

3. Becoming English

Anthony and Mary Molteno's children put down roots in London

DRAFT ONLY

Family life

April 7, 1782. Spring. Mary Lewis and Anthony Molteno walked up the steps and entered the famous church of St Martin in the Fields that stands on what is today Trafalgar Square and was the parish church for this part of London where Anthony worked. They were getting married. Antonio Torre, his employer, was with them to witness the ceremony. But it wasn't entirely the happy wedding one might imagine. The law refused to recognise the validity of any marriage between Catholics unless conducted by a priest of the Church of England. Anthony had had to put aside his religious loyalties, and be married in accordance with the Anglican rite. His and Mary's marriage appears in a register of 'Romish' marriages kept by St Martin's which lists some 30,000 such marriages over a span of many years from 1750 to 1795. The official entry mistakenly records Anthony's surname as Moulton despite his clear signature to the contrary. It also omits Mary's second name, Emma, which she gave years later to one of her daughters.¹

Anthony was 31 years old and his bride 24. Born 200 miles from London in Exeter, Devon, Mary and her parents, John and Mary Lewis, were living in the parish of St Paul's, Covent Garden, just north of St Martin in the Fields. Her father was probably a printer, which would explain how she might have met the young Italian printseller she was now marrying.²

A portrait of each of them exists – Mary's is described as 'a rather beautifully drawn tinted sketch'.³ The drawing of Anthony is from an 'anonymous engraving of Printsellers at Rare Print Sales'; it gives one the strong impression that he had a sharp intelligence, engaging personality, and probably a sense of humour.⁴

¹ We know this because the death certificate of her son, Charles Dominic Molteno, states his mother's given names were Mary Emma. A copy of Anthony and Mary's marriage entry in the St Martin in the Fields Register Book of Marriages was made on 19 Oct. 1804.

² St Martin in the Fields had a John Lewis on its rolls who was a printer by trade. And *The London Book Trades 1775-1800: A topographical guide. Streets P.* lists a Lewis who is a printer living in Paternoster Row, St. Paul's, 1756 to 1776; St Paul's being Mary Lewis's parish.

³ Kathleen Murray to Elfrida Manning, 17 Jun. 1958. Kathleen says she has the original which a member of the family got from Charles Dominic Molteno.

⁴ Elfrida Manning to Kathleen Murray, 26 Nov. 1956. The portrait is dated 1817 and held in the British Museum Print Room.

The newly weds went to live at 1 Vigo Lane, an alley which has long since disappeared, just off Saville Row. They then moved a few hundred yards to 76 St James Street where they lived from 1795 to 1799 and in 1801 Anthony shifted his business premises round the corner to 29 Pall Mall, and later No. 20 which is where the family stayed for the rest of their lives.⁵

Mary, like most middle class women in Europe at this time, remained invisible to history. Her sphere of activity was the home. There was no question of women like her earning their own living and if she wrote letters or kept a diary like her close friend Elizabeth Colnaghi, they have not survived. Informed inference, therefore, is all we are left with in reconstructing something of her life.

They started a family immediately. Anthony arranged for some portraits of the children. There is one etched by Bettelini of the eldest child, James Anthony Molteno,⁶ playing with a dog, and a miniature of Charles Dominic with John and Rose by S. Shelley (c. 1799).⁷

Mary had 11 children in 19 years; the intervals between her pregnancies being usually only about 11 months. Her last baby to survive was born when she was already 44 years old. There is even some evidence that she had one more pregnancy in 1807 at the age of 49 but that the baby, Elizabeth Mary, died shortly after being born. Mary lived in an age when the English population had started to grow rapidly as infant mortality fell and the Victorian custom of having large families became established. She was lucky, one might say, to lose only two of her children in infancy.⁸

Her experience is something women in all societies had to contend with before reliable forms of birth control came into existence in the second half of the 20th century. She lived also in an age when a patriarchal culture did not consider a woman's longer-term health as reason for sexual abstinence.

Mary and Anthony, however, were fortunate in many ways. Anthony ran his business well and the family was never in dire poverty. Mary must have had the help of one or more domestic servants, which would have reduced the burden on her of a large family.⁹ And Anthony did not have to commute to work; they lived, so to speak, above the shop.

⁵ Kenneth R. Lee to 'Mr Molteno' (Donald Jervis Molteno), Glen Lyon, 5 Aug.1981. Also street gazetteers for Pall Mall.

⁶ British Museum Print Room.

⁷ This was presented to Mr R. A. Bristow, c. 1883, by Miss Rose Molteno of Chelsea, his cousin. It was later bought by Percy Molteno in 1907. Kathleen Murray to Sir Robert Bristow, 20 Jul. 1958. UCT Special Collection. Where the original is now, I do not know.

⁸ There is some uncertainty about the deaths of these two children. Jenny Molteno, to whom I am greatly indebted for researches on the Internet, found an Anthony Edmund Molteno's birth registered in St Martin in the Fields. But I have found no record of his baptism in any Roman Catholic embassy chapel. One must presume he died almost immediately. With Mary Sophia Molteno, Jenny found her listed, c. 14 June 1785, in St James's, Westminster. Again, there is no trace of her Catholic baptism. This is all half a century before Births, Marriages and Deaths records began to be kept by the British Government.

⁹ We do not know this for certain because the first nation-wide census was only conducted years later in 1841.

Anthony Molteno and Mary Lewis's children¹⁰

Year of Birth (or Baptism)	Names	Date of Marriage	Spouse	Year of Death
1783 (May)	Anthony Edmund	--		1783 (?)
1784 (3 August)	James "Anthony"	1807	Mary Mylius	1845
1785 (June)	Mary Sophia	--		1785 (?)
1788 (23 March)	John	1813	Caroline Bower	1827
1789 (21 August)	"Charles" Dominic	1823	Margaret Glass (nee Scott)	1874
1791 (22 July)	Mary	1811	Charles Bristow	1845
1794 (27 May)	Francis	?	Mary Jane Auvergne	1868
1796 (18 April)	Henry	?		Died young
1798 (13 Sept.)	Rose	--		1873
1800 (29 June)	Emma	--		1860
1802 (22 August)	Eloise	--		1839

With so many children, Mary and Anthony must always have been surrounded by the noise of their large family and they lived long enough to see several of the children reach adulthood. Mary witnessed her eldest son, James Anthony, getting married in 1807. But three years later in the winter of 1810, she died, aged only 52. Anthony outlived her by six years and was able to see both their daughter Mary marrying Charles Bristow in 1811 and their second boy, John, marrying Caroline Bower in 1813.

