

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S LETTERS.¹

"It has ever been a hobby of mine, though perhaps it is a truism, not a hobby, that the true life of a man is in his letters."

So wrote John Henry Newman to his sister thirty-two years ago. Truisms, like paradoxes, must be taken with a grain of salt. Newman's own letters hardly bear out his own theory. Less than the *Apology*, less than the *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851), less even than some of the famous sermons, such as the sermon on the Parting of Friends, are they the man. "Biographers," says Dr. Newman, "varnish, they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret Lord Burleigh's nods, but contemporary letters are facts." Letters are conclusive evidence of the fact that they were written, but not necessarily of the facts which they allege. If some letters are the most natural, others are the most artificial of all human compositions. They may be written with the fear that they will be published, or with the fear that they will not. Mr. Chamberlain addressed a private letter on a public question to the editor of a newspaper. Cicero, in one of his letters to Atticus, explains that he would not have expressed himself with so much freedom if he had not felt confident that his words would never be read by any other human eyes. But if Newman's remarks are true of any one, they are true of Matthew Arnold. His letters are, if possible, more natural than his conversation. In his witty, genial, and delightful talk there was a serio-comic pretence which people with no humor mistook for affectation. His friendly, chatty, confidential letters combine the simplicity of a child with all the mental and imaginative resources of a scholar, a poet, a philosopher, and a man of the world. Mr. Arnold's family had either to deprive the public of what, apart from enjoyment, it must do every one good to read, or to run the risk of spoiling the letters by cutting out much that was most private and therefore most characteristic. Very few letters could have endured

¹ "Letters of Matthew Arnold," 1848-1888, collected and arranged by George W. E. Russell. 2 vols. Macmillan.

the severe process of excision and retrenchment to which these have been exposed. But Mrs. Arnold has rightly judged that they could stand even such a test. If she has erred at all, it is in the too scrupulous removal of affectionate references to herself.

No praise can be too high for the manner in which Mr. George Russell has discharged his task as editor. He has unhappily felt himself bound, by Mr. Arnold's expressed wish on the subject, to abstain from anything like a biographical narrative; and the letters are left to tell their own story, which it was not their purpose to do. But in a brief Prefatory Note he describes, with the knowledge of an intimate friend and the skill of a literary artist, the genuine character of Matthew Arnold. I was one of those who attended a meeting held in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey soon after Mr. Arnold's death, to arrange some fitting memorial of his poetic genius and his public service. Some of the most distinguished men in England were there, and addressed the audience. There were the Dean of Westminster, Lord Coleridge, Mr. Jowett of Balliol, the fifteenth Earl of Derby, and Archbishop Thomson, all of whom are now gone except the Dean. To the eloquence of the speeches any testimonial from me would be impertinent. But what must have struck every one who heard them was the deep personal feeling of irreparable loss that inspired them all—a feeling so strong that words were quite inadequate to do it justice. All the speakers were men of great intellectual power, fully appreciative of Mr. Arnold's poetry and criticism. But it was the moral beauty—the “nobility,” as Mr. Jowett called it—of his life upon which they almost exclusively dwelt. He was indeed a good man in the best sense of that term. As Mr. Russell says with equal insight and force, he was “gentle, generous, enduring, laborious; a devoted husband, a most tender father, an unfailing friend.” The sort of biography to which Cardinal Newman referred has become altogether obsolete since 1863. It used to be said that the only “Lives” worth reading were those of actors, because they were not supposed to be respectable and so their biographers did not mind telling the truth about them. Times have changed indeed. Actors are now more respectable, or at least more respected, than bishops; and the new school of biography, which will always be associated with the name of Mr. Froude, aims at nothing less than the canonization of what I once heard a lady call the biographee. Mr. Arnold's memory, though it is to be spared that ordeal, would have nothing to fear from it. “Whatever record leap to light, he never shall be shamed.”

Those who knew him best loved him most. He was a saint in his family, a hero to his publisher, and the idol of his friends.

