

one time he seemed to vie with the public in distrusting it, his poetry missed its mark. On the other hand, while his critical writings had swift and almost instantaneous effect for good, the repute they brought him was moderate and largely made up of misconception. For the mass of his countrymen he came somehow to personify a number of things which their minds vaguely associated with kid gloves, and by his ironical way of playing with the misconception he did more than a little to confirm it. But in truth Arnold was a serious man who saw life as a serious business and chiefly relied, for making the best of it, upon a serene common-sense. He had elegance, to be sure, and was inclined—at any rate, in controversy—to be conscious of it; but it was elegance of that plain Attic order to which common-sense gives the law and almost the inspiration. The man and the style were one. Alike in his life and his writings he observed and preached the golden mean, with a mind which was none the less English and practical if, in expressing it, he deliberately and almost defiantly avoided that emphasis which Englishmen love to a fault.

Matthew Arnold, eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous Head Master of Rugby, was born on Christmas Eve, 1822, at Laleham on the Thames, where his father at that time taught private pupils. The child was barely six years old when the family removed to Rugby, and at seven he returned to Laleham to be taught by his uncle, the Rev. John Buckland. In August, 1836, he proceeded to Winchester, but was removed at the end of a year and entered Rugby, where he remained until he went up to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1841, with an open scholarship. He had written a prize poem at Rugby—the subject, *Alaric at Rome*; and on this performance he improved by taking the Newdigate in 1843—the subject, *Cromwell*. But we need waste no time on these exercises, which are not included in the following pages. It is better worth noting that the boy had been used to spending his holidays, and now spent a great part of his vacations,