V

The Old Order Changeth

1839–1841

While Edmund was settling into his Glasgow professorship and Henry studying law at the Inner Temple, their father's life was waning. The brief memorial privately published more than forty years afterward (1881) by his daughter Ellen Eliza gives only scant detail.1 Late one summer he had gone with some of his family on a "long" journey, returned to the seaside at Eastbourne, and fallen "very ill with an attack from which he never entirely recovered." Thereafter he was "always very much of an invalid, though his powers of mind and the beauty of his nature were quite unaltered." Approaching his birthday, 11 July 1838, he thought only of the "72 years of . . . happiness" granted by his "Creator" and all "those dear relatives."

He lived to read Edmund's published Glasgow inaugural. Previously he had gone over the manuscript, suggesting various alterations, most of which Edmund, although "with infinite trouble," as he wrote his father, had dutifully made. "I own to you," Lushington wrote on 3 March 1839, "I am more pleased seeing the whole than when I examined it only piece by piece." Its "general views" were "elevated and just," though possibly too hopeful about the "height of excellence" humanly attainable through education. It might have had "something more of quotation to illustrate and prove the peculiar spirit and excellencies ascribed to the different Grecian authors," but Edmund could provide such illustrations in "future lectures." Meanwhile all the family was
looking forward to “the happy period” of Edmund’s long summer holidays. His own health recently had “rather varied.” Apparently he was becoming reconciled to Edmund’s new employment: “God bless you,” he concluded, “and make your earnest and high-minded exertions a source of advantage to the world and to yourself.”

Within two weeks, without again seeing Edmund, Lushington quietly died. On the blank page of a book, his adoring widow described his final evening, 26 March. Seeming “quite well,” he had walked with her “round the yard, before dinner,” talking and joking as usual “with the workmen whom he met.” After dinner he “conversed, and with his usual delightful affectionate manner, contributed to the enjoyment and comfort of our family circle. At half-past nine o’clock, read our evening prayer; kissed and wished his dear Girls good night; by twelve o’clock the Lord took his angelic spirit to Himself!” On 4 April “the mortal remains of one of the best and most deservedly beloved of husbands and fathers, were followed to the grave by a deeply mourning family.”

Although never to be lavishly wealthy, the family was left comfortably secure. Besides Park House and about five hundred acres of adjoining or surrounding land, Lushington left another substantial house near Maidstone with about two hundred fifty-two acres; perhaps still another manor house in Kent with lands and surrounding woods totaling about two hundred thirty acres; a house and four hundred seventy-nine acres (although mortgaged) in Essex; and perhaps two houses in the Poultry in the City of London.2

Ellen’s 1881 memoir idyllically describes Lushington’s last decade at Park House. Though a newcomer to Maidstone, he had soon become “known and revered as a kind and experienced magistrate, as a man who was ever ready to forward every scheme for the good of his fellows, as a gentleman before whom nothing unjust or mean could be allowed to exist.” He had helped promote the founding of “a large Hospital” and a “public Lunatic asylum.” Before “the purity and gentleness of his mind . . . those of a lower standard of excellence were unconsciously elevated . . . and shrank from expressing anything unworthy in his presence.” He could calmly discuss political or religious differences without giving offense, and was always a kind and courteous host to the friends of his sons and daughters.

All the laborers and cottagers on his lands he knew “in their histories, in their cottages, in their family life.” He “would stop to chat with the old half-blind hedger, or watch the work of the sturdy woodman with his axe, or speak kindly to the little bird boy in his hut of hop-bines, yelling and shaking his rattle to frighten away the crows.” He was always courteous “whether he asked the direction of a road from a laboring man in the fields, or spoke to a beggar in real want.” To the “faithful nurse,” who had cared for all the children “from the eldest to the youngest,” and “spent her whole life in the family . . . ‘Master’s
order was...an unquestioned law." She declared that "if any bad person tried to kill Papa, I would shoot him with my own hand!" The gardener, delighted with glimpses of Park House family life, "exclaimed, 'It reminded me of the Kingdom of Heaven!'

In the long evening after an early dinner, the father would assemble the family and the governess and read aloud from Shakespeare, Scott, Milton, or Southey. "When the elder sons were at home, they would perhaps introduce literature of a later period, but he always returned to Shakespeare with never failing interest." During journeys, or sojournings at the seaside, he would take the children for walks and

open their minds to the wonders of the shore, to the beautiful mysteries of fossil or spar hidden in the boulder like flint stones, to the many changing hues of the sea or the South Downs, to the high white wall of cliff studded with its black lines, with the clouds hurrying along in the blue overhead; filling their minds with pictures which remained vivid and fresh through their lives.

With Lushington's death the Park House property passed to the scholarly Edmund, an otherworldly man of twenty-nine whose energies since his eighth year had been concentrated on classical or philological studies, and who would live in distant Scotland for half of every year. Not until thirty-six years later would the new master of Park House reside there the year round.

Henry had grieved deeply at the death of the father, with whom he had been more than commonly close. Venables recalled that he could never afterward mention his father's name "without a change in his tone of voice" that expressed "undying affection and regret."

