

A Life of Matthew Arnold by Nicholas Murray  
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### **PART ONE: THE MAKING OF A POET**

- Chapter One: The Mighty Oak, 1822 – 1841 Pg. 3**
  - 6 – Thomas Arnold Judged religion by how much nation it included
  - 6 – Unifying national cultural zeal goes back to father.
  - 7 – Muscular Christianity
  - 8 – MA (Matthew Arnold) cultivates the intellectual delicacies that father lacks.
- Chapter Two: Oxford Scholars, 1841 – 1848 Pg. 37**
  - 38 – Early oxford against denouncing the Pop. Newman was a tractarian. MA liked his style, but not ideals. Newman wanted more dogma. And he thought Protestant had dismissed too much dogmatism and were going towards atheism. MA also liked Newman's penchant for social criticism.
  - 42 – MA loves George Sands more than the theology debates. But turned off by her sexual freedom.
  - 48 – JC Shairp's poem on Arnold.
  - 51 – MA too jovial – tongue in cheek
  - 61 – MA is a dandy and passes a test after a brief stint at Rugby goes to work at oriel college.
  - 63 – The 23 year old goes to France to visit George Sands
  - 65 – J.C. Shairp
  - 67 – Barbarian, Philistine, Populace; Barbarian = Lord Lansdowne
  - 67 – MA Appointed inspector of schools in April 1851. His family was relieved, but not his friends.
- Chapter Three: A Pair of Blue Eyes, 1848 – 1849, Pg. 69**
  - 71 – Wrote a nasty letter to Clough about his poem. Here we see emergence of critic. He asks how far poetry should go into activism.
  - 76 – Avoid fanaticism and accept doubt

- 80 – MA prized sincerity in poetry – Anti-Abstraction
- 84 – Marguerite poems fail due to not fitting formula
- 86 – Dover beach comes after Marguerite, on honeymoon
- 88 – Clough resigns rather than sign statements of belief and MA dislikes his poetry again.
- 89 – Poems must have a certain idea of the world.
- 91 – Family surprised by the seriousness of first publication
- 94 – Poem as essay or passion?
- 96 – Are we fragments? Don't resent those who point out transience and big attack on MA's Faux profundity.
- 98 – Pretty words about failure at self-denial
- 99 – A dig at English men and women

### **Chapter Four: The Battle of Life, 1850 – 1853, Pg. 103**

- 103 – Descriptions of the future Mrs. Arnold
- 104 – Swipe at Flu
- 105 – Start to criticize Byron and romantics
- 106 – Early estimates of later rival – the younger Newman – Scion of Sr. Tractarian. IN the book – Lovely comical statement on religion.
- 107 – Faded Leaves records, roadblocks on the way to getting Fanny Lucy
- 110 – All getting married but MA. Obedience to inner life.
- 113 – At 25 – good bye to youth
- 114 – Trying to stay close to K and rejecting modern lit for the poet in current affairs are “quite historical.” Inspector job starts
- 117 – The writing of Dover Beach and contrasts doubtful and melancholy poetry with confident prose
- 117 – MA was a church attender  
His prose is upbeat and poems dower.
- 118 – Monastery, father hated Catholicism
- 119 – School inspector job described
- 120 – Fitch o MA and schools – Buy this book
- 123 – The poet is less than his themes
- 123 – Write of the death of youth
- 125 – Though humbuggy, MA loved local folks.  
MA loves of simple folks and patron saint of intellectuals with day jobs.
- 126 – Chastizing schools that charge poor folks money and Welsh language schools. The government is to unify us.
- 126 – Anti-multiculturalism, don't teach welsch
- 127 – Schools unite and must include the poor
- 127 – Modern poems should not be flowery, but have good content.
- 129 – Empedocles loses his heart for head; This could be a metaphor for MA going to work and losing his heart. But, MA, of course, perseveres.
- 132 – No time to read!
- 133 – Lovely erotic feelings towards Clough. Good lines to explain fatigue from work.

134 Clough's poor reaction to the poetry; refers to the public mind. JC Shairp dislikes the poem's despair.

134 – Sexist.

134 – JC Shairp says MA disowns man's feelings and they disown his poetry. If there is nothing but blank dejection, why write it?