At a dinner of old Balliol men, held when, for the first and last time in this century, there was a really great Primate of the English Church, Matthew Arnold had to return thanks for the toast of his health. He followed Archbishop Tait, an admirable speaker as well as a great statesman, and remarked with exquisite urbanity that after such an impressive performance it might perhaps refresh the company to see a Balliol man who had not got on in the world. The writer of the descriptive report which appeared in the next day's "Times" translated this into the rather coarse paraphrase: "Mr. Matthew Arnold contrasted his own position and emoluments with those of the Archbishop of Canterbury." But Matthew Arnold's spirit of cheerful content was not the least excellent of his many excellent gifts. Men with a fiftieth part of his natural capacity, who work for themselves, often realize an early competence and an ultimate fortune. Mr. Arnold worked for the country, and much of his leisure was spent in adding, by hook or by crook, to the pittance doled out to him from the Education Department. Matthew Arnold was blessed with the soundest of digestions and the sunniest of tempers. But the secret of his happiness was that self-denial was a pleasure to him when it was endured for the sake of those he loved. He enjoyed living, even in London, and his passion for the country was as strong as Thoreau's. Whether he was at home or abroad, nature interested and charmed him. In the earliest of these letters, written to his mother on the 2d of January, 1848, he says:—

"It was nearly dark when I left the Weybridge Station, but I could make out the wide sheet of the gray Thames gleaming through the general dusk as I came out on Chertsey Bridge. I never go along that shelving gravelly road up towards Laleham without interest, from Chertsey Lock to the turn where the drunken man lay. To-day, after morning church, I went up to Pentonhook, and passed the stream with the old volume, width, shine, rapid fulness, 'kempshott,' and swans, unchanged and unequalled, to my partial and remembering eyes at least."

Although Mr. Arnold was an enthusiastic fisherman and rather fond of shooting, his interest in the country was not primarily that of a sportsman. It was rather the devotion which inspired his favorite modern poet and made him as good an interpreter of Wordsworth as Wordsworth was an interpreter of nature. Of all his critical writings there is none more full of perception, as there is none more characteristic of Matthew Arnold, than the Preface to the Selections from Wordsworth.

A very large number of Matthew Arnold's letters are addressed to

his mother, who died in 1873 at the age of eighty-two, having survived her famous husband more than thirty years. Every one knows the poem on Rugby Chapel, and can learn from it that Matthew Arnold revered the memory of his father. His letters to his mother show that his father was rarely out of his thoughts, and he never loses an opportunity of tracing Dr. Arnold's influence upon modern thought. Dr. Arnold is chiefly known as the awful pedagogue of "Tom Brown's School Days." Even in his "Life" by Dean Stanley the literary side of him is too much ignored. It was upon that side that his son delighted to dwell, the side presented in the "History of Rome" and the "Thucydides." Dr. Arnold did not live to complete the "History," which has perhaps suffered from the popular impression that the early annals of Rome are all a myth, that Sir George Cornwall Lewis said so, and that there is no use in bothering about them. But the late Professor Freeman, no mean authority, was an ardent admirer of the book, and considered Dr. Arnold to be a true historian. And if anybody wants not to study the text of Thucydides from the point of minute verbal scholarship, but to read the greatest of all historians with an intelligent guide, he will find Dr. Arnold exactly the guide he wants.

A remarkable proportion of the letters are addressed to members of Mr. Arnold's own family. But perhaps the best of all were written to Mrs. Matthew Arnold when he was travelling. They give all the information which the most anxious wife could require, and they are never trivial or dull. It is certain, both from internal and external evidence, that no idea of publication ever entered the writer's mind. Yet every reader will cordially thank Mrs. Arnold for allowing them to appear. Among his correspondents outside the circle of the Arnolds, Lady de Rothschild must be esteemed peculiarly fortunate. In writing to her Mr. Arnold seems to have been always at his best. That, however, is not surprising. For while there were qualities in Mr. Arnold which irresistibly attracted ladies of every age, there is no one more capable of appreciating at the same time his intellect and his character than that ablest, most accomplished, and most sympathetic of women.

