ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

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An Impression of a Victorian

Robert Metcalf Hartwell

"The true has no value beyond the sham;
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table's a hat, and your prize a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play! -- is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

. . .

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is -- the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say."

Robert Browning:
"The Statue and the Bust".

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Introductory Essay

In modern biography, the scalpel of Sainte-Beuve has been replaced by the kitchen-knife. It is the lives of racketeers and money-kings that will be read and admired, not studies of quaint old ladies, or studious men with moral difficulties; water color prints are purchased -- not pencil sketches or etchings.

There is a place of pause in such an attitude, and it may well be that at present there is grave danger of this being forgotten. Art has its home with the eternal verities; and the true artist is no conscript to the passing literary whims of the moment. The rattle of thunder and the flash of lightning are part of life, and good in their place; but they are not always with us: fresh spring days, the sunrise and the sunset are good also. The concern of the artist is with essential truth: with truth limited by some aesthetic bounds, no doubt, but never with its actual distortion or deliberate concealment. He gives us the truths of life as he honestly sees it to be; and that life is transmuted through the demands of the medium of his special field only so far as it is inescapable.

If modern life takes place upon a dramatic arena, there are artists enough whose proper interests will be sufficient to appreciate and present its values. But to ask that the obviously dramatic shall be the hall-mark of all art and all subjects is to make a generalized demand that would in-

evitably work to the positive ruin of both artist and public. And this danger is one that is particularly to be apprehended in the field of biography. To demand dramatic presentation of all lives is no doubt justifiable in view of the excellences of modern biographical technique. But to insist that all such studies shall be dramatic as the man in the street with his world of movies and economic pressure understands drama is another thing altogether.

On the other hand, there is in this present period a somewhat violent reaction against the "modern" school of biography; a reaction that was gaining momentum even before the premature death of the most brilliant of these moderns, Lytton Strachey, and has, in the time since his death in January, 1932, swept on to a position of almost incredible popular and intellectual approval. Coldly reasoning, one cannot but feel, and strongly, that the reactionaries have gone too far. To condemn sweepingly the new biographical techniques and attitudes that have so shortly been inundating the literary world as a transient and pernicious perversion of art according to formulae imported from Vienna is surely to take neither a very deep nor a very clear view of what has happened. It is more than a craze that has come; it is a manifestation of a new way of thinking, an implicitly questioning and perhaps suggestively stimulating way of thought, and of achievements in the biographic field possible only to an age which could employ such contributions of its day as a pliable psychoanalytic approach to its material, and the dramatic aids

of the motion picture industry. One mode of writing biography, for example, is to alternate the "stream of consciousness" effect ~~previously remarked~~ with the manifold techniques suggested by a study of the methods of the cinematograph with its varied means of pictorial dramatization (the "close-up", the "angle-shot", and the "fade-out"), all these elements contributing to carry the reader through a series of created "atmospheres", or impressions, ultimately stamped, or climaxed, by an "indicative scene". There are many fashions of writing modern biography; but this is one form, and it is the style which has been employed, whether successfully or otherwise, in the study to which this essay serves as introduction. This age has reached a new point of departure in biographic development, out of which better or worse will no doubt come, but which, in either event, will have this new modus operandi an integral part of its being. Reaction is the commonplace law of literature, yet through it all measurable artistic advance seems somehow to occur.

II

The past inevitably acquires a deceptive appearance of stability; the present, that of transition. Yet look in the newspapers and the periodicals of the time, and one will rarely find any permeation of a conviction of stability: they, too, were in an era of transition, and they knew it to be so. Even the Victorian Age, long catalogued as a period of complacency and serenity, was hardly altogether so to them --

not to an age that had figures like Arthur Hugh Clough, Matthew Arnold, and John Ruskin (to name but three), born to wonder, and worry, and protest.

Arthur Hugh Clough was a strange phenomenum. He was not least strange, perhaps, in that he was half an ironist in what was still, after all, the "age of faith"; a man peculiarly fashioned, if ever there were one, by heredity and environment, yet who almost became not a mere sceptic or doubter, but something infinitely more precious in the annals of humanity -- a critic of life.

The teachings a man absorbs and accepts in childhood are more often than not the unexamined axioms he carries with him to the grave. Throughout life there generally occurs a gradual process of emancipation, of self-learning, but vestiges of the old training usually persist, and possibly no one ever becomes completely free. At all events, one must apprehend before he can reject, and to some this awareness never comes. There may be heroism in the process as well; to break away from the gods of one's fathers is not the easiest thing in the world -- and there is always the possibility that the denied Zeus is the real god, with handy thunderbolts; that the God of the Victorians is, after all, the true and one God, and eternal damnation the moral consequence of such impunity.

There were potentialities in Arthur Hugh Clough, but potentialities which never, so it seems, reached their full development, although at certain rare and happy times

it appeared as if that delicate, wavering intellect would, in spite of all disturbing influences, swing at length to its true north, whatever that might be, and lie there at rest, quivering but fixed.

His contemporaries puzzled their wits about him, and his curious fate. What it was that forbade the man's triumph of himself they could never completely make out; always there seemed to be some vital element lacking to their theories. Thus, if justifiable only through virtue of that invaluable perspective lent by time and detachment, a new study of the man would seem not out of place today. And in the wash of time, facets of character and of problems themselves sometimes become clarified. It may well be something of the sort has taken place in the case of Arthur Hugh Clough.

It has been intimated by certain persons of rather a serious and even profound cast of mind that what is loosely called "truth" is a relationship of varying human acceptation; that synthesizing, comprehensive powers are wanting to the human intellect; and that objective standards of measurement and verification are lacking. But Clough's was a mind that almost devilishly created further difficulties as well. For though his was, nearly uniquely, a devastating sincerity, an almost appalling determination not to be tricked by human weaknesses, it may be that such eternal self-suspicion, such remorseless weighing and pondering on the most delicate scales the gossamer threads of one's own motives, is not the happiest fashion to go about the matter. Clough's all-sufficing excuse,

of course, was that it was not choice but an inescapable constitution of mind which predetermined that; a habit, in fact, he sought all his life to conquer or control. And if he were autobiographically sincere as, it may be postulated, few self-delineators have been sincere, there are some things no man can see clearly for himself.

The tragedy of Arthur Hugh Clough is the essential tragedy of a sincere, sensitive soul's persistent strivings to reconcile the irreconcilable matters of the universe, and its obstinate and courageous refusal to compromise when compromise was the condition of content, but the label of failure. Clough did indeed come to eventual compromise, it would seem, but only through the crowning ironic tragedy that it came to him in so refined and insidious a form he mistook it for success.

He could not find salvation in Cartesianism, and assert the supremacy of reason, because, although he was born to the trade, he had a fundamental distrust of it, and was doomed to spend his life rationally re-surveying its futilities. There is a resilient fibre about most minds that resists too disagreeable truths; refuses, though perceiving them, to see them clearly and so irrefutably. Clough's mind, one of those which could have achieved peace only by some sort of unconscious subterfuge, was, the majority of his life, crucified to a merciless honesty of endeavor coupled (so far as it went) to an intense clarity of judgment. As if it were by a malignant scheming of fate, he was compelled to see clearest those perceptions which were ideally designed to torture and torment him most.

Even so, there have been others of a similar nature who have made the pinnacle of laughter their tower beyond tragedy. Clough had this side to him; but doubtless it was only the concomitant irony that it should never, for one reason or another, attain to full expression; further, that of all laughter it should turn to the sardonic -- the pitiful cloak of a hurt, a bewildered, a tragic dismay.

It is the generally accepted portrait that Clough was a sceptic meant to be a believer. If that were true, we have what we have hitherto had: the somewhat dull, uninspiring picture of a slightly unconventional, mediocre mid-Victorian, who spent his mock-heroic moments toying impotently with (but mostly toyed by) great doubts totally beyond his feeble compass, or true desires.

But an actual study of the man and his work suggests, if it does no more, an infinitely more significant and exciting possibility. What if the truth were not the accepted portrait, but rather its converse? What if the sceptic were not meant to have been the believer, but, successfully integrating his personality, to have become actually a more complete, a greater sceptic -- a proclaimed agnostic?

What does this reversal of the orthodox picture, a picture possibly greatly maintained by a subservience to the moral amenities of his day, give us? A rather different portrait of the man, to be sure: the features of a Victorian who might, had he possessed a little more pressure of logic, a little more courage to couple with that penetrating sincerity

of his, had only a little passing madness guided him past the enervating obsession with confused ethical dramas, have planted his standard in the van of his age, and found his true self in the process. He might have become no longer a victim of the Age and his place in it, but a clear-toned critic of it; not the half-enthusiastic disciple of a Carlyle, ar an Emerson, but rather an associate of such as Cervantes, and Swift, and Voltaire.

Much of the significant life and thought of Arthur Hugh Clough seems enwrapped in an impenetrable silence -- baffling, brooding, sphinx-like. But silence was essentially the peculiar characteristic of the man, and therefore, it may be, is an answer as well as an enigma; a key as well as a lock; a symbol. The outward facts of his life are tame, and relatively unimportant; the inner life, superficially, even simpler and without great change -- an unsettling rather than an upheaval. But perhaps in those very slight inward changes which did occur may be traced the darker outlines of deeper, sadder, more portentous things. It may well be that it is in these half-lights and shadows that the man should be studied to be properly known; in delicate meanings and hesitating suggestions, in disclosures of hinted inner failures rather than in complacent apparent triumphs, in telling half-casual insinuations and revelatory soft demurrings. Here may be found, perhaps, the Clough who might have been and was not; but who at times had himself unhappy visitations of these unacknowledged potentialities. Then the remark of his friend, Palgrave, that Clough "cared less to reap than to sow" suddenly takes on a

stinging and unintended irony, while those faltering, stumbling steps contemporaries gazed upon in pity appear in the guise of first false starts and leads that might haply have led to a grander destiny.

Such an inevitably isolated, rather lonely figure is at all events the portrait drawn in the subjoined impression of Arthur Hugh Clough -- an "Impression" purposely so named in that it makes no pretense of absolute authority. It is admittedly simply a suggested possibility, based upon an individual conviction. Such an announcement, however, is not intended to have an inhibitive effect upon criticism, but rather to invite it. The appended study of Clough is not particularly concerned with a technical examination of his work -- except as insofar its merits or demerits, its success or non-success, may illustrate his soul's perplexities. It is a study of the man, rather than of the work; a biography, not a critical review.

What was the bond that enchained him to the obscurity of his lot? What was it that enforced upon him the stillness of unsatisfied repose; that made him seem at times to others, and sometimes to himself, a brooding Achilles out of place in an academic cloister? These are the questions that inevitably must confront the biographer of his life, and there is no final, complete answer possible to a mortal, for that would involve an explanation of the riddle of the universe. Was not this last, after all, the real end of Clough's strivings, and the magnificence of his failure? Was it a game worth the candle? If it had been played as if it were, perhaps that

would have been all that mattered -- perhaps not. Who shall say?

I

"For this name, according to Thy mercy, O Lord, this name of my Saviour Thy Son, had my tender heart, even with my mother's milk, devoutly drunk in, and deeply treasured; and whatsoever was without that name, though never so learned, polished, or true, took not entire hold of me."

Saint Augustine: "Confessions"

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

AN IMPRESSION OF A VICTORIAN

CHAPTER I

Antecedents, Birth, Childhood

1819 - 1828

i

The Cloughs could trace their family tree back as far as an old Welsh family, the first member of whom there is definite record being a certain Richard Clough who occupied his time with two marriages -- one of his wives being related to John Calvin -- in ascending the social scale, and in outliving the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary, into the rule of the great Elizabeth, at which time he, as if finally satisfied, breathed his last.

Progressing down a family tree replete with numerous offspring, one eventually reaches a James Butler Clough, the third member of a family of ten children. When James Clough attained to his maturity, he became the husband of Anne Perfect, and in due course, the father of four children. The first-born child was named Charles Butler; the second, following two years later, was christened Arthur Hugh. In 1820, a sister, the one girl, Anne Jemima was born; and finally, in 1821, the younger brother arrived, George Augustus Clough.

ii

Arthur Hugh Clough came to birth at an auspicious time. A New Year's day child, he was born in the year 1819,

at Liverpool. The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was recent history; Napoleon was already legendary; and in America the slavery question was reaching a semi-acute stage, soon after to recede with the acceptance of the Missouri Compromise, already in the process of formation. Shelley was warming to his maturity; Lamb, De Quincey, Scott, Wordsworth, Moore, Hunt, and Byron were lighting the skies of literature with their fancies, while a certain John Keats had just published his "Endymion" the year before, and it was being fiercely blown about by the icy winds of partisan criticism.

When in the winter of 1822 James Clough migrated with his family to Charleston, in the United States, the small Arthur Clough was an obscure and uncomprehending spectator of a youthful nation in the throes of clamorous industrial progress. In the North, it seemed, the new Erie Canal had been opened from Buffalo to New York, and the first boat had gone through. The North was almost a land of fable to the newly transplanted immigrants. To the younger Cloughs, even this fragrant Southland was to be accepted only as all unnatural things are passively accepted in childhood; and to the tiny sister it meant scarcely as much as that. The parents, likewise, felt an unrest and strangeness that channelled their thoughts and dreams back to the past, to familiar paths, to an English sky so distant from this foreign world. It was Europe, England, that held their interest and claimed their hearts.

What to the strangers was the appearance of the American, Cooper's, "Pioneers" and the "Pilot", or Irving's

"Tales of a Traveller", against, say, the news of Byron's death at Missolonghi? James Butler Clough was a jolly, adaptable sort of person; but to the others, it was much that from the windows of their red brick house near the sea one might gaze at tall vessels from other shores, arriving, departing, at anchor; might dream a bit, now and again, of green fields and hedgerows in an England only the parents could clearly recall.

In the summer they took a trip North, to New York, where they first stopped at a boarding house, but were later invited to stay with some friends who had a home on the picturesque banks of the Hudson, with a large and pleasant garden. Here, while happily idling away the warm summer months, Arthur Clough learned to read. The two following summers the journey was repeated, each time to New York, but once to Albany, Lebanon Springs, and Newport, as well.

After their return to Charleston in the autumn of 1825, James Clough was obliged to return to England on business, and took with him the eldest son, Charles, whom he meant to enter in an English school. It was a somewhat different England to which they returned, an England that was in a hubbub of scientific and industrial development: an eccentric experimenter by the name of George Stephenson had invented some iron contrivance or other that bade fair to turn the country into a shambles. The contraption puffed and snorted down a track at 15 miles an hour; and Lord Derby, for one, was heatedly opposed to any extension of the scheme.

Science had gone mad -- that was obvious. Why, the locomotive alone would poison the air, kill birds as they flew overhead, burn up all the farms and homesteads near the tracks; the boilers were sure to burst sometime or other and kill all the passengers. And should a cow ever happen to stray on the track -- well!! Hadn't Stephenson been queried on the point, and hadn't he himself admitted it would be "awkward"? And if he had, upon pressing, grinningly declared he meant "awkward -- for the coo"[1], who was likely to be taken in by the fellow's infernal bluff? Lucky, indeed, that the rest of the Cloughs were safe and sound in their Charleston home, or at Sullivan's Island, six miles away, where the children could romp and play in the clear Southern sunshine, with nothing more to frighten them than the wild, haunting screams of curlews, who, floating overhead, watched them curiously as they played on the white sands.

Arthur Clough had just turned seven; and his sister, looking back in later years to that time, saw him as "a beautiful boy, with soft silky, almost black hair and shining dark eyes, and a small delicate mouth which our old nurse was so afraid of spoiling, when he was a baby, that she insisted on getting a tiny spoon for his special use".[2] The father away, and Arthur already regarded as the genius of the family, he became the mother's constant companion.[3] There was seemingly very little question what cultural, patriotic, moral,

1- Edw. Emerson Jr. "19th Cent. Year by Year", P. F. Collier, 3 vols. New York, 1900; vol 2, p. 728.
2- "Prose Remains" Macmillan, London, 1888; Memoir, p. 4.
3- Ibid, Memoir.

and theological training was indispensable to genius. For the first, a study of histories, of Pope's "Odyssey" and "Iliad", a French grammar, and Sir Walter Scott were imperative formalities; the second might be inculcated by continual exhortations to love England as his native land, and by the permission to trudge about flourishing the small English flag Clough had somewhere discovered. But a moral and theological education was a process requiring a deeper spade-work, and which should be accomplished neither hastily nor casually, but be an earnest and constant task.

iii

In the summer, the father still away, the Cloughs went over to Sullivan's Island, where they had "a sort of cottage built upon piles"[1], and remained there until late autumn. Here they spent the long months walking along the shore and gathering shells, or strolling about in the garden. It was a period of peace and loveliness: of quiet days spent in watching the steamers and sailing vessels come in and out, in learning laborious lessons with scamperings off to the nursery when visitors called, and quiet evenings passed in learning more lessons, or listening to an adored mother who taught them of God and duty, and who "loved to dwell on all that was stern and noble. Leonidas at Thermopylae, and Epaminondas accepting the lowliest offices and doing them as a duty to his country; the sufferings of the martyrs,

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 4.

and the struggles of the Protestants" were illustrative favorite subjects. The tastes of the mother, unlike those of the father, were rigidly simple; she was "very fond of reading"[1], cared little for general society, and strongly attached herself to a few close friends.

Despite her simple tastes, however, she had an intense love for beautiful scenery, and took a great pleasure in visiting places which had historical associations. In Arthur, she lived again; and at times it appears almost as if the soul of that lover of the stern and noble had determined to project itself into the son, in strict exclusion of the lighter, gayer spirits of her more reckless husband. When the husband was away, who should properly be her main stay and confidant but her "constant companion"?

It is the amusing nature of premises, however, that conclusions should sometimes work out as ironic as they are rigidly logical. Referring to her mother, the sister concludes her contribution to the memoir on Clough, "I cannot but think that her love, her influence, and her teaching had much to do with forming his character"[2]; an opinion warmly supported by Samuel Waddington, and by another critic, who asserts, "Arthur Clough formed no exception to the rule that great mothers are most important in the formation of great men."[3] It is perhaps but too true.

