

did not come within a generation of it. We cannot but be thankful that he gave us these fruits of his observation before the pen dropped from his hand.

Most of us remember the howl of indignation with which the publication of Sir Lepel Griffin's book was greeted. Many who cared very little for America or Americans accused him of exaggeration and misrepresentation. Perhaps he had been unfortunate in his experiences. No one can see everything in a country, or even every phase of its life; and one's general impressions are largely determined by particular incidents. Two men equally well informed, equally impartial, might live in Canada or in England, and go away with totally different opinions as to the desirableness of the one country or the other as a place of residence. Sometimes we marvel at the audacity with which writers and speakers will pronounce, offhand and dogmatically, on persons, classes, nations.

No one can fairly accuse Mr. Arnold of this hasty arrogance, or of the temper which would beget it. His attitude towards the American people is that of affectionate gratitude and admiration. He is ready and eager to make the best of things, and not the worst, generous in his appreciation of their good qualities and accomplishments. His criticism is, therefore, of special value, and represents not so much a judgment as an intuition—the things which he saw rather than the conclusions which he inferred, and his whole article is stamped with this character.

Mr. Arnold's views of civilization in no way differ from those which are generally accepted. It is, he says, the humanization of man in society, the satisfaction for him, in society, of the true law of human nature. In other words, it is the full and complete realization of human life in all its parts, elements, powers — "the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners.

... We are perfectly civilized only when all these instincts in our nature ... have been adequately recognized and satisfied."

As regards one aspect of the subject, the commercial and monetary, Mr. Arnold points out that, for persons who have from three to fourteen hundred pounds a year, America is a much less comfortable country to live in than England. For those who have smaller incomes it is better. But he does not consider this to be the real question. He refers with satisfaction to the much greater equality, the much less division into classes, to be found on this side of the Atlantic. One thing he notices, which we believe most strangers who have mixed in American society have remarked, "a charm in American women, which you find in almost all of them, wherever you go. It is the charm of a natural manner, a manner not self-conscious artificial and constrained." To a certain extent the same may be remarked of a vast number of Canadian women. As we are doing our best to get at the truth on these subjects, we may add that it cannot be applied in its whole extent. What Mr. Arnold says of English women applies, in part, to ourselves.

"I have often heard it observed," says Mr. Arnold, "that a perfectly natural manner is as rare among English women of the middle classes as it is general among American women of like condition with them." At the same time he does not flatter the Americans, for, while he admits the naturalness of the manners of the women, he adds: "It may not be a beautiful manner always, but it is almost always a natural manner, a free and happy manner, and this gives pleasure."

All this is good, he says, but more is required in order to a perfect civilization; and this, he says, may best be described by the word *interesting*. This is the charm of the old Greek civilization, and this—lamentable to relate—is missing in the American. And, amidst a great deal of charming writing, he tells us, in effect, that the interesting in human life is its poetry, its idealism. The "great sources of the interesting are distinction and beauty, that which is elevated, and that which is beautiful."

In trying to explain the absence of the aesthetic taste, we think Mr. Arnold is hardly correct when he says that "in the long settled States east of the Alleghenies the landscape in general is not interesting." Surely this could not be said by one who travelled from Montreal to Boston and New York, passing through the region of the White Mountains and taking excursions into some of the loveliest parts of the State of New York. Indeed there are in this district large stretches of very charming scenery. But the critic is certainly much nearer the mark when he speaks of the Americans as "restless, eager to better themselves, and to make fortunes," and that "the inhabitant does not strike his roots lovingly down into the soil, as in rural England." And again, "the charm of beauty which comes from ancientness and permanence of rural life the country could not yet have in a high degree, but it has it in even a less degree than might be expected."

He is quite right again when he says that the Americans came originally, for the most part, from that great class in English society among

whom the sense for conduct and business is much more strongly developed than the sense for beauty. And not only so, but America has not the nourishment of the sense of beauty in the ancient monuments, the cathedrals, parish churches, and castles of the scholastic and feudal age, nor the charming examples of domestic architecture which are the product of a later period. As a consequence, he says that of the really beautiful, in architecture, in painting, in literature, they have produced very little as yet.

It is the same, he says, with distinction as with beauty. "If there be a discipline in which the Americans are wanting, it is the discipline of awe and respect. "Can we refute this charge, if it is brought against ourselves?" Our most conspicuous defect is our lack of reverence. Here, as in the States, our ethics and our theology have been popularized, until they come very near being vulgarized. Mr. Arnold says that Lincoln, rather than Washington, is the ideal man of contemporary America. Washington, in the present estimate of his countrymen, is but an English officer. The glorification of "the average man" is hostile to distinction, and so is the addictedness to "the funny man," who is a national misfortune. Most of all, perhaps, the newspapers are hostile to it. But, after all, the newspapers only represent and keep alive the state of things as it is. Mr. Arnold is very hard upon the newspapers. While admitting the ability which many of them display, he says: "But, on the whole, and taking the total impression and effect made by them, I should say that, if one were searching for the best means to efface and kill in a whole nation the discipline of respect, the feeling for what is elevated, one could not do better than take the American newspapers."

To all this there is a very obvious rejoinder that the state of things complained of is only what might be expected. Americans are immersed in business, they have no witnesses to antiquity around them, very little leisure for meditation, or for anything apart from practical interests, and therefore the peculiar sense of beauty and distinction, the sentiment of the ideal and the poetic, can be neither generated nor sustained. If Americans would say something of this kind, Mr. Arnold would be fairly content. Such convictions would be the best proof that they were not wholly destitute of the qualities the absence of which he deplors. "If," says our critic, "the community over there perceived the want and regretted it sought for the right ways of remedying it, and resolved that remedied it should be; if they said, or even if a number of leading spirits amongst them said: 'Yes, we see what is wanting in our civilization, we see that the average man is a danger, we see that our newspapers are a scandal, that bondage to the common and ignoble is our snare; but under the circumstances our civilization could not well have been expected to begin differently. What you see are beginnings; they are crude; they are too predominantly material, and so forth. If this were said, we should have no severe criticism to offer.'"

But, the writer persists, the Americans will not say this; they "seem in certain matters, to have agreed, as a people, to deceive themselves." This is good, and it is so good just because it is, in a measure, true of every nation and of every individual. We none of us like to confess, even to ourselves, those faults which are most conspicuous to our neighbours.

And the worst of it is that "all this tall talk and self-glorification meets with hardly any rebuke from sane criticism over there. . . . There are plenty of cultivated, judicious, delightful individuals there. They are our hope and America's hope; it is through their means that improvement must come. They know perfectly well how false and hollow the boastful stuff talked is; but they let the storm of self-laudation rage, and say nothing. For political opponents and their doings there are, in America hard words to be heard in abundance; for the real faults in American civilization, and for the foolish boasting which prolongs them, there is hardly a word of regret or blame, at least in public."

All this is excellent. We should, however, remark, what Mr. Arnold did not know Americans well enough to discover, that a great deal of the tall talk is not taken, and is not meant to be taken, seriously. Still, there underlies it a solid mass of self-complacency, which is the foe of all real progress. We can hardly imagine counsels more necessary or more useful than those of Mr. Arnold, and they are scarcely less necessary in Canada than in the United States.

CRITICISM measures a man by his highest reach. With the coming years Whitman will grow in stature among American poets. It is not impossible that when the age in which he lived has passed into history, his figure will assume Titanic proportions. With his almost inexplicable artistic defects, his was a poet's soul, for its essence was universal sympathy. He loved humanity in its wholeness; he looked upon it and saw that it was good. Above all, he loved his country with uncompromising devotion, and without one backward look of desire or regret.