That summer Henry wrote Milnes from Sandgate on the Kentish coast, where he was staying several weeks "gradually recovering" from a cold that had "nearly killed me." He had been skimming through miscellaneous novels in a local library and reflecting upon the unintended farcicality of the forthcoming Eglinton tournament. "The Iron Age, a farce by performers of distinction," Henry dubbed it. Lord Eglinton had gravely assured the sheriff that "no one could by any possibility be hurt" under the conditions of safety he was imposing. "Much cry and little wool," Henry dryly commented, "or rather perhaps much wool (sawdust at least to make the lists soft) and little cry. Is the troop of horse to be shod by felt, also, that nobody be hurt by a kick? O brave new world that has such men in it!" Some clergyman ought to "discourse" against the "impious sin of mocking our ancestors and bringing them into contempt." But Henry feared that if he said more Milnes would "throw your Troubadour lyre at me, and I do not wish it to be broken." Henry was scornful
too of the prosecution of minor Chartist agitators then taking place: "The law has indeed power to bind and to loose; and it exercises the power rather impressively: it is a net which breaks with large fishes but holds the little ones tight." One "wise" judge had defined sedition as "the speaking with disrespect of the Government and laws in public," a definition, Henry remarked, which would condemn "every speech made on either side at an election." A month later, back at Park House, he was commenting upon Carlyle's recently published Occasional and Miscellaneous Essays. Perhaps people would read Carlyle "now that he has a name." If so they would "surely find one or two things to astonish them. The phenomenon of an English writer, and in his way a religious one, assuming the mythical nature of all Old and New Testament wonders as long since demonstrated, would be portentous to many, and is certainly new."

Burdened as always by poor health, Henry had entered the nine-year period of greatest interest to posterity, his years of association with Tennyson. Actually, that friendship had begun no later than March 1839, when Henry wrote to his father that the "girls will be interested to know that I have the great poet in my room at this moment, smoking with the shortest & blackest of pipes." Henry, who thought it "only provoking" that Tennyson would not publish, had been "settling with him that he is to come down with me sometime or other. Which of her rooms will Maria [the eldest sister] give up for smoking?"

No doubt the mourning period after Lushington's death later that month delayed Tennyson's projected visit. Edmund, writing shortly before his own death in 1893, believed that "the first time Tennyson visited me in my own house was in the summer of 1840 when he came to stay a few days." There is no record that Henry had brought him to Park House before then.

By the summer of 1839, Henry had access to various of Tennyson's unpublished poems. On 8 July he repeated to Venables "parts of 'Locksley Hall,' which is very beautiful, & might be very popular. The freshness & vigour of Tennyson is wonderful." And on 7 February 1840, Henry recited "parts of Tennyson's new poems, which seem to be more tending to comedy, & less ornate." After March 1840, when Henry and Venables began sharing chambers at the Temple, both were seeing Tennyson occasionally, and during some periods frequently.

For Henry the nine years between 1839 and his departure in November 1847 to begin his chief secretoryship of the British government of Malta would be a period of unsettlement and consciousness of underutilized talents. Although admitted to the bar on 20 November 1840 and equipped with gown and wig by the end of the year, he never really practiced the profession. As Venables carefully wrote, "The experiment of his profession was a failure, or rather, it was never seriously tried. . . . With the exception of a few briefs in criminal
prosecutions at assizes and sessions, he had no opportunity of cultivating or
displaying the legal abilities which he possessed in an eminent degree.” His ill
health, Venables believed, “would probably have prevented him from profit­
ing from opportunities of practice”; and it certainly “disinclined” him from
enduring the physical discomforts of “resolute attendance on courts and cir­
cuits,” which too often failed to bring even a persistent new barrister any
profit.9

Milnes, however, had discounted Henry’s physical infirmity, considering it
rather like “a normal condition which with due care would give him the same
chances of life that any of us possessed.” Such an “intense vitality” had ap­
peared “in all he said, and did, and even looked. There was no languour in his
feebleness, no apathy in his enforced quiet; he was less like a weak man than like
a strong man tired.” His mind, certainly, “was eminently apt to perceive, and
his imagination to illustrate, the strong points” of any court case. Milnes sus­
pected that the “real cause” of Henry’s not succeeding at the bar was “his own
want of interest in legal employment.”10 For these suspicions Milnes had
grounds. Henry’s epistolary references to the bar had been too laboriously face­
tious, exposing rather than cloaking his aversion. Did not Milnes “know that
this is term time, and that the whole mystery of iniquity is going on at West­
minster as hard as it can all day, & for a month to come? Into which mystery,
more mysterious even than iniquitous, it is really time for me to get some small
insight.” And again, “For the next few days my time will be very agreeably
spent in sitting in court with a wig on, and hearing other people insinuate
perfectly groundless suspicions against the character and veracities of perfectly
honest witnesses: with no better hope than that I may at some future time be
myself called upon to practice similar iniquity.”11

An aversion to such an “iniquitous” vocation would have been natural in a
man so determined, as Venables later celebrated him, to be straightforwardly
truthful in nuance as well as word:

From his infancy to his death, I believe he never uttered a wilful inaccu­
racy, and so strong was his instinctive love of verbal truth, that his lan­
guage, even when it was most free and playful, scarcely ever took the form
of exaggeration and irony. . . . He maintained, in seriousness and in
jest, a single-minded directness which was not less distinctly expressed in
the tones of his voice, and in the play of his expressive countenance, than in
the substance of his conversation.12

In our more vocationally diversified century, given his imaginative absorp­
tion in politics and international affairs, such an articulate and personally win­
some man might, with adequate health, have disregarded the bar, and risen in
the BBC, become a correspondent for a London daily, held a professorship in political science or international relations in one of numerous British universities, administered a philanthropic foundation, or done any number of other things.