¹⁰ Constructed from the baptismal records of the Bavarian Embassy Chapel (later the Church of the Blessed Maria de Assumptus, and now Our Lady of the Assumption & St. Gregory, Warwick St., London W1); and for Mary Sophia Molteno and Charles Dominic Molteno, St James, Spanish Place (Manchester Square, Westminster). The Bavarian Embassy Chapel was burned down in the Gordon Riots of 1780; the present building lies just off Regent Street. There is some uncertainty however; when Percy Molteno looked at the records over a century ago he found some pages removed. Source: Kathleen Murray to Islay Molteno, 18 Dec.1956.

Politics casting its shadow

The times Mary and Anthony brought their children up in were anxious-making. The family was Catholic and the only place where they could have their new-born christened was in one of the Embassy Chapels.¹¹ They must also have worried that the disorder and destruction directed at Roman Catholics during the Gordon Riots only two years before they had married might recur.

Another worry came out of the blue in the year their fifth child, Charles Dominic Molteno, was born. The French Revolution broke out in 1789 and it soon turned very nasty, not to say murderous, for the French aristocracy and the Catholic Church in France. The extraordinarily radical ideas of the Revolution, *Liberte, Egalite et Fraternite*, resonated throughout Europe. Many English intellectual and political figures like the Whig leader Charles James Fox welcomed the Revolution at first and argued its political ideas were relevant in Britain too. The attempts by Europe's monarchs to crush the incubus of revolution in France led unexpectedly to their military defeat in the mid 1790s and the emergence of Napoleon Bonaparte. He soon proved himself one of the greatest military commanders of all time. Twenty years of warfare between Britain and France followed. One consequence was a blockade of Europe that cut off the important Continental market for prints, as with all other goods, and Anthony, like his friend and former partner, Paul Colnaghi, must have been anxious whether his business could ride out the storm. At one point, an actual French invasion of England looked imminent. This might well have led to the overthrow of the monarchy and in all probability destroyed Anthony's business which now relied on the custom of the English ruling class.

The rough and tumble of London life – young John Molteno gets mugged

London was often a rough place with thefts and muggings being quite common. Members of the family figure in several court records as the victims of nasty incidents. One involved their son John and we have a vivid account of what happened from the Old Bailey record of the resulting trial.¹²

Fob watches were all the rage and young John was the proud owner of an expensive silver watch, costing he told the Old Bailey judge £1.11s.6d. One Saturday in April 1803 John, who was fifteen at the time, was crossing Marylebone Street to go down Vine Street and head home. It was half-past eight and getting dark. A young boy, coincidentally also called John [White] and the same age as John, came up to him and without saying a word snatched the watch out of his fob pocket. John dashed after him shouting 'Stop thief'. A man coming up the street from the opposite direction, a confectioner by trade, joined the chase, grabbed the boy and 'knocked him down'. He described to the court how he 'had fast hold of him by the collar'. He and John marched the thief to the watch-house where they handed him over to an officer, Mr William Shadwell.

¹¹ The Bavarian Embassy Chapel was the nearest, but I have been through the registers of every Embassy Chapel in London in order to determine the births of all Anthony and Mary's children.

¹² A verbatim account of the trial, Ref. No. t18030420-74, can be read at www.oldbailey.org.

The case came up before the Common Serjeant sitting with the Second Middlesex Jury. The accused told a very different story: ‘that gentleman’ – he pointed at John – ‘knocked me down and said I had robbed him’. The youngster, in what to modern eyes was a most summary hearing, was immediately found guilty of ‘stealing, but not violently, from the person’ and sentenced to seven years transportation. This meant being put aboard a sailing ship bound almost certainly for the penal colony of New South Wales 12,000 miles away where, if he survived the six-month voyage, he would serve his sentence.

Becoming English

As we saw in the previous chapter, Anthony moved in a tight circle of his fellow Italian printsellers, engravers and printers. He made sure that, at every christening of his children, one of the godparents or witnesses was Italian. We don’t know how much he spoke Italian at home, but at least Charles Dominic is known to have had a command of the language. And assuming Anthony’s sister who had married Gaetano Testolini had children, these cousins of the Moltenos would certainly have grown up Italian-speaking.¹³

But the family also interacted with the surrounding English community. The children, of course, were half English and their grandparents on their mother’s side lived nearby in Covent Garden. Mary obviously would have spoken English with her growing brood, as would the servants, and the children were educated in the English medium. Anthony, as his clients were primarily English, must also have developed some command of the language.

The French Revolution must accidentally have reinforced this process of the family putting down its main roots in England. During the 20 years or more that the wars continued, there was no question of Anthony re-migrating to some other part of Europe, or even travelling on the Continent. His home city of Milan was now ruled by a member of the Emperor Napoleon’s family and it would have been difficult even to stay in touch with relatives and former friends in Italy.

So, as often happens with immigrant communities cut off from the countries they have had to leave, Anthony and Mary’s family firmly anchored itself in England, and London specifically. As the children grew up and married, it was English spouses they took – Mary marrying Charles Bristow; John, Caroline Bower; James Anthony, Mary Mylius (although her family was originally from Austria). And several years later in the early 1820s, Charles Dominic married Mrs Glass, who was Scottish.

How would the children earn their living?

As the children grew up, a new issue faced Mary and Anthony – what opportunities would be open for them to earn a living? Here the constraints of being Roman Catholic, of recent immigrant stock, and – in the case of the girls – female, all came into play.

¹³ I have not explored what happened to the Testolini family; in particular, what offspring there were, and whether they remained settled in England.

Roman Catholic disabilities were to a significant degree still in place even though Catholic chapels, priests saying Mass, and Catholic religious communities and schools were now allowed by the second Catholic Relief Act of 1791. As a result, Anthony and Mary were able to educate their children well. In 1796, they sent their eldest son, James Anthony, for two years to the prestigious Catholic school, St Edmunds College, Ware, which had been expelled from the country during the Reformation two centuries before and had just been re-founded in England. But any question of the Molteno boys going to university to pursue professional qualifications remained closed to them, even if the idea had crossed their parents' minds, which is unlikely. Oxford and Cambridge barred entry to anyone who was not an Anglican (and male)¹⁴ and University College, the first secular part of what became the University of London, had not yet been founded.

Farming was also closed to the Moltenos in the early 1800s. The formal prohibition on Catholics buying land had been lifted in 1778 But Anthony and Mary's boys would have had little or no experience of life outside London; they were of a generation before the coming of the railways when travel to the countryside was both arduous and expensive. The fundamental obstacle, however, was the country's landowning system which made it very difficult for outsiders to break into.¹⁵

As for a career in the Armed Forces, no Catholic could be an officer until 1817.¹⁶ The British class system also made getting a commission in the Army (through purchase) expensive and in effect closed to everyone outside a narrow social circle. Even a century later, when Anthony Molteno's great great grandson, Dr Ernest Anderson, joined the Royal Horse Guards ('the Blues') just before the First World War, Army officers were still quite poorly paid because of the enduring assumption of their having private means.¹⁷

The only obvious possibilities for supporting oneself in a middle-class occupation were getting a job in what we would today call the private sector or going into business on one's own account. For Anthony and Mary's eldest son, James Anthony, it was easy. He worked in his father's business for some 15 years before Anthony died and it was natural that his father allowed him to take it over. The next boy, John, managed to get some kind of legal qualification.¹⁸ He got a job in government service, although there was nothing in those days like civil service examinations and competitive entry. The third boy, Charles Dominic, went to work for the East India Dock Company at an early age, and stayed with the company all his working life.

