

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S FAREWELL.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD has been presented by the schoolmasters of the Westminster district with a testimonial, on his retirement from the office of Inspector of Schools. In returning thanks he said :

Once after we had been inspecting a school in the north of London, we were entertained at luncheon by one of the managers, who said so many kind things about me that at last, growing embarrassed, I cut it short by saying, "Nobody can say I am a punctual Inspector." You have praised me so much that I feel almost disposed to say something disparaging of myself now. The truth is, my path as an inspector has been made very smooth for me. Everywhere I have found kindness; everywhere I have favours to acknowledge and obligations to express. I hardly know where to begin. I will begin where my obligations are least. To Government I owe nothing. But then I have always remembered that under our Parliamentary system the Government probably takes little interest in such work, whatever it is, as I have been able to do in the public service, and even perhaps knows nothing at all about it. And, ladies and gentlemen, we must take the evils of our system along with the good. Abroad, probably, a Minister might have known more about my performances. But then abroad I doubt whether I should ever have survived to perform them. Under the strict bureaucratic system abroad I feel pretty sure I should have been dismissed ten times over for the freedom with which on various occasions I have expressed myself on matters of religion and politics. Our Government here in England takes a large and liberal view of what it considers a man's private

affairs, and so I have been able to survive as an inspector for thirty-five years; and to the Government I at least owe this—to have been allowed to survive for thirty-five years.

When I pass from Government this somewhat bounded kind of obligation ceases, and my obligation becomes ample and full indeed. As to the permanent officials, most of them have been my personal friends at the time of life when friendship has an intimacy and a savour which it can hardly acquire afterwards; but all the officials of the department with whom I have had to do have lightened for me the troubles of an inspector's life, instead of aggravating them. I suppose the permanent officials are sometimes found by an inspector to be harsh and trying, but in that case I am like the dairy-maid in the rustic poem, who found the dun cow that was vicious to others, gentle to her. My colleagues, the inspectors, I have found always friendly and ready to help; we have had no quarrels, nor an approach to one. Then my assistants—how my assistants have smoothed my path for me. I know it is thought at the office that an inspector's path is often too much smoothed for him by his assistant. My rule was—and I think it a good one—to let my assistant do whatever he could do as well or better than I could myself. I found that to be a considerable quantity, I confess. But I do not think my assistants felt themselves to be unfairly put upon. Lastly, I come to the managers and teachers. From the time when the authorities of the Borough-road and the Wesleyan Educational Committee acquiesced in my appointment, though it was made, let me tell you, irregularly and with neglect of their right of veto, down to