"Whenever wise men," said Herbert, "have taken to thinking about their own times, it is quite true that they have always thought ill of them. But that is because the times must have gone wrong before the wise men take to the business of thinking about them at all. We are never conscious of our constitutions till they are out of order." "Ah; yes," said Mr. Luke; "how true that is, Herbert! Philosophy may be a golden thing. But it is the gold of the autumn woods, that soon falls, and leaves the boughs of the nation naked."—W. H. Mallock, The New Republic (1877)

Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death.—John Ruskin, Modern Painters V (1860)

A very strong, self-reliant people neither easily learns to act in concert, nor easily brings itself to regard any middling good, any good short of the best, as an object ardently to be coveted and striven for. It keeps its eye on the grand prizes, and these are to be won only by distancing competitors, by getting before one's comrades, by succeeding all by one's self; and so long as a people works thus individually, it does not work democratically.—Matthew Arnold, "Democracy" (1861)
The Threat of Anarchy

Through the decade of the fifties Ruskin was becoming more deeply involved in the myriad distresses of the vast world existing outside of art. Up until 1858 his personal religion served to keep him from what he looked upon as the precarious and unenviable position of those secular reformers who in despair of an afterlife had submerged all their own hopes for happiness in the effort to increase the happiness of mankind. But in this year Ruskin underwent a "conversion" that removed the last props of his childhood Protestantism and forced him to seek consolation in the Religion of Humanity.

In May of 1858 Ruskin, exhausted by his work arranging Turner's drawings for the National Gallery, by his teaching at the Working Men's College, and by his lecturing, set out for a holiday in Switzerland and Italy (for a change, without his parents). The tour lasted four months, and comprised experiences that moved Ruskin to modify his outlook on art and his role in the world.

One of these came near Bellinzona, and gave a permanent impress to Ruskin's political sensibility. He saw the weak misery of the people in this area of Switzerland as a small-scale illustration of the disastrous effects of the ethos of competition: "No pity nor respect can be felt for these people, who have sunk and remain sunk, merely by idleness and wantonness in the midst of all blessings and advantages: who cannot so much as bank out—or in—a mountain stream, because . . . every man always acts for himself: they will never act together and do anything at common expense for the common good. . . . " Ruskin was to use this account of the consequences of the creed of "every man for himself" in Unto This Last and elsewhere; and the effect of this Swiss impression on his political creed is felt in the fifth volume of Modern Painters, where he proclaims that "the highest and
first law of the universe—and the other name of life is . . . 'help.' The other name of death is 'separation.' Government and co-operation are in all things and eternally the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death." But Unto This Last and the final volume of Modern Painters were not to appear until 1860, and before Ruskin could write those works, with their secular and humanistic bias, he had to pass through a spiritual crisis of the first order of magnitude.

From Baveno and the Isola Bella, Ruskin traveled to Turin, where he set himself to observing and writing about the paintings by Veronese in the Gallery. In the process both his aesthetics and his religion were transformed. In later years he would maintain that all his early books, up to the end of The Stones of Venice, had been written under the aegis of his simple childhood religious belief; and that Modern Painters II in particular had placed the religious painter Fra Angelico above all others. He had, however, during his work at Venice, experienced the enormous yet irreligious power of Tintoret and Titian, and ever since The Stones of Venice had in his art teaching used Titian as the standard of perfection. But in his inner mind he suffered under the weight of the problem of "how the most perfect work I knew, in my special business, could be done 'wholly without religion'!"3

The problem was to be dramatically resolved in Turin by the accidental collision of two sides of Ruskin's experience. He was pondering an "Annunciation" by Orazio Gentileschi when the question of nobility in art, which he had discussed in Modern Painters III, burst upon him once again in the form of a paradox:

Besides being well studied in arrangement, the features of both figures are finely drawn in the Roman style—the "high" or Raphaelesque manner—and very exquisitely finished; and yet they are essentially ignoble; while, without the least effort, merely treating their figures as pieces of decoration, Titian and Veronese are always noble; and the curious point is that both of these are sensual painters, working apparently with no high motive, and Titian perpetually with definitely sensual aim, and yet invariably noble; while this Gentileschi is perfectly modest and pious, and yet base. And
Michael Angelo goes even greater lengths, or to lower depths, than Titian; and the lower he stoops, the more his inalienable nobleness shows itself. Certainly it seems intended that strong and frank animality, rejecting all tendency to asceticism, monachism, pietism, and so on, should be connected with the strongest intellects. Dante, indeed, is severe, at least, of all nameable great men; he is the severest I know. But Homer, Shakespeare, Tintoret, Veronese, Titian, Michael Angelo, Sir Joshua, Rubens, Velasquez, Correggio, Turner, are all of them boldly Animal. Francia and Angelico, and all the purists, however beautiful, are poor weak creatures in comparison. I don’t understand it; one would have thought purity gave strength, but it doesn’t. A good, stout, self-commanding, magnificent Animality is the make for poets and artists, it seems to me.

The prescription Ruskin had issued in 1856 for uniting expression with technical excellence failed to take into account the force of opposition between religious purity and naturalism that he now discerned in art and experienced in life.

The crisis of the new turning of his thought came one Sunday morning when "from before Paul Veronese’s Queen of Sheba, and under quite overwhelmed sense of his God-given power, I went away to a Waldensian chapel, where a little squeaking idiot was preaching to an audience of seventeen old women and three louts, that they were the only children of God in Turin. . . ." Like other Victorians, Ruskin was discovering that, as Walter Bagehot liked to say, nothing is more unpleasant than a virtuous person with a mean mind; and he was anticipating Arnold’s contrast between the unlovely Puritan religion of those who called themselves “the children of God” and the beauty and sweetness of the pagan or Hellenic ideal. Ruskin could no longer abide by a conception of human nature that either left many of the best human powers out of account or condemned them to perdition:

Has God made faces beautiful and limbs strong, and created these strange, fiery, fantastic energies, and created the splen-
dour of substance and the love of it; created gold, and pearls, and crystal, and the sun that makes them gorgeous; and filled human fancy with all splendid thoughts; and given to the human touch its power of placing and brightening and perfecting, only that all these things may lead His creatures away from Him? And is this mighty Paul Veronese, in whose soul there is a strength as of the snowy mountains, and within whose brain all the pomp and majesty of humanity floats in a marshalled glory, capacious and serene like clouds at sunset—this man whose finger is as fire, and whose eye is like the morning—is he a servant of the devil; and is the poor little wretch in a tidy black tie, to whom I have been listening this Sunday morning expounding Nothing with a twang—is he a servant of God?

Ruskin, for whom religion had always been Evangelical Protestantism or nothing, came out of the Waldensian chapel "a conclusively unconverted man." He had lost his Protestantism and found instead the Religion of Humanity. In trying to understand why Titian, despite his want of religion, had been able to do the most perfect work in painting, Ruskin was forced to the conclusion, "which did indeed alter, from that time forward, the tone and method of my teaching,—that human work must be done honourably and thoroughly, because we are now Men;—whether we ever expect to be angels, or ever were slugs, being practically no matter." In 1877 Ruskin told the workmen and laborers of Great Britain that they would find examples of the work that might be done, in the absence of religious belief, on behalf of humanity, in all the works he himself had written since 1858: "It is all sound and good, as far as it goes: whereas all that went before was so mixed with Protestant egotism and insolence, that, as you have probably heard, I won't republish, in their first form, any of those former books."

In reaction against his old religious loyalties, Ruskin now spitefully claimed to have learned from his experience in Turin that "positively, to be a first-rate painter—you mustn't be pious; but rather a little wicked, and entirely a man of the world." His ideal of world-
liness, however, was the very opposite of a bohemian aestheticism or a studied indifference to human suffering; for he was trying to replace what he now thought of as narrow Protestant piety with a broadly humanistic view of the miseries of the world and of their relation to his own happiness. He was much struck at about this time by the tendency of many religious people, in subtle collusion with apostles of the laissez faire ethic, to invoke the principle of "Mind your own business" as the one to be followed in dealing with foreign affairs. Yet, according to Ruskin, the Bible makes "our own" precisely the last business we should mind. "It tells us often to mind God's business, often to mind other people's business; our own, in any eager, or earnest way, not at all."

Moral awareness now seemed to Ruskin to have been artificially confined within very narrow boundaries by his contemporaries.

Yet even now Ruskin was incapable of subordinating his various aesthetic pursuits to his social goals or of channeling his energies into a single direction. At the end of 1858 he makes his customary statement of goals for the following year, and it is as rich and as diverse and as impossible of realization as ever it had been before his unconversion:

Indeed, I rather want good wishes just now, for I am tormented by what I cannot get said, nor done. I want to get all the Titians, Tintorets, Paul Veroneses, Turners, and Sir Joshuas in the world into one great fireproof Gothic gallery of marble and serpentine. I want to get them all perfectly engraved. I want to go and draw all the subjects of Turner's 19,000 sketches in Switzerland and Italy, elaborated by myself. I want to get everybody a dinner who hasn't got one. I want to macadamize some new roads to Heaven with broken fools'-heads. I want to hang up some knaves out of the way, not that I've any dislike to them, but I think it would be wholesome for them, and for other people, and that they would make good crows' meat. I want to play all day long and arrange my cabinet of minerals with new white wool. I want somebody to amuse me when I'm tired. I want Turn-
er's pictures not to fade. I want to be able to draw clouds, and to understand how they go, and I can't make them stand still, nor understand them. . . . Farther, I want to make the Italians industrious, the Americans quiet, the Swiss romantic, the Roman Catholics rational, and the English Parliament honest—and I can't do anything and don't understand what I was born for.