In these *Epistolæ ad Familiares* literature occupies a comparatively small place. Nevertheless there is enough to throw an interesting light upon Mr. Arnold's strength and weakness as a critic. At the so-called Jubilee Dinner of the Oxford Union in 1873, the late Dr. Liddon, in proposing the toast of "Literature," for which Mr. Arnold was to respond, remarked that the great critic had taught them to criticise even himself. Matthew Arnold's satire was never barbed. It left no

rankling wound behind it, and many of his victims were among his warmest admirers. The critical quality in which he most excelled was the invaluable gift of detecting merit below the surface. He liked to praise rather than to blame, as all good critics do. But it may be doubted whether he had the supreme faculty of judgment. He admired more than he imitated Sainte-Beuve. The dullest man cannot read "Essays in Criticism" without having his mind stimulated and his views enlarged. The cleverest man cannot read the "Causeries du Lundi" without feeling chastened and humiliated by that vast learning, that infallible taste, that exquisite lucidity of style, that impregnable fortress of common sense. Writing to his mother from London on the 7th of May, 1848, Matthew Arnold says:—

"I have just finished a German book I brought with me here; a mixture of poems and travelling journal by Heinrich Heine, the most famous of the young German literary set. He has a good deal of power, though more trick; however, he has thoroughly disgusted me. The Byronism of a German, of a man trying to be gloomy, cynical, impassioned, *moqueur*, etc., all *à la fois*, with their honest bon-hommistic language and total want of experience of the kind that Lord Byron, an English peer with access everywhere, possessed, is the most ridiculous thing in the world."

Of course this is a private letter, and Matthew Arnold's real view of Heine must be sought in his essay and his poem. But really they are almost as inadequate as this, of which indeed they are chiefly an expansion. The "Reisebilder" contains much that is foolish, and much that is repulsive. But no one would gather from the passage quoted that it was one of the wittiest books ever written, or that it contained one of the most beautiful poems in the world. Heine himself may be said to have acknowledged the difficulty about the language by rewriting the book in French. He certainly never pretended to be an aristocrat, for he dwells frequently on his plebeian origin, and he was a disciple of Sterne rather than of Byron.

"Why is 'Villette' disagreeable?" This question was put by Matthew Arnold to his sister on the 14th of April, 1853. And he answers it himself as follows:—

"Because the writer's mind contains nothing but hunger, rebellion, and rage, and therefore that is all she can, in fact, put into her book. No fine writing can hide this thoroughly, and it will be fatal to her in the long run."

He then proceeds to contrast "Villette" with "My Novel," admitting, with a simplicity which seems not to be feigned, that "Bulwer's nature is not a perfect one either." It certainly was not, even according to the

mundane standard of fallen man. But an Oxford scholar like Mr. Arnold should have remembered his Aristotle: *ὄρε τὸ διότι*. You establish your fact before you inquire into its causes. Dr. Johnson once sat down with Mrs. Hannah More before the outspread Sonnets of Milton to consider why they were so bad. Is "Villette" disagreeable? And what of "Shirley," by the same author? Does that, too, contain nothing but "hunger, rebellion, and rage"? Miss Brontë was a woman of genius, and her genius forced its way through every disadvantage of material circumstances and mental training. Bulwer was a clever, highly cultivated man of the world, with immense industry and consummate skill, enjoying all the advantages of wealth and station, but not possessing a spark of the true inward fire. "Sublime mediocrity" is the utmost that can be said of Bulwer, and Matthew Arnold preferred him to Charlotte Brontë. On the 22d of September, 1864, Mr. Arnold wrote to Mr. Dykes Campbell on the volume of Tennyson's poems containing "Enoch Arden." He was at first inclined to write a review of it, thinking—oddly enough—that "Enoch Arden" was "the best thing Tennyson had done." He gave up the task because he feared that if he depreciated Tennyson he would be suspected of jealousy. He wrote:—

"I do not think Tennyson a great and powerful spirit in any line, as Goethe was in the line of modern thought, Wordsworth in that of contemplation, Byron even in that of passion; and unless a poet, especially a poet at this time of day, is that, my interest in him is only slight, and my conviction that he will not finally stand high is firm."

It is no less doubtless eccentric to put Tennyson below Byron than to put Bulwer Lytton above Miss Brontë.

But there must have been something wrong with a critic who could not appreciate the greatest poet of his own age and country, a man only thirteen years older than himself. May it not be—I speak with diffidence—that Mr. Arnold expected from poetry something which it is not the function of poetry to give? Mr. Arnold did not seem to feel—what as a critic he surely should have felt—that he had to account for Tennyson, to explain how a man who was not "a great and powerful spirit" had leavened the speech of educated men, had become a classic in his lifetime, only less a part of their language than the Bible and Shakespeare. If the true poet must be always setting traps or constructing puzzles, if every poem is to prove or disprove something, then "Tithonus" is not a poem, and Tennyson was not a poet. But if the true office of poetry be to express the great commonplaces of life, the objec-

tion that Tennyson has not a "line" falls to the ground. What was Homer's "line"? What was Shakespeare's? What was Keats's? They were on their own lines; they were themselves. Even if we take the case of Wordsworth, it is not the argumentative verse of the "Excursion," but such pieces as "A Slumber did my Spirit Seal," that stamp him as the true poet, not merely the metrical philosopher. Lovely and melodious as so much of Matthew Arnold's own poetry is, haunting the memory like a strain of music, he is best when he is simplest: when he draws from nature, as in the "Scholar Gypsy"; or from human experience, as in those magic verses—

