To My Community
The Twentieth Century Estimate of Matthew
Arnold As a Critic of Literature

by

Sister Mary Loyola Burns, A.B.
University of Kansas, 1930.

Submitted to the Department of English and the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Approved by:

Edwin M. Hopkins

W. S. Johnson
Chairman

June, 1931
FOREWORD

In this thesis an effort has been made to ascertain the twentieth century estimate of Matthew Arnold as a critic of literature by surveying in chronological order available reviews and studies made of his criticism by English and American writers. A certain uniformity of opinion was found to exist in the estimates expressed in each of the three decades of this century. For that reason the decade has been made the unit of organization in presenting the material. As far as possible the date of original publication has been used in assigning an essay to a particular period.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. E.M. Hopkins for early assistance with this study, and particularly to Professor F.D. O'Leary and Dr. J.H. Nelson
for the careful correction of the manuscript.

Sister, Mary Loyola

Feb 13, 1931
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>SOME ESTIMATES OF ARNOLD'S CONTEMPORARIES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>THE PERIOD OF CRITICAL ASCENDANCY, 1900-1910</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>THE PERIOD OF WANING POPULARITY, 1910-1920</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>THE PERIOD OF CENSURE, 1920-1930</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

Introduction

Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, was born December 24, 1822 at Laleham. His early schooling was received at Rugby, Laleham and Winchester; his secondary education at Rugby, where his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, was head master. He attended Balliol College, Oxford. After brief experiences as a fellow at Oriel and master at Rugby, he was elected private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne. In 1851 Lord Lansdowne procured for him an inspectorship of schools, and he acted in this capacity until 1886 when a civil list pension from Gladstone enabled him to retire. The year of his appointment as school-inspector Arnold married. He died suddenly in Liverpool on April 15, 1888.
The volume of Matthew Arnold's purely literary criticism is slender; in all some thirty essays. No published evidence tells the time or circumstance at and in which he began contributing critical articles to periodicals, but the Preface to the 1853 edition of his Collected Poems is, apparently, his first considerable piece of literary criticism. His appointment as Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857 gave impetus to the development of his critical faculty. During the ten years in which he held this professorship he wrote and published the essays ON TRANSLATING HOMER, on THE STUDY OF CELTIC LITERATURE, and the first series of ESSAYS IN CRITICISM. The breadth of Arnold's intellectual range is evidenced by the subjects of the ESSAYS:

   Vo. 3, p. 521

From 1867 to 1879 Arnold's critical activities were mainly social and theological. MIXED ESSAYS, published in 1879, included four literary studies: reviews of Stopford Brooke's A PRIMER OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, Scherer's MILTON, Scherer's GOETHE, and the essay GEORGE SAND. In 1880 he wrote THE STUDY OF POETRY as a preface to WARD'S ENGLISH POETS and studies of Gray and Keats for the same work. In 1883 and 1884 Arnold visited America. Of the discourses given there that on Emerson belongs to his work in literary criticism.

The second series of ESSAYS IN CRITICISM was published in 1888. Included
in this volume, in addition to the PREFACE of 1880 and the studies of Gray and Keats, were the essays: MILTON, WORDSWORTH, BYRON, SHELLEY, TOLSTOY, AMIEL. If the preface to the SELECTED LIVES from Johnson's LIVES OF THE POETS is included, this is the sum of Matthew Arnold's critical writing which is concerned solely with literature. There is, also, much incidental literary criticism in Arnold's controversial essays on social and religious subjects, particularly in LITERATURE AND DOGMA, in LITERATURE AND SCIENCE, in the PREFACE TO BURKE'S LETTERS, SPEECHES and TRACTS ON IRISH AFFAIRS, in the INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH OF JERUSALEM, and in the INTRODUCTION to the GREAT PROPHECY OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION. The reviews considered in this thesis, however, are concerned, in the main, with those essays which have
just been mentioned as being strictly literary. It is to this body of work reference is made whenever in this study the term "essays" is used in speaking of Arnold's work. Slight in volume as this literary criticism is, it has provoked almost innumerable reviews and discussions.

Dissatisfied with what he believed to be the mental apathy of his countrymen, Arnold attempted to quicken their intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities by studies in comparative criticism, particularly of French and German authors. In the practice of criticism he endeavored to foster lucidity and definiteness by formulating critical criteria. Those most discussed in the reviews surveyed in this study are:

Criticism is a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.
The critical power tends to establish an order of ideas; to make the best ideas prevail; there is a consequent intellectual growth and a creative epoch of literature ensues.

Poetry is a criticism of life.

Poetry should treat of an "excellent action," the date of which signifies nothing.

There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent... than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as touchstones to other poetry.

Other causes for contention among reviewers of Arnold's criticism are his e-

\begin{thebibliography}{5}
\bibitem{2} The Works of Matthew Arnold, Edition de Luxe, vol. III, p. 45
\bibitem{3} Ibid., vol. IV, p. 4
\bibitem{4} Ibid., vol. XI, p. 274
\bibitem{5} Ibid., vol. IV, p. 12
\end{thebibliography}
valuation of the literature of his age as failing to come within "the best that is known and thought in the world," And his seemingly unappreciative judgments of his contemporaries, particularly of Thackeray and of Tennyson. Few critics, likewise, fail to upbraid him for that infelicitous and memorable passage concerning Shelley:

In poetry, no less than in life,...Shelley is a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.

Such criteria and judgments make Arnold appear dogmatic and supercilious. Yet he was far from that. The nobility of his character, the charm of his personality, his essential kindliness and gentleness are evidenced by the happiness of his family life, the devotion of his friends,
and the respect of his acquaintances. Scanty, however, are the recorded facts from which one may judge of Arnold the man, for he discouraged any attempt to chronicle interesting and intimate details of his life which might serve as biographical material. Perhaps Arnold would have said, as does Masefield in "Biography," that

When I am buried all my thoughts and acts
Will be reduced to lists of dates and facts,
And none will know the gleam there used to be
About the feast days freshly kept by me,
But men will call the golden hour of bliss
"About this time," or "shortly after this."

He preferred that his "golden hours of bliss" pass unnoted, and that his private life be kept from the idle curi-

osity of the public. Urbane, calm, and charming, yet withal a bit frigid thus the world knows him. His spirit speaks, however, in some of his poetry and in his letters, but most of all, I think, in his notebook. The entries in the latter, made in English, French, German, Latin, and Greek, and covering a period of thirty-seven years, are unconscious revelations of Arnold's nobility of spirit, sensitiveness to beauty, and rectitude of mind. Most of the notations are citations from his reading, significant passages in which he found stimulation or delight. A few are expressions of personal emotion, as the profoundly simple record of his son's death:

January 4. Little Basil died.

---

9 Matthew Arnold's Notebook, edited by Eleanor Wodehouse, p. 28
Of particular interest for this study, however, are those entries indicative of the ideals which motivated his literary criticism, entries such as:

Vera hominis felicitas et beatitudo
in sola sapientia et veri cognitione consistit. 10

Semper aliquid certi proponendum est.

(repeated many times)

Tu te sentiras heureux à mesure que tu découviras, dans l'art des sources d'émotion, de recueillement et d'enthousiasme que tu ne fais encore que deviner.

Un rare esprit d'ordre et de méthode, un goût passionné pour le bon arrangement de toutes choses.

(Lacordaire)

Formerly, la critique n'était que l'art de tout discuter; now, la critique est l'art de tout comprendre et de tout expliquer par l'histoire.

10 Matthew Arnold's Notebook, edited by Eleanor Wodehouse, p.28
Ce qui fait la noblesse de l'homme, c'est le devoir et la raison; il n'est grand en réalité que quand il sacrifice ses entraînements à une fin voulue et désirée.

La condition essentielle de l'art classique un cadre fini, laissant place à toutes les délicatesses de l'exécution. L'avenir est de côté, car ainsi est appelé et provoque le progrès de tous les arts.

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*

Hosea

Donner aux hommes un amour intelligent et passioné du bien.

St. Hilaire.

*Nunquam sis ex toto otiosus, sed aut legens, aut scribens, aut meditans, aut aliquid utilitatis pro communi laborans.*

These extracts from Arnold's personal journal, revealing as they do his almost passionate admiration for definiteness of purpose, order, restraint,

**11 Matthew Arnold's Notebook, edited by Eleanor Wodehouse, pp. 2, 9, 20, 28, 30, 35, 51, 73, 89**
beauty and disinterestedness in all phases of living, make his criticism appear rather an expression of his own aspirations and ideals than an attempt to talk-down to his fellows. They account, likewise, for his fondness for definition and classification. In reading criticism of Arnold's criticism, then, it should be remembered that although he doubtless had a remarkable good time while writing his essays and enjoyed to the utmost thus exercising his creative ability he was also animated by a sincere desire "donner aux hommes un amour intelligent et passioné du bien." That his "camel's hair reiment was always extremely well cut and that he ate his locusts and wild honey with conspicuous
refinement, but makes his work the more interesting.

---

CHAPTER TWO

PERIOD OF CRITICAL ASCENDANCY

During the decade following Matthew Arnold's death, the influence of his personality was still potent. He was remembered either as a "fanciful, finicking Oxonian", who was "always talking down to the intellectual capacities of his inferiors," or as a kindly man, eminent as a critic and a poet, who sacrificed much that was dear to him in the discharge of onerous and distasteful duties. Not many sound evaluations of Arnold's critical work are found in the nineties, but a brief survey of those least colored by personalities may serve as a prelude to the estimates of the twentieth century, which are the special province of this study.

1 Birrell, Augustine, Res Judicatæ, p.182
2 Dawson, George, quoted in Clark, J. Scott, A Study of English Prose Writers, p.519
What were the merits generally con-
ceded to Arnold during the eighteen-
ineties? - merits which caused John
Vance Cheney to say in 1898:

The moment we meet him as a cri-
tic we are in the presence of a
master... He is the keenest, wis-
est critic so far adorning English 3
literature.

Perhaps some of these merits are sug-
gested by the following from R.H. Hutt-
ton:

The volume of *Essays in Criticism*
just published...is a worthy mem-
orial of the great critic we have
lost. For sureness as well as con-
fidence of literary judgment, I
doubt whether Matthew Arnold has
his equal. It is rarely that we
meet with a critic so nearly in-
fallible as Matthew Arnold on any
question of the finer taste, who
has the confidence to express a
judgment that is not welcome to
the public at large with...[such]
calm authority.

3 Cheney, J.V. quoted in Clark, J. Scott,
   *ibid.* p.509
4 Hutton, R.H., *Contemporary Thought &
   Thinkers* vol.1, p.221
Mr. Hutton, then cites the passage in which Arnold ranks Burns as a greater force than Chaucer, though "the world of Chaucer is fairer, richer and more significant than that of Burns," and in which he says The Jolly Beggars, in spite of its hideousness, squalor and even bestiality, has a breadth, truth and power which makes the famous scene in Auerbach's cellar of Goethe's Faust seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes.

"Bolder and surer criticism," continues Mr. Hutton, "it would be hard to find, and we shall not easily find it again, now that Mr. Arnold has left us."

---

5 Quoted in Hutton, R.H., Contemporary Thought & Thinkers, vol. 1, p. 221
6 Hutton, R.H., Ibid. p. 222-3
This "sureness" is, however, limited to criticism of that poetry which aims at giving us reality:

for occasionally in dealing with Shelley who created an unearthly sphere of his own and filled it with music, Arnold's judgment is not so sure. Matthew Arnold was essentially positive. He knew what was false and true to life, and hardly ever failed to point out where the truth was, where the falsetto note came in— it is this which disqualifies him for criticizing poetry such as Shelley's.

Although this praise amounts, in some respects, almost to adulation, it is of particular interest because it stresses two merits universally conceded to Arnold: taste and literary acumen; because it attributes to him that which is usually denied, closeness to life; and because it ranks as a virtue that "essential positiveness" which is usually considered as insufferable dogmatism.

7 Hutton, Contemporary Thought & Thinkers, p.222-3
Mr. Burroughs, likewise, praises this last quality:

To borrow a sentence of Goethe, he [Arnold] helps us to 'attain certainty and security in the appreciation of things exactly as they are'...His power as a critic is undoubtedly his power of definition and classification. His genius for definition and analysis finds full scope in his work on Celtic Literature, wherein are combined the strictness of the scientific analysis with the finest literary charm.

In 1897 Lafcadio Hearn prophesied that "in another generation....[Arnold's] essays will be probably forgotten," and denied that they have sufficient literary charm to make them live. Yet, says Hearn:

8 Burroughs, John, quoted in Clark, J. Scott, A Study of English Prose Writers, p. 510
9 Ibid
Matthew Arnold's essays really laid the foundation of the new English criticism, criticism based upon the method of Sainte Beuve. He first taught English scholars how to write and think in new ways; and he did it partly by setting examples, but much more by showing those scholars how stupid and incapable English criticism was compared with French criticism... But Matthew Arnold did not possess those qualities either of culture or of sympathy required for real criticism of the catholic kind.