Ruskin's confusion of purpose came mainly from his recognition that, with the consolation of an afterlife gone, he had to justify his existence by worldly work; that collecting Turners and Titians into fireproof Gothic galleries was not likely to be viewed by future generations as an adequate apologia for a life; and that the noble and justifiable work, toward which he now felt himself irresistibly impelled, of getting everybody a dinner, was conducive neither to his health nor to his happiness. His postscript to this letter to Charles Eliot Norton indicates his own awareness of the incompatibility of his hopes: "I want also to give lectures in all the manufacturing towns, and to write an essay on poetry, and to teach some masters of schools to draw; and I want to be perfectly quiet and undisturbed and not to think. . . ." 10

Humanitarianism was always for Ruskin an enterprise both unnatural and unpleasant. Despite his oft-expressed hostility to John Stuart Mill, he should have sympathized deeply with a young man who had been courageous enough to ask himself, at an early stage in his career of political reform, whether the realization of all the changes in institutions and opinions toward which he had been working would bring great joy and happiness to him; and who had been honest enough to answer "No!" Ruskin was fond of referring to himself, after 1858, as "miserably benevolent." He admitted to the Brownings that he was never happy as he wrote, whereas they, for all their pretenses to benevolence, enjoyed their singing as much as nightingales did. Ruskin could never sing, only howl:

For my own pleasure I should be collecting stones and mosses, drying and ticketing them—reading scientific books
—walking all day long in the summer—going to plays, and what not, in winter—never writing nor saying a word—rejoicing tranquilly or intensely in pictures, in music, in pleasant faces, in kind friends. But now—about me there is this terrific absurdity and wrong going on. . . . I live the life of an old lady in a houseful of wicked children—can do nothing but cry out—they won't leave me to my knitting needles a moment. And this working in a way contrary to one's whole nature tells upon one at last—people never were meant to do it.\textsuperscript{11}

Nevertheless, within a few months of writing this letter, Ruskin was to announce that he would no longer write or do anything else that did not bear directly on getting people their dinners—"to fill starved people's bellies is the only thing a man can do in this generation, I begin to perceive." What had driven him to this decision, he told Norton on 31 July 1859, was "the dastardly conduct of England in this Italian war." Ruskin espoused the cause of Italian freedom from Austria, not because he disliked the Austrians—who (Prince Radetzky especially) had greatly impressed him in Venice in the winter of 1849–50—but because, having saved Italy from "the rottenness of revolution," they felt nothing but scorn for Italians and were stifling the development of the country.\textsuperscript{12} In June he had published two letters in the \textit{Scotsman} on "The Italian Question" in which he had defended the attempt of Louis Napoleon to expel Austria from Italy and had sharply criticized England's espousal of the principle of non-intervention. Now, in July, he was embittered by the news that Napoleon, beset by a number of political and military obstacles, had failed to keep his promise to free Italy as far as her eastern coasts, and had been forced to settle, in the Peace Treaty of Villafranca, merely for the freedom of Milan while the rest of Italy remained under Austrian control.

Ruskin, though he did not have the highest expectation of France's intervention in Italian affairs—"No French Emperor, however mighty his arm or sound his faith, can give Italy freedom," for she would have to earn it herself—was angered at what he believed to
be England's contribution to Napoleon's failure. England had in-
invoked the principle of nonintervention, of "Mind your own busi-
ness," when the freedom of Italians was being suffocated by a foreign
power, and Napoleon attempted to expel that power, Austria. Yet
the English government seemed to forget the theory of noninterven-
tion in all its dealings with the free, independent country of France:

The French are at present happy and prosperous; content
with their ruler and themselves; their trade increasing, and
their science and art advancing; their feelings towards other
nations becoming every day more just. Under which circum-
stances we English non-interventionists consider it our duty
to use every means in our power of making the ruler sus-
pected by the nation, and the nation unmanageable by the
ruler. We call both all manner of names; exhaust every
term of impertinence and every method of disturbance; and
do our best, in indirect and underhand ways, to bring about
revolution, assassination, or any other close of the existing
system likely to be satisfactory to rogues in general. This is
your non-intervention when a nation is prosperous.13

If Ruskin's anger at England seems understandable, his interpreta-
tion of England's political duplicity as the sign that he must hencefor-
tward devote himself exclusively to dealing with economic questions
is at first sight surprising. That he did react to the Peace of Villa-
franca by turning to the problem of filling starved bellies is clear
from his letters in the days and weeks following the 31 July outburst
of disillusionment to Norton. On 15 August he tells Norton that he is
undecided "whether Art is a Crime or only an Absurdity," and on 18
August he tells E. S. Dallas that he is ready to do battle with the po-
litical economists and with the soulless precepts of laissez faire,
"were it not still in question with me how far certain truths connected
with them can be spoken in the present state of the public mind."14

Ruskin's articles on "The Italian Question" led him to his attack
on political economy for two reasons. First, England's pious invoca-
tion of the principle of nonintervention in foreign affairs struck him
as an extension of the principle of laissez faire that obtained in the realm of industrial relations at home: "'Let who will prosper or perish, die or live—let what will be declared or believed—let whatsoever iniquity be done, whatsoever tyranny be triumphant, how many soever of faithful or fiery soldiery be laid in new embankments of dead bodies along those old embankments of Mincio and Brenta; yet will we English drive our looms, cast up our accounts, and bet on the Derby, in peace and gladness; our business is only therewith; for us there is no book of fate, only ledgers and betting-books. . . . ""15

Secondly, England's selective use of the principle—the unprosperous Italians could be left to themselves, but the contented French with their humane social system, must be rescued from their follies—suggested to Ruskin that English jealousy of France arose from mingled fear and suspicion of a society that had so often seen the red flag of revolution raised on behalf of the working class and that had done more than England to civilize that class.

Ruskin's sense of the superiority of France's social system to England's was publicly expressed in his testimony of March 1860 before the Public Institutions Committee. The committee had been appointed to consider the desirability and the means of opening such public institutions as museums on weekday hours when the working classes would be able to visit them. Ruskin recommended that the institutions be opened in the evenings and made several concrete recommendations about the kinds of pictures, prints, and collections of shells, birds, and plants that might be made available to the working classes. But he also took the opportunity, when questioned by Sir Robert Peel, to point out that far greater interest was taken in such matters by France than by England:

Sir Robert Peel. You stated that you thought there was far more interest taken in foreign countries in the intellectual development of the working classes than in England?

Ruskin. I answered that question rather rashly. I hardly ever see anything of society in foreign countries, and I was thinking, at the time, of the great efforts now being made
in France, and of the general comfort of the institutions that are open.

In France, Ruskin told the Committee, the working man was generally happier than his English counterpart because "there is less desire to get as much out of him for the money as they can; less of that desire to oppress him and to use him as a machine than there is in England." When Sir Robert expressed doubt that more interest was taken in the workers at Swiss factories than at English, Ruskin replied that "I was not thinking of Switzerland or of Zurich. I was thinking of France, and I was thinking of the working classes generally, not specially the manufacturing classes."  

What led Ruskin to champion France's social system at this time was not its democracy but its humanity; not its equality but, on the contrary, what he saw as its sharp definition of classes. Why was it that, in the Louvre, a workingman looked at the pictures with a greater degree of self-respect than a workingman evinced in London's National Gallery? In France, Ruskin claimed, workingmen were far more happily combined in public with the upper classes of society than they were in England exactly because they were more distinctly separated: "The temper abroad seems to be, while there is a sterner separation and a more aristocratic feeling between the upper and the lower classes, yet just on that account the workman confesses himself for a workman, and is treated with affection. I do not say workmen merely, but the lower classes generally, are treated with affection, and familiarity, and sympathy by the master or employer. . . ."  

In the course of his testimony Ruskin stubbornly resisted the suggestion that the French people's greater knowledge of art, greater love of color, and greater happiness resulted simply from a more artistic, colorful, and happy nature than it was the Englishman's lot to possess. No, says Ruskin, the difference lies not in our genes or in our stars, but in our social institutions:

*Mr. Slaney*. Do not you think that the light-hearted temperament of our southern neighbours, and the fineness of
the climate, which permits them to enjoy themselves more in the open air, has something to do with it?

*Ruskin.* I hope that the old name of Merry England may be recovered one of these days. I do not think that it is in the disposition of the inhabitants to be in the least duller than other people.

*Sir Robert Peel.* When was that designation lost?

*Ruskin.* I am afraid ever since our manufactures have prospered.  

In the previous year, 1859, Matthew Arnold had written of France that “it is the bright feature in her civilisation that her common people can understand and appreciate language which elsewhere meets with a response only from the educated and refined classes.” The language to which Arnold referred was the language of ideas, especially political ideas. The common people of France, and of no other European country, were sufficiently accessible to elevated ideas to be able to say of Louis Napoleon’s “generous and disinterested” attempt to liberate Italy: “Après tout, c’est une belle guerre, c’est une belle guerre.”

The occasion of Arnold’s high tribute to the lower classes of France was “England and the Italian Question,” his first political pamphlet, published on 1 August 1859, about six weeks after Ruskin’s letters on “The Italian Question” appeared in the *Scotsman.* Arnold had found himself on the Continent throughout the Italian crisis as the result of a new assignment he had accepted as a foreign assistant commissioner to the Newcastle Commission on Elementary Education. He had been offered the position on 24 January 1859 by Fitzjames Stephen, then secretary to the Education Commission (and shortly, in fact as early as August, to become one of Arnold’s severest political critics), and was delighted at the prospect of breathing the liberating air of foreign soil, and of France in particular. His original task was to report on the systems of elementary education in France and the French-speaking countries (Belgium, Switzerland, and Pied-
mont), but was later altered to include France, the French cantons of Switzerland, and Holland. Even after he accepted the assignment, he admitted to Jane: "You know that I have no special interest in the subject of public education, but a mission like this appeals even to the general interest which every man cannot help feeling in such a subject."  

In January of 1859, four days before he was offered this new opportunity by Stephen, Arnold had been more than usually overwhelmed by grammar papers to read. Nevertheless, he vowed to his sister, he was determined not to give up his "own work" entirely for any routine business. By his "own work" in 1859 he probably meant literary criticism more than poetry; certainly he did not mean his educational reports. But his experience of France later in the year was to awaken his interest in public education and to suggest the possibility of a fruitful marriage between his true vocation of literature and the routine business of school inspection. The nature of the experience in France that would make him into an advocate of popular education is best described by an account of Herder’s experience that Arnold copied into his notebook in 1864: "Herder awoke, in France—to the sentiment of human sympathy. The social spirit of France revealed to him the mission he can fulfill in the world. . . . Herder, without renouncing the superior ideas that were fermenting in his soul, conceived an ardent desire to imitate the effective character of French literature."  

The first public sign of Arnold’s awakening to his new mission came in "England and the Italian Question," which he composed in June and July, after he had spent several months inspecting schools and interviewing school administrators, statesmen, and men of letters. It is noteworthy that his political impulses, which had been relatively dormant since the Continental upheavals of 1848, should again be stirred into activity by foreign turmoil, and that he should now find himself defending the authoritarian emperor who had been the beneficiary of the miserable demise of the Second Republic, and whose accession to power had so deeply disturbed Arnold ten years earlier.