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 9.
2- Ibid, p. 10.
3- "Life and Poems of Clough", Cornhill, 14:410 (1866)

James Clough returned to Charleston, and his family, in November -- Charles having been left at school in England -- and the youthful idyll of the children was resumed more happily than ever. Arthur went on reading history and poetry with his mother, but by this time he had advanced to Robertson's "Charles V" and Watson's "Philip II", and was studying the lives of Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortez. He varied a recitation of the Latin grammar to his father in the early morning with doing sums in the little downstairs office, lying sprawled out on the piled-up pieces of cotton sacking, tumbling about over the cotton heaps with his brother and sister, or walking with his father down to the wharves and ships. In the evenings, having somewhat conquered his shyness of visitors, the eager-eyed youth would sit with his mother and father, and listen intently to the stories of the captains of the merchantmen who came to visit or do business.

In 1827 they returned once more to Sullivan's Island, this time the father with them. The idyll, it seemed perhaps to the youthful fancy, would never cease. Somewhere overseas, England watched the progress of its troops in Portugal, and speculated upon the events of Navarino. What was that, now, to these young people in America, particularly at Sullivan's Island, with their large, rambling house, a grand garden and yucca hedge, the fine white sand of the beaches so soft and pleasant underfoot, so tempting to walk

over barefooted -- that is, to all but Arthur, who trudged on, or stood aloof in fastidious disdain while his brother and sister, unembarrassed by forebodings of genius, paddled and splashed about. A pictorial symphony was theirs: the stretching white sands, with here a small group of palmettos brilliantly etched against the blue sky, the warm sun, and only the ever-floating, screaming curlews and occasional happy calls of other children to break the still, beautiful placidity of the scene.

On the other end of the island lay the gay, inhabited section, a scene of constant activity and color, and the bay where one had gone rowing so often with his father. Six miles beyond, Charleston, with the tall vessels lining the wharves.

There was so much of beauty everywhere, life was so delightful, so even, so untroubled, who would have done other than simply absorb it, take it for granted, and only wonder idly, now and again, what it was like in far away England? Even now, they were packed and leaving for Charleston, with England beyond. What was brother Charles doing?

Did the negroes there sing like this, while they worked away so cheerfully and lightheartedly on the boats one was approaching so rapidly this late autumn day in 1827? Did they have an oyster-shell wall there like this dazzling white one at Charleston?

One more look at Sullivan's Island, from the high

place, before home was reached! A little hazy, today, with black dots above it. The curlews? No time to make sure, with the others calling to him; it couldn't have been, anyway, at this distance. Queer things, curlews -- always circling about like the thoughts inside one that sought for lovely words, and couldn't find them, not the right ones, anyhow . . .

V

By June, 1828, when the Cloughs sailed for England, Sullivan's Island and Charleston had become only a memory. The voyage was exciting and interesting; at least, when they passed through those large, floating masses of seaweed, the time they saw a waterspout, and -- most exciting of all -- when the bleak, distant iceberg was sighted, which stayed in view so long a while.

They remained at an uncle's house in the country for a time, where they found themselves (not particularly to the delight of such shy youngsters, at first) among a boisterous crew of nine or ten cousins of assorted ages. Arthur missed the sympathetic, almost femininely considerate, companionship of his father, who, though he liked life, and change, and gaiety, and was himself venturesome and reckless, was almost paradoxically solicitous of the welfare of others; and the sensitive boy shrank from the rough amusements that entertained the others. As they went a round of other relations, however, and the society became less turbulent and more mature, Arthur relaxed more and more, and seemed

gradually to be conditioning himself to this strange, new life. But all too soon, to the small boy, it was October, and the school at Chester yawned before him, the presence of his brother Charles hardly compensating for the loss of the others. Having seen him safely entered, the remnant of the family sailed again for Charleston. An episode, or a prologue, had closed:

"Swallows have lingered and ceased,
Shadows and echoes are all."[1]

Childhood was over.

1- Edwin A. Robinson, "Pasa Thalassa Thalassa".

II

"Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him."

"What! thou hast no faculty in that kind? Only a torch for burning, no hammer for building? Take our thanks, then, and -- thyself away."

Thomas Carlyle: "Sartor Resartus".

CHAPTER II

Dr. Arnold; and the Everlasting Yea

1828 - 1836

i

After being at Chester but one term, Arthur Clough was removed to Rugby in the summer of 1829.

Rugby! It was a place of rapturous, almost dangerous enchantment to a grave and studious youth

> "Taught to feel, perhaps too much
> The self-sufficing power of solitude."[1]

Here was something vividly new upon earth: young men living moral, industrious lives in a model school owning so visibly as its awe-inspiring symbol and fount of all its goodness the impressive figure of the austere, yet kindly, headmaster, Dr. Arnold; who took such an intense interest in disseminating the seeds of godliness; who, though he might give the impression of watching and enjoying cricket games for their own sake, was really more in place in his pulpit at the school chapel expounding the benefits of physical exercise in their moral significance.

Despite a natural touch of nostalgia, Clough found Rugby an abode of almost indescribable and unending delight; he could <u>feel</u> himself expanding and developing in the invigorating presence of that glowing, pervasive influence, Dr. Arnold.

Like the incorrigible Duchess in "Alice in Wonderland", Dr. Arnold was adamant in the opinion "everything's

1- Wordsworth, "The Prelude".

got a moral, if only you can find it"; and although Dr. Arnold's range of moral conceptions was not the most liberal in the world, he was not the least persistent or ingenious of men when it came to a search for such. He was, metaphorically speaking, a moral bloodhound; and of such keen smell that his prey rarely, or never, eluded him.

Such intense earnestness, such a constantly clear and effectively moral idea of what he was about was a startling novelty in the educational circles of the day; and with something about him, indeed, strangely reminiscent of the famous Vittorino da Feltre, the developments at Rugby were watched by a goodly portion of England with considerable interest. That the doctor was a man of ideals was obvious; and that these ideals were irreproachable Christian ones was certainly no less pleasing. If Arthur Hugh Clough had reached that stage of development where a thorough and finished moral upholstering should be effected, Rugby was, it would seem, the ideal choice. At Rugby, under Arnold, one would learn the good life at the hands of a pious man in a peaceful and harmonious environment. Peace and harmony, were they not the two essentials for a later happy and useful life? Here Clough should find them. At Rugby, under Arnold's tutelage, the great truths of life were laid down with what appeared to have the stamp of authority upon them; it was to become an admirable breeding ground for future bishops, deans, and missionaries, who, though many might later come to differ from the good doctor upon special matters, nevertheless

ever kindly recalled the potency of his early influence and inspiration.

In Arnold's boyhood, it is said, intellectual doubts "beset the first opening of his mind to the realities of religious belief";[1] but by the time he had become a man and taken on the headship of Rugby in 1828, he had put away such childish questionings: "all seem to have vanished away and never again to have diverted him from the decisive choice and energetic pursuit of what he set before him as his end and duty".[2] Though to the end of his life he cherished a peculiar sympathy for the tribulations of the Apostle Thomas, the troubles of that saint had no longer a personal application, save for the past.

ii

Before he had entered upon his larger duties at Rugby, Arnold had maintained a private school at Laleham for youths preparing to enter the Universities, and it was at Laleham he had nurtured and developed the germ of that ideal of "moral thoughtfulness" he was successfully to transplant and bring to flower. One of his pupils recalled this institution as "a place where a newcomer at once felt that a great and earnest work was going forward. Dr. Arnold's great power as a private tutor resided in this, that he gave such an intense earnestness to life. Every pupil was made to feel that there was a work for him to do

1- Stanley, "Life of Thomas Arnold", Murray, London, 1904, p. 27
2- Ibid. p. 27.

-- that his happiness as well as his duty lay in doing that work well. Hence an indescribable zest was communicated to a young man's feeling about life; a strange joy came over him on discovering that he had a means of being useful, and thus of being happy . . ."[1]

The indescribable zest that was first communicated to Arthur Clough took, strange to say, the seemingly irrelevant form of a fondness for drawing; while the strange joy was curiously displayed in a propensity to be "perpetually writing verses, not remarkable except for a certain ease of expression and for a power of running on."[2]

What Arnold in more than one talk impressed upon his pupils was "what we must look for here is, first, religious and moral principle; second, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability."[3] And at a later date, when some of his prize students had, at Oxford, deserted to the opposed camp of the Newmanites, it is gratifying to note that while Arnold might miserably fail to convert them to his theory of the question, their interest in religion and moral principle, he would not have denied, was every whit as keen as his -- and their conduct was impeccable.

At times, indeed, he half-wondered himself whether, as some critics averred, the duties he imposed upon the Sixth Form (whom he had constituted guardians of the morals of the school) might not just possibly be too heavy for their age. It had to be admitted a most remarkable lassi-

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold", p. 35.
2- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 10.
3- "Life of Thomas Arnold", p. 107.

tude seemed to overcome the minds and wills of his best pupils after they had left the vigilant guardianship of that authoritative spirit and met, beyond the Rugby walls, apparent contradictions. Dr. Arnold, and the proper Biblical illustration, would have dissolved the perplexity in a moment. They had ready access to innumerable Bibles, but somehow, without Dr. Arnold, the difficulties remained; it was most strange. Away from the convenient omnipotence of the headmaster nearly anything could happen; the hitherto so apparent machinations of the "Anti-Christ", as he had inspirationally designated them, became not quite so obvious -- indeed, at times appeared not really wicked at all, but rather pleasant and harmless. It was disgraceful; but it was true. His former pupils were completely at a loss to account for this deterioration of standards, and so was Dr. Arnold. He himself was no longer bothered by difficulties, even the most irreducible of them. In the case of the latter his method was surely simple and comprehensible enough; as he remarked, "before a confessed and unconquerable difficulty his mind reposed as in the possession of a discovered truth."[1] What could the subtlest of the Anti-Christ's snares avail against a mind of so impregnable a constitution?

iii

In 1830 Dr. Arnold was moved to write to a friend

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold" p. 177.

that he liked his work at Rugby better and better; it fascinated him: "it has all the interest of a great game of chess, with living creatures for pawns and pieces, and your adversary, in plain English, the Devil: truly he plays a very tough game, and is very hard to beat, if I ever do beat him. It is quite surprising to see the wickedness of young boys; or would be surprising, if I had not my own school experience and a good deal since to enlighten me."[1]

Meanwhile, one of the "pawns and pieces", a young boy, but hardly a wicked one, a little new still to be actively aware of the part he, too, might play against the common great adversary, was gradually moving up the forms, writing his run-on verses, and beginning now and again to win prizes. He had manifested a mild interest in walking, in shooting, and in sight-seeing, but seemed inclined not to mix too much in the rough sport of his fellows. Strange -- no, not altogether strange -- ideas began to move and inspire him; he commenced to reflect with a growing enthusiasm upon those mysterious things called ideals, upon Dr. Arnold's ideals, upon what were becoming what might be called his own ideals, so pleasingly similar to those of that admirable gentleman. Clough led a rather solitary life, partly through choice, partly because those dear to him were far away (even Charles left Rugby in 1831); and where Clough's holidays were spent with different relations, with his uncle, the Reverend A. B. Clough; at Pontefract, at Chester, at Liverpool, and at Mold vicarage

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold", p. 235.

and elsewhere, he had abundant quiet and opportunity to consider the higher aims of life, and the best methods for winning more of Dr. Arnold's handsomely-bound prize-books. The wild, screaming curlews of Sullivan's Island seemed indeed to belong to another era, and an almost forgotten world, well enough for a small chap of six or seven to stare at and wonder about, but Dr. Arnold supplied young men with profounder things to think upon, both in chapel and in the classroom.

Chapel-service at Rugby was awesomely impressive; as the Doctor himself remarked, "The veriest stranger who ever attends divine service in this chapel does well to feel something more than common interest in the sight of the congregation here assembled. But if the sight so interests a mere stranger, what should it be to ourselves, both to you and to me?"[1] And every Sunday, after the service was over, he would sit with a fixed expression of countenance, silently regarding them as one by one they filed out of his presence in the order he had initiated.

The classroom, also, had its share of stirring occasions. There was the time when a violation of the rules against drinking having come to his notice, the headmaster addressed them on the subject at considerable length from his place in the great school, informing the pupils that whereas he should properly have spoken to them from the pulpit, there being others present in the chapel, he "wished to hide their shame"; he then dwelt upon "the sin and the folly

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold" p. 138.

of the habit, even when intoxication was not produced -- its evil effects both on body and mind -- the folly of fancying it to be manly -- its general effect on the school."[1] Customarily, however, the exercises in the classroom moved along in a lighter key, the students bending their wits to write short themes upon suggested topics, in Latin; or, perhaps, on some such subject as, "The excellences of Translation and some of its difficulties".[2]

But all such matters as these fell, of course, into the third and lowest category of the headmaster's schedule of training. That "moral thoughtfulness" which was so especially sought after was inevitably more concerned with developing religious and moral principles, and was naturally the most predominant influence in the school lives of the young charges. One was either for it, or against it; avoid it one could not. This being so, and once the significance of the affair had become fully appreciated by Arthur Clough, the last alternative was not even dreamt of; and he flung himself with boundless enthusiasm into the holy task of improving the parlous condition of the school.

If Dr. Arnold were not quite God, he did, at least, bear a singular resemblance to that God of Duty Clough had been taught to revere from his childhood days. His erudition was almost terrifying; and the quaking small boy who attracted his glittering eye was hardly restored to tranquillity by the Doctor's custom of vocally ranging through the choicest

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold" p. 146.
2- Ibid, p. 677 Appendix B.

selections of the Prophets in the Old Testament, or those of the Lord and His Apostles in the New to find suitable examples to illustrate the exceeding wickedness of the young malefactor -- it was an experience possibly unique in life.

For Clough, however, matters went on quite happily at Rugby. In 1832 he gained a scholarship, open to the whole school for those under fourteen, and the only one which then existed. He had come by this time to feel himself an important officer on the Rugby battlefield, and was taking an increasing delight in carrying on the good cause among the three hundred odd souls there stationed. Like Dr. Arnold, he was surprised to discover, now that his eyes were opened, just how extensively evil flourished upon the slightest provocation. He was comforted, however, by a reflection he later confided to his brother George that if things were bad there, they were much worse elsewhere, "for it must be remembered that Rugby is far better off in this way than most schools."[1]

The years were filing by, and for all his frequent loneliness, the conduct of life was coming to be something thrilling and noble; but it had also become, perhaps, a little too axiomatic; a little too . . cut and dried. Whatever small problems might presumably have puzzled the wits even of a boy in his teens were instantly banished -- or, indeed, could never congregate -- in the light of that happy intellect to which even the most confessed and unconquerable difficulty brought only repose and content. Arthur Hugh Clough

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 59.

appeared in a fair way of achieving a like bliss. The very tone and attitude of Dr. Arnold have crept into his letters: "It was but a few nights ago" Clough writes to his brother George, "that a little fellow, not more than thirteen at the very most, was quite drunk, and that for the second time in the last year."[1]

"Sartor Resartus" was appearing in instalments in "Fraser's Magazine", the work having Carlyle's express intention of setting the universe right.

To set the universe right: it was a captivating suggestion. Was it not Dr. Arnold's idea? Could it not be Clough's? Had he not, in fact, already made a start? Was it not, after all, the very thing the boys above him in the Sixth Form were learning to do; had actually been given authority to do? And was he not even now contributing his own modest support towards fulfilling that same ideal, no matter on how small a scale?

To set the universe right -- one should see . .

iv

"Among the rainbow colors that glowed on my horizon, lay even in childhood a dark ring of Care . . happy he for whom a kind heavenly Sun brightens it into a ring of Duty . ."[2] sighs Teufelsdröckh in the "Sartor".

Clough, fifteen, at the head of the Fifth Form, and only debarred from the coveted responsibilities of the Sixth

1-"Prose Remains", Letters, p. 59.
2- Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus", Scribner's, 1921, p. 87.

by the school age limit of sixteen, was completely absorbed in his work of moral reform among the boys of Rugby, his studies, and in contributing verses to the school magazine. The careless, indifferent days of childhood had indeed become the faintest, most unregretted of echoes. Life was real; life was earnest! and while he could, while lying ill at Rugby and watching from the window Dr. Arnold's younger children at play, compose a poem reminiscently recalling the past,

> "I look'd upon thy children, and I thought of all and each
> Of my brother and my sister, and our rambles on the beach -- --"[1]

he was under no illusions how splendidly distant that past had actually become; but poetry, and a Poet, should frequently have an air of melancholy.

A gentle, engaging boy of somewhat delicate health, for whom a bright future was confidently anticipated, it was inevitable that he should become a favorite of Arnold; and the headmaster, it is said, regarded him "with increasing interest and satisfaction".[2] Clough, on his part, felt a most delicious agitation in the presence of his idol; and a visit of the headmaster to his study so affects him "he can hardly look at his Trigonometry".[3]

He became almost a fixture of the Arnold family circle, attracted Mrs. Arnold by his quiet, gentlemanly manners, was a welcome guest in the drawing room, and an approved companion of the older boys, Matthew and Thomas.

1- S. Waddington, "Arthur Hugh Clough" Macmillan, London, 1883.
2- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 12.
3- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), ed. Lowry, Intro. I, p. 3.