Yet from our present standpoint, his abandoning the bar may seem fortuitous. A busy young barrister, ambitiously pursuing political honors, would have lacked the leisure to spend weeks from time to time as confidant and practical critic to Tennyson. A certain shared rootlessness was necessary to that relationship, so important to Tennyson just then.

Another simple fact ought not to be overlooked. Even before Henry was called to the bar in 1840, a competing occupation was beckoning him back to Park House. With his father dead and his elder brother preoccupied in Scotland, he had an aging mother, four young sisters, and a teen-aged brother who needed a readily accessible, able-minded man, a surrogate head of family. The need would become even greater after the levelheaded mother died in 1841. Henry performed that new role until his departure for Malta, by which time the boy Franklin was a man of twenty-four and graduated from Cambridge with his own highest classical honors.

Between periods of illness and despite family responsibilities and all the random distractions that beset people not regularly employed, Henry also managed during those nine years to produce and publish a respectable amount of writing, including three substantial pamphlets and an admirable 303-page book. We have no certain way of knowing how much anonymous writing he may have done for periodicals. From Venables’s journals we can identify one or two articles previously unattributed. There may have been others, although the systematic Venables, with his constant regard for Henry, probably recorded most if not all.

Undoubtedly Henry’s best-remembered achievement has been the impression he left upon Tennyson as a practical literary critic. Venables reported Tennyson’s “frequent remark” that Henry was the “most suggestive” of “all the critics with whom he had discussed his own poems”; and Hallam Tennyson’s Memoir of the poet immortalized a pithier piece of Tennysonian praise: “Others may find faults in a poem, but Harry finds the fault and tells you how to mend it.” Finally, in Tennyson and His Friends, Hallam declared that his father had “pronounced” Henry to be “the best critic he had ever known.” (We must more thoroughly explore this poet/critic relationship in later chapters.)

Early in 1840 Henry began to share chambers at Mitre Court in the Inner Temple with Venables, who had resigned his tutorship at Jesus College, Cambridge, and moved into London to study law. Venables’s journals demonstrate that his strongest motive for moving was to live nearer his friend. On 25 March,
Henry vacated his own rooms, moved in with Venables, and with frequent extended absences lived there until 1847.

The room quickly became a resort for Tennyson, for Edmund when he was in town, and for various of the Cambridge Apostles and their friends. "A. Tennyson came," Venables wrote on 3 April, "and sat all day, repeated the Gardener's Daughter, which is improved in point of unity. With him & Spedding dinner at Ireland's in Leicester Square—afterwards to Spedding's—B.L.C. [Benedict Lawrence Chapman, Chancery barrister, close friend of both Venables and Henry], R.M. [Milnes or Monteith], & D. Heath. Repeated the Vision, Dora & the picnic eclogue ['Audley Court']—all good." The next day, Saturday, Tennyson was back with Chapman for breakfast: "Again idled all morning talking with him." And then on Sunday, "B.L.C. to breakfast, afterwards A.T." (But Tennyson was away from London during frequent stretches of weeks or months.)

Often in the years that followed, Venables would wonder if his move from Cambridge had been wise. His progress at the bar was painfully slow (though in later years the profession made him wealthy), Henry was too frequently absent, and so many other friends popped in and out that he could hardly do his own work. On 11 May 1841 he wrote: "Attempted at night to continue the Fichte translation, but interrupted by Pollock, &c. It is not to be expected that one can have company when it is wanted without taking the chance of its interfering with other matters. The debate still goes on."

A biography of Venables might be obliged to speculate in depth concerning the configurations of that totally conscientious man's feeling about Henry. Even a biography of Henry cannot simply ignore the topic, since he could hardly have escaped being affected by some of its ambiguities. Almost all of the documentation comes filtered through the single consciousness of Venables. Apparently only two letters survive from the hundreds that Henry wrote Venables during the twenty-seven years of their friendship, but during the final seventeen, Venables in his journals set down frequent, no doubt often too hastily scrawled, takings of his own pulse. More than anything else, it seems, he introspectively needed to define for himself the meaning of the relationship: not only what it was not but more precisely what it was. The journals when carefully studied, not merely skimmed, afford sufficiently numerous indications that during the half-decade before Henry died, Venables was beginning to articulate his long-needed perspective.

Professor Peter Allen, near the end of his admirable book about the early Cambridge Apostles (1978), inserts an untypically febrile paragraph about Venables and the "one-sided love affair," the "single overwhelming passion—his unrequited love for Henry Lushington," that "dominated his life." True,
there was a dominating feeling. But is it not rather too sweeping to announce that "Venables' cultivated exterior, his extensive social life, the insatiable round of work to which he submitted himself, were all masks to hide his deep unhappiness"? Every one of those three? Masks and nothing else? Nor have I found anything at all in the more than twenty-eight years of journals after Henry's death, or in any other documents, to support Allen's other inherently unprovable declaration that Venables was left with "nothing but bitter memories." At the risk of sounding sentimental, I suggest that "tender, belatedly reconciled, memories" would better accord with the documentary evidence. Bitterness, if latent after 1855, lay unexpressed, though frequent expressions of discontent had been recorded during earlier years.