Arnold’s main purpose in the pamphlet was identical to Ruskin’s
purpose in his *Scotsman* articles and in his testimony before the Committee on Public Institutions. Arnold wanted his aristocratic countrymen to learn a lesson about their own masses by contemplating the different aspect and behavior of the masses of France. Like Ruskin, Arnold made the mistake of believing that Napoleon's intentions in intervening in Italy were entirely beneficent and that he had no wish to substitute the domination of France for that of Austria in Italy. Like Ruskin, he believed that the English aristocracy and the ministry of Lord Derby were responsible for foiling Napoleon's scheme of liberation. Like Ruskin, he also believed that Italian liberty could not really be given as a boon by the French emperor, and that "the future of a liberty so bestowed would have been at least ambiguous." But unlike Ruskin, Arnold believed that the English government, in its hostile indifference to Napoleon's effort, had made the right decision for the wrong reasons. Arnold was saddened by the "bitter disappointment of the Italians," yet did not regret the failure of Louis Napoleon's grand design. It would, after all, be distressing for an Englishman to witness a French emperor gaining material and moral predominance over the European Continent. "England may not concern herself with material predominance in Europe; but a share in moral predominance may and must be dear to her."  

What really provoked Arnold to write his pamphlet was not the English government's opposition to Napoleon but its inability to understand the nobility of his motives in trying to liberate Italy. Napoleon, whatever his faults, was in sympathy with the masses; and since—Arnold here generalizes (not very carefully) from his four months' experience in France—"not one Frenchman in a thousand wishes to enlarge the territory of France," it is certain that Napoleon's intervention was not a war of conquest but one of liberation. The English aristocracy cannot fathom this because it does not understand how the man it views as a despot is the elected and trusted ruler of the great majority of "the industrious classes" of France. Accustomed as it is to a working class that talks of selfish interests rather than of disinterested ideas, the English aristocracy also cannot understand how accessible are French common people "to the gratification of
playing before the world the brilliant part of generous and disinterested liberators of such a country as Italy."\(^{23}\)

Aristocracies in general, Arnold continues, and the English aristocracy in particular, are indifferent to the power that ideas can have over the populace because they form a caste of their own, have little personal experience of the masses, and are indifferent to ideas themselves. The greatest political mistake of the English aristocracy had been its supposition that in conquering France in 1815 it had conquered the ideas of the French Revolution, which must therefore be hollow. But, Arnold warns—somewhat paradoxically, in a pamphlet that champions Napoleon III—that the English aristocracy "did not conquer the ideas of the French revolution, and these ideas were, in the main, true."\(^{24}\)

Ruskin, who thought liberty and equality incompatible with true fraternity, told Sir Robert Peel that the French working classes were superior to their English counterparts because they were treated more humanely, not more equally, by their masters or employers. He hoped for the alleviation of the plight of the English working class through aristocracy's recovery of its old sense of obligation to those of a lower social station, and its recognition of the modern application of the old paternalistic ideal. "I believe that the way of ascertaining what ought to be done for the workman in any position," he concluded his testimony before the Public Institutions Committee, "is for any one of us to suppose that he was our own son, and that he was left without any parents, and without any help; that there was no chance of his ever emerging out of the state in which he was, and then, that what we should each of us like to be done for our son, so left, we should strive to do for the workman."\(^{25}\)

But Arnold, who was later to describe the belief that a governing class can serve the interests of classes without power or representation as "the last left of our illusions," learned a different practical lesson from the contrast between the English and the French masses. Alleging that the French masses were, politically, "as far superior to the insensible masses of England as to the Russian serfs," Arnold tells the English aristocracy that "the present Europe is no longer the
Europe of Mr. Pitt” and that it must prepare itself for a future in which force, the special instrument of aristocracies, will give way before ideas, the special instrument of the masses. The compelling problem of the present is not how to reconstruct the paternalistic and aristocratic system that once supported Merry England, but how to prepare the lower classes for their inevitable role as the new rulers of a democratic England. Though Arnold and Ruskin both speak of the “masses” (a term that was later to make Arnold uneasy) Arnold calls them pointedly the democratic masses. As for the paternalistic ideal, Arnold has no patience whatever with it. “Is a citizen’s relation to the State that of a dependent to a parental benefactor?” he asks in A French Eton. “By no means; it is that of a member in a partnership to the whole firm.”

The composition and publication of his political pamphlet had a remarkable effect in reviving Arnold’s spirits and giving to his letters a buoyancy very rare in these years of what in the previous summer he had called his subjugated existence. “I have not been in such spirits for a long time,” he wrote on 17 July as he was completing the pamphlet, which he wrote “with great zest and pleasure.” So pleased was he with his new political self and its first production that he sent copies to a number of political figures, especially his great Whig friends. “I wrote in the earnest desire to influence them, and to approach them on an accessible side—but they are very hard to get at.” One of his most cogent critics was Fitzjames Stephen, the very man who had sent him on his foreign educational mission; but a confident Arnold seemed more pleased by all the attention than disturbed by the criticism. He was eager to know whether Bright and Cobden liked his pamphlet, and was positively elated by Gladstone’s compliment.

Arnold’s extraordinary exuberance during these summer months of 1859 must have come not only from the discovery of a new vocation as a social and political critic but from the consciousness that, after so much resistance, he had at last begun to follow in his father’s footsteps. “I have often thought,” he wrote to his sister on 29 August, “since I published this on the Italian question, about dear papa’s pamphlets. Whatever talent I have in this direction I certainly
inherit from him, for his pamphleteering talent was one of his very strongest and most pronounced literary sides. . . . It is the one literary side on which I feel myself in close contact with him, and that is a great pleasure."^28

Arnold's experience in France brought home to him with renewed force the truth of the casual observation he had made in his very first week of school inspection in October 1851, to the effect that he must eventually become interested in the schools because they were the instruments of civilizing "the next generation of the lower classes, who, as things are going, will have most of the political power of the country in their hands." Education was to be the means of preparing the idea-moving masses for their role as governors of a new, democratic England. Not surprisingly, therefore, the report Arnold wrote between January and March 1860 on the popular education of France, Switzerland, and Holland was, when printed separately in 1861, prefaced by an introductory essay eventually entitled "Democracy."^29

The gist of the detailed survey of Continental popular education that Arnold wrote for the government in 1860 and published on his own account in 1861 was that in France the state carried out the function of educating its citizens whereas in England the state was paralyzed in this vital function by the spirit of religious sectarianism and the doctrine of laissez faire.

France, like England, was beset by religious divisions; but the French state was of the religion of all of its people without the fanaticism of any of them. France recognized three "necessary, irreconcilable religious divisions," Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism, and no others in an empire of thirty-six millions. England, on the other hand, in a population of only twenty-one millions, recognized no fewer than seven divisions, six of them Protestant, one of them Roman Catholic, and none of them Jewish. Worse yet, where the French state encouraged denominations to make themselves national, the English state made itself denominational. Hence French state inspectors of schools represented the unity of the civil power, not the divisions of rival sects. In England, with its state religion, the state failed to offer the various denominations an example of non-
sectarian civil unity. The system in which Arnold had now worked for ten years, despite its recognition of so many sects, was constantly exacerbating sectarian susceptibilities. Anglican ecclesiastics held more than three-quarters of the inspectorships and were constantly guilty of sectarian bullying in schools that were supported by public grants.

The great obstacle to nonsectarian state education in England was the creed of liberty of instruction, or voluntaryism. The English state, unlike the French, had been content to confer grants-in-aid on the existing educational agencies for popular education despite the fact that they were church-directed. In 1851, the first year of Arnold's inspectorship, the *Westminster Review* summed up the charges against the church-run voluntary schools: they were inadequate to the demand (under their tutelage half the female adult population, and one third the adult male population of England and Wales could not sign their names); their efforts were capricious and fitful; last, and most important, they were not responsible to any public agency for the efficient discharge of their duties.\(^30\)

"Democracy," as Arnold would later call his introduction to *The Popular Education of France*, crystallizes the political position to which Arnold's observation of English and Continental schools had led him. Written in 1861, it contains all the ideas of *Culture and Anarchy*, minus the rhetorical elaboration and the "personality" of the later work. Arnold was not exaggerating when, in 1869, he told his mother that his long experience of visiting the nonconformist schools had been the source of "all I have written on religious political and social subjects."\(^31\)

The fact that Arnold was composing his lectures on Homeric nobility and his reports on popular education at the same time has often been noted as a sign of the complex unity of his thought. That he too looked upon them as related activities in a new critical enterprise is suggested by the fact that in July 1861 he sent to his mentor Sainte-Beuve copies of *On Translating Homer* and of *The Popular Education of France* accompanied by the advice to "jetez-y les yeux quelque jour, lorsque vous en aurez de loisir, et voyez si, en abandonnant la
trace d'Obermann, je réussis à ne pas tomber, sans remède, dans la routine de l'esprit, dans la platitude absolue!" Arnold could believe that his educational enterprise was no longer merely routine business because he had connected it with his literary and critical enterprise.

Arnold had established in the Homer lectures, the last of which was given in January 1861, that nobility resided in Homer as well as in aristocracy; and he therefore recommended the Homeric poems as a source of nobility for the nourishment of an otherwise ignoble democratic culture. But it was one thing to recommend Homeric nobility to Oxford and another to recommend it to the East End of London. Arnold had by 1861 become sensitive to the fact that literature, however grand its style, could not exercise a civilizing function on those who could not read English, much less Greek. Therefore, in the following month of February, Arnold applied himself to answering the question of what social agency could replace the once ennobling, but now dying, influence of the English aristocracy upon the people of England. "In other words, and to use a short and significant modern expression which every one understands, what influence may help us to prevent the English people from becoming, with the growth of democracy, Americanised? I confess I am disposed to answer: On the action of the State."

Aristocracy, when it was healthy and uncorrupted, had made of the English a people "in the grand style"; but now "it is becoming impossible for the aristocracy of England to conduct and wield the English nation any longer" and "that lofty maxim, noblesse oblige," is but an anachronism. In France, which had destroyed its aristocracy in a series of revolutions, and which had instituted the social equality that so terrified Englishmen, Arnold had found a system of education and a people that were in the grand style. "The common people, in France, seems to me the soundest part of the French nation. They seem to me . . . to have a more developed human life, more of what distinguishes elsewhere the cultured classes from the vulgar, than the common people in any other country with which I am acquainted."

