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Matthew Arnold's Writings on Education in Relation to His Idea of Culture

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Matthew Arnold's Writings on Education in Relation to His Idea of Culture

by

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A Thesis Written in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Loyola University 1940
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Matthew Arnold's Writing on Education in Relation to His Ideas of Culture

Introduction

During Matthew Arnold's childhood and early youth, England was in the throes of political, social and religious revolution. As the boy grew up under the influence of his brilliant father, Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby, he was bound to become vitally interested in the movements that were tending to overthrow many long-established traditions in the life of his countrymen; and his own active and intelligent mind early began to grapple with the problems which puzzled the minds of so many thinking Englishmen of his day.

We discover with surprise, however, that Arnold's interest in his fellowmen, and in the seriousness of his own responsibility, was quite late in making its appearance. Lionel Trilling, in his Matthew Arnold, informs us that during his school and college days, Arnold was generally considered literary, but he was thought to a far greater degree to be a dandy. He cared very little for discipline, even in his father's own Rugby, and not even at Oxford did he show great gravity of manner or purpose. As we study further his apparent lack of serious conviction as to his responsibilities, it becomes manifest that his actions are a mask behind which is growing that spirit which is to take upon itself a profound devotion to all that concerns the welfare and
advancement of his countrymen.

Another thing that strikes one forcibly in the study of Arnold's life is that, although he felt strongly his duty to help in the solution of the problems of his day, he was by no means an active public figure until quite late in life. His tastes were all in the opposite direction; he would have preferred by all means a quiet life of study and contemplation. He would have liked to give to the world, by means of his pen alone and in the form of theory, the help that he might offer in the solving of his nation's problems.

Early in Arnold's life, the English had succeeded in gaining a great measure of the personal liberty for which they had so long striven. The king, who had ascended the throne during the period of struggle, was stripped of his power and became nothing more than a figurehead of a past civilization. The House of Commons had become the ruling power in England. The struggle for personal liberty, and the establishment of democracy in place of the centralization of rights and of power exercised by a favored aristocracy, were the underlying purposes of most of the reforms which were so materially to change English life. The emergence of the middle and lower classes from a position of submission caused many serious thinkers to feel alarm as to what the masses would do with their newly acquired freedom.

\[\text{Cf. Matthew Arnold, Chapter 1.}\]
To safeguard the best interests of England, to prevent its falling a prey to misguided and ignorant leaders, was a problem which called for the best efforts of thinking men. Matthew Arnold, among these, could see no better way than the education of his fellowmen to the appreciation of culture, as he understood the term—the perfection of the whole man.

Arnold had very little respect for the culture of the middle classes, upon whom were to devolve the political and social destinies of England. Of course he understood that these persons had had no opportunities for culture; but he was alarmed lest the added power which they had attained would be wrongly used, and would result unfavorably, both for themselves and for the country they were to govern. Arnold's primary idea in attacking this problem was that the middle and lower classes should be educated, and he had very definite ideas for the carrying out of his theories. These middle and lower classes must first of all be made to appreciate the value of culture, and to acquire it at any cost. Culture according to Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* is that condition "in which the love of our neighbor, the impulses toward action, help and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—came in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and
Arnold feared for the middle classes that the material well-being which began to show itself in all walks of life in England would so engross their attention that the pursuit of culture—"the study and pursuit of perfection"—would be entirely neglected. He agreed to the necessity of the movement toward "fortune making and exaggerated industrialism" and says that the future would undoubtedly derive benefit from it, but he did not wish the amassing of wealth to become the sole end of men's struggles. He did not wish at any time that the physical should take precedence over the spiritual.

It was because of Arnold's extreme interest in the problem of educating the middle classes with a view to their governing the England of the future, that he undertook in 1851 the position which he held for thirty-five years,—that of inspector of schools.

He was convinced that means should be used to educate democratic society as soon as possible. He felt that the masses should be enlightened and regenerated, lest the political destinies of England fall under the control of the ignorant. To solve this great problem, he wrote, in his office as Inspector of Schools, a large number of reports on his views of the educational system in England. For the Educational Commissioner he prepared a report on the Continental system of education.

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2 Culture and Anarchy, p. 27
And in some of his other writings he developed his ideas of educational administration, organization, and choice of studies.

Arnold's interest in the problem of educating the masses was a direct result of his theory of poetry and of criticism. He says that the province of poetry is to "animate and ennoble mankind," and that criticism is the instrument for discovering and evaluating the best of those ideas which mark the advance of democracy. He could see a very close relationship between literature and life. When we realize the significance of these theories, we can see the reason why a man whose primary interest was the creating and judging of literature, should take up a task which must have been a hindrance to his poetical spirit, as all routine tasks must be. Although the office of School Inspector interfered greatly with Arnold's literary work, the good that he accomplished in the performance of his duties, must have been sufficient compensation to him.

It is important to mention the educational conditions in England about the time of Matthew Arnold, for in some respects he is connected with many of its movements. During the Nineteenth Century the history of elementary education was the record of a persistent attack against privilege. Equality of educational opportunity was taking the place of a system of education graded according to the social position of the individual, and what was once a question of charity became a matter

of right. Elementary education, as it existed in the nation, was the result of a slow process of evolution, characterized by failures, by opportunities, by compromise, by experiment, and by success. Reform in England, as elsewhere, was the outcome of a long and sometimes blind struggle toward better things. There have been periods when criticism rather than constructive ideas have predominated, just as there have been periods of rapid educational advance when the vitality and force of a new faith have carried a nation forward.

The outstanding feature of English elementary education, no matter how it is viewed, was the manner in which it responded to and interpreted the conflicting social, religious, and cultural aspirations of the times. In the eighteenth century, elementary education in England was dependent upon charity or it was sponsored wholly by individuals. The agencies administering it grouped under three heads,—private, domestic, and charitable. Schools under those heads existed and indeed flourished in great numbers down to 1870, when a State system of elementary education was introduced.

The National Public School Association Bill of 1850 proposed that inspectors should be appointed to determine the educational needs of districts. It was under this bill that Arnold was given a position as Inspector. Several bills and codes were introduced later, but the Elementary Educational Bill introduced by Mr. Foster, Chancellor of the Exchequer,
was the most important. It provided that national education be provided by law. After the Act of 1870, elementary education was made universal and compulsory; the education provided was improved and a more rational system of inspection replaced the old plan of payment by the result of examination.

On the whole, many and wide spread reforms were introduced and carried through owing to Arnold's untiring zeal in making known to the authorities the existing condition of education in England, his theories with regard to its improvement.

It is not difficult to observe the great influence that Arnold exerted upon the entire educational system of England by means of his position in the school system of his time, and by means of his insistence upon cultural education, in his writings. Even in the present century the immense progress which England has made along educational lines, may be traced to Arnold's influence, and we see now that his educational researches and theories are an integral part of his cultural and literary idealism.

In the thesis which follows, I shall endeavor to point out Arnold's contribution to the field of public education, his plan for improving the educational conditions of the middle classes, and his influence upon the later intellectual development of England and the Continent.
Chapter 1
Arnold's Ideas on the Objectives and the Scope of Elementary Education

Education, according to Matthew Arnold, is the acquisition of culture, and culture is the study and pursuit of perfection. Perfection consists in the complete development of the whole man; and when man has developed socially, politically, intellectually and morally, to the limit of his possibilities, he may be said to be educated. Arnold follows this idea of the desire for perfection through all his works. Even when his poetic career had just begun, we find him voicing his yearning for perfection, and discovering that nature alone cannot give it to him. It is not long before he finds an answer to his desire for perfection. Although he fights against accepting it, he finally admits that the law of God governs mankind, and only in submitting to this law is man even on the road to perfection. It is in the acceptance of God's supreme dominion that the State and society, as well as the moral life of the individual, finds its means of perfection. This obligation to struggle toward perfection must not keep a man isolated. The will of God must prevail, not only in individuals but in the state, and it is only by mutual help that men will attain the end for which they must
strive, and will reach true greatness.

This idea of greatness, Arnold knew, would hardly be acceptable to the England of his time, which was steeped in the pride of its material prosperity. He feared that the nation would become so satisfied with the "mechanical civilization" in which it gloried, that the desired culture would be completely lost sight of. It was not that Arnold could not see the importance of material prosperity as a great factor in national greatness, but he insisted that this consciousness of mechanical greatness should not be allowed to crowd out the desire for culture.

Arnold could see that culture as he understood it would not be accepted as a necessary, or even a useful quality in the political world. It would have to be by long training and discipline that the nation would be made to see any practical relation between culture and politics. Nevertheless, he thought that by a gradual process of reform by culture, the welfare of the State would have been taken from the hands of unscrupulous Party leaders, and would be safe under the direction of sincere and public-spirited men who would be eminently capable of inspiring men with newer and higher motives for political action. It was in this way that he intended that culture should reform politics.

Much in the same way, Arnold hoped that culture would add
what was wanting in all phases of society, especially in that of the middle class. He had great hopes for this branch of English society, because he thought that these people were eager for new ideas, and were full of energy and self-reliance. He thought that the possession of these qualities was a sufficient guarantee, that, with the right education the middle class would become a group of thinkers, as well as doers.

Arnold accepted a position, in 1851, as an officer of the Educational Department, a post which he held for thirty-five years. As has already been stated, he undertook and carried on his duties in an extremely thorough and conscientious manner, since he felt that through this office he might be able to influence the education of the middle classes so as to include in their elementary training those subjects and practices conducive to the acquiring of culture.

It was in pursuance of this object, that his efforts were bent, from the very outset of his official career, toward the freeing of the schools, not only from the obligation of financial payment, but from the trammels of what he calls "ecclesiastical competition in the domain of education." It is interesting to note in this connection, that, while he spoke against the control of schools by either the Church of England or the dissenting ministers, he had the highest praise for the Catholic schools which he visited in Europe.
Arnold realized that the teachers of the elementary schools should receive the first attention of those interested in the furthering of the culture of the middle classes, and he lent his efforts towards giving them all possible assistance. He was deeply in sympathy with them, and "felt the difficulty of their task. He says;

No one feels more than I do how laborious is their work, how trying at times to the health and spirit, how full of difficulty even for the best; how much fuller for those, whom I too often see attempting the work of a schoolmaster—men of weak health and purely studious habits, who betake themselves to this profession, as affording the means to continue their favourite pursuits; not knowing, alas, that for all but men of the most singular and exceptional vigour and energy, there are no pursuits more irreconcilable than those of the student and of the schoolmaster. Still, the quantity of work actually done at present by teachers is immense; the sincerity and devotedness of much of it is even affecting. They themselves will be the greatest gainers by a system of reporting which clearly states what they do and what they fail to do; not one which drowning alike success and failure, the able and inefficient, in a common flood of vague approbation.\(^4\)

It follows, of course, that the teachers corresponded to the effort put forth in their regard. Sir Joshua Fitch says:

His fine taste, his gracious and kindly manner, his honest and generous recognition of any new form of excellence which he observed, all tended to raise the aims and tone of the teachers with whom he came in contact, and to encourage in them self-respect, and respect for their work.\(^5\)

\(^4\) Reports on Elementary Schools 1854, p. 34.
\(^5\) Thomas and Matthew Arnold's Influence on Education in England, p. 171.
In pursuance of this his object,—that of aiding the teachers in every way possible, not only to make their work more pleasant and agreeable, but more profitable to their pupils, he had some very definite and practical ideas. He had a strong dislike for works on pedagogy, inasmuch as he thought the set rules contained in them would result in a sort of formalism which would kill all eager desire for culture.