Venables had long recognized that his preoccupation with Henry created an imbalance, that he consumed more time thinking about the friendship than Henry did. Therein for him lay much of the gall. Allen seems accurate concerning Venables's journalized feelings when he applies the term "emotional life." The sole wish specified in the journals (not intended for publication) was for more constant comradeship and a more equitably reciprocated regard. The journals indicate a commitment to a conservative moral code for both himself and others. His biographical sketch of Henry celebrated an idealist whose "purity and simplicity of . . . nature repelled every form of vice without any apparent effort." When Henry and Venables were together, there had always been much hearty day-by-day enjoyment, much intellectual communion. Loneliness and melancholia descended for Venables when he and his friend were apart, or in the days immediately preceding a parting. But in time, as we shall later see, Venables came to recognize that Henry had indeed valued him too, genuinely in the way of truehearted friendship.

An additional, and ironical, circumstance must not be disregarded if one would see Venables whole. His journals reveal unmistakably that both during and after Henry's lifetime—at least from 1847—Venables came to be emotionally preoccupied, often painfully so, with another Lushington, Henry's sister Emily (born in 1817, the same year as Cecilia Tennyson Lushington). During stretches of his journals, including one period when Henry was present in England, home from Malta, Venables seems considerably more absorbed with Emily than with Henry. There are more than sufficient indications that Emily loved him. Unfortunately, Venables, with or without good reason, feared marriage. It may be that, in the end, the unfulfilled relationship with Emily was the real tragedy of Venables's life. It was almost unquestionably so for Emily.

Tennyson, making his first visit to Park House some time in the summer of 1840, would have met Mrs. Lushington, unless she was staying at the seaside, as various family members often did during summers. Earlier that spring or
Mrs. Tennyson with Alfred and her daughters had moved from High Beech to Tunbridge Wells. Most probably Tennyson came to Park House in late summer after Edmund returned from his visit of "some months in various parts of Germany." Edmund later recalled that already the Tennysons had found their new residence "not healthy for all of the family, and they were wishing to meet with some other place to settle in." After "a day or two" Edmund returned with Tennyson to Tunbridge Wells for "a short visit to his mother's house," where Edmund would have first met his future wife. "Not long after this first visit" (whatever that phrase means), Tennyson brought his mother and "two younger sisters" (it would have been Cecilia's first sight of her future home) "to stay some days," while they looked "round the neighbouring country" for a house. If that visit occurred any time during 1840, Edmund's mother and Cecilia's mother—admirable, near-saintly women both—could have become fleetingly acquainted.

Soon sorrow struck again. After an apparently brief illness, Mrs. Lushington died at the age of sixty-one-and-a-half on 10 January 1841, Edmund's thirtieth birthday. She had been seriously ill before Edmund, home for Christmas holidays, had been forced to return to Glasgow. On 5 January, Maria wrote that although "very languid," their mother seemed improved, more "cheerful & comfortable," taking an interest in reading and asking to be wheeled about in her chair. But soon she was worsening, and Edmund began speeding southward. Snow delayed the mail coach between Glasgow and Lancaster. At the Birmingham railway station, he received a letter from eighteen-year-old Franklin: "May God grant you strength and comfort under the painful news I have to give you. Our dearest Mother passed from this life about 4 o'clock this afternoon, with very little pain as we hope and believe." After receiving the Sacrament, she had lain "quite tranquilly and easily . . . perfectly conscious" until almost the end. Another letter, from Henry, awaited Edmund at London. "The girls continue more calm, more free from agitation of any kind, than any could believe who did not know the strength as well as the tenderness of their minds." Their "steady unfa ltering resolution" in nursing their mother had "brought tears" to Henry's eyes "oftener almost than anything else, in recollecting it." Edmund reached London, hours behind schedule, between two and three in the morning, rested an hour at Henry's and Venables's chambers, and then started for Park House by chaise, arriving on the fourth day after the death.

In London, Venables had written that the mother's death would be "far worse in its consequences for the family" than the father's had been, and that so "great a shock coming after the first may affect the feelings and character of some of them for many years, or for life." After "having known deep sorrow,"
there might never again be "cheerfulness of the same kind as before. If any other blow should come it will be of a still heavier kind." Fortunately, another thirteen years would pass before the next family loss in 1854 would introduce a terrible train of four premature deaths in less than five years.

Even so, with Sophia's death the old order at Park House had irrevocably passed, yielding place to a not very enviable new. The most steadying hand was gone. Not again during the nineteenth century would any one woman be the center around whom a generally happy Park House would unambiguously revolve. Cecilia Tennyson, who in less than two years would become the nominal mistress of the place, would possess neither the uninterrupted tenancy nor the physical and emotional endowments requisite to the role. During long stretches she would be necessarily away with Edmund in Scotland, or else would reside in various places at the seaside. Even when in residence she would be weighed down by chronically poor health.