IN THE BOOK: MA argues that literature should unite us. That is the Bible and Homer, so we will have a common language. Did you read Homer in School? It was in a collection of books. Teach of its glory put it in the context of western civ. The best that has been thought and said, (I recognize that as a classic Arnold line). We have enough media disintegration and noise. Were I President I would make the whole nation read Homer and the Iliad together. I wouldn't do literature that will be forgotten. Do greats like Matthew Arnold, who tie us to our cultural heritage. Put the greats in great works. In the context of our often artistically great culture and evolving civilization.

135 – 1853 writing great poetry. Married in 1851, right?

## **Chapter Five: The Emergence of a Critic, 1853 – 1860, Pg. 137**

139 – Sohrab and Rostum re-enacts MA's being overshadowed by his father.

141 – Poetry should ennoble us.

142 Empedocles withdrawn from 1853 – 1867

143 – Art is better than we are

148 – Inspecting load detailed

149 – Sexist again!

151 – Happy with family

152 – His love of a library / and Athenaeum Club

153 – Driven to another library

156 – Two innovations as Oxford Poetry Professor – 1) Lecturing in English

157 – Father would have been happy

157 – He notes poet's death dates

158 – MA would hate post-modernism. His criticism and poetry didn't mesh. He's a conservative radical. 1857 publishes Merope.

163 – He likes wine / 7 years into their marriage they still don't have a steady home.

168 – Ala J. S. Mill's on Liberty, the State helps, but individuals create cultural energy.

170 - MA gets essay style from father and entered military drill. The names of his children listed

## **PART TWO: THE TRIUMPH OF THE CRITIC**

### **Chapter Six: The Nicest Moderation, 1860 – 1865, Pg. 175**

176 – MA loves Napoleon and worries about America

177 – "I have never read of any democracy which truly succeeded except by entering into that alliance with the best intelligence and virtue within itself and

submitting to that guidance from which autocratic and oligarchic governments managed to get on without.”

179 – Tensions with Tennyson (whose success he may resent)

180 – 183 – Translation of Homer

184 – Birth of Nelly and MA pushing himself

185 – The Middle Class wanted Laissez faire; MA began working against this with his Ed in France book

186 – Democracy affirms our essence

186 – Great summary of doctrine

187 – K’s despair – she adopted dead Willy’s children

188 – People know him as his father’s son, but the change is beginning.

189 – “After all, one likes one’s own family about one better than anything in the world.”

193 – Attack on payment by results as an ed policy

194 – Fighting for the poor

197 – Flue works hard

197 – 8 MA on Stanley’s biography of his father

199 – Again listing artists’ death ages

200 – Spirit of the writing, not doctrine is important

202- Joy at having an audience

204 – A French Eton

## **Chapter Seven: The Elegant Jeremiah, 1865 – 1869, Pg. 209**

210 – Essay in criticism published to Henry James’ delight

210 – Wants to help England intellectually

211 – Mocking Bentham

216 – Arnold’s father also liked centrality of government

218 – Culturist analysis

219 – MA has no funds

221- Thysis to Clough published

223 – Garland’s Friendship – Last Child, # 6 born

225 – Race against death noted on 44<sup>th</sup> birthday

229 – Celt spirituality can reform middle class philistinism. His book helped the celt revival happen

230 – Bad English elements come from the Germans. Celts have sweetness and light

230 – He considers his writing natural magic

231 – Strong statement for cultural unity

232 – Browning’s urging led to Empedocles getting reprinted

234 – Dover Beach is NOT about Christianity’s fading, but uncertainty.

235 – MA loved the spoof at his expense, “Culture and its enemies.”

236 – 1868 – Doubts about public education

237 – MA, Carlyle and Democracy

238 – MA Breaks his tooth, his second one. Baby Basil is ill and gets Chamomile injections.

Guide to all schools and universities on the continent.

239 – Basil Dies – MA Thinks of death

The origin of the term Philistine and MA does like the unintellectual folks

241 – Repression statement

241 – Thomas, MA's oldest child, dies

242 – Death thoughts

242 – Culture and Anarchy discussion starts.

242 – Culture and Anarchy has become a whipping boy for elitest backwards thought.

243 – But, a few pages will show this is wrong, for movement, against old ideas, inward.

Arnold was interested in what culture could do, not its dividing us. Culture makes people think feely.

C&A is his secular prologue to his coming religious quest.

244 – In the first chapter, "Sweetness and light," he assigns 4 clear characteristics to culture.