How, he asks, is a sensible teacher likely to effect most practical good? Is it by betaking himself to the scientific teachers of pedagogy, by feeding on generalities such as I have just above quoted, by learning that we are to disuse rule-teaching, and adopt teaching by principles, that we are to teach things 'in the concrete instead of in the abstract,' that we are to walk worthy of the doctrine long ago enunciated by Pestalozzi, that 'alike in its order and its methods education must conform to the natural process of mental evolution'? The worst of such doctrines is that everything depends upon the practical application given to them, and it seems so easy to give a practical application which is erroneous. The doctrine of Pestalozzi, for instance, may be excellent, and no one can say that it has not found ardent friends to accept it and employ it; and the result is that one sees a teacher holding up an apple to a gallery of little children, and saying; 'An apple has a stalk, peel, pulp, core, pips, and juice; it is odorous and opaque, and is used for making a pleasant drink called cider.'

In virtue of like 'doctrine,' new methods of spelling, new methods of learning arithmetic are called for. Some of them are ingenious. We must always remember, however, that their apparent conformity to some general doctrine apparently true is no guarantee of their soundness. The practical application alone tests this, and often a method
Thus tested reveals unsuspected weakness. Then there is, besides, the difficulty of getting new methods which are unfamiliar substitutes for old methods which are familiar.

Arnold points out that there are, for the teachers, new problems to solve, new unfamiliar methods to learn, but that one would work on the old line, use his own initiative, and make use of what he finds beneficial in the new methods. He sums up what he considers the duty of the teacher, in the following words:

The best thing for a teacher to do is surely to put before himself in the utmost simplicity the problem he has to solve. He has to instruct children between the ages of four and thirteen, children, too, who have for the most part a singularly narrow range of words and thoughts. He has, so far as secular instruction goes, to give to those children the power of reading, of writing, and (according to the good phrase) of casting accounts. He has to give them some knowledge of the world in which they find themselves, and of what happens and has happened in it; some knowledge, that is, of the great facts and laws of nature, some knowledge of geography and of history, above all of the history of their own country. He has to do as much towards opening their mind, and opening their soul and imagination, as is possible to be done with a number of children of their age and in their state of preparation and home surroundings.

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6 Reports on Elementary Schools 1878, pp. 212-213
7 Ibid., Report for 1878, p. 213
As is shown in his official reports, Arnold insisted that the opening of the soul and the imagination of children should be entrusted to none but to proficient and cultured teachers who are interested in the welfare of the pupils. "The teacher will open the children's soul and imagination the better, the more he has opened his own: so he will also clear their understanding the better, the more he has cleared his own." It was not only book-knowledge, but taste and culture, he considered most important, for he did all he could to urge on the younger teachers the necessity of acquiring culture for themselves in order to be able to impart it to others.

He tried to encourage the teachers in his district to continue improving themselves by going to the London University after they had acquired their legal certificate. "It is among the teachers that the desire for a better culture, and the attainment of it, must show itself. It shows itself in those in my district by more and more numerous efforts to pass the examinations which the London University, with a wise liberality, makes accessible to so large and various a class of candidates." In the pursuit of his primary end, that of imparting culture, and of making the children of the middle classes

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8 Ibid., Report for 1878, p. 215
9 Ibid., Report for 1863, p. 108
desire culture, he held that it was necessary to include in the curriculum not only those subjects which bore upon the industrial life of the pupil, such as sewing, calculating, writing and spelling, but those subjects which he calls "formative", particularly the study of poetry.

He knew the value of good reading-books, although he admitted that these good books were not easily acquired. Just the practice of reading, that is, for its mechanical purpose, any reading book available would do, even if the variety of content was somewhat promiscuous. But he did not consider these books as literature and asked to have books used that would help in forming the taste and judgement of the pupils. He had a dislike for the use of reading-books that were used as instruments for imparting stories of scientific knowledge. For higher purposes, to form the pupil, besides giving him knowledge, not only good literature should be read, but good poetry also. "Good poetry", he said, "is formative; it has, too, the precious power of acting by itself and in a way suggested by nature."\textsuperscript{10} Hence he thought it was of importance to have the children memorize extracts of good poetry.

I believe that even the rhythm and diction of good poetry are capable of exercising some formative

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., Reports for 1878, p. 210
effect, even though the sense be imperfectly understood. But of course the good of poetry is not really got unless the sense of the words is known. And more and more I find it learnt and known; more and more it will be easy to refuse to let the recitation count for anything unless the meaning of what is recited is thoroughly learnt and known. It will be observed that thus we are remedying what I have noticed as the signal mental defect of our schoolchildren—their almost incredible scantiness of vocabulary."

Arnold agreed that all subjects might be taught in the elementary schools, but he urged that English should be made compulsory for all. Good exercises in the English language, also in the meaning, derivation, and definition of words, are the one kind of knowledge that must be gained, not by cramming, but by thought, and it gives the pupils not only knowledge, but amusement. "After learning the definition of a noun, to recognize nouns, when one meets with them, and to refer them to their definition, that is an exercise of intelligence."

He emphasized the point that no system of education was complete which did not provide means for the pupils to learn the right use of the mother tongue.

He did not believe in overloading the curriculum of the elementary schools with numerous optional subjects. He allowed the teachers to select whatever optional subject they

11 Ibid., Reports for 1878, p. 210
12 Ibid., Reports for 1876, p. 190
deemed necessary from a list, including history, geography and various branches of science. But stress must be put on the vernacular tongue, especially in the higher classes. He attached great importance to grammar, even in the elementary course; he says: "Grammar is an exercise of the children's wits: all the rest of their work is in general but an exercise of their memory."13

Arnold thought that the rudiments of Latin and French might well be taught in primary school, as a preparation for further educational opportunities the pupils might have after they left school. Even if the pupil did not continue in secondary schools he would at least know that there are other languages than his own and it would also help him to recognize the meaning of English words derived from the Latin and French languages.

Every one is agreed as to the exceptional position of Latin among the languages for our study. Our school boy of thirteen will do little with his rudiments of Latin unless he carries on his education beyond the scope of our elementary schools and their programmes. But if he does carry it on beyond that scope, Latin is almost a necessity for him. By allowing Latin as a special subject for a certain number of scholars in our elementary schools, we are but recognizing that necessity, and recognizing as surely we very properly may, that for some of the better scholars in our schools the necessity will arise.

13 Ibid., Reports for 1878, p. 189
French, too, has a special claim. To know the rudiments of French has a commercial value. A boy who is possessed of them has an advantage in getting a place. He knows this himself, and his parents know it; a little French, in addition to good attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic, is a recommendation for a place. A little Latin is not, a little German is not, a little botany is not; a little French is. Here is a reason for admitting French to our list of extra subjects, closely limited though this list ought to be. French has the educational value for our school children of being a second language; it has also an educational value for us from its precision and lucidity, qualities in which the expression of us English people is often deficient; and it is, besides, a matter of instruction which has the advantage of much commending itself to the minds of our scholars themselves and of their parents, as a help to a boys start in life.14

Arnold foresaw that the teaching of science would have to be permitted within certain limits. He did not approve of the teaching of mathematics, animal physiology, physical geography, and botany as optional specific subjects in the primary schools, but he was an advocate of the teaching of some of the facts of law and nature, called Naturkunde by the Germans, and called "Physiography" by Huxley, in the elementary school, to the children under thirteen years of age if the technicalities of specific science were omitted.

The excuse for putting most of these matters into our programme is that we are all coming to be agreed that an entire ignorance of the system of nature

14 Ibid., Report for 1878, p. 208
is a gross defect in our children's education as not to know that there ever was such a person as Charles the First. Now our ordinary class-programme provides, or at any rate suggests, some remedy against the second kind of ignorance, for history is one of our class-subjects; it provides none against the first. This is a bolt; we ought surely to provide that some knowledge of the system of nature should form part of the regular class course. Some fragments of such knowledge do in practice form part of the class course at present. Children in learning geography are taught something about the form and motion of the earth, about the causes of night and day and seasons. But why are they taught nothing of the causes, for instance, of rain and dew, which are at least as easy to explain to them, and not less interesting? And this is what the teaching of Naturkunde or natural philosophy (to use the formerly received, somewhat over-ambitious, English name for the kind of thing) should aim at; it should aim at systematizing for the use of our schools a body of simple instruction in the facts and laws of nature, so as to omit nothing which is requisite, and to give all in right proportion. Of course the best agency for effecting this would be a gifted teacher; but as gifted teachers are rare, what we have most to wish for is the guidance of a good text-book. Such a text-book does not at present, so far as I know, exist; some man of science, who is also a master of clear and orderly exposition, should do us the benefit of one. But meanwhile there is not reason for delaying the attempt to teach in a systematic way an elementary knowledge of nature. Text-books abound from which a teacher may obtain in separate portions what he requires; there can be no better discipline for him than to combine out of what he finds in them the kind of whole suited to the simple requirements of his classes. Some teachers will do this a great deal better than others, but all will gain something by attempting it; and their classes too, however imperfectly it is at first often affected will gain by its being attempted.15

15 Ibid., Reports for 1878, pp. 205-206
Because he believed that the study of good literature and good poetry throws light on every other subject of thought, and the study of material facts and laws does not enlighten the intelligence of a student beyond himself, he insisted that the former and not the latter studies, were instruments to form the character and to regulate the life of the pupil.

