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A Fugitive and Gracious Light: The Relation of Joseph Joubert to Matthew Arnold's Thought

G. Thomas Fairclough

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G. Thomas Fairclough

**A Fugitive and
Gracious Light**

new series no. 23

University of Nebraska Studies

march 1961

A FUGITIVE AND GRACIOUS LIGHT

G. THOMAS FAIRCLOUGH

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*The Relation of Joseph Joubert
to Matthew Arnold's Thought*

university of nebraska studies : new series no. 23

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*For
My Father and Mother*

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G. THOMAS FAIRCLOUGH

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Prefatory Note

The edition of Matthew Arnold's works used in this study is *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, 15 volumes (London and New York: Macmillan, 1903). Citations of books in this edition are incorporated into the text, preceding or following the quotations. Book titles are abbreviated according to the following key, and page numbers follow the titles.

Volume No.*	Title	Abbreviation
I	<i>Poems, Volume One</i>	<i>Poems, I</i>
II	<i>Poems, Volume Two</i>	<i>Poems, II</i>
III	<i>Essays in Criticism, First Series</i>	<i>E. in C., I</i>
IV	<i>Essays in Criticism, Second Series</i>	<i>E. in C., II</i>
	<i>Discourses in America</i>	<i>D. Amer.</i>
V	<i>On Translating Homer</i>	<i>Trans. H.</i>
VI	<i>Culture and Anarchy</i>	<i>C. and A.</i>
	<i>Friendship's Garland</i>	<i>F.G.</i>
VII	<i>Literature and Dogma</i>	<i>L. and D.</i>
VIII	<i>God and the Bible</i>	<i>G. and B.</i>
IX	<i>St. Paul and Protestantism</i>	<i>Paul</i>
	<i>Last Essays on Church and Religion</i>	<i>Last E.</i>
XI	<i>Preface to Poems (1853)</i>	<i>Pref.</i>
XIII	<i>Letters, Volume One</i>	<i>Letters, I</i>

Two other important volumes are not included in the Macmillan edition. They are *Reports on Elementary Schools, 1852-1882*, edited by Sir Francis Sandford (London and New York: Mac-

*Some volumes, not having been used, are omitted from the list. Others contain more than one of Arnold's works. For example, Volume V contains *On the Study of Celtic Literature* as well as *On Translating Homer*; the former book was not consulted, so its title is not on the list.

millan, 1889), abbreviated in this study *R.E.S.*, and *The Note-Books of Matthew Arnold*, edited by H. F. Lowry, Karl Young, and W. H. Dunn (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), abbreviated *N.B.* Citations from these volumes are given in the same manner as those from the Macmillan edition of the *Works*.

The single work of Joseph Joubert, used throughout this study, is *Pensées, Essais, Maximes et Correspondance*, edited by Paul Raynal, second edition (Paris: Librairie V. de Normant, 1850). The chapters in this work are called *Titres*; the aphorisms within each, with a few exceptions, are numbered. Citations are given in the text, in this manner: the Roman numeral signifies the chapter number, the Arabic numeral the number of the *pensée*. *Titre XXIV* has several subdivisions, which are indicated by lower-case Roman numerals following the chapter number. In the preface (*Titre préliminaire*), in *Titre VI*, and in the last section of *Titre XXIV* (vi), the individual *pensées* are not numbered; citations from these sections use the page number, preceded by "p."

Two secondary sources are used with sufficient frequency to make an abbreviated form of citation desirable. They are Louis Bonnerot, *Matthew Arnold, Poète: Essai de Biographie psychologique* (Paris: Librairie M. Didier, 1947), and Lionel Trilling, *Matthew Arnold*, second edition (New York: Meridian Books, 1955). Citations in the text consist of the name "Bonnerot" or "Trilling," followed by the page number.

1 / "One Single Ray of Light"

Dans la pure région de l'art, il faut éclairer son sujet avec un rayon de lumière unique et partant d'un seul point.

Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, XXIII: 84.

He [Joubert] is the most prepossessing and convincing of witnesses to the good of loving light. Because he sincerely loved light, and did not prefer to it any little private darkness of his own, he found light; his eye was single, and therefore his whole body was full of light.

Matthew Arnold, "Joubert"

OF THE MANY literary and critical influences which combined to mold the thought and achievement of Matthew Arnold, few are more pronounced or more pervasive than those emanating from nineteenth-century France. French writers of Arnold's own time and of that immediately preceding were to him masters and companions whose aid he fully and frequently acknowledged.