" For each day brings its petty dust
Our soon choked souls to fill;
And we forget because we must,
And not because we will."

If Mr. Arnold liked "metaphysical poetry," he ought to have revelled in Browning. But he did not. His classic taste was shocked, as Tennyson's also was, by the frequent harshness and roughness of that undeniably "powerful spirit." He admired Browning just when Browning left his problems and wrote with true simplicity.

Mr. Arnold was justly proud of the vogue which his pet phrases had, and the readiness with which they were picked up by educated men. "The writing world was," as he said, particularly fond of him. He supplied them with quotations, and they were not ungrateful, as he points out in his inimitable way. He writes to his mother:—

"I have been amused by getting a letter from Edward Dicey, asking me, in the name of the proprietors of the 'Daily Telegraph,' to give them a notice of Blake the artist, and to name my own price. I sent a civil refusal, but you may depend upon it Lord Lytton was right in saying that it is no inconsiderable advantage to me that all the writing world have a kind of weakness for me, even at the time they are attacking me."

Afterwards he wrote a good deal for the "Pall Mall Gazette" when Mr. John Morley was its editor, and his objection to anonymous writing, which had been very strong, disappeared. Mr. Disraeli congratulated him on the popularity of "Philistines," "Sweetness and Light," and the rest of them. This was a real compliment coming from a master of many phrases, and highly appreciated. But this sort of success was really valuable less in itself than as a proof that his books were read. "Philistines" is from the German, "Sweetness and Light" from Swift. The description of Oxford at the end of the Preface to "Essays in Criticism" was his own, and will be read with pleasure, like

"Dover Beach," while the English language endures. There is nothing more interesting in these pages than the account of Mr. Arnold's conversation with Mr. Disraeli at Aston Clinton, the late Sir Anthony de Rothschild's house in Buckinghamshire. Mr. Disraeli, who unaffectedly liked and admired men of letters, and whose sense of humor never slumbered, was at his best with Matthew Arnold. With him he was not only courteous, as he was not always, but simple and sincere, as he was seldom. Those who have read Mr. Disraeli's beautiful speech in the House of Commons on the death of Cobden, quoted in Mr. Morley's biography, will find that on this occasion he expressed the same opinion in private. "He was born a statesman, and his reasoning is always like a statesman's, and striking." Being reminded that he had met Mr. Arnold some years before, Mr. Disraeli said:—

"Ah, yes, I remember. At that time I had a great respect for the name you bore, but you yourself were little known. Now you are well known. You have made a reputation, but you will go further yet. You have a great future before you, and you deserve it."

Could anything have been better said? Having acknowledged the compliment, Mr. Arnold referred to Mr. Disraeli's abandonment of literature for politics.

"Yes," he replied, "one does not settle these things for one's self, and politics and literature both are very attractive; still, in the one, one's work lasts, and in the other it doesn't." He went on to say that he had given up literature because he was not one of those people who can do two things at once, but that he admired most the men like Cicero, who could."

There is no "Life" of Lord Beaconsfield except Mr. Froude's little book, and there probably never will be. But among all the scattered notices of that eminent and extraordinary man in the political memories of his generation, I do not know one which exhibits him in so attractive a light as does this spontaneous and contemporaneous letter from Matthew Arnold to his mother.

