The Transformation of London "Society" at the End of Victoria's Reign: Evidence from the Court Presentation Records[*]

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To its late-Victorian participants, London "Society" was one of those abstractions, like "the young," that deteriorated with each passing generation. For decades chroniclers of Britain's clannish ruling circles had lamented the diminishing refinement, morals, and breeding of those highest sections of elite society that migrated to the capital each spring for the parliamentary and social "season."[1] Thus, when the press, with many contributors from the aristocracy itself, launched a new campaign against London Society in the last years of Victoria's reign, the charges had a familiar ring. Society was expanding alarmingly, abandoning its standards, worshipping notoriety and opulence, and abdicating serious responsibilities in the pursuit of frivolous amusement. If the criticisms contained few surprises, the intensity of the alarm was unprecedented. Beginning in 1874, with *The Way We Live Now*, Anthony Trollope's novel of a greedy and credulous *beau monde*, and continuing through a series of journal articles bearing titles such as "The New Society," "The Deterioration of English Society," "The Sins of Society," and "The Enlargement of London Society," critics subjected the aristocratic elites and the informal institutions of the London season to fierce scrutiny and nearly universal diagnosis of advanced illness.[2] In 1910, the famous Conservative hostess, Lady Dorothy Nevill, delivered one of many obituaries:

[1]See, for example, *The Lounger* (1786) in *How They Lived*, vol. 3: *An Anthology of Original Documents Written between 1700 and 1815* (Oxford, 1969), p. 113: "The crest of noble or illustrious ancestry, has sunk before the sudden accumulation of wealth in vulgar hands. Elegance of manner...dignity of deportment...pride of virtue have given way to that tide of fortune, which has lifted the low, the illiterate, and the unfeeling, into stations of which they are unworthy." Elizabeth Longford notes Lord Melbourne's displeasure at seeing the Rothschilds in high society in the 1830s (*Queen Victoria* [New York, 1964], p. 77). In the 1920s Lady Londonderry also complained of the changes in Society since her youth and attributed the problems to the advent of film stars (*Retrospect* [London, 1938], pp. 40, 252).

[2]"The New Society and its Sets," *Vanity Fair*, 2 November 1889; Hamilton Aide, "The Deterioration of English Society," *New Review* 2 (1890): 112–19; Ouida, "The Sins of Society," *Fortnightly* 58 o.s., 52 n.s. (1892): 780–97; "The Enlargement of London Society," *Saturday Review*, 5 May 1900. Edward Hamilton's diary entries for 5 July 1887 and 15 October 1891 confirm that participants in London Society shared, if, indeed, they did not create, the impressions of the journalists (Edward Hamilton papers, British Library, Add. MSS. 48646).

"Society, in the old sense of the term, may be said, I think, to have come to an end in the 'eighties' of the last century."[3]

These judgments were impressionistic, but it will not surprise historians to hear that the years between 1870 and 1914 were ones of crisis for Britain's aristocratic and gentry classes. During this time the traditional ruling groups, deriving their power and prestige largely from the land, faced a dramatic series of challenges to their authority. The great depression in agriculture, an expanding electorate, labor and socialist movements, and the intrusion of business families into the public schools, Parliament, and the peerage itself were all combining to effect a gradual shift in the exercise of power in Britain. According to F. M. L. Thompson, a close study of the years before 1914 reveals that "the political elite had ceased to be a characteristically landed one, that the old landed aristocracy had slipped a long way towards merging into an upper class of varied origins, and that the ambience of political and social life had lost its flavor of aristocratic taste and breeding."[4] Although the degree of permeability and adaptability at the highest reaches of British society are still matters for debate,[5] it would be surprising indeed, in the face of such challenges, if London Society in the Edwardian era had continued to resemble in form and function its early Victorian counterpart.

In fact it did not, an assertion that the records of Victoria's Lords Chamberlain substantiate to a greater degree than the unease of contemporary observers. In chronological and alphabetized volumes, the Lord Chamberlain kept track of people attending court at drawing rooms and levees, as well as recipients of invitations to royal balls and concerts.[6] Presentation to the monarch was a normal prerogative of the British elite, exercised almost exclusively in London during the season from April through July each year. Over the course of Victoria's reign, the records show an explosion in the numbers, and a significant shift in the composition, of those taking part in this royal ceremony. The increase seems large enough to confirm assertions that the last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an expansion and dilution of London Society, a change so extensive

[3]Lady Dorothy Nevill, *Under Five Reigns*, ed. Ralph Nevill (London, 1910), p. 151.

[4]F. M. L. Thompson, "Britain," in *European Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Spring (Baltimore, 1977), p. 24. Thompson has reiterated this point more recently in "English Landed Society in the Nineteenth-Century," in *The Power of the Past*, ed. Pat Thane, et. al. (Cambridge, 1984), p. 195. Harold Perkin describes the same change in *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London, 1989), pp. 62–78.

[5]See the exchange between David Spring and Lawrence Stone over the latter's *An Open Elite?* in *Albion* 17, 2 (Summer 1985): 149–80, and the summary of the relevant work by Stone, Thompson, W. D. Rubinstein, and others in David and Eileen Spring, "Social Mobility and the English Landed Elite," *Canadian Journal of History* 21 (1986): 333–51.

[6]These materials can be found in the Public Record Office (PRO), Lord Chamberlain's Department (hereafter cited as LC), 6.

that the functions it had served for well over a century were transformed as well.

I

When Victoria came to the throne in 1837, London Society was an informal grouping of the most prestigious, influential, and wealthy members of Britain's aristocratic and gentry classes. "With its customs, its etiquette, its unwritten laws," it seemed to be among the "fixed institutions" of the country — as normal a part of elite life as the lord lieutenancies or Parliament itself.[7] In fact, however, the yearly migration of territorial magnates to the capital was "only" about two centuries old. A highly structured and predictable London season had required two conditions: an annual meeting of Parliament and the willingness of the monarch or the Prince of Wales to hold court near Westminster while the politicians gathered. These conditions were not achieved until after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Only then, as places and preferments passed out of the hands of the court and into the pockets of ministers in Whitehall, did the parliamentary foundations of the London season solidify. "Publick Business, and Publick Diversions, have the same Season," the *Free-Thinker* commented in 1718.[8] During the century that followed, clubs, coffee houses, public places of amusement, and private mansions for the rich proliferated in the capital. Participation in the London season became, in G. E. Mingay's words, "an essential part of the lives of the wealthy and could not be dropped without loss of prestige and influence, for it was that, as much as their houses and possessions, which proclaimed their membership of the exclusive circles of highest society."[9]

Even in the Napoleonic period, however, London Society had not assumed the forms that the Victorians took for granted. In her suggestive study, *The Best Circles*, Leonore Davidoff describes the changes that took place in the highest sections of Society in the early years of the nineteenth century, as nobles and gentry sought to counter the double threat posed by disaffected radicals and individuals newly enriched through war manufacture or imperial trade, who demanded social and political rewards for their economic achievements.[10] At

[7]Ishbel Aberdeen, *Musings of a Scottish Granny* (London, 1936), p. 22.

