

PERSONAL EDUCATION

As Shown in the Work of Thomas Arnold.

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June 13, 1795—June 12, 1842. These dates mark the birth and the death of Thomas Arnold, the great master of Rugby School. His was a life of only forty-seven years, yet no life of the century was fraught with greater blessing to mankind. This world is ruled by kings and always will be. The king is the man who moulds the thought and life of the people. If any Englishman since Cromwell did that Thomas Arnold did it.

Arnold was educated at Oxford. Leaving there in 1819, he opened a private school for boys at Laleham on the Thames. The period at Laleham was the most important part of his preparation for Rugby. Here he was controlled by the same principles which dominated his Rugby work. He cared for the boys as for his own sons. He protected them from the presence of those whose influence was only evil. To do this he was much with them. He was satisfied with no less in the boys than he would look for in his own sons.

During his work at Laleham a great change came into his religious life. The principles which he had followed as a matter of course became emphatically a part of his own convictions to be embraced and carried out for life or death. In his common acts of life, whether private or public, the depth of his religious convictions most vividly appeared.

English education, as known in 1827, needed a *regeneration*. Where should the reform begin and who should lead? The mere resistance to change which clings to old institutions was a great obstacle, and in some of the schools their constitution made reform almost impossible. But the day for reform had come. Providence pointed to Rugby as *the place*, and to Thomas Arnold as *the man* for the movement. The place, the man, and the movement met. The reform came not so much in the *method* as in the *man*.

In August, 1827, the head mastership of Rugby became vacant, and Arnold was an applicant for the position. Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel College, predicted that if Arnold were elected he would change the face of education throughout all the public schools of England. He was elected. In August 1828 began the best fourteen years of his life—years of intense, enthusiastic, and fruitful action. To those who never considered the priceless jewel of a boy's soul he seemed to be buried—a mere schoolmaster. Some said: "What a pity that a man fit to be a statesman should be only a teacher of boys! If we had