a purpose, is in itself, and quite independent of its subsequent fulfilment, a contempt of court. In *Shaw v Shaw* (2 Swaby and Trustram, page 519) the late Sir Creswell Creswell so decided, if indeed authority were needed. I own I was surprised that when the legal effect of what he had done was pointed out by me to Mr. Mulock he did not express himself prepared at once to retrace his steps, and to cease from further interference with Mrs. Chetwynd’s suit; and the more so as it appeared from his own statement in the court, that he had no interest whatever in the matter, and only a very recent acquaintance with Mr. Chetwynd. Had Mr. Mulock under these circumstances been content to give the court an assurance that he would go no further in his endeavour to intimidate Mrs. Chetwynd, the court might properly have taken no further notice of this most improper letter. All this I intimated to him the other day, and I gave him the opportunity of considering the matter and consulting his friends. The result is that he still adheres to the determination expressed in his letter, and refuses all assurance that he will desist from executing his menace. The court has no alternative but to adjudge him guilty of contempt and to order him for the same to pay a fine of £300. The future is in Mr. Mulock’s own hands. If he persists in the course which he says he has marked out for himself as a Christian, and by act or deed, by writing or publishing, makes any further attempt to stand between Mrs. Chetwynd and her free access to this court, I wish him to distinctly understand that he will subject himself to further punishment by fine or imprisonment or both. If, on the other hand, being satisfied that he is acting illegally, he should hold his hand and submit to the authority of the court, I shall be prepared to attend to any application that

he may make next term for the remission of this fine; and for that purpose I shall direct the officer of the court not to estreat the fine until the fourth day of next term.”

Mulock: “I have not the slightest objection to your lordship’s judgement.”

The Judge: “Mr. Mulock, the case is over.”

Mr. Serjeant Ballantine: This is a case, my lord, in which you will probably think it right to condemn Mr. Mulock in the costs.”

The Judge: “You may make that the subject of another application.”

The consequence was that when Mulock again appeared in court he accepted that he would conform to the court’s order and requirements, when the fine and costs were remitted; but Blanche Chetwynd’s counsel appealed for costs against Mulock to be restored following which the remission of the fine was made consequent upon Mulock paying Blanche Chetwynd’s costs.

In a letter to a friend and distant kinsman, John Beavis Brindley (later the first Recorder of Hanley), Mulock explained the reasons for his action and behaviour:

*“If he had simply confined himself to the exaction of a promise from me not to publish matter which would probably or necessarily come out in evidence before the court, I would at once have yielded, but the judge (I think unwisely and unwarrantably) persisted in extorting a pledge which struck at the very root of all freedom of the press. My correspondence with Chetwynd, his wife, his family and friends, is not only unobjectionable, but useful, instructive and clearly demonstrating that I was the acknowledged benefactor of all parties. I did not feel myself bound to submit to dictation of so arbitrary a cast, and I do not repent of my conscientious contumacy. But taking a far loftier view of the entire case, I am convinced that as a believer in the Scriptures of Truth, I am called on to **obey every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake**. If Judges order injustice, upon **their** heads be the guilt, but on my part I will not contravene their improper exercise of power.”*⁸

Whatever dire situation threatened surrounded him, Mulock’s attention turned to an industrial dispute between proprietors and miners, thought to threaten the tranquillity of the county, and he was determined to bring the matter to the attention of Lord Palmerston, the Home Secretary:

“My Lord,

I beg to ask your Lordship’s attention to the contents of the enclosed printed paper on the alarming state of things in South Staffordshire.

The government or the local authorities cannot properly interfere between the Employers and the lately employed – but it is, in my opinion, the plain duty of the Executive to adopt timely precautions to preserve the peace of a large and densely populated district, where thirty thousand colliers are now out on strike. In case of any serious outrages (which are much to be dreaded) the whole police force of the county would prove utterly insufficient to maintain public order and safety.

It is for your Lordship and colleagues to devise the means for averting any calamities which may possibly occur in consequence of the fearful differences now unhappily existing in South Staffordshire.

I am your Lordship’s obedient servant,

Thomas Mulock.

*Stafford, October 9th 1864.*⁹

Mulock also sent a copy of the letter to the Earl of Lichfield, but without any covering note, merely ‘*With Mr. Mulock’s respects the Earl of Lichfield*’ written on the inside of the envelope flap.¹⁰

As to the case of Chetwynd v Chetwynd, it followed that in January, 1865, Thomas Mulock, was once again a resident of the county prison - the root of the problem being the non-payment of Mrs. Chetwynd's solicitor's costs in the action that involved Mulock. Challenging the decision of the judge to change his ruling and feeling aggrieved in the process, Mulock wrote to the High Sheriff of Staffordshire, Thomas Thorneycroft, sending a copy of the letter to be published in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*:

"To the High Sheriff of Staffordshire,

Sir,

*On the 3rd instant I was arrested and conducted to this gaol by one of your officers, bearing a warrant, which, on inspection (by courtesy of the governor), I find to be an informal, and consequently an illegal document. Ever since the abolition of 'general warrants' (now nearly a century ago)¹¹, it has been invariably held to be the law of England that every warrant affecting the personal liberty of any individual shall set forth clearly on the face of it the true and proper grounds for coercing the presumed offender of his lawful freedom. I am sorry, for the sake of public justice, to be compelled to assert that this protective principle has been obviously violated in my case. The warrant merely states that I have been adjudged to pay a fine of £300 to the Queen "for intimidating Blanche Chetwynd, petitioner, for the purposes of preventing her from proceeding in the cause Chetwynd against Chetwynd in her Majesty's Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes." Now, sir, I unhesitatingly assert that this is a totally erroneous representation of the real cause of my being committed to prison. Mrs. Chetwynd has never been intimidated so as to prevent her from proceeding against her husband in the Divorce Court and she has uninterruptedly carried on her suit until it has been partly tried in that court. The proveable facts connected with my arrest are briefly these. In July last Judge Wilde imposed upon me a fine, which he spontaneously promised to remit if I should abstain from publishing any disagreeable matter (which I was in full possession of) concerning Mrs. Chetwynd. On the second day of last term I appeared in court, and informed Judge Wilde that, out of unfeigned respect for the tribunals of this country, I have, in every particular, conformed to the requirements of his court; whereupon the judge addressed me in complimentary terms, and **unconditionally remitted the fine**. On the following day, however, Sir James Wilde thought it proper to retract his remission, and make it contingent upon the payment of costs to Mrs. Chetwynd and her solicitor. Twice in court and once in chambers I respectfully, but firmly, remonstrated with the judge, and pleaded the injustice of mixing up a solicitor's costs, (readily recoverable by ordinary procedure) with an alleged contempt of court – plenarily remitted as a public offence, but re-imposed in order to enforce costs for a private party wholly un-aggrieved. My remonstrations were only met by the Judge's declaration that "the costs would be very trifling." A most excessive and exorbitant bill of costs was subsequently served upon me, which, on grounds stated by me in court, I refused to pay. **That** refusal on my part was the reason publicly assigned by the judge for estreating the remitted fine, and yet not one word of my condemnation, solely for the non-payment of costs, appears on the face of the sheriff's warrant.*

Whether this grave error of omission is attributable to the Court of Probate or the officials of the Exchequer is a matter of perfect indifference to me, for, with all due respect for yourself, sir, I shall look to the High Sheriff of Staffordshire as the functionary responsible for all the consequences of my illegal arrest and prolonged imprisonment.

Sheriff's Ward, County Prison, Stafford, January 5th 1865.

Mulock's release from this imprisonment, in April, 1865, was apparently brought about by a decision made at the Treasury, and caused him to notify the public that he was once again a free man; in a letter dated the 20th April, he wrote to the *Staffordshire Advertiser*:

"Will you allow me to inform your readers who took interest in a marked episode of the well known Chetwynd case that, by virtue of an order from Treasury to the High Sheriff of Staffordshire, I

was on Tuesday last (18th April) unconditionally discharged from the latter's ward in the county prison, where I had undergone, since January last, a by no means uncomfortable captivity.

*I of course feel obliged to **the powers that be** for this perfectly spontaneous act of considerate compassion towards an old man not conscious of any criminality; but I nevertheless indulge the expectation that my causeless and unreasonable imprisonment may be of use in supplying some salutary instruction to the tribunals of this country. That constructive contempt of court may not again be borrowed from the obsolete 'practice' of the Star Chamber; that fines unconditionally remitted should not be penally revived when no just cause existed; and that the attempted enforcement of costs by indirect exercise of power is not the most important function of her Majesty's Judges.*

Yours, @c., Thomas Mulock¹².