The essential requisites, of a great critic; disinterestedness of judgment, and acute aesthetic sensibility; Arnold exemplified, in the opinion of Miss Repplier.

---

10 Hearn, Lafcadio, History of English Literature Vol. II, p.841
He was incapable of confusing literature and politics. His taste for Celtic poetry and his attitude towards home rule are both perfectly defined and perfectly isolated sentiments, just as his intelligent admiration and merciless condemnation of Heinrich Heine stand side by side, living witnesses of a mind that held its own balance, losing nothing that was good, condoning nothing that was evil, as far removed from weak enthusiasm on the one hand as from frightened depreciation on the other.

It is, however, in Mr. W. Basil Worsfold’s admirable study of Matthew Arnold in *The Principles of Literary Criticism* that one of the most satisfying estimates of this earlier period is found. Excellent is the discussion of Arnold’s gradual identification of culture and criticism; of the

---

11 Repplier, Agnes, "Curiosities of Criticism" in *Books & Men*, p. 156
gradual advance in the direction of definiteness shown by his later as compared with his earlier writings; 12

and of

the general standpoint from which Arnold looks out upon contemporary life; 13

but mention of them, only, must suffice. It is Mr. Worsfold's concise and adequate summary of the contribution Arnold made to the science and practice of criticism which pertains, especially, to this thesis. He says:

What I conceive to be the sum of the advance which is embodied in his writings on this subject (literary criticism) is this. The test of symmetry which was laid down by Aristotle in the Poetics was found by Addison to be inadequate, and a new test, that of the power to appeal to the imagination, was substituted in its place. The former was a material

12 Worsfold, Basil, Principles of Criticism chap. VII p.156
13 Ibid p.162
test, and its use implied that the form of literature was prior in importance to the thought: the latter is a spiritual test, and its use implies that the thought of literature has been recognized as prior in importance to its form.

In what respects, then, has Arnold advanced? In the first place, he has applied this principle to the study of literature. Addison only discovered it after he had tried to measure Paradise Lost by the rules of formal criticism. But it is from this aspect—thought, not form—that Matthew Arnold wrote of poetry and poets from the first.

'The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power.... it interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing with inspired conviction the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature.'

In the next place, he gave definiteness to the principle of pointing out that there was a special field of the imagination which belonged to poetry of the highest order confined itself to appealing to the imagination within this sphere.

'...we should conceive of it (poetry) as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will
discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.

The new principles which Matthew Arnold has introduced into the study of literature can be grouped, I think, under one or other of the following propositions:

I. The action of two distinct factors can be traced in any work of creative literature—the personality of the author, and the mental atmosphere of the age.

II. Poetic thought can be presented in prose or verse, and the only limit to structural freedom is the natural requirement that the form of the vehicle should be appropriate to the character of the thought conveyed.

III. Poetry is a "criticism of life"; its subject-matter embraces not only human action, but all conscious manifestations of human activity, including thought not merely as "sentiment"—i.e. the thought which precedes or conditions action; but thought as the depository of the mental experience and the spiritual aspirations of the race.
IV. As a branch of art, poetry is characterized by its 'interpretative power'; its truth, as compared with the truth of science, is the truth of feeling not the truth of signs, and the test of supreme poetic merit is the 'high seriousness of absolute sincerity'—a quality which presupposes the morality of the poet.
Though Mr. Worsfold's use of the adjective "new" in speaking of principles one and two may be questioned, he has fittingly applied it to principles three and four. Around them later discussion of Arnold's critical work usually centers. In the 'nineties, however, these principles remain practically unchallenged, and not until after 1910 do they receive an appreciable amount of censure. Of particular interest is Mr. Worsfold's opinion that the subject matter of poetry, as defined by Arnold, includes thoughts as well as actions.

Unfavorable comment on Arnold's critical writing was, nevertheless, not lacking during the nineties. Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, while crediting him with "one of the most perfect criticism ever written,"

15 Stedman, E.C., Victorian Poets, p. 79
deprecates his tendency to aloofness:

While admiring his delineations of Heine, the DeGuerins, Joubert, and other far-away saints or heroes, we feel that he possibly may overlook some pilgrim at his roadside-door.

Mr. Saintsbury, writing in 1895, is much more severe in his condemnation. According to him, Arnold's critical abilities "if not overrated, are wrongly estimated." He was well-read, but not extremely learned, and "though acute was the very reverse of judicial." Mr. Saintsbury thus dismisses him:

His real value as a critic, apart from his individual merit of providing much delightful English prose shot with wit and humor, and enclosing endless sweetmeats if not solids of sense, consisted chiefly in the comparative novelty of the style of literary appreciation which he accordingly gave to lit-

16 Stedman, Victorian Poets, pp. 91-2
17 Saintsbury, George E., Corrected Impressions, pp. 144
18 Ibid., p. 146
erary study...He seemed to me at first, and has always seemed to me, flawed with those very faults of freak and crotchets against which he was never tired of protestating, and though a very useful stimulant and check, not a good model, and a still worse oracle...Admire, enjoy, and be thankful for Matthew Arnold as a critic, but be careful about imitating him, and never obey him without examination,

A year later Mr. Saintsbury, although granting that "Arnold recalled critics from the dullness of the long reviews of the period, and...from the flippancy of the short, while inculcating a wider if not always a sounder comparison," still finds it impossible to rate his critical ability very highly:

Undoubtedly his influence... did not make for good entirely. He discouraged—without in the least meaning to do so.

19 Saintsbury, George E., Corrected Impressions pp.144-5-6
20 Saintsbury, G.E., A History of Nineteenth Century Literature, p.387
and indeed meaning quite the contrary-seriousness, thoroughness, scholarship in criticism. He discouraged without the least meaning to do so, and indeed meaning quite the contrary-simplicity and unaffectedness in style. But he was a most powerful stimulus, and in some ways, if not all, a great example.

In the same article Arnold is styled a "Socrates in London." Much as one may value Mr. Saintsbury's opinion, one feels an unpleasant and unwarranted note of condescension in this criticism, and is inclined to agree with Mr. John Churton Collins when he says: "Nothing is more amusing... than Mr. Saintsbury's cool assumption of equality as a critical authority with such a critic as Matthew Arnold, whom he sometimes patronises, sometimes corrects, and sometimes assails."

21 Edin., A History of Nineteenth Century Literature, p.355
22 Collins, John Churton, Ephemera Critics, p.105
In 1899 Mr. Saintsbury published a brief but most admirable study of Arnold in which there is no patronage and no captious criticism. To a true and impartial lover of Arnold, Mr. Saintsbury's book is, I believe, as satisfying or more so than the later studies by Mr. Paul (1902) and Mr. Sherman (1917). There is, as might be expected from an orthodox Episcopalian such as Mr. Saintsbury is, a most severe and, it must be admitted, a most sound appraisal of Arnold's social, political, and religious essays, written between 1867 and 1879. Mr. Saintsbury regrets Arnold's divagation in these fields, and believes that by his interest in such subjects he was "tempted away from literature."

23 Saintsbury, George, Matthew Arnold, pp. 126 f.
24 Ibid. p. 126
He rejoices, however, that

Mr. Arnold was allowed another ten years and more wherein to escape from the wilderness which yielded these Dead Sea fruits, and to till his proper garden once more.

It may be that Mr. Saintsbury's disapproval of these "Dead Sea Fruits" is responsible for the early grudging and somewhat trivial appreciations which have just been cited from Corrected Impressions and from A History of Nineteenth Century Literature. This disapproval, however, fails to influence his 1899 appraisal of Arnold as a critic of literature, and without accusing Mr. Saintsbury of changing his opinion regarding Arnold's critical ability, it may be said that he at least modified it.

25 Ibid., p. 142 Saintsbury, Matthew Arnold
In the preface to *Matthew Arnold* (1899) Mr. Saintsbury speaks of the subject of his biography as "the master of all English critics in the latter half of the nineteenth century." Since he is a just admirer and not a blind devotee of Arnold, Mr. Saintsbury does not overlook what he considers to be Arnold's faults: his "avowedly militant position" in the first series of *Essays in Criticism*; his use of "fanciful terminology," his tendency to make "exceedingly arbitrary and unproved assertions" in the *Lectures on Translating Homer*; and his ranking, in the same essay, of "English literature as a living intellectual instrument after the literatures of France and Germany".

26 Saintsbury, George, *Matthew Arnold*, p. vi
27 Ibid., p. 68
28 Ibid., p. 68
29 Ibid., p. 70
30 Ibid., p. 71
All these defects Mr. Saintsbury mentions, and he makes, likewise, a sharp criticism of the famous definition of poetry.

The final estimate of Arnold as a critic of literature is nevertheless high: "Let the palme- let the maxima palma- of criticism be given to him in that he first fought for 'stock-taking' of our own literature in the light and with the help of others." In a passage which is in phrasing and substance the bud which flowered in the pleasing appreciation made in the History of Criticism (1904), Mr. Saintsbury ranks Arnold with Dryden and Coleridge. He says also that "if not as the sole, yet as the chief, beloved and champ-

31 Ibid., p. 88 Saintsbury, Matthew Arnold
32 Ibid., p. 227
33 See page 58 of this thesis
ion of the new criticism, as a front- 
fighter in the revolutions of literary 
view which have distinguished the latter 
half of the nineteenth century in Eng-
land, Mr. Arnold will be forgotten or 
neglected at the peril of the generations 
and the individuals that forget or neg-
lect him."

The next bit of criticism to be 
considered is that of Mr. Tovey, (1897) 
one time Clark Lecturer at Trinity College, 
Cambridge. In view of the fact that he 
was the Reverend Duncan C. Tovey, and re-
calling the substance of Arnold's essays 
on Literature and Dogma and on God and 
the Bible, one could scarcely expect a 
eulogy. Full credit is given by Mr. To-
vey, however, to Arnold's exemption from 
prejudice and isolation, and to his mak-
ing possible a "world literature." There

34 Saintsbury, George, Matthew Arnold, p. 226
is a slashing criticism of Arnold's ideas of culture, which has no particular interest for this study, in spite of the fact that Mr. Worsfold contended that Arnold identified culture and criticism. It is the discussion of Arnold's appraisal of Burns's _Jolly Beggars_, so favorably commented on by Mr. Hutton, which is surprising. After quoting the passage in which this poem is termed "a superb poetical success," Mr. Tovey protests:

Poetry, superb poetry, sublimated out of a coarse and bestial life— the thing is, we suppose conceivable to the aesthetic mind which knows nothing of moral scruples...; but what a transition we have made in the space of a few pages! We seemed to have passed, as the traveller in Italy passes, through the portico of a ruined temple into a hovel. It is not enough to reply that the transition is delicately managed; that Matthew Arnold has previously told us that Burns's moralizing lacks that "accent of
high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity," which we find in Dante. For all this, he too clearly shows us that the image of his idolatry has feet of clay. For, given that with "high seriousness" or without it, on themes the most exalted and vile, superb poetry is possible; and what is the inference? Clearly that the imaginative faculty may select and glorify, but does not create the elements which give to poetry whatever of moral force she possesses, and that where moral fibre is wanting, it is not in poetry to supply it.

Mr. Tovey's next point of attack is Arnold's use of the line "For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair" "sandwiched," as he expresses it, between the two really splendid quotations from Milton and Shakespeare, to exemplify the expression of "moral idea" in poetry.

Even if we use the term moral in the "large sense" which we are expected to give it, we are puzzled to discover in what way the words "For ever
wilt thou love and she be fair"
bear upon the question, "how to
live." We are only conscious
that we have been presented
with a monster balloon of theory,
and that our morality is ex-
pected to become gaseous in
order to inflate it.

No discriminating person can wholly ap-
prove of the passages quoted. The ques-
tion of the moral idea in Keat's line is,
indeed, debatable, but Arnold's use of
it as an illustration scarcely warrants
Mr. Tovey's conclusion. The citation is
made because it is unique in its censure
of Arnold's ethical ideas as revealed in
his literary criticism.

In direct contrast, and almost equ-
ally biased is Mr. Woodberry's estimate
of Arnold:

Arnold was a critic of ci-
vilization more than of books,
and aimed at illumination by
means of ideas. With this goes

36  Tovey D.C.,  Reviews and Essays, pp.
84-5
his manner,—that habitual
of telling you something
which you did not know before,
and doing it for your good,
which stamps him as a preacher
born. Under the mask of
the critic is the long English face of the gospeler;
that type whose persistent
physiognomy was never absent
from the conventicle of English thought.

One may be amused or distressed at hearing Matthew Arnold called a "gospeler,"
but it is evident that in the case of
this critic Arnold's efforts to illumine
failed entirely.