¹⁴ Oxford and Cambridge only lifted the ban on Catholics and Dissenters in 1854 when compulsory religious tests were removed. M.D.R. Leys, *Catholics in England – 1559-1829: A Social History*, London, Longmans, 1961, p. 152.

¹⁵ Percy Molteno's daughter, Margaret Murray, told me how, when she and her husband, Lenox, started farming at Painswick Lodge in Gloucestershire in 1924, they were simply not accepted by the surrounding gentry – this despite her father having been a Member of Parliament and a managing director of one of the country's leading shipping lines.

¹⁶ M.D.R. Leys, *Catholics in England – 1559-1829: A Social History*, London, Longmans, 1961, p.148.

¹⁷ Ernest Anderson made clear this was one reason why he never married.

¹⁸ His grandson, Percy Molteno, described him as an attorney at law.

For the girls, Mary, Rose, and the youngest sisters, Emma and Eloise, the choices were much narrower. Marriage was assumed to be a young woman's natural vocation and Mary, the eldest, got married to Charles Bristow in 1811. But the other three never married. They were all still in their teens when their father died in 1816 and so had no parent to help arrange things for them. Nor, it seems, did they have significant inheritances to act as an enticement to young suitors.

Anthony Molteno's will

Anthony had outlived his wife by six years. He saw the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, but died in October the following year.¹⁹

His will, dated three months before his death, is a fascinating and lengthy document.²⁰ It gives a picture of a confident, meticulous and successful businessman who foresees every eventuality. He wishes to be fair to each of his eight children and is confident his eldest son who will carry on the family business and take the chief responsibility for winding up his estate.

The will indicates that Anthony had six brothers and sisters in Italy. But one must doubt, after so many years away, how close he felt to them. He only remembers them in a codicil, does not mention any of them by name, and leaves them merely a token sum of £10 each. There is no reference in the will to his having any siblings living in England, and whether or not one or two of his brothers had ever been in London, they were clearly not there in 1816.

Anthony is particularly concerned for his three 'infant daughters' – Rose aged 18; Emma 16 and Eloise (whom he calls Eliza) 14. He instructs the two eldest boys, James Anthony and John, to look after their sisters til they reach the age of 21. They are currently in school (it sounds like boarding school) and 'when not at school, they shall live and reside with my said son, James Anthony Molteno, and they shall continue to live and reside with him until [the determination of] my said trade or business', or they marry. He spells out that it is reasonable to place this responsibility on James Anthony because he will be doing this 'out of the profits of my said trade' and getting 'a fair and reasonable allowance for the maintenance of my said three daughters'. In fact, the will provides for him to be paid the very considerable sum of £300 annually out of the estate.

The two eldest sons and a family friend were appointed executors, but James Anthony was clearly in the lead. He was already 31 years old and married with three young children. His brother, John (my great greatgrandfather), whom incidentally Anthony refers to as John C. Molteno,²¹ was also married

¹⁹ See Catholic Record Society, Vol. XII, 'Laity's Directory' Obituaries, 1773-1839 (drawn from Catholic chapels in London). It is Anthony's obituary, incidentally, which states he was 65 years old, and how we know he must have been born in 1751.

²⁰ Public Record Office, the National Archives, Ref: prob/11/1588.

²¹ We can be fairly sure that the C stands for Charles. It would explain why John in due course called his own eldest son, John Charles. It also gives support to my suggestion (see Ch. 2) that Anthony's own middle name was Charles, not George.

by this time. Was there some tension between the two brothers over the will? It would not be surprising, given that James Anthony was to be paid such a substantial sum while John got nothing. Of course, all the work involved in arranging and accounting for the sale of their father's huge stock of copper plates (some 30,000 of them) and other assets fell to James Anthony in the years that followed, as did responsibility for the youngest girls.

Questions remain as to what happened in the actual distribution of the proceeds from Anthony's estate among his offspring. James Anthony had taken over the business and prospered until his bankruptcy 20 years later. In contrast when John died at an early age only 14 years after his father, he left his family with virtually nothing to inherit. As for Charles Dominic, the third son, he had already received a small advance from his father of £180 on what he would eventually hope to inherit. Their sister Mary Bristow's situation created the biggest problem in that Anthony had already had to bail out her ineffective husband to the tune of £2,000. He insisted this sum be deducted before she inherited her portion, presumably because the legal situation of wives at this time meant that, almost always, their husbands controlled whatever property they inherited.

Almost all Anthony and Mary's descendants in the generations that followed come from the families of the eldest two boys, James Anthony and John. Their stories form the next chapters. Here we will tell what we know of what happened to the other children.

[CONSIDER INSERTING HERE THE SECTION ON MAY MOLTEÑO AND THE BRISTOW CLAN since she also married before her father's death]

Emma and Eloise Molteno take their vows

Emma and Eloise completed their growing up in the family home at 20 Pall Mall where their eldest brother, James Anthony had now moved in with his own family. Eloise was the first to leave and find her own way. On 30 April 1821, when she was still only 19, she was received into the Order of St Benedict in Winchester.²² This city had become a hub of Catholicity in Southern England during the years when so many Catholic religious had fled France and taken refuge in England during the Revolution. Eloise knew the Order's house in Winchester already because she and Emma had been confirmed there the year before, and their elder sister, Rose, had in fact been confirmed there back in 1811.²³

A year and a half after being received into the Order, Eloise was invested with the holy Habit of St Benedict and she made her full profession a year later when she was 21 years old. She followed the

²² The Community of the Glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary had been exiled from Brussels in 1794 during the French Revolutionary Wars. It settled in Winchester where it remained until moving to East Bergholt in 1857. It was the first enclosed community of religious to exist in England since the Reformation. Dom Aidan Bellenger, 'The Brussels Nuns at Winchester, 1794-1857', *English Benedictine Congregation History Commission Symposium 1999*. The building in Winchester is now the Royal Hotel.

²³ Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, pp. 218, 235.

custom of religious houses and took a new name, Mary Catherine OSB. What her life as a nun was like we do not know although in the next chapter I will describe the experience of her niece, Catherine ('Kate') Molteno, who also became a Catholic nun (as a Sister of Mercy) in the next generation.

Emma, Eloise's slightly older sister, took much longer before deciding to follow the same path. But in November 1830 – she was 32 by this time – she, too, was received into the Benedictine convent at Winchester and made her profession two years later, taking the name Dame (Domina or Mistress in Latin) Mary Bernard.