On the 29th April 1865, less than two weeks after her father's release from prison, Mulock's daughter Dinah married George Lillie Craik who, shortly afterwards was made a partner in Macmillans, the publishers. It seems improbable that Thomas Mulock attended the ceremony, held at Trinity Church, Bath. Many newspaper reports at the time confused the bridegroom, who was some years Dinah's junior, with Professor Craik, an elderly literary gentleman. It was George Lillie Craik who eventually purchased Mulock's biography of George Canning, seemingly on his own behalf, not that of Macmillans, perhaps as a gesture to his wife and to give some small financial reward to Mulock for his endeavours; it was a work, however, that appears to have passed into obscurity and does not seem destined for publication.¹³

Thomas Mulock now turned his concentration to the state of affairs in Ireland, addressing another letter to Lord Palmerston, which was sent to the Irish capital for attention; there the newspaper's correspondent forwarded a copy to the London office of the *Morning Post*:

"Mr. Thomas Mulock, who takes this rather roundabout way of addressing Lord Palmerston, has his cure for rebellion; but some persons will say that it is not a new one, having been tried in this country before, and not without success":

"Let there be martial law for a brief season, and the present Commander of the Forces in Ireland is an officer well qualified to enforce it with decision and impartiality. He had to deal with Sepoy mutineers; and what is Fenianism but a mutiny against all civil order – an irregular array of armed rebels, who should be met and conquered by the soldiers of the Crown."

As Mr. Mulock intends his letter for the eye of Lord Palmerston, I am inclined to afford him the opportunity of seeing it in print in England, which he seems not to have hoped for when he sent it to this city. After the customary preamble, he says:-

"In the midst of profound peace and amity with foreign powers, your lordship's government has deemed it necessary (and the public voice vindicates the necessity) to adopt the strongest measures that civil polity can suggest to secure the safety of Ireland, an integral and immediate portion of the British empire, not from aggressive invaders, but from treason, hatched by Irish rebels on their own soil; and suffer me, my lord, to premise that the present conspirators are not to be confounded, in theory, with the rebels of '98, or of 1803, or the puny insurrectionists of 1848. They are the Young Ireland of the lower classes – a risen generation of pseudo patriots – not blinded, ignorant fanatics, wrought upon by the priesthood as in '98, and partially in 1803 by the same evil agency, or fierce though feeble red republicans, as in 1848 – but men well instructed in elementary knowledge at the National Schools, where pupils have the benefit of the very best educational books in existence – but where the Bible is, in effect, interdicted. The results of such a system are now cropping up, not unlike the fabled sowing of Cadmus – in a harvest of armed men. The Fenians are 'United Irishmen' with far more knowledge than their predecessors, and therefore infinitely more dangerous. To sever Ireland from English rule is their one great object and aim. Political reforms, or even the overthrow of the Established Church, do not constitute the main motives for binding

together the Fenian Brotherhood. The inherited hatred of the 'Saxon' is their undying false principle, and the extinction of British sovereignty over Ireland is their war-cry, and war, to all intents and purposes, they have been diligently preparing for, and their drillings, &c., make it clear that Fenianism is a pure military organisation. Its ramifications, as your lordship well knows, extend throughout every part of the 'Green Isle.' Arms are everywhere in hands hostile to the Executive, and American allies (in addition to Irish rebels in American States) would gladly succour the Fenian cause. Indeed the Yankee disbanded soldiers who can no longer butcher their own brethren are fitted to be ready riflemen in aid of the Irish lovers of battle and bloodshed at home. Now, my lord, I venture to warn the Queen's Government against the delusive supposition that this fearful state of things in Ireland can be effectually quelled by any exercised power of law – whether ordinary or extraordinary. The law of treason with its stern technicalities, special commissions, pompous legal pedantry, confronted by defensive legal quibbling – interspersed with the seditious speechifying of prisoners' counsel in open court; all this will fail to put down Fenianism, and peradventure may fan the flame of disloyalty in Ireland. What is really required in the present exigency is to place all Ireland under martial law. To 'proclaim' as it is termed, some districts by virtue of the Coercion Act will not prove effectual, for the Fenians will, in all likelihood, immigrate into un-proclaimed counties and thus evade detection. The safety of the multitudes of well-disposed quiet and industrious subjects of the Queen in Ireland calls loudly for a government measure that would reassure their minds, which neither trials for treason, nor capital convictions, nor sentences of penal servitude (followed soon by tickets-of-leave) can ever effect."

It is here that the passage occurs which I have transferred to a more conspicuous position. Mr. Mulock resumes:-

"This, my lord, is a serious crisis. A more wicked causeless breach of tranquillity was never contemplated or perpetrated in any country. To the well-affected (and they are many) in the sister-isle, the uninterrupted enjoyment of closest connection with England is an incalculable benefit, and England herself is pre-eminently interested in maintaining a beneficent rule over the Irish people. Upon the foresight and energy of the government, the continuance of that rule (humanely speaking) now depends; and my earnest expectation and my hope is, that your lordship and colleagues may be led to act wisely in the present gloomy conjecture of national affairs."

It is said that people at a distance generally know more of the affairs of others than they do themselves, and probably this explains the fact that while Mr. Mulock is convinced that martial law is necessary for the suppression of Fenianism, the best informed persons in Ireland are beginning to lose all fear of that conspiracy, which they believe the ordinary laws of the country quite capable of destroying.¹⁴

There then came a letter concerning the widow of Thomas Moore, in which Mulock sought to correct an opinion that was going the rounds:

"The Poet Moore and his Recently Deceased Widow:

*As there are now few surviving friends or acquaintances of Thomas Moore, obituary reporters are somewhat at fault in referring to the marital matters of the brightest of Irish bards. In 1811, Moore married Betsy Dyke, the second of three sisters who were then figurantes in the ballets brought forward on the Dublin stage by Giroux. "Bessy" was then eighteen, which assures us that she died lately aged 72. She was, as personally known to the present writer, a truly amiable and excellent person, full of good sense, though not exactly qualified to appreciate the loftier strains of her husband's muse. She was essentially the domestic upholder of the family, while Moore was either writing his poetry at home, or more frequently warbling his own songs in gay aristocratic circles. It is not correct, as alleged by a writer in the **Times**, that Moore's poetical powers were scarcely, if at all, drawn forth by his devotedness to his wife; for several indirect allusions to his unabated regard for "Bessy" could be pointed out in his charming lyrical pieces, and the following, copied from the "Irish Melodies," was exclusively addressed to Mrs Moore.*

Thomas Mulock.”

The piece that Mulock selected and was published by the newspaper, was Moore’s ‘I’d Mourn the Hopes that Leave Me.’”

The death of Lord Palmerston in October 1865, was not an occasion that Mulock could let pass without offering some comment for the edification of the general public, the more so as some reports of Palmerston’s past parliamentary career, in Mulock’s view, had not been as accurate as they should have been. Mulock ‘communicated’ a correction to the editor of the Staffordshire Advertiser:

“Some Errors and Omissions of the Public Journals with reference to the late Lord Palmerston”:

“Lord Palmerston’s early political life cannot be expected to fall in with the personal recollections of journalists of the present day, and therefore mistakes and omissions excusably occur. The present writer speaks of what passed under his own knowledge.

It is quite true that Lord Palmerston (as well as R. P. Milnes, whom the present writer saw frequently at the time) was offered a seat in Percival’s cabinet, which they respectively declined; but Lord Palmerston’s acceptance of the Secretaryship at War is confounded by many with the then higher office of Secretary of State for war and colonies, which Lord Palmerston never filled. It was occupied by Lord Castlereagh, until his dual with Mr. Canning, and subsequently by Earl Bathurst. Mr. Canning highly esteemed Lord Palmerston, and on the former’s accession to the premiership, Lord Palmerston was for the first time introduced into the cabinet.

When Huskisson’s resignation of the Colonial Office was promptly accepted by the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston waited on the Iron Duke and besought him to solicit Huskisson to retain his position in the cabinet – which the Duke turned a deaf ear to. “But,” said the Duke, some years later, “all Huskisson’s friends forgot to ask him to withdraw his letter to me – which, had he done, the affair would have been settled amicably and at once.” This anecdote was told the writer by the late Lord Hatherton, the trusted friend of all the parties.