Four Lushington sisters, not without health problems of their own, survived from the seven daughters born to Lushington and Sophia. For the next fifty-two years, until the last one (Emily) died only three months before Edmund, one or more of the sisters would, except for brief intervals, reside at Park House. Ten days after the mother's death, the eldest, Maria Catherine, became twenty-five. Born with, or soon developing, cataracts in both eyes, she had sustained two ophthalmic surgical operations before the age of three, but her sight was never normal. Her letters indicate a fine intelligence, and temperamentally she appears the most serene of the four, a steadying influence, perhaps the one most like her mother. Emily, twenty-three, herself often ill, seems to have been the most comely of the four, extraordinarily appealing, the one with whom men fell in love; yet she was consistently self-effacing, devoted to caring for children, nursing the sick, visiting the needy. Ellen Eliza, nineteen, was high-strung, the one whom the others sought to shield from nervous excitement. She became the literary one, writer of inspirational verses and creditable though undistinguished moral stories peopled with good and simple characters and adorned with admirable descriptions of the countryside, especially her beloved South Downs. She had frequent illnesses, early and late, and in her final years was unable to walk. Louisa Sophia ("Louy"), not yet seventeen, was apparently vivacious and admired for her mental accomplishments and breadth of interests. She seems to have been relatively healthy but would die, probably from dysentery, when barely thirty. Perhaps it should be stipulated that the greater part of all we know about the sisters must be extracted from one source, Venables's journals, not entirely unbiased since he was devoted to them all; and had he ever married, he would have married Emily.

Meanwhile Edmund, like his former tutor Julius Hare, and Hare's revered
master, Coleridge, had been developing into a Germanophile and something of a metaphysician. Before 1841 he had traveled for study in Germany at least three times. As early as 1838 Professor Christian Lassen, of Bonn University, had testified that Edmund understood German "perfectly, and speaks it with correctness and fluency," besides having "acquired an extraordinary knowledge of German literature, especially the portion of it relating to philology and philosophy." In German metaphysics Edmund was finding a second field of study to complement his dedication to Greek. Since boyhood he had practiced precise concentration, analyzing a given text, determining just what it was or was not saying, what those particular words in the uniquely functioning syntax of that particular language seemed to denote and connote. He would continue to put himself sternly through that kind of finding out before embracing or rejecting philosophical ideas, or venturing into speculations of his own.

His openness to German higher criticism of the Scriptures had occasioned raised eyebrows among the Apostolic set. To Milnes, Henry had written light-heartedly on 2 January 1837:

Notwithstanding your good wishes for his orthodoxy, [Edmund] is deep in Strauss, having gotten to the end of one volume not less thick than impious, and being preserved from the abyss of skepticism only by the accident of having left the second at Cambridge. His fate cannot therefore be deferred beyond February. My ignorance of German, which however I intend to remove, may preserve me a little longer.

With more apparent seriousness, Monteith, who within a few years would become a Roman Catholic, wrote to Milnes in October 1839:

Lushington gave me some pleasant days here—great talk about all the secret troubles of theology—they are mere mental perplexities with him—his lymphatic, xanthous temperament never permits these things to be really grievous to him. It is curious inquiry, as about Greek roots, & his intellectual ambition to be a man of insights & a truth-proclaimer maybe mortified—but he pineth not at heart, & will die of gout like his fathers for 4 generations hale & happy & fresh of spirit, all riddles unread, & God's statutes unexpounded.

Venables in July 1839 recorded "various discussions with ELL on philosophical questions connected with Kant, Fichte, & philosophy in general." Venables too had learned German, was writing reviews of German works, and later occupied himself by working on (but did not publish) translations of Fichte. Edmund's obituary writer in 1893, his former Glasgow pupil the Greek scholar Lewis Campbell, remembered him in middle life, sitting "in summer days
... under the stately 'immemorial elms’ at Park House, "holding a classic volume or some book of German philosophy in his hand." In philosophy "he leaned rather to Kant than to Hegel. An idealist to the core, he was at the same time a lover of close and accurate reasoning."

Out of Edmund’s absorption in German thought and his indignant intolerance of whatever seemed superficial or shoddy scholarship grew the only anonymous periodical article known to be his. From Venables’s journals we know that Edmund wrote the article in his friend J. M. Kemble’s British and Foreign Review that mercilessly examined a small book entitled Observations on the attempted application of pantheistic principles to the theory and historic criticism of the Gospel. Part I. On the theoretic application, being the Christian Advocate’s publication for 1840, by Dr. William Hodge Mill (1792-1853). Mill, a former Fellow of Trinity College respected for his work in oriental studies, including Arabic and Sanskrit, had been the founding principal of Bishop’s College in Calcutta until forced by ill health to return to Britain. In 1838 he became chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Christian Advocate on the Hulse Foundation at Cambridge. In 1843 he would stand unsuccessfully for the Regius Professorship of Divinity, being distrusted for supposed Tractarian leanings; finally, in 1848, he would become Regius Professor of Hebrew.

Mill’s 1840 book was the first of five annual installments of a work intended to demolish D. F. Strauss’s Leben Jesu. The part that Edmund reviewed attempted broadly to link Strauss with recent German philosophy, all of which Mill denounced as generally “pantheistic” and therefore patently anti-Christian. With his eighteen years in India and his background in Indian languages and thought, Mill felt prepared to expose all the impious enormities of pantheism. But apparently he commanded less of German than of several other languages, and would not recognize possible differences between Indian pantheism and its current German counterparts, or between degrees of pantheism in different German writers. To him, pantheism was pantheism, and most if not all contemporary German philosophers were pantheists. Their philosophy had already "begun to visit us." It regarded "God and nature in a light utterly irreconcilable with Christianity," rejected "all notion of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, above and beyond ourselves," and discarded "all faith in the unseen, all hope of an individual immortality of being." The Idea was God, "and mankind at large is the Christ." Sacred records were mere "dreamy visions and legends." The "only reality admitted in any system of traditional religion" was the "identity of our highest reason with the essence that is all-pervaded and indestructible. Those to whom the Hegels and the Schellings are exhibited as restorers of philosophy should at least know what is the kind of doctrine they are called upon to admire."
Edmund finished his review in mid-April, then sent it to Venables in London, who read it at first “with a good deal of disappointment,” unable to “see how Edmund’s answer [to Mill] can be an answer.” After Edmund arrived from Glasgow in May, he conferred with Venables, then made some “alterations” before sending the piece to Kemble.