Arnold was not in favor of including, either in the courses of study or in the systems of examinations, any strictly formal methods, which would hamper the imagination, or prevent the free and intelligent use of the child's own abilities. Anything which would be a hindrance to the pleasure taken in the pursuit of culture of knowledge for its own sake was extremely distasteful to him. He sets forth his views on the subject of examinations in the following:

Inspection under the old system meant something like the following: The inspector took a school class by class. He seldom heard each child in a class read, but he called out a certain number to read, picked at random as specimens of the rest; and when this was done he questioned the class with freedom, and in his own way, on the subjects of their instruction. As you got near the top of a good school these subjects became more numerous; they embraced English grammar, geography, and history, for each of which the inspector's report contained a special entry, and the examination then often acquired much variety and interest. The whole life and power of a class, and fitness of its composition, its handling by the teacher, were well tested; the inspector became well acquainted with them, and was enabled to make his
remarks on them to the head teacher; and a powerful means of correcting, improving, and stimulating them was thus given. The new examination groups the children by its standards, not by their classes; and however much we may strive to make the standards correspond with the classes we cannot make them correspond at all exactly." The examiner, therefore, does not take the children in their own classes. The life and power of each class as a whole, the fitness of its composition, its handling by the teacher, he therefore does not test. He hears every child in the group before him read, and so far his examination is more complete than the old inspection. But he does not question them; he does not, as an examiner under the rule of the six standards, go beyond the three matters, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the amount of these three matters which the standards themselves prescribe; and, indeed, the entries for grammar, geography, and history have now altogether disappeared from the forms of report furnished to the inspector. The nearer, therefore, he gets to the top of the school the more does his examination, in itself, become an inadequate means of testing the real attainments and intellectual life of the scholars before him. The new examination is in itself a less exhausting business than the old inspection to the person conducting it; it does not make a call as that did upon his spirit and inventiveness; but it takes up much more time, it throws upon him a mass of minute detail, and severely tasks hand and eye to avoid mistakes.16

Arnold realized early in his official career that compulsory education for the middle classes was necessary. The Philistines, as he styles them, were as a whole well satisfied with their own condition. They did not realize the value of anything except

16 Ibid., Reports for 1863, pp. 98-102
wealth and industry, and would have been willing to forego all culture, if left to themselves. Therefore their only salvation, at least in the beginning, was in having education forced upon them. It was for this end that Arnold directed unremitting efforts for seventeen years. Even after a law was passed enforcing education upon all the children of the middle class, the authorities made little effort to enforce it. In the report of 1867, Arnold says:

Throughout my district I find the idea of compulsory education becoming a familiar idea with those who are interested in schools. I imagine that with the newly awakened sense of our shortcomings in popular education....the difficult thing would not be to pass a law making education compulsory; the difficult thing would be to work such a law after we had got it. In Prussia, which is so often quoted, education is not flourishing because it is compulsory, it is compulsory because it is flourishing. Because people there really prize instruction and culture, and prefer them to other things, therefore they have no difficulty in imposing on themselves the rule to get instruction and culture. In this country people prefer to them politics, station, business, money-making and many other things.17

As early as 1869 Arnold anticipated that compulsory education would later mean the freeing of schools. "Gratuitous schooling," he says, is "rapidly passing out of the sphere of abstract discussion, and entering into the sphere of practical politics."18 In spite of the fact that he held the principle

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17 Ibid., Reports for 1867, pp. 125-126  
18 Ibid., Reports for 1878, p. 213
that people "value more highly" that which cost something, he advocated making public school education gratuitous to the upper, as well as to the lower classes in the community.

Matthew Arnold was a sincere and devoted public servant. His efforts for improving education, and his high and disinterested pursuit of culture for himself and his fellow countrymen have gradually obtained more and more favorable results. At the present we find the reforms which he advocated an integral part of the English school system.
Chapter 11
Arnold's Comparison of English Education with the Continental and French Achievement

During the course of Arnold's official life he had the opportunity of making three visits to the Continent. These trips were of great advantage of himself, and particularly to the cause of education in England. He made it his business to inquire minutely into the educational systems of those countries which he visited, and upon his return home introduced a great deal of the information thus obtained, into his official reports.

He prepared, in 1861, his first report for the Commissioners who had the charge of looking into the state of popular education in England. Arnold had been appointed Assistant Foreign Commissioner by the government, a post which required that he visit a number of foreign countries with the purpose of inquiring and reporting on the state of popular education in those countries. Since France, Holland, Germany and Switzerland had long-established public schools, England wished to profit by their experience, to improve his educational system, and to discover if she was receiving adequate returns for the increasing grants made from the Treasury.

In 1865, when the School Inquiry Commission was in charge
of the secondary education in England and Wales, Arnold was again appointed as Assistant Commissioner. He went to France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy and reported on the educational systems of the middle and upper classes in those countries.

The third occasion which he had of making a foreign journey was in November, 1885, when the Education Department itself charged him with the duty of reporting on the part which the legislation took in education in France, Germany, and Switzerland on four special points: free education; the quality of education; the status, training and pensioning of teachers; and compulsory attendance and release from school. These elaborate reports were later published in books, under the titles of The Popular Education of France with Notices of that of Holland and Switzerland, A French Eton, and Higher Schools on the Continent.

After he had made a comparison of English education with that of foreign countries, Arnold realized that its deficiencies were due to the fact that it had been run unsystematically; that it had just gone along parochially, voluntarily, or privately without standards, wise supervision, or properly conceived ends. He was much impressed by the Continental system, and realized that educational statesmanship had been at work. In Germany, Frederick the Great and Humboldt, in
France, Napoleon and Guizot, using the means they had, had naturalized education. Through these great men administration and organization had received the highest order of intelligent planning. Arnold asserts that public instruction would never be on the right footing until England got some one at its head who could handle the situation. From the new ideas which he had acquired on the Continent he urged certain reforms in education. Herbert W. Paul says:

French institutions and French habits of thought were always thoroughly congenial to Mr. Arnold. His lucid, methodical mind was attracted by the thoroughness of French logic, and he was more especially fascinated by the orderly sequence with which the pupil ascended from the primary school to the university. Himself the product of reformed Rugby, and of unreformed Oxford, a child of the old learning and the new spirit, he was appalled by the anomalous condition of English universities, and by the chaos of intermediate teaching in England.19

Arnold was more interested in the French educational system than in that of Germany; although the English had a nearer affinity to the Teutonic race, he thought the English more akin to the French in their history, their love of liberty, their literature, their aspirations, and their moral ideals, and he thought that both could gain much if they understood one another better. He recognized that strong State

19 Matthew Arnold, p. 106.
action in France, which was a great aid to education, could be accomplished in England. Let us quote from A French Eton a passage which will summarize the true function of the State.

Is a citizen's relation to the State that of a dependent to a parental benefactor? By no means; it is that of a member in a partnership to the whole firm. The citizens of a State, the members of a society, are really a partnership....'a Partnership,' as Burke Noble says, 'in all science, in all art, in every virtue, in all perfection.' Toward this great final design of their connection, they apply the aids which co-operative association can give them.

Arnold made his foreign inquiries for his first reports in this unpopular belief and in the light of these principles. He describes in them the organization of the primary schools, their relation to the central government, the salaries, and status of the teachers and their normal training. He notes in full detail the "congregationist" schools which were taken care of by religious Sisters, who were certified teachers but who received very little aid from the State. He said of the Sisters' schools:

A few days later I visited a school in the Rue de la Sourdiere, kept by the Sisters. There is here a girls' school with 200 scholars, held in three good and well-fitted rooms, each under the care of a Sister; there is also an infant school of 100 under the care of two other Sisters. These Sisters belong to a community of sixteen, who live in the same house.

A French Eton, p. 79
under a superior; five are charged with the care of the schools, the remainder devote themselves to visiting the poor, tending the sick, preparing medicaments for them, and similar works of charity. The premises where the school was formerly held were very bad; two years ago the city of Paris bought the present house, and arranged it excellently for its actual purpose. The order in both schools was admirable; the instruction in the girl's school moderate. The arithmetic, however was good; nearly all the girls in the upper class could work correctly sums in interest and in vulgar and decimal fractions; in a similar school in England this would seldom be the case. On the other hand, few girls in this class could tell how many departments France contained, or had even an elementary knowledge of geography: the upper class of a girls' school in England is generally fairly informed on geography—certainly has almost always learned the number of the English counties....Apart from the mere instruction however, there is, even in Paris, something in the Sisters' schools which pleases both the eye and the mind, and which is more rarely found elsewhere. There is the fresh, neat schoolroom, almost always cheerfuller, cleaner, more decorated than a lay schoolroom. There is the orderliness and attachment of the children. Finally, there is the aspect of the Sisters themselves, in general of refinement beyond that of their rank in life; of a gentleness which even beauty in France mostly lacks; of tranquility which is evidence that their blameless lives are not less happy than useful. If ever I have beheld serious yet cheerful benevolence, and the serenity of the mind pictured on the face, it is here. Is it then impossible—I perpetually asked myself in regarding them—is it then impossible for people no longer under the world's charm or who have never felt it, to associate themselves together, and to work happily, combinedly, and effectually, unless they have first adhered to the doctrines of the Council of Trent?21

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21 *Popular Education of France*, pp. 102-103
Before his second visit to the foreign countries, he wrote an essay under the title *A French Eton*, which contained his description of two French schools that had interested him. The first was the Lyceum, or secondary school, of Toulouse, that was under the Minister of Education. It was a high type of school, attended by sons of wealthy parents. It was maintained by the state, and was attached to a local academy of high rank. The professors here, as in all the schools of France, were certified teachers. The source of study was well balanced, requiring Latin, Greek and French for all students, and other additional subjects for the more advanced. Even in this type of school, the fees for tuition were low enough to have admitted pupils of all classes. Arnold says:

Such may be the cheapness of public-school education, when that education is treated as a matter of public economy to be administered on a great scale with rigid system and exact superintendence in the interests of the pupil and not in the interests of the school keeper. Such a Lyceum is not managed for speculation or profit, and for the education of its youth and for that object only; the directors of the Lyceum are simple servants of the public employed by the public at fixed salaries.\(^{22}\)

Later he visited a private school at Sorèze, directed by the Dominican, Lacordaire. The French Government did not permit anyone to teach even in a private school without a certificate of competency. The director of the Sorèze

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22 *A French Eton*, p. 35
institution was left free to try his own experiments in teaching and to exercise his own religious influence. The program of studies was similar to that of a Lyceum. Lacordaire had stricter rules, and the school had a more pronounced military system than any other school in France. "One of the two characteristics which distinguished Lacordaire was his passion for firm government. He called our age one 'which does not know how to obey!'"23

Arnold considered the French Normal schools excellent. He visited three of them, and describes carefully that of Bordeaux. The course, he says, for the training of pupil-teachers lasted for a period of three years, during which time the students were taught the knowledge necessary for teaching in the primary schools. When the student had satisfactorily completed the studies required for primary instruction, he was allowed to take up the facultative subjects, and he must also from this time on learn the art of teaching. The students spent a great deal of time in the practice schools, by which they profited highly.

Undoubtedly, knowledge of method is of the highest importance to the schoolmaster; donner c'est acquerir, says a French poet most truly; to teach is to learn; and to give a man, therefore, the power of teaching well is to give him the power of

23 Ibid., p. 38
learning much. Undoubtedly, too the attention to method in the French training schools has resulted in the establishment of improved modes of teaching particular subjects; the teaching of arithmetic, for instance, the teaching of reading, have been facilitated and simplified.  

No one in England, he held, was taught to teach, while in France the State was responsible for all kinds of education.

For admission to normal school an examination which bore only on elementary branches was given to the students. This examination was conducted by the academy-inspector of the district, to exclude all the incompetent applicants. The prefect accepted for the normal school those who passed the examination, and were not less than eighteen years old, and not more than twenty-two, who intended to continue in the service of teaching for at least ten years, and who had a certificate of good conduct. Students were later given a test to obtain a teaching certificate.