[8]Quoted in *Oxford English Dictionary* entry under "Season." On the origins of London Society see Thomas B. Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, ed. C. H. Firth, 6 vols. (London, 1913), 1: 356–60; Dorothy Marshall, *Dr. Johnson's London* (New York, 1968), pp. 113–14, 137–42.

[9]G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1963), p. 157. On eighteenth-century Society, see James Maurice Scott, *The Book of Pall Mall* (London, 1965), chap. 7; Norman Brett-James, *The Growth of Stuart London* (London, 1935), chaps. 12–16; Jay Barrett Botsford, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century: as Influenced from Overseas* (New York, 1924).

[10]Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette, and the Season* (London, 1973). See also E. Beresford Chancellor, *Memorials of St. James's Street* (London, 1922), pp. 208–61.

the same time that reform agitation brought wider political representation, Davidoff asserts, the standards and procedures for admission to the highest social circles tightened. Rules of etiquette and precedence became more strict. Pronunciation, which indicated origin more reliably than could clothing, grew self-consciously eccentric. The genealogical workshops of Burke and Debrett flourished, partly, W. L. Burn surmises, as "a defensive reaction on the part of established families against the threat of the new industrialists, leading to a desire to divorce the concept of gentility from that of economic status."[11] Great public meeting places like Ranelagh and Hurlingham were abandoned to the lower classes or closed down entirely, and masked balls, easily infiltrated by outsiders, were discontinued. The geography of London Society grew more restricted as well. In the eighteenth century, noblemen still built great houses in distant Bloomsbury or along the Strand, and festivities regularly took one south of the Thames or up the Tottenham Court Road. By Victoria's reign, the great mass of Society participants congregated in a small area within the West End: "on the North bounded by Oxford Street and Bayswater, on the South by Pall Mall and Eaton and Belgrave Squares, on the East by Picadilly, and on the West by Knightsbridge. This is London."[12]

A few of Society's great functions continued to be held in public places — races at Ascot and the rifle meets at Wimbledon fell into this category of entertainment. For the most part, however, the Victorian upper classes retreated into increasingly private and controlled engagements held within the home. Dinner parties, weekly salons, and private balls were the staples of mid-nineteenth century entertaining, and the etiquette of calling, inviting, chaperoning, and reciprocating for these functions assumed elaborate proportions. The increased restraint and decorum of the aristocrats by mid-century had religious foundations, as well as the sanction of Victoria's court. In addition, however, the "rules of Society and the confining of social life to private homes"[13] acted to confirm the importance of breeding in an era of economic transformation, and to perpetuate patterns of behavior that united the British ruling classes across the length and breadth of the island.

Participation in London Society served many functions for the Victorian elites. The season was, of course, a time for diversion, consumption, acquisition of culture, and the display of one's wealth and importance. It was also a marriage market, providing contacts among aristocratic offspring separated during most of their adolescent years by the system of public school education for boys. But the privacy, exclusivity, and etiquette surrounding Society's rituals did not only

[11]W. L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise* (New York, 1964), p. 254.

[12]*Fifty Years of London Society, 1870–1920* (London, 1920), p. 51.

[13]Davidoff, *Best Circles*, p. 17. Lawrence and Jeanne Fawtier Stone assert that a similar emphasis on privacy and exclusivity characterized country house life as well; see *An Open Elite?: England 1540–1880* (abridged ed.; Oxford, 1986), p. 163.

structure relationships within the elites. They worked also to regulate contacts between the ruling circles and those who wished to enter their ranks. In London, especially, the patterned social rounds of the Victorian upper classes served as a filter to keep parvenues ("mawkins," as the Gladstones and Lytteltons called them in their private family vocabulary[14]) away from the great houses where the nation's political and social leaders circulated. By mid-century, important hostesses like Lady Palmerston and Lady Jersey could determine whether an aspiring Irish politician, a young litterateur, or a merchant's gentrified son would make the social connections that could transform political promise into minister-ial opportunity.[15] During the mid-Victorian years, as Lady Aberdeen wrote, London Society was "a part of the very life of the people who had the largest stake in the country and who counted for something. Nobody could well come to the front without participating in it to some degree."[16] The forms and rituals of Society played an important role in ensuring that those who did come to the front remained predominantly aristocratic or gentry well into the industrial era.[17]

Such was the informal institution that contemporaries saw breaking down in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Part of the consternation arose from a perception that the moral tone of Society was changing. In the 1870s, for the first time since the Regency, the "fastest" sections of London Society found a patron within the royal family. The behavior of the Prince of Wales and his Marlborough House friends prompted fears that luxurious living and a demor-alizing pursuit of amusement would undermine the English governing classes as the same vices had ruined their Roman counterparts.[18] But the concern was not caused by moral revulsion alone. The late-Victorians believed that the very structure of Society was undergoing a transformation, that the institution was being expanded and diluted beyond recognition. The "upper ten thousand," wrote Hamilton Aide in 1890, ought to be called the "upper million." *Vanity*

[14]See [George Lyttelton], *Contributions towards a Glossary of the Glynnese Language* (privately printed, 1851).

[15]Mary Jeune, "Great Political Ladies," *Realm*, 5 April 1895. See also Lady Dorothy Nevill, *Reminiscences*, ed. Ralph Nevill (London, 1906), p. 103: "It was extremely difficult for a stranger to obtain a place until credentials had been carefully examined and discussed."

[16]Aberdeen, *Musings of a Scottish Granny*, p. 22.

[17]As late as 1880 these classes supplied a majority of the House of Commons, a high proportion of the cabinet, and 85% of new appointments to the peerage; see F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), p. 278; J. A. Thomas, *The House of Commons 1832–1901: a Study of its Economic and Functional Character* (Cardiff, 1939), pp. 14–16; W. L. Guttsman, *The British Political Elite* (London, 1963), pp. 78–79; Ralph Pumphrey, "The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: a Study in the Adaptation of a Social Insti-tution," *American Historical Review* 65 (1959): 7.