Yet the number of scholarly studies devoted to Arnold's French sympathies are few. The only book-length study in existence is Iris Esther Sells's *Matthew Arnold and France: the Poet* (New York, 1935). As the title indicates, this book confines itself to an investigation of Arnold's poetic inspiration. Moreover, it suffers from its attempt to oversimplify Arnold's literary development by emphasizing the influence of one man—Étienne Pivert de Senancour, author of *Obermann*—at the expense of others whose importance is minimized or denied. Articles, less ambitious, have been published,

See pages 72-78 for translations of French quotations.

showing Arnold's relation to Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Sand and Vigny.¹

These, however, are by no means all of Arnold's Gallic affinities, nor even all the important ones. Certainly they are, with the exception of Senancour and probably Sainte-Beuve, no more significant in the study of Arnold's literary development than Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), one of the last French writers to devote himself to the *pensée*—that literary form which the French have made peculiarly their own—and one of the finest. Yet the only published work on Joubert's relation to Arnold consists of brief comparisons in the biographies by Bonnerot and Trilling.²

Joubert is, as Arnold freely admitted, not a titan in literary stature. Because his output is small and confined to one literary type, historians of French literature find it easy to sum him up in a paragraph, and not many English or American readers are cognizant of his work or even of his existence. Yet Arnold thought highly enough of Joubert to write a fairly lengthy essay about him and to fill it with sympathetic biography, sensitive translation, and well-nigh unstinted praise. Moreover, to the commendation in "Joubert" Arnold added the quieter but richer praise of quotation in many of the essays he wrote in the last twenty-five years of his life, not a few of which are among the key statements of his theories and judgments on life and art. Consequently, the absence of a detailed comparative examination of Joubert and Arnold is surprising; and to fill, at least partially, this lacuna in the study of Arnold is the aim of this essay.

Matthew Arnold, writing to his mother on February 4, 1863, describes the literary work which he hopes to complete before the coming of summer. His projects are numerous: "I hope before I come to Fox How (if I come there) this summer, to have printed six articles" (*Letters*, I, 242-243). After enumerating them, he mentions another possible essay, more nebulous at this time: "Perhaps I may add to these one on Joubert, an exquisite French critic, a friend of Chateaubriand."

This passage is of considerable interest as Arnold's earliest sur-

¹ A. Whitridge, "Matthew Arnold and Sainte-Beuve," *PMLA*, LIII (1938); L. F. Mott, "Renan and Matthew Arnold," *Modern Language Notes*, XXXIII (1918); F. L. Wickelgren, "Matthew Arnold's Literary Relations with France," *Modern Language Review*, XXXIII (1938); V. L. Romer, "Matthew Arnold and Some French Poets," *Nineteenth Century*, XCIX (1926); S. M. B. Coulling, "Renan's Influence on Arnold's Literary and Social Criticism," *Florida State University Studies*, V (1952).

² Bonnerot, pp. 280-281; Trilling, pp. 197-201.

viving comment on Joubert. However, Joubert is far from being a new interest to him. "My great advantage is that every one of the subjects I propose to treat is one that I have long reached in my mind, read and thought much about, and been often tempted to write of."

How early did Arnold become acquainted with Joubert? This question can be answered with a considerable degree of exactness. Joubert's *Pensées, Essais, Maximes et Correspondance* was not printed until 1838, and then incompletely and "for private circulation only" (*E. in C.*, I, 298); the first edition for the general public did not appear until 1842. By 1863 the book had been greatly augmented and twice reprinted, in 1850 and 1861. Arnold possessed a copy of the 1861 edition, according to the "List of Books" which the editors of his *Note-Books* have added to that volume (*N.B.*, 641).

From 1852 until his death in 1888, Arnold kept a reading diary in his *Note-Books*. Before 1852 we have only Arnold's letters, and by no means all of them, to consult for lists of his reading. The lists there given, however, are extensive, especially in the letters to Clough, his mother, and his sister Jane ("K."); and Joubert's name never appears in them.

In the reading diary, the first mention of Joubert's book is found at the end of the notebook for 1861 (*N.B.*, 566). The correspondence of this date with that of the publication of the third edition, the fact that Arnold owned a copy of this edition, and the absence of any earlier mention of Joubert all make it seem fairly certain that Arnold first read Joubert in this year. The book is referred to simply as "Pensées et Maximes de M. Joubert." The title is not crossed through, indicating that Arnold did not finish the book that year, or desired to reread it soon (*N.B.*, xiv). The list for 1862 contains a reference to Joubert in a list of books to be taken to Fox How in the summer (*N.B.*, 567). In 1863 Joubert's name appears, not in the reading list proper, but in a series of titles marked "To compose. Prose"; and it is crossed through (*N.B.*, 569). This is evidently a reference to the essay "Joubert," which appeared in *Essays in Criticism, First Series*, in 1865.