How refreshing is this understanding
evaluation of Mr. Gates! (1897)

It is...as an appreciator of
what may perhaps be called the
spiritual qualities of literature that Arnold is most distinctively a furtherer of criticism. An appreciator of beauty,
— of true beauty wherever
found, — that is what he would
willingly be; and yet, as the
matter turns out, the beauty
that he most surely enjoys

37 Woodberry, G.E., Makers of Literature
pp. 3-4
and reveals has invariably a spiritual aroma,--is the finer breath of intense spiritual life. Or, if spiritual be too mystical a word to apply to Homer and Goethe, perhaps Arnold should rather be termed an appreciator of beauty that is the effluence of noble character.

Two years later (1899) Mr. Gates is more judicial, but still sympathetic:

Within the limits imposed by preoccupation with conduct and by carelessness of all arts except literature, Arnold has been a prevailing revealer of beauty. Not his most hostile critic can question his delicacy of perception as long as he allows perception free play. ...Considered as a writer with definite regenerative purposes to carry out and a body of original ideas about conduct of life to inculcate, he succeeded admirably. Considered solely as a literary critic he is not ideal; not ideal because he is so much more and because his interests lie so decisively outside of art. Literary criticism to be

---

effective must regard works of art for the time being as self-justified integrations of beauty and truth, and so regarding them must record and interpret their power and their charm. And this temporary isolating process Arnold is very rarely willing or able to go through with.

Mr. Gates's estimate is among the last of the serious evaluations of Arnold's literary criticism made during the 'nineties. What, in conclusion, was the general estimate of Arnold during that decade? Undoubtedly it was high. Though he was censured for literary dandyism and superciliousness, lack of sympathy with his own fellows and time, discouragement of scholarship, want of judicial ability, too great preoccupation with moral ideas, and, likewise, too little concern for them, Arnold's place as a critic of

39 Ibid., Three Studies in Literature, pp. 173, 179, 180
distinction was made secure by almost universal recognition of his freedom from personal, political or insular prejudice, his cosmopolitanism, his bold, sure and positive criticism, and his contributions of definition and classification to the science of criticism. It was, however, by the judgment of the twentieth century that the permanent value of Arnold's critical writing should be determined.
CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF CRITICAL ASCENDANCY

Between 1900 and 1910 Matthew Arnold's reputation as a critic of literature reached its zenith. His phrases were "at the end of every current pen," and his paradoxes were "accepted commonplace." During these years he was the subject of three biographies, and his works were discussed in a bewildering number of reviews and essays. The critical writings of Matthew Arnold came to be regarded as classics.

Critics such as Augustine Birrell, Oliver Elton, William Knight, William Morton Payne, W.C. Brownell, G.K. Chesterton and others praised Arnold's literary judgments, his balance of mind.

1 Brownell, W.C., Victorian Prose Masters, p.151
2 Ibid., p.149
his cosmopolitanism, his penetration, his deftness of style, and his ability to stimulate thought. Mr. William Horton Payne's evaluation is representative of such tributes:

Concerning the general sanity and acuteness of...Arnold's literary judgment it is not easy to speak in terms sufficiently high. It is the simple truth to say that he was the greatest English critic of his time...He is the critic who has done, on the whole, more than any of his contemporaries to aid men in clear thinking and right feeling about literature. His instinct in such matters is nearly always sure, his guidance nearly always safe.

Censorious criticism of Arnold is rare in the first decade of the twentieth century. There is a pleasant lessening of complaint concerning his superciliousness and aloofness. G.K. Chesterton,

3 Payne, W.M., Greater English Poets, pp. 280, 281
speaking paradoxically, as usual, says in 1907:

His very faults reformed us. His chief service for the modern English is that he discovered the purely intellectual importance of humility... He himself was proud and supercilious. When all the role of Arnold's real glories has been told there always does remain a kind of hovering doubt as to whether he did like mankind. He has no feeling of familiarity with the loves and hungers of the common man.

Concerning this last statement, Mr. Birrell (1903) thinks otherwise:

The papers of Heine and Spinoza and Marcus Aurelius were read with eagerness and enjoyment... They were not written for specialists or even for students, but for ordinary men and women, particularly for young men and women, who carried away with them from the reading of Es-

sends in Criticism something they could not have found anywhere else, and which remained with them for the rest of their days, namely, a way of looking at things. 5

What a tribute to the man who held that criticism should "establish a current of true and fresh ideas!" 6

Further and more open expression of satisfaction with the results of the Arnoldian leaven comes in 1902 from Mr. W. C. Brownell:

How different in a critical aspect from its condition when Arnold began to write is the England of our day—England and its literary dependency ourselves! And how largely the difference is due to the influence of Arnold's writings!...

And if one seeks a concrete instance of the great advance made in English critical writing in the past twenty-five years, mainly through the a-

5 Birrell, Augustine. Res Judicatae, p. 208

6 Selections from Arnold's Prose Works, ed., Johnson, W.S., p. 50
gency of that culture for which Arnold was always contending and in whose triumphs he is surely entitled to share, a very striking one is furnished by the contrast between the state of things at present and that existing when he inquired, "Why is all the journeyman-work of literature, as I may call it, so much worse done here than it is in France?"

...His work in short, is there to speak for itself. The poor have the gospel of culture preached to them, and his phrases are not at the end of every current pen.

A certain smug complacency with his own world detracts from Mr. Brownell's, doubtless, merited tribute. Mr. Arnold Smith writing in 1907 is almost as enthusiastic, however. He says:

It is hard for a generation which has grown up among certain recognized canons to realise that to a former generation those canons seemed revolutionary and to appreciate the man who has thus converted the world to his views.

7 Brownell,W.C., Victorian Prose Masters, pp.149,151
8 Smith,Arnold,Main Tendencies of Victorian Poetry,p.116
Three detailed studies of the work of Matthew Arnold were made between 1900 and 1910: Mr. William Harbutt Dawson's *Matthew Arnold and His Relation to the Thought of Our Times* (1904), Herbert Paul's *Matthew Arnold* (1902), and George Saintsbury's analysis in his *History of Criticism*. The first of these books is mainly concerned with Arnold's personality and his social and theological criticism. It has little if any value in determining Arnold's status as a critic of literature. The evaluation of Arnold as a critic in Mr. Paul's admirable biography, however, merits attention.

Mr. Paul makes no sweeping prophecy that opinion regarding Arnold's critical work will not fluctuate:

# G.W.E. Russell's *Matthew Arnold* (1904)
was not available.
How far Matthew Arnold will suffer from having been too much the child of his own age, it is as yet too soon to say. The "Zeit-Geist" has its limitations. It is the spirit of wisdom, not the spirit of a day, that is justified of all her children... Both as a poet and a critic, Matthew Arnold was essentially a man of his time.

Yet, says Mr. Paul:

Matthew Arnold's criticism, once regarded as a revelation has long since taken a secure place in English letters. Like his poetry, unlike his theology and his politics, it has original and intrinsic value. It is penetrating as well as brilliant, conscientious as well as imaginative. Arnold did for literature almost what Ruskin did for art. He reminded or informed the British public that criticism was a serious thing; that good criticism was just as important as good authorship; that it was not a question of individual taste, but partly of received authority, and partly of trained judgment.

9 Paul, Herbert, Matthew Arnold, pp. 2, 3.
10 Paul, Herbert, Matthew Arnold, p. 4
By these last phrases Mr. Paul definitely separates Arnold from the ranks of impressionistic critics. Moreover, he believes Arnold's method to be the "open sesame" to the realm of criticism, for he says:

He did not only criticise books himself, he taught others how to criticise them. He laid down principles, if he did not always keep them. Nobody after reading Essays in Criticism has any excuse for not being a critic. 11

How delightful would be the existing intellectual condition, if Mr. Paul's opinion were other than that of an enthusiastic biographer! And against his further remark that Arnold could not merely give reasons for his opinions, but show that they were... the deliberate judgments of a trained intelligence

working upon a systematic order of ideas," it is interesting to set Mr. Saintsbury's opinion expressed in 1904:

If you ask him for a clear, complete, resumed, and reasoned grasp of a man's accomplishment for a definite placing of him in the literary atlas—he will not have much answer to give you... A certain want of logical and methodical aptitude, which may be suspected, a dislike of reading matter that did not interest him, which is pretty clear, and that dread of "the historic estimate", which he openly proclaimed, would have made this impossible. 12

Mr. Paul's discussion of Arnold's critical and judicial frailties is interesting:

He (Arnold) did not appraise his English contemporaries, though not through envy or jealousy. The prejudice did not apply to foreigners. He idolised Sainte Beuve, was never just to Shelley, and not until the close of his life, to Keats. 13

13 Paul, Herbert, Matthew Arnold, p. 73
A "dogmatism of his own" is admitted; bias of friendship is held responsible for the comparison of Clough's "clever verse-making with the simple dignity of Homer"; Arnold's critical dicta concerning Chapman, Pope and Thackeray is held unfair; and the praise of the "prosy and dull" Scherer is censured. Mr. Paul's conclusion, however, is:

Judging his critical work, as talent should be judged, at its best, one can hardly overpraise it. It is original, penetrating, lucid, sympathetic, and just. Of all modern poets, except Goethe, he was the best critic.

The third study of Arnold's criticism to be considered, Mr. Saintsbury's analysis, is the most satisfactory one made between 1900 and 1910. The Preface of

14 Ibid., p.15  Paul, H. Matthew Arnold, p. 5
15 Ibid., p.62
16 Ibid., p.64
17 Ibid., p.69
18 Ibid.,p.162
19 Ibid., p.173
1853, On Translating Homer. The Study of Celtic Literature, The Essays in Criticism, and the Introduction to Ward's English Poets are discussed in detail, and evaluated. The later and lesser critical writings of Arnold: the articles on M. Scherer's Goethe, George Sand, Tolstoi and Amiel are touched on, only, as "they add nothing (except in one case) to the critics general Gospel or theory, but exemplify with delightful variety and charm his critical practice."

In The Preface, says Mr. Saintsbury, Arnold adds "one to the not extensive list of critical axioms of the first class", when he asserts that excellence of treatment cannot make an inferior action equally delightful with a more noble one.

That "all depends on the subject" had been said often enough before; but it had not

been said by any one who had the
whole of literature before him,
and the tendency— for half a
century distinctly, for a full
century more or less— had been
to unsay or gainsay it. 22

Specific contrast of this axiom with Dry-
den's statement in his Preface to An Even-
ing's Love that "the story is the least
part, the workmanship the greatest", leads
Mr. Saintsbury to say:

It is hardly possible to state
the "dependence"— in the old
dueling sense— of the great quar-
rel of Poetics and almost of Cri-
ticism, more clearly than is done
in these two Prefaces by these
two great post-critics of the
seventeenth and nineteenth cen-
turies in England. 23

With this in mind, later opposition to
Arnold's critical principles is easily
understood.

Regarding On Translating Homer, Mr.
Saintsbury says in part:

Saintsbury, G.E. A Hist. of Criticism
22 Ibid., p.520
23 Ibid., p.520
We see here...something which was not difficult to discern even in the more frugal and guarded expression of the Preface. This something is the Arnoldian confidence that quality which Mr. Hutton, perhaps rather kindly, took for "sureness."...We may think that this confidence is strengthened, and perhaps to some extent caused, by a habit of turning the blind eye on subjects of which the critic does not know very much, and inspecting very cursorily those which he does not much like. But right or wrong, partial or impartial, capricious or systematic as he may be, Mr. Arnold applies himself to the actual appreciation of actual literature, and to the giving of reasons for his appreciation, in a way new, delightful, invaluable. 24

A discussion of "the really important feature" of the tractate, its famous handling of "the grand style," follows. Let it suffice to say here, that Mr. Saintsbury believes Arnold's definition "only really fits Dante, and that it was originally

25 Ibid., p. 522
derived from a study of him." And his conclusion is that:

The grand is the transcendent and it is blasphemy against the Spirit of Poetry to limit the fashions and the conditions of transcendence. 27

The second member of the "Summa Criticismi," The Study of Celtic Literature, Mr. Saintsbury speaks of as "tempting in promise, but disappointing in performance," a fault due, partly, to the heterogeneity of subject matter. Arnold's lack of direct acquaintance with Celtic languages and literature is, as usual, regretted. Mr. Saintsbury, likewise, censures Arnold's method of picking out characteristics of "melancholy," "natural magic," et cetera in Celtic literature.

26 Ibid., p. 524 Saintsbury, Hist. of Criticism
27 Ibid., p. 526
28 Ibid., p. 521
29 Ibid., p. 526
and attributing the presence of these qualities in writers like Shakespeare and Keats, "where we have not the faintest evidence of Celtic blood," to Celtic influence. That such qualities are found in these authors is true, but, says Mr. Saintsbury:

That Mr. Arnold has any valid argument showing that their presence is due to Celtic influence, I do not admit, because he has produced none. 31

In other words, it is Arnold's method and not his conclusions with which Mr. Saintsbury disagrees.