When Mr. Arnold returned from the United States full of delight at the unbounded courtesy and hospitality with which he had been received, he told with glee and gusto a story of the late Mr. Barnum. The great showman, he said, had invited him to his house in the following terms: "You, sir, are a celebrity. I am a notoriety. We ought to be acquainted." "I could n't go," he added, "but it was very nice of him." The letters do not deal much with the private lives of public men. They are for the most part concerned either with higher or more homely topics. But there is a charming and most characteristic anecdote.

dote of Samuel Wilberforce, the famous Bishop of Oxford, which is too good to be passed over. It occurs in a letter to his mother, dated the 2d of February, 1864, and it refers once more to Aston Clinton a house where he always liked to stay :—

“The Bishop of Oxford had a rather difficult task of it in his sermon, for opposite to him was ranged all the house of Israel, and he is a man who likes to make things pleasant to those he is on friendly terms with. He preached on Abraham, his force of character and his influence on his family; he fully saved his honor by introducing the mention of Christianity three or four times, but the sermon was in general a sermon which Jews as well as Christians could receive. His manner and delivery are well worth studying, and I am very glad to have heard him. A truly emotional spirit he undoubtedly has beneath his outside of society-haunting and men-pleasing, and each of the two lives he leads gives him the more zest for the other. Any real power of mind he has not. Some of the thinking, or pretended thinking, in his sermon was sophistical and hollow beyond belief. I was interested in finding how instinctively Lady de Rothschild had seized on this. His chaplain told me, however, that I had not heard him at his best, as he certainly preached under some constraint.”

Neither bishop nor chaplain held the opinion, which a clergyman ought to hold, that the way to be a gentleman is to be a Christian.

There are in these volumes no letters to the late Lord Coleridge, who was perhaps Mr. Arnold's oldest and most intimate friend. They happened to meet in America, and Mr. Arnold describes himself as embarrassed at the unctiousness of the eulogies bestowed upon him in public by the Lord Chief Justice of England. Lord Coleridge was a various man, a great orator, a great social personage, a man of letters even more than of law, an admirable talker, but, above all, a consummate master of irony and sarcasm. A letter from Matthew Arnold to his wife, written in 1854, contains a delicious reference to a review of his own poems by the future Chief Justice :—

“My love to J. D. C. [John Duke Coleridge], and tell him that the limited circulation of the ‘Christian Remembrancer’ makes the unquestionable viciousness of his article of little importance. I am sure he will be gratified to think that it is so.”

This is in the true Coleridgean style, and quite perfect in its way. But of course it must not be taken as an expression of annoyance or resentment. Matthew Arnold was never spiteful, and hardly ever angry. It was his fun, and his fun was always irresistible.

Mr. Arnold's politics are, I suppose, as well known in America as they are here. They were rather French than English. He adopted early in life, and retained to the end, the opinion that his own country was intellectually behind France; that the French were logical whereas

we were not; and that there was a serious danger in the British preference for common sense, or the rule of thumb, to principles and ideas. The sort of prejudice embodied in Mr. Disraeli's celebrated dictum that this country is not governed by logic, but by Parliament, he held to be mischievous clap-trap, if indeed Mr. Disraeli was not laughing in his sleeve. It is curious that with this turn of mind he should have been such an enthusiastic admirer of Burke, with whom the British Constitution was an idol, not to say a fetish. Perhaps he was captivated and carried away by the "grand style" of that splendid and princely writer. However that may be, Mr. Arnold, though he called himself first a Liberal and afterward a Liberal-Unionist, never belonged to any political party. Although he liked Mr. Disraeli in private,—and no wonder,—he called him a charlatan in reference to his public career. In Mr. Gladstone he had no confidence, believing him to be swayed by ecclesiastical bias, at the mercy of fitful enthusiasm, and opposed to real freedom of thought. While he wrote warmly in praise of Burke's attachment to his native land, and pointed out that the liberality of his Irish policy was unaffected by the general reaction of his opinions after 1789, he would not hear of Home Rule. The fact is, that although he took an interest in politics from time to time, and always interested others when he wrote about them, he treated them, as he was well entitled to do, piecemeal and in a desultory fashion. He made too little allowance for men who had to act and to do the best they could with the imperfect means at their disposal. "I hold," he said once, in a sentence printed under the clever caricature of him in "Vanity Fair," "I hold that the critic should keep out of the region of immediate practice." Fortunately for mankind he did not follow his own maxim in poetry. In politics he certainly did. But now and again, with the true critical insight, he drew the mental portrait of a statesman as no one else could have drawn it. In 1870 the University of Oxford, which he loved and served, conferred upon him an honorary degree, and made him, according to the rather absurd form in such cases, a Doctor of Civil Law. Lord Salisbury, as Chancellor of the University, presided at the ceremony, and in Mr. Arnold's opinion performed his part very well. Concerning him Mr. Arnold writes to his mother:—