We may assume, then, that Arnold's knowledge of Joubert was reasonably complete and thorough by February of 1863. Let us consider now his brief comment on Joubert in his letter to his mother.

"An exquisite critic, a friend of Chateaubriand." It was Chateaubriand who had written the obituary of which Arnold speaks so highly in "Joubert" (*E. in C.*, I, 298), and who had prepared the

first, private edition of the *Pensées* for publication. Whether Arnold's admiration for Chateaubriand led him to Joubert is not now discoverable, but certainly the discovery that Chateaubriand had valued Joubert as a friend and an author would have augmented Arnold's interest in the older writer.³

What Arnold means by the words "an exquisite critic" may best be explained by his characterization of Joubert in the essay: "a man of extraordinary ardour in the search for truth, and of extraordinary fineness in the perception of it" (*E. in C.*, I, 306). Joubert is exquisite in the sense of "discriminating"—the most common use of the word in connection with critics and criticism; he is also exquisite in the sense of "intense" or "consummate." These types of exquisiteness are prized highly by Arnold. They are closely related to the two commandments of Bishop Wilson which Arnold quotes at the beginning of one of his most famous essays.⁴ When we "take care that our light be not darkness," we are discriminating; when we "never go against the best light," we are intense or ardent. We combine the best of Hellenism with the best of Hebraism; and, as will be shown, one of the chief reasons for Arnold's high opinion of Joubert is his belief that Joubert had achieved such a combination.

"Joubert" is as warm an acknowledgment and as sensitive an appreciation as Arnold ever wrote. In it we can find two principal trends of thought which may be followed profitably in a study of the relation of Arnold's work to Joubert's. The first is the emphasis

³ Mrs. Sells, in *Matthew Arnold and France: the Poet*, either overlooks or deliberately minimizes the importance of Chateaubriand to Arnold, an importance to which "Joubert" bears eloquent testimony. She says, for example, that the character of René, hero of Chateaubriand's novel of that name, has as its keynote "attitudinizing" (p. 42); and in the next sentence, that in Chateaubriand's writings "sentimentality served for religious conviction and the heart was pompously invoked to override rational scruples." While many modern readers would agree with this, the following words from "Joubert" show clearly that these were scarcely Arnold's opinions.

As to Chateaubriand himself, again, the common English judgment, which stamps him as a mere shallow rhetorician, all froth and vanity, is certainly wrong; one may even wonder that we English should judge Chateaubriand so wrongly, for his power goes far beyond beauty of diction; it is a power, as well, of passion and sentiment, and this sort of power the English can perfectly well appreciate. One production of Chateaubriand's, *René*, is akin to the most popular productions of Byron,—to the *Childe Harold* or *Manfred*,—in spirit, equal to them in power, superior to them in form.

(*E. in C.*, I, 303)

And later, after quoting Chateaubriand on tragedy: "Who does not feel that the man who wrote that was no shallow rhetorician, but a born man of genius, with the true instinct of genius for what is really admirable?"

⁴ "Hebraism and Hellenism"; *C. and A.*, 120.

Arnold places on Joubert's possession of *light*—intellectual and spiritual illumination and clarity—and on the paramount importance of this quality to the critical thinker. He praises Joubert for "his having clearly seized the fine and just idea that beauty and light are properties of truth, and that truth is incompletely exhibited if it is exhibited without beauty and light" (*E. in C.*, I, 310). The second is the classification of Joubert's work by subject matter; what Arnold considers to be his most significant maxims deal with three topics—religion, literature, and society.⁵

The use of light as a metaphorical equivalent of truth or intelligence has a long history in Western culture.⁶ We can trace it back to Zoroaster and Plato: Ahuramazdah, the god of light, is the principle of all good according to the *Avesta*; in the *Republic*, the light from the fire of knowledge is the only illumination of the cave of human existence. We find it in the Bible, most markedly perhaps in II Corinthians 4:6: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Plotinus regarded fire as "splendid beyond all material bodies," and its light as "the splendour that belongs to the Idea."⁷ In the Middle Ages such writers as Bonaventure and Grosseteste carried this thought further and constructed a "cosmological account of light as the fundamental form and energy of all being, the source and form of all beauty." The basic analogy of their aesthetic was between "the beauty of brightness" and "clear knowledge and . . . the clearly knowable."⁸

It may be noted that, to the earliest users of the symbol, light appears to be well-nigh interchangeable with fire, its chief source. Fire, however, is a source of heat as well as of light; and both fire and heat became symbols for emotion, rather than reason or knowledge, at a fairly early period. Today we speak commonly of "the heat of anger," "the warmth of zeal." Jeremiah's God cried out against Israel (Jer. 17:4): "Ye have kindled a fire in mine anger,

⁵ Joubert's religious criticism shows "delicacy and penetration" (*E. in C.*, I, 315); his literary maxims "have the same purged and subtle delicacy" (319); his political thought is "keen and true" (328).