Hopefully the two girls were glad to be together again under the same roof, but it didn't last all that long for Eloise died, when still a young woman, in the winter of 1839. Emma continued her life as a nun for another 20 years until her death in September 1860 at St Mary's Abbey, Suffolk. The two sisters described themselves as the 'daughters of Mr Anthony Molteno of Como and London.'²⁴

Rose Molteno gets marooned in the United States

Rose, the third one of the three youngest sisters, was apparently been a very pretty young girl. But she neither married nor became a nun. Instead, she seems to have tried to support herself, possibly as some kind of companion. At one point when already middle-aged, she lived at Goods Hill, Tenterden, in Kent with a family called Orange; in quite what capacity is not clear.

The Oranges may then have moved to the United States, with Rose accompanying them; alternatively, having decided to go on her own, she was given an introduction to their relatives who were already in America. The *Devonshire's* passenger list for 12 August 1850 recorded her as being 45 years old (in fact, she was already 52) and intending to stay in, not just visit, the US.²⁵ By this time, most of her brothers and sisters in England were no longer alive, including John and Eloise who had died many years before, and Mary (Charles Bristow's wife) and James Anthony who both died in 1845.

Rose disliked America intensely, at least initially. She wrote to her beloved brother, Charles Dominic Molteno, a year after arriving: 'I have found many drawbacks to the enjoyment of the country in my sojourn at Illinois. There are so many annoyances in flies, jiggers, prickly heat etc. I fear they are too great to enumerate.... Mrs Orange and myself were covered over with large spots, just as if we had had the small pox.'²⁶ As for the summer nights, they 'are never still and quiet as our English ones in the country are, but as soon as the night commences, so do the grasshoppers, katendes [or katy-dids], locusts, frogs of all descriptions and innumerable insects begin their music and concert.'

²⁴ Catholic Record Society, Vol. XLII, p. 35. Registers and Records of Winchester (Order of St Benedict).

²⁵ New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957.

²⁶ Rose Molteno in Cincinnati to Charles Molteno and his wife Margaret, London, 13 Sept. 1851.

But it was the people she took against most decidedly. 'All the Orange's acquaintances were keeping stores or taverns or boarders. You shake hands with all you see and all are invited to sit down to table with you; it is not very pleasant to be always in the society of ignorant people and there are many such.' For someone who had grown up in the Molteno home in Pall Mall where well off and cultured clients and craftsmen were part of the social circle, it was difficult to adjust to these down to earth, informal Americans whom she clearly regarded as belonging to the lower classes!

But what option did she have? Although 'heartily tired of America altogether, how I can with my present funds get back to England again and have sufficient to support myself, requires great consideration.' It was a problem to which there was no answer.

Her situation on arrival had been made more complicated by her nephew, Whiston Bristow (her sister Mary's son), falling in love with the Oranges' daughter who was already engaged to someone else. Whiston, who was in his early 30s, had previously tried to make a new life for himself in Jamaica, but had now moved to the United States. He had got a good job there (being paid \$1,000), but 'in a moment of pet', as his Aunt Rose felt, threw it up. His employer, Mr Butler, kindly gave him an excellent testimonial praising his 'capacity for business and integrity'.²⁷

Rose tried to make herself useful to her nephew. It seems she was prepared to base herself wherever he managed to get a new post. Six months later in April 1852, she wrote to Charles and his wife again.²⁸ Whiston was now staying with her. He had been unwell and although she was contemplating visiting friends in Cincinnati again, 'I shall not like to leave Whiston for any length of time alone'. But she was very lonely and missed her relatives in England. She recalled with tears in her eyes her brother Charles Dominic coming down to the docks in London two years before to see her off and calling out as the ship cast off, 'God bless you, my dear Rose'. 'I think how far I am removed from most of those I love,' she writes, [but] 'I stopt and think that 'tis God's will that has directed me here, and I trust for some good purpose'.

Whatever money Rose had inherited from her father was clearly not adequate now for even a modest independent existence, nor for her to return to England. Twenty years after her arrival there, the US 1879 census recorded her living in Indiana, the local Post Office Directory listing her as Rose Multem (sic) (aged 70) living with Mary Bristoe (sic) (aged 52) and two children, James and Rose Bristow (15 and 13 respectively).²⁹ Presumably this was Whiston's family but what had happened to him I do not know.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Rose Molteno in Madison, Wisconsin to Charles and Margaret Molteno, Bridge of Earne, near Perth, Scotland, 18 Apr. 1852.

²⁹ Jenny Molteno in Australia tracked down these details. These fragments are an example of how difficult genealogical research can be when unsupported by other evidence. The frequent mistakes of careless census enumerators and, in the modern age, equally slapdash transcribers of original records in the process of digitisation create real problems in searching for particular individuals.

All her life, Rose kept in touch with Charles Dominic, who was only a year older than her.³⁰ For his part, he was always concerned about her, knowing she was hard up, and when he died in 1874, he left her some money in his will. Sadly, Whiston's family had not let him know that his sister had already died the previous year, having been in the States for nearly quarter of century.³¹

Charles Dominic Molteno, the beloved focal point of the family

This son of Anthony and Mary Molteno's is the only one for whom an actual photograph exists, so we can see what he looked like. His hair was dark, a reminder perhaps of his ancestry, and he could speak Italian. But his stepdaughter Margaret Scott Glass never heard him talk about his ancestors in Italy,³² although all his life he kept his Molteno family seal 'which consists of the Eagle, crowned, with his initials under it'.³³ And in the handful of his letters that survive, along with his sister Rose's, we can hear his voice and get some sense of the kind of man he was.

Charles, the name by which he was known in the family, had been born in Pall Mall in the year of the French Revolution. He grew up and spent all his working his life in London. On retiring, he moved to Scotland where he lived another 23 years (the first Molteno to be in that country) and died at the grand old age of 85 in 1874. He had outlived all his brothers and sisters and his life spanned most of the 19th century.

He became the main person other members of the family related to. His youngest sisters, Emma and Eloise had, as we have seen, withdrawn themselves from the world. Rose had landed up, almost by accident, on the far side of the Atlantic. Mary became trapped in a difficult marriage. John had died at a young age as we shall see, and James Anthony was preoccupied with running the printselling business and later dealing with his bankruptcy.

Charles' kindness and warm interest in them drew three generations of his relatives to him. He had a particular interest in his brother John's family. He attended the christening of John and Caroline's eldest son, John Charles Molteno, in the Bavarian Embassy Chapel in Warwick Street in 1814, and became the boy's godfather. He kept in touch with Caroline after she was widowed in 1827 and often wrote to her daughter (and his niece), Nancy Bingle, John and Caroline's daughter. Until he retired in 1851, he, Caroline and Nancy were all living in London. And even after he settled in Scotland, he followed with delight in *The Times* the doings of his increasingly eminent nephew, John Charles Molteno, in the Cape Colony; indeed he lived to see him become the Colony's first Prime

³⁰ Margaret Molteno (nee Scott) to Mrs John Charles Molteno at the Cape, 23.11.1870.