*Lord Palmerston, as Secretary for Foreign affairs, in December 1851, did not immediately recognise Louis Napoleon’s **coup d’etat** as constituting the latter’s title to the Empire, which followed after. But Lord Palmerston, after the lapse of some days, addressed direct encouragement to the Prince President, passing by the Marquis of Normanby, our then Ambassador, at Paris. Lord Palmerston subsequently sent despatches for Louis Napoleon, which, not being previously seen by the Queen and Prince Consort caused the dismissal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office by Lord John Russell. Lord Palmerston thought (as the present writer fully expressed concerning the crisis in France) that the **coup de’tat** was almost a rigorous necessity; forasmuch as the Chamber of Deputies was resolved to usurp the command of the Army, of which Changarnier was to be nominated the chief. Such a state of things would have rendered Louis Napoleon’s Presidency a mere mockery, and in fact would have made his position powerless.*

In every department over which Lord Palmerston presided, he manifested a characteristic earnestness to master the minute details of business. Nothing escaped him, and he readily received suggestions from persons of sincerity, though of far inferior position and capacity. A little reminiscence will illustrate this: when at the Home Office Lord Palmerston widely diffused a circular, pointing out the embarrassment occasioned by the quantities of bad penmanship which he was compelled to receive from official persons, but which he frequently found to be illegible. The present writer addressed to Lord Palmerston a brief letter indicating the principal cause of all this bad writing, viz. the false eagerness of professed teachers to put children into cramped small hand, instead of making the large, correct form of each letter of the alphabet familiarly known to the pupil. Lord Palmerston, who never pooh-poohed honest hints, as is customary nowadays, answered the writer in warm terms of acknowledgement, and admitted the soundness of the remarks.

*Lord Palmerston was a jocose poet of an order only inferior to Canning. His (Lord Palmerston's) contributions to the **New Whig Guide** are admirable specimens of racy, good-humoured satire; but the **Athenaeum** is quite at fault in intimating its belief that "J. W. Croker and Sir Robert Peel" were Lord Palmerston's tuneful associates. Croker was a charming poet, abundantly verified by his *Battles of Talavera* and his touching lines on the death of Canning, but Croker never wrote a line for the **New Whig Guide**. As for the late Sir Robert Peel, although rich in classical attainments, he most certainly never put forward any pretensions to the possession of a poetical faculty, and least of all to poetical pleasantries.*

*So much has been extollingly written concerning the late premier that hardly any place is left for supplementary eulogy. The extent of the national loss by the unexpected death of Lord Palmerston cannot be presently estimated. He was a man of ruling mind and influence, partly by commanding intellect, and partly by prevailing tact. Statesmen of varied **calibre** were content to serve under him – and he contrived to maintain harmony in a cabinet wherein not a few elements of dissonance existed – in familiar fact and phrase he bound the bundle of sticks together, so as to ensure practical unity among able and useful colleagues. Who is capable of undertaking such a task as this with even a plausible prospect of fulfilling it?"¹⁵*

Thomas Mulock continued to bring himself before the public but having advertised a lecture that he was to deliver on the French Revolution, was forced to re-arrange the date due to a mix-up with booking arrangements at the venue! The lecture eventually took place on the 25th November 1865, when he addressed a small, but seemingly appreciative and encouraging audience, the reduced numbers, the report stated, probably due to the storm that took place on that day:

"The programme embraced the whole period from the accession of the first Napoleon to the Imperial throne to the present day, and this sketch was preceded "by a review of political parties in England during the progress of Jacobinism in France – Pitt, Burke, Canning, Fox and Sheridan." The difficulty of covering so wide a canvas in the short time devoted to a lecture is at once evident, and this constituted the one defect of Mr. Mulock's able address, which was distinguished by the pungency of its criticism on men and principles, and by the lucidity of the narrative of events. Mr. Mulock denounced the principle of the sovereignty of the people which the promoters of the French Revolution propounded as "the dominion of the dunghill and the monarchy of mud." He defines the Whig as one who seeks power at any price, and who gets up grievances as the means of securing it, and adduced as instances Catholic Emancipation and Reform, whilst, he observed, that the best measure ever brought forward – the repeal of the Corn Laws – was achieved neither by Whig nor Tory, but by Richard Cobden, who was neither. Mr. Mulock was, however, very impartial in his castigations. Whilst he pronounced the French Revolution to be the work of infernal agents, he condemned in strong terms the corruption of the Throne, the aristocracy, and the Church which preceded it, and in praising Burke for comprehending the destructive character of the Republican Doctrines he pointed out that his admiration for what it destroyed was unfounded. Again, while tracing the continued effects of the revolution to our own time, and pronouncing them mischievous, he treated the three Monarchs who followed the first Empire with the utmost scorn, especially denouncing Louise Philippe as a petty-fogging trickster. Whilst admiring Pitt he condemned his policy in going to war with France in conjunction with the Continental powers. Wellington he warmly eulogised and Burke and Canning he especially praised, saying, however less of the latter than those of his audience, who were aware of his close association with that statesman as his private secretary, desired to hear. Fox and Sheridan he placed far below their rivals in Parliament, and condemned them as the promoters of revolutionary principles. He expressed his entire approval of the course taken by the present Emperor of the French in 1851. He said he did not share the apprehensions of invasion which led to the establishment of the Rifle Volunteer Force, for though the lower French officers did entertain absurd notions of invading England, he did not think the folly ascended higher than Colonels, but he approved of the volunteer movement. Speaking of the Code Napoleon, which he highly praised, Mr. Mulock condemned the present state and practise of English law, and noticed that in France a suitor must first get the assent of an *avocat*, equivalent to our

barrister, before he could go to the *avoue* or attorney, and proceed with his action, and if a case at the trial appeared a groundless one the *avocat* was liable to, and often suffered, suspension for having certified it, whilst in England it was the interest of the lawyers to encourage litigation. The lecture was extempore, and was delivered with considerable force considering Mr. Mulock's age. The audience greeted him with hearty applause, which was renewed at the close on the invitation of Mr. Pilling, the president of the institution."¹⁶

In the December Mulock gave a lecture on the 'Past and Present State of Ireland:

"Mr. Thomas Mulock delivered a lecture at the Lyceum on Tuesday evening, on "The Past and Present State of Ireland." He gave an interesting sketch of the past history of the country, observing that it was a great misfortune to Ireland that it was not in the first instance thoroughly conquered, the result having been constant outbreaks of a continuous course of vain struggles against the supremacy of England, instead of an acquiescence in the connection of the two countries, and an earnest resort to those industrious pursuits which can alone make a nation prosperous. Regarding the Roman Catholic religion as one of the causes of the misfortunes of the country, Mr. Mulock still entirely condemned the penal laws which were passed with the view to put it down by legal oppression. He said Cromwell alone appeared to have understood how to deal with Ireland, for the sword was a more merciful instrument of overcoming rebellion than penal laws. He approved the repeal of those laws on the principle enunciated by his illustrious friend Mr. Canning, that all good subjects should be treated with equal justice quite apart from their religious convictions, and that government should punish overt acts and not opinions. He claimed credit for having suggested the principles of the Encumbered Estates Act in Ireland in a letter to Lord Clarendon. He denounced Fenianism as atheism and Jacobinism, as based on principles subversive of the bonds which held society together. He maintained that it was far more serious than the government and the public generally thought, and urged that martial law should be proclaimed in Ireland, and stringent measures taken to put it down. The attendance was not large, but the lecturer was heartily applauded."¹⁷

Mulock's daughter, Dinah, at this time provided a stained glass window for the Shrine Chapel at St. Mary's Church, Willesdon, in memory of her mother, Dinah and her two brothers, Thomas Mellard and Benjamin Robert.¹⁸

In 1867 Mulock returned to what was for him a favourite cause for intervention, in the unwarranted detention, as he saw it, of a person by medical authority, and taking up a case that had excited a deal of public interest, Mulock wrote to Lord Harrowby, the Chairman of the Board of Visitors of the Coton Fields Lunatic Asylum, at Stafford, seeking his intervention on behalf of a patient at that hospital. This correspondence Mulock forwarded to the editor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser* and it duly appeared in the paper as a matter of public interest:

"THE CASE OF TOVEY TENNANT: OPPRESSIVE PERVERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH LAW OF LUNACY":

The following correspondence has passed between the Earl of Harrowby and Mr. Mulock:

Stafford, August 27th 1867.

"My Lord,

"Now that the 'hurly-burly' of sham reform is suspended, and (as our excellent common friend Major Fulford¹⁹ informs me) your Lordship has returned to rural quiet, I think it opportune to address a question to your lordship which I am confident your well-known urbanity will pardon me for putting.