Mill erred, Edmund argued, in linking Strauss’s *mytho-historical* criticism with German *philosophical* speculation: there was no “obvious or immediate connexion.” Essentially, Strauss was following a prevalent German historical trend that thoroughly examined *all* unsubstantiated narratives “from any nation”—“Greek, Asiatic (including Jewish), and Teutonic.” But even when Strauss did introduce certain “philosophical principles,” Mill erred again in trying to answer Strauss in particular by broadly assaulting “Hegel and other philosophers”:

No writer is entitled to consider it as a light matter to speak hastily and on insufficient knowledge, of the combined labours in thought of men who have earnestly devoted their lives to subjects on which he has bestowed but a passing glance: or to endanger the success of what is well done in his undertaking by mixing it up with what is ill done, and perhaps need not have been attempted at all. In the first-mentioned defect he is unjust to his adversaries, in the latter to himself.

Furthermore, Mill’s basic rhetorical method, ostensibly expositing a whole philosophical system by displaying a few isolated excerpts, was irredeemably defective. It was doubtful that the “essence” of any system could be “fairly conveyed to an uninitiated reader by a few prominent sentences, without the slightest sketch of the process of reasoning by which this essence has been obtained from the first data.” The difficulty increases in proportion to the complexity of the system. The “several parts of the system” must always “keep each other in check, and occupy their place in virtue of something else than mere juxtaposition.” To have “anything beyond dead mass in building” requires “interwoven conceptions to make the law which binds stone to stone.” If that rule was true of “matter symbolizing mind,” it was much more so “of the immediate products of mind itself.” Words alone “do not form sentences; and thought too has to be spelt out, not singly and apart, but along with and by the aid of conceptions which lead to it step by step, and which mutally lend and borrow meaning.”

“If I know not how Plato or Hegel thought up to this principle,” inquired Edmund, “how can I feel certain what he thought in it? Am I not exposing myself to the error of fancying that from words alone I can legitimately derive a comprehension and knowledge of things?”
But if such a caveat applied to the delicate task of tracing "a train of speculation in a single mind," it was "more pointedly" applicable to the philosophy of an entire nation like Germany, which had "wandered its own way for fifty years, with few lookers on and yet fewer attendants, toiling to find the light by steps painful and slow." Each "successive development" had involved much of the "preceding." All historians of German philosophy agreed that "the prominent speakers, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, are relatively to each other necessary points of transition." Each formed part of "the existence and ground of the comprehensibility" of his successors. All these thinkers had "emphatically" asserted that "their predecessors have more truth in what they assert than in what they deny." Each had attempted to "include, and by reconciling explain and verify, other systems."

It was particularly "dangerous and deceptive" to characterize such a complexly "various, yet interdependent, national philosophy" with one basically meaningless term like "pantheistic." That unfortunate adjective had been "rarely equalled" for "vagueness of application" and "frequent unmeaningness." If ever used at all, it "should be carefully fenced round by rigorous definition" to avoid "misunderstanding or misapplication." When misused, such an epithet "tempts those to judge rashly who perhaps might never be qualified to judge at all." It " fosters ill-will and contempt, both in the one party who complains that he is not understood, and the other who will not take the trouble to seek to understand him, or believe that he may be worth understanding."

After exposing miscellaneous defects in Mill's arguments and assumptions, and supplying a three-page listing of his mistranslations from the German, Edmud urged British scholars to step forth and lead out in attempting to understand the Germans, "presenting in a true undistorted light to the independent minds of England the career which German thought has opened for itself in the last and the present generation." Incompatibilities between English and German beliefs would inevitably persist for many years. The "leading thinkers of the nation which produced Luther" were not likely to "regard any subject whatever as guarded within a sacred pale from scrutinizing glances of pure thought" or to "acquiesce in holding a religious creed" that does not harmonize with reason. But a study of the Germans "carried on more in the spirit of love than of distrust," with "the aim of finding, not errors to repel, but rather concurrent truths to attract," despite differences in their clothing, would "draw to light points of contact and community now hidden from the general view." And it might "tend to the purifying of faith and the illumination of reason alike" in both nations.

Apart from his Glasgow inaugural, this review is the longest and fullest
surviving exposition of Edmund's scholarly ideals. It reflects with distinction the rigorous, fair-minded spirit of his best mentors—Hare and Thirlwall and the men at Bonn—and the open-minded receptivity of his namesake ancestor Bishop Edmund Law. It was probably his only venture into writing for the reviews. Neither his Glasgow position nor his own self-esteem was contingent upon publication, and by ordinary standards he was apparently deficient in ambitiousness for reputation. For him study was its own reward. But if this article is unique, so was the occasion for his intellectual outrage: a wrong-headed attack upon a field of study he had recently begun to love, made by a professed fellow-philologist who ought to have known better, offending Edmund’s most cherished ideals of scholarly integrity and responsible use of language.