A similar criticism of method is made in the discussion of that "epoch-making" book The Essays in Criticism, (first series) in which, the younger critic says,

31 Ibid., p. 527
there is a regrettable use of "theory divorced from history." Mr. Saintsbury expresses his objection thus:

Mr. Arnold's estimate of the condition of French, and still more of German literature in his own day, as compared with English, will not stand for five minutes the examination of any impartial judge, dates and books in hand. 33

It is the historical parallels which are false. There is praise for Arnold's analysis of the deficiencies of English literature and for his suggestion that comparative criticism is the needed corrective. There is, also, the usual regret that Arnold chose "unimportant people like the Guerins" for his first example in such comparative study.

Mr. Saintsbury's opinion concerning the Introduction to Ward's English Poets

32 Ibid., p. 527
33 Ibid., p. 527
34 Saintsbury, G. E. A History of Criticism, p. 529
is that it contains "no one really new thing," but in it Matthew Arnold gathered up and focussed his lights afresh and endeavored to provide his disciples with an apparently new definition of poetry." Quite surprisingly, this famous definition is summarily disposed of:

All literature is the application of ideas to life; and to say that poetry is the application of ideas to life, under the conditions fixed for poetry, is simply a vain repetition. 37

Mr. Saintsbury contends that the definition is merely another weapon Arnold uses in "taking the field in favor of the doctrine of the 'Poetic Subject.'" 38

In view of Mr. Saintsbury's own eminence as a critic, and also in view of his

35 Ibid., p.531
36 Ibid., p.531
37 Ibid., p.532
38 Ibid., p.532
earlier (1895, 1896, 1899) less appreciative appraisals of Arnold's critical works, his conclusion to the discussion of Arnold in *A History of Criticism*, has been chosen to represent the general estimate of Arnold between the years 1900-1910:

His (Arnold's) services, therefore, to English Criticism, whether as "preceptist" or as an actual craftsman, cannot possibly be over-estimated. In the first respect he was, if not the absolute reformer, the leader in reform of the slovenly and disorganised condition into which Romantic criticism had fallen. In the second, the things which he had not, as well as those which he had, combined to give him a place among the very first. He had not the sublime and ever new-inspired inconsistency of Dryden... He had not the robustness of Johnson; the supreme critical "reason"... of Coleridge; scarcely the exquisite, if fitful, appreciation of Lamb, or the full-blooded and passionate appre-
ociation of Hazlitt. But he had an exacter knowledge than Dryden's; the fineness of his judgment shows finer beside Johnson's bluntness; he could not wool-gather like Coleridge; his range was far wider than Lamb's; his scholarship and his delicacy alike give him an advantage over Hazlitt. Systematic without being hidebound; well-read (if not exactly learned) without pedantry; delicate and subtle, without weakness or dilettanteism, catholic without eclecticism; enthusiastic without indiscriminativeness.—Mr. Arnold is one of the best and most precious of teachers on his own side. And when, at those moments which are, but should not be, rare, the Goddess of Criticism descends, like Cambina and her lion-team, into the lists, and with her Nepenthe makes men forget sides and sects in a common love of literature, then he is one of the best and most precious of critics. 39

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF WANING POPULARITY,
1910-1920

Social, political and religious conditions prevalent between 1910 and 1920 strongly influenced critics of that period in their evaluations of Matthew Arnold's critical writings. Unfortunately, there is no book for that eventful decade which parallels Holbrook Jackson's admirable study of the 'nineties. The best thing one can do is to recall a few of the events which so markedly influenced literature and literary standards.

In the earlier years of the decade, scepticism regarding old beliefs and standards became more and more prevalent among all classes. There was an increasing tendency to revolt against anything which savored of rule or precept.
In 1914 came the World War, fanning national and political prejudices, and causing upheaval in social and economic conditions. Of the entrance of the United States into the War, in 1917, and of the unrest previous to and consequent upon it, mention need scarcely be made. The result of both these events in Europe and in America was the flouting in life and letters of old conventions, old standards and old beliefs.

As was natural, a new type of literary criticism arose. What place, then, during the years from 1910 to 1920 does that criticism hold which purposes by a "disinterested endeavor to know and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to create a current of fresh and true ideas"? In an-

swering this question, the evaluations of Arnold's criticism have been considered in their reference to: first, Arnold's method of criticism; second, his specific critical practices; third, his conception of the relation of morals and criticism; fourth, his critical work as a whole.

Mr. Stuart P. Sherman believes (1917) that Arnold's criticism is a composite of three methods: the judicial, the impressionistic, and the historical. Arnold, doubtless, would have called himself a judicial critic. In The Study of Poetry he quite plainly points out that the solely personal or the solely historical estimates will be "fallacious." Judicial criticism involves the acceptance of standards, and, as has already

The Works of Matthew Arnold Ed. de Luxe 2. Ed., p.5 and p.6
been said, standards of any kind were not in high favor between 1910 and 1920. It is not surprising, then, that Arnold's critical method is at variance with that of the "new criticism".

Mr. Spingarn, defining this "new criticism" in a lecture given at Columbia University in 1910, said:

We have done with all the old rules...genres, or literary kinds...with the comic, the tragic, the sublime...We still hear talk of the "grand style"...but the theory of style has no longer a real place in modern thought...We have done with all moral judgment of art as art...Beauty...aims neither at morals nor at truth...We have done with the race, the time, the environment of a poet's work as an element of criticism...with the history and criticism of poetic themes...We have done with the evolution of literature...What has the poet tried to do, and how has he fulfilled his intention? What is he striving to express and how has he expressed it? What vital and essential spirit animates his work, what central impression
does it leave on the receptive mind, and how can I best express this impression? Is his work true to the laws of his own being rather than to laws formulated by others? These are the questions that modern critics have been taught to ask when face to face with the work of a poet. Has he or has he not created a work of art?

Mr. Spingarn's critical manifesto is quite patently, though not specifically, a direct attack on the Arnoldian type of criticism. In *The Nation* for February 7, 1918, Mr. Irving Babbitt discusses Mr. Spingarn's critical theory. His article is quite clearly, though not specifically, a defense of Arnold's method. Mr. Babbitt says, in part:

> According to the new doctrine, the critic should cease to be exclusive, and become comprehensive and sympathetic. This is an important half-truth, though perhaps no half-truth since the beginning of the world has ever been so over-worked. For it is not enough,

---

as Mr. Spingarn would have us believe, that the critic should ask what the creator aimed to do and whether he has fulfilled his aim, he must also ask whether the aim is intrinsically worth while. He must in other words, rate creation with reference to some standards, set both above his own temperament and that of the creator.

In 1917 Mr. Babbitt, writing in The Nation for August second, specifically defended Matthew Arnold's criticism. The discussion stresses Arnold's modernity, but defines modernity not as "the latest thing," but as "the positive and critical spirit, the refusal to take things on authority." This, Mr. Babbitt feels, is exemplified in Arnold's critical writings. Mr. Babbitt, likewise, advocates judicial criticism:

What we Americans most urgently require is a steady exhibiting—

tion of cool and sane criticism
... We have no ends of clever people, but clever people without standards.

Mr. Stuart P. Sherman, whose book

*Matthew Arnold and How to Know Him* (1917)

contains an excellent analysis of Arnold's literary criticism, says:

One of his (Arnold's) shining distinctions is that his discussion of a principle or a poem or a man always comes to a point; always terminates in a decision...What makes his decisions generally so weighty is one's consciousness that he seldom speaks, as the impressionist often does, out of a whim or a crotchet, or a mere personal inclination.

A comparison of Arnold with Mr. H.G. Wells, made by Mr. Sherman in 1915, is interesting as it bears directly on the estimate of Arnold's critical method. Mr.

5 Babbitt, Irving, "Matthew Arnold" in *The Nation* vol.105, 8/2/1917, pp.117-121

6 Sherman, S.P., *Matthew Arnold And How to Know Him*, p.154
Sherman analyses with much skill the truth of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's statement in *The World of H.G. Wells*, that "in the future Wells will be thought of as having played towards his own epoch a part very similar to that played by Matthew Arnold." Admission is made that both writers insist upon the importance of a free play of ideas upon all subjects which concern us. "But", says Mr. Sherman, it is essential to know the standpoint adopted, the method pursued, and the object contemplated by each... At the risk of verbal absurdity Wells as a critic takes his stand with the future behind him, he retreats into the future for light on problems of the present, and the object of his criticism is to enable us to see things as in themselves they really are not. And, to continue the Hibernian, Arnold

---

takes his stand with the past behind him; he returns to history for light on the questions of the day, and his object as he never tires in repeating is to enable us to see things as in themselves they really are... Difference in the critical object, the method and the standpoint arises from the fundamental opposition between the pseudo-scientific and the humanistic outlook upon life... We have here... the curious fact that the critic of scientific training abandons the "scientific method" and proceeds from the unknown to the known, while the critic trained in humane letters adopts the scientific method and proceeds from the known to the unknown. I mean that Wells in his skepticism of the categories established by the intellect, throws reason overboard, and commits the steerage of his course to a self-willed, egotistic, anaclitchal imagination... For Arnold, who retains his faith in the intellect, truth is not something to be created, but something to be ascertained. Between the two critics yawns the gulf: Wells seeks to make whim and the will of H.G. Wells prevail, while Arnold seeks to make "right reason and the will of God" prevail. 8

Although Mr. Sherman's words are particularly applicable to Matthew Arnold's social criticism, the reference to his using the "scientific" method is equally pertinent to his literary criticism.

To Mr. Babbitt's and Mr. Sherman's staunch defense of Arnold's critical method we may well add that of Mr. W.C. Brownell, whom Mr. Mencken disparagingly calls the "Amherst Aristotle." Mr. Brownell is an avowed advocate of standards. A comparison of the passage which follows with Mr. Brownell's estimate of 1907 wherein he gloried that "the poor have the gospel of culture preached to them," (see pp.31-32) reveals change in intellectual conditions.

9 Mencken, H.L., "Criticism of Criticism" in Contemporary American Criticism, ed. Bowman, J.C., p.66
The cause of this change, and the present contempt for tradition and for heritage of the past is to be found, Mr. Brownell believes,

in the immense extension in our own time of what may be called the intellectual and aesthetic electorate, in which, owing to education either imperfect or highly specialized, genuine culture has become less general; with the result that the intellect, which has standards, has lost co-operative touch with the susceptibility and the will, which have not, but whose activities are vastly more seductive as involving not less tension at all. For the instinctive hostility to standards proceeds from the tension which conformity imposes both on the artist who produces and the public which appreciates... Standards are products...of culture and consequently pertinent constituents of everyone's intellectual baggage. And in the field of art and letters they play an especially prominent role, because art and letters are artificial simplifications of material much less synthetized and therefore less suscep-
tible of comparative measurement, namely nature and human life. The act of judging in itself implies some standards.

Applying these ideas to criticism, Mr. Brownell says:

Truly constructive criticism does not of necessity involve rigidity. It implies not a system, but a method...and when we read some very interesting and distinguished criticism...and compare it with concentric and constructive work,—such as par excellence that of Arnold,—we can readily see that its failure in force is one of method as well as of faculty...And I think he will achieve the most useful result in following the...work of the true masters of this branch of literature, the born critics whose practice shows it to be a distinctive branch of literature, having a function, an equipment, a criterion, and a method of its own...This at all events, is the ideal illustrated, with more or less closeness, by...such critics as Sainte-Beuve, Scherer and Arnold...  

10 Brownell, W.C. Standards, pp. 9, 10, 2
11 Ibid., pp. 86 and 91
Comment on the citations just made would be superfluous. If the subject of this thesis permitted, it would not be difficult to show that they are a restatement of Arnold's own principles. In all of them, however, there is a marked note of defense, which is distinctly lacking in the criticism of Arnold's work made previous to 1910. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that but one specific attack on Arnold's method of criticism was found for the period 1910-1920. Arnold suffered more from neglect than from abuse. He belonged to the past, was a Victorian, and, therefore, merited little attention.

The one censorious criticism was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in the introduction to his edition of Matthew Arnold's essays. Mr. Raleigh says:
The method of his [Arnold's] criticism is wholly and essentially dogmatic. He made short work of bad poets, which is to his credit. Yet even when he treats of good poets, his method, sometimes just, is hardly ever sympathetic. He balances faults and virtues without caring much to enquire how they came to grow up together in one mind...Matthew Arnold cared only to judge deeds as deeds—poems as poems—he was quite in-curious about men. In his critical essays he presents us with many sound rules and many memor-able sentences, but no live man.

Recalling Arnold's essays on Heine, George Sand and the de Guerins, one wonders how Mr. Raleigh can accuse Arnold of lack of sympathy or of presenting "no live men."

In summary, then, it may be said that the judicial method of criticism as exemplified by Arnold was practically repudiated during the second decade of the twentieth century. Conservative and hu-

manistic critics such as Mr. Irving Babbitt, Mr. Stuart P. Sherman, and Mr. Brownell made an effort to defend Arnold's principles, which, although not followed, received little direct censure.