There were two reasons for the superiority of the French common people to their English counterparts. One was France's social equality
(a phenomenon whose existence had not been visible to Ruskin). Arnold argues that a community which desires to expand and develop instinctively chooses equality; for communities that resist equality sacrifice the contribution to the community that their common people might otherwise make. Great inequalities depress rather than excite the energies of the common people; for in the presence of vast inequalities they forsake even the modest amount of improvement available to them and feel only the absolute futility of trying to raise themselves to the level, so far above their own, of the highest class. In France, where social equality prevails, the common people have a self-respect and "a consciousness of counting for something in their country's action" unknown elsewhere.35

The other reason for the quality of working-class life in France and indeed for France's power in Europe was that France alone had organized democracy in the institutions of the state. Other countries had also felt the great ideas of 1789, but only France had made them the basis of her state and its organizations. France had had the rare courage to remodel her institutions "with an eye to reason rather than custom, and to right rather than fact."36

Whereas Ruskin attributed the superior civilization of the French workingman to French inequality and to a less thoroughgoing commercialism than prevailed in England, Arnold attributed it to French equality and to the organization of French democracy. We need not doubt that Arnold and Ruskin were talking about the same country. Political theorists using foreign countries as foils to their own have a talent for finding what they look for; and whereas Ruskin saw democracy as only the latest extension of the spirit of laissez faire, Arnold looked upon democracy as both desirable and inevitable. The real question for him was whether England would follow the French or the American model. America, in Arnold's view (a distant one, since he was not to visit the country until 1883) lacked respect for individual distinction and was entirely dominated by her middle class. Her middle-class character and her religion of the "average man" were attributable to the fact that she had never had a priesthood or an aristocracy. Of course, America was not to blame for lacking what
she could never possibly have had; but she was to blame for not having substituted for aristocratic institutions "the dignity and authority of the State." Democracy, Arnold argued, need not be interpreted as the Americans had interpreted it. The real question for Englishmen was this: "When the inevitable course of events has made our self-government something really like that of America, when it has removed or weakened that security for national dignity, which we possessed in aristocracy, will the substitute of the State be equally wanting to us?" \(^{37}\)

Lionel Trilling has remarked that "in Arnold's time he might as well have told the English middle class that only Popery or Mohammedanism could save the national life from meanness as that in the State lay spiritual salvation." \(^{38}\) Arnold, aware of the strength of opposition to the idea of the state—"With many Englishmen, perhaps with the majority, it is a maxim that the State . . . ought to be entrusted with no more means of action than those which it is impossible to withhold from it. . . ." \(^ {39}\)—sought to mitigate hostility to the state by tracing its historical causes and by showing that the reasons that once justified it no longer existed.

Aristocracies are naturally jealous of a strong state power, but it is not with the aristocratic class that Arnold is concerned. The suspicion of the state had also found extraordinary favor in the English middle class and especially in the Protestant Dissenters for the very good reason that during the early burgeoning of this class the state had been made the instrument of high church and prelatic persecution of the Puritan party and the middle class. \(^{40}\) The middle-class abhorrence of state action that had discriminated against its religious convictions and social interests had, illogically and unfortunately, been exaggerated into abhorrence of state action in general. "Leave us to ourselves! magnates and middle classes alike cried to the state. Not only from those who were full and abounded went up this prayer, but also from those whose condition admitted of great amelioration. Not only did the whole repudiate the physician, but also those who were sick." \(^{41}\)

But the mid-Victorian middle classes believed that they owed their
freedom and their prosperity, not their sickness (could they even be brought to admit it), to the doctrine of laissez faire. Cobden, the great advocate of free trade, had warned in 1853, "Depend upon it, there is a spice of despotism at the bottom of all this intervention by combined bodies in the concerns of individuals. . . . I think we shall not get right till there is a revolt against all such organizations . . . in the interests of Liberty—PERSONAL LIBERTY." The typical member of the Victorian middle classes resented government interference in his business affairs, in his religious worship, and in his education of his children. Government inspectors like Arnold might submit Blue-Book reports documenting the harm caused by laissez faire in the schools, in the factories, in the mines, and in nearly every corner of English life. But their advice was often futile to overcome the kind of high-principled inertia that Samuel Smiles described:

When typhus or cholera breaks out, they tell us that Nobody is to blame. That terrible Nobody! How much he has to answer for. More mischief is done by Nobody than by all the world besides. Nobody adulterates our food. Nobody poisons us with bad drink. . . . Nobody leaves towns undrained. Nobody fills jails, penitentiaries and convict stations. Nobody makes poachers, thieves and drunkards. Nobody has a theory too—a dreadful theory. It is embodied in two words: laissez-faire—let alone. When people are poisoned with plaster of Paris mixed with flour, "let alone" is the remedy. . . . Let those who can, find out when they are cheated: caveat emptor. When people live in foul dwellings, let them alone, let wretchedness do its work; do not interfere with death.43

Such grim accounts of the evils wrought by the system of laissez faire may cause us to forget that the resistance to state action came not exclusively from benighted or self-seeking men, but also from such intelligent, humane, and disinterested thinkers as John Stuart Mill. In June 1859, while he was on his inspection tour of French schools, Arnold read Mill’s new book On Liberty, and commended it to his
sister as "worth reading attentively, being one of the few books that inculcate tolerance in an unalarming and inoffensive way." Still, he could hardly have been pleased by all he read in the book. Here he was formulating his idea of the supreme importance of state education, and he read in *On Liberty* that "a general State education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another: . . . in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body." In 1861, when Arnold was publishing *The Popular Education of France* and urging his countrymen to emulate French rather than American democracy, Mill, who had already written that "society in America requires little but to be let alone," was in *Considerations on Representative Government* asserting that there was "a superiority of mental development" in even the lowest class of Americans not to be found in any other country, and that if forced to choose between France's "mania for uniformity" and England's "unbounded toleration for every description of anomaly," he would unhesitatingly choose the latter. Not surprisingly, by the end of the decade Arnold had taken to linking Mill with Edward Miall, one of the leaders of the voluntaryist opposition to state "interference" in education, and warning his countrymen of the related dangers of "Millism" and "Miallism."

In espousing democracy in conjunction with a strong state, and in dispensing with the principle of laissez faire, Arnold saw himself as a liberal of the future, searching for "some better liberalism than the sterile liberalism of the past, with its pedantic application of certain maxims of political economy in the wrong place." He was separating himself from the shibboleths of Mill and his school but not from their central allegiance to democracy and equality. After all his objections to Mill, Arnold was able to recognize him in 1863 as "a writer of distinguished mark and influence, a writer deserving all attention and respect," and to say after Mill's death that if he was not quite the great spirit that his admirers supposed, he was nevertheless "a singularly acute, ardent, and interesting man . . . capable of following lights that led him away from the regular doctrine of philosophical radicalism. . . ."
But there was another kind of reaction to Millite liberalism seething in mid-Victorian England, one that had no more fondness for democracy and equality than it did for laissez faire, and that looked upon liberalism not as a true faith needing reform and revitalization but as the very instrument of the devil. Of this reaction John Ruskin was to become the most formidable spokesman. "When I accuse Mill of being the root of nearly all immediate evil among us in England, I am in earnest—the man being looked up to as 'the greatest thinker' when he is in truth an utterly shallow and wretched segment of a human creature, incapable of understanding Anything in the ultimate conditions of it, and countenancing with an unhappy fortune whatever is fatallest in the popular error of English mind."

But it must be remembered that this outrageous letter to Charles Norton was not written until 1869; and that the violent condemnation of liberty that is often paired with it—"my own teaching has been, and is, that Liberty, whether in the body, soul, or political estate of men, is only another word for Death, and the final issue of Death, putrefaction"—was not written until 1875 and was downright inaccurate as a description of Ruskin's past teaching. Not only had Ruskin, as we have already seen, spoken favorably of liberty in his earlier works on painting and architecture; he had written in the last volume of Modern Painters, published in 1860, that the highest service of art was the exposition of true authority and of freedom, and that all he should care to say on the subject of individual freedom "has been already said admirably by Mr. J. S. Mill in his essay on Liberty." Even as late as 1865 he could bring himself to say that "there is much that is true in the part of Mr. Mill's essay on Liberty which treats of freedom of thought; some important truths are there beautifully expressed, but many, quite vital, are omitted. . . ."

The significance of Ruskin's change from a balanced and relative assessment of Mill to an extreme and absolute one is that during the ten-year period of controversy that intervened the question of political economy had become for Ruskin the one great question, outweighing and then consuming all others. He was to allow his conviction of the wrongness of laissez faire to master all other social and political considerations, and to serve as a touchstone for measuring the qual-
ity of thinkers and even the devotion of friends. He went so far as to inform Charles Eliot Norton in 1869 that until Norton declared publicly, in *Atlantic Monthly* or elsewhere, whether he espoused Ruskin's political economy or Mill's, there could be no true friendship between them. Ruskin insisted that Norton acquiesce in his own absolute conviction that Mill and those of his school "are not wise men—nor scientific men (nor—I say here good men). . . . "

Yet the original basis of Ruskin's quarrel with Mill was "science" and not ethics, the nature of economy, not of goodness. Whatever modifications Mill might have introduced into the laissez faire creed that he articulated in *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), he continued to believe firmly in competition; for "wherever competition is not, monopoly is; and. . . monopoly, in all its forms, is the taxation of the industrious for the support of indolence, if not of plunder." But for Ruskin competition was a synonym for anarchy. Of all the shocking and contentious things he said before the Public Institutions Committee in March 1860, none was more shocking or contentious than his assertion that the deterioration in the condition of the English working class was due to the increase of competitive trade and manufactures. When the chairman of the committee suggested that Ruskin might have been victim of a slip of the tongue, the witness repeated his heresy: "I intended not only to cast a slur, but to express my excessive horror of the principle of competition, in every way. . . . "

In August of the previous year, as we have already noted, Ruskin had expressed doubt about whether the time had yet come for speaking the truth to the public concerning political economy, since "it is often impossible, often dangerous, to inform people of great truths before their own time has come for approaching them. . . . " Now, in the course of his testimony before the committee, he said that the relation between the upper class and the working class in England was "a subject which cannot at present be discussed. . . . " But, quite aside from the fact that Ruskin's contentiousness tended always to overpower his prudence, he was being sucked irresistibly into the whirlpool of political and economic controversy over practical affairs.
By late 1859 Ruskin found himself more than usually dissatisfied with his own and everybody else's work in art. He told Tennyson, à propos of *Idylls of the King*, that it was a pity to see so great a poetic power squandered on "visions of things past" instead of exerted on "the living present." As he drew toward the conclusion of seventeen years' labor on *Modern Painters*, Ruskin expressed a sense of futility in producing his work, "not merely because of the time's sorrow or injustices... but because even its mechanism is becoming too strong for any hope of resistance"; and he told the Brownings he would try to devote himself to quiet copying of nature and Turner: "It seems to me the most useful thing I can do. I am tired of talking."55