A weakness of the ankles confined his prowess in football to the position of goal-keeper, but even so he attained celebrity and even fame. Certain facial characteristics, as well, impressed his fellows. "I always said", remarks a friend of this period, "that his face was quite another thing from any of those of our own generation; the mixture of width and sweetness was then quite as marked as it was later."[1]

Clough shortly became editor of the school organ, the "Rugby Magazine", and flung into this additional activity with impetuous enthusiasm, after a formal prayer for success:

"O all-wise God, whose Providence has ordained this undertaking, and laid its weight on me, grant that it be not a snare unto me. Let it not interfere with those more especial duties which I am placed here to perform . ." "Let thy purifying influence so continually dwell in me, that this work may be indeed done unto the Lord, that I may seek in it not the selfish gratification of my own desires, but the increase of reputation to this my school, and, in some degree also, thine, and the spread of those higher principles whose light shines here through all of the same age everywhere. Grant also, Lord, that these its objects may be fulfilled to the utmost, and that it may be an instrument in thy hands of great good to this School and all boys everywhere."[2]

But with this additional labor and worry, his class studies, and his reform efforts, the payment of a price be-

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 12.
2- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough) Intro. I, p. 12.

came merely a matter of time. Consequently, it is not surprising to find him writing to his mother in the July of 1835, "I have been in one continued state of excitement for at least the last three years, and now comes the time of exhaustion."[1]

Now and again he suffered from "stupors"[2], but took great care that his letters to his brother George should sound cheerful and encouraging, that that less intense soul should not weigh the abounding delights of inward virtue against the less arduous pleasures of animal ease, and sink in the scale. Did not he himself have lapses? As, for example, the time when, "Instead of turning to God last night I wrote a sonnet, and poetized till 10 o'clock. Composed 2 more in bed."[3]

V

But for all the inward satisfaction attendant upon one consciously living a useful and Christian life, Clough was not completely happy. The fact is, he felt rather isolated, for not only was he exceedingly fastidious in his choice of friends (while most of these had already gone up to Oxford or Cambridge), but the acquaintances who remained and might, in time, have developed into friends appeared to regard his interest with a most unreasonable and growing suspicion -- ridiculously as if they felt his interest were that of a scientist in a specimen, whereas it was really

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 59.
2- Ibid, p. 61.
3- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Intro. I pl. 8.

Christian and brotherly love, and an earnest desire to do them good. As he wrote his sister, he simply wished "now most earnestly to know as many as possible; for there is a deal of evil springing up in the school, and it is to be feared the tares will choke much of the wheat. There is a great deal of good in the top of the school, but then it is what may be called disagreeable good, having much evil mixed with it; especially in little matters, so that from these persons good is disliked. I am trying, if possible, to show them that good is not necessarily disagreeable . ."[1]

The results were disappointing; at least, he was shortly thereupon writing, "I have a great deal of time in my study, and am almost more by myself than I wish."[2]

Under the influence of Arnold's growing interest and tutelage, Clough burned to labor still harder for the cause; he was doing much, he would do yet more. Dr. Arnold was his inspiration and his idol; but with Dr. Arnold, alas, there was "so much to look up to".[3] He was, and he was half-conscious of the fact, inextricably caught up in the Rugby scheme of things. The chariot of goodness went on at a continuous and unrelenting pace; and he who had deliberately made himself an integral cog in its wheel must go on with it until his work there was completed. One labored, and was frequently exhausted and depressed, yes, but "sometimes all seems so very bright, the little good one has done seems so

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 62.
2- Ibid, p. 62.
3- Ibid, p. 64.

great, and the good one hopes to do so certain, that one gets quite elevated."[1]

The letters he was receiving from former school fellows now at Oxford and Cambridge further increased his excitement and anticipation. His letters home took on almost a rhapsodic tone: the present was so overflowing, "living under and gathering wisdom from a great and good man";[2] and if the present was so blessed, what would the future be? "Such a prospect makes one tremble, for it seems to be too fair for earth: at least it makes one resolve to do all to fix one's affections on things above, lest God should see that such fortune was too great for one, and that one could not bear it."[3]

The cup was brimming over.

vi

It was November of 1836, and Arthur Hugh Clough had just gained the Balliol scholarship, the highest honor a schoolboy in England could attain. It was a splendid and memorable occasion.

Another, and a greater triumph followed close upon this. His revered headmaster, when delivering the yearly speeches that closed the school term, broke his almost invariable rule of silence that accompanied the presentation of the prizes to congratulate Clough on having gained every honor which Rugby could bestow, and having done the highest

1- "Prose Remains" Letters, p. 64.
2- Ibid, p. 66.
3- Ibid, p. 66.

credit to his school at the University, Arnold's own Oxford.

Clough's Rugby career had closed in an aura of splendor, and he looked about for new and more stubborn worlds to conquer. It was nothing that he had raised the moral and literary standards of the "Rugby Magazine" by an ingenious blending of the ideas of Dr. Arnold with the poetic conceptions of Blanco White; nor was it anything at all that his scholastic record at Rugby had been a continuous list of prizes. But it was a great deal that he had, while in the school, flung his entire heart and energies to the side of moral virtue. "I verily believe", he had written to his friend Simpkinson during the year, "my whole being is soaked through with the wishing and hoping and striving to do the school good, or rather to keep it up and hinder it from falling in this, I do think, very critical time, so that all my cares and affections and conversation, thoughts, words and deeds, look to that involuntarily."[1] Where, at Rugby, was even a Hercules to take over such a burden? Atlas was half-fearful to leave.

He had reasons, however, to be more than reconciled with his lot; he breathed them to Simpkinson in elucidation of his preference for Oxford over Cambridge. A "High Arnold"[2] coterie was forming at Oxford (later to consist in part of Lake, Stanley, Fox, Matthew Arnold, and himself); and though at Oxford they would "only form part of a large set . . there is more hope there that a little leaven will leaven the whole

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 68.
2- Ibid, p. 68.

lump";[1] and while, as he enlarged in a subsequent letter, "one may fancy Cambridge a very excellent and useful big place of education . . the influences of Oxford and its place in relation to the commonwealth is far higher for good or for evil. Suppose Oxford became truly good and truly wise, would it not be far more important and a far greater blessing than Cambridge in the same condition?"[2]

He would see what he could do when he got to Oxford, and had become properly oriented; meanwhile, he was sure "this constant writing of letters is not really a waste of time. Everyone of us has much he needs to receive, and there are few who have nothing to give; and I, for one, cannot speak too highly of the good I have got from others in this way; it is such a constant correction of each other's wild and foolish tendencies of mind, opinion, &c."[3]

In October, 1837, Arthur Hugh Clough went into residence at Oxford. Some natural tears he may indeed have dropped at leaving Rugby; but if so, as in the poet's conception of some illustrious predecessors, he wiped them soon. The world was all before him. He had Oxford to convert!

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 69.
2- Ibid, p. 73.
3- Ibid, p. 69.

III

"Too-heavy-laden Teufelsdröckh! Yet surely his bands are loosening; one day he will hurl the burden far from him, and bound forth free and with a second youth.

"'This', says our Professor, 'was the Center of Indifference I had now reached; through which whoso travels from the Negative Pole to the Positive must necessarily pass.'"

Thomas Carlyle: "Sartor Resartus".

CHAPTER III

Oxford; and the Center of Indifference

1837 - 1848

i

When Clough entered Oxford in 1837, he had chanced upon it during one of those periodic disturbances that checker its famous history. The eager, ambitious, earnest youth with the abundance of dark, soft hair, and the shining, animated eyes must have gazed about him with a considerable degree of wonderment. Was this only too well sowed ground the anticipated wasteland through which he had planned to drive missionary furrows?

The Oxford Movement was in full swing at the time, and working with a diligence peculiar to High Church organizations. Further than that, it was daily bearing a greater and greater resemblance to that Holy Catholic Church whose governance the Tractarians protested not to accept.

In the spring of 1833 two Oxonians, John Henry Newman and Hurrell Froude, who nourished a certain, and at that time noticeably rare, religious fervor in their hearts, while stopping in Rome on a tour of southern Europe had twice called upon Monsignore Wiseman at the Collegio Inglese. It was perhaps neither particularly unusual nor indicative; but subsequent events made the visits appear so. During the return voyage Newman composed his famous "Lead, Kindly Light". When John Keble, a third member of this inspired little group, delivered a sermon on "National Apostasy",

it began to take the definite form of a movement leading no one yet knew whither, but guided by the highly controversial spirit of Newman's "Tracts for the Times." The Oxford Movement, designedly to restore the Anglican Church to a condition of finer spiritual integrity, had begun. But Cardinal Newman, looking backwards on those early days, declared he soon found such a program impossible "without cutting across the teaching of the Church of Rome."[1] The logical conclusion of so dangerous an admission was in rapid process of enactment just at the time when Clough entered Oxford.

The "High Arnold" set had all the vigor of self-assured righteousness to animate their struggle with evil. But where to grapple with it understandably became a more difficult matter when it appeared in forms other than that of a small boy coming in drunk for the second time in a year. And here was a flourishing rival organization already firmly established with a similar righteous assurance and the further seductive attraction of religious principles that sailed thrillingly close to unspeakable dangers. The thought alone both terrified and captivated. Whether it was the charm of novelty or the thrill of danger that was most attractive one cannot be sure, but it is certain many of Dr. Arnold's brightest pupils felt themselves in the grip of a strong fascination; that Dr. Arnold would (and did) sternly disapprove no doubt only increased their interest in the new movement. The Newmanites may indeed have been what the head-

1- Waddington, "Arthur Hugh Clough"

master was later convinced they were, "the direct development of that system . . I call Antichrist."[1] But by this time the indefatigable Doctor had found so many indubitable manifestations of the Antichrist, that some of his students had become faintly sceptical about such prognostications.

ii

This, then, was the situation that confronted the ambitious formulators of a High Arnold group upon their introduction to Oxford. At first, as was proper, they relied upon Dr. Arnold for support; but while the headmaster's interest in them had seemingly only increased with their departure from Rugby, his method of combatting from afar what was going on at Oxford by urging them to remain religiously alert and cling to the truth, though admirable advice, was sorrowfully inadequate. In this new world into which they had been precipitately plunged, they became uncomfortably aware that the precepts which had served so beautifully to guide them through the charted walks of Rugby were sadly inapplicable to a place where the events and laws and problems were not of Dr. Arnold's designing. He retained their respect and love till the end, but for some at least (of whom Clough was one) the problem had suddenly become not whether or not one should cleave to the truth, but exactly what the truth was. The revelation that a system of thought which they had come to believe not simply self-evident to them, but universally regarded so as well, was now neither the one nor the other

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold", p. 530.

overtook them with all the force and suddenness of a cataclysm.

The idea of converting others to what had been, for them, so unmistakably the good, the true, and the beautiful, had existed in their minds for so long now that to find the conception suddenly empty and unmeaning, and themselves in dire need or danger of conversion to some fixed standard, was ironic enough to be almost laughable -- but sardonically so. This was the end to which their charitable intentions had brought them! How convert others to the Truth, when it suddenly became a question of which truth?

Clough, like the others, found this sudden, unsettling effect most appalling. Yet there was something delightfully exhilarating about it as well. What was taking place both about him and within him was extremely interesting, and not half so disagreeable as it logically should have been. What was it was wrong with him? Had he become immoral? He felt certain it was not that. Was he unmoral . . didn't he care, then? Ah, but he did -- supremely. Why, continued the remorseless self-questioning, why should he actually be enjoying this indecent feeling of insecurity, so obviously an undesirable condition in which to remain? Was he undergoing a mystic conversion, like other of his companions, that ultimately would swing him into the arms of the Newmanites, as would please one of his earliest Oxford friends, Ward, the Tractarian?

He was in Oxford: "safe and sound, capped and

gowned"[1] he had exuberantly written to his sister upon his entrance: what a short time ago he had written this -- a few months -- yet now, what a distance of worlds. "Capped and gowned": that, yes; but "safe and sound", ah, that was something else again. This frightening, yet secretly enjoyable sense of turmoil and responsibility; this feeling of actually living and deciding, of what seemed almost impious speculation upon the validity -- not of God, of course, but -- of creeds, was it quite . . proper?

In this young, developing Arthur Hugh Clough, one seems to see the perennial conflict of opposed traditions -- the Augustinian and the Petrarchan. It is the ancient story of a venerated fount of authority against an individual ego; and perhaps the ego, in its first flush of liberation, reckoned its triumph too soon; had underestimated both the courage and the loyalty of that other Clough. At all events, within those mysterious recesses of the human personality, the battle was from now on to be fought out in earnest, in darkness.

iii

Of the lighter side of his life at Oxford, one hears at first of a few wine parties, but so far as it is known, Clough was never drunk. He was not likely to be, who recalled several disgraceful incidents of the sort at Rugby, and Dr. Arnold's opinion thereon. He abstained from general society, partly it seems through his native fastidiousness, partly through embarrassed pecuniary circumstances. Many

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 76.

already noted in him at this time an "unusual degree of reserve".[1] His leisure hours were spent in part rambling in brief excursions about Oxford, which country, he wrote to Dr. Arnold, did not appeal to him so much as the Rugby fields; but most of the time was spent in his cold rooms on the ground floor of Balliol, where he endured the cold without a fire the whole winter, studying, and reflecting diligently. He did not himself mind the cold, he once remarked -- and it was superlative for keeping out visitors. For all such Spartan endurance, however, his health appeared to suffer considerably; also, his thick brown hair came out. His family worried about him, but he wrote reassuring letters, and continued his way of living.

Clough's early years at Oxford were a period of study, of meditation, of self-analysis. Little of this found expression through the medium of verse at the time -- Clough in this following the illustrious example of Wordsworth (whom he was reading) in his moral crisis. Arthur Hugh Clough had "a very high reputation as an undergraduate";[2] in fact, many of his contemporaries later frankly confessed they owed more to him than to any other man. But exactly of what this considerable obligation consisted they have somehow always strangely failed to specify.

His stay at Oxford began to settle outwardly into the conventional form of a university career: there was much study (too much, Clough later considered), some good lectures,

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, (Ward's Recollections) p. 19.
2- Ibid, pl 18.

the few wines, some "small and select"[1] breakfasts -- where one was likely to meet persons of prominence, and where "high thinking" was the favored commodity -- and some pleasant holiday rambles.. It was late in 1838 that Clough twice met John Henry Newman, once at a dinner party, and once at one of the select breakfasts. He had even the honor of drinking wine with him, he remarked lightly to his friend Gell, his confidant of the period, and affirmed, "on the strength of all which of course, as is one's bounden duty, I must turn Newmanist."[2]

Underneath the easy humor, it is not hard to suspect the certain intellectual attraction of the idea, and the toying with it. Normally, it should mark one of the crises of his life. With Arthur Hugh Clough apparently the typical material, like his friend Ward, of which the Newmanistic Catholics were made: of poised, trembling intellect, devoutly religious, at Oxford so sensitively responsive to each fresh gust of a new idea, it seemingly needed only the slightest of twists to send him in headlong support of whatever lost cause or impossible belief first came his way. Yet the most powerful and novel and seductive one there he somehow withstood.

One cannot but wonder what insulated him from it. The answers offered have been various; and perhaps not the least amusing feature of most is that they interpret the same arguments with proper effect but opposite meaning. The

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 80.
2- Ibid, p. 80.

influence of Arnold was claimed as beneficial by both sides; it was strength of intellect that both attracted and deterred him from Newmanism. The anti-Newmanites complacently pointed out his abstention as the flattering indication of perspicacity; while his friend, W. G. Ward, who was not only a Tractarian, but became with Newman a Catholic in 1845, eulogizing Clough after his death found that candor compelled him to affirm with some pointed significance, he was "perhaps less remarkable for logical consecutiveness."[1] It would not be surprising if, in this half-defensive declaration which protected Ward from an ironic ricochet of the same accusation, he had (possibly more than he himself or any of their contemporaries appear to have been aware) unintentionally exposed the crux of Clough's lifelong tragedy.

At any rate, in the present instance, the fact remains that Clough, an attractive plum dangling just out of reach of the Newmanites, protested the irresistible fascination of their beliefs, deplored his own weakness, seemed ever on the point of dropping into their hands -- and remained hanging. As time went by, though to the less-penetrating he continued to appear on the verge of falling, the more discerning of his Newmanistic friends had resigned all such hopes.

As a matter of fact there seems to have been an unanalyzable something within Clough which would not allow him to become a Newmanite however much he might play with the idea in his talk or in his letters. His journal entry

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 19.

for Monday of Passion Week, 1838, seems significant: "I must keep in mind . . that many persons of the most advanced piety and goodness are this week engaged in all sorts of self-denial, and mortification -- fasting from food and sleep, amusement and society -- Newman for instance, whose errors as we believe them to be must not make me ever forget how far he is above me in goodness and piety, and wisdom too -- tho' in certain points we with less power by our advantages be nearer the real truth, and though less wise have more wisdom."[1]

Whatever perplexities might puzzle him, they could not cloud his clear perception that Newmanism was an ignis fatuus: Dr. Arnold was still the one bright, fixed beacon on a storm-tossed sea.

iv

Clough was coming to be more and more perturbed by the inconsistencies and contradictions of certain of his hitherto most cherished opinions to which his logically-minded friend Ward somewhat maliciously called his attention. They had frequent chats, and though Clough at times passionately wished himself out of, and away from all such discussions, resolved "to forget all the words one has heard, and to theorise only for amusement"[2], he found this not so easy. But at least he should never, never forget the words of the "Sartor", "Thought without Reverence is barren, perhaps poisonous", and "for man's well-being, Faith is properly the

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, Intro. I p. 14.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 80.

one thing needful".[1]

Clough's unusual reserve and silence were a screen of which the corners, at least, were sometimes lifted to disclose tantalizing glimpses of a setting upon which the curtain was destined never to be fully raised. One such occasion occurred around this period of his stay at Oxford. He had come upon Plato's "Republic", and from the elevation of its shining magnificence even the earnestness of the energetic Newmanites seemed to have its humorous, if not ridiculous, aspect. Was a laugh, broad and frank, the easiest, wisest manner, after all, in which to dismiss them and all their ways? In a happy moment he was almost convinced it was; a new world seemed about to dawn before his eyes. Gell, leaving shortly to be a missionary in Tasmania, must know how he felt:

"If you have not hitherto studied this wondrous book", he wrote to him, "I recommend you to cast aside those heterodox and heretical authors, Calvin and Milton, and immediately commence upon it. Plato, not being a Christian, is quite orthodox; in fact, Sewell says that his Republic is realized in, and indeed is a sort of prophecy of, the Catholic Church; Coleridge meanwhile declaring it the most wonderful anticipation of Protestant Christianity."