18 For contemporary impressions of Society's deteriorating moral tone, see Mary Jeune, "London Society," *North American Review* 154 (1892): 603–12, and "Plutocrats and Rastaquoueres," *World*, 18 May 1892.

Fair also noted the enlargement of Society and asserted that it was losing co-
herence and fragmenting into sets whose main occupation lay in competing for
the attention of the gossip press.[19] *Outlook*, a weekly periodical founded in 1898
to reflect the views of a younger generation of the Tory elite, captured a per-
vading sense of unease at the passing of the "old days," when the "convenient
size and simple structure" of London Society had reflected a less fluid social
reality. The numbers of those now participating in Society, wrote *Outlook*,

> defy analysis and refute conventional classification. The son of a duke is in the City,
> the earl is on the Stage, the rural democrat has his autobiography edited by a count-
> ess....Men who are interesting for their achievements in any field of enterprise or of
> hospitality; women with the power to charm, to stimulate the lazy, and to rest the
> overworked by their conversation,...that is Society in so far as Society can be said
> any longer to exist.[20]

Was something novel happening in London in the 1880s and 1890s, or were
the prophets of doom merely adding another chorus to the interminable swan-
song of Society? The answer is not easy to ascertain. The number of those
participating in London Society has not been determined for any period, and
evidence showing what effects the increasing wealth of upper middle-class busi-
nessmen and professionals may have had on the composition of the highest
levels of society is only now appearing. The years between 1880 and 1899 did
mark the turning point when men enriched by manufacture, commerce, and the
professions—to the point of leaving £500,000 or more at their deaths—began
to outnumber the territorial magnates. In addition, Thompson has found a sharp
rise around mid-century in requests for licences to display armorial quarterings
on family stationary and silver.[21] This suggests a large group of affluent men
who were seeking some of the marks of status traditionally reserved for their
betters. The data from the Lord Chamberlain's records on court presentations
provide another piece to the puzzle. They indicate that there are indeed grounds
for believing that the number of individuals participating in the season was
increasing, and that the newcomers did not belong to those aristocratic and
gentry families who had habitually participated in London Society.

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[19]Aide, "Deterioration of London Society," p. 113; *Vanity Fair*, 2 November 1889. See also T. H.
S. Escott's chapter on cliques in *Society in London* (London, 1885). Both *Bartlett's Familiar
Quotations* and the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* trace "upper ten thousand" to the novel *Necess-
ity for a Promenade Drive* by Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806–1867).

[20]*Outlook*, 5 February 1898. *Outlook* was founded by George Wyndham, junior minister for the
Conservatives and a friend of W. E. Henley, to replace the defunct *New Review*, see J. W. Mackail
and Guy Wyndham, eds., *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols. (London, 1925), 1: 62.

[21]W. D. Rubinstein, "Wealth, Elites and the Class Structure of Modern Britain," *Past and Present*
76 (1977): 103; Thompson, "Britain," pp. 31–32; Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English
Society, 1780–1880* (London, 1969), p. 431. For a modern historian who confesses bewilderment
over the problem of determining Society's size, see Pat Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics,
1860–1914* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 22–23.

II

"Everybody of consequence who is in London is supposed to go to court once a year," reported Adam Badeau, a minor American diplomat and sharp-eyed observer of the upper crust, in 1885. His comment was not a reflection on the excitements offered by royal functions. Walter Bagehot had observed in 1867 that the royal court was no longer "the focus where everything fascinating gathered, and where everything exciting centered."[22] The queen did not preside over the best parties, set advanced standards of taste and cultivation, or wield the most political power. The honors in all these fields lay with different members of the nobility and an occasional exotic plutocrat. Standing aloof from the more dazzling and frivolous sections of Society, Victoria's court nonetheless performed indispensable services. By providing an apex to the social pyramid, the royal family prevented an unseemly scramble for supremacy among the oligarchs. The court also conferred legitimacy. Presentation to the monarch in-dicated "to a man's acquaintances that he occupied a certain status in society."[23] It meant that one could attend subsequent drawing rooms and levees and act as sponsor to friends and relatives of one's own. Finally, although other contacts might be necessary to see social and political ambitions realized, formal accep-tance by the Crown confirmed one's right to aspirations for inclusion in the highest circles.

"Eligible for presentation" implied more precise standards than actually ex-isted. "Facility of access" to the sovereign was, as the Victorians acknowledged, an ancient, though theoretical, privilege of any subject. During the eighteenth century, however, the haphazard arrangements of early modern courts — where "all and sundry could, and did, squeeze into the king's Presence Chamber" — gave way to much more formal occasions for admission to the monarch's pre-sence.[24] By Victoria's reign, presentation required that one secure a sponsor already entitled to attend a royal drawing room or levee. One had then to petition the Lord Chamberlain two days in advance of the event: "it being Her Majesty's command," instructed the *London Gazette* in 1837, "that no presentation shall hereafter be made,...but in conformity with the above regulations: and further, that no person shall be admitted, on any pretence whatever, who has not been

[22]Adam Badeau, *Aristocracy in England* (New York, 1885), p. 21; Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (Ithaca, New York, 1963), pp. 90, 94. Presentation to the monarch and yearly appear-ances at a drawing room or levee thereafter were the *sine qua non* for securing a place on the invitation list to court balls and concerts. However, the higher one stood in the order of precedence, the more yearly court functions could be skipped without suffering a penalty. In 1888 Evan Charteris, the youngest son of the earl of Wemyss, received no court invitations because he had not attended a royal gathering in two years. Lady Mary Ormsby was likewise excluded because of an absence of six years. The duke of Hamilton, however, continued to receive invitations even though he had not put in an appearance since 1878 (PRO, LC 6/138).

[23]Percy Armytage, *By the Clock of St. James's* (London, 1927), p. 320.

[24] Ibid., p. 116.

so presented."[25] On meeting these conditions, certain individuals were assured of entry: all members of the aristocracy and county gentry who had not violated the queen's dictum against divorce, higher officers of the army and navy, barristers of good family, the upper clergy, and important office holders. For most professionals, military men, and officials, however, admittance was already guaranteed by their status as members of the landed classes.