But even as Newman was drawn almost against his will and despite all adverse circumstance, into the Roman Catholic Church, which is depicted in the *Apologia* as his appointed destiny, so was Ruskin drawn against his will and his predilection, and at the cost of his happiness, into what he later called "a new epoch of life and death." For he had come at last to recognize that the true cause of his lassitude and of his sense of the uselessness of his previous work was his discovery of "the great fact that great Art is of no real use to anybody but the next great Artist; that it is wholly invisible to people in general—for the present—and that to get anybody to see it, one must begin at the other end, with moral education of the people, and physical, and so I've to turn myself quite upside down..." His new revelation, as E. D. H. Johnson has noted, was similar to Arnold's discovery at about the same time that the grand style in literature was not of much use to those who could not read; and as Arnold in 1860 moved from questions of Homeric translation to the problem of popular education, Ruskin moved from paintings and from nature into economics and society: "I got the bound volume of *Modern Painters* in the valley of St. Martin's in that summer of 1860, and in the valley of Chamouni I gave up my art-work and wrote this little book—the beginning of the days of reprobation."56

The "little book" was *Unto This Last*, "the only book," Ruskin said in *Sesame and Lilies*, "properly to be called a book, that I have yet
written, the one that will stand (if anything stand) surest and longest of all work of mine."\(^{57}\) Ruskin, like Arnold, had for a long time insisted on art's obligation to give joy; but by 1860 both men had come to believe that joy and perfection could not be conceived of as individual gifts or attainments, and that individual perfection was neither desirable nor possible in the midst of suffering and imperfect men. To be real, Arnold was shortly to argue, perfection had to be general; and Ruskin too now espoused the view that, as he wrote some years later, "the beauty which is indeed to be a joy for ever, must be a joy for all." He saw his movement from art to society as one from illusion to reality: "It is the vainest of affectations to try and put beauty into shadows, while all real things that cast them are in deformity and pain."\(^{58}\)

Ruskin composed *Unto This Last*, the culmination of years of thought about society and politics, with the utmost care, writing every word of the book twice and much of it three times. By the end of June 1860 he had submitted the first essay to the *Cornhill Magazine*, which had been founded at the end of the preceding year by George Smith under the editorship of Thackeray.

According to Ruskin, the objects of his *Cornhill* essays were simple enough. He aimed to give an accurate and stable definition of wealth and to show that wealth could only be acquired under certain moral conditions of society, primary among them the belief in the existence and attainment of honesty. His title, *Unto This Last*, was derived from the parable in Matthew 20:14 of the master of the vineyard who insists on paying all his workers the same wage, even including those hired at the eleventh hour. To the workers who protest against the equal reward meted out to industry and to idleness, the master replies: "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

Ruskin used the parable from Matthew not only to support his belief that the state is obliged to feed those who (for whatever reason) do not work as well as those who do, but to connect the "science" of political economy with an entirely new order of value. The "laws" of
political economy were built on an analogy with the laws of physics; the theory of the natural identity of interests was thought of by its propounders as comparable to one of Newton's laws. Philosophical Radicals held that all social phenomena are reducible to laws, and that the laws of the social world depend upon the laws of human nature.\textsuperscript{59} As late as 1877, *Hard Times*, whose criticism of industrial society is warmly recommended in the first chapter of *Unto This Last*, could be condemned in the *Atlantic Monthly* as a quixotic assault on the laws of nature: "The time will come," wrote E. P. Whipple of Dickens's fictional critique of laissez faire economics and ethics, "when it will be as intellectually discreditable for an educated person to engage in a crusade against the established laws of political economy as in a crusade against the established laws of the physical universe; but the fact that men like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Dickens can write economic nonsense without losing intellectual caste shows that the science of political economy, before its beneficent truths come to be generally admitted, must go through a long struggle with benevolent sophisms and benevolent passions."\textsuperscript{60}

That such a time of intellectual sophistication in economic matters never did arrive was partly due to the fact that, as G. M. Young has pointed out, Ruskin "evolved, and forced his world to accept, a new set of axioms as the basis of all future political science in England."\textsuperscript{61} He sought to show that the laws of economy were not physical but moral, and that the constant in human behavior was not greed but "social affection." The "soi-disant science of political economy" had, in his view, been constructed on a false thought model. It had been willing to recognize the social affections, but only as accidental elements in human nature that might occasionally require modifications in the laws deduced from the great central axiom that man is basically "a covetous machine" dedicated to buying what he needs in the cheapest market and selling what he does not in the dearest.\textsuperscript{62} Mill might admit that the conclusions of political economy "even in its own peculiar province [that of Wealth], are only true conditionally, subject to interference and counteraction from causes not directly within its scope";\textsuperscript{63} but for Ruskin the concession was meaningless
since the social affections are not of the same nature as the economic drives: "They alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added; they operate, not mathematically, but chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable."\(^{64}\)

Political economy was a pseudo-science because its starting point was a mythical being rather than a man; all its conclusions might be true if it were the case that men had no souls. But since they do have them, the attempt to erect a science upon the fiction of a soulless automaton whose efficiency is only occasionally marred by the interference of soulful, noneconomic considerations, is futile. That is one reason why the political economists are helpless to settle the strife between employers and employed in the strikes that beset English society.

But even if political economy were a true rather than a false science, it would be useless for practical application, "it being not by 'science' of any kind that men were ever intended to be set at one." Ruskin sensed the absurdity of the political economists' exhorting people to act in obedience to laws which were supposed to be inevitable in any case; and he recognized that the morality of the utilitarian economists was nothing more than their psychology put in the form of an imperative. The advocates of the enlightened pursuit of self-interest may argue that the interests of the masters are not antagonistic to those of the men; but such argument is vain labor because, as everyone knows who has observed the life of his own family, it does not follow that persons must be antagonistic because their interests are. It is characteristic of Ruskin that he employs the model of family relationships to prove the uselessness of the speculations of political science. "If there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, their interests are not the same. If the mother eats it, the children want it; if the children eat it, the mother must go hungry to her work. Yet it does not necessarily follow that there will be 'antagonism' between them, that they will fight for the crust, and that the mother, being strongest, will get it, and eat it."\(^{65}\)

Ruskin was attempting to moralize the sphere of industrial rela-
tions, which lay under the aegis of laissez faire utilitarianism. Bentham and his innumerable followers had maintained that actions were to be judged not by conformity to an arbitrary moral standard but by their utility, in the sense of their capacity to produce pleasure or to deflect pain. But Ruskin holds that morality cannot, and should not, be based on the notion of usefulness: "For no human actions were ever intended by the Maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency, but by balances of justice. He has therefore rendered all endeavours to determine expediency futile for evermore. No man ever knew, or can know, what will be the ultimate result to himself, or to others, of any given line of conduct. But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act." 69

To illustrate the primacy of justice over expediency in the relations between men, Ruskin uses the example of the relations that prevail between masters and domestic servants; and it is noteworthy that Ruskin’s prescriptions for the moralization of industrial relations are nearly always based on relations between parents and children or between master and servant. According to the political economist, the master will only get the greatest possible average of work from his servant if he feeds and lodges him as poorly, and drives him as hard, as the servant will endure without leaving for a better place. But according to Ruskin, the largest quantity of work will be done by this man only if his will or spirit “is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel: namely, by the affections. . . .” If the servant were a soulless machine, with entirely calculable energies and predictable responses, the political scientists would be right; but he is a human being whose motive power is “an unknown quantity,” a soul. It is not, therefore, antagonism but affection between man and master that produces the “greatest material result.” 67

Ruskin’s stress on material results is important. Although his own ultimate end is moral reform, his arguments to that end are eminently pragmatic, indeed, utilitarian. Bentham used to say that all objectors to the principle of utility eventually end up justifying their anti-utilitarian dogmas in utilitarian terms; and in this instance Ruskin seems to bear him out. “In any case, and with any person, this unselfish treat-
ment will produce the most effective return. Observe, I am here con­sidering the affections wholly as a motive power; not at all as things in themselves desirable or noble, or in any other way abstractedly good.” Of course, Ruskin hastily adds, the master who consciously extends affection to his servant in order to turn the servant’s grati­tude to account will find none of his economical purposes answered, for “in this, as in all other matters, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, whoso loses it shall find it.”

Ruskin had constant recourse to the Scriptures because he knew that they would recall to the minds of his readers a world of associa­tions and values that the political economists had intentionally left out of account. He recognized the tendency of modern industrial so­ciety to subsume all values under the values of the marketplace, to transform men into “labor,” nature into “property,” and the social bond into the “cash nexus”; and he saw that the laissez faire philos­ophy had in fact become a religious creed, with its shibboleths of free enterprise, supply and demand, exchange theory of value, and competition. To struggle against the new creed and the new values he needed to revitalize moral and religious values that were still pro­fessed, but no longer—at least in the economic sphere—practiced; for it was one of the paradoxes of the Victorian era that, to cite G. M. Young once more, “its practical ideals were at odds with its religious professions.” It was Ruskin’s ability to bring religious awareness back into economic thought that caused Bernard Shaw to assert in his Fabian pamphlet on Ruskin that “the most thoroughgoing opponents of our existing state of society” declared themselves followers not of Marx but of Ruskin. It is a striking paradox that Ruskin had no sooner undergone his conversion from Evangelical Anglicanism to the Religion of Humanity than he most strenuously asserted, in his quarrels with the political economists that, as Plato said, “Not man, but a god, must be the measure of all things.”

The iconoclasm implicit in Ruskin’s title is made explicit in the two concrete proposals of the first chapter of Unto This Last, “The Roots of Honour.” The first of these is for a fixed rate of wages, ir­respective of the demand for labor. For all of the important, and much of the unimportant, labor done, Ruskin argues, wages are already so
regulated. "... Sick, we do not inquire for a physician who takes less than a guinea; litigious, we never think of reducing six-and-eightpence to four-and-sixpence; caught in a shower, we do not canvass the cabmen, to find one who values his driving at less than sixpence a mile." The only way to protect the good workman from being replaced by the bad one or from being forced by competition to work for an inadequate wage is to pay all labor at a fixed rate, but to employ only the good workmen. Ruskin's second practical proposal is that, to diminish the suffering caused by the violent fluctuations of demand in modern industrial society, a constant number of workmen be maintained in employment. In addition to creating security for the men, this measure would give them a permanent interest in the establishment with which they are connected, like domestic servants in an old family or soldiers in a crack regiment.