⁶ This and the following paragraph are based largely upon some brief but pregnant passages on the symbolism of light in William K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York, 1957), pp. 120-122, 140-141.

⁷ *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen McKenna (London and Boston, 1917-1930), I, 81.

⁸ Wimsatt and Brooks, *op. cit.*, pp. 139, 140.

that shall burn for ever." Isaiah used fire interestingly, as a symbol of false or illusory knowledge (Is. 50:11): "All ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." Two quotations from Shakespeare⁹ will show a more modern use of fire as a symbol of emotion in active opposition to reason. The Dowager Countess of Rossillion in *All's Well that Ends Well* (V, 3, ll. 6-8) speaks of

th' blaze of youth,
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbears it and burns on.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (II, 7, ll. 21-23), Lucette seeks to calm her lovesick mistress, Julia:

I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

The symbolism of light appears in many of the thoughts of Joubert and the critical essays of Arnold; to a much lesser extent they use the symbolism of fire. Bonnerot devotes most of his discussion of their relationship to a comparison of their theories of light. He goes so far as to say of Arnold: "C'est dans son essai sur Joubert qu'il a le mieux exprimé son culte pour la lumière" (280). In later chapters I shall discuss more thoroughly the use of the symbol by the two men. Let it suffice now to say that Arnold recognized and admired in Joubert not only the possession of the quality but the fondness for the metaphor.¹⁰

Arnold's comparison of Joubert with Coleridge is based primarily on the fact that, in Arnold's judgment, they both had light. "That in which the essence of their likeness consisted is this,—that they both had from nature an ardent impulse for seeking the genuine truth on all matters they thought about, and a gift for finding it and recognizing it when it was found" (*E. in C.*, I, 300). But Coleridge must eventually be considered inferior to Joubert as a critic, because his light was not concentrated into the "one single ray . . . starting from a single point." His life and his thought were not at one, and therefore the body of his life was not full of light.

⁹ This and the following citation from Shakespeare are taken from *The Complete Works*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston, 1936), pp. 393 and 47 respectively.

¹⁰ Arnold quotes in "Joubert," in whole or in part, no fewer than 51 of Joubert's maxims. Four of the longest and most important of these—on the Bible and the religious orders (*E. in C.*, I, 317-319), on Plato (322), and two on thought (311-312)—use the symbolism of light extensively.

For certainly it is natural that the love of light, which is already, in some measure, the possession of light, should irradiate and beautify the whole life of him who has it. There is something unnatural and shocking where, as in the case of Coleridge, it does not. Joubert pains us by no such contradiction.

(*E. in C.*, I, 330-331)

Contradiction always pained Arnold, and consistency always pleased him. He refused for years to reprint those of his own poems which conflicted with his critical aims, and he expected in others the same "single eye" which he so rigorously developed in himself. That Joubert, from mere slenderness of achievement, might manifest a greater concentration and consistency than Coleridge, does not seem to have occurred to Arnold. But the single aim and impression which are certainly to be found in Joubert are admirable traits in a writer of *pensées*.

The tripartite classification of Joubert's subject matter is not less interesting because it is incomplete. Arnold deliberately excludes from his consideration, except in passing, maxims which deal with subjects other than religion, literature, and society;¹¹ and one feels that this is not only because Arnold thinks the best maxims deal with these subjects, but because he thinks them the best subjects for maxims to deal with. Joubert had, in fact, many others which interested him;¹² but most of Arnold's intellectual endeavor, so far as his prose is concerned, was directed into these three channels.

In the succeeding chapters of this essay, I shall attempt to present some indications of the effect which Joubert's *Pensées* had upon Arnold's thought, over and beyond that which is acknowledged in "Joubert." "Joubert" was written on the strength of two years' acquaintanceship; but throughout the rest of Arnold's life he referred frequently to Joubert, in his published writings and in his notebooks. The "one single ray" of illumination which Arnold steadfastly pursued had rested earlier on Joubert, as it had on men so different as Isaiah, Marcus Aurelius, Goethe, and Bishop Wilson; and it was Arnold's habit to make pilgrimages to those places where he knew the light had shone.