"He is a dangerous man, though, and chiefly from his want of any true sense and experience of literature and its beneficent function. Religion he knows, and physical science he knows; but the immense work between the two, which is for literature to accomplish, he knows nothing of, and all his speeches

pointed this way. On the one hand he was full of the great future for physical science, and begging the University to make up her mind to it, and to resign much of her literary studies; on the other hand he was full—almost defiantly full—of counsels and resolves for retaining and upholding the old ecclesiastical and dogmatic form of religion. From a juxtaposition of this kind nothing but shocks and collisions can come; and I know no one, indeed, more likely to provoke shocks and collisions than men like Lord Salisbury.”

All this is profoundly true, though as different as possible from the ordinary praise and abuse of the present Prime Minister. People argue that Lord Salisbury is a man of letters because he can write a good style. They forget that he was a journalist when journalists were required to know the English language. If any one will turn to Lord Salisbury's address, delivered at Oxford as President of the British Association in 1894, he will see how thoroughly Matthew Arnold understood the man. Religious equality has been enforced at Oxford in spite of Lord Salisbury; and religion, being left to its own resources, is more powerful there than it was in the old days of compulsory and conservative orthodoxy. Physical science is amply recognized. But one change there has been which neither Lord Salisbury nor Mr. Arnold in 1870 foresaw,—Oxford has fallen into the hands of the specialists. Philologists and physiologists, historians and lawyers, geologists and theologians, have substituted for the old idea of a liberal education a multitude of narrow and technical schools for cramming the memory and starving the intellect. The old education may have been defective. But at least it was an education, and not an apprenticeship.

When he was in Rome in 1865, Matthew Arnold wrote to his mother:—

“Here in Italy one feels that all time spent out of Italy by tourists in France, Germany, Switzerland, etc., is—human life being so short—time mispent. Greece and parts of the East are the only other places to go to.”

Thousands, from Goethe to *Mr. Foker*, must have felt the same about Italy. But Matthew Arnold discovered twenty years later that the West, as well as the East, was worth a visit. His letters from America are naturally more interesting to English than to American readers. One to his younger daughter, now Mrs. Wodehouse, gives a graphic account of the way in which his time was spent. It was written from the Union Club, Chicago, January 21, 1884:—

“We got here late last night. We are staying with a great bookseller, who is also a general and is always called General M'Clurg. He really was made a general in the Civil War, being a brisk and prominent man, but it is odd to address a bookseller as *General*. We arrived at the station at eight in the evening, and

drove to his house. After a hasty dinner he hurried me off to a reception at the Literary Club, explaining to me on the way that I should have to make a speech. This was the programme. The hundred members of the club were gathered together when we arrived. The president received me, and then the whole club filed out to supper, I standing by the president and being presented to each member and shaking hands with him as he passed me. The supper-table was splendidly decorated with flowers. I was put in a great chair by the president, and, having just dined, had to go through the whole course from oysters to ice, with plenty of champagne. . . . We have had a week of good houses (I consider myself now as an actor, for my managers take me about with theatrical tickets, at reduced rates, over the railways, and the tickets have *Matthew Arnold troupe* printed on them)."

Mr. Arnold gave the American people of his best. He told Mr. Russell that he would rather be remembered by the lectures he delivered in the United States than by any other of his compositions in prose. He did not altogether like lecturing. He had not been accustomed to addressing large audiences, and he had a good deal of trouble with the management of his voice. But the kindness of his reception was such that, as his letters show, he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Mr. Russell, in his Prefatory Note to these volumes, expresses the opinion that Matthew Arnold's theology, "once the subject of some just criticism, seems now a matter of comparatively little moment; for indeed his nature was essentially religious." Mr. Russell's Note, as he modestly calls it, is so good that one hesitates to find fault with anything it contains. But this sentence introduces so many controversial questions, and bears so distinctly upon a most significant part of Mr. Arnold's first work, that it cannot be passed over in silence. I respectfully demur to the logic. That Mr. Arnold's nature was essentially religious his life and writings alike prove. But does it follow that because his nature was essentially religious his theology should be a matter of comparatively little moment? That is rather a cynical view of the relation between theology and religion. An irreligious man could never have written "St. Paul and Protestantism," or "Literature and Dogma," or "God and the Bible." Matthew Arnold's theology was not original. It was the theology of Ewald and of Renan, men of great power and learning, who must be refuted by argument and not dismissed with an epithet. By his adroit use of the adjective "just" Mr. Russell disposes of three volumes in one syllable. It seems, however, probable that by Mr. Arnold's theology is meant, not his opinions, but his methods; not his theology proper, but his theological style. A wider issue could hardly be raised. We have all in our youth composed more or less tedious and unprofitable essays upon the