Ruskin does admit that there will be difficulty, loss, and inconvenience occasioned by the radical changes he proposes. But things that can be done with convenience and without loss are not always the things that most urgently require doing. Merchants would understand this better if they adopted what Ruskin now proposes to them, a code of heroism for trade. Admitting yet deploring the fact that the merchant, unlike the soldier or even the lawyer and physician, has always been presumed to act selfishly, Ruskin declares that henceforward "sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war." Where Arnold in 1860 was seeking to resurrect the grand style of Homer in the democratic state, Ruskin was seeking to instill heroism in the very class that most blatantly lacked it. Commerce was a selfish pursuit because "men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields; not recognizing what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields." There are in every civilized nation, says Ruskin, five great intellectual professions, relating to the necessities of daily life. Each has its special function in a nation:

The Soldier's profession is to defend it.
The Pastor's to teach it.
The Physician's to keep it in health.
The Lawyer's to enforce justice in it.
The Merchant's to provide for it.
And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to die for it.
"On due occasion," namely:—
The Soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.
The Physician, rather than leave his post in plague.
The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood.
The Lawyer, rather than countenance Injustice.
The Merchant—what is his "due occasion" of death?

Never one to be backward in assigning the duty of others, Ruskin asserts that the duty of the merchant, which he has to perform even at the cost of his life, is to provide for the nation, and to guarantee that the work done to produce what he sells is work beneficial to the men he employs. He may be sure that the work will benefit his employees if he treats them in all things as he would treat his own son. In place of the laissez faire ideal of competition, which is for him the negation of the social bond itself, Ruskin puts the paternalistic ideal of the family in which children surrender their freedom to do as they like in return for the sustenance and direction provided by loving parents.

What Ruskin sought to destroy was the prevalent belief that the value of men, called "labor," could and should be determined in the market by supply and demand, just as the price of land was determined. "Oversupply" of labor, he knew, meant starvation; and leaving the fate of men to the vicissitudes of the market was equivalent to denying their value as human beings. Did some value attach to the human status as such, or was value merely a function of the market place? If value was not determined in the market place, where and how was it determined?

Four years earlier, in his discussion of the pathetic fallacy, Ruskin had voiced his contempt for German and English metaphysicians who purported to distinguish between subjective and objective qualities of things, applying the former label to those qualities of things that depend upon our perception of them, the latter label to those
qualities of things that they always have. The disjunction between "objective" and "subjective" was in Ruskin's view a specially corrosive falsehood because it encouraged the artist and thinker to believe that "it does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us," so that nothing really exists in its own right, but everything depends upon how we see it or think of it. In fact, Ruskin urges, the metaphysicians have deceived themselves in supposing that the word "Blue" means the sensation caused by a gentian on the human eye. On the contrary, "it means the power of producing that sensation: and this power is always there, in the thing, whether we are there to experience it or not, and would remain there though there were not left a man on the face of the earth."  

Qualities of things and values of things are not identical, but when Ruskin comes to define value in the fourth and last essay of Unto This Last, "Ad Valorem," he is trying to assert for value the kind of independence from human whim that he had in Modern Painters III ascribed to the qualities of things. His adversary Mill had equated value with "value in exchange," so that usefulness was defined as "capacity to satisfy a desire, or serve a purpose"; but Ruskin says that a useful object is one that supports life, and this idea is the key to his conception of value. Ruskin, indulging in one of those etymological excursions that so irritated Arnold, mockingly suggests that a sounder Latin instruction than is fashionable among middle-class merchants might have taught them that the nominative of valorem is valor; that valor comes from valere, meaning "to be well or strong," in life (if a man), for life (if a thing); and that, as a result, to be "valuable" means to "avail towards life."  

Value, for Ruskin, is primarily intrinsic, independent both of opinion and quantity: "Think what you will of it, gain how much you may of it, the value of the thing itself is neither greater nor less. For ever it avails, or avails not; no estimate can raise, no disdain repress, the power which it holds from the Maker of things and of men." If value is intrinsic, so too is wealth; neither, as Ruskin was to point out two years later in Munera Pulveris, is constituted by the judgment of men. The task of political economy is not merely to assign to "de-
mand" or any subjective desire the authority of objectivity, but to teach men and nations to "demand" what leads to life and to scorn what leads to destruction and death. If political economy is truly a science of wealth, it must respect human capacities and dispositions, and recognize that they are moral considerations. To admit, what Ruskin contends, that values have an absolute and autonomous existence is but the first step toward reform; for the values may exist indeed, but be ineffectual if human beings fail to recognize them: "... Economists have never perceived that disposition to buy is a wholly moral element in demand: that is to say, when you give a man half a crown, it depends on his disposition whether he is rich or poor with it—whether he will buy disease, ruin, and hatred, or buy health, advancement, and domestic love. And thus the agreeableness or exchange value of every offered commodity depends on production, not merely of the commodity, but of buyers of it; therefore on the education of buyers, and on all the moral elements by which their disposition to buy this, or that, is formed." 78

But it was precisely with education that Ruskin's well-to-do readers were most stingy. "Charitable persons suppose the worst fault of the rich is to refuse the people meat. ... Alas! it is not meat of which the refusal is cruelest, or to which the claim is validest. The life is more than the meat. The rich not only refuse food to the poor; they refuse wisdom; they refuse virtue; they refuse salvation." And having refused all these, they exclaim that the poor "cannot receive education!" 77

This condemnation of the rich for withholding knowledge from the poor calls to mind a famous passage of Culture and Anarchy written eight years later, and also published in the Cornhill Magazine:

I remember, only the other day, a good man looking with me upon a multitude of children who were gathered before us in one of the most miserable regions of London,—children eaten up with disease, half-sized, half-fed, half-clothed, neglected by their parents, without health, without home, without hope,—said to me: "The one thing really needful
is to teach these little ones to succour one another, if only with a cup of cold water; but now, from one end of the country to the other, one hears nothing but the cry for knowledge, knowledge, knowledge!" And yet surely, so long as these children are there in these festering masses, without health, without home, without hope, and so long as their multitude is perpetually swelling, charged with misery they must still be for themselves, charged with misery they must still be for us, whether they help one another with a cup of cold water or no; and the knowledge how to prevent their accumulating is necessary, even to give their moral life and growth a fair chance!"\textsuperscript{78}

Arnold's culture seeks to fulfill itself in marriage to conduct, and conduct seems to cry out for guidance by culture. Arnold's advocacy of birth control, striking as is its appearance in a work generally supposed to rest on pious platitudes, is but a part of his affirmation of man's responsibility, in this world, for creating his own good.

Arnold was moved to describe what he had seen on his inspection tours in the East End of London by the laissez faire necessitarianism of the \textit{Times}, which had doggedly maintained that increases in trade and in population were always desirable, and that the human misery that might be caused by "ebbs and flows in the tide of trade and business" was inevitable and therefore not to be quarreled with. Arnold, whenever he visited the East End, armed his spirit against its depressing sights by carrying with him that "finest economical doctrine" of the \textit{Times} which explained: "There is no one to blame for this; it is the result of Nature's simplest laws!"\textsuperscript{79}

But Arnold heard the spirit of Pangloss speak through religion as well as through economic liberalism. As laissez faire economics looked upon increases in trade and manufacture as goods in themselves, so did Scottish poets like Robert Buchanan and English Hebraists in general celebrate increases in population as unmitigated benefits. If the economists cloaked their doctrines in the inviolability of "natural law," the Hebraists cloaked theirs in the sanctity of "God's law." "God's law" enjoins, or is held by the Hebraists to enjoin,
people to "be fruitful and multiply," while it simultaneously proclaims that "the poor shall never cease out of the land." Yet a devotee of culture, which decrees that "individual perfection is impossible so long as the rest of mankind are not perfected along with us," cannot reconcile himself, by means of such comforting doctrines, to the existence of great masses of "half-sized, half-fed, half-clothed" people in the East End of London.

Arnold's collision in *Culture and Anarchy* with those advocates of free trade and "philoprogenitiveness" who denied that knowledge could help the poor was the culmination of a quarrel with the laissez faire conception of value that Arnold had carried on since the beginning of the decade. We have already seen how, in 1861, he blamed the creed of voluntarism and of "Leave us to ourselves!" for the shabby mediocrity of English education. But in 1862 there occurred an event that was to give him, for much of the rest of his life, an intensely personal as well as broadly intellectual reason for hostility to the philosophy of laissez faire and the market conception of value.

In May of 1862 a "Revised Code of Minutes and Regulations of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education," somewhat modified from the Revised Code presented in July 1861, was approved by Parliament. Although its chief framers, Robert Lowe, vice-president of the council, and Ralph Lingen, permanent secretary of the Education Department (and the friend who had originally secured Arnold his appointment), claimed that the Revised Code was intended to remove the educational evils identified by the Newcastle Commission, the chief motive for its promulgation appears to have been the desire to reduce spending. Indeed, defenders of the Revised Code were habitually saying that if it was not efficient, it would be cheap, and that if not cheap, it would be efficient. The main feature of the new scheme, called "payment by results," was the stipulation that payment of grants to schools be contingent upon a combination of inspection and individual examination of pupils in reading, writing, and arithmetic, instead of, as had been the case previously, upon the inspector's general evaluation of the entire operation of the school.

Arnold at once recognized the Revised Code as a means not merely
of reducing state grants for support of the schools of the poor but of transforming the school from "a living whole with complex functions, religious, moral and intellectual" into "a mere machine" for teaching the three r's. In March of 1862, while the controversy (unique among English educational controversies in that it did not arise from sectarian religious strife) was at its height, Arnold published a forceful attack on "The Twice-Revised Code" in Fraser's Magazine. Since, as an inspector, he was in the position of attacking his own superior in the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, Robert Lowe, he published the essay anonymously. But he was widely known as its author and risked his job by printing it. To his timid wife he wrote: "If thrown on the world I daresay we should be on our legs again before very long. Anyway, I think I owed as much as this to a cause in which I have now a deep interest, and always shall have, even if I cease to serve it officially." 81

Arnold's vitality as a writer on educational subjects came from his vision of education as an agent of civilization itself rather than of mere instruction. He had the foresight to recognize the futility of trying to instill in the poor the ability to read merely by forcing schools for the poor to concentrate exclusively upon reading; and he reminded the reformers that what mainly hindered poor children in reading was the disdain for books and for knowledge in the homes from which these children came and to which they returned. In other words, what the poor wanted even more than reading ability was civilization. "It is the advance of them and their class in civilization which will bring them nearer to this power, not the confining them to reading-lessons, not the striking out lessons on geography or history. . . ." 82 To attain good reading, cultivation in other subjects was necessary; but the Revised Code would cut off all grants for those subjects in the hope of getting better reading.