³¹ I am grateful to Jenny Molteno who tracked down Charles Dominic Molteno's will and recorded Ron Molteno's recollections. Rose is buried in South Park Cemetery, Greensburg, Decatur County, Indiana. This latter bit of information came through the help of someone responding to an inquiry via the website, *Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness!*

³² Margaret Scott Glass to Caroline Molteno, 19 Jun.1875.

³³ See Chapter 1. It came into the hands of Percy Molteno.

Minister. This affection was strongly reciprocated. When John brought his wife, Maria, and their children to visit Britain for the first time in 1861, he rushed them up to Scotland to see his uncle. The journey precipitated Maria going into labour and their son, Percy Molteno, was actually born in Charles' house! On his next visit to Europe in 1871-2, John again dashed up to Edinburgh to see his uncle one last time. And when, a couple of years after that, Charles got the news of Maria's unexpected death at the Cape – only months, it turned out, before his own – he wrote to Nancy of the tears being drawn from his eyes.³⁴

Charles had left school at fifteen and gone to work for the newly formed East India Dock Company in 1804. This had been set up by Act of Parliament at the behest of the 'Honourable East India Company' (a self-ascribed honorific title!). Its docks were to be built next to the West India Docks just north east of the Isle of Dogs (today's Canary Wharf). There was to be an Export Dock and vast new Import Dock twice its size that could handle up to 250 sailing vessels at a time, including the big 1,000 ton East Indiamen. The new enterprise rapidly became profitable – which was no surprise, given Parliament had granted it a 21-year monopoly on handling all Britain's trade with the Far East.³⁵ Its profitability was further boosted by the country's soaring population and booming import needs – tea for the working classes; spices, Chinese silks and Persian carpets for the wealthy!³⁶

Charles was employed by the Company as a Receiver. The Act of Parliament referred specifically to these 'collectors, receivers or agents' who were made responsible for collecting a charge of 2/- a ton on all cargo landed from the East India Company's and other ships. There was no question of the Dock Company being allowed to decide what fees it would levy – another example of how much more interventionist and prescriptive the state often was in the early days of modern capitalism two centuries ago.

Charles stayed working for the East India Dock Company his entire working life, 47 years in all. By his own admission, the job did not make him a rich man, but it must have been reasonably paid – for the Company relied on its Receivers for both meticulous attention to detail and the utmost probity. It is tempting also to wonder whether Charles' dealings with ship captains of many different nationalities gave him opportunities to develop his command of languages. Certainly, his stepdaughter Margaret recalled that he was 'a very good linguist ...[illegible] Latin, Italian, French, German and Spanish, [and] he played and sketched'.³⁷

³⁴ The few letters that survive show how Charles Molteno was in touch with every branch of the family. They included his nephew, young Whiston Bristow, who was in Jamaica for a time, and Frances Parker, his greatniece who was the daughter of James Anthony's daughter, Mary Molteno.

³⁵ This was long before the days when free trade became a prevailing nostrum in Economics!

³⁶ <http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConFactFile.69/East-India-Docks.html>.

³⁷ Percy Molteno to Betty Molteno, 26 Sept.1881, relating what one of Charles Molteno's stepdaughters, Miss Glass, had just told him.

In 1823 Charles married a widow, Margaret Scott Glass (1786-1873).³⁸ She was the daughter of a Scottish merchant, Alexander Scott. Her first husband was the Rev. Lawrence Glass of Aberdeen, and they had had two daughters, Margaret and Catherine 'Kitty'. By the time of her marriage to Charles, Margaret was 37 and had been a widow for eleven years, and her girls were already young teenagers. She and Charles did not have children of their own, but he and his stepdaughters developed a very close and happy, lifelong relationship.

A delightful illustration of this survives and also illustrates Charles' engaging sense of humour and love of intellectual discussion. Tucked into a notebook of his³⁹ is a card he kept for years and years. It reads: "Two Ladies at *The Cock and Lion* will be happy to see Mr Charles Molteno to Dinner at 4 Clock." It was from Margaret and Kitty, and the pub was an 18th century tavern in Wigmore Street. By way of reply, Charles had composed the following verses:

Dear Ladies, your kind invitation
To sup at *The Cock and Lion*
By me is received with delight
I will come, my word pray rely on.

At Carlton House splendour we find
Rich couches for Lux'ry to sigh on
But true joy whose seat is the mind
I shall find at *The Cock and Lion*.

His wife, Margaret Scott Glass, was not a Roman Catholic. This led Charles to become the only member of the second generation of Moltenos in Britain to become a Protestant. His greatniece, Catherine 'Kate' Molteno, of whom more in the next chapter, was definite that he practised what one of his stepdaughters described as his 'earnest, serious sense of religion' in the Church of Scotland tradition.⁴⁰

Margaret was the sister of a well-known member of the Scottish intelligentsia, John Scott (1784-1821) who had moved to London where he married Paul Colnaghi's daughter, Caroline. Both women became prematurely widowed. The Colnaghis and Moltenos had been close family friends since the 1780s, so this may have been how Charles Molteno and Margaret met. John Scott was editor of the *Champion* and then for a short time before his premature death of *The London Magazine*. This tragedy came about in rather extraordinary circumstances. In 1820 Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law, Lockhart, wrote a series of scurrilous articles in *Blackwood's Magazine* attacking the great romantic poet William Wordsworth and the 'Cockney School'. John Scott was a friend and admirer of Wordsworth, and a schoolfellow of Lord Byron. He was furious and challenged Lockhart's London

³⁸ They married on 3 May 1823. Source: Marriage Licence Alligations (sic) Faculty Office, 1701-1850. Tracked down by Jennifer Molteno. The West Middlesex Marriage Index says the date was 15 May, in Kensington (London).

³⁹ This came into the hands of Iona Bowring (nee Murray), presumably via her grandfather, Percy Molteno.