An element of uncertainty arose with people described by *Manners and Rules of Good Society* as "the aristocracy of wealth, the aristocracy of art, merchant princes and leading City merchants and bankers." The Lord Chamberlain had discretion in turning away applicants whose claims lay in these areas, though the status of the sponsor probably played an important role in his decision. At mid-century, there was an expectation that members of families entirely new to court surroundings would not apply for presentation until "their wealth, education *and association* warrant their doing so."[26] Because of the restraint exercised by newly affluent families in seeking admission to the court—and hence affirmation in the eyes of Society—participants in the Victorian season remembered even the largest festivities as occasions where "each individual was thoroughly known to all the others."[27]

Early in her reign Victoria established her own procedures for receiving her subjects at drawing rooms and levees. Unlike William IV, who had held weekly levees in St. James's Palace during the first half of each year, the queen had three to five levees per season, with 150 to 300 people presented each time. Levees were attended only by men and had official as well as social purposes. Newly-appointed government servants, diplomats and military men returning from abroad, county worthies, and foreign dignitaries all paid their respects to the queen as head of state at these affairs. Attendance at levees increased slowly throughout the century, from less than a thousand a year at the beginning of the reign to something under two thousand at the end. This trend probably reflected the expansion of government bureaucracy and imperial obligations, as much as it did changes in the composition of Society.

The drawing rooms were otherwise. There, garbed in off-the-shoulder evening dress with long train and three ostrich feathers, women made their curtsies to royalty. These occasions were smaller, more restrictive, and meant to announce and confirm a woman's position in Society. Throughout Victoria's reign a steady forty-five percent of those introduced were debutantes. The rest were second presentations of women who had had a change in status through marriage or advancement in precedence, and married women being presented for the first time. Victoria generally held three drawing rooms between March and June,

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[25]*London Gazette,* 14 July 1837.

[26]Quotes in Ernest Sackville Turner, *The Court of St. James's* (London, 1959), p. 322.

[27][Lord Lamington], "In the Days of the Dandies," *Blackwood's* 147 (1890): 13.

although when she was pregnant the number might be only one or two. Scheduled for mid-afternoon, drawing rooms were actually day-long ordeals. Their allure, as well as their expense and bother, are well documented in memoirs of the period.[28] Again, it should be noted that presentation was not a sure guide to position in Society. The rare woman with a stain on her reputation who was not received by the queen might remain an important social force — Lady Holland, for example. Others might, through presentation, establish their respectability but not take part in the London season until there was a daughter to bring out.[29] Nevertheless, court presentation of women is probably the single most accessible indication that a family wished to participate in Society life at some point.

In figure 1 drawing room presentations over the course of Victoria's reign are charted. The figures there do not represent the exact number of presentations
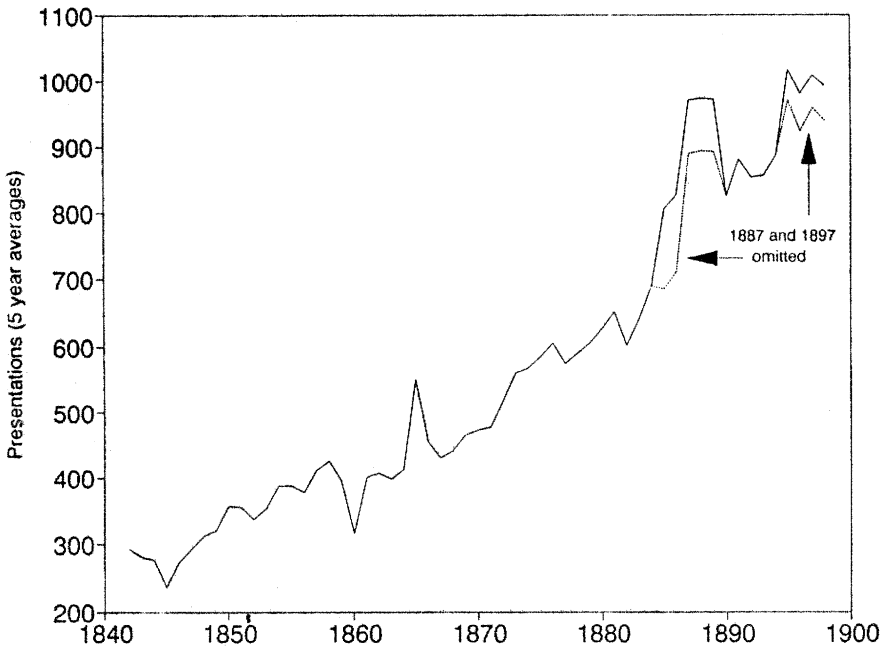

Figure 1: Drawing-Room Presentations during Victoria's Reign

[28]For a description of a typical drawing room, see Stella Margetson, *Victorian High Society* (New York, 1980), pp. 60–61, or the *Graphic*, 2 June 1888.

[29]In 1859, for example, Mrs. Charles Tennant, wife of a millionaire Glasgow industrialist and mother of the future Margot Asquith, was introduced under the sponsorship of Lady Camperdown, but the Tennant family did not begin to attend the London season until the late 1870s. At that time Mrs. Tennant was presented to the queen again, then introduced her eldest daughter, who was "coming out" (PRO, LC 6/8).

each year, but reflect a moving average of five year periods: e.g. the average number of presentations for the years from 1840 to 1844 was 292, the average of the years 1841 to 1845 was 282, and so forth.[30] This procedure was used to iron out anomalous years such as 1862, when no drawing rooms were held because of Albert's death, and 1863, when twice the normal number of pre- sentations were made to accommodate those who had not been able to attend the year before.

The chart indicates that the number of drawing room presentations climbed gradually through the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, grew more quickly in the 1870s, and jumped precipitously beginning about 1885, before leveling off at a new and much higher plateau in the last decade of the century. The distinction is dramatic. For the first thirty years of the period, presentations averaged 344 a year; for the last three decades they averaged 756 annually. The rate of growth in the 1850s was twenty percent over the previous decade, and in the 1860s only fifteen percent. The 1870s showed a thirty-two percent increase, and the 1880s a phenomenal forty-three percent rise over the preceding ten years.

The chart also shows a dotted line which represents an alternate pattern of growth for the late 1880s and late 1890s. This second curve reflects the averaged figures with the Jubilee years of 1887 and 1897 taken out of the calculations. Court presentations were significantly higher in those years. Presumably, fam- ilies from the colonies, or respectable county families who had not previously been to London, wanted to take part in the historic occasions without necessarily desiring further involvement in London Society. Even the modified curves in- dicate remarkable growth, however. From the modest three hundred a year Vic- toria could expect to greet during the first years of her reign, she was faced with another six hundred by the end.

Who accounted for this great increase, which represented a tripling of the numbers being presented at court over decades in which the population of Great Britain doubled? Certainly the traditional aristocracy, who were not reproducing as fast as the general population throughout most of the nineteenth century, did not account for such growth.[31] A sample of 290 of the approximately 33,000 women presented between 1840 and 1900 confirms this point.[32] (See Table 1). Using T. H. Hollingsworth's definition of an aristocrat as someone who had a

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[30]For exact figures, see appendix.