The immedacy of Arnold's regret over the introduction of the new system is apparent in the intensity of the language he uses to describe the diminution of his inspectorial role. The new system, he alleges, turns the inspectors into a set of registering clerks, with a mass of minute details to tabulate, such a mass as must, in
Sir James Shuttleworth's words, "necessarily withdraw their attention from the religious and general instruction, and from the moral features of the school." In fact the inspector will just hastily glance round the school, and then he must fall to work at the "log-books." And this to ascertain the precise state of each individual scholar's reading, writing, and arithmetic. As if there might not be in a school most grave matters needing inspection and correction; as if the whole school might not be going wrong, at the same time that a number of individual scholars might carry off prizes for reading, writing, and arithmetic! It is as if the generals of an army,—for the inspectors have been the veritable generals of the educational army,—were to have their duties limited to inspecting the men's cartouch-boxes. The organization of the army is faulty:—inspect the cartouch-boxes! The camp is ill-drained, the men are ill-hutted, there is danger of fever and sickness. Never mind; inspect the cartouch-boxes! But the whole discipline is out of order, and needs instant reformation:—no matter; inspect the cartouch-boxes! But the army is beginning a general movement, and that movement is a false one; it is moving to the left when it should be moving to the right: it is going to a disaster! That is not your business; inspect, inspect the cartouch-boxes!  

Arnold affixed blame for the new system of "payment by results" to two causes. One was laissez faire, the other was "that tide of reactionary sentiment against everything supposed to be in the least akin to democracy which . . . is now sweeping over Europe." Conveniently for Arnold, both the laissez faire philosophy and the terror of democracy were summed up in the figure of Robert Lowe, chief perpetrator of the Revised Code.

Robert Lowe, whom Disraeli called an "inspired schoolboy" (as well as the only M.P. whose hand he would not shake), and to whom Gladstone, his chief opponent, attributed "genuine power of mind," had achieved brilliant successes at Winchester and at Oxford, where he had examined Ruskin for "Smalls." Yet he came to disapprove of the public schools and of classical education as well, because the form-
er, as endowed schools, contravened the natural interplay of supply and demand, and the latter was less important than modern languages and the scientific habit of mind, "the one invaluable thing in life." Lowe was one of the few men of his time hated (in roughly equal measure) by classical scholars and by trade-union leaders, and there is a curious sense in which Arnold's unusual combination of sympathies—for classical education, for democracy, for a strong and responsible State—found its mirror image in the strange mixture of loyalties—to science, to aristocracy, and to laissez faire—in the man who headed the Committee of the Privy Council on Education from 1859 to 1864.

We can better understand Arnold's educational effort if we remember that his adversary until 1864 was both an educational aristocrat and a doctrinaire exponent of laissez faire. Lowe believed that "any attempt to keep children of the labouring classes under intellectual culture after the very earliest age at which they could earn their living, would be as arbitrary and improper as it would be to keep the boys at Eton and Harrow at spade labour." He also believed that education was a commodity, like bread; if there was free trade in corn, there should be free trade in schools.

Arnold was therefore hardly exaggerating Robert Lowe's religious devotion to the laissez faire creed when, at the conclusion of "The Twice-Revised Code," he described his antagonist as "a political economist of such force, that had he been by when the Lord of the harvest was besought 'to send labourers into his harvest,' he would certainly have remarked of that petition that it was 'a defiance of the laws of supply and demand,' and that the labourers should be left to come of themselves." As Ruskin had resorted to Matthew, so Arnold resorts to Luke, to remind readers that the "laws" of supply and demand are distinctly secular. The image of Robert Lowe forcefully calling Jesus' attention to the science of political economy was intended to remind Arnold's readers of what Ruskin had been urging in Unto This Last, that the ebb and flow of supply and demand are not the ultimate determinants of value.

Later in 1862, writing about "Ordnance Maps" in the London Re-
view, Arnold pointed out that free enterprise provided no guarantee of demand for quality. Nowhere did public demand "ensure" a supply of maps of first-rate excellence; but on the Continent excellent maps existed because governments demanded them. In England, on the other hand, reliance had to be placed on private enterprise, and private enterprise always failed, because "a tradesman's business is simply to make money." In its maps as in its educational system, the English government preferred cheapness to excellence.

Arnold was unwilling to entrust the definition of standards and value to the marketplace, because (as he wrote in the following year in A French Eton) "the mass of mankind know good butter from bad, and tainted meat from fresh, and the principle of supply and demand may, perhaps, be relied on to give us sound meat and butter. But the mass of mankind do not so well know what distinguishes good teaching and training from bad; they do not here know what they ought to demand, and, therefore, the demand cannot be relied on to give us the right supply." It was in A French Eton that Arnold moved from the subject of elementary to that of secondary education, but he was still fighting the same obstacle to the improvement of education through state organization and supervision, and public guarantees of the quality of instruction: the obstacle of laissez faire. Arnold believed that every Englishman should have been able to see, with his own eyes if not those of Dickens, that the system of free enterprise in secondary education had produced endless variations of Salem House operating under the aegis of countless Mr. Creakles. "By this time we know pretty well that to trust to the principle of supply and demand to do for us all that we want in providing education is to lean upon a broken reed."

Arnold's criticism, begun in 1861, of the evil effects of the principles and practice of laissez faire, was to continue for the rest of his career. We have already seen how in Culture and Anarchy he charged that the untaxing of the poor man's bread had "been used not so much to make the existing poor man's bread cheaper or more abundant, but rather to create more poor men to eat it," and how he blamed the dogged adherence to laissez faire axioms for the fact that "about one
in nineteen of our population is a pauper,” and that the children of the East End dragged out their existences “without health, without home, without hope.” Much later, in 1880, he was to endorse the position espoused by unionist workmen that “free political institutions do not guarantee the well-being of the toiling class.” In “The Future of Liberalism” he would beg Lord Derby, when next he was about to launch into one of his customary paeans to the free institutions, free trade, and free manufacture of Liberal England, first to look about him at such flourishing centers of manufacturing industry as Bolton, Wigan, and St. Helens, and then to ask himself whether they are gardens in which the human spirit can flourish. Arnold’s description of industry’s development and effects in such “hell-holes” as these is, for reasons that will shortly become apparent, worth quoting its entirety:

St. Helens is eminently what Cobbett meant by a *Hell-hole*, but it is only a type . . . of a whole series of places so designated by him . . . places developing abundantly their manufacturing industries, but in which man’s instinct for beauty, and man’s instinct for fit and pleasing forms of social life and manners . . . find little or no satisfaction. . . . And not only have the inhabitants of what Cobbett called a Hell-hole, and what Lord Derby and Mr. Bright would call a centre of manufacturing industry, no satisfaction of man’s instinct for beauty to make them happy, but even their manufacturing industries they develop in such a manner, that from the exercise of this their instinct for expansion they do not procure the result which they expected, but they find uneasiness and stoppage. For in general they develop their industries in this wise: they produce, not something which it is very difficult to make, and of which people can never have enough, and which they themselves can make far better than anybody else; but they produce that which is not hard to make, and of which there may easily be produced more than is wanted, and which more and more people, in different quarters, fall to making, as times goes on, for themselves, and which they soon make quite as well as the others do. But
at a given moment, when there is a demand, or a chance of demand, for their manufacture, the capitalists in the Hellholes, as Cobbett would say, or the leaders of industrial enterprise, as Lord Derby and Mr. Bright would call them, set themselves to produce as much as ever they can, without asking themselves how long the demand may last, so that it do but last long enough for them to make their own fortunes by it, or without thinking, in any way beyond this, about what they are doing, or troubling themselves any further with the future. And clusters and fresh clusters of men and women they collect at places like St. Helens and Bolton to manufacture for them, and call them into being there just as much as if they had begotten them. Then the demand ceases or slackens, because more has been produced than was wanted, or because people who used to come to us for the thing we produced take to producing it for themselves, and think that they can make it (and we have premised that it is a thing not difficult to make) quite as well as we can; or even, since some of our heroes of industrial enterprise have been in too great haste to make their fortunes, and unscrupulous in their processes, better. And perhaps these capitalists have had time to make their fortunes; but meanwhile they have not made the fortunes of the clusters of men and women whom they have called into being to produce for them, and whom they have, as I said, as good as begotten. But these they leave to the chances of the future, and of the further development, as Lord Derby says, of great manufacturing industries. And so there arise periods of depression of trade, there arise complaints of over-production, uneasiness and distress at our centres of manufacturing industry. People then begin, even although their instinct for expansion, so far as liberty is concerned, may have received every satisfaction, they begin to discover, like those unionist workmen whose words Mr. John Morley quotes, that "free political institutions do not guarantee the well-being of the toiling class."  

In view of all this, it is hard to understand what is meant by the persistent charge that Arnold was indifferent to social and economic
questions. Ladd, in his book on Ruskin's moral aesthetic, describes Arnold as "retreating from the roar of machines and the spectacle of industrial poverty" into the "leisurely culture" of "sweetness" and "light." Lippincott, in his study of Victorian critics of democracy, holds that Arnold "underestimated the materialism engendered by the profit-system, and . . . did not probe the problem of inequality in relation to industrial property. . . ." Raymond Williams has argued that "both Arnold and Ruskin are, in the end, victims of abstraction in their social criticism: Arnold, because he shirked extending his criticism of ideas to criticism of the social and economic system from which they proceeded; Ruskin . . . because he was committed to an idea of 'inherent design' as a model for society." This charge, as it regards Arnold, is plainly untrue—unless we suppose that the only way of relating ideas to the social and economic system is by means of the Marxist version of the genetic fallacy: namely, that all ideas and all motives are derived from class and material motives. But perhaps the cloud of confusion raised by this charge can be dispersed, and its true meaning discovered, if we ponder yet another remark on Arnold and Ruskin by Williams. "It is now orthodox," he says, "to suppose that democracy is the root of our cultural problems, and from this supposition Arnold is a major figure. . . . On the other hand, if we see the cultural argument as essentially a critique of a commercial society, other figures take the foreground: Carlyle, Dickens, Ruskin, Morris; and then Arnold is an important but minor contributor. . . ."