¹¹ Cf. *E. in C.*, I, 329: "I have not cared to exhibit him as a sayer of brilliant epigrammatic things . . . , though for such sayings he is famous."

¹² Among the titles in his two volumes are "Qu'est-ce que la Pudeur?" (VI); "Des differents Ages, de la Vie, de la Maladie, et de la Mort" (VII); "De l'Espace, du Temps, de la Lumière, de l'Air, de l'Atmosphère, des Champs, des Animaux, des Fleurs, etc." (XIII).

2 / "The Poetry of the Heart": Joubert and Arnold's Religious Thought

La religion est la poésie du coeur; elle a des enchantements utiles à nos moeurs; elle nous donne et le bonheur et la vertu.

La vérité ne vient pas et ne peut pas venir de nous. Dans tout ce qui est spirituel, elle vient de Dieu. . . . Il faut donc consulter Dieu d'abord, puis les sages et son propre esprit, pour tout ce qui est spirituel.

Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, I: 60; XI: 4

The language of the Bible . . . is literary, not scientific language; language *thrown out* at an object of consciousness not fully grasped, which inspired emotion. Evidently, if the object be one not fully to be grasped, and one to inspire emotion, the language of figure and feeling will satisfy us better about it, will cover more of what we seek to express, than the language of literal fact and science.

Religion, if we follow the intention of human thought and human language in the use of the word, is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling.

Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*

Few of Arnold's writings—especially of those published after 1860—fail to deal with religious questions. Many do so, of course, only briefly and indirectly. At least three books, however, were presented by Arnold, and received by the public, as major contributions to nineteenth century religious thought. These are *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and *God and the Bible* (1875). As the chief expressions of Arnold's religious views, they constitute the chief sources of the material of this chapter. In addition, the essay "Joubert" will, here as elsewhere, be used to provide some foundation for discussion; and Arnold's last important poem, "Westminster Abbey" (1882), can furnish several valuable insights.

Arnold, beginning his critical comment on Joubert's book, cautions his readers: "The first or preliminary chapter has some fancifulness and affectation in it; the reader should begin with the second" (*E. in C.*, I, 299). The second (numbered as "Titre première," the first being "Titre préliminaire") is the chapter entitled "De Dieu, de la Création, de l'Éternité, de la Piété, de la Religion, des Livres saints et des Prêtres." From this ambitiously named chapter come fifteen of the fifty-one *pensées* quoted by Arnold in "Joubert"—more than from any other single chapter. They are prefaced by this judgment on Joubert as a religious thinker:

I doubt whether, in an elaborate work on the philosophy of religion, he would have got his ideas about religion to *shine*, to use his own expression, as they shine when he utters them in perfect freedom. Penetration in these matters is valueless without soul, and soul is valueless without penetration; both of these are delicate qualities, and, even in those who have them, easily lost; the charm of Joubert is, that he has and keeps both.

(*E. in C.*, I, 312-313)

Soul and penetration are, in this context, approximate equivalents of sweetness and light respectively. Joubert shows, as Arnold himself was to show later, an appreciation of the triple nature and power of religion—part intellectual, part moral, part aesthetic and intuitive; and such appreciation requires sweetness and light. Both Joubert and Arnold are concerned with distinguishing between and evaluating the three aspects of religion, a task for which soul and penetration are needed.

Because they see these aspects of religion as inextricably conjoined, they both distrust metaphysics and metaphysical systems, which attempt to dissociate the intellectual element of religion from its fellows and to exalt it above them. Arnold shows this distrust to some extent in the passage quoted above, when he doubts whether Joubert, had he written "an elaborate work on the philosophy of religion," could have preserved his penetration and his soul as he has in the *Pensées*. In the second chapter of *God and the Bible*, entitled "The God of Metaphysics," Arnold engages in a lengthy, semiphilological disquisition designed to prove essentially that "all abstract ideas are merely the illegitimate inflation of concrete experience" (Trilling, 327), and consequently that metaphysics is "the science of non-naturals" (*G and B.*, 56). In *Literature and Dogma* continually, and in the other books frequently, he

argues for the even greater illegitimacy of that specialized form of metaphysics known as theology.

A system of theological notions about personality, essence, existence, consubstantiality, is *artificial* religion, and is the proper opposite to *revealed*; since it is a religion which comes forth in no man's consciousness, but is invented by theologians,—able men with uncommon talents for abstruse reasoning. This religion is in no sense revealed, just because it is in no sense natural.