[31]Figures on population increase in Britain taken from Chris Cook and Brendon Keith, *British Historical Facts, 1830–1900* (New York, 1975), p. 232. On the aristocracy, see T. H. Hollingsworth, *The Demography of the British Peerage*, supplement to *Population Studies* 18 (London, [1965]), p. 33.

[32]The sample is based on every tenth name from the alphabetical drawing room lists of 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, and 1891. The following reference works were used in identifying the names (place of publication is London unless otherwise noted): *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Who's Who*; *Who was Who*; Burke's *Peerage, Knightage and Baronetage* (1890, 1902, 1952);

spouse, parent, or grandparent bearing hereditary title, the percentage of drawing room participants contributed by wives, daughters, or granddaughters of peers and baronets dropped markedly during Victoria's reign. Accounting for seventy-two percent of presentations in 1841, such women constituted barely twenty-four percent a half century later. At the same time the proportion of titled women acting as presenters of others also declined, from fifty-nine percent in 1859, to fifty-one percent in 1879, and to twenty-nine percent in 1899.[33] The status of women introducing more than one person in a season changed as well. In 1859, of eighty-seven women who were "multiple sponsors," only ten were not titled. In 1899, 131 women presented several people, and seventy-seven such patronesses were untitled. Perhaps it was this democratization of sponsorship that provoked a court edict in 1903 limiting the number of women outside her own family that a matron could introduce.[34]

According to J. V. Beckett, the number of hereditary title holders in Britain rose by eleven percent between 1850 and 1900, and this figure mirrors closely enough the small rise in the absolute numbers of aristocrats attending court in

Table 1
Social Composition of Women Presented at Victoria's Drawing Rooms
(in percentages)

	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Aristocracy	72	55	56	38	42	24
Landed Gentry	16	19	17	27	18	23
Professional	8	16	15	12	15	26
Business	–	–	3	8	6	8
Foreign/Colonial	–	3	3	6	8	7
Unknown	4	7	6	10	11	12
[Total Number]	[24]	[31]	[34]	[52]	[62]	[86]

Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1846, 1855, 1871, 1894, 1937); Walford's *County Families of the United Kingdom* (1888, 1904); Hayden's *Book of Dignities* (1894); *Directory of Directors* (1889); *The Law List* (1865, 1895); Kelly's *London Medical Directory* (1892); *Alumni Cantabrigienses, 1752–1900*; Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament* (1979); John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (1883; reprint ed., Leicester, 1971).

[33]These figures were obtained from a sample which counted the numbers of "Ladies" and "Honorables" among the sponsors in the years 1859, 1879, and 1899. This procedure excluded the grand-daughters of title holders, as well as the daughters of baronets, but included the wives of knights.

[34]T. H. S. Escott, *Society in the New Reign* (London, 1904), p. 115.

the sample lists.[35] To account for the rest of the women seeking a place in Victoria's drawing rooms, one must posit an increasing number of less prominent matrons, who had managed to find a sponsor, acting as benefactors to still more obscure friends of their own. It is possible, to be sure, that such women had been petitioning the Lord Chamberlain for access to court throughout the reign and that a conscious decision was made in the last decades of the century to admit them. The fact that in 1880 the court began to hold a fourth drawing room each season, while in 1894 the number was increased to five, might support this conclusion. More probably, however, the Lord Chamberlain, faced with an enormous volume of applicants, each bearing an acceptable sponsor's name, could find no consistent reasons beyond the numbers themselves for turning anyone away. In the early 1880s, Badeau reported that Victoria, in an effort to curb the numbers coming before her, had decided to admit only two daughters in a family at any drawing room.[36] In the 1890s another attempt seems to have been made to limit presentations. The record books begin to show drawing rooms at which exactly two hundred people were presented each time.

Some contemporaries had no trouble identifying the newcomers. The *World*, described by Stephen Koss as "a gossipy weekly with snob appeal," commented in 1891:

> In old days City potentates were content with their own position east of Temple Bar, and would no more have thought of sending their wives to St. James's Palace than of going themselves to a levee. But now all is altered, and the "House" contributes largely both in diamonds and flesh to the annual farce which is played during the months of March and May. Let any person who knows London society look through the list of *debutantes* and ladies attending the Drawing-rooms, and I wager that not half the names will be even known to him and her. People are now presented and present their daughters, whose life and interests are entirely foreign to Court surroundings....If birth and breeding are to go for nothing, and if the Drawing-room is to be but a gathering together of social scum and *nouveaux riches*, the sooner the thing exists on a thorough Republican and cosmopolitan basis the better.[37]

If the sample list is accurate, however, "social scum" was too strong an assessment. For one thing, a slowly rising proportion of the newcomers were wives and daughters of the gentry, defined as men from landed families with no obvious business or professional occupation. By the end of the period, over one fifth of all presentations fell into this category. Of these sixty-one women, fully fifty-three were either great-granddaughters of title holders or members of a family listed in the 1871 edition of Burke's *Landed Gentry*. Indeed, twenty-two were wives or daughters of family heads named in both the 1871 *Landed Gentry* and John Bateman's *Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*. Though

[35]J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660–1914* (Oxford, 1986), p. 41. The numbers of aristocrats in the samples were 1841–18; 1851–17; 1861–19; 1871–20; 1881–26; 1891–21.

[36]Badeau, *Aristocracy in England*, p. 23.

[37]*World*, 13 May 1891; Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1984), 2: 36.

the decline from eighty-eight percent in 1841 and sixty-five percent in 1871 was dramatic, titled and gentry families still contributed forty-six percent of those presented in 1891. Moreover, the number of new families in this group — defined as those whose grandfather held neither estate nor title — was quite small. Thompson has estimated that perhaps only one quarter of the families found in the 1871 *Landed Gentry* could really be considered new.[38] The figure for court presentations among the gentry was about one tenth overall, nor was it higher in the sample years 1881 and 1891.

The professional families — those of lawyers, doctors, clergymen, civil servants, and high ranking military officers — showed a similar degree of respectability.[39] Sir Robert Morier in the diplomatic service and Henry Bosanquet in the law, for example, belonged to professional "dynasties." Their fathers, grandfathers, or uncles had been distinguished practitioners in the same field.[40] Goughs and Waughs in the military and Rennies and Princeps in government service were correspondingly well-established. Other professionals of more obscure origin had served the Crown with such distinction that no one could protest the presence of a wife or daughter at court. Arnold Royle, for example, whose wife and sister-in-law appeared at the May 5th 1891 drawing room, was the son of a Lymington solicitor. After serving as a doctor in the army, Royle became physician in ordinary to the duke of Albany and then a clerk of the robes and groom of the privy chamber to Queen Victoria.[41] Similar considerations accounted for the presence of the wife of Lieutenant General John Watson in 1881 and of Admiral William Montague Dowell in 1891 — the careers of these men read like pocket surveys of Victorian imperial adventuring.[42] Even among the fifteen businessmen who appeared in the sample, half held political office in the City of London or were sitting members of Parliament before their female relatives were presented.