⁴⁰ Catherine 'Kate' Molteno to Betty Molteno, 27 Jan.1922.

agent to a duel. The two men met at a farm outside the city – it lay between Camden Town and Hampstead. They exchanged two rounds of shots and John Scott was fatally wounded.⁴¹

In 1851, Charles retired. He was 62, and he and Margaret immediately moved up to Scotland where they lived for the rest of their lives. He explained how they came to settle where they did: ‘My wife’s two daughters having a property in Newton, we sat ourselves down at the Bridge of Earn, a village five or six miles from their abode in a very sweet situation near to the River Earn with very pleasant walks in all directions.’ Life was made easier by their having a living in servant, one Catherine Hutchison; and as they reached their eighties, they employed two domestics, Rachel and Mary.⁴² Their financial situation had been transformed by the death of Margaret’s brother-in-law, John Glass, a few years before in 1846. He had made his fortune in Jamaica, presumably from the hugely profitable sugar industry built on the backs of slave labour – the West Indies, together with India, being Britain’s two most lucrative colonial territories. On returning to Scotland, John Glass had bought the village of Newton and, being a bachelor, left it eventually to Margaret Molteno’s two daughters, Margaret and Kitty Scott Glass.⁴³

Charles continued to keep in touch from Scotland with his numerous relations. He was much loved – as this letter from Margaret Baird (a niece of Charles’ wife), for example, makes clear: ‘My dear old Uncle and Aunt’, she writes, and at the end of which she sends her love to the Miss Bristows (Charles’s sister, Mary’s, daughters).⁴⁴

Margaret Molteno, who was two years older than her husband, died in her daughters’ home, *Newton House*, in April 1873. Neither of the two sisters, Margaret or Kitty, had ever married. After their mother’s death, they continued to care for their stepfather, Charles. The elder one wrote to his niece Caroline Molteno (soon to be Caroline Murray) immediately after his death in December 1874: ‘We have lost your dear Uncle, and his death was so sudden and unexpected, we can scarcely realize that he is gone.... We miss him terribly. As he became older, his dependence on us endeared him the more.’ In fact, ‘his faculties were as bright as ever.’ He continued to take *The Times* daily, as well as reading vociferously – ‘tho’ we have books regularly from an Edinburgh library, he seemed to have not enough to read. We go through the store so quickly.’ He was indeed fortunate in his old age – not just in having his stepdaughters as loving carers, but his sight and hearing and wonderful memory remaining as good as ever.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Margaret Scott Glass to Caroline Molteno, 19 Jun.1875. Also letter from W. M. Parker, at work on a biography of John Scott, to the UCT Archives, c. May 1940.

⁴² Scottish Census, 1861. Charles’s surname is misspelt Mottino. And the next Census (1871) mis-records his age as 31 and his wife’s as 34! The error rates in 19th century censuses were extraordinarily high and makes one wonder whether the enumerators were ever tested for literacy and clear handwriting!

⁴³ Charles Dominic Molteno to Nancy Bingle, various letters.

⁴⁴ Margaret Baird, 6 Jun.1837.

⁴⁵ Margaret Scott Glass to Caroline Molteno (John Charles Molteno’s second eldest child), 30.12.1874. On the Memorial Tablet to the whole family is this beautiful inscription to the elder stepdaughter: ‘in her tongue was the law of kindness.’ *Proverbs*, 31-26.

Charles remained intellectually vigorous right to the end. In fact, he was busy reading the 20 volumes of *Ancient Classics for English Readers* at the time of his passing, which made all the more ironic the death certificate entering the cause of death as senile decay! Only a week or so before the end did he have intimations that his time had come. Writing to his sister Nancy Bingle on 14 December 1874, he told her in touching terms: 'I have had lately instructions that my course is nearly ended, in severe pains across my chest and my back and shoulder, and loss of appetite. I do not repine, but am thankful for the long term given to me – which I only wish to be prolonged for the sake of some of my dear family who need my assistance.'

One of his last acts was to check with Margaret and Kitty they did not need to inherit anything from him financially. They assured him they were well provided for. He then arranged his will so as to leave what modest sums he had to those relatives he was worried about financially. One of these was his niece Elizabeth Molteno, the daughter of his long deceased brother James Anthony. 'Poor thing,' he wrote, 'she is very unfortunate in not obtaining any employment and I am much distressed for her.'⁴⁶ Margaret Glass was surely not exaggerating when she told Nancy after his death that, 'as the Scotch people say "a wonderful bairn, he seemed too good to live".'⁴⁷

He and his wife lie buried side by side in the little graveyard of Arngask in Perthshire.

Mary Molteno and the Bristow clan

Charles' sister, Mary Molteno married Charles Busby Bristow on 9 November 1811. Mary was only 19, and technically still a minor. Their marriage certificate at St James, Piccadilly,⁴⁸ records they were married by licence, 'by and with consent of Anthony Molteno, the natural and lawful father of said minor'.⁴⁹ They did not get off to a good start. Mary's great grandson, Sir Robert Bristow, says in his history of the Bristow family that Charles Bristow may have married her against his father's wishes.⁵⁰ Certainly, the register was signed by his elder brother, Whiston, not their father who may therefore not even have been present. Mary's father Anthony Molteno and her brother John did however attend.⁵¹ Sir Robert thinks 'there came a period of unhappiness and I think real incompatibility, and

⁴⁶ Charles Dominic Molteno to Nancy Bingle, 22 Jul.1873.

⁴⁷ Margaret Scott Glass to Nancy Bingle, 7 Jan.1875.

⁴⁸ A Central London's church, well known today for the talks and market it hosts.

⁴⁹ Taken from a true copy dated 4.9.1934, as stated in Sir Robert Bristow's letters, July 1958.

⁵⁰ Sir Robert Charles Bristow, *Memoir of the Bristow Family with notes on the Family of Molteno of Milan and South Africa*, privately published, Johannesburg, 1944, p. 37. [44pp in length]

⁵¹ For the umpteenth time, official and other records seem incapable of spelling Molteno correctly. IGI records for Mary's wedding spell Anthony's surname Moltino.

what became of Charles we could never discover. Our parents would never tell us, except that “it was not edifying”.⁵²

Charles Bristow was a businessman, ‘a merchant of London’ as he was described, but a very unsuccessful one. His repeated bankruptcies were reported in the London press and I have already mentioned that Mary’s father had to bail him out financially. The trouble started only a year into the marriage. Charles, who billed himself as a ‘ship and insurance agent’ at this time, had his partnership with Robert Porter dissolved. A few years later, in 1819, something similar happened again and another of his partnerships was dissolved – but there is no record of what his line of business in St Dunstons Hill, Great Tower Street, now was.⁵³ Sir Robert says: ‘he moved about a good deal, failed in his business owing to the defaulting of a partner in Portugal, and was last heard of in his father’s will dated 1835 ... after which both he and his wife disappeared from the [commercial?] directories, church registers etc.’

Mary and Charles started a family as soon as they got married. The eldest child, also called Mary, was born the following year (1812). Another daughter and three sons followed before their father unaccountably disappeared. The two girls never married. Whiston eventually emigrated to the United States, ‘performing en route a remarkably daring feat in fetching up kegs of gunpowder from the burning hold of the ship [he was travelling on] and saving it from destruction, an act duly recorded by Lloyd’s.’ He became known in his family as ‘The Hero’, this accolade being put on a photo of him with his two sons in the USA. He had married there sometime after 1851. There is, as a result, a line of Mary Molteno’s American Bristow descendants that still needs to be researched. By contrast, a lot is known about the English Bristows who are descended from her youngest boy, Robert Anthony Bristow, and their lives are recounted at various points in this book.