"You should see the Arch-Oxford-Tractator before you leave this part of the world, that you may not be ignorant on a topic doubtless interesting even to the remote barbarians in Van Dieman's Land. It is said that Romanists are

1- Carlyle: "Sartor Resartus" p. 59; p. 144.

increasing, Newmanists increasing, Socinians also, and Rationalists increasing, but all other kinds of men rapidly decreasing; so that on your return to England perhaps you will find Newman Archbishop of Canterbury and Father Confessor to the Queen; Lord Melbourne (if not burnt) excommunicated . . .

"You will also have the opportunity of seeing Conybeare Pater issuing fulminatory condemnations of the Fathers at the heads of astonished Newmanists from St. Mary's pulpit; himself in shape, conformation, and gestures most like one of his own ichthyosauri, and his voice evidently proceeding from lungs of a fossil character."

"Furthermore, there will be boat-races, with much shouting and beer-drinking; a psychological study of great interest." [1]

The spirit of overflowing humor is the abundant element of the letter; but behind it, at times dazzlingly real and unmistakable, is the occasional flashing gleam of the satirist's rapier. Voltaire grinning from behind Rabelais; Cervantes consorting with Fielding. Either style, had he developed it, might have led to that pathway he was so uncertainly seeking. It was not to be: he would not sneer, and at some things he could not laugh -- not even if the sneer were mild and the laughter gentle. It was another, truer answer for which he was searching -- this was not it.

Besides touches of Wordsworth and Coleridge, there is more than a hint of the beautifully balanced and ornamented

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, pp. 83-84.

phrases of Saint Augustine in many of Clough's pieces of the period. Among the pages of the Saint, one might linger, almost comforted, in the perplexities of a kindred spirit. Had not he, too, "hungered and thirsted not even after those first works of Thine, but after Thee Thyself, the Truth, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:"?[1] And what was it that touched the heart chords with so haunting, personal a tone even in so simple a passage as: "Too late loved I Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new! too late I loved Thee!"[2]

But there was a disturbing note to: "Thus it happened that whatever they said, I strangely assented to as true, not because I knew it, but because I wished it to be true."[3] Something important, something pregnant was involved in the suggestions of such a passage. What if - - - ! The sentence should be marked for further consideration . . .

V

To poor Clough the ways of the world and its people were coming to seem more than ever confusing; even Carlyle did not resolve some vexing puzzles, and in some matters had come to seem almost as unreliable as he was mystical. It was a discouraging fashion in which to be winding up one's undergraduate career, but if there was no help for it, why, there was no help for it -- and that was an end to the thing. He must worry along as best he could in the hope that some

1- "Confessions of St. Augustine" Universal Lib. p. 39.
2- Ibid, p. 232.
3- Ibid, p. 50 (note).

way, somehow, matters would shape out properly.

Even among the delights of creative versifying, his mind revolved among disquieting notions. He might write in a lecture-room,

> "Away, haunt thou not me,
> Thou vain Philosophy!"[1]

like a distracted Coleridge, and:

> "Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,
> When the fresh breeze is blowing,
> And the strong current flowing,
> Right onward to the Eternal Shore?"[2]

like the attentive son of Anne Perfect, and the respectful admirer of Dr. Arnold; but none knew better than he, really, that while the breeze may have been fresh, and the current strong, both, it seemed, were fitful. It is apparent that he was torn in the grip of that fierce human dilemma remarked by Kant: that man's desire to grasp the final, complete reality of the universe moves him to perpetual effort, while at the same time the very nature of this ideal of an intelligible, synthesized unity is such that it remains, for humanity, forever incompletely known.

He wrote to Simpkinson: "That I have been a good deal unsettled in mind at times at Oxford, and that I have done a number of foolish things, is true enough, and I dare say the change from Rugby life to its luxury and apparent irresponsibility has had a good deal of ill effect upon me."[3]

Arthur Hugh Clough,

> "Sails rent
> And rudder broken, -- reason impotent, --
> Affections all unfixed . .",[4]

1- "Poems of A. H. C." London, Macmillan, 1885, p. 7.
2- Ibid, p. 7.
3- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 88
4- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 8.

as he declared, turned out his troubles in a series of verses. In slightly elegiac tone, he found satisfaction, if not happiness, in dreaming of,

> "That blest day
> When ill we cannot quell shall be no more."[1]

It was a fairly long poem, one of those that had "run-on", and the stanzas were jotted down at various intervals. Himself, Oxford, and the world seemed all at odds.

Clough was adrift: it is a melancholy truth increasingly apparent. To undergraduates he might, a senior, present a serene, "massive figure, in scholar's surplice, standing before the brass eagle" reading chapters from the Hebrew prophets; they might indeed feel towards him a "distant reverence"[2], but as Clough to Clough, and confided to the run-on verses, it was a different story: there, a small, bewildered boy again,

> "Like a child
> In some strange garden left awhile alone,
> I pace about the pathways of the world . .
> . . With qualms of vague misgiving in my heart
> That payment at the last will be required,
> Payment I cannot make . . ."
>
> " . . . O hide me, Mother Night!"

True, there was some faint ground for hope:

> "Little thou think'st in thy despair
> How soon the o'ershaded sun may shine,
> And e'en the dulling clouds combine
> To bless with lights and hues divine
> That region desolate and bare,
> Those sad and sinful thoughts of thine!"[3]

-- always provided those "sad and sinful thoughts" did not cost one that possible blessedness. Yet he saw . . so many

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 9.
2- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 20.
3- "Poems of A. H. Clough", pp 10 - 13.

things that caused those black doubts to arise. What was he to do? Why could he not have the steady, complacent surety of his dear Dr. Arnold? He wrote:

"O Good and Great,
In whom in this be-darkened state
I fain am struggling to believe . .".[1]

And he did struggle mightily; but the doubts remained to mock him; the be-darkened state grew darker.

vi

Clough was living at the time in a small cottage in the vicinity of Holywell. Here he varied the sombreness of his reflections with cold outdoor baths every morning all winter through, and with long periods of hard reading each day; the final examinations were approaching rapidly. His heart was hardly in his work: prizes, contentions, "schoolboy love of racing",[2] controversies, speculation, labor itself, somehow, had all come to seem unimportant and unsatisfying in the face of the really desperate matters they hid and submerged. Truth: what and where was it? What numberless follies and crimes were committed in its name.

Sometimes, at the close of a page, in the gleam of a last shaft of sunlight in an afternoon walk, or lurking behind the sudden seriousness of a friend's remark, it seemed about to become palpable, to reveal itself in manifold splendors or pure simplicities, as the case might be; but then the page behind always barren; the sunlight vanished to

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 14.
2- "Prose Remains", On Oxford Studies, p. 401.

dusk; the friend tormentingly silent; the secret as hidden as ever. He versified the bitter fact:

"The fruit of dreamy hoping,
Is, waking, blank despair."[1]

So there he went: taking his cold baths, his walks, doing his daily reading, and sympathetically listening to undergraduates who came to him for advice upon their problems. His own searing, inner conflict only intensified and stamped-in the sweet, patient cast of expression that had become characteristic of him. But the furrows of perplexity could also, on occasion, impressively accumulate on the high forehead.

The veneration of callow undergraduates continued to increase: here was a Thinker one might trust for a friendly, appreciative, and profound hearing; here was one who was to do great things in the world of action as well as that of books. It was to them and to others as surprising as it was disconcerting when the publication of the class lists showed that Clough had failed to take a first.

vii

Returning to Oxford in the summer of 1841, Clough tried unsuccessfully for a fellowship at Balliol. He remained in residence, however, supporting himself on the exhibition and scholarship he still held. His father had failed in business that year, and had lost all his money. With this added worry, it was a considerable relief to Clough to be

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough" p. 16.

notified in the spring of 1842 that he had been elected à Fellow of Oriel.

It has been declared, "The life of an Oxford don would seem by no means an unpleasant life. It possesses a sufficiency of employment to avoid the tedium of idleness, and a sufficiency of idleness to prevent anyone from being overworked."[1] It appears, in short, an excellent and fortunate position from which to wage a finish fight against these fundamental and vexatious problems of life which now had beset Clough these many years. This time there should be no quarter, no half-solutions, no fiddle-faddling.

His failure of the previous year to take a first class had not the slightest whit discouraged him or lessened his estimation of his own powers. He had written to his sister upon the publication of the lists: "I can assure you it has not lessened my own opinion of my ability, for I did my papers not a quarter as well as my reading would naturally have enabled me to do; and if I got a second with my little finger, it would not have taken two hands to get a double first (there's for you!)."[2]

But in 1842 also came the news that Dr. Arnold was dead. The thought reverberated in Clough's mind. He had been told of the event at Oxford, and had left at once for home, stunned. A sense of awful loneliness took possession of him. What, or who, was now to guide and encourage him? Who would be so kindly and understanding? Clough might lecture to young undergraduates on ethics and

1- "Arthur Hugh Clough", Waddington.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 89.

logic, might explain away the superficial doubts, and listen patiently and pityingly to their deeper quandaries -- but all the while he felt desperately within himself he was in as bad a case as they. Now he should feel that more than ever. Dr. Arnold, who surely had possessed some key to all these mysteries, was dead. There is pregnant meaning buried in Clough's simple, despairing comment: "He was for a long time more than a father to me."[1]

Home, family sympathy, diversions could not restore quiet to his heart; restlessness grew upon him, and in a few weeks he set off to wander aimlessly through the Welsh mountains, alone with his grief. Here, in the granite silences and beauties of nature, there might somewhere be a peace denied to sensate man.

viii

In October of this year, Thomas Arnold joined his brother Matthew and Clough at Oxford, Matthew having come up on a Balliol scholarship in the fall of 1841. One catches idyllic glimpses of this pleasant interlude: the little group, with Theodore Walrond, "skiffing up the Cherwell, or else in the network of river channels that meander through the broad meadows facing Iffley and Sandford",[2] and breakfasting in Clough's rooms Sunday mornings.

But more blows were to fall upon Clough this year. In October his brother George, to whom he was deeply attached, sailed for America. He was struck down by fever at Charleston,

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 34.
2- "The Nineteenth Century" (T. Arnold) 43:105, 1898.

and within a very few days was dead. His father, who unknowingly had sailed for America to join him, arrived at Boston only to hear the mournful news. In poor health himself, shocked, and forlorn, James Clough returned in the summer to the small family in England, sadly tarried among them for awhile, anxiously watched and nursed by all, and then, ruling off his last earthly account, followed his son.

ix

At times Clough felt as if he would like to leave Oxford. At first he was a little in doubt himself as to why he should have such disquiet. There were, after all, much worse places in the world than Oxford, and there was the distressing half-conviction that if he went, and wherever he went, he would to a large degree take his problems with him. But thinking the matter over one day, he concluded that at least the compulsion upon an Oxford tutor to sign the Thirty-nine Articles as a prerequisite to receiving his M. A. was manifestly and immoderately oppressive. He confided as much to Gell, now the Reverend Mr. Gell:

"I have a very large amount of objection, or rather repugnance, to sign 'ex animo' the Thirty-nine Articles, which it would be singular and unnatural not to do if I stayed in Oxford . . It is not so much from any definite objection to this or that point, as general dislike to subscription, and strong feeling of its being a bondage and a very heavy one, and one that may cramp or cripple one for life."[1]

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 93.

But his friend Gell remarked in a letter some months later, "Nothing would surprise me after your last letter, not even to learn that you were turned into an Independent Clergyman. Pray why not sign the XXXIX articles; you must sign something, unless you mean to have nothing to do with anybody. Where will you find a more sensible set of clerical regulations?"[1]

And additionally Clough had a very concrete and definite reason that made it desirable he remain at Oxford: he had bound himself in some pecuniary arrangement whereby the present comfort of a near relative would be secured, and a not immaterial benefit would accrue to himself upon the death of that individual, considered as likely to occur very shortly. By this agreement, Clough was to pay out £ 100 a year. The immediate effect was that the health of the relative improved at least sufficiently to postpone the imminent death for fifteen years.

x

Clough signed the Articles, "though reluctantly enough";[2] comparative peace and quiet again were his. To Gell he wrote late in 1844:

"My own justification to myself for doing as I am doing is, I fear, one which would be as little approved of by you as my objections on the other hand. However, it is simply that I can feel faith in what is being carried on by

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 23.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 93.

my generation, and that I am content to be an operative" -- how have the mighty fallen! -- "to dress intellectual leather, cut it out to pattern, and stitch it and cobble it into boots and shoes for the benefit of the work which is being guided by wiser heads."[1]

xi

"An idler among academic bowers"[2], Clough's tutorial years were slipping by rapidly, easily. The passing months had brought to him a certain amused, half-resigned way of viewing even such things as sectarian fervor: the earnest Victorian had lost a good deal of his solemnity, or -- could it be? -- his conscientious regard for the loftier matters of life. Was it triumph or compromise? he found it hard to say. Matthew Arnold had written to him, in his usual breezy style, from Rugby in the March of 1845,

"My dear Clough, have you a great Force of Character? That is the true Question. For me, I am a reed, a very whoreson Bullrush: yet such as I am, I give satisfaction. Which you will find to be nothing -- nor yet is a patent Simulation open to all men, nor to all satisfactory. But to be listless when you should be on Fire: to be full of headaches when you should slap your Thigh: to be rolling Paper Balls when you should be weaving fifty Spirits into one: to be raining when you had been better thundering: to be damped with a dull ditch-water, while in one school near you sputters and explodes a fiery tailed Rocket, and in the rest patent Simulators cease-

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 96.
2- Wordsworth, "The Prelude".

lessly revolve: to be all this, and to know it -- O my Clough".[1]

To be raining when he had been better thundering: would that be the final judgment upon him -- and from the lips of a babe? Yet life, it seemed, provided its bountiful gifts to those who probed not too deeply; nor tried too conscientiously to bear more than one's portion of the weary weight of this unintelligible world. For one need not, you know. After all, as he reminded a friend, there was such a thing as "a vicious habit of poking into intellectual questions merely for the fun of it, or the vanity of it . ."[2] "Taking it easy and acquiescing in anything"[3] -- might that not be best, after all? Clough might lay down his "toga tutoria",[4] and go abroad for a year with a pupil; he might teach school at Birmingham; or go to Switzerland for a while with his sister. He thought it possible he might find himself teaching in the near future at one of the new Irish universities, at Belfast, or Cork. He spoke before the Decade club several times; was attending dinners, parties, and breakfasts more frequently now; was lecturing quite a bit; and, once, was off "to a party at General Duff's to see Highland dancing."[5]

The Oxford Movement, in 1845, had ended as Dr. Arnold had anticipated: with Newman (preceded by Ward, and followed by a number of others) slipping off to the Catholic Church.

In 1847, Clough was powerfully stirred by the distress of the Irish in the midst of a potato famine. He was moved to address a pamphlet to the young men of Oxford, urging

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 56.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 99.
3- Ibid, p. 99.
4- Ibid, p. 105.
5- Ibid, p. 111.

them to retrench in such a time of suffering, or, at least, not to over-eat, over-drink, and over-enjoy. There is an oddly familiar ring about the style of some of the passages; but whether or not it was the potency of the Carlylean exhortation, it is gratifying to learn (though in somewhat ambiguous phrase, to be sure) that Clough's pamphlet was not without effect upon the young men of Oxford.

The religious poems written by Clough around this time, even the famous "Qui laborat, orat", indicate perplexity, rather than firm faith.[1]

xii

In November, 1847, Clough, learning that Emerson had come over to England, and was in the vicinity, took advantage of his sister's acquaintance with the American poet and lecturer to offer him his hospitality and his services as guide to the beauties of Oxford. The offer was accepted. The new interest was to have repercussions upon Clough, while on Emerson's side as well the meeting was not without its satisfactions -- had he not found someone who read and delighted in both Carlyle and Wordsworth? Fancy! in England, and in the puerile age of Tennyson! He could hardly believe it.

Clough, on the other hand, was equally enthusiastic. To think of meeting Ralph Waldo Emerson himself! The person

1- It is perhaps of passing significance that Thomas Arnold, in whose home the above poem was conceived, and by whom it was partly inspired, remarks of his friend Clough, "his mouth was beautifully formed, but both it and the chin were characterised by some lack of determination and firmness." ("A.H.Clough" Waddngtn.)

who could say with amazing Yankee positiveness: "We know truth when we see it, let sceptic and scoffer say what they choose. Foolish people ask you, when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear, 'How do you know it is truth, and not an error of your own?' We know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake when we are awake."[1]

What an opportunity this was to find out the secret of such complacent assurance; to subdue this baffling matter of truth to a principle as simple as that to him, too.

So Emerson was taken around on the grand tour of the colleges and grounds; was introduced to Matthew Arnold, Stanley, James Anthony Froude, and Palgrave; had the window of Dr. Pusey's room pointed out to him; and talked . . .

And when he at length felt himself in a position to make an estimate, Clough, in a letter to Thomas Arnold, described Emerson to him as "the quietest, plainest, unobtrusivest man possible; will talk, but will rarely <u>discourse</u> to more than a single person, and wholly declines 'roaring'." Then he adds (and was it in disappointment?), "he is much less Emersonian than his Essays. There is no dogmatism or arbitrariness or positiveness about him."[2]

xiii

It was with the suddenness of a <u>coup d'etat</u>, as far as many of Clough's friends were concerned, that the tutor abruptly decided conditions at Oxford were intolerable. Why the discovery should have been delayed until this

1- "Emerson's Essays" Houghton Mifflin, 1929, v. I, p. 262.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 137.

particular time is unexplained; but by March, 1848, he was writing to Shairp:

"Another three weeks will see me at the end of these tutorial -- what shall I call them? -- wearinesses, now at any rate. But whither the emancipated spirit will wing its flight can't be guessed. Paradise, or purgatory, or -- ? the limbo of meditation, the penal worms of ennui, or the paradise of --? Vanitas vanitatum -- omnia vanitas."