I beg, then, to enquire of your lordship whether, in your capacity of Chairman of the Committee of Coton Lunatic Asylum, you would feel at liberty to allow a friend of his family to see Mr. Tovey Tennant, now a patient in that establishment? As Mr. Tovey's case has excited

considerable notoriety, I think it highly desirable for the sake of the institution, that the true, present case of the unfortunate gentleman should be fully known – which it cannot possibly be, so long as all access to him is denied, and by the very parties too who are pecuniarily interested in his detention. For myself, I do not venture to pass any judgement on the precise case of Mr. Tovey, but it is perfectly clear from all the published statements respecting him that he is not a dangerous lunatic, nor an imbecile. The utmost alleged against him appears to be that he cherishes ‘delusions’ of an eccentric cast, quite harmless in themselves, but construed by the strained conclusions of medical men as denoting absolute privation of mental faculty. I am not going to obtrude adverse arguments upon your lordship, but it may suffice to say that if the indulgence of strange fantasies be indicative of insanity, and calls for coercion and confinement, a vast number of persons, now at large, would necessarily be deprived of personal liberty and their rights of property. In all ranks and gradations of society would be found, I boldly affirm, almost innumerable individuals who fondly hold, and even openly avow, beliefs, opinions and settled convictions of so startling and extravagant a character as to set truth at daring defiance. Exalted personages, even sovereigns wearing crowns, are known to cherish false views and ‘delusions,’ in comparison of which poor Mr. Tovey Tennant’s imputed freaks of fancy are trifles of the very slightest significance; and yet all those persons, apart from their favourite mental hobbies, are as capable of passably performing the duties required of them as the soberest members of society; and I hold it to be rank injustice to meddle with errors of thought which produce no practical injury to anyone.

Let us hope, my lord, that the time is at hand when the professional dogma respecting ‘delusions’ will be forced to yield to rational public opinion, viz. that delusions, however erroneous and regrettable – but which cause no injury to any fellow mortal – shall not be a sufficient ground for consigning men and women to asylums – to herd with undoubted lunatics.

Lord Harrowby responded:

To: Mr. Mulock.

Sandon Hall,
September 10th 1867.

Sir,

My time has been so much engrossed just now that I have not been able to attend properly to the subject of your letter. I hope to do so very shortly.

I am sir, your faithful servant,
Harrowby.

Having acknowledged the letter, Harrowby later responded:

Sir,

‘I have now perused copy of the judgement delivered in the case of Mr. Tovey by Lord Justice Turner and Lord Cairns, and having so done cannot see that the Committee of the Coton Hill Asylum would be justified in co-operating to re-open the case. We are acting on rules, which we must abide by. The question as to the amount of delusions and their nature, which justify and call for confinement in an asylum, or any other restraint on personal liberty, is one too difficult and delicate for me to pretend to enter upon. In this case we have no option as a Committee. I regret that various engagements should have prevented me from giving earlier and full attention to your communications.’

I am sir, your obedient servant,
Harrowby.

Mulock was not to be put off by the ‘straight bat’ that he encountered and was unable to resist the temptation to include a comment on Harrowby’s political inclination:

Stafford, September 11th 1867.

“To the Right Honourable the Earl of Harrowby,

“My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship’s courteous letter, or I would prefer saying, just such a letter as a highbred Nobleman is wont to write.

*I too, my Lord, have closely considered, and with the utmost impartiality, the judgement delivered in the case of Mr. Tovey Tennant, by the late Lord Justice Turner and endorsed by Lord Cairns, and, allow me to say that, one point excepted, I differ from that judgement **in toto**: for it is plain to me that the Judges had delegated to subordinates duties which they were perfectly competent to perform, and, indeed, ought to have performed themselves. Instead of private inquiries made by an official physician of the court – instead, also, of a far too furtively conducted commission **de lunatico inquirendo** at Coton Asylum (by Commissioner Barlow) – the proper and satisfactory course was to order the appearance of Mr. Tovey Tennant before the Court, and there and then pursue such an open investigation as would have made it evident whether Mr. Tovey Tenant was or was not a madman. For, my Lord, this is the true question at issue in Tovey’s case. **Not**, as sordidly interested parties, or as speculative experts would craftily allege, that he is a prey to certain ‘delusions’ and **therefore** must be deemed a lunatic, and deprived of personal liberty, and all exercise of his rights of property – but simply, does Mr. Tovey entertain any delusions dangerous to himself or to others? This is the law of England, shamefully perverted by certain medical men who drive a lucrative trade in constructive lunacy, and who crowd public and private asylums with men and women who cherish queer but harmless ‘delusions,’ and who are nevertheless quite capable of discharging the ordinary duties of life. Dr. Forbes Winslow is the great apostle of the medical creed which would consign about every third person in England to a madhouse! (And **par parenthese**, I may say that the discreet doctor is the reputed owner or part owner of several asylums, and his doctrines are largely carried out elsewhere with orthodox rigour). Tovey’s clandestine marriage at Scarborough, I join with the judges in reprobating; but is it not strange that the bench omitted to censure the misconduct of a solicitor at Scarborough who, with a full knowledge of all the facts of Tovey’s case, raised no objection to the marriage and even professionally sanctioned the marriage settlement? It was the proper business of the said solicitor to refer to the statutes of George 2nd which renders such marriages illegal and invalid.*

*As your lordship refers me to the authority of Lord Cairns, let me add that, while admitting the great ability of the new luminary of the House of Lords, my estimate of the soundness of his judgement is very much shaken by his Lordship’s – ‘delusion’ shall I call it? That minorities (Tory of course) ought to be effectively represented! That a political minority should cleave steadfastly to a **PRINCIPLE** is perfectly justifiable; but that a minority should have **POWER** by means of a subtle subterfuge is a dangerous error which it was reserved for a great lawyer to palm upon the public.*

N.B. Some considerations flowing from the preceding correspondence will shortly appear. T.M. ²⁰

The next item to draw Mulock’s comments was that of a concert arranged to raise funds for the Stafford Market, John Morgan, the Mayor of Stafford, having launched a bid, through the concert, to improve the roofing of the building, the concert being held at the Lyceum Theatre on the evening of Friday the 20th September 1867. Shargool, the organist of St. Mary’s, Stafford, and a flautist named Matthews performed, while Montem Smith, a tenor of some repute, gave a well-received rendition of many ballads. There had been a brief and approving report of the concert in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* of the 21st September, but Mulock thought it appropriate to give a more comprehensive account:

*“The necessity of going early to press on the night of this charming concert, curtailed the favourable criticism which appeared in the last issue of the **Advertiser**. It is, however, not too late to enter somewhat more largely and distinctively into the merits of a series of performances so creditable to the artistes, and so eminently gratifying to the auditory. Mr. Montem Smith’s musical*

entertainment entitled 'An Evening with the Old English Ballads,' constituted of course the main part of the concert, and a more pleasing popular exposition of the subject, illustrated by the characteristic vocal powers of this excellent English tenor, and aided by his own versatile accompaniment, can hardly be conceived. Mr. Smith's object is to rescue English ballads from the reproach of not being admirable national music; and he certainly does much to verify his patriotic theory by singing with great taste, feeling and humour a number of ballads, each of which has some peculiar claim on our attention. But ballads after all, are more illustrative of national manners than of national music, and Mr. Montem Smith, in his introductory remarks to each song, exemplifies this very happily. Every successive song told upon the audience, but 'Barbara Allen,' 'O, for a husband,' 'The flaxen headed ploughboy,' and one or two more, drew forth that hearty applause which is always a spontaneous sign of approval. Mr. Smith, commencing with the well-known air of 'My lodging is on the cold ground,' put forth several arguments to assure us that it is an English, not an Irish melody; but we beg to tell him (and indeed have told him) that he labours under a mistake. The point was agitated and settled sixty years ago, before Moore wrote a line of 'Believe me if all those endearing young charms' – one of the most graceful of the Irish melodies. Sir John Stevenson's researches were indefatigable, and the Irish lineage of the sweet air was fully established by Walker, the author of the celebrated 'Essay on the Irish bards. The truth is, that England does not possess anything of national music worthy to be compared with the Irish melodies. 'That strain I heard was of a higher mood.' The mixture of power and pathos, of tenderness, and wild revolt against foreign oppression, give a singular national impress to the music of the maltreated and misguided people of Ireland; and Moore did his utmost to fan the flame of discontent by his unrivalled lyrical contributions to the far-famed 'Irish melodies.' And now what shall we say of the choicely paired instrumentalists, Mr. Shargool and Mr. Matthews? Mr. Shargool's eminent ability as an organist and pianist is thoroughly known and appreciated. He is a first-rate master of instrumentation, and his solo playing is always delightful, for he evidently not only knows but *feels* what he plays, and this the true key to all expression in music. But on this occasion Mr. Shargool had a worthy associate in every piece performed. Mr. Matthews, apart from all exaggerated estimate, is unsurpassed by any existing flautist, and in our humble judgement he is superior to any performer on the flute within memory. He enjoys the most complete command over his instrument (silver toned in every sense), and he extracted an astonishing variety of sounds which were so exquisitely blended with accordant sounds from Mr. Shargool, that the respective instruments were, so to say, locked in one another. The 'Concertante,' by Beethoven, and the fantasia, 'There is na luck,' charmingly instanced this. We understand that Mr. Matthews is an amateur of his art; all we can say is, that he could readily prove his just claim to be one of the most distinguished heads of the musical profession. It will be a source of great gratification to all lovers of good music when a fitting building shall be erected containing an ample concert room for Stafford and County assemblages. We fear that local capitalists have directed their instruments towards the Rowley Estate Company, and that they have done wisely; but the more villas and terraces spring up about Stafford, the more likelihood will there be of an increased and increasing population, among whom many would be glad to hear with advantage 'Old English Ballads' from Mr. Montem Smith, and classic solos and harmonies from Mr. Shargool and Mr. Matthews.²¹