In any of the years sampled, then, substantial majorities existed that were neither "social scum" nor "nouveaux riches" in the sense that critics deplored. Nevertheless, contemporaries of *Vanity Fair* and *World* were correct that some-

[38]Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p. 125.

[39]As far as possible the families of both husband and wife were checked in determining which social category to assign a woman. A woman born into a landed family — either aristocratic or gentry — was placed in that category, even if she married a professional or a businessman. A woman not from a landed background was placed in the category of her husband's occupation. Only the ranks of colonel and general in the army and captain and admiral in the navy were considered in placing a man in the category of military professional.

[40]Morier: *Dictionary of National Biography*; Bosanquet: *Law List* (1865), Walford's *County Families* (1888). The wives of both men presented their daughters in 1881.

[41]Royle: *Who was Who, 1916–1928*.

[42]Watson: obituary in *The Times*, 27 January 1919; Dowell: Walford's *County Families* (1888), *Landed Gentry* (1937).

thing was happening to the composition, as well as the size, of London Society in the last two decades of the century—and that the best word to describe the change was dilution. This process was apparent even among the women presented from the landed classes. Of the thirty gentry women who appeared in the 1841, 1851, 1861, and 1871 samples, only seven belonged to cadet lines of a major estate owner. Of thirty-one gentry women presented in 1881 and 1891, half came from branches, rather than trunks, of great landed families.

For the elites, this sort of dilution was undoubtedly less distressing than changes at the other end of the social spectrum, among the presentations contributed by the business classes. Inevitably, families with commercial, manufacturing, and financial backgrounds were infiltrating Society as their numbers in the peerage and the House of Commons increased. Thus, in the 1871 and 1881 samples, six of eight businessmen—brewers Octavius Coope and Daniell Thwaites, coal proprietor Richard Fothergill, manufacturer Charles Paget, merchant Mitchell Henry, and financier William Fowler—were all members of Parliament. Another, wholesale druggist Thomas Dakin, was Lord Mayor.[43] The six business names in the 1891 list had no such official imprimatur, although the backgrounds of these participants do confirm the argument made by W. D. Rubinstein a decade ago as to the relative advantage that men in commerce and finance held over industrialists in acquiring the perquisites of the landed classes.[44] Mrs. Spencer Brunton and Mrs. T. D. Galpin were the wives respectively of a stockbroker and a banker.[45] Two daughters of Paul Julius von Reuter came sheltered under the umbrella of their father's communications empire.[46] Miss Ethel Gordon Davies' father had become Sheriff of London in 1888. He was proprietor of two popular London eating establishments—Pimm's in the Poultry and the Ship and Turtle in Leadenhall Street. Finally, Mrs. Octavius Vaughan Morgan sponsored her sister-in-law, Mrs. Septimus Vaughan Morgan. Their husbands were among the partners of Morgan Crucible, an iron foundry established in Battersea in 1856.[47]

Men who used business acumen to vault from obscurity to social prominence in a lifetime were a small handful of all those seeking court recognition for

[43]Coope, Fothergill, Paget: *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*; Thwaites, Henry: *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*; Fowler: obituary in *The Times,* 19 September 1905; Dakin: obituary in *The Times,* 25 May 1889. The eighth businessman, Benjamin Piercey, was a civil engineer important for his construction of railways in India.

[44]Rubinstein, "Wealth, Elites and Class Structure," pp. 112–17.

[45]*Directory of Directors* (1889).

[46]Reuter: *Dictionary of Business Biography*, 4: 887. Reuter is difficult to categorize, since he was a foreigner to whom the court had granted the honors given to foreign nobility.

[47]Davies: obituary in *The Times,* 19 September 1912. Davies had not even the plutocrats' enormous wealth behind him, for he left "only" £87,000 when he died. Vaughan Morgans: *Dictionary of Business Biography*, 3: 3; *Who was Who* on Sir Walter Vaughan Morgan.

their female relatives. Nevertheless, if their percentage in the 1891 sample is accurate, there would have been seventy or more such families attending in that year. In the early 1890s Lady Warwick could still instruct the newly-married Elinor Glyn that one did not invite people engaged in trade or commerce to the house. By the next decade, even the etiquette books would acknowledge that "*trade* is not debarred" from court presentation and Society life.[48]

A similar change was occurring among the professionals, who, in 1891, out-numbered both the gentry and the aristocracy at court. A third of these twenty-one families were military, while three came from the civil service. Eight belonged to the legal profession, which produced the wives of four barristers, Metropolitan Police Magistrate Albert de Rutzen, jurists John Mellor and John Gorrell Barnes, and one inexplicable solicitor. Without the pedigrees provided by gentry and peerage directories, it is difficult to trace the backgrounds of all these families. Of the total, only five seem to be genuinely new, in the sense that no person sharing that name was listed in *Burke's*, attended Oxford or Cambridge, or practiced a profession.

Nevertheless, by the standards of earlier times, some colorful characters were making an appearance at court. Mrs. Moberley Bell attended on 4 March 1891, for example. Her husband, son of a mercantile family from Alexandria, had experienced a meteoric rise in the last decade as Egyptian correspondent to *The Times*. In 1890 Bell became the paper's managing editor.[49] Mrs. and Miss Robson Roose appeared at the same drawing room. Dr. E. C. Robson Roose, author of such popular medical tracts as *Wear and Tear of London Life, Nerve Prostration and Other Functional Diseases of Daily Life,* and *Gout and its Relation to Liver and Kidney Disease*, began his practice in Brighton in the 1870s.[50] Love of Society and the many "persons of eminence" among his clientele soon brought him to London, where his "ingratiating manner and abundant tact" won him "a very large and fashionable practice." "Ministers of State, legislators, and celebrities of all descriptions" frequented his table, as well as his consulting rooms. The appearance of Roose's wife and daughter in the presence of royalty seemed to them, no doubt, little more than official recognition of a social standing already hard won.