"Edward has been here to breakfast -- a phantom of the ancient glories. If it were not for all these blessed revolutions, I should sink into hopeless lethargy."[1]

The inner, impalpable, unseen forces had reached their furthest limit: inertia itself could stand the strain no more -- for motion to follow was more natural than otherwise. In May, 1848, Clough gave up his tutorship, and was shortly to leave on a trip to Paris with Emerson. His fellowship he maintained six months longer.

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 120.

IV

"Ever, as the English Milton says, to be weak is the true misery."

Carlyle: "Sartor Resartus",
"The Everlasting No".

CHAPTER IV

Dipsychus; and the Almost-Everlasting Nay

1848 - 1853

i

Clough's friends have been at some trouble to suggest a consistent reason for his resignation; the matter has been made the more obscure in that Clough himself has clouded it with suggestions and possibilities as ingenious but perhaps as inconclusive as any of theirs. He himself seems not wholly to have understood.

Was it the inspiration of Emerson? Or was it the renewed stimulus of one he had considerably outgrown, the Carlyle who said "doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by Action"? Some were convinced it was the latter. Hutton, for example, remarks: "I, for my part, do not at all doubt that it was in great measure Mr. Carlyle's stern exhortations to all men to clear their lives of all misleading professions, which induced Clough to throw up his Oxford fellowship."

Or was it, on the other hand, simply the latent, stirring impulses of one who, in his happier moments, thought himself a great poet to be? Was it a late awakening to the full significance of that cry: "Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name!"?[1] Had "the limbo of meditation, the penal worms of ennui" been definitely rejected in the name of a higher destiny? Clough felt (or implied he felt) it to be so;

1- Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus".

but where or why he was going, he knew not. Earlier in that same year, he had written Thomas Arnold, "In England we go on in our usual humdrum way; the ecclesiastical world agitated by all manner of foolish Hampden-rows: of the confused babble about which all quiet people are infinitely tired. I have given our Provost notice of my intention to leave his service (as tutor) at Easter. I feel greatly rejoiced to think that this is my last term of bondage in Egypt, though I shall, I suppose, quit the fleshpots for a wilderness, with small hope of manna, quails, or water from the rock."[1]

While Palgrave suspected it was the failure of Clough's reformation plans for Oriel, its conversion to "a wider course of studies, plainer living and higher thinking"[2] that moved him to his decision, Matthew Arnold, who thought he understood him pretty well, remarks in a letter written a few years after Clough's death,

"On the special point you mention -- his resignation of his fellowship -- I could say nothing; for I had already left Oxford and had ceased to be in continual communication with him, when it happened. It was a subject, too, on which he was not likely to have been communicative to any one."[3]

Thus has the bewildered biographer "to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no answer but an Echo."

Perhaps, after all, the real explanation is that

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 120.
2- "Fraser" (Palgrave), 65:527
3- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 161.

the move was, purely and simply, a duty he felt laid upon him, without troubling to diagnose exactly why, or particularly caring. He felt suddenly he wanted to leave: he would leave first, and analyse his motives later. And later they had become lost in the act. To be sure, the Thirty-nine Articles were "a painful restraint on speculation"; and James Anthony Froude was bold enough to tell Carlyle afterwards that he and Clough had both left the college beeause they felt themselves "out of place in an Article-signing University";[1] but Clough had speculated under the restraint for some time before its painfulness became particularly distressing to him. Was it possibly a subconscious motivation of those brief periods of cynical insight which stimulated him to move vaguely in a direction in which they might best expand and develop; where they might happily, ultimately, have grown into a harmonious, if satirical, view of life? The time was out of joint: that was increasingly apparent. And there was some powerful, not-to-be-denied urge within him anxiously begging the freedom to set it right -- or at least to display, in no soft, academic phrases, the inconsistency of its theory with its practice:

> "Thou shalt have one God only; who
> Would be at the expense of two?
> No graven images may be
> Worshipped, except the currency:
> Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
> Thine enemy is none the worse:
> At church on Sunday to attend
> Will serve to keep the world thy friend:
> Honour thy parents; that is, all
> From whom advancement may befall;

1- J. A. Froude, "Carlyle in London".

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive:
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it:
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat:
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly:
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition."[1]

That Clough, who, one short month previous, forced to alleviate ennui by the thought of the "blessed revolutions" of 1848, had written the despairing letter to Shairp, is suddenly found writing to his sister,

"Up here at Oxford I keep in general company very quiet . . but at the same time I could sometimes be provoked to send out a flood of lava boiling hot amidst their flowery ecclesiastical fields and parterres. Very likely living in this state of suppressed volcanic action makes one more exasperated than one should be when any sort of a crater presents itself. Natheless, there is wisdom in withholding."[2]

One eventually comes to realize that here is only a sharper facet of that mood in which Clough had written his letter of Whit-Sunday, 1839, when the young Oxford undergraduate had come upon the novel and stimulating "Republic" of Plato, and possibilities of more than one view of life and the world lay all before him. Was it a sign that the restless tutor, after so long and wearisome a sojourn in the wilderness, had regained the prospect of entering that Promised Land? It seemed to be so.

A visit or two with Matthew Arnold in London, and to

1- "Poems of A.H. Clough", ("The Latest Decalogue"), p. 134.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 123.

see Miss Fortescue perform in "Sweethearts and Wives" at the Haymarket Theatre, and then in May he set off with Emerson for a five weeks stay in Paris.

ii

At home again, at Liverpool, in September, Clough was busily engaged in writing out his "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich".

It had been a year of revolution and change: the old gods were tumbling or being destroyed. But while Thomas Arnold, in New Zealand, hung breathlessly upon the "tidings of those mighty events, and seemed to feel the reverberations of those shocks"[1]; and Bagehot remembered "witnessing, even in our sober London, in February 1848, how bald fathers of families paid large sums, and encountered bareheaded the unknown inclemencies of the night air, that they might learn the last news of Louis Philippe, and, if possible, be in at the death of the revolutionary Parisians"[2], Clough found much to enjoy in Paris. He dined daily with Emerson, and often with Milnes; went to see Rachel in "Phèdre", and was disappointed in her; and altogether felt thoroughly enthusiastic about this phase of the blessed revolution he had been privileged to witness.

He worked away at his "Bothie" with a certain satirical satisfaction: the University authorities, knowing he was at work upon some poetic manuscript, confidently expected an <u>apologia</u> of his conduct, the "Christian Year" of a

1- "The Nineteenth Century" (T. Arnold) 43:105, 1898.
2- "Literary Studies", W. Bagehot, vol. III, p. 54.

meek soul bearing its burdens with Christlike resignation, or else a fulminatory denunciation of the Thirty-nine Articles. He smiled often as he wrote -- they should see. In October he resigned the fellowship which he still held.

"The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" appeared before the year 1848 was out, and was shortly followed, in 1849, by a volume of poems published in collaboration with his friend Burbidge under the title "Ambarvalia", to which Clough's contributions had been composed over a period of seven years during his residence at Oxford.

The "Bothie" is an interesting study. Clough was an artist whose creative imagination may (for one who was an artist) perhaps be said to possess the smallest index of refraction known; whose character delineations may quite possibly all be reducible to recognizable combinations and distortions rather than the essentially unanalyzable transfigurations that are considered the core of genius.

Was it Clough or only his character Adam who wrote:

"There is a great Field-Marshall, my friend, who arrays our battalions;
Let us to Providence trust, and abide and work in our stations"?[1]

Was it Clough or Philip who replied:

"Would that the armies indeed were arrayed, O where is the battle!
Neither battle I see, nor arraying, nor King in Israel,
Only infinite jumble and mess and dislocation."

"Let us get on as we can, and do the thing we are fit for;"

"Get along, each as we can, and do the thing we

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 198.

That isn't likely to be by sitting still, eating and drinking"?[1]

The approximately two thousand lines of the "Bothie" would appear to have been rushed off with all the vigor of one of the youthful run-on verses, and was composed within a month. Longfellow's "Evangeline", coming after a reading of the "Iliad", had suggested to Clough the use of the hexameter form; and the pleasing use of that form in English is not only a difficult accomplishment, but one decried by certain fastidious critics. At all events, the "Bothie", in the world beyond Oxford, had a mixed reception.

Had Clough written a poem, or a many-sided study of himself? He himself, as well as his friends, may have wondered. And where, among all these partial beings, was the true Arthur Hugh Clough . . ?

iii

Clough had received, in the winter of 1848, an invitation to take over the Headship of University Hall, London, an institution of unsectarian principles which had been founded for the purpose of receiving students attending the lectures at University College. But as the tenure of office was not to take effect until October 1849, the early months of that year gave him an opportunity for a long desired period of extended travel. He should go to Paris, or Rome, and see what he should see. Who knew? there he might find the answer to it all -- though hardly in Catholicism.

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 198.

Thirty years old -- and not yet arrived at a consistent philosophy of life! What was it that delayed him? His whole young manhood spent in inconclusive battling with the meanings of things; in futile efforts to do what Matthew Arnold scornfully referred to as trying to "solve the universe";[1] in fiddle-faddling, and shilly-shallying.

And now, in this latest letter from Matt, the same sometimes almost cruel bluntness, so irritating at times, from one so much younger (who, after all, had not done so much himself): "I only urge you to reflect whether you are advancing."[2] In which direction was advancement, anyway? Could Matthew Arnold tell him that -- could anyone?

He was almost sick with self-disgust; he did not sleep well, and he brooded. Suddenly one day some of those vapory thoughts crystallized. What if one should regard Christianity as resting upon an extremely suspicious premise, and . . He wrote out "The Shadow". Thoughts from Augustine roved in his head: "I sought for pleasures, sublimities, truths, and so fell headlong into sorrows, confusions, errors." How fearfully possible; but there was nothing really impious in writing what you had conceived the moment before the call of faith counselled the cooling, frightened mind back to the worship of God. "Behold, Thy servant, fleeing from his Lord, and obtaining a shadow."[3] Words of the Bible, phrases of Butler, arguments of Paley worked about in the artistic pigments of his creating mind. Irony: that was to be the background of this sketch, as he framed it. Recall that argument

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 63.
2- Ibid, p. 99.
3- "Confessions of St. Augustine", p. 21.

of Dr. Arnold's? What was it . . that, "if the Resurrection be true, Christianity surely is true; and then how can one think of Christ except religiously?"[1] True, true, all true -- but there was that all important premise: what if the Resurrection were not true; a stone not rolled away . . and a Shadow, a Shade, hovering about disregarded because the Truth is no longer so important as that a sublime legend be perpetuated. The great World calling to the police to take the Thing away for the sake of order and peace. What a theme for ironic handling.

All this was very daring; was sure to be misunderstood; and furthermore the wells of inspiration had run dry: it would have to remain an unpolished fragment till some later time. At any rate, it had served its purpose; had gratified a whim; had eased his mind, if not his heart. Peace might be his again -- and sleep.

If he could only have more creative inspirations of this sort. There were other variations that might be played upon the same idea. The thought continued to tantalize him.

iv

He journeyed towards Rome in April. Once more he had gone abroad at a time that most people would have called politically important.

It was Naples, and Easter. Clough walked down the street, hot ideas surging within him. Bells were tolling, half-suggesting the pattern of a poem. How they brought

1- "Life of Thomas Arnold", p. 435.

back the memory of Dr. Arnold. Stanley had printed some travel extract from the Doctor's "Journal" in his biography. What was it the Doctor had written? How the scene might be shaped into a drama of Pleasure, and Sin, and Death. And so it might. But not as a drama, a poem -- that was what it should be. Then later, perhaps, a drama -- if he could do it:

"Through the great sinful streets of Naples as I past,
With fiercer heat than flamed above my head
My heart was hot within me; till at last
My brain was lightened when my tongue had said" --

what? Catch a refrain from the bells:

"Christ is not risen!"

"Christ is not risen, no --
He lies and moulders low;
Christ is not risen!

. . . . .

"Ah! 'some' did well to 'doubt!'"

. . . . .

"Eat, drink, and play, and think that
this is bliss:
There is no heaven but this;
There is no hell,
Save earth, which serves the purpose
doubly well,"
etc.

. . . . .

"And, oh, good men of ages yet to be,
Who shall believe <u>because</u> ye did not see --"[1]

Clough was composing "Easter Day": the volcano, it seemed, was at last in full eruption.

Only seemed, however. Saint Augustine remarks somewhere, "in more ways than one do men sacrifice to the rebel-

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", pp. 57-61.

lious angels." Clough had doubtless illustrated that to a nicety. With the increasing surety of the fact, he became more and more disturbed. It was a godless piece of work.

And yet it was some of the best work he'd done; he felt that, too -- he couldn't destroy it. An inspiration came to him. He proceeded to compose a sequel with the theme that Christ was risen. The two portions, alas, were awkwardly and obviously inconsistent.

It has well been said, "The excellence and fruitfulness of anything consists in our loving and enjoying it, in our expressing our personality through it."[1]

Clough found the zest and delight he had felt before had vanished into the limbo of all rejected things. Conscience, which Conrad has called the heirloom of the race and the family, had triumphed.

> "What a rain of ashes falls on him
> Who sees the new and cannot leave the old!"[2]

v

Clough, as might possibly have been anticipated, was disappointed in Rome: the stone of which it was made was, it seemed, "a poor plastery material; and, indeed," he wrote his mother, "Rome in general might be called a rubbishy place".[3] He enjoyed the fireworks in the Colosseum, however, visited Mazzini, noted that "the religious customs seem to thrive still; they kissed away yesterday at St. Peter's toe as fast as they could have done in its best days"[4]; admired

1- "America's Coming of Age", Brooks
2- "Lancelot", E. A. Robinson.
3- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 145.
4- Ibid, p. 148.

Michael Angelo's work, that is, what he could ascertain to be his; and awaited the French attack.

Clough and his party hung out little British flags from the windows, and he wrote to assure his mother that "except for the nuisance of all galleries being shut, I should be very well content."[1] His greatest affliction was that the Vatican was closed; but as he managed to gain entrance to the Sistine Chapel, to St. Peter's, and to the Pantheon, and after a time obtained a special permit to visit the Vatican, the time passed pleasantly enough for all the inconvenience of the war. In the interim he worked the local gossip and war news into both his letters and a long poem he was composing, titled "Amours de Voyage".

An acquaintance later asked Clough if this poem were not an account of his own experiences during his visit to Italy. Clough replied emphatically that it was "extremely not so".[2] Although certain actual observations and trivial experiences of his own are worked into the poem, as far as plot and event are concerned, Clough's firm denial is undoubtedly truthful; but just as undeniably is it true that its hero, Claude, is a caricature of Clough's sometime impulses and thoughts carried to their logical conclusion. Claude is not a reflection of Clough's own life, but was a possibility of it.

Clough was deterred from publishing the "Amours", presumably because of some depreciatory private criticisms,

1- "Prose Remains", p. 149.
2- Ibid, p. 173.

until 1858.

Dealing expertly as it does with the perpetual revulsions and perplexities of an introvertive character, whose will power is generated only in flashes, and whose action is smothered often enough in surmise, there is much in the "Amours" that inevitably suggests certain characteristics and problems of the author himself. One of the atmospheric interpolated verses queries:

> "Is it religion? I ask me; or is it a vain superstition?
> Slavery abject and gross? service, too feeble, of truth?
> Is it an idol I bow to, or is it a god that I worship?
> Do I sink back on the old, or do I soar from the mean?
> So through the city I wander and question, unsatisfied ever,
> Reverent so I accept, doubtful because I revere."[1]

And when Rome was attacked by the French, was it Claude, or some repressed impulse within the quiet, detached Arthur Clough, that

> "Dreamt of great indignations and angers transcendental,
> Dreamt of a sword at my side and a battle-horse underneath me"?[2]

A battle-horse underneath him! The suggestion of that Clough who had absorbed so well the moral of Carlyle's two Dumdrudges yearning for an active role in this useless physical combat is almost ludicrous -- or was it physical combat of which he was really thinking? The ludicrous may conceal the pathetic.

Claude,

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 221.
2- Ibid, p. 224.

"Could live, I believe, with children;
to have those
Pure and delicate forms encompassing, moving about
you,
This were enough, I could think, and truly with
glad resignation
Could from the dream of Romance, from the fever
of flushed adolescence,
Look to escape and subside into peaceful
avuncular functions."[1]

Was it the character Claude alone who desired escape and salvation? Who had,

"Slunk from the perilous field in
Whose wild struggle of forces the prizes of life
are contested"?[2]

And in conclusion, Claude decides:

"I will go where I am led, and will not dictate to
the chances."[3]

His beloved was hopelessly lost to him; to escape the despairing knowledge of his own weakness, he sought forgetfulness in a flight to Naples, and Egypt.

Clough, unlike Claude, had no alternative but to return to Gordon Square and University Hall, where he entered upon his new duties in October.

vi

It was perhaps not the happiest period of his life: he was lonely and bewildered; he found he had made a great change from the reposeful atmosphere of Oxford to the breezy cosmopolitanism of University Hall, and also that many of his old friends had cooled towards him and drifted away. Even breakfast with Crabb Robinson and his circle was scarcely

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 217.
2- Ibid, p. 254.
3- Ibid, p. 258.

compensation. Clough, however, won Crabb Robinson's complete approval and respect: to him he remained to the end of his days, "that admirable and accomplished man. You know whom I mean. The one who never says anything."[1]

Bewildered and distress, Clough felt a greater and greater longing for close, intimate, sympathetic understanding; for feminine understanding, and love: he wanted a wife.

When Clough first found himself established at University Hall, he had written to Thomas Arnold,

"I, believing that I shall be kicked out for mine heresies' sake, and doubtful of success in literary doings, have sometimes looked at my feet and considered the antipodes, reflecting however much on the natural conservatising character of our years after thirty."

"Do we not work best by digging deepest? by avoiding polemics, and searching to display the real thing? If only one could do the latter! -- Emerson is an example, and also Carlyle, and in his kind M. A."[2]

Is there to be found here some indication that the seeds of "Dipsychus" were already sprouting? Was that valiant effort to be proof that he could dig deeply and daringly? that he also was not without force, and the courage it demanded? He, like Emerson, should "unsettle all things"; like Carlyle, he would show them he could blow the loud trumpet, and proclaim what he felt to be so. He would at last assert himself!

