

In giving you an account of Mr. Arnold's theories on social reform, I shall follow his own example, as I have done before, of quoting, wherever possible, from the author himself. Many of my extracts are noticeable for the dry humor of their style, and his words would hardly gain in point, to put it mildly, by condensation. The passages in which his views are given are scattered up and down his works, and I merely claim the credit of presenting them to you in a somewhat more accessible shape.

After tracing the origin of the English to the fusion of three races, Germans, Celts and Normans, he proceeds to point out the elements of character distinctive of each: "The Germanic genius has steadfastness as its main basis, with commonness and humdrum for its defect, fidelity to nature for its excellence. The Celtic genius, sentiment as its main basis, with love of beauty, charm and spirituality for its excellence, ineffectualness and self-will for its defect. The Norman genius, talent for affairs as its main basis, with strenuousness and clear rapidity for its excellence, hardness and insolence for its defect."* To the fusion of these three elements he traces the defects in the English nature: "If we had been all German, we might have had all the science of Germany; if we had been all Celtic, we might have been popular and agreeable; if we had been all Latinized, we might have governed Ireland as the French govern Alsace, without getting ourselves detested. But now we have Germanism enough to make us Philistines, and Normanism enough to make us imperious, and Celtism enough to make us self-conscious and awkward; but German fidelity to Nature, and Latin precision and clear reason, and Celtic quick-wittedness and spirituality, we fall short of."*

Having heard Matthew Arnold's description of English in the mass we are in a position to understand the three classes into which he divides the English people, viz., the Barbarians, the Philistines and the Populace, which I need hardly say correspond to the upper, middle and lower classes. "All of us," he notes, "so far as we are Barbarians, Philistines or Populace, imagine happiness to consist in doing what one's ordinary self likes. The graver self of the Barbarian likes honors and consideration; his more relaxed self, field-sports and pleasure. The graver self of one kind of Philistine likes business and money-making; his more relaxed self, comfort and tea-meetings. Of another kind of Philistine, the graver self likes trades' unions; the relaxed self, deputations or hearing Mr. Odger speak. The sterner self of the Populace likes brawling, hustling and smashing; the lighter self, beer."†

Besides the mixture of natures that go to make up the Englishman, there are, Mr. Arnold points out, two causes that have led to the stunting and pauperizing of his nature. The first is his love of inequality: "to him who will use his mind as the wise man recommends, surely it is easy to see that our short-comings in civilization are due to our inequality; or, in other words, that the inequality of classes and property, which comes to us from the middle ages, and which we maintain because we have the religion of inequality, that this constitution of things, I say, has the natural and necessary effect, under present circumstances, of materializing our upper class, vulgarizing our middle class, and brutalizing our lower class. And this is to fail in civilization."‡ To understand the second cause to which Mr. Arnold attributes our shortcomings, I must explain to you in a few words his theory of civilization. This, he asserts, consists in the due admixture of four elements or, in his own words, "powers" which conduce to well-being. There is the *power of conduct*, of which the English are the highest expression: the *power of beauty*, for which Italians are still pre-eminent; the *power of knowledge*, the special heirloom of the Germans; and the *power of social life and manners*, in which the French excel even more than the Athenians. While these powers demand equitable development, it is contended by Arnold that the emphasis given to the power of conduct has destroyed the prominence of the other equally important factors of civilization among the English. A few years after Shake-

spere's days, Mr. Arnold is never tired of reiterating, "the great English middle class, the kernel of the nation, entered the prison of Puritanism, and had the key turned on its spirit there for two hundred years."* Hence the great need of our time is the transformation of the British Puritan. "Our Puritan middle class presents a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty, a low standard of manners."†

I should exhaust your patience if I attempted to repeat half of the clever and caustic criticism that Matthew Arnold passed upon the poor Puritan. "Suppose we take the figure we know so well," he writes, "the earnest and nonconforming Liberal of our middle classes, as his schools and his civilization have made him. He is for disestablishment; he is for temperance; he has an eye to his wife's sister; he is a member of his local caucus; he is learning to go up to Birmingham every year to the feast of Mr. Chamberlain. His inadequacy is but too visible."‡ The following is a picture of the transformed Puritan, in the clutches of the Ritualist. "Who that watches the enormities during the celebration of the communion at some Ritualistic church, their gestures and behaviour, the floor of the church strewn with what seem to be the dying and the dead, progress to the altar almost barred by forms suddenly dropping as if they were shot in battle,—who that observes this delighted adoption of vehement rites, till yesterday unknown, adopted and practised now with all that absence of tact, measure, and correct perception, all that slowness to see when they are making themselves ridiculous, which belong to the people of our English race,—who, I say, that sees this, can doubt, that for a not small portion of the religious community, a difficulty to the intelligence will for a long time yet be no difficulty at all!"§ Lastly we catch him again at the stamping-ground of Philistinism—the Social Science Congress. "One can call up the whole scene. A great room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty air and faded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without; and in the soul of any poor child of nature, who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation and mourning and woe."||

But I must now bid adieu to my subject, much as I should like to introduce you to the Puritan's Palatine Library, or to the clever comparison of the relative merits of Milton and Eliza Cook. I will merely add one word in vindication of the stand that our author has taken, of his criticisms that have called forth volumes of abuse in good and bad English. With England, as with the rest of the world, there can be no such thing as finality. She must reform herself constantly, to keep in sympathy with the age. But unlike other nations, or with less excuse than they could urge, England is full of anachronisms of a most glaring nature, a useless House of Peers, a State Church, a social system wherein the disparity between rich and poor is greater than in any civilized country in Europe, and greatest abuse of all,—England has possession of Ireland and seeks to retain it, in contempt of the will of the majority of its people, and in the face of the public opinion of Europe, by means of repression and martial law. Such a state of things cannot be permanent. England cannot, any more than Coreya, hold herself aloof from the modern spirit. And the modern spirit is awake almost everywhere else. "The cause of want of correspondence," writes our author, "between the forms of modern Europe and its spirit, between the new wine of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or even of the sixteenth and seventeenth, almost everyone now perceives; it is no longer dangerous to affirm that this want of correspondence exists; people are even beginning to be shy of denying it. To remove this want of correspondence is beginning to be the settled endeavour of most persons of good sense."** It is because the chief opposi-

* "The Study of Civil Literature."

† "Culture and Anarchy."

‡ "Equality." *Fort. Rev.*, March, 1878.

** "Essays in Criticism."

† Irish Catholicism and British Liberalism. *Fort. Rev.*, July, 1878.

‡ "An Eton Boy." *Fort. Rev.*, June, 1882.

§ "Literature and Dogma."

|| Preface to "Poems of Wordsworth."