

THE INTELLECTUAL DEATH

I.—THE JOYLESS WISDOM

“For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun’s hot eye,
With heads bent o’er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD

WE used to be taught in the old times—such of us at least as attended the Scottish Minerva in her orthodox temples—that the chief end of man was to glorify God and rejoice in Him all the days of his life; and as the lesson was commonly enforced upon our tenderness without mitigation or remorse of hand, I suppose we are not likely to forget it for the rest of our earthly span. *How* God was to be glorified and rejoiced in was not, so far as I can remember, indicated with any clearness, and, to be honest, I do not know that many of us concerned ourselves very greatly about that matter; possibly our actual glorification of Him, such as it was, would be all the more effectual and acceptable in consequence. However that may be, I think that those old Puritanical instructors of youth, in spite of their sourness and severity, do yet merit our respect, inasmuch as they not only asked a question to which some sort of reply must necessarily be given before any reasonable system of education can be evolved, but also supplied an answer to it. In its own way, too, it is an excellent answer, notwithstanding a suggestion of vagueness, and I should be quite ready to adopt it as the basis for my own little educational air-castles, provided I may be allowed to interpret it in my own fashion. I shall, however, come to that later on.