Evaluations of Arnold's specific practices in criticism are concerned mainly with his comparative criticism, and his use of "touchstones" to determine literary merit.

Mr. Raleigh in 1912 reminds us that there is no English name among the subject of the Essays, and finds Arnold's cosmopolitanism, as represented by his studies of foreign literature, a matter for censure and not for praise:

The defect of Matthew Arnold as a critic...is that he had too little affection for England. It is not easy to divine how the English people, if, by the operation of some mad miracle, they
had moulded themselves on his teaching, could have remained English. The consideration is not irrelevant—for Matthew Arnold became more and more in his latter work a critic of English literature, which is intensely national and can be only imperfectly criticised from the cosmopolitan point of view. That and no other was his point of view, from first to last. His criticism is a good antidote to parochialism. His condemnations, based as they are on a knowledge of the great work that has been done in other countries and in bygone ages, are sound and often illuminative...[But] he had nourished his youth on other pastures, and had no taste for many flavours that are racy of the English soil...Differences of language, of aims, of circumstance do not perplex him; he sets up his tribunal and applies his tests indifferently to all comers. 13

Against Mr. Raleigh's harsh comment it is pleasant to place that of another of Arnold's countrymen, Mr. G.K. Chesterton (1913). To him Arnold is "not so much a

philosopher as a man of the world," and among Arnold's virtues Chesterton lists that of "reminding us that Europe was a society, while Ruskin was treating it as a picture gallery." A third Englishman, Mr. Alexander Kelso, (1914) praises Arnold for keeping himself free from the exaggerated worship of the continent which is found in Carlyle. An understanding sympathy of the foreigner and his peculiarities made Arnold truly cosmopolitan, but "not to the extent of expatriating himself and firing long-distance shots at the British Public from the security of the Grand Canal."

Two Americans find Arnold's use of comparative criticism an indication of

14 Chesterton, G.K., The Victorian Age in Literature, p. 75
his intellectual breadth. Arnold belongs, in the opinion (1910) of Mr. Paul Elmer More, "to one of the great families of human intelligence, which begins with Cicero... and passes through Erasmus, and Boileau, and Shaftesbury, and Sainte-Beuve." Mr. Sherman (1917) attributes Arnold's cosmopolitan critical attitude to his culture, which gave him "a strong sense of the community of the civilized world." In the essay on Academies, Arnold, continues Mr. Sherman,

by a skilful use of the comparative method has made the possession of the French people... their standard of excellence, their conscience in intellectual matters, their freedom from provinciality, seem enviable... Arnold has the magical touch of the Pied Piper of Hamlin. (1917) 18

17 Sherman, S. F. Matthew Arnold & How to Know Him, p. 134.
18 Sherman, S. F. Matthew Arnold and How to Know Him, p. 143
So effectively do Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Kelso, Mr. More and Mr. Sherman champion Arnold's cosmopolitan attitude in his critical studies that Mr. Raleigh's censure appears negligible. Even under the luminous rays of the "new criticism" this glory of Arnold's remains undimmed.

No unqualified approval of the use of "lines and expressions of the great masters" as touchstones to determine poetic excellence appears to have been expressed during the years 1910 to 1920. Arnold's most sincere admirers, Mr. John Churton Collins and Mr. Stuart P. Sherman, find the method inadequate. Sir Walter Raleigh speaks of it with scorn. He considers the touchstone from Dante,

In la sua volontade e nostra pace, too comprehensive. It contains, he says, "the truth of all religion." How can it be used to determine the merit of 21
which Mr. Raleigh says is "meaningless."
Of the whole method he speaks (1912) thus:

Nothing so bizarre has ever been done in so serious a spirit since the foolish fellow of the classical story brought a sample brick to market in the attempt to sell his house. 22

Mr. Collins (1912) believes that "though the tendency to reduce and submit everything to the standard and touchstones of 23
a lucid intelligence" may be "the dia-
thesis of a consummate critic" such a critic will have his limits.

---

20 Works of Matthew Arnold, ut supra, p.14
21 Ibid., p.22
22 Essays in Criticism, ed. Raleigh, Walter, Introd., p.XIV
23 Collins, J.C. Posthumous Essays, p.195
Consummately he may be, but within a certain sphere. The moment he is confronted, say, with such rude, crude, elemental forces as Walt Whitman, or such flights as Shakespeare in "Lear", nay, with what is most characteristic of the Hebrew Prophets, of Pindar, even of our own Milton, his touchstones and standards are apt to fail him. Matthew Arnold’s range of sympathy was wider than Sainte Beuve’s, but we cannot but feel that, in some what timid deference to his master, he deliberately confined it.

To this excellent bit of criticism, Mr. Sherman’s practical conclusion adds but little. He considers (1917) the touchstones admirable in revealing that union of "classical authority and personal taste," which is one of Arnold’s critical distinctions, but fails to see how they will "save us," as Arnold says, from fallacious estimates of poetry.

23 Collins, J.C. Posthumous Essays, p. 195
24 Sherman, S.P. Matthew Arnold and How to Know Him, p. 158
Save us, yes, "if we have tact and can use them"! But taste must function in choosing them, and taste must keep on functioning in using them; there is no automatic mode of registering the reaction to them of inferior work. 24

So, with not a single aye in its favor, the method of using lines from the great masters as guides for determining poetic excellence stands condemned before the tribunal of critical opinion from 1910 to 1920.

Any attempt to consider the evaluation of Arnold's conception of the relation of morals and criticism necessitates an explanation of his definition of the word "moral." In the essay of Wordsworth he quotes Voltaire as saying "no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." Mr. Arnold continues:

24 Sherman S.P. Matthew Arnold & How to Know Him, p.158
Voltaire does not mean, by "treating in poetry moral ideas," the composing moral and didactic poems; that brings us but very little way in poetry. He means just the same thing as was meant when I spoke above "of the noble and profound application of ideas to life"; and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by laws of poetic truth... a large sense is of course to be given to the term moral. Whatever bears upon the question "how to live" comes under it. 25

If the definition ceased here there would be cause for controversy as to his understanding of "the large sense" to be given to the word "moral." Fortunately, he cites examples of poetry which fulfills or fails to fulfill the requirements he has suggested. Omar Khayyam's "Let us make up in the tavern for the time we have wasted in the mosque," may be taken, Arnold says, as the motto of the poetry which revolts against moral ideas. In this category he includes

poetry in which style rather than subject matter is the chief concern, such as that of Theophile Gautier. A happy treatment of moral ideas is Wordsworth's chief distinction, although he is lacking in "treasures of humor, felicity, and passion,

which are found in Burns, Keats and Heine.

Quarrel as one will over the meaning of the term moral, he cannot accuse Arnold of narrowness. A true appreciation of moral ideas does not blind him to the merits of poetry which fails to embody them. It is this which prevents, according to Mr. Sherman, Arnold's criticism from becoming dull and monotonous. His essays surely include discussion of many authors who were far from preoccupied with moral ideas, as Homer, Heine, and George Sand. Arnold's distinction as a critic lies, Mr. Sherman

believes in his ability to quicken the aesthetic and intellectual sensibilities as well as the moral, and he adds:

Anyone who reads Arnold thoughtfully and thoroughly without feeling an immense quickening of his literary sensibility has, in all probability, no literary sensibility to quicken. The quickening force of the aesthetic interest is present to a greater or less degree in everything that Arnold wrote. (1917) 27

The "new criticism", as defined in chapter Five of this thesis, disregards the moral element entirely. Mr. Mencken in Criticism of Criticism of Criticism, speaks (1918) of that art as practiced by such "learned and diligent, but essentially ignorant and unimaginative men" as Brownell, Phelps, Sherman, and More as

27 Sherman, S.P. Matthew Arnold and How to Know Him, p.172
28 Mencken, H.L. Criticism of Criticism of Criticism, in Contemporary American Criticism, ed. Bowman, J.C. p.69
"little more than a branch of homiletics." Since three of these gentlemen are among Arnold's staunchest advocates, it follows that Mr. Mencken would scarcely approve Arnold's interest in "moral ideas." Mr. Spingarn, whose critical manifesto has already been discussed, expresses himself thus:

To say that poetry is moral or immoral is as meaningless as to say that an equilateral triangle is moral and an isosceles immoral. 29

The statements of Mr. Mencken's and Mr. Spingarn's must be taken as representative of the popular attitude toward the relation of morals and criticism, and therefore toward Arnold's criticism. Direct comment by critics on this aspect of Arnold's work is negligible.

29 Spingarn, J.E., "The New Criticism," in Ibid., p. 56
Like his judicial method of criticism, his moral conceptions are considered to be too antiquated to merit attention. A few of the "essentially ignorant and unimaginative" men venture to express their ideas, however, and, in justice to Arnold, Mr. Brownell and Mr. Sherman are quoted:

The highest service of criticism is to secure that the true and the beautiful, and not the ugly and the false, may in wider and wider circles of appreciation be esteemed to be the good. (1914) 30

Mr. Sherman (1917) is more specific:

To give a good direction to our hearts and consciences—that may appear to many readers in these progressive days a homely and old-fashioned function to be performed by literary criticism; but Arnold was unquestionably very greatly interested in giving that. His character adds weight and importance to his morality. His fine intelligence and pure elevated feeling invest his morality with a winsome beauty. So let a stimulus to

30 Brownell, W.C., "Criticism," in Ibid., p. 92-3
the heart and conscience be reckoned with the stimulus to aesthetic sensibility and the stimulus to intellectual curiosity as the three vital elements which the reader may expect to find in his essays on criticism. 31

Evaluations made between 1910-1920 of Arnold's critical work as a whole are more favorable than the spirit of the decade might lead one to expect. Mr. Collins, Mr. Chesterton, and Mr. Sherman, have praised for him, particularly for his service to the art of criticism. Mr. Quiller-Couch writing in 1918 also values his work in that respect, and counts it to Arnold's credit that "he treated criticism as a deliberate disinterested art, with laws and methods of its own." Comparing Arnold with Coleridge, Mr. Theodore Whitefield Hunt

31 Sherman, Stuart P., Matthew Arnold and How to Know Him, p. 185
32 Quiller-Couch, A., Literary Studies, First Series, p. 235-6
saisi(l906) "Each made such decided contribution to the cause of English criticism as to leave it stronger and richer than he found it." In conclusion, and as representative of the more conservative opinion the estimate in the Cambridge History of English Literature (1917) may be cited:

Arnold's later prose writings confirmed the opinion which his poetry and a few early essays had gone far to establish, that ... he was the most brilliant literary critic of his time. Much of his social, political and religious criticism is, perhaps, because of its ephemeral subjects doomed, ultimately, to oblivion, although a good part of it can never lose its point or practical value while the temper and habits of the English people remain substantially what they are. His literary criticisms, however, will live as long as the best of their kind; and, in the combination of remarkable poetic achievement with illuminating discourse on the art of poetry and on "the best that is known" -
Dryden and Coleridge, alone, among English writers share his pre-eminence. 34

A resume of the appraisals of Arnold's critical writings made during the second decade of the twentieth century shows that neither his method of criticism, his advocacy of the use of "touchstones" to determine poetical excellence, nor his conception of the relation between morals and criticism, was generally approved. Despite Mr. Raleigh's adverse comment it may be said that Arnold's studies in foreign literature, on an effort to broaden the English critical outlook, and his treatment of criticism as an art in itself, together with the brilliancy of his writing are counted his chief merits. As a critical factor Arnold lost influence. He was to be admired, perhaps, but not to be followed.

CHAPTER V
THE PERIOD OF CENSURE

Before attempting an estimate of Arnold's status as a critic of literature in the second decade of the twentieth century, some knowledge of the social, political, and religious life of the period was held necessary. Likewise before making a similar estimate for the third decade of the century, some knowledge of the state of criticism is essential. Apparently something had happened to that peculiar branch of literary writing between 1910 and 1920, as has been said, allegiance to critical tradition and critical standards was popularly decried. The past and Matthew Arnold with it suffered more by neglect than by abuse. Followers of Arnold and of his critical canons were put on the defensive. A so-called "new" theory of criticism was
prevalent. Mr. H. L. Mencken, himself a critical insurgent, interpreting this theory (as practiced in America) in the light of former criticism, robbed it of the right to be called new by terming it "the Spingarn-Croce-Carlyle-Goethe theory," a theory which demands, he says, too much intellectual resilience on the part of the "grown-up sophomores who carry on the business of criticism." Whether Mr. Mencken was correct or not, is not possible to say. It would appear, however, that either the theory itself or its application by incompetent critics had brought about a somewhat sorry state of affairs in the realm of criticism. In 1924 Mr. John Middleton Murry, who cannot be considered reactionary, thought it "an unholy mess." He voiced his sentiments thus:

1 Mencken, H. L., "Criticism of Criticism of Criticism" in Contemporary American Criticism, ed. Bowman, J. C., p. 68
We think we have made an advance because criticism is now, we say, disinterested. Disinterested or uninterested, I wonder. Not that I would imply that the modern critic lacks interest in what he is doing; I mean simply that he, like everybody else, acquiesces in the notion that literature really is cut off from the main concerns of life. Essentially, it amuses or fails to amuse; fundamentally, it is a diversion... The fact of the matter, as I see it, is that we are caught and involved, in a period of transition. In this period of transition literature is, in fact, not important to life; because it is not regarded as important. Inevitably criticism is condemned to the purely aesthetic judgment. Unfortunately, there is no such thing... Poor Matthew Arnold died forlornly, trying to hold the bridge, with "Criticism of Life" on his banner. He was a lonely and pathetic and heroic figure, with his heart torn between "Wragg is in custody" and the futile felicity of The Scholar Gipay... When he had departed the aesthetes swept over the bridge. Matthew Arnold's place is taken by Mr. Bernard Shaw, a man of great talent and a firmer hold of less important truths, who is more passionately certain
than Matthew Arnold that literature is important to life, but far less certain than Arnold as to what is literature...
It is an unholy mess. The men who believe literature is important to life do not know what literature is, and those who do not believe it is important cannot know what it is.