thesis that ridicule is (or is not) a test of truth. For my part I do not propose to repeat my offence. But it so happens that in one of these very letters Mr. Arnold endeavors to show, with obvious sincerity, that the criticism upon his theological manner was not "just." The passage occurs in a letter to his sister, Miss Arnold. He belonged to a very orthodox family, and in religious matters his foes were those of his own household. In 1874 he writes:—

"There is a levity which is altogether evil; but to treat miracles and the common anthropomorphic ideas of God as what one may lose and yet keep one's hope, courage, and joy, as what are not really matters of life and death in the keeping or losing of them, this is desirable and necessary, if one holds, as I do, that the common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must and will inevitably pass away. This I say not to pain you, but to make my position clear to you."

Nobody who reads that passage can doubt that the writer meant every word he wrote, and the irresistible inference is that in all his theological works—if indeed they are to be so designated—he intended to free religion from what he considered injurious to it. The expression which of all that he wrote gave the deepest offence, and which need not be repeated, he withdrew on finding that it had inflicted especial pain upon the distinguished philanthropist who was associated with it. Even in this letter to his sister Mr. Arnold could not refrain from one retaliatory blow at his accusers. "The religious world which complains of me," he says, "would not read me if I treated my subject as they say it ought to be treated." When Samuel Rogers was reproached for saying disagreeable things, he replied: "I have a very low voice, and if I did not say disagreeable things nobody would hear what I said." Some of Mr. Arnold's critics must have been acquainted with Pascal. The profundity of Pascal's genius was only equalled by the fervor of his piety. Yet in his "Provincial Letters," which deal entirely with theological subjects, he exhausts the resources of wit and irony in making the doctrines of the Jesuits ridiculous. Mr. Russell may reply that the doctrines of the Jesuits are false, while the opinions of "the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester" are true. But that is hardly the point.

Many years before Mr. Arnold himself took up religious subjects he fell in with Greg's "Creed of Christendom," and thus wrote of it to his mother in 1863:—

"Greg's mistake lies in representing to his imagination the existence of a great body of people excluded from the consolations of the Bible by the popular

Protestant doctrine of verbal inspiration. That is stuff. The mass of people take from the Bible what suits them, and quietly leave on one side all that does not. He, like so many other people, does not apprehend the vital distinction between religion and criticism."

Those were just the people whom Mr. Arnold's treatment of the Bible especially irritated. They were conventional without being serious. He was serious without being conventional. They took his humor for flippancy because their own flippancy was devoid of humor. The essential connection of humor and reverence can be missed by no student of literature and of life. No one could be more nobly serious than Mr. Arnold, as in his poetry, which is the best and the most enduring part of him. But there are delusions, absurd as well as pernicious, for which laughter is the proper cure. When Voltaire exposed religious persecution to the ridicule and contempt of civilized mankind, he did a real service to religion as well as to humanity. I remember a preacher before the University of Oxford exhorting us to "hold fast to the integrity of our anthropomorphism." I cannot help thinking that a dose of Matthew Arnold would have been good alike for him and for his congregation.

Not that Mr. Arnold was without prejudices. Far from it. He did not like Nonconformists. Referring to James Montgomery, the Moravian hymn-writer, he says: "Of all dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent, which environed Montgomery, seems to me the stupidest." In his hatred of Dissent and of the middle class Mr. Arnold was at least impartial. For while on the one hand he was a clergyman's son, he certainly belonged to the middle class. He was too fond of classification. He should have remembered his own excellent saying that in England there is no such sharp division between classes as exists in some Continental countries. The middle-class Dissenter does not divide his time between sanding his sugar and saying his prayers. Nor do "aristocrats" all eat off gold plate, fare sumptuously every day, and entertain reasonable doubts of their own paternity. The House of Lords is like a dull and empty House of Commons. The working-men in the House of Commons are much the same as the rest, except that, if anything, they have rather better manners. It is true that when Mr. Arnold thus wrote of Dissent, the Dissenters were excluded from the Universities, or at all events from posts of honor and emolument therein. But Dr. Martineau is a more learned man and a more subtle thinker than Mr. Arnold.