When in 1867 some British adventurers were kidnapped by tribesmen in Abyssinia, the British government thought it desirable to mount an expedition to secure the release of the captives. This gained national coverage and Mulock brought his opinion to bear upon the subject; the correspondence that passed between him and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and then the India Office, naturally found a place in the local Stafford newspaper:

"THE PLANNED INVASION OF ABYSSINIA":

The following correspondence has been forwarded to us for publication:

Stafford, September 8th 1867.

"To the Right Honourable Lord Stanley, M.P., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

“My Lord,

*The imminence of immense national expenditure in equipping, conveying and providing for the proposed expedition to Abyssinia induces me, with all due respect and deference to your Lordship and colleagues, to put the simple question, whether an offer of ransoming the unfortunate captives would not be the most likely and expedient mode of effecting their deliverance? A recent and reliable traveller (Sir S. Baker) in the country adjacent to Abyssinia shows unmistakeably that money or money's worth constitutes the only means of accomplishing any object through the semi-savage chiefs of the abject Nubian peoples. Why not then doff all false dignity, and resort at once to the prudent policy of ransom, which, be it ever so large in amount, would be the merest trifle compared with the enormous outlay now about to be incurred; and worst of all, the deadly perils to which our gallant soldiers must necessarily be exposed in marching through a vast desert of pestiferous jungle, under a burning sun – all commissariat supplies, including even drinking water – to be furnished continuously from our sea-board stores until and after our troops reach their desolated destination – to find, it may happen, that the **casus belli** has been removed by the massacre of the captives to avenge British invasion? These forshadowings are not unworthy of grave consideration.”*

Foreign Office, September 13th 1867.

To Thomas Mulock, Stafford.

Sir,

I am directed by Lord Stanley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant and to inform you that all arrangements connected with inquiries in regard to Abyssinia are made under the orders of the India Office.

I am sir, your most obedient humble servant,

E. Hammond.

Not to be daunted Mulock persevered:

Stafford, September 14th 1867.

*“Mr. Mulock presents his compliments to Lord Stanley and begs to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Hammond's letter of the 13th instant informing him (Mr. Mulock) that “all arrangements connected with inquiries in regard to Abyssinia are made under the orders of the India Office.” Mr. Mulock feels obliged by Lord Stanley's prompt courtesy, but begs to observe that his sole and specific inquiry was, whether the question of ransoming the captives **by the government** had been fully considered by her Majesty's ministers, among whom the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs holds a deservedly esteemed position?”*

India Office, September 17th 1867.

Sir,

I am desired by Sir Stafford Northcote to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant inclosing a copy of a communication addressed by Mr. Mulock to Lord Stanley, for which Sir Stafford is much obliged.

I am sir, your obedient servant,

W. H. Benthall.

Here it seems the Civil Service prevailed: there would be no further comment.²²

Following upon the letter about the concert held by the Mayor of Stafford, Mulock then published circulars commenting upon the sale of sheep in the improved covered market at Stafford and another relating to a Perambulator Nuisance, both circulars available for purchase from William Edwards, bookseller, of Bridge Road, Stafford. The circular concerning the covered market was in

effect a mild rebuke for the Mayor of Stafford and the Market authorities and not unworthy of reproduction:

“The present Mayor of Stafford (a much respected townsman) being desirous of illustrating his Mayoralty by means of publico-private acts, his worship set on foot, very strenuously, a subscription to defray the cost of removing all nuisances from the vicinage of the covered market, and with the further liberal view of rendering it not only a sheltered place of sale for the usual articles of household consumption, but capable of being readily converted into a semi-fashionable saloon of large dimensions. Money being raised, and the work completed, handsome entertainments have taken place there, among which may be noticed a constitutional-conservative (whatever that may mean) banquet, at which there was a patriotic exhibition of a customary gormandising, guzzling and fuddled speech-making. I, as a mere outsider, concluded that all must be going on in a satisfactory manner, according to the Mayor’s enticing appeal for more and more subscriptions (to liquidate debts); when, on the 2nd instant, walking up Greengate Street, I was accosted by a scared-looking official, who implored me to look into the covered market, “for, sir,” said the frightened man, “they have turned it into an auction room for sheep, and we shall have pigs next.” So, asking the civil inspector of police to accompany me to the scene of action, I went thither, and certainly it had not been exaggerated. On my right were some scores of fine sheep, ready for an early change into mutton, but not conducing to the cleanliness or sweet savour of the hall; on my left was a long table covered with eatables, prepared (I suppose) for the highest bidders, and, further on, a noisy crowd was assembled, in the centre of which stood Mr. Gillard, expatiating most loudly and eloquently on the merits of a lot of fleecy four-footed favourites. The whole place, however, was offensive in the extreme, and, as the inspector remarked, “it would hardly be sweet enough for the sellers of butter, etc., on the coming Saturday.”*

*Now, I am requested to ask the Mayor, whether when he so importunately solicited subscriptions for the improvement of the covered market, any such state of things as just described, was in contemplation? If not, why should such a nasty supplement be allowed by the Borough Magistrates? Some angry subscribers think a portion of their quota ought to be returned to them, but others, more moderate, are of opinion that not a penny should in any way be contributed towards discharging debt (why was it incurred?) unless a guarantee shall be given that sheep are not to be folded, nor pigs suffered to litter in the covered market.*²³

In the October of 1867 Mulock published a review, price 4d, of the Queen’s book on the early years of her beloved Albert, *‘The Queen’s Literary Tribute to the memory of the Prince Consort.’* (I have not been able to obtain sight of a copy.)²⁴

Having advertised that he would deliver a lecture on English Protestant Ritualism, to be held at the Lyceum, Stafford, Mulock discovered, no doubt with some irritation, that the meeting was cancelled due to the theatre having been booked for another engagement!²⁵ The lecture was rearranged to take place on the 28th October, admission 1/- to the boxes or floor, 6d to the gallery and a report of the meeting stated that Mulock:

“In expounding on his theories observed that there was a great amount of darkness on the subject, proceeding that prior to the advent of the Saviour there was a true and false ritualism; that the former was ordained by the command of God, which was observed by Abel, and that the latter was a device of man’s own contrivance, like Cain’s sacrifice and the golden calf in the desert, and was the object of the condemnation of the prophets. However, in Christ all these were fulfilled, and since his death there remained only two external rites – baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Mulock noticed the extension of sacerdotal views in the Church of England, and expressed the fear that such would ultimately lead to the separation of Church and State, which he should greatly regret. He regarded the Established Church not as a spiritual, but as a political institution and as forming a kind of ecclesiastical police, but one of the greatest value as it planted all over the country men of education who exerted, on the whole, a very beneficial interest on society. Mr. Mulock took a gloomy view of the future, apprehending that everything tended to loosen the bonds by which society is held together,

and feared that this country was in a fair way of being involved in revolution, which, in so rich a country, would be likely to be very terrible in its extent. The lecture abounded with 'happy hits' at various parties, a specimen of which was Mulock's reference to Lord Derby's expression about having taken "a leap in the dark" "*people were often obliged to walk in the dark, or to grope in the dark, but to leap in the dark seemed the conduct of an insane person.*" The audience, which was small, frequently cheered the lecturer.²⁶

7th March 1868.