In a review of a work which appeared in 1849,

1- "Literary Studies", Bagehot, Memoir by Hutton, v.I, p.xxxv.
2- "Prose Remains", p. 169.

Francis Newman's "The Soul", Clough had written:

"Let there be priests, if you please, to preserve the known, and let them, as is their office, magnify their office, and say, It is all. But there shall also be priests to vindicate the unknown; nor shall it be accounted presumption in them to maintain, It is not all."[1]

vii

In 1850, in June, Clough wrote to a friend: "Let us not sit in a corner and mope, and think ourselves clever, for our comfort . . . Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it without fiddle-faddling."[2]

The answer to his besetting puzzle had not been found in the travel of the preceding year. Or had he found it one day, in Naples, and lost it again? He could not tell; perhaps there was no answer for mortality -- only a multiplicity of delusions resting upon no final truth, after all.

A modern poet writes:

"fly for truth,
And hell shall have no storm to crush your flight,
No laughter to vex down your loyalty."[3]

Was such an endeavor too venturesome for one living in England in 1850? Is it ever less so, in any place, in any age? Or was it that, in Goethe's phrase, "Whom God deludes is well deluded?" The sentence stuck in Clough's mind, and he carried it with him on a hasty vacation trip to Venice in the autumn.

1- "The Nation", 36:259, 1883.
2- "Prose Remains", p. 174.
3- E. A. Robinson, "Captain Craig".

viii

At Venice Clough began the writing of the dramatic poem, "Dipsychus". "Dipsychus" was to be at once a challenge and an answer.

But as the poem went on, with all Clough's supremest art and intensest courage going into the labor, the issues became more and more shadowy and ill-defined. Point after point he recorded successfully; excellences, direct hits, and beauties recurrently appeared and retired. But what was designed to be concrete and particular became abstract and multiform. It was perhaps inevitable, the nature of the problem at which he labored being what it was. A critic has said of it with much pointedness: "The central difficulty is that Dipsychus reluctantly and passively allows truth to drive him, instead of going out boldly to find truth."[1] "Dipsychus" spun itself along indecisively in an inconclusive conflict that was reality itself. The figures changed and interchanged: the spirit now tempter, now voice of reality; the hero now weakling, now tragic figure in a struggle where heroism was only relative, and victory impossible. The scenes changed; the dialogue went on interminably; definite conclusions were as far off as ever.

"Dipsychus" is ultimately a presentation of the indefiniteness of life; the composition of one who is unsure whether repose or action is the higher plane (whereas Goethe was positive it was action -- or whether there were indeed planes. Rightly looked at, the work may be seen to be no

1- "Arthur Hugh Clough", J.I.Osborne, Constable, London, 1919, p. 136.

mean answer to the categorical philosophy of Goethe. Osborne, while classing the work as inferior to the Faust, lists, "a few compensatory advantages on the side of "Dipsychus". One has already been suggested -- absence not merely of melodrama, but of drama, may be taken as a point of superiority in an attempt to represent the essential conflict of life just exactly as it really is. Truth may be there none the less for its failure to become apparent to minds accustomed to think of life as dramatic."[1]

If Goethe, and under him, Carlyle, should be the self-appointed priests of Action, and slight the equally venerable claims of Inaction, and the reasons thereof, Clough should take it upon himself to defend and illustrate the latter. If Mephistopheles were the positive, according spirit, the Spirit of the "Dipsychus" should beset the hero with confusing alternatives.

ix

Samuel Waddington has acutely commented that those who accuse Clough of having "no direct teaching to put forward, no assured gospel or tidings of any certainty, to proclaim to his hearers or readers . . have mistaken for weakness what is the very soul, and strength, and essence, of Clough's poetry and power."[2] This "soul, and strength, and essence" lies, of course, in his very refusal to be content with superficiality, or dogmatism. This was his virtue; his fault, or weakness, was that if he had taken up a stern

1- "Arthur Hugh Clough", Osborne, p. 139.
2- "Arthur Hugh Clough", S. Waddington.

chase, that pursuit of bare, if bitter, Truth, it was a chase incompatible with any premise that "Whom God deludes is well deluded."[1]

It was only in moments that Clough rose to its demands. One reason for his weakness is that he was, after all, a child of his Age; and if he did his best to escape the thralldom of dogmatism, he never wholly outgrew a subconscious reverence for a Victorian God of Duty. It was hardly to have been expected: there were definite limits to the ruthlessness of this search for truth; shrines and sanctuaries which one might not desecrate: Dr. Arnold would not have tolerated it. Supersensitively wary of most delusions, Clough was perhaps a victim of the most fundamental of them all, if the profoundest; not because he quailed, or was hypocritical, through cowardice, but simply because this belief, and this creed were so intimate a part of his heritage, his early education, and his Age, he could never quite get to see it detached from himself, and in the bright, scientific light of impassionate analysis.

As W. G. Ward perceived, if Clough had intellectual faults, one was certainly his lapses in logical consecutiveness.

x

"Dipsychus" is, in effect, a colloquoy between Dipsychus and the Spirit -- or Arthur the Good, and Arthur the Doubtful. The elements that went to make up its being

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 91.

were, as has been implied, mingled. There was that in Clough which looked out upon the world and life with a piercing clarity of sight, and had a tendency to question established things that is reminiscent of Euripides, of Voltaire, and of Byron:

> "Mark off thus much air,
> And call it heaven; place bliss and glory there;
> Fix perfect homes in the unsubstantial sky,
> And say, what is not, will be by-and-by;
> What here exists not must exist elsewhere.
> But play no tricks upon thy soul, O man;
> Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can."[1]

But there was likewise within Clough that which knew only too well the Victorian sanctities; and when Dipsychus asked himself,

> "Were it not nobler done, then, to act fair,
> To accept the service with the wages, do
> Frankly the devil's work for the devil's pay?"[2]

the point is that while it was impious to renounce God, there was one thing more sacrilegious still, and that was to deny the existence of a Devil. He spun his machinations, unquestionably. One might be an atheist, and deny God; but the Devil brooked no such blasphemy.

Clough had his stipulations:

> "God, Revelation, and the rest of it,
> Bad at the best, we make the best of it.
> Like a good subject and wise man,
> Believe whatever things you can."[3]

And his logic crashed before his conditions. The Spirit saw him,

> "Through everlasting limbos of void time,
> Twirling and twiddling ineffectively,
> And indeterminately swaying for ever."[4]

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 90.
2- Ibid, p. 120.
3- Ibid, p. 87.
4- Ibid, p. 117.

And Dipsychus, recognizing this truth, can observe half-bitterly, half-appreciatively,

> "Life loves no lookers-on at his great game,
> And with boy's malice still delights to turn
> The tide of sport upon the sitters-by,
> And set observers scampering with their notes."[1]

Beneath the mighty symphony of awful, perhaps universal, tragedy, there are the faint tones of personal defeat:

> "Oh, there are hours,
> When love, and faith, and dear domestic ties,
> And converse with old friends, and pleasant walks,
> Familiar faces, and familiar books,
> Study, and art, upliftings unto prayer,
> And admiration of the noblest things,
> Seem all ignoble only; all is mean,
> And naught as I would have it."[2]

"Dipsychus" is, a critic would have it, "perhaps the saddest poem in existence." Yet, for all its agonized reflections, the tone and conclusions are not those of complete despair. Perhaps they rightfully should have been; but they are not. Instead, they may rather be characterized by the conviction of Dipsychus,

> "Better to wait:
> The wise men wait;"[3]

and Clough waited. Despite Arnold's reminder, "we are growing old, and advancing towards the deviceless darkness",[4] Clough dawdled away at a sequel that was never to be completed, and wasted little time smoothing out the crudities of the original version. Thus was left Dipsychus, in apt fulfillment of the Spirit's conception,

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 103.
2- Ibid, p. 108.
3- Ibid, p. 102.
4- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 118.

"Through everlasting limbos of void time,
Twirling and twiddling ineffectively,
And indeterminately swaying for ever",

the work unpublished in Clough's lifetime.

xi

The managing body of University Hall "bewildered Clough, and were by him bewildered".[1] He had written to Thomas Arnold in the May of 1851: "Nothing is very good anywhere, I am afraid. I could have gone cracked last year with one thing or another, I think, but the wheel comes round."[2]

The wheel had come round: Clough was in love:

"Ah! years may come, and years may bring
The truth that is not bliss,
But will they bring another thing
That can compare with this?"[3]

A less barbaric Samson had met a fairer, more ingenuous Delilah, in whose loving arms he might relax.

The founding of a new college at Sidney inspired Clough with the hope of obtaining its principalship. On the strength of the hope he had allowed himself to become practically engaged. But he failed to obtain the post, felt himself obliged to give over an alternative scheme of contented poverty with hard literary labor, found himself pointed matrimonialwards without even fair prospects, and, all in all, life darker and more disheartening than ever.

xii

1- "Literary Studies", Hutton Memoir, v. I, p. xxxiii.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 177.
3- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 318.

Clough's best known poem, "Say Not, The Struggle Naught Availeth", written at this time, is after all a poem of hope and courage, not of confidence. And the insecurity of Clough's position at University Hall was such as to assure him that some fears, at least, would not prove liars.

Closely following the failure to secure the appointment to the college at Sidney, he was obliged to give up his post at the Hall. His friends pulled political wires to secure him an appointment in the Education Office, but the Liberal Ministry went out of office, and these efforts too came to nothing. Marriage, under the conditions, he felt to be temporarily out of the question -- and who could say for how long? In the bitterness of these disappointments, he turned for comfort to what should seem the now almost torturing youthful dreams of a splendid destiny. He was thirty-three: who had ever thought or heard of him? Nevertheless, thirty-three was not so terribly old, even if, as Matthew Arnold uncomfortably reminded him, "How life rushes away, and youth. One has dawdled and scrupled and fiddle faddled -- and it is all over."[1]

xiii

At the end of October, 1852, Clough sailed for America with rather vague intentions either to teach or write; sailed to the pleasing accompaniment of a ship-letter from Matt, with the perpetual refrain: "what a difference there is between reading in poetry and morals of the loss of youth,

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 120.

and experiencing it! And after all there is so much to be done, if one could but do it."[1] Clough had written to Emerson in June asking what teaching prospects there were, and the reply had been generally encouraging.[2] He went with hope in his heart, and an increasing enthusiasm for his adventure. Perhaps, perhaps in America lay somewhere waiting that elusive answer he had so long been seeking:

> "When we have proved, each on his course alone,
> The wider world, and learnt what's now unknown,
> Have made life clear, and worked out each a way,
> We'll meet again, -- we shall have much to say."[3]

xiv

When Clough arrived in Boston, "Arabian Nights" seemed to have come true. He was everywhere "the celebrated author of 'The Bothie', a whole edition of which was printed and sold, they say, here".[4]

By the end of November he was thoroughly established and at home. Life seemed to turn her fairest smiles upon him. He was invited to lecture; commenced tutoring at Cambridge; became interested in American political and economic questions; and was advised to start up a school for boys or girls. The last idea especially appealed to him; he writes, "I am content do do this till I am forty, at any rate."[5]

While lecturing about Wordsworth, Clough affirmed,

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 125.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 186.
3- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 267.
4- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 191.
5- Ibid, p. 195.

"To live in a quiet village, out of the road of all trouble and temptation in a pure, elevated, high moral sort of manner, is after all no such very great a feat."

"Perhaps it is only those that are themselves engaged in the thick of the struggle and conflict that rightly can cheer on, or fitly can admonish, their fellows, or to any good purpose assume the high moral tone."[1]

And when speaking of the seventeenth century in a lecture on "The Development of English Literature", Clough declared:

"This austere love of truth; this righteous abhorrence of illusion; this rigorous, uncompromising rejection of the vague, the untestified, the merely probable; this stern conscientious determination without paltering and prevarication to admit, <u>if</u> things are bad, that they are so; this resolute, upright purpose, as of some transcendental man of business, to go thoroughly into the accounts of the world and make out once for all how they stand: such a spirit as this, I may say, I think, claims more than our attention -- claims our reverence."[2]

Verily, Minerva's seat has many mansions.

XV

Clough made a relatively brief stay in America; but that stay, however, lasted long enough for many happy memories. There had been dinners with the Longfellows, the Lowells, the

1- "Prose Remains", Lecture on Wordsworth, p. 319.
2- Ibid, Lecture on English Literature, p. 347.

Emersons, with Norton, Channing, and Dana; he had met Harriet Beecher Stowe; and there was that admirer in Cincinnati who had been kind enough to ask for an autograph. As early as March, Clough had made the discovery, "Emerson is the only profound man in this country".[1]

He had written but little poetry while in America, and of that, the most had naturally enough been love poems dedicated to an absent one.

A pure windfall, however, both mentally and financially, had come his way. Little and Brown, "the head booksellers",[2] had suggested to him a project for re-publishing the Dryden translation of North's Plutarch. He was to have discretion to do it as he liked, and to receive $350 for the translation. As a matter of fact, the intermittent labor was to occupy him practically the rest of his life.

xvi

While he had remained in America, Clough had worked away upon Plutarch with queerly mixed feelings. At times he had felt almost gay, and light-hearted; was happy and took a genuine pleasure in his work:

"It is odd how much better I like this Plutarch than I do anything which requires distinct statement of opinion",[3] he notes in a letter written in February. Yet for all this encouraging semi-tranquility, at times he had the uncomfortable feeling it was not so much the Plutarch itself he enjoyed doing as . . as -- he could not explain: as some-

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 206.
2- Ibid, p. 200.
3- Ibid, p. 201.

thing else. His old acuteness of self-analysis seemed somehow to have become dulled. Had America done this to him? Should he be glad of this blunting of sensitivity? The haunting, indefinable feeling of some defection, some unanalyzable guiltiness on his part continued to beset him.

After two weeks of puzzling, the field of his suspicions had narrowed:

"Apropos of this Plutarch, I feel sometimes as if I must not trifle away time in anything which is not really a work to some purpose, and that any attempt to be happy except in doing that would be mere failure, even if apparently successful. It sometimes seems to be said to me that I must do this, or else 'from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have". There is nothing very terrible in this, but I cannot get myself to look at things as mere means to money-making; and yet, if I do not, I seem in some sense guilty. It may be the sanguine atmosphere of a new country has filled me with a vain confidence of there being really something in me to be done beyond mere subsistence. In London I felt myself pretty well helpless to effect anything.

"'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Is there any application for that, I wonder, nowadays?"[1]

To get the answer, what was more natural than for Clough to seek out the only profound man in the country? He visited Emerson; the Emerson who had written in "Tantalus",

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, pp. 203-4.

"For no man can write anything who does not think that what he writes is for the time the history of the world; or do anything well, who does not esteem his work to be of the greatest importance. My work may be of none, but I must not think it of none, or I shall not do it with impunity."[1]

But that Emerson whom Clough had found "less Emersonian than his Essays" was even further removed from his magazine articles. Clough thought it "very good to go to him. He appears to take things very coolly".[2] And when he had returned, after two sleepless nights spent with the wise man, he felt "a good deal more reconciled to mere 'subsistence'". "Emerson is really substantive."[3] Clough was pleased to note that his inward disturbance subsided.

In a poem of 1839, the ambitious young Oxford undergraduate had written:

> "Oh, well do I remember then the days
> When on some grassy slope (What time the sun
> Was sinking, and the solemn eve came down
> With its blue vapour upon field and wood
> And elm-embosomed spire) once more again
> I fed on sweet emotion, and my heart
> With love o'erflowed, or hushed itself in fear
> Unearthly, yea celestial. Once again
> My heart was hot within me, and meseemed,
> I too had in my body breath to wind
> The magic horn of song; I too possessed
> Up-welling in my being's depths a fount
> Of the true poet-nectar whence to fill
> The golden urns of verse."[4]

Those were the days of aspiring youth. In manhood, one went to Emerson instead of a hillside for insight; drained the true poet-nectar from a fount adapted to subsistence, and found the golden urns had turned to clay house-vases.

1- "Uncollected Writings", Emerson, "Tantalus", p. 119.
2- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 204.
3- Ibid, p. 204.
4- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 5.

By May 12, he was contentedly writing: "On the whole, I do think that pupilising and writing is my proper vocation, and that if I could afford to stick to it, and do whatever work is offered me really well, I should in time be well paid for it."[1]

Throughout the month of June there was a final round of dinners, a letter from Carlyle announcing that a post of examinership had been secured for him in the Education Office, and by the 7th of July he was half-way to England aboard the "Asia" in indifferent company, including a Mr. Slidell, of Louisiana; and "a horrid woman from New York", whose actions shortly convinced him there is "a purgatory for vulgar people."[2]

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 212.
2- Ibid, p. 216.

V

"Many a green isle needs must be
In the wide sea of Misery,
Or the Mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track.

. . . . .

Ah, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:"

Shelley: "Lines Written Among the
Euganean Hills".

CHAPTER V

Marriage; and the Everlasting Yea Again -- With Variations

1854 - 1858

i

Clough was married in June, 1854, to Miss Blanche Smith, of Combe Hurst, Surrey, the granddaughter of Mr. William Smith, M. P. for Norwich. Again life was to take on a new meaning for him, to become clothed with beauties. An acquiescence in the dictates of mere "subsistence" brought, after all, a release and peace. His craft had nosed its way into a sunlit harbor; a land covered with verdure and flowers lay about him. He was thankful.

The delights of the honeymoon came and went; a happy dream spent, it would seem, at the estate of his wife's first cousin, Miss Florence Nightingale, a woman a year his junior, whose indomitable energy had for Clough a strange attraction, almost an irresistible fascination. What power to see comprehensively and directly, and to act upon such vision immediately! Her very presence was magnetic. Her residence at Lea Hurst, Matlock, brought back memories of America, of Shady Hill, as he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton.