The training-school examinations are not those which determine the award of the certificate of capacity. To adjudge this, there sits twice a year, in the chief town of every department, an examination-commission named by the departmental council, and consisting of seven members, of whom one must be a primary inspector of the department, one a minister of the same religious persuasion as the candidate, and two functionaries of public or private instruction. Any person aged not less than eighteen years may appear as a candidate,

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24 Popular Education of France, p. 137
giving a month's notice of such intention. The examination is oral and written. Exercises in dictation and grammar, handwriting, the four rules of arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions) and in the composition of narrative of a school report, are performed by the candidates. For each of these four exercises is allowed a space of time not exceeding three-quarters of an hour. The commission collects and judges these written exercises; the candidate who has failed in them is not allowed to continue his examination any further. Those who have performed them satisfactorily are called up in turn before the commission, and examined orally in reading, religious knowledge, grammar, and arithmetic. The religious examination is always conducted by the minister of the candidate's own persuasion. A quarter of an hour is allowed for each of these oral exercises, and the proper certificate-examination is concluded.25

While in Europe, Arnold made a study of the relation of the government to education. He made known his findings in his official reports, and drew some extremely worthwhile comparisons and conclusions with regard to school legislation in England.

Problems on education, he asserts, often arise, and the government not seldom meets with questions on education, of which there are two opposite opinions, both rational; the government must treat each opinion with due respect and be guided by the best means pertaining to the times and the people. The government, in dealing with education, will sometimes meet with opinions that are the result of prejudice; then it

25 Ibid., p. 140
must act on some ground of reason. Arnold speaks highly of
the French legislation upon this matter.

I say then, that by its form and by its contents, by its letter and by its spirit, by its treatment of reason and by its treatment of prejudice, in what it respects and in what it does not respect, the school-legislation of modern France fosters, encourages, and educates the popular intelligence and the popular equity. 26

"This," he continues, "is a great national advantage."

But while the days of aristocracies are over, they have left their mark as schoolmasters on the nations of Europe. Men are hard to teach and forget easily, so the nations that keep their schoolmasters the longest are the most to be envied. The great ecclesiastical institutions of Europe with their massive cathedrals, in which they held their ceremonies and services, the great graceful and refined aristocracies have served as ideals to elevate the sentiment of the masses in Europe.

As surely, churches and aristocracies often lacked the sanctity or the refinement ascribed to them; but their effect as distant ideals was still the same: they remained above the individual, a beacon to the imagination of thousands; they stood, vast and grand objects ever present before the eyes of masses of men in whose daily avocations there was little which was vast, little which was grand; and they preserved these masses from any danger.

26 Ibid., p. 166
overrating with vulgar self-satisfaction and inferior culture, however broadly sown, by the exhibition of a standard of dignity and refinement still far above them.27

Arnold thought that the Revolution had a great influence on education in France, but he was impressed by the fact that the greatest and most lasting influence made on the imagination of the French people was fashioned years before.

For more than a thousand years France had the most brilliant aristocracy in Europe; her common people were the countrymen of the Montmorencies, the Birons, the Rohans. She is the eldest child of the Roman Catholic Church, a church magnificent even in its decline. At the present hour, when her feudal magnates are gone, when her ecclesiastical magnates are shorn of their splendour, she has an aristocracy to meet the best demands of the modern spirit—an aristocracy the choicest of its class in the world; she has the Institute. The servility which has degraded the scientific and learned societies of some other nations has, in the French Institute, not been allowed to triumph. It is a true aristocracy of the intellect of France; and, in worthily commanding national respect where great objects to awaken national respect are rare—in rigidly tempering, in the domain of intellect, science, arts, and letter, the natural self-confidence of a democratic society—in making impossible, for the intelligent French common people. A vulgar and provincial self-satisfaction with a low rate of culture, however general—the blessings which it confers on France are incalculable.28

27 Ibid., p. 169
28 Ibid., pp. 171-172
England and France, Arnold claimed, had a negative resemblance in popular education, and that the two peoples resembled each other in this, that each, in its own way was greater than all others. Each of the two people was like in its national feeling and in its surprise at the shortcomings of each other. Besides the above resemblance, of all civilized nations they were the most natural, of all genuine nations they were the most civilized. Education would augment alike their greatness, but their government must offer the best systems of education.

In France, a national system which, though very unpretending, is all that a government can prudently attempt to make universal—a system fixing a low level, certainly of popular instruction, but one which the mounting tide of national wealth and well-being will inevitably push up higher. And this system is so framed as not only not to favour popular unreason or popular intolerance, but positively to encourage and educate popular reason and popular equity. In England, a system not national, which has undoubtedly done much for superior primary instruction, but which for elementary primary instruction has done very little. That it may accomplish something important for the latter, some have conceived the project of making it national. Against this project there are, it seem to me, grave objections. It is a grave objection, that the system is over-centralized—that it is too negligent of local machinery—that it is inordinately expensive. It is a graver, that to make it national would be to make national a system not salutary to the national character in the very points where that character most needs a salutary corrective; a system which, to the loud blast of unreason and intolerance, sends forth no certain counterblast; which submissively accompanies the
hatefulest and most barren of all kinds of dispute, into its smallest channels;--sterotypes every crotchet, every prejudice, every division, by recognizing it; and suggests to its recipients no higher rationality than it finds in them.29

He noticed in his visits to France that a great mass of the population attended the elementary schools at one time or another. The primary schools were within walking distance, and were maintained at a low fee throughout France. Some of the children who lived in the manufacturing district labored from ten to twelve hours a day in the factory and attended school for two hours a day, but the demands for labor in the agricultural districts were much less. The French system did much for the actual school-learning and culture of the French peasants for the past and present, but promised more for the future. He was convinced that the result which school legislation had produced upon the temper and intelligence of the people in France was important.

The intelligence of the French people is well known; in spite of their serious faults, in spite of their almost incredible ignorance, it places them among the very foremost of ancient or modern nations. It is the source of their highest virtue, (for the bravery of this people is rather a physical than a moral virtue,) of a certain natural equity of spirit in matters where most other nations are intolerant and fanatical. I suppose that this intelligence is a thing not altogether peculiar and innate in the people of France; if it were, the upper classes, adding culture to this exclusive

29 Ibid., p. 174
natural gift, would exhibit over the upper classes of other nations a superiority of which they certainly have not given proof. If it is culture which develops this intelligence in the higher ranks of all nations, then of some their want of book-learning, must be feeling the beneficent operation, if they show an intelligence which the masses of other nations do not possess. This culture they do actually receive; many influences are at work in France which tend to impart it to them; amongst these influences I number their school-legislation.30

Arnold asserts that the French legislation which was to educate the national intelligence spoke to the public in an intelligible simple, human language, that could be understood by all. The educational laws of France had a directly favorable effect on the intelligence and general reason of its population; also that the French legislation uttered laws that were reasonable and equitable; and that they did not interfere with religious instructions in their schools. The French did not demand knowledge of particular facts but of general facts. They had not informed their people on all points, but on some points they were well informed.

On certain capital points the State in France has by its legislation and administration exercised a directly educative influence upon the reason and equity of its people, and that of this influence the mental temper of the French people does actually show the fruits.31

30 Ibid., p. 159
31 Ibid., p. 161
Arnold held that the French system had provided satisfactory schools and competent teachers, and had put the means of education within the people's reach.

Arnold must have attached some value to the educational system of Germany, for he brought it out in three reports. He may have considered the example of the Teutonic race easier to follow. He was pleased with the low fees of its education, even if it had doubled within a year. He held that the English public schools and universities could be run as cheaply. The attendance at the German schools, he found was compulsory for all the children, and the schools were denominational, with a conscience clause. Arnold said that the schools of Prussia were similar to those of Germany, and the government was as that of France, which gave a student every opportunity of intellectual progress. The State sought the opinion of skilled men in educational matters; this, he urged should be done in England. He wrote about Holland, Belgium and Switzerland in his reports. Although these countries were different in circumstances, and in the peculiarities of their people, they were all preferred to England, if not only in Strong State action in regard to public education, at least for guidance in dealing with individual and local initiative given by the State.
I do not think we can hope in England for municipalities which, like the Dutch municipalities, can in the main safely be trusted to provide and watch over schools, for a population which, like the Dutch population, can in the main safely be trusted to come to school regularly; for a government which has only to give good advice and good suggestions in order to be promptly obeyed. Even the Government of Holland, however has regulated popular education by law; even the school-loving people of Holland, so well taught, so sober minded, so reasonable, is not abandoned in the matter of its education to its own caprices. The State in Holland, where education is prized by the masses, no more leaves education to itself, than the State in France, where it is little valued by them. It is the same in the other country of which I have described the school system—in Switzerland. Here and there we may have found, indeed school—rules in some respects injudicious, in some respects extravagant; but everywhere we have found law, everywhere State-regulation.

Ibid., pp. 233-234
Chapter 111
Arnold's Treatment of Particular Subjects

We have often repeated that in Arnold's opinion, the chief purpose of education is the attainment of culture—the perfection of the whole man. Perfection may not be gained by developing the moral sense alone. Neither may perfection be reached by training the intellectual faculties to the exclusion of the moral and the social instincts. Culture is to make of a man a well-rounded perfected being, in which all his faculties are harmoniously and beautifully combined to bring him to his ultimate goal.

Arnold says that it is not by any particular branch of study, to the exclusion of all others, that culture is acquired. He insists that he does not mean by culture the study of belles lettres; the culture of a nation embraces its whole intellectual activity. He was accused of being impractical, and of wishing to exclude from the course of studies all of those subjects which had begun to take so important a place in the interests of men, that is, the natural sciences. But he explains that the program which he is defending is one that will provide for scientific knowledge of the natural world, and will reform the study of the classics and of belles-lettres in general by introducing into it something of the
systematic and thorough-going spirit which animates workers in the field of natural science.

Arnold makes a four-fold division of human nature,—moral, intellectual, esthetic and social. The powers which go to the building up of human life, he says, are: "The power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners... Human nature is built up by these powers; we have need for all of them. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of science would admit it."33 The argument which Arnold constructs upon this conception of human nature does not proceed to demonstrate the superiority of letters over science in every sphere. It makes a distinction: in the sphere of "intellect and knowledge," the study of the natural sciences is of very great service; in the spheres of "conduct," "beauty," and "social life and manners," it is for the mass of mankind of negligible service, certainly of far less service than the study of letters. With this conclusion all good humanists will agree.

33 Literature and Science in Discourses in America, p. 102
Arnold, with his firm critical thought, showed how far literature and natural science go together, and where they part. He says:

Practical people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working profession he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it?...Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honour, and the really useful part of the community were slaves...And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labour and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!34

Arnold insists that the end of education is to be educated. He uses Plato's definition of education as "those studies which result in the soul getting soberness, righteousness and wisdom,"35 and he uses this as applicable at all times, "whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary

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34 Literature and Science in Discourses in America, pp. 72-76
35 Ibid., p. 78
Arnold follows Plato's ideas that the most important function of education is the perpetuation of the moral life of the race. This, above all, is entitled to security. Literary education, rather than the modern trend toward science, is necessary for intellectual and moral discipline.