In mid-March of 1841 Edmund, back in Glasgow after the burial of his mother, had been dropped into close friendship with a remarkable man only six years her junior. The aging and infirm “Opium Eater” Thomas De Quincey (born 1785), had escaped with a few books and a great bundle of treasured papers one night from Edinburgh, after hiding out for nine years to avoid debtor’s prison, and turned up at the door of John Nichol, professor of astronomy at Glasgow and a close colleague-friend of Edmund. When a bulky shipment of new astronomical instruments for the Glasgow observatory elbowed poor De Quincey out of Nichol’s house, Edmund, alone in his own house nearby, took in the fugitive until he could locate other quarters, as he did about three weeks later. Those weeks of association between the specialized but open-minded young linguist and the versatile old journalist, with his encyclopedic reading and assimilative mind—a man who had intimately known the Wordsworths and Edmund’s ideal, Coleridge—held promise of enjoyment and instruction for both. Both were good listeners, and De Quincey, given a receptive audience, was a fascinating talker hardly less prodigious than Coleridge himself. But De Quincey’s biographer relates that “on the very first evening, as Professor Lushington and De Quincey were sitting down to dinner, De Quincey was seized with a violent affliction, inflammatory and connected with strong delirium, which for many subsequent days prostrated him in an infant state of helplessness.” He remained at Glasgow, living near the college, for about three years, almost continuously ill. Edmund assisted as he could, bringing books from the college library. De Quincey had long been proud of his proficiency in Greek, doing his own translating for his articles; and his interests extended to the German metaphysicians and philologists, into whom Edmund had more recently delved. The friendship continued after De Quincey returned to Edinburgh, where Edmund frequently came to cheer him when he was depressed. Some of the best, most confidential letters De Quincey ever wrote, priceless
sources for his biographers, were addressed to his young professor friend. Ed­
mund was one of the last to visit him before he died in 1859. And surviving the
old man’s death, until the end of Edmund’s own life in 1893, was a mutually
sustaining platonic friendship between Edmund and De Quincey’s youngest
daughter, Florence Bairdsmith (1827–1904), whose admirable husband, Col­
onel Richard Baird Smith, died on duty in India in 1861, leaving her with two
small daughters. Highly intelligent and a sympathetic letter-writer, she will
appear from time to time in our narrative.

The spring and later months of 1841 were a prospering time for the friendship
between our Lushington brothers and Alfred Tennyson. For Tennyson it was a
crucial year. Although he had not yet informed his friends he had finally com­
mitted himself in February to publishing his poems to forestall publication of
the unrevised 1830 and 1832 versions in the United States.28 In late fall his family
would move from Tunbridge Wells to Boxley, near Park House. And he was
continuing to endanger his inheritance by speculating in an ultimately disas­
trous wood-carving scheme of the High Beech lunatic asylum keeper, Dr. Mat­
thew Allen.

Venables’s journal records that Edmund arrived in London from Glasgow on
4 May, finding both W. H. Thompson and Tennyson at Venables’s and Henry’s
chambers. Tennyson was “still occupied with the woodcarving speculation.”
The next day Edmund and Venables began going over Edmund’s review of
Mill, but were soon “interrupted by Tennyson, who staid all morning.” When
Venables went off to study at “the library,” Edmund and Henry accompanied
Tennyson to his quarters (probably at 7 Charlotte Street, where he wrote Dr.
Allen a week later that he was “still living”).29 On the eighth, Henry and
Edmund left for St. Leonards, but Henry returned on the eighteenth; and on the
twentieth he and Venables called on Tennyson and “sat with him a long time—
talking & looking over his M.S. book. Brought it away & dined late at the Club.
Afterwards looked over some of the poems, as always with great admiration,
particularly Locksley Hall & a new ballad, Ellen Adair [“Edward Gray”]. Suc­
cceeded apparently in persuading AT to take steps about money.” On the next
day they “read over more of the poems, principally the Hallam series, which
are exquisitely true & touching, though perhaps few men, at least middleaged
men will be able to feel their peculiar truth. A. Tennyson called & staid a very
short time, leaving town to day.” It remains unclear what Tennyson was per­
suaded to do about money; most of his finally fatal agreements with Allen seem
already to have been sealed.

On 12 June, Venables and Henry went together down to Park House, where
Tennyson was already staying with Edmund. On the night of the fifteenth,
probably for all the party including the four Lushington sisters, Tennyson “re-
peated Lady Clara & some other poems, including The Picnic" ["Audley Court"]; and on the eighteenth, Venables's thirty-first birthday, "Tennyson repeated the Cock & Dora, the first admirable & less known. Not that these things are by any means unmixed pleasure." Obviously, Venables would have preferred more unshared time with Henry and the other Lushingtons. Both corporeally and vocally, Tennyson filled a lot of space.

On 8 July, while at home with his own family at Llysdinam in Wales, Venables learned through a letter from Chapman that Henry and some others in the family would probably go to Italy for almost a year. Franklin's physician had prescribed a warmer climate, and it soon appeared that the sister Emily needed it also. Another letter from Chapman received on 29 July contained another "strange piece of news," probably the decision of the Tennysons to move from Tunbridge Wells to Maidstone. A letter from Henry to Edmund, postmarked 8 July 1841, speaks of "Alfred's coming with or without Mr. [Charles Tennyson] Turner to look at the houses."