Charles Bristow and Mary Molteno’s children⁵⁴

Year of Birth	Names	Date of Marriage	Spouse	Year of Death
1812	Mary Bristow	--		
1814	Rosa Maria Bristow	--		
1815(?)	Charles Francis Bristow	?		

⁵² Sir Robert Bristow to Kathleen Murray, 9. Jul.1958 and 12 Jul.1958.

⁵³ *London Gazette*, 25 July 1812; 9 November 1819.

⁵⁴ The actual birth dates of four of the five children were, as was common practice, written in the family Bible. This suggests the Bristow family were Protestants, not Catholics. The table draws on the handwritten family tree prepared by Sir Robert (Charles) Bristow, July 1944, from Edward Jenkins’ *History of the Bristows, Records in the British Museum, London Directories, & Family documents*’.

1818	Whiston Molteno Bristow	Yes	[unknown]	
1820	Robert Anthony Bristow	1849	Margaret Swan	

Mary Molteno made a considerable impact on the Bristows, judging by the stories that have come down about her. The family have a miniature of her by L. Ferrier in London dated 18 May 1830 – painted therefore some 20 years after she had married. It shows her as a ‘a proud and forceful, middle-aged woman obviously beautiful and reflecting resentment’, not to mention an argumentative streak which her descendants felt came from the Molteno, not Bristow side, of their family! Certainly she seems not to have been a meek or docile wife. A story is told that one night she invited various people to dinner of her own accord. When her husband Charles refused to come down and join them, she used an axe to break down the panels of his study door!⁵⁵ Her descendants also ‘believe[d] [she had] a strong artistic, imaginative and critical faculty not previously possessed by the Bristows’.⁵⁶ There is even a belief today, probably apocryphal, that she had flaming red hair, and whenever a Bristow woman is a redhead, the family calls it ‘the Mary Molteno hair’.

After her husband’s disappearance, she and the children must have lived in quite straitened circumstances. At first she got small dividends from her portion of her father’s estate which her brother, John Molteno, used to receive on her behalf and send on to her.⁵⁷ But she had to find a way of supporting her family herself. One of the very few possibilities available to middle-class women in the 19th century was to start running a school as a business. She was doing this in 1836 when she was in her mid forties,⁵⁸ at a time when her sister-in-law, Caroline Molteno, was also doing so in another part of London, Peckham, following her husband John’s death.⁵⁹

Mary stayed in contact with her brother Charles Molteno, as well as with Caroline. Several of her children kept in touch with their Molteno uncles and aunts too. Her elder daughter, Mary Bristow, for instance, who never married, was still writing to both her cousin Nancy Bingle (nee Molteno) and her Uncle Charles Molteno in the 1870s. And Nancy’s mother, Caroline Molteno, tells how the youngest boy, Robert Bristow, when grown up, had come out to Peckham ‘and drank tea with me’.⁶⁰

Whiston, the eldest of the three we know about, also stayed in touch with his Molteno relatives. When as a youngster of nineteen he went out to Jamaica in 1837 to try his luck, he wrote quite a bit to his Uncle Charles

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sir Robert Bristow to Kathleen Murray, 9.7.1958 and 12.7.1958.

⁵⁷ John Molteno to Margaret Molteno (Charles’s wife), 15 Jan. 1827.

⁵⁸ *London Gazette*, 23.12.1836.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 5.

⁶⁰ See Ch. 5.

Molteno. In one letter, he described cheerfully how he had an ‘an excellent Master’ and ‘am, as far as circumstances will allow, happy’. He was employed on the Wales Estate and ‘unite[d] the several duties of Parson occasionally, Clerk at church, Clerk in Mr Thorpe’s office, soldier on Militia muster days and head Bookkeeper on the Estate.... I like the life I lead exceedingly.’ He owns up, however, to having had two or three severe attacks of ‘sickness’ and ‘constantly looks forward to the time when we shall all meet again.’⁶¹ He was lucky not to catch yellow fever that carried off another of his cousins, William Molteno, James Anthony’s son, who likewise sought to better himself in Jamaica a few years later. Both boys, like yet another cousin of theirs, John Charles Molteno, responded to unexpected poverty in this third generation of the family in England by seeking a new life in the colonies in the 1830s and 40s.

The Bristow family has always been very aware of its Molteno connections right down to the present day. As late as 1888 a greatgrandson of Mary’s was christened Anthony *Molteno* Bristow. And in his history of the family written in 1944, Sir Robert Bristow, who was particularly interested in the more remote origins of his family – back to Tudor times and even the Crusades! – reproduced whole extracts from Percy Molteno’s account of the Moltenos’ possible Italian forebears in the Middle Ages.⁶²

Mary died on 3 February 1845. Her life had been a difficult one and her death no less so. One of the family inscribed on the back of the miniature with Ferrier’s painting of her: ‘God was mercifully pleased to relieve her from a state of great and prolonged suffering.’ She was just short of 54 years of age and was buried in Nunhead Cemetery near Peckham Rye Common in South London.

Francis ‘Frank’ Molteno and the Swiss Connection

Francis was the fourth – and last – of Anthony and Mary’s sons who reached adulthood. Born in March 1794, he was actually called Frank in the family. We know frustratingly little about his life. He, alone among his brothers and sisters, went to live on the Continent at some point after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. For how long or what he was doing there is not known. But he landed up in Switzerland and had a daughter, Mary Jane Molteno, born there. Jane, as she was called, was baptised in the British Chaplaincy in Geneva on 12 March 1825. Her mother was recorded simply as ‘Jane’.⁶³

The next trace we have of him and his family is quarter of a century later! A Directory covering Gloucester and Bristol for 1849 listed him living at Prospect House, London Road, Gloucester.⁶⁴ He was married, his wife, ‘Mrs Molteno’, running a Ladies Boarding House and Day School at the same address. In the winter of the following year, 1850, tragedy struck. Their grown up son, Charles Molteno, died. He was only 24 years old and had been in a very sickly condition for several years – his death certificate lists ‘scrofulous disease of the kidneys’, ‘tubercular of the lungs’ and an abscess.

⁶¹ Whiston Bristow to Charles Dominic Molteno, East India Dock Office, Billeter Square, London, 7 Oct.1837.

⁶² See Chapter 1 of this book.

⁶³ International Genealogical Index (IGI), Continental Europe, records.

⁶⁴ Hunt & Co. Directory for 1849. I am grateful to Jenny Molteno for this information.

He was still living with his parents, but now at a place called Barton St Michael, a hamlet on the edge of the City of Gloucester, his father being listed as its 'Occupier'.