In March 1868, Mulock was summoned by William Edwards (the bookseller noticed above, and with whom he had lodged in Forebridge), for arrears of rent; Mulock lost the case. As with much of Mulock's activities it cannot be ignored and appeared under the heading 'THE TROUBLES OF A LODGER':

County Court, Stafford, before W. Spooner, Esquire, Judge.

EDWARDS v MULOCK:

'This was an action which, like that which followed it, excited much interest in a crowded court. It was brought by Mr. William Edwards, of Forebridge, Stationer, to recover from the defendant the sum of £4-13s-11d, being £4 for six weeks rent of apartments to January 31st, seventeen weeks gas, 8s-6d and 5s-5d for articles supplied. The defendant had paid £2-18s-9d into court, disputing the claim for gas and for two of the six weeks lodgings charged, he having left them on the 17th ult. On the case being called on he pointed out that the summons bore no witness signature, and maintained that it was therefore informal, but observed that from his respect for authority, which was rather on the wane at present, he would have come into court even had it been written on the back of a playbill. Mr. Brough, who appeared for the plaintiff, briefly opened the case, stating that in September last Mr. Mulock called upon his client and agreed to rent some apartments in his house at the rate of £32 a-year. In due course he removed to the apartments and when the first month's rent was due he sent the plaintiff £2-8s. He was, however, informed that the amount was £2-13s-4d and he rectified that mistake by paying the additional 5s-4d. Matters went on until the beginning of November, when Mr. Mulock sent a note to the plaintiff stating that Mrs. Edwards had given him notice to quit at the end of the week, but that he could not accept it for two reasons – first, because it had not come from the plaintiff himself, who ought to be master in his own house, and secondly, because his tenancy was a monthly one. If proper notice were given he (Mr. Mulock) would pay attention to it, though not without regret, as he had always found the plaintiff respectful and obliging. However, Mr. Mulock, with the consent of the plaintiff, occupied the apartments until the 17th of January, when he left under the following circumstances. On Saturday the 11th of that month, Mr. Mulock - who, as most of the inhabitants of the county were aware, was a gentleman who corresponded very much - required some postage stamps, as he often did. He was supplied with some, and was asked at the same time whether he should require any more, and he said he should not. The plaintiff's reason for having this question put to him was that he (plaintiff) was a gentleman of a thoroughly religious mind – (laughter) – and did not like to go into his own shop on the Sabbath, or give other persons the trouble of going into theirs even for postage stamps. On the Sunday Mr. Mulock asked the servant to fetch some stamps, and she expressed her willingness to fetch them, but the plaintiff forbade her from taking them out of the shop or going anywhere else for them. In consequence of this Mr. Mulock wrote the following note to the plaintiff:

"Mr. Edwards having forbade his servant to convey a request on an urgent matter to a party four doors distant, Mr. Mulock desires to notify that he shall give up his apartments on the 31st instant. The servant girl, who, to do her justice, was willing enough to go, says that Mr. Edwards assigned a *religious* scruple for his conduct. This may be, but Mr. Mulock justly attributes all such trivial scruples to an imperfect knowledge of Christ's Holy Religion; Lord's day night, January 12th 1868."

The plaintiff replied stating that he had received Mr. Mulock's note with much satisfaction and would cheerfully forego his right to a month's notice on condition that Mr. Mulock left on the 31st as notified. The plaintiff contended that Mr. Mulock having said he should leave on the 31st, he was entitled to rent up to the end of the month; but Mr. Mulock having left in the middle of the month, considered that he ought not to pay rent beyond that time. This was the principle point in dispute. It was fair to Mr. Mulock to say that he had when he left tendered the plaintiff the amount he had paid into court, and informed him that any other demands must be applied for specially, and if shown to be just and lawful would of course be discharged. It appeared that a hearthrug, for which the plaintiff paid £2-10s or £2-14s had been very much damaged, owing, as was alleged, to Mr. Mulock's negligence, but no claim was made on this ground. The plaintiff and his wife then gave evidence in support of Mr. Brough's statement. The plaintiff stated that when Mr. Mulock first spoke about the apartments he said it was for a friend of his who wanted some, and had he known earlier that it was himself he should have refused to let them to him.

Mr. Mulock stated his own case in an able and amusing speech. He said he was happy to appear before his Honour as defendant and not as plaintiff. He always counselled persons not to go to law, and of course, he practised what he preached, which many preachers did not. However, appearing as defendant was quite another thing when a charge was made which the defendant believed to be extortionate and an attempt to impose upon him. He would not waste their time by laboured declamation but give them a succinct statement, the more so as he forbore cross-examining the plaintiff and his wife, the greater part of whose testimony was about as valuable as the 'Arabian Nights,' being as it was a complete fable to him. Mr. Mulock was proceeding to give his account of what took place, when his Honour suggested that he should make his statement evidence by giving it upon oath. Having been sworn, Mr. Mulock denied having agreed to give £32 a-year, but said that when the £2-8s was sent back to him he expected his daughter to visit him, and not wishing any unpleasantness at such a time, he yielded to the unjust demand. It might be inferred from the evidence given, that he suffered no inconvenience while he was at the plaintiff's, and that his sudden removal arose from his unreasonable request not being complied with. It was not so. The fact was that he had been made extremely uncomfortable, not by the plaintiff, but by his wife. He did not know whether in the course of his reading, his Honour had ever met that passage in Thackeray in which he points out that if a landlady were good-tempered, attentive, and civil, she might make her lodgers extremely comfortable; but that if, on the contrary, she should be, like too many landladies, a shrew and a screw – (much laughter) – she would make his life very miserable. On one occasion Mrs. Edwards brought the grave charge against him of having too many visitors. He was rather startled, and ventured to say something about the rights of lodgers to their own premises, and this was the cause of her giving him a week's notice. He sent for Mr. Edwards and expostulated with him. He, poor man, was very civil and very meek – so meek, indeed, that he could see at once that he was one of those unfortunate beings who were subjected to the tyranny of 'petticoat government.' (Much laughter.) He had nothing to say in defence, and he (Mr. Mulock) had not the heart to do more than give him a brief lecture on the law of landlord and lodger, not omitting to inform him that lodgers had a right to their own premises, and that Mrs. Edwards, in complaining of the number of his visitors – who were as respectable as any in the neighbourhood – had taken a great liberty. Other matters occurred, trivial in themselves, but they made him feel very uncomfortable. Among other things which annoyed him was their constant change of servants – they had no fewer than three during the short time he was with them. One of them robbed him of a sovereign, and when Mrs. Edwards found it out she despatched the servant, so that there could be no communication between them. Other little matters occurred with which he need not trouble the court; but he wished the landladies of Stafford to know that they must treat their lodgers with civility, or else their lodgers would give them notice to quit. With reference to the occurrence about the postage stamps, a true account had not been given. He had requested the servant to borrow a few stamps of a neighbour, who, however, had none on hand; and he then asked her to make a similar application to another neighbour, only four doors off. To his astonishment and that of a gentleman who was sitting with him the servant returned with a curt message to the effect that her master forbade her getting him these stamps, owing to some religious scruple. With regard to this he might safely say that he had lived along life, and could live comfortably with Turks, infidels and heathens; but he really could not get on at all with self-righteous