- 1) It is not elitest
- 2) It is socially useful as it comes from the moral and social passion for doing good.
- 3) It is dynamic and not static (growing and becoming)
- 4) It is profoundly democratic and inclusive. Perfection cannot happen while the individual remains isolated.

The men of culture are the true apostles of equality.

246 – Here we get Hellenism and Hebraism for the first time. Hellenism is spontaneity of consciousness; Hellenism is strictness of conscience.

249 – "My poems represent the spirit of the times" letter is June 4<sup>th</sup> of 1869

## **Chapter Eight: Religion and the Zeit-Geist, 1870-1877, Pg. 251**

251 – 252 Dover Beach does not mean the end of faith or religion and Arnold spent the 1870s on this topic.

252 – Not an agnostic; Arnold was a believer and worshipper – after his own fashion – till the day he died.

253 – He is still good at sports

253 – 254 MA still couldn't get a promotion. He didn't mind so much, but Flu wanted it. And they inherited 2,000 lbs and paid off their debts.

254 – This was the only unhappy spot in their marriage, mondy. She had been brought up wealthy and didn't like to struggle. MA never made more with writing than he did as inspector. Also, she never read Emerson and didn't like controversy. May 1870 St. Paul and Protestantism was published.

255 – Herein he provides his definition of God which caused a stir and was repeated in Literature and Dogma (1873), "That stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfill the law of their being."

Arnold said the Church of England was right to keep out the Puritans in the 1660s, as they were restricted. But, now they should let them in.

## BILDUNG

- 256 – He wanted Catholics in too, but said it would not happen in his day.  
Edward Miall represented too much Hebraism (as a non-conformist), John Stuart Mill, too much Hellenism. Our only real perfection is in totality.
- 257 – Though given another award by Oxford, he still had money problems.
- 258 – His satirical Arminius letters were collected as Friendship's Garland.
- 260 – His Brother in Law's 1870 Education Act, William Forster, included inspection of Catholic schools.
- 261 – He turned down the editorship of Fraser's magazine because it would take too much time. And, he got a nicer inspectorship district.  
He, though, regretted the people and districts he would no longer see.
- 262 – Piglets escape his pen and the whole family chases them with much laughter.
- 263 – MA's cats are named Blacky and Atossa  
Arnold didn't like Islam or the Koran.
- 264 – He became a frequent target of satirists
- 265 – A third of Arnold's children die, Budge, the fat, 16 year old.
- 266 – He wrote a book, A Bible-Reading for Schools  
MA's hair never went white, he called it a "perpetual miracle."  
In 1873, his most controversial book, Lit and Dogma.
- 267 – Collections of sermons sold very well.  
Lit and Dogma argued that Christianity could only survive if it ettioned false dogmas. The middle class were bible readers, but the lower classes were abandoning it.
- 268 – Rather than miracles, he wished to base in on intellectual grounds. All religion is about morality. Marlity touched by emotion. He rejected meracles as fairy tales.
- 269 – Literary critics were the right persons to interpret the Bible as poetry.
- 271 – MA moves to his last home, in the country. Less expensive but still too expensive. He has two dogs. Kaiser and later max.
- 272 – Things are beautiful, despite clouds inside and out, to be felt to the end.
- 272 – Arnold argues "the facts and history of religion" should be in the curriculum.
- 1873 – His mother died at 82.
- 273 – The Arnold's were stoic in the face of death. Fan was shaken.
- 1874 – Gladstone gives way to Disraeli.  
MA hoped the losing liberals would distance themselves from the Dissenters.
- 279 – MA argued that Ireland should have a Catholic University.
- 280 – In defense of the Church of England he calls it a great national society for the promotion of goodness.
- 281 – but he denounced its classism.
- 282 – MA never really took the dissenter's complaints as seriously as he might.  
George Sand dies. His son Dick had run up gambling debts.