Mrs. and Miss Haweis may have felt the same way. After graduating from Cambridge, without honors, Hugh Reginald Haweis had fought with Garibaldi in the Italian independence movement before obtaining a deaconship in 1861.[51] A few years later he received the curacy of St. James's, Marylebone, where he

[48]Davidoff, *Best Circles* p. 61; Keith Middlemas, *Pursuit of Pleasure: High Society in the 1900s* (London, 1977), p. 247.

[49]Bell: *Dictionary of National Biography*.

[50]Roose: *Medical Directory* (1892); obituary in *The Times*, 13 February 1905.

[51]Haweis: obituary in *The Times*, 30 January 1901.

ministered "after the fashion that was peculiarly his own" until his death in 1901. Haweis sounds a strange shepherd of souls. *The Times* referred cryptically to the "natural disadvantages" he brought to his profession, the "scandalous subjects" he addressed from the pulpit, and his undoubted appeal to "lovers of sensation." Whatever his mix of oddity, brilliance, and self-promotion, however, Haweis "unquestioningly won the success he sought," as the presence of his female relatives at court affirmed.

The appearance of families like these at Victoria's later drawing rooms sub-stantiates the suspicion that — however successful, respectable, or affluent they considered themselves — a number of people were now claiming a privilege that only the aristocracy and highest gentry had presumed to exercise a generation before. The charge is even more compelling if the women who remain uniden-tified are taken into account. Only the last of the sample years included names that simply draw a blank. From 1841 through 1871, the identity of ten out of 141 individuals remains unconfirmed. Eight of these instances are because seve-ral women from the gentry and professional classes had the same name, and two because no mention at all of such a person could be found in the reference works consulted. In 1881 and 1891, seventeen of 148 people are unidentified. Seven of them, although their names are quite specific, have no place in the social, professional, business, educational, or colonial directories of the period.

The press was correct, then, when it wrote in the late 1880s that people "whose life and interests are entirely foreign to court surroundings" had decided "to lift their heads above the fortifications which guarded the elect."[52] For some, the move probably reflected the same surge in patriotic sentiment and devotion to the queen that fueled the Jubilees and the expansion of empire. Others had quite concrete reasons for appearing — five daughters to launch or a husband's reception of a knighthood to celebrate. For still others, however, court presenta-tion seems to have been a calculated step in an upward social progress that had not yet peaked. An unusual early example occurred in 1861, when Mrs. Robert Lush presented her daughter, after herself having just been introduced by Lady Theresa Lewis. Lush, a brilliant legalist of modest origins, had become a Queen's Counsel and Bencher for Grey's Inn in 1857. In 1865 he would be knighted and begin fifteen years of service to the Crown as a judge.[53] Horatio Davies, the restaurateur already mentioned, was a minor City of London official for less than five years when his wife and daughter came to court. The next year he became a member of Parliament, and later, Lord Mayor. Even the gentry produced occasional examples of rising families. In 1884, Alice Allgood, daugh-ter of an old but minor Northumberland landowner, married the son of a wealthy and significantly newer neighbor. In 1891, as Mrs. John Straker, she was pre-sented to the queen by a daughter-in-law of the duke of Northumberland. By

[52]*Vanity Fair*, 2 November 1889; *World*, 13 May 1891.

[53]Lush: obituary in *The Times*, 28 December 1881.

1894, John Straker of Stagshaw House was listed in the *Landed Gentry*, even though he did not provide a lineage beyond his own father.[54] Court recognition was one tangible contribution a woman could make in a Victorian family's pursuit of that most intangible of assets, status.

III

The evidence from the court presentation records lends substance to the concerns of contemporaries that London Society was undergoing important changes at the end of the Victorian era. The expansion and dilution of Society were the result of several factors. Britain's imperial preeminence contributed to the rise of military and civil service families and created a certain number of foreign and colonial visitors each year.[55] (The 1871 sample list contained Jennie Jerome, mother of Winston Churchill, as well as Mrs. James Harriman.) At the same time economic changes associated with the second industrial revolution produced an increasing number of upper middle class and professional families who were able to move into the orbit of London social life — white collar incomes rose much faster than population throughout the nineteenth century.[56] Improvements in rail transport and in the appearance and sanitary conditions of the capital city gave unprecedented numbers of affluent families an incentive to participate in the season, while expansion of the metropolis itself provided more people — most of the barristers, jurists, and businessmen who swelled the ranks of the 1891 drawing rooms were already London inhabitants.[57] But the effect of these forces was the transformation of London Society and the functions it had performed for the elites only a generation earlier.

On the most superficial level, the season became more hectic. The number of people attending court, riding in Hyde Park, dining at the Savoy, and applauding at the Haymarket raised the temperature of social London to fever pitch for much of the spring. More functions were held outside the home, as new clubs and hotels that admitted both sexes opened their rooms to catered dinners and

[54]Straker: *Landed Gentry*, 1871, 1894. W. D. Rubinstein identifies the father, Joseph Straker, as "a major shipowner, and the founder of a notable colliery dynasty" (*Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain since the Industrial Revolution* [New Brunswick, 1981], p. 76).

[55]See Charles Eyre Pascoe, *London of To-day* (London, 1888), pp. 27–29: "London has become a pleasure lounge for the idlers of the globe... Americans, French, Germans, Indians, Colonials, and persons of leisure and wealth from all parts of the world flock to the capital city during the season."

[56]See Phyllis Dean and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688–1959* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 152. Population of the United Kingdom rose from 26.7 million to 41.4 million between 1841 and 1901. During the same years, incomes for government workers and professionals rose from £34.6 million to £148.3 million.

[57]On these changes in late-Victorian London, see Donald Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (New York, 1976), chaps. 3, 5, 7. Between 1871 and 1901, the population of greater London grew 69%, while drawing room presentations more than doubled. Rubinstein demonstrates, however, that the wealthy middle class was disproportionately concentrated in London ("Wealth, Elites and Class Structure," pp. 106–10.)

receptions. The gossip press expanded, feeding growing public curiosity about the doings of the great. Everyone agreed that the cost of first-rate entertaining soared. "Who dares invite his friends to a simple English dinner, with dry sherry and sound claret?" asked Hamilton Aide in 1890. "He must have champagne, and a French cook, or abstain from hospitality."[58] When the fortune of Colonel North, the "nitrite king" from Yorkshire, competed with that of the duke of Portland, leadership in Society seemed to rest on an immense pedestal of cut flowers, exotic and unseasonal foods, professional entertainers, paddocks of Derby winners, and rooms decorated in the full magnificence of what the Germans called the *pomposenzeit*. Whether these changes constituted the enshrinement of the *nouveaux riches* as arbiters of taste or cooptation of the bourgeoisie by the traditional elite,[59] their effect was to increase the opportunities for newcomers with charm, talent, or wealth to make contacts and gain the visibility that could transform them into social forces in their own right.