(*L. and D.*, 50-51)

A few pages later, speaking of theological attempts to define God, he denounces “the astounding particularity and license of affirmation of our dogmatists, as if he [God] were a man in the next street. . . . Theologians . . . built up a wall first, in order afterwards to run their own heads against it” (59).

What Arnold dislikes most about metaphysicians and theologians is, in the former, the use of language which is at the same time both overspecialized and vague, and in the latter, the attempt to twist the language of poetry into that of science. Joubert's suspicions are very similar. On the language of metaphysics, Joubert exclaims: “Combien de gens se font abstraits pour paraître profonds! La plupart des termes abstraits sont des ombres qui cachent des vides” (XII, 32); and “Le Dieu de la métaphysique n'est qu'une idée” (I, 9). On the pseudo science of some theologians: “Oserai-je le dire? On connaît Dieu facilement, pourvu qu'on ne se contraigne pas à le définir” (I, 6); and “C'est leur confiance en eux-mêmes, et la foi secrète qu'ils ont de leur infailibilité personnelle, qui déplaisent dans quelques théologiens” (I, 122). These latter come very close to Arnold's assertions of “astounding particularity.”

When it comes to accusing particular parties of “astounding particularity,” both Joubert and Arnold have fairly specific targets—targets, moreover, which resemble each other in several ways. Joubert's target is the Jansenists. The paragraph in which he attacks them for their misuse of religious language is quoted approvingly by Arnold.

Les jansénistes font de la *grâce* une espèce de quatrième personne de la sainte Trinité; ils sont, sans le croire et sans le vouloir, *quaternitiaux*. Saint Paul et saint Augustin, trop étudiés, ou étudiés uniquement, ont tout perdu, si on ose le dire. Au lieu de *grâce*, dites aide, secours, influence divine, céleste rosée; on s'entend alors. Ce mot est comme un talisman dont on peut briser le prestige et le maléfice en le tra-

duisant; on en dissout le danger par l'analyse. Personnifier les mots est un mal funeste en théologie.

(I, 135)

Except for their retention of the Visible Church as the chief means by which God's grace is dispensed, the Jansenists were what might be called the Calvinists of French Catholicism. For them the "habitual grace" of Thomism, for the reception of which the souls of all men are prepared by virtue of their human condition, had ceased to exist; the "actual grace" of God, wholly external to the nature of man, was all. With man made powerless before God, and God made knowable to man only through the workings of his grace, "grace" does become a sort of fourth member of the Godhead: in mediation as important as Christ, in power as great as the Holy Spirit. And this heresy is brought about, says Joubert, partially through inattention to, or too much attention to, *language*. Joubert was most displeased, of course, by the denigration of morality and reason which this exaltation of grace brought in its train; but he disapproves in this paragraph especially the attempt to turn poetic language into scientific language—"personnifier les mots."

Two other *pensées* on the Jansenists show how clearly, to Joubert's mind, they had forfeited the essence of religion by their disproportionate emphasis on only one of its aspects.

Les jansénistes aiment mieux la règle que le bien; les jésuites préfèrent le bien à la règle. Les premiers sont plus essentiellement savants, les seconds plus essentiellement pieux.

(I, 133)

Les philosophes pardonnent au jansénisme, parce que le jansénisme est une espèce de philosophie.

(I, 137)

Joubert attacks Jansenism not merely for intellectuality, but for *false* intellectuality—false because, while making a show of intellect with its pseudo-scientific language, it rests on a basis of denial of the power of human reason. For a similar false intellectuality, manifested in a like misuse of words, Arnold repeatedly attacks "the authors of our dogmatic theology" (*L. and D.*, 286): the sacerdotalists of Catholicism and high Anglicanism, the "justificationists" of Evangelicalism and Dissent. Joubert said that the word "grace" was to the Jansenists a talisman. Arnold, writing several decades later and using the same comparison, takes the dogmatists to task for making an entire book or a single church a charm.

For, after all, the Bible is *not* a talisman, to be taken and

used literally; neither is any existing Church a talisman, whatever pretensions of the sort it may make, for giving the right interpretation of the Bible.

(*L. and D.*, xxix-xxx)

Joubert's sentence about the dangers of studying Paul and Augustine too much or in isolation is a partial preface to Arnold's insistence, found mainly in *Literature and Dogma* but repeated in all three books, that a man who knows no book save the Bible cannot possibly know that book well. "The *homo unius libri*, the man of no range in his reading, must almost inevitably misunderstand the Bible" (*L. and D.*, xiii). Now all dogmatists, whether sacerdotalists of the Right or justificationists of the Left, are essentially one-book men, or at best one-book-plus-commentary men. Yet they, certain as they are to misunderstand that which they study so exclusively, set themselves up as the only real authorities on religion. Arnold sums up his case against them severely: "For the learned science [of religion] one feels no tenderness, because it has gone wrong with a great parade of exactitude and philosophy" (*L. and D.*, 305). This decision is by no means overly severe, if one considers the gravity of the main charge against the dogmatists. This charge is that they lack *culture*, "the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit" (*L. and D.*, xii). This deliberate fixity of attention which the man of one book, one work, one idea, gives to only one part of the world's best and of human experience, removes him from the full glory of light—from the completeness of the revelation of God in the human spirit.