In *Literature and Science*, he says:

> The moral education in the past, has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education... The design of abasing what is called 'mere literary instruction and education,' and of exalting what is called 'sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge,' is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design. I am going to ask... Whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely to prevail.\(^{37}\)

In the last half of the Nineteenth Century, the scientific activity which became so important a part of the life of England produced an immediate effect in the field of education. Natural science was becoming more and more a desired

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\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 78

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 79
subject in the curriculum of schools and colleges, and it was not long before the scientific discoverers and popularizers began to make war upon the classicists. Arnold was an ardent champion of the classical studies, as essential means to bring about that "complete human perfection" which was the end of education. He sets forth his views on the subject in a lecture on Literature and Science, which he delivered in America in 1882.

The scientists had declared that Arnold gave to science a very meager place in the scheme of education. Arnold, in return, argues that, even if scientific investigation has traced the descent of man from the ape to the present day man, has measured the planets, and has made the mystery of force more mysterious by its experiments, the discipline of science leaves him with most of his nature unformed and unsatisfied.

For the man of science gives us only the knowledge of dead facts -- "Knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense of beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying."38

38 Ibid., p. 112
Arnold held that education was the opening of the soul and the imagination, and that its function was to bridge the gulf between knowledge and conduct.

The mediaeval universities came into being because the supposed knowledge delivered by Scripture and the Church so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men by alloying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty. 39

Arnold does not wish to exclude science from the scheme of education, because he sees that the knowledge of the universe which has been attained through the study of science has "liberated the emotions," which were too easily swayed by the false teachings of the medieval universities. But he argues that to establish a close relationship between the "new conceptions and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct," 40 the need for humane letters is still more urgent.

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are,

39 Ibid., p. 116
40 Ibid., p. 117
--the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points;--so much the more will the value of humane letters and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.41

He maintains that one should avoid any comparison between the merits of humane letters and the merits of natural sciences as means of education. He says (Literature and Science) that the study of science could never take the place of the humanistic studies, because science does not develop the powers which build up human life--the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners. Since culture is the perfection of the whole man, a branch of study which excludes from its sphere of action any one of the powers of man, cannot be of assistance in teaching man how to live.

If the choice must be made between humane letters and natural science, "all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences."42

41 Ibid., p. 124
42 Ibid., p. 129
And again he defends humane letters.

The student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science... but the student of the natural sciences only will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift of doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.\(^{43}\)

In defending humane letters he is very careful to make his explanation simple, to clear away any misunderstanding, which as a humanist he had to remove when he disputed from the left wing of science. He kept on his guard so as not to be misunderstood by those who are not advocates of letters. For when he speaks of letters in education, they would not think that he meant belles lettres or any "superficial humanism," as the opposite of science.

"In culture," he says, "the aim being to know ourselves and the world, we have, as the means to this end, to know the best which has been thought and said in the world."\(^{44}\) The study of the works of the classical writers, Arnold considers essential to produce a man of culture. And when he speaks of

\(^{43}\) Ibid., pp. 125-126  
\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 82
becoming better acquainted with Greece and Rome, he means
the study of more than their language. He wishes that men
should study the Greek and Roman world--its institutions, its
social and religious life, above all, the spirit which inspired
them. In his essay on "Hebraism and Hellenism" in Culture
and Anarchy, he tells us that Hellenism inspired one to get
rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by
seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty. He
quoted Socrates,--"The best man is he who most tries to
perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels
that he is perfecting himself."45

Arnold goes on to say that apparently there was something
wrong with the Hellenic conception of human nature, because
it lacked the basis of self-control and conduct which alone
could make it a safe and complete aim for man's development.
This is supplied by Hebraism in Old Testament history and by
Christianity, which is the Hebraism of the New Dispensation.
He explains this idea of beauty, which is expressed in the
best of Greek art and poetry, in the following quotation from
"Sweetness and Light":

45 Culture and Anarchy, p. 116
The best art and poetry of the Greek, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed that it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. Are we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it is wanting or misapprehended at present. 46

Sweetness and light,—beauty and wisdom,—these are the aims of Arnold’s system of education, and whatever contributes most to the complete and harmonious development of these two essentials of a complete human being, is eminently desirable. He holds that the classical writers of antiquity must be studied and learned, for they are the great humanizing influence on the minds of the people and should not be used as mere text-book knowledge.

When we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a

46 Ibid., p. 19
knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative....more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages. I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That at least is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavoring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavoring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.47

In another place, he explains that a man must know himself and the world in order to be educated; and this surely, was the aim of the Greeks.

It seems to me firstly, that what a man seeks through his education is to get to know himself and the world; next, that for this knowledge it is before all things necessary that he acquaint himself with the best which has been thought and said in the world; finally, that of this best the classics of Greece and Rome form a very chief portion, and the portion most entirely satisfactory. With these conclusions lodged safe in one's mind, one is staunch on the side of humanities.48

There is scarcely a part of classical literature, says Arnold, which will not repay one with increasing desire for more and more study, and which will not lead to the final end of education, - the attainment of that "sweetness and

47 Literature and Science in Discourses in America, p. 87
48 A Speech at Eton in Mixed Essays, p. 411
light," which is the basis of culture.

Strike into it anywhere, lay hold of it anywhere, it is always powerful and interesting,--so one may almost say of classical literature. Strike into it where you like, lay hold of it where you like, you can nearly always find a thread which will lead you, if you follow it, to large and instructive results. 49

And again: "The best in literature has the quality of being in itself formative; of bringing out its own significance as we read it." 50

Arnold advocated wide study of the classics themselves, rather than the study of ancient peoples through the medium of history. He thought that the study of classical literature had a calming effect upon the modern spirit. "Sanity--that is the great virtue, the ancient literature; the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in spite of all its variety and power. It is impossible to read carefully the great ancients without losing something of our caprice and eccentricity; and to emulate them we must at least read them." 51

Arnold gives to the Greeks the credit for instilling into human nature the instinct for beauty, for knowledge and

49 Ibid., p. 413
50 Ibid., p. 411
51 Preface to Poems (1853), p. 497.
conduct. He felt that the Greeks had the true culture, and he declared that the majority of men, if they could be made to appreciate the gift of the Greeks to civilization, would insist upon the study of Greek art and literature as a prominent part in all education.

I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience; they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age, they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well; they want to induce and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves.52

Arnold wished that students should gain from the literature of Greece and Rome, not only a knowledge of the language and poetry of the ancients, but a knowledge of "Rome's military, and political, and legal and administrative work in the world."53 The knowledge of ancient Greece to him meant a general knowledge of mankind, not knowledge of any certain poem, the history of Greece, and the treatises and speeches of certain

52 Ibid., p. 501
53 Literature and Science in Discourses in America, p. 91
prominent men, but the knowledge of Greece "as the giver of Greek art and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology."\textsuperscript{54}

We are not to conclude, however that Arnold's demands for the study of literature would be completely satisfied by a knowledge of ancient classics. He insisted that the people should know modern as well as ancient letters. Knowing the modern nations, he asserts, is knowing not only their belles lettres, but knowing their sciences as well. "All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men."\textsuperscript{55} Hence Arnold has been impressed by the great wisdom of the Greeks, for his definition of culture is, "Knowing the best which has been thought and said in the World" that "best" mean, "what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature."\textsuperscript{58}

Literature and art should be first in education, he affirms, and the scientific studies of nature afterward,
which is the true progression and order of knowledge when it
is rewarded as a discipline of life. "The appeal, in the
study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment;
not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made
to see that it is so."57

He did not believe that scientific studies would ever be
put in the place of literary studies, in the scheme of edu­
cation, but he feared that they would be challenged by science
and finally a scientific bias would be given to education.

As with Greek so with letters generally; they
will some day come, we may hope, to be studied
more rationally, but they will not lose their
place. What will happen will rather be that
there will be crowded into education other
matters besides, far too many; there will be,
perhaps a period of unsettlement and confusion
and false tendency; but letters will not in
the end lose their leading place. If they
lose it for a time they will get it back
again. We shall be brought back to them by
our wants and aspirations.58

Those who give to natural knowledge the first place in
education, Arnold held, leave out "the constitution of
human nature,"59 which is one of the most important things.

He divides human nature "not pretending to scientific

57 Ibid., p. 97
58 Ibid., p. 136
59 Ibid., p. 100
exactness" into moral, intellectual, esthetic, and social branches. The powers which go to the building of the human life, he says, are:

The power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners... Human nature is built up by these powers; we have need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it."

Arnold did not intend to point out in this conception of human nature the superiority of letters over science in every sphere. There is distinction in the sphere of "intellect and knowledge," the study of natural science is a great help in the sphere of "conduct" "beauty" and "social life and manners." It is far less help, though, for the majority of mankind, than literary studies. All men of science may not agree to this, but all humanists do. Arnold develops science in the sphere of intellect and knowledge in an interesting manner.

We experience, as we go on learning and knowing,—the vast majority of us experience,—the need of relating what we have learnt and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which

60 Ibid., p. 101
61 Ibid., pp. 101-102
we have in us for beauty...But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledge is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic... In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even goes a long way...The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with the instrument-knowledges.62

These results of science are very interesting. He states that all men should have some knowledge of them, but that after one has learned them one is still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge,—that they have no effect upon the moral sense, and therefore fail to bring about the perfection of the whole man.

62 Ibid., pp. 105-109
Chapter IV
Arnold's Conceptions of Middle Class Education in Relation to his Principles of Culture

The interest that Arnold felt in the education of the middle classes was based upon his firm conviction that upon the "Philistines" as he called them, rested the future of England. He had very little regard for the intelligence of that group, and was alarmed lest his country become less and less influential among the nations of the world. He says, "The whole weight of the country rests upon the middle class, and the intelligence of the middle class is virtually non-existent". He defines the natural modern spirit as "fulfilling a natural, rational life by the growth of a love of industry, trade and wealth; the growth of a love of the things of the mind; and the growth of a love of beautiful things. These are body, intelligence and soul all taken care of." But he says that the middle class is concerned only with the body.

The middle classes, until recently, had had very little opportunity for self development. The aristocracy, while it had many faults, had a fixed social and political status,

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L. Trilling, *Matthew Arnold*, p. 230
in which literature was the ornament, and also the means
by which they had acquired the culture which was the mark
of their high station. But now, with the emergence of the
middle classes into the front rank of political life in Eng-
land, something must be done to instill into society the
importance of those things which make for a "civil peace,
allowing repose, confidence, free activity of the mind and the
tolerance of divergent views."\[64\] Arnold, before he was an
educator, was a poet a critic and a philosopher. He says that
what men want is something to animate and ennoble them, not
merely to add zest to their dreams. He continues "I believe
a feeling of this kind is the basis of my nature--and of my
poetics."\[65\] He is not always satisfied that his own poetry
has fulfilled the purpose for which he intended it, never-
theless he was utterly sincere in his aim,—to make his work
useful. He explains what he means by the usefulness of lit-
erature when he speaks of the effect that ancient writers
have upon their readers.