But the American adventure was to be, after all, only a cherished, but fading, memory. He visits Crabbe Robinson, walks with Carlyle, notes the growing unpopularity of the Queen and Prince Albert because of their suspected sympathies with Russia, is "overwhelmed with work and imaginary

responsibility" and labors "with huge interruptions"[1] at Plutarch. The old interests had reasserted their power, and new charms gradually whittled down those enthusiasms he had brought from over the water. He was never to return to America.

ii

On March 24, 1854, the Crimean War broke out with a formal declaration by France and England against the Czar. It was to be a long drawn out affair; but one, it happened, that was to bring undying and deserved celebrity to one of Clough's new relatives, his wife's first cousin, Miss Nightingale, at the time engaged in her nursing home in Harley Street. Sidney Herbert, prominent in the Cabinet and the War Office, was an intimate friend of Miss Nightingale's, and well acquainted with her powers, if not their infinitude. When she wrote offering to serve in the East, the offer was immediately accepted -- was, in fact, anticipated.

Clough could not fail to be concerned: he had the deepest admiration for Florence Nightingale; had received kindnesses from her; was now a relative. Tied up at the Education Office, and with his Plutarch, and his new domestic affairs, he could not perhaps be of much assistance to this strong-willed cousin of his; he might, however, be of some. This offer, likewise, was immediately accepted: Miss Nightingale was not likely to pass over anyone able or willing to help. There was always something that could be done

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 225.

which she could not attend to personally -- and besides, she really liked Clough and his quiet ways and kindly manner. He might never set the world on fire, but he would, no doubt, make Blanche a hard-working, faithful husband. And a laborious man was even scarcer than a faithful one. She outlined what tasks he could conveniently do for her.

iii

When Miss Nightingale left England in October, Clough went over to Calais to see her at least that far on her way to Scutari and its horrors. The following month was to see England greatly aroused and apprehensive over the conduct of the war. Florence Nightingale arrived at Scutari on November 4, just ten days after the battle of Balaclava, and the day before the battle of Inkerman.

Clough had taken a house in September on the outskirts of Regent's Park -- to which, however, they did not move until November -- "not far from the Zoological Gardens, with a canal underneath it, and some very un-Venetian gondolas, called here coal-barges, passing to and fro upon it in the foreground, while in the distance rise the suburban Alps of 'Ampstead and 'Ighgate--".[1]

A brief cholera epidemic had come and gone; the Crimean trouble went on, while Clough followed the news of the war in general and of Scutari in particular with the greatest of interest. Louis Napoleon and his Empress passed

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 229.

under their windows with Victoria and Albert; Lord Raglan died and was succeeded by General Simpson; Sebastopol occupied the spotlight of attention. At last, in September, 1855, the besieged city was taken -- the Crimean War was practically over.

The war had been kind to Arthur Clough in many respects: had provided an interest that took his mind off personal troubles; and had proved a source of pecuniary benefit, for part of his work was to examine candidates' qualifications in English composition, literature, and history preliminary to appointments in the Engineers and Artillery. He noted with satisfaction: "Hence, I can more than pay my income tax."[1]

The memoir edited under the direction of his wife relates: "all the new duties and interests of domestic life grew up and occupied his daily thoughts. The humour which in solitude had been inclined to take the hue of irony and sarcasm, now found its natural and healthy outlet . . the new experience which he was daily gathering at home made many perplexed questions, both social and religious, clear and simple to his mind." "It is quite certain", the memoir goes on to say, "from little things which he was in the habit of saying that, had he been permitted, he would have expressed his mature convictions in works of a more positive and substantial kind. But unfortunately, he was too willing and too anxious to take work of every sort, and to spend himself

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 235.

for others . . nor can any one doubt that in work itself he found full satisfaction, especially in such work as made him helpful to others."[1]

In the spring of 1856, Clough was appointed secretary to a commission for examining the scientific military schools on the Continent. With this commission he travelled about for three months throughout France, Prussia, and Austria. An additional employment frequently fell to him of examining candidates, who reported to the Education Office, in English Literature. In July of the same year, Miss Nightingale returned from her heroic and historic labors in the hospitals of the Crimea, full of plans for the future, and decided to reform contemporary ideas on everything from the question of religion to that of the whole military hospital system.

iv

"But what of him --
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?"[2]

"The work in which" Clough "took the deepest interest", it is reported, "was that of his friend and relation, Miss Nightingale."[3] Between his labors upon Plutarch, and writing letters of technical advice to Professor Child, who was engaged in translating Chaucer; the mingled pleasures and responsibilities of domestic interests, and his work at the Education Office, he still had some leisure that might profitably be de-

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 47.
2- E. A. Robinson, "Flammonde".
3- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 48.

voted to useful work. To what better hands could he entrust this leisure than those of the practical, the almost unbelievably competent, Miss Nightingale? She it was who seemed to to offer the most satisfying example of that dictum of the "Sartor": "The end of Man is an Action, and not a Thought, though it were the noblest." In her so capable hands, what might not the outcome be? To what modest heights (now that the mad hopes of youth could be comprehended as the illusions they were) might he not rise? Late hopes, at thirty-seven, and best forgotten: but the small labors themselves, trivial though they might appear beside larger, more magnificent conceptions, because such grand conceptions were no longer his, could become, for him, significant and valuable as the higher reaches of thought had never been.

His friend Bagehot remarks: to Clough, "as to the mass of men, the vulgar, outward world was a primitive fact . . Reconcile what you have to say with green peas, for green peas are certain; such was Mr. Clough's idea."[1] And if the green peas with which he reconciled his words were those he was permitted to shell for Miss Nightingale, who should condemn him for that? Only a Matthew Arnold.

"To fill the hour, that is happiness", no less a sage than Emerson had laid down; and Clough, filling his hours, won for himself a peace he would not have dreamed possible. And if, in some infrequent, unhappy moment, a refrain from "Lear" should most unjustly disturb his quietude,

1- "Literary Studies", Bagehot, vol. II, p. 264.

"Then they for sudden joy did weep
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among";

if, even more foolishly, lines from his own "Dipsychus" should haunt his thoughts in the oppressive darkness of some restless night:

"To thine own self be true, the wise man says.
Are then my fears myself? O double self!
And I untrue to both? Oh, there are hours,
When love, and faith, and dear domestic ties,
And converse with old friends, and pleasant walks,
Familiar faces, and familiar books,
Study and art, upliftings unto prayer,
And admiration of the noblest things,
Seem all ignoble only; all is mean,
And nought as I would have it";

or certain phrases and passages from the letters of his friend, Matthew Arnold, (a name to conjure with, now) pain like the stings of a persistent mosquito, what was there to do but to laugh, a little bitterly perhaps, at these uneasy visions of the night, knowing the morning sun would banish such weak despair in the distractions of the domestic round, and the day's green peas. If he had achieved no memorable conquest of life, nor solved its riddles, he at least appreciated tangible blessings -- perhaps not all did that.

V

In an incomplete manuscript, "Notes on the Religious Tradition", written sometime in this period of his life, Clough records,

"My own personal experience is most limited, perhaps most delusive: what have I seen, what do I know? Nor

is my personal judgment a thing which I feel any great satisfaction in trusting. My reasoning powers are weak; my memory doubtful and confused; my conscience, it may be, callous or vitiated.

"I see not how it is possible for a man disinclined to adopt arbitrarily the watchword of a party to the sacrifice of truth -- indisposed to set up for himself, and vehemently urge some one point -- I see not what other alternative any sane and humble-minded man can have but to throw himself upon the great religious tradition."[1]

This is abnegation rather than resolution: a muddy solution in which the old terms are still floating -- the problem of possible delusion, the question of conscience, the flying for truth -- but obviously now floating helplessly about unattached and unmeaning. The acids of hopeless speculation have left no alternative but the salvage of conformance with "the great religious tradition". It is defeat -- hopeless and irrevocable. It is the terms of a man who has made peace at the price of surrender.

To accept anew a tradition one has formerly found unconvincing is a damning admission of weakness; the portrait of a man finally entrapped one way or another by the sheer irreducibility of perplexities and contradictions that cannot be resolved, and will not be withstood. Doubts of this sort are either refined away, or deliberately disregarded; they cahnot be successfully uprooted.

Clough goes on: "Where then, since neither in

1- "Prose Remains", On the Religious Tradition, p. 415.

Rationalism nor in Rome is our refuge, where then shall we seek for the Religious Tradition?

"Everywhere; but above all in our own work: in life, in action, in submission, so far as action goes, in service, in experience, in patience, and in confidence."[1]

For Clough, it has become quite apparent, life had been resolved similar to the intricacies of the Caucus race in Carroll's masterpiece, where "the best way to explain it is to do it."

vi

For all the sincerity of this frank endeavor to be a pragmatist; to accept life rather than to solve it; to develop practical, mundane interests in the labors of Miss Nightingale; and to devote oneself to the sufficiently arduous problem of raising a family,

> "One former frailty haunted him, a touch
> Of something introspective over much."[2]

There were moments when, despite the demands of Plutarch, the reading of Crabbe; despite the "sunny sweetness of his temper" which saved him from feeling too much "the sad things of the world"; and despite this "highest and purest peace"[3] one had successfully achieved within himself, one might note:

> "Would I could wish my wishes all to rest,
> And know to wish the wish that were the best'."[4]

vii

In '56, an unsettled condition of affairs in the

1- "Prose Remains", On the Religious Tradition, p. 418.
2- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 280 (Mari Magno).
3- "Prose Remains", Memoir, pp. 50-1.
4- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 280 (Mari Magno).

East existed. Clough divided his attention between the events in India, and his volumes of Plutarch -- the first of which had been published in February. His letters became filled with comments on both; but between the lines one catches glimpses of the conventional parent. Thomas Arnold, recently returned from "parts Australian",[1] met Clough this year. He thought him a good deal changed, "his cheek was paler than formerly, and his beautiful eyes less bright. But his kind smile was the same as ever . ."[2]

Little creative work was being done by Clough these days. It was hardly a loss: in the Blessed Isles to which his skiff had been guided and anchored; in talk with old friends, in household duties, labors for Miss Nightingale, and problems of translation, a life of chastened thought was more than easier, it was sweet.

Some inner light enabled him to pace -- if with sometimes straying footsteps -- through the sad confusion of the world. And really, do you know, when one did not puzzle too much about life, it was not terribly unintelligible. Surround oneself with absorbing interests, check reflection whenever it occurred, and the blank confusion of the higher rules of life faded into happy practicality. Admitting, for the nonce, that one's skiff had been guided, not driven to this peaceful anchorage, was not the end itself all that mattered?

viii

Professor Dewey remarks: "Happiness is found only in

1- "The Nineteenth Century", 43:105.
2- Ibid.

success; but success means succeeding, getting forward, moving in advance. It is an active process, not a passive outcome. Accordingly it includes the overcoming of obstacles, the elimination of sources of defect and ill."[1]

Had Clough done this? It will be felt that he had not; and the pitiful nature of his fundamental tragedy becomes clearer and clearer. He had found not true happiness but a negative form of content; he had contented himself by narrowing the range of his desires; that was his success: a relinquishment of issues he dare not challenge. He was passionately desirous of attaining to some sincere, victorious belief; he found refuge, under another name, in a compromise that seemed attainment; a defeat that seemed so little ignoble he confused it with triumph.

What he despised perhaps above all other things was that gentle hypocrisy which consists in shrinking from unpleasant truths. He would have rejected with loathing and scorn any suggestion of a "Victorian Compromise",

> "I sought not, truly would to seek
> disdain,
> A kind, soft pillow for a wearying
> pain,
> Fatigues and cares to lighten, to
> relieve;"[2]

under another name, or rather, under no name at all, this was precisely the shift to which he came.

ix

In 1858, Clough decided to publish his nine-year-

1- Dewey, "Reconstruction in Philosophy", p. 179.
2- "Poems of A. H. Clough", (Mari Magno), p. 286.

old poem, "Amours de Voyage". He had no longer any illusions as to its artistic merit, but writing for mere subsistence had long been a satisfactorily settled problem. He wrote to Lowell in January:

"You have just got half the 'Amours de Voyage' (for the 'Atlantic Monthly'); there will be two more reports, and then all will end in smoke. The poem has been suppressed to the orthodox maturity of the ninth year, but, like poor wine, it is, I fear, only the worse for not having been drunk and forgotten long ago."[1]

He was happier in his assurances upon other matters. "On the moral side", remarks his friend Thomas Arnold, "and with reference to the distinctions between good and evil, pure and sensual, he was as firm as a rock."[2]

For all the activity of the period, however, the incessant reading -- Tennyson's Arthur poems, Hogg's "Life of Shelley", Gladstone's "Homer", the "Courtship of Miles Standish" being among the books -- and his narrow attention to the English political scene and the progress of the Indian campaign, one fancies one traces a small element of discontent. Was it the let down concomitant with a man's arrival at the age of forty, who looks back upon a life of indifferent achievement, and forward to empty years of little more? One cannot but wonder.

A small incident occurred at this time which, however trivial it looked upon the surface, perhaps in the light of significant possibilities, and the fact that it was at

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 239.
2- "The Nineteenth Century", 43:105.

least felt worthy of record by Thomas Arnold, may be of interest:

Clough was dining with Thomas and Matthew Arnold at a restaurant one evening. Matthew was gay and talkative, Clough moody and downcast. In the course of the evening, the conversation turned upon Voltaire, Arnold saying, with an airy wave of the hand, "As to the coarseness or sensuality of some of his writings, that is a matter to which I attach little importance."

And the usually equable Clough replied with unexpected and hostile bluntness, "Well, you don't think any better of yourself for that I suppose."[1]

Was it, just possibly, some queer involution of a subconscious defense mechanism?

1- "The Nineteenth Century", 43:105.

VI

"The roiling inward of a stilled outside,
. . .
The full brain hammered hot with too much
thinking,
The vexed heart overworn with too much
aching, --
This weary jangling of conjoined affairs
Made out of elements that have no end,
And all confused at once, I understand,
Is not what makes a man to live forever."

-- Edwin A. Robinson: "Ben Jonson
Entertains a Man From Stratford".

CHAPTER VI

Last Years

1858 - 1861

i

The last years of Clough's life seem to glide after one another as an exhausted wave ebbs more and more swiftly down the beach until it is lost and engulfed among the torrential waters of its successor.

Clough, standing upon a certain hillock of the years at the age of forty, could level upon the scene. He wrote to Norton in April, 1859:

"My figure forty stands nearly three months behind me on the roadway, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung; an octavum lustrum bound up and laid on the shelf. 'So-and-So is dead', said a friend to Lord Melbourne, of some author. 'Dear me, how glad I am! Now I can bind him up.'"

"We are having deaths lately for our news, as for example that of William Arnold . ."[1]

Forty . . "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung"; at forty, the question whether French influence in Italy would mean that the Pope "will go to the dogs, with all his canaille accompanying"[2], and the Plutarch, occupied one's reflections and time. Thoreau might declare, "No man ever followed his genius till it misled him. Though the result were bodily weakness, yet perhaps no one can say that the consequences were to be regretted, for these were a life in conformity to higher principles. If the day and the night

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 248.
2- Ibid, p. 249.

are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal -- that is your success."

Ah, were only these words more than beautiful and hopeless sentimentality, should not such a success be anybody's! "Bodily weakness" -- starvation, he meant; or, it may be, the exhaustion of putting one's whole heart and soul into an endeavor. Into Plutarch, for example? Bitter thought. Thoreau was a sublime dreamer; his philosophy hardly meant for a married man come to terms with existence, and having the compensatory joy of a growing family and a loving wife. That was it: "compensatory joy" . . or was it really an escape? But Thoreau hadn't married, had he? He would have found it made a difference. Yet marriage hadn't seemed to confine Matt so much; and his persistent, warning voice, like that of Mephistopheles himself was still sounding as of yore in his ears. The same unvarying note, the same malignant urgings. Or was this irritating advice from Matt irritating only because it reiterated what Clough's own conscience was telling him? Matthew Arnold's latest letter, in 1859, might just as well have been penned in 1845, or 1850: still the same exhortations to labor, to give over slothful delights, to write -- that the years were fleeting fast.

"Froude . . adds a long rigmarole about your being so happy and so virtuous that it is not desirable to get literary work out of you -- in that regular Carlylean strain

which we all know by heart and which the clear-headed among us have so utter a contempt for -- since we know very well that so long as segnities is, as Spinoza says, with superbia the great bane of man, it will need the stimulant of literary work or something equally rousing, to overcome this, and to educe out of a man what virtue there is in him. I for my part find here that I could willingly fish all day and read the newspapers all the evening, and so live -- but I am not pleased with the results in myself of even a day or two of such life."[1]

If no man followed his genius till it misled him, what was Clough's genius? To write poetry? That was putting it rather generally . . "No man ever followed . ." Perhaps, in his case, it meant that -- that --

And then, it may be, his wife called him to dinner; or it was time to go to the Office; or to help Florence Nightingale in some work or other; to feel the restorative content that accompanies the performance of a useful labor; to admire her abounding energy and strength of will. The catechetical questions were forgetfully tucked away in some mental pigeon-hole, to gather cobwebs, or to await another musing hour -- it scarcely mattered.

ii

In September, 1859, the Cloughs moved from their residence near Regent's Park to 21 Campden Hill Road, Kensington, just below Macaulay's house. A series of minor

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), ed. Lowry, p. 151.

ailments and accidents throughout the year had weakened Clough's health and constitution, and caused his family considerable anxiety in regard to him. There is a picture of him around this time as being "five feet ten in height, well made, inclining to burliness; he had a handsome frank face, dark-eyed, full chinned and ruddy complexioned, the nose being straight and rather short; his head . . ran deep from front to back, and showed a graceful domed outline."[1] Another describes his "scant and silvery hair: the gait, almost halting at times . . the perplexed yet encouraging smile that met the speaker, if chance talk touched on matters of speculative or moral interest; the frown and furrows of the massive forehead at any tale of baseness or injustice; the sunny glance of healthy homely laughter at any word of natural kindness, or brilliancy, or innocent humour."[2]

He followed the altercations between Louis Napoleon and Pio Nono with considerable interest, and in October pronounced, "The French Emperor's 'allocution' to the Cardinal at Bordeaux is a slight improvement on his doings lately; perhaps a feeler to the country, for if he were not afraid of the popular adherence to the Pope and Clergy in France, I suppose he would certainly take the holy father by the temporal beard in Bologna."[3]

An event of considerable more importance than such interesting possibilities soon usurped Clough's attention. On December 16, a second child, a son, was born to him.