Three months later tragedy struck again when Frank's wife, Mary Susanne, also died that same winter. She was only 51, and suffering from bronchitis and phthisis.⁶⁵ Frank, still called Francis Molteno in official documents, described himself simply as a 'Gentleman' and the 'Proprietor' of Barton St Michael, a hamlet on the edge of the City of Gloucester a few hundred yards east of the Docks. What 'Proprietor' implied is unclear since the family was obviously not wealthy.

The next year, 1851, the country's second national census took place. The family now consisted only of Frank, who described himself as a retired teacher, and his daughter, Jane, who had been born in Geneva. Whether Frank had supported himself by teaching most of his working life, we do not know. Teaching was certainly, as we have seen repeatedly here, a frequently resorted to occupation by middle-class people without the capital to start a more profitable line of business. It required no formal qualifications and there was not yet any taxpayer-funded school system (the state in Britain taking no responsibility for educating the population).

He married again fairly soon after losing his wife. She was also called Mary. The two of them, and presumably Jane, went to live in Newland Villas in the Parish of St. Nicholas. But this new wife herself died, with Frank at her bedside, a few years later in February 1858. She was 56 years old.

In the wake of all these deaths, he and his daughter Jane, who was now in her 30s, left Gloucestershire for good. He returned to London, and lived for a short time at 1 Cecil Street, The Strand, which lay only a few hundred yards from where he had grown up. Jane, it seems, went off to Geneva where she had been born.⁶⁶ There she married Louis Ami Auvergne in 1863 and they had a son in 1866 whom they called Frank (after his grandfather). By this time Frank had himself become unwell and Jane must have persuaded him to join her in Geneva. She later described how her husband had been 'devotedly attentive' to her father in his last illness. He died in the same year his grandson was born.

Charles Molteno loved Frank greatly. There was only a five-year gap between them. Charles wrote of 'My dear Frank... so loving a brother ... Was he not loving to all his relations and friends?' But somehow all contact between the two of them – were the only brothers still alive in the 1850s and '60s – was lost for many years. In 1873, after Charles learned belatedly that their sister Rose had died some time before in the United States, he was upset that there was no way he could let Frank know the sad news. He put an advertisement into *Galignane's Paper* in the hope presumably that it would lead to a response. Amazingly, Jane, now Madame Jane Molteno-Auvergne,⁶⁷ saw it and

⁶⁵ Death Certificates DXZ 599919 and 599921 respectively.

⁶⁶ There is no trace of either of them in the 1861 census; so they were both possibly living in Switzerland by this time.

⁶⁷ The UCT Chief Librarian, Dr C. F. M. Immelman, states, in a note to a transcribed letter (See Footnote 67) that it was a custom in Europe at this time for a woman to attach her maiden name to her new surname when marrying.

wrote to him. She told him that her father had already died in Geneva seven years earlier, and she was married with a young son.⁶⁸ Charles was overjoyed to be in touch with 'our new-found Jane', and an intense correspondence took place between them for a few months. She said she continued to build castles in the air, one of which was to visit England again and present her 'handsome boy and kind husband' to her uncle.⁶⁹ Sadly, it never happened because within a year Charles, the last of the second generation of Moltenos in Britain, had passed away.

Jane was now in her mid fifties. Her son, Frank Auvergne (or Francois as he was probably known in Switzerland), remained her only child.⁷⁰ It is possible that from him is descended another line of Anthony and Mary Molteno's descendants, this time located in Switzerland.⁷¹

Anthony and Mary Molteno's family – Drawing the threads together

In telling the story of Anthony and Mary's offspring in the first part of the 19th century, several strands in the family tapestry become clear. Mary may not have been a Roman Catholic herself, but all her children were baptised in the Catholic faith; how deeply they all remained rooted in it once grown up or married, varied. Anthony was able to give them a middle-class way of life, but they all had to support themselves once they grew up. And the opportunities open to them were constrained by many factors – religion, whether they were male or female, the narrow range of professions that existed in the pre-modern world, and the almost total absence of a public sector (the British state having almost no responsibility in that age to house, educate, keep healthy or support the population in old age).

⁶⁸ The photograph of this seven-year old which Jane sent to her Uncle Charles Molteno is stored in the University of Cape Town Special Collection, BC 601, Box 1.

⁶⁹ Charles Molteno to his niece, Nancy Bingle, 8 Jun.1874.

⁷⁰ Frank had a few assets in England and had made Jane his sole executor. Her Uncle Charles had been worried whether 'my dear Frank has been able to leave some provision for his dear family' and so he left her a legacy in his will.

⁷¹ There is one confusion relating to Francis 'Frank' Molteno that needs to be cleared up. Kenneth Lee, one of the Molteno family historians in the 20th century (see later in this book), came across a mid 19th century Italian painter in England called Francis Moltino (1818-1874). He specialised in landscapes, especially coastal and marine scenes, and exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1848-1855. His work included some lovely London scenes like 'Battersea Old Mill' and 'Early Morning – Waiting for the Tide', and he was sometimes even compared to Turner. Ken became convinced that this painter was a son of Francis Molteno, in spite of the different spelling of their surnames, and put him on the Molteno family tree. But he was mistaken. In fact, he was also wrong in other respects, including thinking at one point that the painter was a woman, and that John and Caroline Molteno were 'her' parents. (See K.R. Lee to T. R. M. Ashfield, 19.10.1981.) Things were made even more muddled by the fact that Francis Moltino's English descendants began to spell their surname as Molteno. I will return to them briefly later because they were the only people in Britain to bear that surname and yet be entirely unrelated to Moltenos. They continued in existence, carrying the Molteno name until only a very few years before I began my research.

Each of the eight (out of eleven) children who survived into adulthood put down firm roots in English soil by way of the people they married and the occupations they took up. They lived out their lives in England with only two exceptions – Rose who landed up in the United States for the last 20 years of her life, and Frank who was in Switzerland at two points in his life.

Family was important to them all, except perhaps for Frank. They stayed in touch with one another to a considerable extent, as did their offspring in the next generation. And as was to happen in future generations, at least of them – in this generation, Charles Dominic Molteno – was by personality and inclination the focus for keeping the family together.

Politics was not completely irrelevant to their lives. But there was no question of any of them playing an active part. Not only were all women excluded from participating, but even for the men their Catholic faith and the extreme narrowness of the franchise kept them out. But this did not mean that politics had no impact on their lives. The French Revolution and the wars that followed cut them off from the Continent. Even more dramatically, the vast expansion of the British Empire during the 19th century revolutionised the opportunities open to the next generation. We will see these factors affecting the lives of the two eldest sons, James Anthony and John, and of their children through whom can be traced the great majority of Anthony and Mary Molteno's descendants down to the present day.

Filename: *3. Becoming English - FURTHER REVISED 7 Sept 2016*