An American, also, found the state of criticism particularly unsettled. Mr. Percy H. Boynton in 1923, discussing Pessimism and the Critical Code, said:

Cold fact is always bewildering... the rising generation of critics are having an unusually hard time because the facts of today are unusually cold... It is a normal, but none the less half-amusing, aspect of the situation that the current anti-Puritan criticism of today insists on expressing itself not merely in terms of emancipation but in shrill and hysterical cries of defiance of the old regime.

The solution suggested by Mr. Boynton, although somewhat out of point here, is interesting because of its Arnoldian phrasing:

The insistence against both Hebraism and Hellenism—a simultaneous fight on grimness and Sunny Jimness—is an antidote against the moralism of the recent past. 4

A third opinion pertinent to the critical situation of the decade just past, is that of Mr. Scott-James. In his discussion (1928) of Expressionism he says:

We have emerged— from... (the) pre-war maelstrom into our present so different age—light, debonair, ingenious, experimental, inquisitive, slightly ironic and flippant... If there is any one outstanding characteristic of our age it is the admiration of novelty, and disdain for the established, the canonical, the recognized and, therefore, the outworn. Consider the modern dislike for

anything that can be called Victorian. The Victorian is fixed, put in its place, "tidied up" - anything that savours of it is to be eschewed.

With criticism in this admittedly chaotic state it is not surprising that the protest against Arnold is expressed in an occasional "shrill and hysterical cry" of defiance. The silent indifference, which was the characteristic attitude of the past decade toward his work, is replaced by audible censure. Even conservative reviewers, while acknowledging Arnold's obvious merits, do not hesitate to criticise his defects somewhat severely. Representative of such criticism is that of Legouis and Cazamian in A History of

Their opinion is that Arnold the poet is nearer our age than Arnold the critic, although the latter is a "more commanding figure in the history of literature (and) of ideas." His service in establishing a new school of criticism with classical standards and a "coherent set of ideas" is acknowledged, and his acute literary sensibility is given praise. They believe his "magistral authority was at times too sure of itself," find that he fails sometimes "to follow out his own principles to the end," and feel that he did not rise "at all points to the height of his ideal." Nor is he"always free from a shade of priggishness." Nevertheless, Arnold "is the prophet of equanimity by way of a flexible habit of thinking," in spite of the
fact that "prejudices, narrowness of outlook, and passive ways of thinking have limited or warped his mental perspective in certain directions." 6

With his frailties stressed until they appear almost as cardinal sins, Arnold, as represented by Legouis and Cazamian, seems far from being "the most brilliant literary critic of his time." 7

This, it may be remembered, was the opinion offered by Mr. W. L. Jones in The Cambridge History of English Literature (1917). Since in the later estimate (1927) of Legouis and Cazamian Arnold's personality is a considerable factor in determining his critical status, a possible cause of the change in attitude

might be the present interest in Victorian biography.

Oliver Elton (1922), F.S. Boas and Laurie Magnus (1926) are agreed that Arnold "is a little...remote from the needs of the new age," yet the Essays still "hold their own." Arnold is "one of our best and his place is safe."

Quite surprisingly Mr. Mencken concurs. Averring in "Footnotes on Criticism" (1922) that "the motive of the critic really worth reading is not that of the pedagogue but of the artist," he concludes:

Arnold had his faults, and so did Sainte-Beuve, and so did Goethe, and yet they are re-membered today, and all the learned and conscientious critics of their time, laboriously concerned with the precise

8 Magnus, Laurie, Dictionary of European Literature, pp. 21-22
9 Elton, O. A Sheaf of Papers, p. 78
intent of the artists under review, and passionately determined to set it forth with god-like care and to relate it exactly to this or that great stream of ideas—all these pedants are forgotten. What saved Carlyle, Macaulay and company is as plain as day. They were first rate artists. They could make the thing charming, and that is always a million times more important than making it true.

The one hundredth anniversary of Arnold's birth and, also, the edition of his Complete Works, which appeared in 1924, occasioned some favorable reviews. Gordon Hall Gerould's, though scarcely representative of current opinion, is illuminating, and is refreshing to consider before passing to less sympathetic criticism of Arnold's work. Mr. Gerould says (1924):

---

10 Mencken, H.L., *Prejudices*, "Footnotes on Criticism", p.92
It may well be that Arnold is more talked about today than read. If that is the case, and I don't pretend to know—it is a sad pity, for there are few of the great Victorians who have more to say to the third decade of the twentieth century.

There are few to whom our decade can so well afford to listen...His admirers have made of him a pompous figure, bursting with self-pride and crying out against life as it has to be lived. They have taken the clever phrases that he justifiably used to drive home his points...and restated them as eternal truths. They have forgotten his good sense, his ardor, his tenderness...It is no disparagement of him to say that he was always the didactic essayist rather than the pure critic, who is forever testing and trying in an attempt to discover new aspects of truth, new facets of beauty. Sane judgment Arnold had, but not the judicial temper...I have said that our generation can well afford to listen to this Victorian. No one denies, I believe, that we live in a period of some confusion. Values are fluctuating, to put the case very mildly. In such circumstances, the words of a man like Arnold, who by his
poets intuition had laid hold
on certain changeless elements
in life, may be exceedingly
profitable to the hearer. It
is amazing, indeed, as one
sweeps his work afresh, that
so many of the essays are per-
tinent to our troubled age. 11

A "new" Arnold biography by Hugh
Kingsmill(Lunn), an analysis of his cri-
tical principles by Mr.R.A.Scott-James,
and an account of his poetical theory
and practice by Stanley Williams, are
the most important studies of Arnold's
criticism made between 1920 and 1930.

Mr. Kingsmill's witty but shocking-
ly impertinent biography, published in
1928, follows the Freudian method of
character analysis. "Hatt", as Mr. Arnold
is familiarly called throughout the book,
is represented as a victim of inhibitions-

11 Gerould G.H. in The Bookman, Vol. 59,
No. 4, June, 1924, p. 460-463
which prevented his becoming a great artist. Fortunately, Mr. Kingsmill's wholly unjust treatment of Arnold, the man, does not concern us, except as it colors the interpretation of his critical writings. The biographer confesses he has "used Arnold's personal history to explain his weakness as a poet and a critic." Where Mr. Kingsmill's deductions are based upon unreasonably ingenious inferences, they have in this paper been disregarded.

Mr. Scott-James's evaluation also made in 1928, is excellent. Though slight, it may well be considered as representative of the best critical opinion for the 1920-1930 period. Significant in itself is the fact that an author so thoroughly modern in his point

of view has given Arnold a place in

The Making of Literature.

The third appraisal, that of Mr. Williams in Studies in Victorian Literature (1923), is concerned with Arnold's poetical theory and practice. Sympathetic in treatment it offers a pleasant balance to the other studies.

Each of the three writers considers first Arnold's pronouncement that true poetry must treat of an excellent action in a serious manner so that the total impression may produce enjoyment. Situations in which a continuous state of mental distress finds no vent in action are painful, not tragic, and are not suitable for poetic representation. It was on the basis of this theory that

Arnold excluded *Empedocles on Etna* from the 1853 edition of his poems, the preface to which is his first significant critical essay.

Mr. Kingsmill considers the omission of *Empedocles* and the inclusion of *Sohrab and Rustum*, in which suffering finds vent in action, as "one of the decisive moments of Arnold's life." The contention is that the mental state of Empedocles, "the Sicilian philosopher who grumbles about life on the summit of Mount Etna," represents Arnold's own melancholy outlook, as illustrated in his letters and personal lyrics. The poem fails to rise to the heights of true tragedy not because of its subject-matter but because Arnold "lacked the courage to paint real despair. The var-

14 Kingsmill, H., *Matthew Arnold*, p. 115
15 Ibid., p. 117
ious obligations imposed upon him by his upbringing, to be hopeful, to be moral, to help others to be moral, etc., fettered his imaginative freedom." He took refuge in the Aristotelian maxim that "the primary objects of artistic imitation are human beings in action," from which he formulated his own poetic theory, which excludes the entire subject-matter of lyric poetry.

Mr. Kingsmill apparently disregards two important characteristics of Arnold: his marked classical taste and the "ali- quid certi" which he endeavored to make the purpose of all he did. The first might well account for the formulation of the theory, the second, for his preference which represents suffering finding vent in action. These seem much more

16 Kingsmill, H., Matthew Arnold, p. 116
17 Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, Cooper Lane, p. 6
reasonable explanations than inferences drawn from passages in poems and letters.

The objection regarding the exclusion of lyric poetry, however, is justifiable. More judicial critics than Mr. Kingsmill have commented on the omission. Few, if any, have offered his solution. He suggests that Arnold may have felt that the "short compass of most lyrics excludes the effects of monotony and depression" which result from a longer presentation of situations involving mental distress. On this matter Mr. Williams is of the opinion (1923) that in the Preface of 1853 was "obviously not speaking of lyric poetry," for "in the Preface of 1854 he declares definitely that the relation of his theories to lyric poetry is another story." Mr. Williams says

18 Williams, S. T., Studies in Victorian Literature, p. 133
Unluckily...that is a story which Arnold never relates. His conceptions of laws for more subjective poetry must be gathered together from other sources; from letters and chance comments. The results are sketchy but suggestive. In all his analyses of poetry Arnold was inclined to underestimate "feelings", but not to the extent nor precisely the way which critics...have assumed. 19

Mr. Williams believes that Arnold included "by implication thoughts and feelings as integral elements of actions."

Mr. Scott-James apparently thinks Arnold intended the theory to apply only to narrative and dramatic poetry. His objection is to the demand that the action be "excellent."

An "excellent action"...The permanent as opposed to the ephemeral—what less can we ask for in "verses fit to live"?...Yet in all the passages in which this question is discussed Arnold makes us feel that he has turned a blind eye to literary experiences which

19 Williams, S.T., Studies in Victorian Literature, p. 133
were not available to Aristotle or Dante, with the result that he discovers a peculiar disqualification in the life of our own time by which the actions belonging to it become unsuitable for great poetry. 20

Arnold's tendency to overestimate the past, to demand too much simplicity and severity, are the chief defects in the standards he proposes for the subject-matter of poetry.

He is on safer ground when he confines himself to those principles which he shares with Aristotle, Coleridge and Goethe. They and he agree that the plot, or action, or motive is the first thing... Also that its unity, the "total impression"—not, as Arnold puts it, "occasional bursts of fine writing"... is what gives a poem its essential character. 21

The second important principle of Arnold's poetic theory is that poetry is a "criticism of life." This last phrase was first used in the essay on Joubert (1861)

20 Scott-James, The Making of Literature, p. 266
21 Ibid., p. 268
at which time Arnold applied it to all literature. Later he embodied it in his definition: "poetry is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." This definition with the demand for an "excellent action" are his chief literary tenets.

By 1920 the storm of ridicule aroused by Arnold's definition had somewhat abated. Occasionally one finds telling references such as this of W.S. Hudson's (1922):

Matthew Arnold called...poetry a criticism of life, which is just what one would expect Matthew to call it;

or this of Mr. Philo P. Buck (1930):

The old criticism took itself too seriously...Even Matthew Arnold is a bit heavy with his

23 The Works of Matthew Arnold, Edition de Luxe, Vol. IV, p. 4
24 Hudson W.S., "A Hind in Richmond Park," p. 270
doctrine that "poetry is a criticism of life" and is inclined at times to list as valuable poems only those that have some philosophical message. 25

Mr. Scott-James makes no adverse comment on the definition, except as it concerns Arnold's rejection of his own age as offering suitable matter for such criticism.