When Venables went down to Park House on 10 August, he found that Henry, Franklin, Ellen, and Louy were in "Tunbridge." Three days later they were all back "with the utterly unexpected addition of Alfred Tennyson." Tennyson departed on the fifteenth, probably bound for the Continent; he was in both Paris and Holland that month. On the sixteenth Henry disconcerted Venables ("the most disagreeable result" of the Italian plan he had "yet thought of") by suggesting they give up their chambers at the Temple. (They were not given up.)

The seventeenth brought a young Oxford undergraduate, Franklin's former Rugbeian schoolfellow George Granville Bradley (1821-1903), future headmaster of Marlborough and dean of Westminster, who would also come to Park House in 1842. Although it has long been accepted that Bradley met Tennyson during this first visit, it seems improbable. Bradley's letter to Hallam Tennyson more than fifty years later says only, "I feel sure [less than positive] that I saw him during my first [1841] visit [to Park House]." But Tennyson had not appeared before Venables departed on the twenty-fourth; on the twenty-sixth Tennyson, back from the Continent, wrote from London to an American acquaintance; and on 1 September, Henry and Franklin surprised Tennyson ("a Godsend I did not expect") by visiting him at Dr. Allen's in High Beech. Bradley would always remember the contrast between the Lushington circle and the people he had known at Rugby and Oxford. If the Park House set even mentioned Newman or the Oxford Movement, it was only "as matters of secondary or remote interest"; but they "seemed as much at home in the language of the Greek dramatists as if it was their native tongue." Chapman had remarked to Bradley that Henry could at once "give the reference and the con-
Bradley most vividly remembered Henry: "Ah! how his sweet and delicate face and kindly voice as mounted on a pony he joined us in our walks come back to me across the interval of more than fifty years."

At Park House, after returning from High Beech, Henry ironically wrote Milnes that "the madmen" had seemed "little if anything better than ourselves. Dr. Allen's mania did not break out much—unless it were on the subject of wood carving." Alfred had been "very ill with sore throat, but otherwise very pleasant—as indeed he always is." Henry's party would be sailing for the Continent at the end of the week, and Henry was unreconciled. Two weeks earlier he had written Milnes that he "extremely" disliked the idea: "I am fully satisfied from all I have heard or read that the Continent is a humbug. . . . The Alps, perhaps—but I have no doubt that their height and grandeur have been scandalously exaggerated. The Rhine is well known to have been overpuffed." The Italian climate was notoriously "miserable and changeable." Even the physician who prescribed the journey admitted that Neopolitans were quite "subject to colds and catarrhal afflictions." Was it "for this that one is to leave one's native land, to change fires for stoves and the blessings of a pure and reformed Catholic church for an idolatrous polytheism? not even to get rid of colds? I have discovered in myself a new virtue of patriotism, at least a novel degree of it, since this scheme was resolved upon." To Milnes he pleaded—more than half-seriously, one feels: "Pray get me a sinecure before next May. I give up for the present my brilliant prospects at the bar—for at least a year and a half—by this exile, and my country ought to reward me."

On 1 October, Venables and Chapman met the Lushington party—Henry, Emily, Franklin, and Louy—in Switzerland, finding Franklin ill and Henry in a very "dispirited condition." As it turned out, illness would afflict the party for much of their time away from England; it is doubtful that anyone received much benefit, beyond the educational, from the displacement.

Before Venables reached London on 6 October, Edmund had passed through bound for Glasgow, taking Maria and Ellen for the winter, and emptying Park House of all its Lushingtons. By 5 November the Tennyson family was settled at nearby Boxley Hall, close to the old churchyard where so many Lushingtons now lie. Alfred was still living part of the time in London. On the seventh, in London, Venables "called on Alfred Tennyson, & sat with him a long time, talking mostly about Lushington matters, a kind of conversation of which one cannot tire." On that same evening Venables "heard for the first time that he was likely to publish." Two other times Venables found Tennyson "too ill to be seen." On 3 December, Venables and Monteith found him "with leeches on his arm, which was swelled, but not otherwise looking unwell or in very bad spir-
its. The three men had "very pleasant talk till about ten." It would be "difficult," Venables thought, "to meet two persons of so much originality & fulness of matter in conversation."

Tennyson's health had improved somewhat by Christmas. Edmund, coming down from Glasgow (with or without Maria and Ellen?), "spent the time mostly at Boxley, [where] A.T. was now settled with his mother and sisters." They all had "sometimes dance and song in the evening." (Could this have been the time when Edmund, his own house nearly empty a mile away, began to fall in love with the tall Cecilia? Or had the process already occurred?) The number of In Memoriam poems "had rapidly increased since I had seen the poet [about four months], his book containing many that were new to me." Edmund had heard Tennyson "repeat" some of the elegies "before I had seen them in writing," and had read others "from the book itself which he kindly allowed me to look through without stint." One night that December, when Edmund and Alfred "were sitting up together in his bedroom," Alfred began to recite the sixth poem, "One writes, that 'other friends remain.' " More than fifty years later, with Alfred newly dead and his own death only a few months or weeks away, Edmund would recall, "I do not know that the melodious thunder of his voice ever impressed me more profoundly."

Edmund returned to Glasgow, inevitably thinking of his sad journey from his mother's bedside a year before. Some days later he had a letter from Alfred: "I have been once into your grounds, the house looked very unhappy. Charles and I went together: he admired the place very much, though everything was deep in snow."