The season also began to lose its distinctive timing, so that it started with a "pre-season" in November and December and carried on at full tilt later in the summer.[60] As festivities in the metropolis occupied more of the year, the strict separation between the city and country lives of the aristocracy dissolved, a trend that was aided in any case by the arrival of the automobile. When travel to London during the off-season became routine, so did weekending in the country during the spring. "There is also a growing tendency, what with Newmarket and other race meetings, and Sunday parties in the country, to escape from London as much as possible," wrote Edward Hamilton in May 1892, "and the unpopularity of balls and the large dimensions of London Society tend to less social gatherings in town."[61] As a place where one could be assured of meeting familiar people for a predictable round of activities at fixed times, London Society was breaking down.

An even more significant change was the loss of Society's function as an adjunct of the political system. In the palmy days of mid-Victorian coalition governments, this most aristocratic of institutions — outside the court and the

[58]Aide, "Deterioration of London Society," p. 115; Escott, *Society in London*, p. 165; Seymour Fortescue, *Looking Back* (London, 1920), p. 189; Augusta Fane, *Chit Chat* (London, 1926), p. 281. For a summary of these changes, see Jamie Camplin, *The Rise of the Plutocrats: Wealth and Power in Edwardian England* (London, 1978), chap. 12.

[59]For opposing views, see H. J. Hanham, "The Sale of Honours in Late Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 3 (1960): 277–89, Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime* (New York, 1981), pp. 89–93, and Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850–1980* (Cambridge, 1981), chap. 7.

[60]*Outlook*, 5 February 1898.

[61]Diary for 7 May 1892, Edward Hamilton papers, B.L., Add. MSS. 48657. Lady Desborough's diaries for the years 1887–1914 in the Hertford County Record Office confirm this change in travelling for one aristocratic family who lived close to London.

family estate — had served important political purposes. When a handful of great houses provided identifiable avenues to the centers of power, the political segment of Society could monitor the entry of newcomers to the system and push the advancement of those who found approval. Through the judicious use of social favors, the salons of the great hostesses might create supporters in the House of Commons as well.[62] In the late-nineteenth century, this system, too, began to change. Increasing numbers of men from outside the traditional ruling strata began to enter Parliament — their wives and daughters were among those crowding the royal drawing rooms.[63] As party organizations became more sophisticated, clubs, caucuses, and headquarters provided alternate forums for contact between leaders and their backbenchers. Joseph Chamberlain demonstrated the possibility of establishing a political base outside the London system: only after he had gained national prominence did Chamberlain participate in high society. With the creation of the Primrose League in 1883, the aristocracy itself acknowledged that the conditions of mass democracy required political hopefuls to do more than cultivate their own deferential constituencies and jostle with the powerful at Londonderry House. The introduction of new people, new forms, and new methods into the political system worked to loosen the symbiotic relationship between social and parliamentary success that underlay London Society. "As a principle of social organization, politics have been replaced by other agencies," wrote T. H. S. Escott in 1904.[64] Increasingly, London Society became a place where status, rather than political power, was brokered.

The responses of the traditional aristocracy to these changes varied, for the expansion and dilution of London Society worked to break down the common allegiances, standards, and codes of behavior that the ruling classes had developed. The monarchy, by accepting its role as the head of a national society rather than an aristocratic "Society,"[65] and the "smart" sections of the nobility and gentry, by adopting new standards of display and catholic entertaining, both contributed to the emergence of a social elite based on celebrity status and wealth, rather than breeding alone. Other groups, familiar to Vita Sackville-West in her childhood, steadfastly refused to countenance the new order. Agreeing, no doubt, with Escott that "the society in which you will see no one whom after a time you have not seen before...is not merely the best, but perhaps the only, the sole society which it is worth taking the trouble to enter," they

[62]Davidoff, *Best Circles*, pp. 26–28, 63–65; Guttsman, *British Political Elite*, chap. 6.

[63]J. A. Thomas, *The House of Commons, 1821–1901*, pp. 14–16, indicates that 1880 was the first year that men from non-landed backgrounds made up a majority of the House of Commons.

[64]Escott, *Society in the New Reign*, p. 72.

[65]On this important change in the role of the monarchy, see David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition,' c.1820–1977," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 101–38.

relegated themselves to smaller, more exclusive and more isolated circles.[66] Ac-
cording to several observers, a third alternative was adopted by some aristocrats
within the Edwardian political establishment. These survivors, represented by
the Conservative Souls and their friends among the Liberals, prolonged their
hold on national affairs by moving their activities from the metropolis to the
countryside. Ensconced on rural estates for weekend after weekend of the
parliamentary season, this elect could mingle "beyond the reaches of the ordin-
ary aspirant...and [be] more remote" than they had ever been.[67] Adapting as
they could, or chose to, individual aristocratic and upper gentry families retained
their power, influence, and status.[68] But as one of the most important institutions
through which the traditional elites had exercised power as a class, London
Society was in eclipse before the First World War.

[66]Vita Sackville-West, *The Edwardians* (London 1930); Escott, *Society in London*, p. 115.

[67]George S. Street, *People and Questions* (London, 1910), pp. 185–91; also "The Enlargement of
London Society," *Saturday Review*, 5 May 1900; H. E. M. Stutfield, *The Sovranty of Society*
(London, 1909), p. 223.

[68]On this point, see Harold Perkin, "The Recruitment of Elites in British Society since 1880,"
Journal of Social History 12 (1978): 222–34.

Appendix

Drawing Room Presentations, 1840-1900

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1840	372	1860	430	1882	710
1841	255	1861	342	1883	731
1842	409	1862	0	1884	264
1843	223	1863	773	1885	865
1844	203	1864	492	1886	883
1845	318	1865	387	1887	1290
1846	230	1868 *	485	1888	832
1847	208	1869	421	1889	979
1848	414	1870	419	1890	883
1849	390	1871	533	1891	877
1850	260	1872	510	1892	555
1851	335	1873	503	1893	1107
1852	388	1874	670	1894	841
1853	404	1875	584	1895	899
1854	295	1876	571	1896	1033
1855	348	1877	596	1897	1209
1856	507	1878	609	1898	923
1857	391	1879	511	1899	977
1858	352	1880	668	1900	822
1859	460	1881	640		

*records for 1866 and 1867 not available

Source: Public Record Office, Lord Chamberlain's Department, L.C. 6/4-30, 6/91-120