Mr. Kingsmill's objections are two. In the first he reminds us that in the essay on Wordsworth Arnold quotes Leslie Stephen as saying, "Wordsworth's ethical system is as distinctive and capable of exposition as Bishop Butler's" Mr. Arnold then counsels against the tendency of Wordsworthians to praise their idol for the wrong things and adds:

His Wordsworth's poetry is the reality, his philosophy... the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition

25 Buck, Philo M., Literary Criticism, p. 131
26 Kingsmill, H., Matthew Arnold, p. 265
Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion.  

This Mr. Kingsmill construes as a repudiation by Arnold of his own poetical definition, a repudiation caused because "he was pulled up short when Mr. Leslie Stephen seemed to agree with him."

Mr. Kingsmill's other objection is the usual one: that Arnold failed to elucidate what were "the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." In discussing this part of the definition, Mr. Williams admits (1923) that there is no "detailed explanation of the entire theory in any particular passage in Arnold's writings." He conjectures, however, that by "the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty" Arnold

26 Kingsmill, H., *Matthew Arnold*, p. 265
27 Ibid., p. 264
meant the qualities of "high seriousness" and "truth of substance," and, perhaps, the more conventional attributes of poetry: style, manner, diction and movement."

These conjectures are confirmed, according to Mr. Williams, in the essay on Byron where Arnold says:

> Truth and seriousness of substance and matter, felicity and perfection of diction and manner, as these are exhibited in the best poets, are what constitute a criticism of life made in conformity with the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty.

This is a satisfying answer to both of Mr. Kingsmill's objections, and also to one mentioned by Mr. Williams: that Arnold's definition fails to distinguish between poetry and prose. The adequacy of the theory is thus summarized by Mr. Williams:

> The component parts of the

---

29 Williams, Studies in Victorian Lit., p.146
30 Williams, S.T., Studies in Victorian Literature, p.145
theory are scattered, but they make up, I think, a definite conception of poetry. Poetry in this theory is distinguished from prose. Thus to reply to Arnold that everything that is written, including Mother Goose, is "a criticism of life" is idle; to say that poetry is an imaginative and not a critical process and, therefore, cannot be "criticism" is to mistake Arnold's meaning. The crux of the matter is that readers have been inclined to study the phrase "criticism of life" perse. It is, after all, like "culture" and sweetness and light" a catchphrase. One must probe beneath the words to grasp Arnold's whole meaning. 31

Contention is also made, Mr. Williams says, that this theory of poetry lacks practical value. It does not aid in judging poetry, as do the definitions by Milton, by Coleridge and by Wordsworth. To this Mr. Williams replies:

Personally I fancy that in reading poetry there are as many people who think of...it as "a criticism of life" as there are those

31 Williams, Studies in Victorian Literature, p.146
who remind themselves constantly that poetry is "simple, sensuous and passionate. One cannot go far in this direction. But everyone knows that for Arnold himself the theory constituted a very reliable touchstone for recording verdicts on books. He refers to it constantly in all the Essays in Criticism. Its various phases of "high seriousness" and "truth of substance"; the emphasis on style, and on ideas, these tests have brought from Arnold some memorable criticisms of literature... Who will deny the value of Arnold's analyses by this method of Chaucer? Burns? Keats?

Mr. Williams's discussion leads naturally from the evaluation of Arnold's theories of poetry to the estimates of him as a critic of literature. In this capacity he is most censured for his advocacy of "touchstones" as aids in determining the excellence of poetry. Be-

32 Williams, S.T., Studies in Victorian Literature, p.147
tween 1920 and 1930, however, the critical verdict of this method is somewhat kinder than that expressed in the second decade of this century. Favorable opinion of it has just been cited from Mr. Williams; Mr. Kingsmill makes no comment on the method; two sound evaluations are offered by Mr. Scott-James and Mr. Henry Hazlitt.

Mr. Scott-James finds the practice an old and honorable one. (1928) Had not Longinus "laid down a few tests by which we may be sure that literature has the true accent of the sublime"? To the suggestion that sublimity may be recognized in passages which "please always and please all (fastidious) readers," which "take so strong a hold upon the memory that they cannot be forgotten," and which would e-

33 Scott-James, R.A., The Making of Literature, p. 277
licit praise from Homer or Demosthenes, Mr. Scott-James feels certain Arnold would have subscribed. These conditions are all implied in his counsel "to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as touchstones to other poetry." Moreover, Mr. Scott-James justly interprets Arnold's suggestion:

He would probably agree that
...the method of comparing passage with passage is not a sufficient test for determining the value of a work as a whole; he himself insisted that we must judge a poem by the "total impression." But there is no reason why we should not extend Arnold's comparative method, not resting content with detached judgments from isolated passages, but comparing the whole impression we have in our mind of one work with the whole impression that has been stamped upon our minds.

35 Ibid., p. 277
by a masterpiece. The comparative method is an invaluable aid to appreciation in approaching any kind of art. 36

A more recent and less tolerant criticism of the "touchstone" method is made by Mr. Henry Hazlitt in The Nation for December 3, 1930. He says:

The more original new poetry is the less it is likely to bear any superficial resemblance to the old, and, therefore, the more likely the touchstones are to condemn it. The critic of contemporary letters is occupied with what (from the standpoint of eternity) must be classed as second, third, and fourth rate work...Achievement is rare in proportion as it high and the critic who compares every new...literary achievement with that of Sophocles or Homer merely dooms himself to condemn everything that appears in his own lifetime. 37

In his choice of touchstones Mr. Scott-James believes that Arnold occasionally was influenced by moral rather than by estheti-

tic standards. He thinks most of the lines admirable, but adds:

I admit to experiencing some sense of shock when...we come upon these from Milton:

And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome.

The sentiment is excellent. The moral is a noble one. It recalls all the admirable ethical qualities which Milton gives to his heroic Satan. But in regard to the "style and manner," the "diction and movement," from which "the matter and substance of the best poetry" are "inseparable," what are we to say of these indifferent lines with their redundant phrases. Milton morally exalted—poetically, in his weakest vein. 38

Exception to Arnold's literary judgment of Chaucer is made by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Arnold, it may be recalled, denies to Chaucer the rank of a great classic because his poetry lacks high and excellent seriousness. Of this Mr. Quiller-

33 Scott-James, R.A., The Making of Literature, p. 278
Couch says (1922):

It would be cruel to Arnold's memory to suspect him of the British fault of mistrusting for serious whatever happens to be illuminated by humor. But I do suspect him of having over-looked Troilus, one of the most nobly serious poems in our language.

To support his contention Mr. Quiller-Couch quotes from Troilus:

And loveth Him the which that right for love
Upon a cros our soules to bye
First starf and roos and sit in hevone above,
For he nil falsen no wight darI seye
That wol his heart al hoolly on himleye
And sin He best to love is and most make
What nedeth feyned loves for to seeke.

"Nobly serious" this passage undoubt-edly is and, although not truly representative of Chaucer, Mr. Quiller-Couch is justified in quoting it. Yet, to even an

Quiller-Couch, Studies in Literature, 2nd Series, p. 241
undiscerning person the lines lack that "high-seriousness" which Arnold attributed to Dante, to Shakespeare, and to Milton. Perhaps it is the homely sweetness in many of Chaucer's thoughtful passages which separated them from the austerely great, and which makes us satisfied with Arnold's judgment.

Mr. Scott-James (1928), Mr. Kingsmill (1925), and Mr. Quiller-Couch (1922) concur in censuring many of Arnold's literary appraisals, particularly his failure to appreciate Shelley and his harsh treatment of Keats in regard to Fanny Brawne. Both of these judgments, according to Mr. Scott-James and Mr. Kingsmill, arise from Arnold's tendency to confuse moral and literary standards of excellence. Mr. Quiller-Couch's opinion regarding the Shelley criticism is vigorous and somewhat unusual:
The only void in which Shelley ever beat his luminous wings in vain was a void in Matthew Arnold's understanding...Arnold's essay on Shelley is "sour": with all its skill as a piece of writing, it does not contrive to hide a certain amount of positive unfairness...Though "soured" would be the juster word, for Arnold, poet of the Strayed Reueler must have loved Shelley in his time and with his whole heart. 41

It is difficult to think of Arnold writing "sourly," yet, at times, one feels that he is too austere, too exacting in his critical standards. His sense of shades of excellence is admirable but, concerning his literary judgments as a whole, Mr. Scott-James query is well put:

We may ask whether it is fair to demand that all hills should be Alps. Is there not an excellence in some minor poetry worth while on its own account? May we not miss its qualities if we too insistently disparage it by the greatest. 42

41 Quiller-Couch, A., Studies in Literature, Second Series, pp. 461-2
42 Scott-James, R.A. The Making of Literature, p. 281
The last evaluations of Arnold critical writing to be considered are those relative to his criticism of criticism. "A disinterested endeavor to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas"—this Arnold repeatedly averred was the function of criticism. Mr. Kingsmill (1928) and Mr. Scott-James (1928) find Arnold himself lacking in disinterestedness.

Mr. Kingsmill suggests that the attacks in the first essay in Essays in Criticism on "Sir Charles Adderley, Mr. Roebuck, contemporary English literature, the British Constitution, Bishop Colenso, and the Liberal party" are far from disinterested. Arnold's lack of personal

sympathy was apparent under the veneer of urbanity, charm and persuasion with which he attempted to conceal his censure. Citing The Saturday Review's criticism of the contemptuous tone of Arnold's Homer lectures, Mr. Kingsmill says:

No application of self-hypnosis surely could convince [Arnold] that his charm and persuasion had quite come off that time. 44

Little fresh comment is offered by Mr. Scott-James in the first of his discussion of Arnold's code for criticism. He finds that the function of Arnold's criticism is, in the broadest sense, to promote culture; he notes the moral aspect culture has for Arnold, and "while not trying to find fault with him for identifying the culture of the critic with propaganda," seeks to ascertain what

44 Kingsmill, H. Matthew Arnold, pp. 217-218
45 Scott-James, R. A. The Making of Literature, p. 270
"he means when makes so much play with the word disinterested." Arnold did not.

Mr. Scott-James feels confident, mean what is meant today when it is said an artist or a critic must be disinterested. From a passage in the essay on Heine this interpretation of the term is deduced:

The critic will be disinterested in the sense that he will pursue only the ends of cultural perfection, and will be uninfluenced by the coarser appeals of the Philistine. 46

Mr. Scott-James further criticism (1928) is particularly interesting:

In analysing the pernicious influences which beset the critic Arnold has made a great advance, and has rendered a service to criticism. He has put before him for his guidance a majestic ideal of intellectual and spiritual excellence, in accord with the best that has been known and thought in the world. But let us frankly face his position. He has urged that the critic should be free from ignoble interests; but in doing so he has asked for his sub-

45 Scott-James, R.A. The Making of Literature p. 270
46 Scott-James R.A. The Making of Literature, p. 271
jection to certain other interests which may be the more subtly beguiling because they are noble. He has emancipated him from certain intellectually unworthy interests only to bind him all the more tightly to spiritual interests determined, however sweetly and reasonably, by "the moral and social passion for doing good." 47

This is markedly the attitude of the critics of this last decade of the twentieth century, although a few are glad that Arnold remained in bondage to spiritual interests. Mr. Scott-James continues his discussion by analysing what he believes is the present conception of disinterestedness. In an artist it is to "provide... an experience; any end beyond making that experience vivid and complete being an alien end, destructive to the artists singleness of purpose." Since "the first business of the critic is to endeavor to put himself as the viewpoint

47 Scott-James, R.A. The Making of Literature, p. 271, 272
48 Ibid., p. 272
of the artist," disinterestedness in a critic must be essentially the same as in the creator. Arnold's "disinterestedness," Mr. Scott-James feels sure (1928), has no reference to this effort of the critic to associate himself with the artist. It is pertinent only to the critic's social activities, to his "going into the world to break a lance on behalf of the authors he esteems." In this capacity there is need for him to set his face against "ulterior political, practical considerations about ideas," and set himself to "communicate fresh knowledge" in the light of "the best that is known and thought in the world," and "to create a current of true and fresh ideas."