people – much laughter – particularly Sabbatarians and other Pharisees. These were the people who above all others were the real pests of society. They were so in England, but still more so in Scotland, where he sometimes lived, and where these ludicrous and un-Christian Sabbatarian scruples prevailed to the fullest extent. It was a very common thing for Sabbatarians in that country to attend three Services at Church on the Sabbath – as they hypocritically and incorrectly call the Lord's Day – and after the last of those Services adjourn to the *clachan*, which was in plain English the pot-house, where they remained the rest of the night even until morning. (Laughter.) Mr. Edwards might, for aught he knew, be as pious as Mr. Brough represented him to be; but his piety ought not to have prevented him from allowing his lodger to obtain what he urgently required. At any rate, to have remained much longer under the roof of so pious a man would have entailed very considerable suffering upon him, and hence his (Mr. Mulock's) notice to quit. Probably his Honour would think they had done well to separate when they could not agree. He denied having agreed to pay £32 a-year, and in the rent he did pay coal and gas was included. It was certainly one of the most unjustifiable cases ever brought forward. He might state that he had the happiness to have a daughter whose powers the world well knew – a very celebrated writer – a daughter who was very kind and obedient to him, and who was worthy of every respect and honour. He read a letter which the plaintiff had written to his daughter – a lady who was a perfect stranger to him – stating that he (Mr. Mulock) had left in consequence of his (plaintiff's) declining to allow his servant to purchase postage stamps for him on *a Sunday*. (This, Mr. Mulock observed, was probably intended as an appeal to his daughter's new relations with Sabbatarian Scotland and was, moreover, entirely false, as the servant was merely asked to borrow the stamps.) The letter further stated that Mr. Mulock owed him £4-13s-11d which he refused to pay – this he said was also false – and with the view of preventing exposure, requested Mrs. Craik to use her influence with Mr. Mulock to satisfy the claim. His daughter was married to a Scotchman, and he replied, stating that they never interfered with Mr. Mulock's affairs. He (Mr. Mulock) to whom Mr. Craik had sent the plaintiff's letter, wrote to Mr. Craik telling him that the letter was a falsehood from beginning to end, he having tendered the amount justly payable but which the plaintiff declined to receive unless he yielded to extortionate charges. "Your course," he informed Mr. Craik, "was quite correct, for no person whatever could I suffer to interfere with my upright conduct in the management of my own affairs, as I require neither counsel nor assistance." With these facts he left the case in his Honour's hands, but he must tell him plainly that nothing that could occur there could at all alter his view respecting the plaintiff's extortionate demand. For that reason he resisted it, but no person could ever say that he ever refused to comply with a just claim. He was incapable of doing so. As for the plaintiff and his wife, if they should incur some degree of odium by their proceedings they had only themselves to blame, and though he bore them no ill feeling he was constrained to say that if any person should enquire of him respecting lodgings and should at all manifest any inclination to submit himself to the tender mercies of Mrs. Edwards, he should certainly give him the advice which *Punch* gave to those about to marry – "don't." (Much laughter.)

His Honour said he ought not to allow himself to be carried away entirely by Mr. Mulock's clever and amusing statement of his view of the case. As regard the rent he should hold that it was a bargain for 12s a-week, there being no sufficient evidence of an agreement for £32 a-year. He should strike out the claim for gas, there being no proof a special agreement, in the absence of which the defendant was entitled for the sum he paid as rent to have the benefit of such facilities and conveniences as the lodgings afforded. He should allow rent up to the 31st of January, the time claimed by the plaintiff. If the plaintiff had merely said he would dispense with a month's notice without imposing any condition he should have allowed rent up to the day on which Mr. Mulock left only, but he said in his letter "on condition that you leave on the 31st." He therefore held that there was a special agreement between the parties that Mr. Mulock should remain tenant until the 31st, the plaintiff waiving his right to a month's notice. He should give judgement for the plaintiff for 18s-8d beyond the sum paid into court. Mr. Mulock said he was quite satisfied. The decision confirmed his impression that the only question in that court was "What's to pay?" (Laughter)

What might have become a final venture for Mulock was his proposal to edit the diaries of the late Lord Hatherton and it seems that he made the suggestion to his son-in-law, though without

response.²⁷ If MacMillan's had been enthusiastic – the Hatherton family undoubtedly would not have been.

Thomas Mulock died on Wednesday the 11th August 1869, and was buried at Castle Church, Stafford, on Friday the 13th August, the funeral attended by his daughter Dinah and her husband; also in attendance were the prison governor, Major Fulford and the prison surgeon, Robert Hughes! Mulock, did not live to see the abolition of imprisonment for debt for which he wrote so passionately and vigorously; that came about at the end of the year²⁸; and while his prediction that India would be totally lost to Britain eventually came to pass it took much longer than he anticipated, but did require a substantial military presence for control to be maintained in the meanwhile. Nor was he completely wrong in his forecast as to the future of Britain in Ireland!

From observations that have come down from contemporaries there seems much to deplore in Mulock's character, though as a solitary figure he may excite curiosity. Yet as the father of a renowned author - whose work did so much to stir the minds of ladies in Victorian England, but which now may attract more attention outside the country of her birth than inside - he is a legitimate figure of interest and analysis, primarily as to what influence he exercised on his daughter and her writing. Mulock was Irish by birth and temperament; amply possessed of qualities and failings often associated with persons of that nation. As to his early years there is little record though there is much that we might wish to know, just as we may about his daughter, Dinah's. But other than an obscure reference or two the earliest detail we have is of Mulock coming to Liverpool in his early twenty's where he appears to have shown far greater interest in politics than business. He impressed many people, so long as he extolled their political cause, and while there became acquainted with George Canning, to whom he claimed to have been a secretary, by which 'post' I conclude that he was keeping Canning punctual for appointments and meetings and scheduled appearances during his election campaigns.

Mulock undoubtedly upset persons of different political viewpoint, he was by some dubbed 'bloody Moloch' – bearing in mind the biblical association by no means a compliment - but in his business activity he failed. He attempted to advance his status by attending Oxford University, but bankruptcy proceedings brought about by the collapse of his business interests ended his hopes there. He turned to writing, at which he had shown accomplishment in letters to the *Courier*, and having moved to London was applauded for his letters in the name of Satan, which were extremely amusing and well received; but was he sufficiently rewarded as well? It seems unlikely. Mulock went abroad where he was advised to lecture, but we only appear to have his own opinion in respect of how well he did at Geneva, while at Paris an authoritative figure²⁹ rated his performance as indifferent. Returning to England there followed a venture as a non-denominational minister with extreme, almost unattainable standards for his followers. The movement collapsed under his volatile ego. Marriage, which he may have hoped would bring him some stability of income and status, inevitably added to the pressures of his life (and of that of his wife), and what of the relationship between them? The birth of three children within a relatively short space of time indicates that whether the union was of a blissful nature or not, it is at least plausible that there was dutiful submission on the part of the lady; but Mulock's indignation and frustration having led him to invoke procedures at law he became a subject of ridicule; lacked insight; perceived his own faults as those of others. It is plain that his marriage had collapsed, as had his chapel following, when he was committed to Stafford gaol for debt in 1830, and when released he may well have spent some time in a social vacuum, living from hand to mouth and in a deteriorating manner – for it would seem that he received little or no support from his wife at this time – and was eventually committed to the asylum in 1832. Much has been written of Victorian asylums and of those helpless and often vilified persons committed to them, of whom Mulock thought himself to be one; but were the authorities so wrong in committing him? Would he not at times have appeared demented by his abstract, self-delusional, religious zeal; the strength and vehemence of his demands frightening to his wife and others of the family? Hindsight is a wonderful weapon; knowledge and opinions have modified modern attitudes; but looking back at his activities in the light of his day there seems little room to criticise the then current medical opinion. The years that he spent in the asylum would only have served to increase the gulf between Thomas and his wife, but

with the death of his mother-in-law and additional finance at hand, came opportunity for a fresh start in London; a dutiful throw of the dice on Mrs. Mulock's part, perhaps under persuasion, where hope triumphed over experience, though could she have been glad of opportunity to escape to where she was not known? The pity of friends can at times be less than welcome. Mrs. Mulock have then moved into the change of life, but for whatever reason there were no further births to the lady of which we are aware. As for Thomas he had no income; no profession, no trade, and once his wife's financial state reduced under his controlling guidance (in order to satisfy his expectations of status and expenses for this, that and the other, as would befit the cultivated head of the family) and reduced the family finances most certainly would have been - there would inevitably have been recriminations, to which no doubt the children would inevitably have been obliged to lend ear. But all that Thomas could do was talk, read, write and wrangle; earning money on a sound and regular basis and the maintenance of a family appears beyond him. Over many years he produced booklets with challenging religious subjects, but his pamphlets concentrated on obscure nuances beyond popular and at times (certainly mine) comprehension. He tried lecturing once more but without much success; then tried business as a secretary to the Society of Heirs at Law. That seems to have come to an abrupt end. He then experienced the failure with the railway company that can only have added to his overall distress. In his mind Thomas Mulock was so often the victim of prejudice; of circumstance; of betrayal; but from 1845 when he is generally charged with deserting his family, could it have been that he lived in fear of a tap on the shoulder from a bailiff and consequential imprisonment? How, I ask, could it be otherwise? In trying to set up the railway company he travelled to many places, Bedford, Stoke, Crewe and Manchester amongst them, solicited support for the scheme. Who but the secretary of the company would have inserted advertisements in the various newspapers, arranged printed matter, sent out letters and much else essential for the purpose; possibly entertaining added to his personal expense for travel and accommodation. And when the company collapsed, was he as secretary left high and dry responsible for any debts that existed? It seems doubtful if others concerned in the enterprise would have come forward to shoulder the burden. Certainly his brother-in-law, Parker, thought that Mulock was on the point of arrest for debt in 1845 or why would he have mentioned the Insolvency Court? Reverting to Mulock's relationship with his wife and family had they now, too worried, exhausted and exasperated to tolerate him longer, quite simply given him marching orders? It was not long afterwards that Mrs. Mulock died. Following the debacle of the railway venture Mulock speculated about a career in law, it was never going to be; soon he was at Liverpool seeking an income by advising investors or potential investors on matters to do with the railway - railways were a lucrative business for some at the time - but it seems this thought never got off the ground. Following this Mulock was in Ireland at the time of the potato famine, then Scotland when he had a brief period of financial reward before, biting off the hand that fed him, he returned to London. Mulock's expressed support for Louis Napoleon led to a journey to France and a brief spell once more as an editor of a newspaper, a venture that came to an abrupt end. Pape cites Mulock as writing to Harding, one of the trustees of the children's money, in March 1852, asking for an advance of £40 to enable him to return to England. By 1852 Mulock was again in Ireland at his beloved Killiney, where his relatives may well have (reluctantly) supported him as his principal occupation appears to have been 'public letter-writing.' While outside the jurisdiction of English law Mulock would not have faced imprisonment, if indeed he was threatened by it, and when in 1854 he returned to Stoke, by 1855 he would appear to have been without funds, bringing about his own imprisonment for debt by refusing to pay his hotel bill. Did he really dispute the hotel bill, or was it a convenient way to avoid the stigma of incurring a bill when not being able to pay it, for which he may well have been imprisoned as a criminal and in far less comfortable circumstances? To be imprisoned on a point of principle far more acceptable and less threatening to his highly-polished ego, that was so susceptible to bruising and most volatile in reaction?