"L'idée de Dieu est une lumière, une lumière qui guide, qui réjouit," Joubert says (I, 101). Arnold turns from philosophical and theological systems, built on the sand of undefined and misused terms, to seek a "verifiable" definition of God, an idea which can be to the plain man the best light he has. To formulate this definition Arnold has recourse to the Bible, especially to the Old Testament, and to the moral experience of humanity.

In *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold attempts to state the essential qualities of the Jewish *Eternal*, Jehovah, without ascribing to this *Eternal* any anthropomorphic trappings. *Righteousness* and *transcendent power* are for him the basic attributes of this *Eternal*.

They [the Jews] meant the *Eternal righteous*, who loveth *righteousness*. They had dwelt upon the thought of conduct and right and wrong, till the *not ourselves* which is in us and all around us, became to them adorable eminently and altogether as a *power which makes for righteousness*; which

makes for it unchangeably and eternally, and is therefore called *The Eternal*.

(*L. and D.*, 32)

Any attempt to define God, especially a "scientific" attempt which proclaims its dissatisfaction with practically every other definition, is capable of exciting opposition. Joubert's warning on this matter (I, 6), already quoted, was not heeded by Arnold. Joubert himself attempts poetic approximation rather than definition, as does the Old Testament. Anticipating half of Arnold's definition almost exactly, he speaks of the true God as a *power*, and compares him with the God of metaphysics to the latter's discredit. After saying (I, 9) that the God of metaphysics is only an idea, he adds: "mais le Dieu des religions, le Créateur du ciel et de la terre, le Juge souverain des actions et des pensées, est une force."

In discussing the relation of Joubert's thought to the other half of Arnold's definition—righteousness—we must first look at Arnold's famous definition of religion. In defining religion, Arnold first isolates its object: "the object of religion is *conduct*" (*L. and D.*, 14). Conduct becomes righteousness, the true mark of religion, when emotion is added to it.

Religion, if we follow the intuition of human thought and human language in the use of the word, is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling; the passage from morality to religion is made when to morality is applied emotion. And the true meaning of religion is this, not simply *morality*, but *morality touched by emotion*.

(*L. and D.*, 20)

Interestingly, Arnold never undertakes to define, in *Literature and Dogma* or elsewhere, the "emotion" which when added to morality produces religion; he does not even name it. Yet it cannot be simply any emotion; neither Arnold himself nor his sympathetic readers would be likely to admit that such an emotion as the fear of hell-fire, when superimposed on morality, would create true religion. In Arnold's extended comparison of moral and religious maxims (*L. and D.*, 22-24), that which separates the two is an emotion which is specifically religious, and which can only be termed the love of a transcendent righteous power, or God.¹

¹ It might be argued that the first example given by Arnold proves something very different from what Arnold thought it proved, since the quotation from Quintilian mentions a "power not ourselves which makes for righteousness"—*Providentia*; while the quotation from Proverbs has no mention of a transcendent power having any effect on "the path of the just." Arnold tells us that the former is morality, and the latter religion; but without Arnold's *ipse dixit* we might feel justified in coming to the opposite conclusion.

To Joubert, as to Arnold, conduct and emotion are indispensable characteristics of true religion and truly religious men. Although he is no Jansenist, he is a notably Puritan Catholic; Arnold must have been surprised to discover such a man in France, the land of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. One long entry in Joubert's first chapter shows his conception of the relative worth of virtue and intellect in the eyes of God.

Dieu mettra-t-il les belles pensées au rang des belles actions? Ceux qui les ont cherchées, qui s'y plaisent et s'y attachent, auront-ils une récompense? Le philosophe et le politique seront-ils payés de leurs plans, comme l'homme de bien sera payé de ses bonnes oeuvres? Et les travaux utiles ont-ils un mérite, aux yeux de Dieu, comme les bonnes moeurs? Peut-être bien; mais le premier prix n'est pas assuré comme le second, et ne sera pas le même.