Arnold's decision that there was little in his own age which merited the true critic's consideration reveals, in the opinion of Mr. Kingsmill (1928), a lack of

49 Scott-James, R.A. *The Making of Lit.* pp. 272-3
50 Ibid., p. 273
51 Ibid., p. 274
discernment. He reminds us that:

The barren age from which Arnold purposed to deliver English literature, included, taking the fifty years preceding the appearance of *Essays in Criticism*, the best work of Keats, Shelley, Dickens, Carlyle, Thackeray, Tennyson, Swinburne and Browning... What Arnold's age suffered was not from sterility but congestion. 52

Mr. Scott-James (1928), recalling that Arnold considered his age an "era of progress," a period of "industrial development" and "lacking in the elements which are needed for the exercise of a great art," wonders if he would, if alive today,

pass over so disdainfully the poetry, drama, or fiction of such men as Ibsen, Walt Whitman, Flaubert, Thomas Hardy, Chekhov, Verhagen... How could this usually discerning critic, who says that art is a "criticism of life" venture to condemn so much life as unfit for the artists creation. 53

52 Kingsmill, R., *Matthew Arnold*, p. 221
54 Ibid., p. 267
A corollary of Arnold's definition of criticism, and one which he delighted in stressing, was that an era of criticism preceded or inaugurated an era of creative activity. Regarding this Mr. Kingsmill's and Mr. Scott-James's opinions are in agreement. The former admits "that some epochs are more favorable to poetry than others," but adds:

Criticism follows creation, and corrects it. The baby cannot be beaten till it is born. This fallacy of Arnold's...is frequently used nowadays by those who, finding themselves unable to create, do not see how the mystery can be explained on any other ground than the presumed unsuitability of the age to exercise of the imaginative faculty. Hence the present fashion of towardness—Towards a New Poetry, Towards a New Religion, Towards a New World. 56

The critic, according to Arnold, is "a John the Baptist, preparing the way for one whose shoe is not worthy to unloose." It

56 Ibid., p. 220
may be true, Mr. Scott-James admits (1928), "that the powerful critic plays his part in fertilizing the soil and in watering the young plant," nevertheless.

Arnold has advanced no reason for believing that...the critic's is more than one of the many voices which fill the air and set the echoes ringing, stirring the creative impulse of potential poets in our midst. This art impulse does not necessarily spring from formally correct ideas—it is started by notions of any and every kind hurtling from side to side. It is not released only by the force of culture, though culture will keep it in the straight and narrow path.

Two recent estimates which relate particularly to Arnold's present place in criticism may well serve as a conclusion to this survey of the 1920-1930 period. Mr. Montague (1928) makes a plea for a return to Arnold's method of criticism solely on the basis of its ethical value. The critic

57 Scott-James, R.A., The Making of Literature, p. 275
58 Ibid., p. 275
of today who wants to be "in mode" lays it down "that no imaginative author should manifest a dislike for "scrubs or polecats," in spite of the fact that the natural man quite simply and frankly prefers those bus-conductors who do not steal his change to those who do," and is most at home with those people "whom nobody would want to blackball at a club." Mr. Montague is convinced that the words "good" and "bad" in the moral sense are not wholly obsolete solecisms. He says:

What a thrill the average man would get from any unconventional pioneer who let fashion go hang and said that conduct was three-fourths of life...and that literature is only losing the way and going off to dawdle in blind alleys when it ceases 59 to take account of the fact! Let him come to Arnold with a fresh mind, and that thrill will be his.

Mr. Eliot believes (1930) that Arnold "holds his position... by the power of his rhetoric and by representing a point of view," but "in the end is at his best in... his defence and enunciation of a needed attitude." There is, according to Mr. Eliot, a revival of interest in Arnold in our own time, and he calls the Victorian critic the "forerunner of what is now called humanism." Though we may not turn to Arnold as disciples, though he is no longer a leader in either cultural or critical fields, he is, Mr. Eliot believes, "a stimulus to proceed."

"Two swallows do not make a summer," nor can one forecast the future reputation of a writer from the opinions of two critics, but a reasonable conjecture might be that an age weary of unrestrained self-
expression in literature, and weary also of wayward criticism may find tonic value in Arnold's critical rectitude and that the incipient swing of the pendulum may give impetus to the present revival of interest in his criticism.

In conclusion it may be said that between 1920 and 1930 evaluations of Arnold's criticism are, on the whole, more censorious than in any period of the century. He is, however, more of a factor than he was in the decade just preceding. His very inexorableness is a challenge to both the laissez-faire and conservative critics. He is a reproach to the former, a stimulus to the latter. For that reason, and also because of the frequent discussion of the chaotic state of criticism, Arnold is more commented on in this period (1920-1930) than in any previous, although much of the comment is fragmentary and
valueless. Neither Arnold's theories of literature, nor his critical principles, practices and judgments are generally approved during these years, but at the close of the second half of the decade his critical reputation is slightly in ascendancy.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

To review briefly the estimates discussed in the preceding chapters, it may be said that at the opening of the twentieth century Matthew Arnold was considered among the foremost of English critics, but that the appraisals of his work made between 1890 and 1900 are not of lasting value because of the proximity of the period to Arnold's own. Estimates as yet tended to be laudatory or condemnatory as Arnold himself had been esteemed or despised. During the first decade of the century, his critical reputation was decidedly in the ascendency; as an artist and a preceptist he was much in fashion. Between 1910 and 1920 his popularity waned, but he suf-
fered more from neglect than from censure. In the third decade of the century, as a result of the fashion of berating the Victorians, Arnold's criticism received a full share of condem-
nation. At the close of the decade, however, there is apparently a revival of interest in his critical work, and re-
newed belief in its merit.

Data gathered from the English Cata-
logue support these judgments as to
Arnold's critical reputation. From
1904 (the date of the first avail-
able catalog) to 1910, 33 editions of
Arnold's works (prose and poetry)
were published; from 1910 to 1920,
19; from 1920 to 1930, 27. The U.S.
Catalogue likewise shows a similar
fluctuation, although the records
in this book are not complete enough
to be relied upon. The Reader's
Guide and International Index have
the following number of references:
1900-1910, 50; 1910-1920, 16; 1920-
1930, 31.
During the investigation made in this study, certain reflections have naturally suggested themselves. The first is that in the twentieth century Arnold's place as a critic of literature seems due, chiefly, to his literary craftsmanship. In each of the decades surveyed this craftsmanship has been acknowledged by even his opponents. Today there is for the discriminating reader ever fresh pleasure as well as intellectual stimulus in the Essays in Criticism, particularly in the studies of Heine, Wordsworth, Marcus Aurelius, the de Guerins, and George Sand. As pure literature, they are delightful specimens of creative criticism in both the new and the old sense of that term.

Arnold, too, by his theories and dicta seems to persist as a force in lit-
erary criticism. Early reviews of his essays are most concerned with his felicity of expression, his lucidity of thought, and his cosmopolitanism, whereas later appraisals, particularly from 1910 on, are concerned chiefly with his theories of literature and his method of criticism. This suggests that whereas probably few people than formerly read Arnold's essays for intellectual refreshment or diversion, professional critics still find his theories worthy of serious consideration. Few books on literary criticism even now fail to include discussion of his work. Moreover, not a few writers carry on Arnold's tradition in some form. For instance, F.C. Prescott's Poetry and Myth (1927) is quite patently a brief for Arnold's statement that "most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will
be replaced by poetry," although Mr. Prescott, lacking Arnold's spiritual refinement, presses the theory until the "most" becomes "all". Mr. Phosphor Mallam also follows Arnold. In An Approach to Poetry (1930) he uses the famous definition of that art, "criticism of life," as a basis for his chapter on Thought.

The decline of Arnold's popularity with the general reading public has to some extent been compensated for by the place accorded him in college curricula. Today, "every school boy knows" Sohrab and Rustum and, likewise, how to study poetry. There may be a peculiar recompense in this passing of Arnold from the gift-book to the college textbook stage of literary favor. It at least insures his "getting at" the class he

most longed to reach, the class whose literary taste may possibly be improved. The very definiteness of the touchstone method, scorned and derided by critics, may prove a blessed boon to the student struggling to distinguish between the rhymed platitudes of Edgar Guest and the sententious harmonies of Shakespeare.

Something of the twentieth century estimate of Arnold's criticism is suggested by a consideration of the critics who have found his essays worthy of comment. Though this study has been confined to opinions expressed by English and American writers, it cannot be doubted that Arnold has been an influence, also, in France and in Germany. The interest shown by critics of various nations in his work is in itself a means of establishing that "intellectual confedera-
tion" which Arnold felt should exist among modern nations.

Remembering Arnold's lack of affection for America and Americans, and his not too successful tour made here, it is pleasant to find that judgments of his work show no trace of national prejudice. English and American critics are fairly in accord as to his merits and weaknesses. If there is at the present time in either country a tendency to overpraise him it is in our own, a result, no doubt, of the fact that young American cities look upon Arnold as a forerunner of the modern humanists. The advocacy of Arnold's principles by Mr. Babbitt, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Sherman finds no parallel in England, nor is there in that country a counterpart of America's "Illinois Arnold." As a theorist in the fields of social and literary
criticism, Arnold seems more generally approved in the United States than in England. As a pure critic of literature his worth is acknowledged in both countries with apparent uniformity.

The type of critic with whom Arnold has found favor during this century is, in some measure, indicative of the changing attitude toward him. It will be remembered that Mr. Saintsbury, modified perhaps unconsciously but nevertheless quite clearly, his first unfavorable judgment and conceded Arnold's merit both as a preceptist and craftsman. Other academic and judicial critics in each decade have championed him, as, for example, between 1900 and 1910, Oliver Elton and John Churton Collins; between 1910 and 1920, W.C. Brownell, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More; between 1920
and 1930, Laurie Magnus, Stuart P. Sherman and Stanley Williams. But in the second half of the decade just past (1920-1930) Arnold finds favor, also, with critics who are assuredly not of the academic school: Mr. Scott-James, Mr. T. S. Eliot, and Mr. C. E. Montague. Up to about 1925 favorable comment from non-academic critics was occasioned only by Arnold's style, and by his literary artistry. Mr. Scott-James, Mr. Eliot and Mr. Montague, however, stress particularly the sanity of Arnold's critical attitude.

This approval of Arnold by some of the less conservative critics recalls a passage in one of the most delightful of his essays, that on Joubert. He speaks there of the two kinds of authors: "the great abiding fountains of truth,"

2 Essays in Criticism, First Series.
who are, nevertheless "immortal in function and who inspires a permanent interest." These less brilliant writers, lacking true sublimity, will never be universally reverenced, but neither will they be "trampled down" by the multitude; they will be "singled out and preserved by the very iconoclasts" of the generation which follows them. To apply such a vigorous term as "iconoclast" to Mr. Scott-James, Mr. Eliot, and Mr. Montague may seem unjust, yet these critics are, surely, not of the image-worshipping school of writers. Fully in touch with the current of present-day thought they, nevertheless, discern in Arnold's criticism not only that peculiar grace of expression and freshness of thought which

---

so distinguish it from mere book-reviewing, but also that "truth which illumines
and gives joy and by which men's spirits
are indissolubly held."

To those who delight in Arnold's
essays for the sheer pleasure and in-
tellectual stimulus their reading brings,
and who prize the essential rightness of
the principles set forth in them, it is
satisfying to feel that even so slight a
survey as the one made in this study in-
dicates that these works and these stand-
ards are "like the lamp of life to be
handed on from one generation to another
in safety."

3 Ibid., p. 334  Essays in Criticism
4 Ibid., p. 334
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS BY MATTHEW ARNOLD


B. BOOKS ABOUT MATTHEW ARNOLD


**C. CRITICAL REFERENCES IN BOOKS**


Tovey, Duncan C. *Reviews and Essays* (London, 1897), pp. 71-37.

Scudder, Vida D., Social Ideals in English Letters. What to Do According to Arnold (Boston, 1898), pp. 233-242.


Woodberry, George Edward, Makers of Literature (New York, 1900), pp. 1-27.


Knight, William A., Retrospects (New York, 1904), vol. 1, pp. 193-204.


Smith, Arnold, Main Tendencies of Victorian Poetry, The Poetry of Intellectual Doubt (Birmingham,
1907), pp. 116-132.

Maugham, Laurence, English Literature in

Saintsbury, George, A History of Nine-
teenth Century Literature 1780-

More, Paul Elmer, Shelburne Essays (New
York, 1910), vol. 7, pp. 213-244.

Collins, John Churton, Posthumous Essays

Raleigh, Walter, Matthew Arnold, Essays
in Criticism (London, 1912), Introduction, pp. I-XVI.

Chesterton, Gilbert Keith, The Victorian
Age in Literature (London, 1913),
pp. 73-79.

Hunt, Theodore Whitefield, English Lit-
erary Miscellany, Second Series

The Cambridge History of English Lit-
erature (New York, 1917), volume
XIII, 2, pp. 95-115.

Goldmark, Mrs. Ruth (Ingersoll), Studies
in the Influence of the Classics
on English Literature. The Hellen-

Harris, Frank, Contemporary Portraits (New York, 1920), vol. 1, pp. 240-257.

Elton, Oliver, A Sheaf of Papers (London, 1922), p. 6, p. 52, p. 78.


Magnus, Laurie, A Dictionary of European Literature (New York, 1926), pp. 21-22.


Sherman, Stuart Pratt, Shaping Men and Women (Garden City, N.Y., 1928), pp. 265-281.


Frye, Prosser Hall, Visions and Chimeras (Boston, 1929), pp. 72-78.


D. GENERAL REFERENCE BOOKS


E. CRITICAL REFERENCES

MAGAZINE ARTICLES