When Arnold is charged with shirking his duty—if that is the right word—of criticizing the Victorian social and economic system, what is really meant is that he did not make the economic question the one great, all-consuming issue of his social philosophy, did not choose to explain human action in economic terms, and did not conclude, from the fact that "free political institutions do not guarantee the well-being of the toiling class," that free institutions were not worth preserving. Arnold paid sufficient attention to the question of social justice to exercise a powerful influence over thinkers with such impeccable socialist credentials as R. H. Tawney, who took the title and theme of the second chapter of his book Equality—"The Religion of
Inequality"—from Arnold; but he steadfastly resisted the temptation, which has been so powerful in the last hundred years, to allow the economic and social question to obliterate all considerations of what is needful to a free and humane life. By espousing democracy and liberalism Arnold had, in effect, from the point of view of observers like Williams, cut himself off from that true faith which unites nineteenth-century "conservatives" like Ruskin with twentieth-century Marxists. 95

T. S. Eliot has said that "Culture and Anarchy is on the same side as Unto This Last," and he is right in the sense that both excoriate the principle of laissez faire and preach the superiority of government and cooperation to anarchy and competition. But whereas for Ruskin anarchy was coextensive with the realm of industrial relations and production, Arnold looked upon the anarchy of the laissez faire industrial system as but one manifestation of a deeper moral and spiritual anarchy. 96 He agreed with Ruskin that the collision of opposed forces or interests in the economic realm was not guided by an invisible hand that made private vices into public benefits and the pursuit of selfish interests into a social obligation; but he went beyond Ruskin in recognizing that, as Irving Howe has astutely observed, there is no more reason to suppose that this mythical invisible hand by means of which innumerable conflicting units are supposed to be wrought into a resultant of cooperation will prove any more satisfactory "in the economy of moral conduct than it has in the morality of economic relations." 97

This is why Arnold sought a solution to "anarchy" not merely in new economic arrangements but in a wider conception that he called "culture." His criticism of laissez faire economics is couched in the terminology of culture rather than in the terminology of Christian socialism or of Marxism; but it is no less sincere or accurate for this deviation from progressive orthodoxy. We have seen how for Ruskin all social and political questions, all considerations of liberty and equality, were subsumed by the single issue of political economy, correct views about which even became a prerequisite for continued friendship with him. Arnold, on the other hand, with his deep, abid-
ing suspicion of a "one thing needful," whether in politics, economics, aesthetics, or religion, felt the importance of, and maintained his allegiance to, democracy and liberalism even as he recognized that neither was a guarantee of economic salvation for the working class. It was no accident that in 1879 when he chose to republish the essay that contains his first public onslaught on the principle of laissez faire, his introduction to *The Popular Education of France*, he entitled it "Democracy"; and he surely did not consider it accidental that Robert Lowe, who in the first part of the decade of the sixties had invoked the laissez faire doctrines to defend "payment by results" in education should in the second half of the decade emerge as the most thunderous and articulate parliamentary opponent of working class suffrage and of democracy.98

There is hardly a book on Ruskin that does not celebrate his pre-science in advocating social and welfare schemes put into practice in the twentieth century, or remind us that the members of the first Parliamentary Labor Party claimed to have been more deeply influenced by *Unto This Last* than by any other book. Arnold, though he gave far more attention to the conditions created by the Industrial Revolution than has generally been recognized, and was even, according to Lionel Trilling, among "those writers who made the old conditions of the Industrial Revolution ever less possible,"99 declined to make economics and sociology the basis of his political inquiries. The dismal industrial slums that arose from the practice of laissez faire had to be viewed as a symptom, along with religious sectarianism, worship of machinery, and love of "collision" for its own sake, of spiritual anarchy; and Arnold would not fix his attention exclusively on what he took to be one symptom among many of a pervasive infection.

Ultimately, Arnold and Ruskin agreed on the cause of modern anarchy. It was a new state of things in which, to quote Hannah Arendt, "a conception of law which identifies what is right with the notion of what is good for—for the individual, or the family, or the people, or the largest number" replaces "the absolute and transcendent measurements of religion." They disagreed over where this anarchy mani-
fested itself most menacingly, and how it might be combated, but their views need not therefore be thought mutually exclusive. John Stuart Mill, in writing of Bentham and Coleridge, once formulated a distinction between "complete thinkers" and "one-eyed men" that may be of use in comparing the modes of thought of Arnold and Ruskin, especially since it does not force us to choose between the two men. Bentham, says Mill, was a revolutionary thinker and a narrow one; in fact, he was revolutionary because he was narrow. Bentham's indifference to questions that did not suit his philosophy is certainly deplorable, yet perhaps, concedes Mill, "man has but the choice to go a little way in many paths, or a great way in only one." Desirous as Mill was of a social philosophy that synthesized partial truths, he seemed compelled to admit the necessity of "a large tolerance for one-eyed men, provided their one eye is a penetrating one: if they saw more, they probably would not see so keenly, nor so eagerly pursue one course of inquiry. Almost all rich veins of original and striking speculation have been opened by systematic half-thinkers: though whether these new thoughts drive out others as good, or are peacefully superadded to them, depends on whether these half-thinkers are or are not followed in the same track by complete thinkers."  

The social philosophies of Ruskin and Arnold may be seen as complementary if, applying Mill's suggestion, we view Arnold as the "complete" thinker of more inclusive yet less intense perception who follows in the track of Ruskin, the man of genius whose perception, as Hazlitt once said the perception of all genius must be, is partial and exclusive. The difference between Ruskin's stress on one particular question at the expense of all others, and Arnold's search for a "complete" philosophy, is but the reappearance in the political realm of the difference between their romantic and classical ideas of art. Ruskin had always stressed the importance of strict fidelity to separate facts and details, in disregard of all requirements of "system," of wholeness, and of the generality of truth; and he had determined, in all his inquiries, "to follow out, in any by-ways that may open, on right hand or left, whatever question it seems useful at any moment to settle." Arnold, by contrast, though he found Ruskin's work full of
excellent, penetrating insights, thought it lacking in the order and concatenation of things that was the preliminary to truth; and he urged the necessity, in art and in thought, of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, and warned of the dangers of supposing that the present concerns of men, however compelling, were their only or their most important concerns. Our present life must always be viewed, he believed, in relation to the collective experience of the past, and our latest impulses and experiences wrought into consistency with future exigencies as well as inherited truths. The attempt to grapple with present problems and needs, pressing as they might be, in disregard of the necessary continuities of human society, threatened to bring on yet worse problems. In society as in poetry, Arnold believed, one was morally obliged to respect traditional boundaries even as one tried to alter what happened within them. In 1853 he had issued a plea to poets to transmit intact to future generations the traditional framework of poetry. Fifteen years later, in *Culture and Anarchy*, he proclaimed: "For us the framework of society, that theatre on which this august drama has to unroll itself, is sacred; and whoever administers it, and however we may seek to remove them from their tenure of administration, yet, while they administer, we steadily and with undivided heart support them in repressing anarchy and disorder; because without order there can be no society, and without society there can be no human perfection."102

Arnold's and Ruskin's theories of art became theories of society because, as we have seen in previous chapters, they were originally framed as conceptions not only of the good work of art but of the good life. The difference between Arnold's classicism and Ruskin's romanticism was the difference between two orders of intelligence and two kinds of temperament. In 1873 Ruskin told an Oxford audience that "the writers and painters of the Classic school set down nothing but what is known to be true, and set it down in the perfectest manner possible in their way. . . . Romantic writers and painters, on the contrary, express themselves under the impulse of passions which may indeed lead to the discovery of new truths, . . . but their work, however brilliant or lovely, remains imperfect.
Arnold would have agreed with this formulation, except that he saw the personal consequences of the romantic artist's passionate desire to be truthful to a uniquely modern experience in graver terms than Ruskin did—at least until Ruskin began to suffer those consequences himself.

In one of his 1866 Oxford lectures, "On the Study of Celtic Literature," Arnold tried to show the difference between Celtic and Germanic "races" by pointing to the different qualities of their plastic art. The Celts seemed, with their insatiable sentiment and yearning toward the impalpable, "almost impotent" in sculpture and painting. The Germanic "races," on the other hand, with their appreciation of architectonicé, of composition and of wholeness, excelled in painting. England, being primarily a mixture of the Celtic and Germanic elements, was better off than the all-Celtic Irish, but still far inferior to "the more unmixed German races." The best example, in Arnold's view, of the Celtic inaptitude for composition in painting was Ruskin's idol, Turner; for the characteristic Celtic "impulse to express the inexpressible carries Turner so far, that at last it carries him away, and even long before he is quite carried away, even in works that are justly extolled, one can see the stampmark, as the French say, of insanity."104

From the very outset of his career as an artist, Arnold had sought to take precautions against immersion in the kinds of experience, external and internal, that courted insanity; and in March 1865 he told his mother:

No one has a stronger and more abiding sense than I have of the "daemonic" element—as Goethe called it—which underlies and encompasses our life; but I think, as Goethe thought, that the right thing is, while conscious of this element, and of all that there is inexplicable round one, to keep pushing on one's posts into the darkness, and to establish no post that is not perfectly in light and firm. One gains nothing on the darkness by being, like Shelley, as incoherent as the darkness itself.105
Ruskin, on the other hand, conceived of the relation between the light and the darkness of human life in a far different and less cautious way. He had, in *Modern Painters*, written the history of the disappearance of light and color from art and from the world; and when madness beset him, it took the form of a black storm cloud that darkened the heavens and cast moral and physical gloom over the earth. But in 1860, when he was writing *Unto This Last* and allowing himself to be "blackened" (to use the word Arnold will later apply) by political conflict, he could only see that to turn his back on the darkness was to turn his back on life. In the last volume of *Modern Painters*, after noting the shadows and coloring of some Highland and English hill scenery, he wrote:

Now, as far as I have watched the main powers of human mind, they have risen first from the resolution to see fearlessly, pitifully, and to its very worst, what these deep colours mean, wheresoever they fall; not by any means to pass on the other side, looking pleasantly up to the sky, but to stoop to the horror, and let the sky, for the present, take care of its own clouds. However this may be in moral matters, with which I have nothing here to do, in my own field of inquiry it is so; and all great and beautiful work has come of first gazing without shrinking into the darkness. If, having done so, the human spirit can, by its courage and faith, conquer the evil, it rises into conceptions of victorious and consummated beauty.\textsuperscript{106}

In my concluding chapter I hope to show the different kinds of critical stances adopted by Arnold and Ruskin to meet the encroaching darkness of the modern world, and the kinds of choices that had to be made by a Victorian critic who wanted to penetrate the darkness of his world without being submerged by it.