A steadying and composing effect upon their judg-
ment, not of literary works only, but of men and

\[64\] Ibid., p. 164

\[65\] Ibid., p. 140
events in general. (Readers of ancient literature) are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience: they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age: they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well; they want to educe and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves: they know, to that this is whether their age and its literature can assist them in the attempt....They do not talk of their mission nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; (as writers) their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling. If asked to afford this by means of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them: they are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration. They reply that with all this they can do nothing; that the elements they need for the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul; that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them; but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort with difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them.

This idea, of ennobling and uplifting mankind by means of literature, was the underlying motive of Arnold's interest in the education of the middle classes. He set himself to curing the ills of this group of his countrymen, at first by

Preface to Poems, p. 2
the instrumentality of his pen; Even when he became closely associated with education in his position as school inspector, we must not presume that he substituted this routine work for the writing which was so much more congenial to him. He continued writing and lecturing all his life, although the fountain of poetry seems to have dried up when he took up the tasks of a school inspector, which were not altogether to his liking. However, he assumed his duties in a conscientious spirit, and carried them on zealously, if not lovingly.

Arnold had fault to find with each of the three classes into which he found England society divided.

He accused the aristocracy of lack of ideas in its public services. He corrected the democracy for its peculiar vices, but for the middle classes he reserved his severest criticism and his most humorous remonstrances. He contends that this class had some virtues of its own, but he says that it was "full of narrowness, full of prejudice, with a defective type of religion, narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty and a low standard of manners." He excuses them, somewhat, in the following words from Essays in Criticism:

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*Irish Essays*, p. 363
The great English middle class, the kernel of the nation, the class whose intelligent sympathy had upheld a Shakespeare, entered the prison of Puritanism and had the key turned on its spirit there for two hundred years. 'He enlargeth a nation,' said Job, 'and straiteneth it again.' If the lower classes in this country have utterly abandoned the dogmas of Christianity, and the upper class its practice, the cause lies very much in the impossible and unlovely presentment of Christian dogmas and practice which is offered by the most important part of the nation; the serious middle class, and above all by its Nonconforming portion.68

Arnold held the greatest sympathy for members of the middle class. In truth, he says, he was born a member of that class and it was only through education and training that he had been fortunate enough to escape the faults which he condemned in the members of the industrial class. In his work as inspector he came into close contact with the middle class, and became well acquainted with their aspirations and ideals, political, social, and religious. He could understand the disagreeable, joyless attitude toward life which the Puritan type had created, and he did all that he could to inspire the people with a love for the beautiful in literature and art.

Loving the beauty of arts, the classical ideas of France, as he did, he was grieved by the condition of the

68 Essay in Criticism, p. 130
English middle classes. It is well to quote a passage in which he tells his own story.

What makes me look at France and the French with inexhaustible curiosity and indulgence is this: their faults are not of the same kind as ours, so we are not likely to catch them; their merits are not of the same kind as ours, so we are not likely to become idle and self-sufficient for studying them. I find such interest and instruction in considering a city so near London, and yet so unlike it. It is not that I so envy the Frenchman his cafe-haunting, domino-playing bourgeois, but when I go through Saint Pancras I like to compare our verstry-hunting, resolution-passing bourgeois with the Frenchmen, and to say to myself, 'This then, is what comes of not frequenting cafes nor playing dominoes. My countrymen here have got no cafes, and have never learnt dominoes, and see the mischief Satan has found for their idle hands to do! Still I do not wish them to be the cafe-hunting, domino-playing Frenchmen, but rather some third thing, neither the Frenchmen nor their present selves.'

There was much truth in this kind of criticism. He sometimes appeared to be a pedant to those whom he criticized, exacting from the laboring people an impossible standard of life. In return, he told them of their lack of taste, their want of intelligence, and their need of culture and of beauty. Arnold was sincere and was interested in the welfare of his countrymen.

Because of their opposition to the organized national Church, the Dissenters, made up for the most part of members

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69 Friendship's Garland, p. 360
of the middle class, had been denied participation in all cultural and professional pursuits. As a matter of course, they were excluded from the Universities, from schools, from higher professions, and from public services for three centuries, so it is hardly just for their fellow-countrymen to reproach them for their want of culture and ideals of education. The means of education had been placed far beyond their means. The Nonconformists feared the State, because it made their ancestors suffer in the past.

When Arnold was first interested in education he lamented that the middle classes were "among the worst educated in the world." For thirty years, he tried, both in his lectures and his essays to convince England that learning was necessary, but he did not live to see the day when he could discontinue or even modify his indictment. He attributed the continued illiteracy of the middle class to lack of schools and to the inferiority of such schools as were in England for their use.

Wealthier classes had their colleges, in which they secured a good education, but the middle classes had to go to the private "academies," and were the laughing-stock of the world. He defines the middle classes in his Irish

70 Popular Education of France, p. 75
Essays:

I have always adopted an educational test, and by the middle class I understand those who are brought up at establishments which are more or less like Salem House, and by educators who are more or less like Mr. Creakle. And the great mass of the middle part of our community, the part which comes between those who labour with their hands on the one side, and people of fortune on the other, is brought up at establishments of the kind, although there is a certain portion broken off at the top which is educated at better. But the great mass are both badly taught and are also brought up on a lower plane than is right, brought up ignobly... And this deteriorates their standard of life, their civilization. It helps to produce in them, and, it perpetuated, a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty a low standard of manners.71

Arnold had great confidence in the merits of the middle class and its capacity for cultural development, but he felt strongly that the impetus for improvement would never be initiated within that group. It must have its rise in the desire of the aristocracy to help the middle classes and to come into closer contact with them.

He knew that indifference to higher education, or any kind of education, was a defect in England. The evil was caused by the large gap which divided the middle classes and the aristocratic classes, and prevented the former from being

71 Mixed Essays and Others, p. 320
an aid to society. That is, if the middle classes could be fused with the upper classes and then be formed into one powerful whole, the contact would elevate and refine the former. In his pedagogical mission to France, Arnold had seen that there:

The system of public secondary education...effaces between the middle and upper classes the sense of social alienation; it gives to the boy of the middle class the studies, the superior teaching, the sense of belonging to a great school which the Eton or Harrow boy has with us; it tends to give to the middle classes precisely what they most want, and the want of which makes the gulf between them and the upper--it tends to give them personal dignity.72

In his investigations in Germany he saw that the same conditions existed there as in France. He noted that the upper and middle classes there received the same education, while the English middle classes were not brought up on the same educational plane as the upper classes. This separation was different from that created by rank of wealth, for the classes were as much divided in thought and ideas as if they lived in two different worlds.

The aristocracy in France, therefore, is not a class which, in addition to its advantages of birth and wealth over the middle class, had

72 Popular Education of France, p. 75
received a higher training than the middle class, in schools of a superior standing. Aristocracy and middle class are brought up in schools of one equal standing. The French aristocracy has, it is true, the spirit of caste; it strives to separate itself, to assert its superiority, to give effect to its prepossessions. But the immense homogeneous middle class in France is too strong for it. The mind and imagination of this class is not subjugated by aristocracy like the mind and imagination of the middle class in our country.73

Arnold contended that the middle classes, for their own sake and that of the nation, should no longer be deprived of educational benefits. As he detected social defects he was wont to find its remedies. The correction for these defects was education, and to give them the proper education the public school system should be established by the State. In one of his School Reports he pleads with the government to do something to enlighten middle-class education. "Either the education of this mass (of the middle class) must remain what it is, vulgar and unsound; or the State must create by its legislation, its aid, its inspection, institutions honourable because of their public character, and cheap because nationally frequented, in which they may receive a better."74

73 Mixed Essays and Others, p. 122
74 Popular Education of France, p. 76
He felt that most individuals, localities, classes, and denominations, need an outside power to help them to arrive at their highest possibilities. That power should be the State. That is, it should supervise all educational questions.

On the continent, he found the government led in the directing of educational effort. In England on the contrary little was done by the State. In *Culture and Anarchy* he shows this difference between the English and the Germans.

The Licensed Victuallers or the Commercial Travellers propose to make a school for their children; and I suppose, in the matter of schools, one may call the Licensed Victuallers or the Commercial Travellers ordinary men, with their natural taste for the bathos still strong; and a Sovereign with the advice of men like Wilhelm Von Humboldt or Schleiermacher may, in this matter, be a better judge, and nearer to right reason. And it will be allowed, probably, that right reason would suggest that, to have a sheer school of Licensed Victuallers' children, and to bring them all up, not only at home but at school too, in a kind of odour of licensed victualism or of a bagmanism, is not a wise training to give to these children. And in Germany, the action of the national guides or governors is to suggest and provide a better. But, in England, the action of the nation guides or governors is, for a Royal Prince or a great Minister to go down to the opening of the Licensed Victuallers' or of the Commercial Travellers' school, to take the chair, to extol the energy and self-reliance of the Licensed Victuallers or the Commercial Travellers, to be all of their way of thinking, to predict full success to their schools, and never so much as to hint to them that they are probably doing a very foolish thing, and that the right way to go to work with their children's education is quite different. And it
is the same in almost every department of affairs. While, on the Continent, the idea prevails that it is the business of the heads and representatives of nation, by virtue of their superior means, power, and information, to set an example and to provide suggestions of right reason, among us the idea is the business of the heads and representatives of the nation is to do nothing of the kind, but to applaud the natural taste for the bathos showing itself vigorously in any part of the community, and to encourage its works.75

There were, Arnold said in A French Eton, "numberless endowed schools and 'educational homes'--some of them good, many of them middling, most of them bad; but none of them invested with much consideration of dignity."76 He wanted an institution which gave "largeness of soul" to the children of the middle classes, one which would lift them out of the middle classes into the life of the nation--the education that is identical with that of epic poetry. The only way to bring this largeness of soul, this desire for learning, into the schools, was to establish public schools for the middle classes, on the same plan as that used in France. Arnold points out in a passage in the Popular Education of France his idea of the moral and social ends to be obtained in such schools.

The aristocratic classes in England may, perhaps, be well content to rest satisfied with their Eton

75 Culture and Anarchy, p. 97-98
76 A French Eton, p. 60
and Harrow; the State is not likely to do better for them; nay, the superior confidence, spirit, and style, engendered by a training in the great public schools, constitute for these classes a real privilege, a real engine of command, which they might, if they were selfish, be sorry to lose by the establishment of schools great enough to beget a like spirit in the classes below them. But the middle classes in England have every reason not to rest content with their private schools; the State can do a great deal better for them; by giving to schools for these classes a public character, it can bring the instruction in them under a criticism which the knowledge of these classes is not in itself at present able to supply; by giving to them a national character, it can confer on them a greatness and a noble spirit, which the tone of these classes is not in itself at present adequate to impart. Such schools would soon prove notable competitors with the existing public schools; they would do these a great service by stimulating them, and making them look into their own weak points more closely: economical, because with charges uniform and under severe revision, they would do a great service to that large body of persons who, at present, seeing that on the whole the best secondary instruction to be found is that of the existing public schools, obtain it for their children from a sense of duty, although they can ill afford it, and although its cost is certainly exorbitant. Thus the middle classes might, by the aid of the State, better their instruction, while still keeping its cost moderate. This in itself would be a gain; but this gain would be nothing in comparison with that of acquiring the sense of belonging to great and honourable seats of learning and of breathing in their youth the air of the best culture of their nation. This sense would be an educational influence for them of the highest value; it would really augment their self-respect and moral force; it would truly fuse them with the class above, and tend to bring about for them the equality which they desire.  