1- "Fraser's", 74:525 (Allingham).
2- Ibid, 65:527, (Palgrave)
3- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 251.

Clough, just recovering from an attack of scarlatina, was packed off to Hastings, "for ventilation", that he might not be an "inconvenient neighbor"[1] for the new arrival.

iii

Clough's final years have about them a funereal air of rigor mortis, or of all the dreariness and irremediability of arterio-sclerosis. It is almost unaccountable that it should be so. The life of any man just entering upon his forties should hardly appear that way; much less a man with any pretensions whatsoever to the stimulations of genius, and the inspiration of art. Yet the unbelievable is the true: the man who, in the eighteen-fifties, had made the supreme bid for resolution and recognition, the poet who was some day to be great, has, this quickly, entered upon brief, but unmistakably declining years. The glow of twilight is upon it already; the hands of death and darkness not far removed. An air of retirement and of pettiness seems to drape it in dull and dispiriting colors. The great plans and dreams of youth are not years, but centuries or ages away; they are forgotten; as if they had never been. It is old age one is looking upon: old age at forty, and a decline not quite that of a Homer, although, in grim parody, Clough's "Odyssey" was yet to come.

The interest in politics and religion continued; he notes in March, 1860, "The Pope after all won't be sent a begging"[2]; Plutarch he felt faulty, at least in the early

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 251.
2- Ibid, p. 252.

lives; when Rowse comes over, he must make a picture of Clough: "I continue to think his picture of Emerson the best portrait I know of anyone I know."[1] In July, "we are lingering on here sadly, waiting for the end of Parliament, and having no summer. People talk of a grand fusion of the Conservative and Liberal-Conservative parties, modern Tories and modern Whigs making one solid national defence against Bright and the Radicals."[2] Rowse makes a picture of him, but it is disappointing, hardly comparable to that of Owen; "but still it is a very good likeness";[3] at intervals he revised the "Bothie".

A series of misfortunes befell him: his toe was broken in an accident, and such an injury "prevents one's walking, and impairs one's energies in general";[4] his health showed grave signs of deterioration; his mother, after a lingering illness of several years, died in the summer of 1860 of paralysis, a disease to which several of his family had succumbed. He became more and more depressed, but sternly concealed his troubles from others in his customary fashion.

iv

Clough spent the autumn holiday of 1860 in Scotland. Failing to recuperate his health in this interval, he obtained six months leave of absence from the Council Office, and went to Malvern for several weeks to take the water-cure.

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 252.
2- Ibid, pp. 253-4.
3- Ibid, p. 254.
4- Ibid, p. 253.

His health appeared to improve, and in February, 1861, he went to Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight.

It is somewhat of a sad coincidence that at this very time Emerson was reminiscently making an entry in his Journal: "That is the merit of Clough's 'Bothie', that the joy of youth is in it. Oh the power of spring! and, ah, the voice of the bluebird! And the witchcraft of the Mount Auburn dell, in those days! I shall be a Squire Slender for a week."[1]

At Freshwater, Clough too seemed to be feeling the mystic, thrilling touch of the spring -- a spring that was to be his last. There are pictures of him strolling about with his toddling children, or carrying them on his back along the country lanes; of walks among daffodil and snowdrop beds, and coming upon the green fernery of sheltered nooks. He would arise early and go strolling over the country downs before breakfast. He found time to write two or three brief poems, and to translate some portions of Homer. He visited friends; he watched the sunrise and sunset; he may have wondered what the future held for him. He was ordered not to labor too much at writing; he read Emerson; and maintained his understanding of the course of American politics through his correspondence.

But in March he was warned by his physician to leave that climate and scene which appeared so happy and ideal, and go to Greece, Italy, or the South of France for

1- "The Heart of Emerson's Journals", ed. Perry, p. 287.

the summer months. He was reluctant to leave, but finally consented, and in the middle of April went alone to Greece, and Constantinople. Beauty was all about him in these last travels, and he seems to have acquired almost a super-awareness of the fact; it inspires his discriptions and impressions as they appear in his letters. On April 28, he writes,

"On Friday we went to Eleusis, through the pass of Daphne; there is scarcely anything left; the little village just about occupies the site of the great temple. There is a little quay like a sickle running out into the water, and in one spot some lesser ruins have been opened out. The bay, which is completely shut in by Salamis, is beautiful, and so is the plain, now green with young corn, and the mountains of Parnes behind it. Dark poppies and small camomile flowers abound everywhere instead of grass, and a good many flowers quite strange to me."

On the twenty-ninth,

"In the evening I rambled about, along the Ilissus, picked some maiden hair from the rocks over the springs of Calirrhoë, where we found women washing and donkeys drinking, and so through some beer and wine gardens along the water-side to the Stadium, a great hollow in the hill-side where the foot-races were."

On April 30, he describes: "from the plateau you see Hymettus and the plain with the Acropolis far below. The road up rounds a shoulder of Aegialus, and then gets wilder.

You see goats about, nearly all black. The whole of the mountains are pine-wooded -- a light green with a stone-pine head . . numerous flowers at Phyle, cistus, thyme in blossom. The young pine look soft of foliage: I mistook them for deciduous trees".

The following day he went down to Piraeus, the port of Athens, and embarked for Kalamaki,

"As I started, on the road to Piraeus, the light of sunrise (about 5.20) came over Lycabettus, the sun actually rising over Hymettus with the Parthenon between. People were then in the fields."

In May, he went up Pentelicus: coming down, he lunched "beside the monastery of the Pan-agia; bread and cheese and oranges, by a beautiful gushing water in a sort of cup out of a wall, tall white poplar overhead, olives, and also large dwarf oaks . ."

The following night he witnessed a procession from a church, "a band of military music at the head, and lots of soldiers, then some banners and crosses, and then a little way behind, the priests and the bier. All the streets are filled with the people carrying lighted stéariques, and blue and red lights were let off."[1]

With so much beauty, the long dry fountains of verse re-opened. It was as if the travels of this last period were not an escape from the evils of British weather, nor a search for merely physical health, but a desperate and beautiful stalking of something infinitely more precious

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, pp. 257-61.

something of which this outward beauty was mysteriously symbolic. If the "Dipsychus" were Clough's "Iliad": his tale of great battle and far-questing; of a fairer, more enchanting Helen, and of a more impregnable Troy, then "Mari Magno", which he now began, is his "Odyssey": a twilight study of sad, far-off things under a guise of love-tales and social relations -- Homer in the form of the English Chaucer, and the style of Crabbe, with the point of view, particularly in the Tale of Christian, of Thomas Hardy. Clough wrote two of the tales this first journey.

But, as he wrote in "The Clergyman's Tale", in "Mari Magno":

> "A dismal thing in foreign lands to roam
> To one accustomed to an English home,
> Dismal yet more, in health if feeble grown,
> To live a boarder, helpless and alone
> In foreign town."[1]

In June, though not recovered, he returned for a few weeks more in England. Languid and seemingly depressed, he spoke little of his journey.

V

Clough, still in London the first week in July, made plans to go to Auvergne and the Pyrenees. To Norton's invitation to make a visit to America and stay with him, he returned the reply that this year he would be unable to do so, but hoped some future year to spend a September with him. His letter went on to discuss the political quandary of the Americans, "it being indeed hardly possible that the States,

1- "Poems of A. H. Clough", p. 289.

North and South, should ever again live together in union",[1] and expressed his own understanding of the difficulties. The letter concluded:

"My nervous energy is pretty well spent for today, so I must come to a stop. I have leave till November, and by that time I hope I shall be strong again for another good spell of work.

"Lord Campbell's death is rather the characteristic death of the English political man. In the cabinet, on the bench, and at a dinner party, busy, animated, and full of effort to-day, and in the early morning a vessel has burst. It is a wonder they last so long. I shall resign if it proves much of a strain tc me to go on at this official work. Farewell."

It was to be a more lasting farewell than either anticipated.

vii

Again escape to scenes of faery beauty, at first alone. At Mont Dore-les-Bains, however, a sudden shift of plans occurred: "This morning about 8.30, going across the place to the café, whom should I see but Tennyson. They are all here. They go to the Pyrenees, and I am to follow them. I want to come home in September, and see no sufficient reason yet for not returning to work in November."[2]

On August 8, he received word that a daughter, the third child, had been born to him; expressing his de-

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, pl 270.
2- Ibid, p. 273.

light, he replied, "I think you must call the little girl Blanche Athena."[1]

It was on this journey that he composed all the remaining "Mari Magno" tales except the last. He rejoined the Tennysons for a short time longer in August and the first part of September; there are glimpses of him riding or walking to one magnificent view after another in the Pyrénées.

Remaining in the south of France until the middle of September, the stout, wearied figure of Clough continued its journeyings to Paris, where he was joined by his wife. In anticipation of his possibly exhausted condition, the children had been left in England. They stayed in Paris but a few days, and then set out for Switzerland, the Italian Lakes, Florence, and Rome before the winter. Nature seemed to have become spendthrift on this, his last tour. They moved slowly along pleasant roads and valleys pausing, wherever it suited their fancy, to gather flowers by the wayside. The beauties of the Pass of Gonda were left behind them; Stresa and Milan attained and evacuated, with Clough now suffering from recurrent spells of illness. Parma was reached with difficulty, and, Clough feeling slightly better at this time, spent some hours before the pictures of Correggio. They drove on, over the Appenines, and down into Pistoia: "It was a lovely sunny day; the hills were covered with young chestnuts and flowering arbutus; the air was fresh and soothing, and he seemed to revive on the heights, but looked with

1- "Prose Remains", Letters, p. 274.

dread on the valley lying beneath, with its white towns shining hot in the sun."[1]

They finally arrived at Florence October 10, and Clough went to visit the Boboli Gardens that same afternoon. He went to a few other places of historic or artistic importance, and then, on the twelfth, was forced to his bed with a malarial fever. The fever ran its course, and seemed to respond to treatment.

"During the first three weeks he seemed perpetually occupied with a poem he was writing . . and when he began apparently to recover, and was able to sit up for several hours in the day, he insisted on trying to write it out, and when this proved too great an effort he begged to dictate it. But he broke down before it was finished, and returned to bed . ."[2]

Three days before his death on November 13, when his fever-ravaged constitution was finally to be subdued by a stroke of paralysis, his sister arrived from England. He mistily smiled to recognize her, and weakly wondered why she had come.

It was pleasant to lie here in this soft ease. What was this increased sensitivity to beauty that overtook a man in his maturer years? This yearning, yearning (always evaded or defeated) as of a drooping soul making its final effort to catch the last drop of loveliness. So cruel, that life should bring fullest appreciation only when the pulses beat slower. Sullivan's Island, and all the glorious days of childhood had not an atom of the intensity of this ethereal beauty about

1- "Prose Remains", Memoir, p. 54.
2- Ibid, p. 55.

them; not for all their bright flush of the morning of life that sunk into the heart, and held one as in a dream. Florence, the Uffizi, the Pitti Palace: all the happiest art of Nature and Man. The hills of Fiesole, where it was said ghostly lights were seen to pass thence to the Duomo on the night Lorenzo the Magnificent died.

Death should not come hard in Italy -- even to an Englishman. To have nights like these -- it was night, wasn't it? -- with moons so soft and full, the radiant glory of its light flushing the Val d'Arno. What a time to be feeling beauty so deeply and keenly . . One should not, could not die at such a time. He was not going to die: they said the dying never thought such thoughts. He was only forty-two, and had left so much undone. So many truly courageous things he had never said as they should have been said, but might someday. So many vexed problems he had not solved.

What was it Matt had once written him, now long, long ago? "That our spirits retain their conquests: that from the height they succeed in raising themselves to, they can never fall."[1] What an earnest turn he had given it -- almost as if had been a revelation. Pray God it were.

What was it like, over there? Such thoughts. But ah, so much of beauty, of feeling, of insight he had never really written into his poems, but that should have been. That would be. That should form a part of "Mari Magno". Like Byron, he would surprise those critics who had damned him as hopelessly introspective; he would become objective. "Mari

1- "Letters" (Arnold to Clough), Lowry, p. 93.

Magno" should be but the beginning.

Sometimes, looking back, his life seemed one long, horrible failure. Almost a conspired treachery on the part of the people he had loved. Blanche, and Plutarch, and Emerson, and Carlyle . . had they somehow all innocently betrayed him? They had killed what they loved -- what a thought. Yet Blanche and the anodyne of domestic rounds; Plutarch, and the escapes from aching thought that it offered; Emerson, who had said one must choose either truth or repose, yet so oddly had recommended repose to Clough; Carlyle, who had procured him his position at the Education Office, while preaching creative production . . how malevolent this seemed to him at the moment. Only Matt -- how strange! -- had not betrayed him.

Now the moon would be waning on the Val d'Arno: that mysterious, soft mist that filled the vale would be turning to a richer, darkening purple again, as before the moon's rising. Beauty!

In the Uffizi Gallery, that picture of the Nativity, by Correggio. It would be dark now, no one standing before it in rapt wonder. He could recall it so vividly! the baby Christ, the kneeling Mary; the radiant mystery of the Whole embodied spiritually by the artist into that childish figure which breathed the assurance of a truth somewhere, immutable, at last. The truth Christians knew as God. Had he been a true Christian? Underneath all, he felt, somehow, he always had.

Nativity - life - death. The endless cycle of the

ages. Futility, folly, failure: what did they mean? Crucifixion and resurrection -- or a stone not rolled away . . ?

He was so tired. And understanding was so difficult. He would sleep.

viii

Epilogue

Clough was buried outside the walls of Florence in a little Protestant cemetery which looks towards Fiesole and the heights.

His death was not unnoticed by the great: Florence Nightingale mounted three widow's caps: the first for Clough, the second for Sidney Herbert, and the third and largest for "Aunt Mai" who had not died but retired at this critical juncture.

Carlyle, too, was not without his feelings upon the event, which had been communicated to him by Froude with the suggestion that the great man might write "two pages"[1] that, coming as they should from Thomas Carlyle, would be an all-sufficient tablet perpetuating Clough's memory. When Byron had died in 1824, Carlyle, who had never so much as seen him, had been good enough to pity one who at his death was "still struggling amid the perplexities", and to reflect, "what might he not have done, what might he not have been!"[2] He could hardly do less for Clough, whom he had known personally, liked so much, and regarded as "a diamond sifted out of the general rubbish heap."

1- J. A. Froude, "Carlyle in London".
2- "Contemporary Comments", p. 74.

Carlyle did indeed reply to Froude in a letter containing a few tributary lines on Clough set down with obvious care. He had, he affirmed, "expected very considerable things of him"[1] -- but as for the two pages requested, he was unfortunately too busy to oblige.

Emerson, however, was still exclaiming with emotion eleven years later, "alas, he died too early for us all"[2]; and to the end of his days seemingly never forgot the young man who had admired Wordsworth in the age of Tennyson, had captured the springtime of life in his "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich", and had so flatteringly confided in him about his feelings on this matter of subsistence two memorable nights in 1853, in America.

Matthew Arnold published his "Thyrsis", a poem which dealt a little with Clough, and much with the expression of other matters. Other friends contributed glowing testimonials in which they emphatically asserted it was only a premature death which had robbed him of certain triumph; indeed, that he was a success.

But the eulogies, as years passed, gave way to elegies; and the elegies to forgetfulness, with only an occasional prying critic to disinter his life, and little new to offer. The "poet of Doubt" became embalmed in the phrase, and was relegated to the obscurity befitting a second-, or third-rate Victorian poet.

A few admirers have been, and doubtless always will be, his. "Candid" criticism has likewise been his portion.

1- J. A. Froude, "Carlyle in London".
2- "Uncollected Writings", Emerson, p. 19.

One such critic remarks, "As a member of a famous group of Rugby men, he is held by many to have been thrust into a position of eminence which his work never really merited, and the charm of his personality seems, during his life, and even after his death, to have enlisted for him the rather undiscriminating admiration of a powerful circle, especially among Oxford men, who exerted themselves to thrust him down the throats of an undiscerning public. But the cult of Clough has died entirely in the Oxford of today, and if it lingers at all among men of letters, it seldom makes itself heard. By most of us Clough, particularly Clough the poet, has been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

"Can anyone with an ear of even ordinary sensitiveness read stuff of this kind for any length of time with patience? Can he read it without actual suffering? We think not."

"In the words of Swift --

'His kind of wit is out of date'.

And so is his kind of verse."[1]

The extremity of such criticism is surely self-evident. But what the final estimate of his poetry, as poetry, will be is hardly the critical concern of this biography of spiritual struggle.

There are additional dabs, however, to be touched on the dark side of the picture: If his "Mari Magno" poems seemed to some to show a new side of Clough, a technical mastery of a more objective, detached treatment than hitherto,

1- "Academy", (Armstrong), 52:260 (1897).

while a little artistic benefit might have come about, it would have seem to have come about rather late to produce any real spiritual solution of the problems that had baffled him his entire life. A door was opened to a possible technical advance, or a more popular narrative approach to life, and to a further escape: but that is all. What such a transformation of technique might have meant to the poet can hardly be ventured: the move was too tentative. Possibly not very much; indeed, one critic declares, "the genius of twaddle which often hovers near his muse, makes its presence especially felt in his last poems, the 'Mari Magno' tales." "They are easy, pleasant, even edifying reading, and they essentially want effectiveness. They are written in obvious imitation of Crabbe . . but their general level is much lower." "In the first tale especially the genius of twaddle reigns supreme."[1]

And on the inner track of the spirit, the prospect appears even gloomier. The real Clough had dwindled to an armchair beside a fire, and quiet, narrative poems of love and marriage. In that last persistent effort of grim energy: that writing, writing, writing of a man on the edge of the grave, is it ultimately more than the last pitiful delusion and unhappy attempt of one born perhaps for nobler things?

1- "Westminster Rev.", 92:363, (Sidgwick) (1869).

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