## Chapter Nine: Approaching America, 1877 – 1885, Pg. 285

- 285 – In 1877 Arnold cast his vote for JC Shairp as professor of Poetry.
- 286 – Dick to go to Australia.
- 288 – MA loves equality but not socialism or communism because they are “content with too low and material a standard of well-being.”
- 289 – Brother Edward died.
- 290 – He thought if the dissenters really cared about justice, they’d take up the Irish cause. But they hated the Catholics.
- 291 – MA called for a public school for the middle classes or a universal system of Stat-supported secondary schools.
- 292 – He thought his rallying for public school more important than a poem or essay.
- 293 – Mixed essays comes out
- 294 – He told the working class they could gain from a system of middle class education because that would give them a civilized class to move in to.
- 294 – 295 Beating zulus cheered as it would add to the “extension of the Englishry . . . its spread is the spread of future civilization.”
- 296 – A tide of low culture is coming; but literature will always keep its supremacy. Because it adds to the self-preservation in humanity.
- 297 – Burke too conservative for MA. But he respected him and edited a volume of his writing in 1881.
- 298 – MA went to America to pay off his son Dick’s gambling debts.
- 301 – MA writes Huxley that science is a part of his definition of culture. The phrase, the best that has been known and said in the world includes science.
- 304 – MA’s view on the Irish question was not that Irish should be given their freedom, but that the British should be nicer to them. There was a blended national feeling between England and the Welsh and Scots and Irish. But the philistines would not budge.
- 305- 26 year old Wilde writes MA. He later mocks him by saying, “the primary aim of the critic is to see the object as it really is not.”
- 306 – Helps get Dick a job.
- 309 – MA did “literature and science” 29 times in America. It was Dick’s gambling and ticket to Australia.
- 311 – MA tired of his own rhetoric.
- 312- Doesn’t wish to die at work.
- 313 – Alcohol consumption habits.; wine adds to the agreeableness of life.
- 313 – Flue read all his works, but was not as intellectual as Rothschild.
- 314- He called his trip, “the invasion of America.”
- 314 – Get lit and science to know how to think and feel.
- Flue and Lucy left for America on 10/13/83. Via Staten Island entered on 10/22/83.
- 316 IN THE BOOK – “He is very like his photographs - tall with large nose and mouth, brown mutton chop whiskers and hair almost jet black, carefully – trimmed

and parted in the middle, and brushed smoothly over his broad, but not particularly lofty forehead.”

316 – “For there are few Englishmen who are more read in the United States or about whose personality more curiosity is felt.”

317 – Filthy lucre and MA 1<sup>st</sup> speech in America.

318 – Lectures are to America what opera is to Italy and Theater to France.”

318 – His lecture “numbers” was about the majority not always being right. States are saved by their righteous remnant.”

320 – Compliments American women and gets some favorable press. But has no time to meet people. Also, does poetry readings that are liked.

321 – The middle class in America are happier.

322 – March 5<sup>th</sup>, he set sail for England.

### **Chapter Ten: Last Words, 1884 – 1888, Pg. 323**

324 – Discourses in America contains the three lectures he gave in the US. Lucy found a New York lawyer to marry.

325 – He suggests going to US again in October, to see daughter and make money. He didn’t go until May of 1886.

325 – His religious books were better received in the US, where folks were more progressive. He complained that the reading of poetry and books was declining (ironically due to papers getting better).

326 – Literature and science repeated that science was a part of the best said, but liberal arts were needed. (he based this on instinct and could not foresee today’s literary theory eating literature as elitist from the inside).

326 – Science cannot replace humanism of literature: Debates Huxley on this

327 – Lucy marries in England.

328 – MA’s poems more commercially successful than his prose.

329 – He compliments Flu’s conversational skills

Also we learn more of dinner party talk as Lucy loves to hear of them in letters.

Tom’s son married Huxley’s daughter. (reverse)

330 – Shairp dies.

331 – In November 1886 sets off for the continent to study schools

332 – Flu and he speak of politics.

333 – ice skating

334 – Arnold crying over his pet

335 – Off to America again.

336 – He nurses his grandson Fred.

337 – America is without savor or depth, says MA. He also hated the papers. He wept again.

338 – MA cool towards English lit as it is separate from Greek lit.

339 – MA retires and his position on payment by results may have cost him his promotions. He spoke of his empathy with teachers and the Union. To the government I owe nothing! He began.

339 – Buy me! Reports on elementary schools 1908



340 – He retired at 63. He wrote the piece on General Grant for his nephew Ted.

341 – Resigned towards death and doing figures and skating backwards

344 – Lovely statement on rivers and nature.

346 – America had solved the political and social problems, but not the human problem, “How to live?” The cult of the average man in Chicago was the enemy of what is elevated and beautiful, of what is interesting.

348 – The famous leap over the 3 foot railing happened 24 hours prior to Arnold’s death.

349 – Arnold dies.