When finally released from confinement Mulock became re-united with his daughter but the relationship remained one of duty on her part and could he have been a little envious of her success?

Nowadays, no doubt, Mulock would have become a successful public figure, whatever his faults; of that I have little doubt. Perhaps a Member of Parliament, even of ministerial position; or a trade union leader, or he could have found an important niche in local government. Given the

advance of science now so readily available, Mulock may not have allowed his judgement to become clouded with religious considerations, have devoted his talents to purely secular considerations. Throughout his life Mulock was compelled to write and ever sought an avenue through which he could express, impress and progress, but mostly mistook the way. As Byron observed, Mulock lacked control and, when fired with enthusiasm, lacked judgement.

As to how his behaviour affected his daughter I leave others to decide, but for a woman who was so successful in her literary life, Dinah now appears to have been virtually forgotten, at least in England. Her novels now may have little appeal; the morals of her stories nowadays readily incorporated in general experience; her verse perhaps only appreciated by a narrow circle. That Dinah was private, almost secretive, about her family life was for the days in which she lived, with good cause. Aghast at her parents situation, where a loveless social duty had to prevail until an inevitable final rupture, Dinah found solace and hope in literary expression, as had her father, and when she wrote on feminine interests would not her young domestic experiences have predominated in moulding her thoughts and advice?

The only vague trace of Dinah's birthplace that now remains appears to be the name 'Longfield Road' at Hartshill, Stoke, but I say that from a casual glance, perhaps there is more. I find it interesting that George Saintsbury, in his 'History of English Literature,' published in 1898 (and having since been reprinted on a sufficient number of occasions to mark general approval of the author's endeavours), and at a time when Dinah's literary achievements were comparatively fresh in the public mind, only casually remarks her name, 'notice of bare inclusion' was, in his opinion, all that she warranted (even her name is omitted from the index in my 1953 reprint, but that we might attribute to a composer's error). Whether Saintsbury - who amply demonstrates his own scholarship in dealing with those whom might be thought more aesthetically valued amongst contributors over the centuries - dismisses her through literary snobbery or was reflecting the general assessment of her at that period I leave for others to ponder. But it does seem that apart from the contribution by Mrs. Oliphant and that of Aleyn Lyell Reade and the notes from Pape, such public curiosity about Dinah as might have existed remained un-sated. Perhaps insufficient material of interest was available, if so the foregoing account may help to clarify why. The sensitive, most private girl from the Potteries in Staffordshire, avoided embarrassment by keeping much from the public eye, and given human nature perhaps more than we shall ever know. But wasn't 'John Halifax' really the person Dinah wished that her father could have been, one who through plain toil devoid of intellectual straining achieved what he so much desired to be, a Gentleman?

The deaths of his sons may have told upon him, though not shown; left a disappointment that his line was not to be continued; the two boys in turn must have suffered psychologically from their early background. Two stories come down relating to the death of Thomas, one that he fell from the rigging of a ship, the other that he slipped into a dry dock. Were they convenient explanations by the family to cover an embarrassing actuality or did anybody really know? Then Benjamin! Did Dinah, remembering her father's volatility and seeing and fearing the same development in her younger brother, find it more convenient to have him looked after by some convenient custodian, comfortably out of sight, while she was unable to face the stress that such behaviour brings? And yet again on Dinah; when in 1870, after her father's death, she published another of her many novels, '*A Brave Lady*,' the reader of this tale may very well conclude that the principal characters are those of her mother and father. Sally Mitchell in her remarks on Dinah comments on the similarity, as does Karen Bourrier. I shall not depart from the wisdom that they respectively impart. To me the account seems a virtual autobiography, adapted to conceal the true identity of the characters and so avoid offering ammunition to public gossip while at the same time allowing Dinah a form of confession.

One last point remains for me to comment upon; when Dinah Craik (as she then was) died suddenly in 1887, her husband, George Lillie Craik, received a message of condolence from Queen Victoria. In replying Craik mentioned an occasion which Dinah had recalled to him, when she met and spoke with Queen Victoria, "who has been most kind to me." Dinah could and surely would have wished for no greater compliment than that her sovereign had noticed and regretted her passing.³⁰

Here ends my tale of Thomas Mulock, but given that he wrote so much about so much, is it not possible that there could other instances for someone to relate; I have not covered everything.

¹ Staffordshire Advertiser January 23rd 1864. See also WSL ‘The Visiting Committee of Stafford Gaol, 1793 – 1878’ A J. Standley

² See Sally Mitchell.

³ Staffordshire Advertiser 23rd July, 1864; Kentish Chronicle, 6th August 1864.

⁴ W. H. Chetwynd (often known as Henry Chetwynd) became a visiting magistrates of the prison in January 1854, remaining so until his resignation from the committee at the April Quarter Sessions of 1865, see ‘The Visiting Committee of Stafford Gaol, 1793 – 1829,’ (unpublished) A. J. Standley, WSL.

⁵ Staffordshire Advertiser, 23rd July, 1864

⁶ The Glasgow Daily Herald, 29th July, 1864

⁷ Staffordshire Advertiser 23rd July 1864.

⁸ See Quotes and Queries.

⁹ Staffordshire Advertiser, 17th October, 1864

¹⁰ SRO D615/P(L)/1/10, letters to Lord Lichfield.

¹¹ The abolition of General Warrants followed John Wilkes illegal imprisonment following an attack on the King in the *North Briton*.

¹² Staffordshire Advertiser 22nd April 1865.

¹³ Numerous newspapers of the time; Dublin Evening Mail, 18th May, 1865,

¹⁴ The Morning Post, 29th September, 1865

¹⁵ Staffordshire Advertiser 28th October 1865.

¹⁶ Staffordshire Advertiser 25th November 1865.

¹⁷ Staffordshire Advertiser 16th December 1865.

¹⁸ Internet page of St. Mary’s Church, Willesden. The window was destroyed by enemy action during the Second World War.

¹⁹ Major Fulford, the governor of Stafford prison.

²⁰ Staffordshire Advertiser 21st September 1867, SRO

²¹ Staffordshire Advertiser 28th September 1867.

²² Staffordshire Advertiser 21st September 1867.

²³ Staffordshire Advertiser 26th October 1867; *Wednesday 2nd October 1867.

²⁴ Staffordshire Advertiser 26th October 1867.

²⁵ Staffordshire Advertiser 19th October 1867.

²⁶ Staffordshire Advertiser 2nd November 1867.

²⁷ ‘Narrating Insanity’ Karen Bourrier.

²⁸ Effective from the 1st January 1870, though imprisonment could be imposed under certain circumstances, particularly non-payment of fines.

²⁹ Thomas Moore

³⁰ Windsor Archives RA VIC/Main/F/39/4 (By kind permission of Her Majesty, the Queen)