Introduction to Popular Education of France, p. 40-41
Arnold applied Goethe's maxim—"Everything in the grand style is formative." This idea he carried with him as he visited the schools in his district. He held that the nation lacked the grand style, and so it permitted the schools to be as they were. Lionel Trilling shows what Arnold pointed to be the source of the grand style.

France's education was conceived in the grand style and England's was not, for France possessed England lacked the conception of the one agency in modern society capable of giving a high and noble tone to the national life. Once the aristocracy had been that agency, infusing the grand spirit into a nation's spirit; now aristocracy was gone, or its functions curtailed, and democracy must find a new model of grandeur. French democracy had already found it; English democracy seemed not to desire it at all; the modern source of the grand style, is the State. 78

His idea of State action he develops most systematically in one of his essays entitled A French Eton.

If secondary instruction were organized on a great and regular scale, if it were a national concern, it would not be by insuring to the offspring of the middle classes a more solid teaching at school, and a larger share of home comfort than they now present enjoy there (though certainly it would do this), that such secondary instruction would confer upon them the greatest boon. Its greatest boon to the offspring of these classes would be its giving them great, honorable public institutions for their nurture— institutions commanding the spirit, at the time of life when the spirit is most penetrable, the salutary influences of greatness, honour, and nationality—inflames

Matthew Arnold, p. 179
which expand the soul, liberalize the mind, dignify the character...I have no pet scheme to press, no crotchet to gratify, no fanatical zeal for giving this or that particular shape to the public establishment of our secondary instruction. All I say is, that it is most urgent to give to the establishment of it a wider, a truly public character, and that only the State can give this.

On his pedagogical tour of France, Arnold was impressed by the generous and dignified educational aims of the school at Sèze, a middle-class institution, and by the low fee charged.

Why cannot we have throughout England—as the French have throughout France, as the Germans have throughout Germany, as the Swiss have throughout Switzerland, as the Dutch have throughout Holland—schools where children of our middle and professional classes may obtain, at the rate of from 20 to 50 pounds a year if they are boarders, at the rate of from 5 to 15 pounds a year if they are day scholars, an education of as good quality, with as good guarantees, social character, and advantages for a future career in the world, as the education which French children of the corresponding class can obtain from institutions like that of Toulouse or Sèze.80

Arnold did not hold that this institution was any better than Eton, or could do what Eton did for the English boys. This great public school of England had done much to form the ruling class. It had given the boys a formative influence which was not found in ordinary surroundings, and imbued in them a high,

79 A French Eton, pp. 66-67
80 Ibid., p. 37
magnanimous governing spirit. This institution had had its origin in endowments, but the time of endowments no longer existed. The middle-class parent thought more of the comforts of life than of education, and comfort and gentleness were given at Eton. Similar institutions were not permitted in either France or Germany. Arnold desired to give to the boys in school the idea and influences that one would receive at home.

It seems to me that for the class frequenting Eton the great aim of education should be to give them those things which their birth and rearing are least likely to give them: to give them (besides mere book-learning) the notion of a sort of republican fellowship, the practice of a plain life in common, the habit of selfhelp. To the middle class the grand aim of education should be to give largeness of soul and personal dignity; to the lower class, feeling, gentleness, humanity.81

Annual examination for secondary schools, Arnold asserts, fails to bring out what is its real objective; that it is a difficult and delicate matter and likely to produce impatience and opposition among the students subject to it; that the secondary schools should have generalized examinations given by the universities. In an essay entitled *Porro Unum Necessarium* Est he brings out the practical measures needed.

What is really needed is to follow the precedent of the Elementary Education Act (of 1870) by requiring the provision throughout the country of a proper supply of secondary schools, with proper buildings and accomodations, at a proper fee, and with proper guarantees given by the teacher either in the shape of a university degree or of a special certificate for secondary instruction...The existing resources for secondary instruction, if judiciously co-ordered and utilized, would prove to

81 Ibid., p. 70
be immense: but undoubtedly gaps would have to be filled, an annual State grant and municipal grants would be necessary. That is to say, the nation would perform, as a corporate and co-operative work, a work which is now never conceived and laid out as a whole, but is done sporadically, precariously, and insufficiently... The middle class who contribute so immense a share of the cost incurred for the public institution of elementary schools, while their own school supply is so miserable, would be repaid twenty times over for their share in the additional cost of publicly instituting secondary instruction by the direct benefit which they and theirs would get from its system of schools. The upper class, which has bought out the middle class at so many of the great foundation schools designed for its benefit, and which has monopolized what good secondary instruction we have, owes to the middle class the reparation of contributing to a public system of secondary schools.\(^\text{82}\)

He says in another of his essays that there should be two grades of the secondary schools—one grade dealing with the classical side of learning, and the other with the modern or practical side. In this new system he wished to incorporate all secondary schools, with the proviso that this plan could be changed with time and circumstances according to modern needs.

The four or five hundred endowed schools, whose collective operations now give so little result, should be turned to better account; amalgamation should be used, the most useful of these institutions strengthened, the most useless suppressed,

\(^\text{82}\) Mixed Essays and Others, p. 129-130
the whole body of them be treated as one whole, destined harmoniously to cooperate towards one end. What should be had in view is to constitute in every county at least one great centre of secondary instruction, with low charges, with the security of inspection, and with a public character. These institutions should bear some such title as that of Royal Schools, and should derive their support, mainly, of course, from school fees, but partly also from endowments—their own or those appropriated to them—and partly from scholarships supplied by public grants. Wherever it is possible, wherever, that is, their scale of charges is not too high, or their situation not too unsuitable, existing schools of good repute should be adopted as the Royal schools. 83

Arnold made an effort to get his countrymen interested in secondary education for the working classes, and he thought that he could convince them of its wisdom.

I have to make an address to the Working Men's College at Ipswich, the largest College of the kind in England. The inducement to me was that I might try and interest them in founding a system of public education for the middle classes, on the ground that the working class suffered by not having a more civilized middle class to rise into, if they do rise; this is in my opinion a very true plea, but you may imagine the difficulty and delicacy of urging it in a public meeting in a provincial town, where half the audience will be middle class. However, the speech is meant for the working men, the hands in the great factories for agricultural implements there. They are said to be an intelligent set, and I do not despair of making them follow me. 84

83 A French Eton, p. 20
84 Letters, Vol. II, p. 151
He did not think that anything could be done for the education of the middle classes, except by State control. It was not his idea, however, that the local authorities be given no rights whatever. He held that the work of administration should be taken care of by local authorities, but that the State should see that schools were provided with an efficient teaching staff and proper well kept school-buildings, and administer the annual examinations.

Arnold realized that the aristocracy might be strongly opposed to this education of the middle classes. "Why, he asked, should they create competitors for their own children?" He knew that the real and permanent solution of the problem was to create in the middle classes themselves the desire for education:

The course taken in the next fifty years by the middle classes of this nation will probably give a decisive turn to its history. If they will not seek the alliance of the State for their own elevation, if they go on exaggerating their spirit of individualism, if they persist in their jealousy of the anitpathies and the shibboleths of a past age are now an anachronism for them,—that will prevent them, probably, from getting the rule of their own country for a season, but they will certainly Americanise it. They will rule it by their energy, but they will deteriorate it by their low ideals and want of culture. In the decline of the aristocratical element, which in some sort supplied an ideal to ennoble the spirit of the nation and to keep it together, there will be no other element
present to perform this service. It is of itself a serious calamity for a nation that its tone of feeling and grandeur of spirit should be lowered or dulled. But the calamity appears far more serious still when we consider that the middle classes, remaining as they are now, with their narrow, harsh, unintelligent; and unattractive spirit and culture, will almost certainly fail to mould or assimilate the masses below them, whose sympathies are at the present moment actually wider and more liberal than theirs. They arrive, eager to enter into possession of the world, to gain a more vivid sense of their own life and activity. If these classes cannot win their sympathy or give them their direction, society is in danger of falling into anarchy.85

It is a little surprising to readers of the present day that Arnold urged State action and that he made such an effort to convince his countrymen of its benefits. The middle classes were somewhat satisfied with themselves, and thought it was not necessary for Arnold to plead for them. Secondary education was the favorite topic of the day, and the middle classes considered that if they succeeded in other great enterprises, such as industry, there was no reason why they could not take care of their own educational system. They did not agree with Arnold's idea of State action, for they considered that they, the middle classes, supplied the mind and power for all the great

85 Mixed Essays and Others, p. 29
things done in England, and they would not consent to having an outside power training their children.

The middle classes for a long time did not do much with regard to education and the result was as Arnold had anticipated, they remained "among the worst educated" in the world.\footnote{Popular Education of France, p. 75} Even if he accused them of being the worst class, he did not despair of them. "But however this may be, there is no doubt that a liberal culture, a fullness of intellectual life, in the middle class is a far more important matter, a far more efficacious stimulant to national progress, than the same parts in an aristocratic class."\footnote{A French Eton, p. 113}

Arnold had some hope for an improvement in education in the future, for he thought that the children to come would improve by the mistakes and good works of the middle classes and aristocracy of the past, and would weave into their education the ideas of the past, of their own experiences, and of the needs of the time. He prophesies for the future:

Children of the future whose day has not yet dawn; you, when that day arrives, will hardly believe what obstructions were long suffered to prevent its coming! You who, with all your faults, have neit
the aridity of aristocracies, nor the narrow-mindedness of middle classes, you whose power of simple enthusiasm is your great gift, will not comprehend how progress towards man's best perfection, the adorning and ennobling of his spirit—should have been reluctantly undertaken; how it should have been for years and years retarded by barren commonplaces, by worn-out clap-traps. You will wonder at the labour of its friends in proving the self-proving; you will know nothing of the doubts, the fears, the prejudices they had to dispel; nothing of the outcry they had to encounter; of the fierce protestations of life from policies which were dead and did not know it, and the shrill, querulous upbraiding from publicists in their dotage. But you, in your turn, with difficulties of your own, will then be mounting some new step in the arduous ladder whereby man climbs towards his perfection; towards that unattainable but irresistible lod-star, gazed after with earnest longing, and invoked with bitter tears; the longing of thousands of hearts, the tears of many generations.88

Secondary education improved for a time, but Arnold saw the beginning before his death. The Public School Commission of 1861 started the reform of secondary education with

then in 1864, the Tauton Commission also did much for the improvement of elementary education, but neither carried the work far. The Endowed School Act of 1869 helped to

many secondary schools, but it did little toward the improvement of middle-class education.

Arnold did all he could with voice and pen to improve the
middle classes, but they were satisfied with their education and did not see why Arnold urged them to better their educational conditions. He did not lose courage and felt that his effort had been of some influence on his countrymen. "I think I am gradually making an impression about public secondary education." His ideas on education were not all followed by his countrymen, nor by the government, but his essays on the need of secondary education remain, and have been an influence on the improvement of education, from Arnold's time to the present.