Matthew Arnold never for a moment forgot that he was his father's

son. In 1855, when he was thirty-two, his mother found and sent him a letter of his father's. He acknowledged it in the following terms:—

“I ought before this to have thanked you for sending the letter, which is ennobling and refreshing, as everything which proceeds from him always is, besides the pathetic interest of the circumstances of its writing and finding. I think he was thirty-five when that letter was written; and how he had forecast and revolved, even then, the serious interests and welfare of his children—at a time when, to many men, their children are still little more than playthings! He might well hope to bring up children, when he made that bringing-up so distinctly his thought beforehand; and we who treat the matter so carelessly and lazily—we can hardly expect ours to do more than *grow up* at hazard, not be *brought up* at all. But this is just what makes him great—that he was not only a good man saving his own soul by righteousness, but that he carried so many others with him in his hand and saved them, if they would let him, along with himself.”

Dr. Arnold was cut off in the prime of life, leaving his “History of Rome” a fragment, and his work at Rugby incomplete. The true presentment of him is given by Dean Stanley rather than by Judge Hughes. His system of school management he introduced from Winchester, adding only the sermon to the cane. His ideas of political philosophy were much more interesting and remarkable. Like his son, he was considered a heretic by the Scribes and Pharisees of his day. Dr. Stanley, who ought to know, says he was a Broad Churchman. But he held the theory that Church and State were two aspects of the same thing: that the Church was the State on its ecclesiastical side, and that the State was the Church on its political side. Nonconformists were erring brethren, who really belonged to the Church, although they chose to reject its ministrations. But those who were not Christians were outside the State as well as the Church, and, though entitled to protection because they paid taxes, had no right to sit in Parliament, or even to vote. While Matthew Arnold travelled a long way beyond his father's theological ceremonies, and was certainly not opposed to the emancipation of the Jews, he inherited and adopted Dr. Arnold's invincible faith in truth, righteousness, and innocence. No line of his poetry suggests anything but what is lovely and of good report. No act of his life could have been condemned by the puritan rigor of his father. From his father also he derived much of his inbred taste and literary sense. Dr. Arnold's style is always lucid, dignified, and impressive. His mind was steeped in that standard and touchstone of perfection, the literature of Athens. Plato and Thucydides were the favorites of the father; Homer and Sophocles of the son. Greece is justified of her children.

HERBERT WOODFIELD PAUL.

REMINISCENCES OF AN EDITOR.

I HAVE been in newspaper work for about thirty years. I have held places of various grades of responsibility on daily journals in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Boston. I have been reporter, correspondent, managing editor. I have assisted the sporting editor, taken assignments from the dramatic critic, and risen to the altitude of "writing brevier." To say that I have been in and of nearly a generation of American newspaper life would be less than the truth, for I agree with a philosophic fellow-worker who fixed the term of a generation of newspaper men at thirteen years. They do come and go with wonderful rapidity, and some of us who are already in the third cycle of change feel like apologizing either for our perverse inability to die, or for our incapacity to find some more profitable sphere of effort. I felt this way the other day, when (in my hearing) a successful physician, who began life as a reporter, spoke very scornfully of the newspaper man who had not sense enough to discover that the talents needed to earn him a bare living in "journalism" would bring him substantial rewards in any other business or profession. I suppose it must have been some such idea that was at the root of Horace Greeley's fixed objection to paying any man a salary of more than twenty-five dollars a week; it being his opinion that if an employee of a newspaper could earn more than that he ought to strike out for himself. Considering the number of second- and third-rate newspaper men who have made first-class reputations in politics, have adorned Presidential cabinets, and made their mark generally in the public life of the country, there does seem to be something wrong with the old hands at the bellows who can find nothing better to do.

I am not a panegyrist of the past at the expense of the present in newspaper-making or anything else, but the fact cannot well be ignored that on the daily press of 1895 the qualities that are acquired by training and experience count for less than they did even twenty years ago. A mature and reasonably accurate knowledge of public men and affairs has not ceased to be useful in newspaper offices, but it has ceased—even when accompanied by a talent for vigorous writing—to