

powers of insight, knowledge of the world and literature, that is, of men in action and men in books, dispassionate judgment, solid learning and freedom from insular prejudice—if there be such a thing—was combined a happy irony, pronounced enough to be trenchant, though not sufficiently keen, except to the exceptionally thin-skinned, to wound mortally. His criticisms of America and the Americans, though they have raised the stereotyped howl in certain quarters, are neither unjust nor unkind, they but represent matters as he saw them and as many others see them. What can be truer or better put than this: "It is often said that every nation has the government it deserves. What is much more certain is that every nation has the newspapers it deserves. The newspaper is the direct product of the want felt; the supply answers closely and inevitably to the demand. I suppose no one knows what the American newspapers are who has not been obliged for some length of time to read either those newspapers or none at all. Powerful and valuable contributions occur scattered about in them. But on the whole and taking the total impressions 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."

In the same essay from which the foregoing excerpt is culled Mr. Arnold, speaking of distinctions, says: "As to distinction, and the interest which human nature seeks from enjoying the effect made upon it by what is elevated, the case is much the same. There is very little to create such an effect, very much to thwart it. Goethe says somewhere that 'the thrill of awe is the best thing humanity has.' But if there be a discipline in which the Americans

are wanting, it is the discipline of awe and respect." Who, speaking conscientiously, can ward off the thrust? Or who can deny the truth of the following:—"Far from admitting that the American accent, as the pressure of their climate and of their average man has made it, is a thing to be striven against, they assure one another that it is the right accent, the standard English speech of the future." Again:—"They reform the spelling of the English language by the insight of their average man." Is there anything in all this "to offend"? Is there anything that *should offend*? Surely not. Or are the citizens of the truly great Republic mere petulant boys and girls to be wheedled into a belief that "things are not what they seem," and coaxed out of an assumption that in others would merit the scourge or bread and water.

And especially is Mr. Arnold's summing up of the whole matter worthy the careful consideration of all who have the interests, the true interests, of the American nation at heart. He says: "To sum up, then, what really dissatisfies in American civilization is the want of the interesting, a want due chiefly to the want of those two great elements of the interesting which are elevation and beauty. And the want of these elements is increased and prolonged by the Americans being assured that they have them when they have them not. And it seems to me that what the Americans now most urgently require, is not so much a vast additional development of orthodox Protestantism, but rather a steady exhibition of cool and sane criticism by their men of light and leading over there. And perhaps the very first step of such men should be to insist on having for America, and to create, if need be, better newspapers." Surely all who admire, love and respect whatever is worthy in the politics, literature and