89 Ibid., p. 102
Chapter V
Arnold's Aims in Education and Their Accomplishment

In order to sum up Arnold's work in education, and to point out how this work forms a consistent part of his life's work as a critic of literature and culture, it will not be possible to consider his educational works as separate from the rest of his writings. One must take into account not only his educational reports and the other works dealing directly with the subject, but in a general way, also his poetry and all his prose works, which affected the educational aims, and by means of these, the culture of his own age and that of the present. For from the outset of his literary career his purpose was to discover and point out the truth, and to induce men to love and strive after what is best in all phases of life.

In his very earliest works, we find Arnold impressed with the greatness of his calling as a poet and teacher of men. "It is awful to be the mortal vessel of truth." And in the same poem there is a hint of what is to be the theme of Arnold's life work, to strive after the perfection of the

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90 Cromwell, as quoted in L. Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p. 17
whole man: "Say not such dreams are idle; for the man still toils to perfect what the child began."91

Culture is the word which sums up all Arnold's philosophy,--the necessity that man is under of knowing and appreciating the best that has been thought or written, and the obligation which follows from this knowledge--of practising in his daily life those things which will lead him to perfection. This was the constant theme of Arnold's teaching, and it is impossible to find any of his works in which this idea is not at least implied. From his earliest writings to his last, he insists upon the necessity for culture, and in most of his prose works, he carefully explains and enlarges upon his favorite theme.

It makes no difference whether the subject with which he is dealing is criticism or politics or society or religion or education, he bases the solution of all his problems upon culture,--the striving after perfection. This culture, it must be insisted upon, is not merely a means of knowing truth. It must concern itself, not only with the "passion of pure knowledge, but with the moral and social passion for doing good."

91 Ibid., p. 17
To be the apostle of culture in this highest and best sense of the word, was, as we have said, Arnold's great business in life. To a man whose life was dedicated to the noble purpose of uplifting his countrymen to a higher plane of thought and of living, the question of the education of children must have appealed as of primary importance. He must have realized that if children were early impressed with the love of, and the desire for, what is true, beautiful and good, these noble aspirations might take firm hold of the children's hearts and would bear fruit in later life.

We may not think, however, that he undertook his task of Inspector in the Public School system with the thoroughly altruistic motive of uplifting the children of England. We must confess that while he was extremely interested in the culture of the middle classes, he would not have chosen so public and routine a method of arriving at the end unless he had been actuated by the necessity of making a living. Trilling says that "Arnold knew the work would be a burden,---dull, irksome, time-consuming; and for some time after he undertook it, he disclaimed all active interest in it. He wanted to marry and he needed an income. He did his work well, but it hastened his poetic end."92 In other words,

92 Matthew Arnold, p. 158
Arnold did not accept his position as Inspector with the idea that this would be the best method of inspiring the people of England with that desire for culture which it was his aim to teach. Nevertheless there is no doubt that his position gave him great opportunities to carry on his life's work. Although his duties were restricted to certain districts, there is no doubt that his reports had great influence. The very fact that the position of inspector was held by so well-known a man of letters added the effect of the recommendations that he made and also to his influence in later years.

No just estimate of Arnold's influence on English education is possible without taking into due account his position and work in the outside world, and especially in the world of letters. He himself would have been the first to admit that public education, important as it is, was only one of the interests and not the paramount interest of his life. Yet it is surely not a small episode in the history of education in England that for thirty years, one of the chief administrative offices in the Bureau of public instruction should have been filled by one of her most illustrious poets. Unconsciously and indirectly his influence over his colleagues, over the teachers, and over the children, was all the greater because he was a poet; for he saw them all with the clear and penetrating eye of genius and not with that of a pedant or merely an industrious official. For example, some readers of his latest foreign report were a little puzzled to interpret a sentence in which he said of some German schools, 'Again and again I find written in my notes, The children are human.' It is not of course to be supposed that he meant to imply that in English
schools the children were not human; but only that speaking as a poet, he recognized in some German schools the presence of other influences than those of ordinary lessons, the freedom and the naturalness which can come only from a true sympathy between teacher and taught.93

To inspire the middle classes with a desire for knowledge and to show them that mere material greatness was not the end of their existence, was the theme of Arnold's work in education, as along all other lines. He urged the more extensive and intensive training of teachers toward that end. He strongly advocated State control of schools with the idea that in this way cultural studies would be universal. He was in favor of compulsory education, because he knew that unless all children would be forced to attend school, cultural development would be stopped in many industrial districts. In reviewing these aims of Arnold in his educational work, we must not forget that cultural studies to him meant all those things which lead to a fuller, truer and more complete life, not only intellectually, but socially and morally. Culture was to make man aim at perfection. Conduct, to Arnold, was three-fourths of life.

93 Sir Joshua Fitch, Thomas and Matthew Arnold and Their Influence on English Education, p. 268
We must own that, although many of the reforms which Arnold urged along educational lines, have been adopted, his ideal was higher than has by any means been attained. The supreme importance of culture as opposed to commercial prosperity, has not made itself realized to the extent that Arnold would have wished; neither has the English middle class become the leader in culture which he was so desirous it would become. But advances in that line have been made, the impetus for which must certainly be attributed to the influence of Matthew Arnold.

One more point should be considered before the subject of Arnold's views on education is exhausted,—a question which is of particular interest to his Catholic readers;—that is, his views on the rights of Catholic education. He had the greatest respect and admiration for the Catholic schools of France, and he argued that those schools were good because they were left free to take care of themselves, and because they were treated by the government with fairness and liberality. He argued long and earnestly for the establishment of Catholic Schools, and even of a Catholic University in Ireland. His views were so rational and so full of justice that they must command the respect of Catholics to this day. Even though some of his ideas concerning the Church were wrong, there is no doubt that he felt its influence and admired it as the store-
house of culture, and a means of imparting culture to its children.

We have been considering Arnold's work in the field of education. It was a work noble and worthy of the best efforts of a great man, but if we should think of him only as an educator in the strictest and most technical sense of the term, we should not have made any correct estimate of the importance of his work or his influence upon the thought of his generation and the next. Arnold's career as inspector of schools contributed greatly to his influence as a public figure, and thereby gave his theories as expressed in his poetical and prose works an added weight of authority. But, as he himself confesses, this public position was undertaken for the utterly prosaic and mundane purpose of earning a living, and although he devoted himself conscientiously and whole heartedly to his routine tasks, this was not, as we have said, the source of his influence upon English thought. Arnold was a great poet and a great critic, and it is in these fields that his influence lies.

As has been stated so often in the course of the present thesis, the motive and end of all of Arnold's work is the acquiring of culture--the perfection of the whole man. In his poetry, as well as in all his prose works, no matter
on what subject, he is essentially a critic, using the term in the sense in which he himself understood it. His definition of criticism, as given in the Oxford lectures is "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." "Criticism" tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere." 94

To discover the truth—the best that has been done and thought in the world, and to direct the whole of man's endeavors to perfecting in himself and his work, that which he discovers—this is the culture of which Arnold speaks.

Arnold calls poetry "a criticism of life," and even in his earliest poems there is the deep insight into the meaning of life, and the insistence upon the duty of a man to uplift and inspire men to perfect themselves, that we find in his later poems and in his prose works. There are a number of these earlier poems in which he shows doubt and uncertainty as to the means of acquiring this perfection, but at no time does he hesitate in his prime purpose. He has been criticised as a Victorian prude who cannot write even poetry without making it of some use. But he is in

94 Quoted in C. Stanley, Matthew Arnold, p. 126
excellent company if he considers this the end of poetry. Plato says that poetry must be moral, and all truly great poets are teachers of truth.

Many writers on Arnold divide his works too exactly into periods, saying that he stopped writing poetry to take up political and social questions, and finally that the question of religion and morality occupied the last years of his life. The man who looks at Arnold's works as strictly divided into periods, misses entirely the motive and theme of his life's dedication. Even in his earliest years, he had made up his mind not to be a recluse, much as that would have been to his liking, but to be a disseminator of ideas. In the 1853 Preface he gives his idea of the purpose of poetry.

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions; human actions possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the Poet. Vainly will the latter imagine that he has everything in his own power; that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it; he may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect.95

He goes on to show how the greatest poets have accomplished

95 Preface to Poems (1853) p. 473.
the end which he set forth as the only worthy end of poetry. In everything that Arnold wrote he keeps steadily in view his main objective—to know truth, and to live so as to acquire the perfection of the whole man. He looks at the world as a whole, and at the time in which he lived a man of his insight and human sympathy was bound to be troubled by the social and political, and above all, by the religious disturbance which were upsetting the life of England. His interest in social and political questions he shows in Culture and Anarchy, when he discusses the liberal and revolutionary policy which is affecting the world. He makes the following comment upon the Revolution's motto—Fraternity, "Individual perfection is impossible so long as the rest of mankind is not perfected along with us." His solution for social and political problems was that moral life and growth in all classes of society should be brought about, not by an upsetting of the traditional social groups, as was so prevalent in the revolutionary spirit of the times, but by a mutual spirit of helping one another to attain the true end of culture—that man may perfect himself by virtue.

Arnold's religious beliefs are expressed in a number of his essays. He was not orthodox, and has been accused of being irreligious. This is far from the truth. But he was more troubled at the outset by the injustice and misery of life
than by what he believed. He could see the contrast between Christianity as he had been taught it, with the practise of Christianity about him. He loved the liturgy of the Church of England, but he was disgusted with the insincerity and unintelligence of many clergymen. He saw nothing but ugliness in the practises of the Dissenters and very little reason in their beliefs.

Arnold's whole religious teaching centers, not around the idea of belief or revelation, but around that of conduct. The whole scheme of his religion is morality. He says that if it seems strange that so great and complex a thing as religion should be taken up with the idea of conduct, we must remember that three fourths of a man's life is conduct. Of course, we know that to do is not enough. We must also believe, and in this as far as I understand it, Arnold's code is wrong. Nevertheless, we cannot help admiring, as we have mentioned before, Arnold's liberal and just attitude toward the Catholic Church. He says in a letter to Newman in 1871, that the Catholic Church cannot be anti-democratic, as the English Church may be, and often is.96 Arnold's ideal of religion was to make a far better and happier society in the future than ours is now."97

96 Cf. L. Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p. 367
97 Essays on St. Paul, p. 327
I have attempted to show in the last few pages of this thesis that Arnold was not only an educator in the sense that is implied when we speak of his post as inspector. He was an educator from the very beginning. He spent his life educating his fellow countrymen to true and noble ideals in politics, society, conduct—everything that goes to make up the life of a man in these complex times. And although many of his doctrines have fallen on deaf ears the leaven of his ideas is beginning to permeate English thought, and he is beginning to take the place which he deserves as a great literary man, who has influenced for good the life of modern England.
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The thesis, "Matthew Arnold's Writings on Education in Relation to His Idea of Culture", written by Sister Mary of Good Counsel Brunell, C.S.J., has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. Zabel  
June 3, 1940

Mr. Young  
June 5, 1940