(I, 28)

If this does not have the mathematical precision of Arnold's estimate of conduct as "three-fourths of life" (*L. and D.*, 18), it certainly gives to conduct a definite if not overwhelming pre-eminence.

Arnold's vagueness in dealing with the religious emotion does not beset Joubert. Joubert is not afraid of the word *piety*, as Arnold seems to be; indeed, one of the most singular characteristics of Arnold's religious writings is the complete absence of this word from their pages.² In a passage which Arnold quotes with approbation in "Joubert," Joubert tries to define the relationship of piety to religion.

La piété n'est pas une religion, quoiqu'elle soit l'âme de toutes. On n'a pas une religion, quand on a seulement de pieuses inclinations, comme on n'a pas de patrie, quand on a seulement de la philanthropie. On n'a une patrie, et l'on n'est citoyen d'un pays, que lorsqu'on se décide à observer et à défendre certaines lois, à obéir à certains magistrats, et à adopter certaines manières d'être et d'agir.

(I, 61)

Piety is not enough, as reason and morality alone are not enough, to constitute true religion; but as an attitude of the soul, piety aids

² The word *pietism*, which originally denominated a movement in the Lutheran Church in Germany, acquired in the nineteenth century its pejorative meaning as an exaggerated religious attitude. (The OED records this usage first for 1829.) Arnold certainly would have disliked this attitude, and perhaps his dislike extended to the parent word. Yet in 1875, the year of *God and the Bible*, Henry Edward, Cardinal Manning defined piety as almost the equivalent of Arnold's religious "emotion": "Piety is the filial affection of the sons of God" (*The Mission of the Holy Ghost*, p. 295).

reason and morality to know and do the will of God. "On connaît Dieu par la piété, seule modification de notre âme par laquelle il soit mis à notre portée et puisse se montrer à nous" (I, 3). Compared with this, the reason Arnold gives for the religious superiority of the Jews is significant: "No people ever *felt* so strongly as . . . the Hebrew people, that conduct is three-fourths of our life and its largest concern" (*L. and D.*, 26). That is, the Hebrews' religious emotion—their piety—brought the knowledge of the transcendent righteous power to their door, and helped them to act according to its dictates.

Joubert sums up for piety (I, 34): "La piété est une sagesse sublime, qui surpasse toutes les autres, une espèce de génie, qui donne des ailes à l'esprit." Arnold's final phrasing of Israel's achievement is:

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; the idea belongs to him who has most loved it. . . . Israel and the Bible are filled with righteous joy, and rise higher and say: 'Righteousness is salvation!' and this is what is inspiring.

(*L. and D.*, 362, 363)

"The idea belongs to him who has most *loved* it." Love of the righteous power—piety—gives man the knowledge of this power's nature, "the idea" of God and of conduct. Consequently it leads to a right use of reason and a right standard of conduct, and so is truly "une sagesse sublime." By fostering both light and sweetness, it has its important function in creating "the poetry of the heart."

A common adjunct of poetry is imagery. The imagery of light, discussed briefly and generally in the first chapter of this essay, has a considerable place in the attempts of Arnold and Joubert to depict religion and to analyze its power. Since this imagery is so important a part of scriptural authors' efforts toward the same end, this is not surprising.

Arnold begins his approach to a definition of God with etymology. In *Literature and Dogma* he takes our word for the Deity back to its earliest significance.

Strictly and formally the word "God," we now learn from the philologist, means, like its kindred Aryan words, *Theos*, *Deus*, and *Deva*, simply *shining* or *brilliant*. . . . [It] is a reminiscence of those times, when men invoked "The Brilliant on high" . . . as the power representing to them that which transcended the limits of their narrow selves, and that by which they lived and moved and had their being.

(*L. and D.*, 12, 29-30)

In *God and the Bible* "the Shining" is used (30-32) as a minimal etymological definition of God. Here, Arnold says, is the beginning of the concept of God; "Let there be light" is the first step in religious psychology, if not perhaps in cosmology.

Joubert introduces light into his first chapter almost at the outset, but with an interestingly different emphasis.

Dans cette opération d'imaginer Dieu, le premier moyen est la figure humaine, le dernier terme la lumière, et, dans la lumière, la splendeur.

(I, 2)

Light is here the last achievement of religious meditation ("dans cette opération . . . le dernier terme") rather than the primary, irreducible insight.³ For Arnold, of course, light represents a final achievement, which culture helps to bring about; but this achievement is only an amplification of the primitive recognition of "the Shining." If the light of Arnold's God has its source in Genesis 1:3, the light of Joubert's God is the summation of Dante's quest: "Cio ch'io dico è un semplice lume."⁴

This light which has its origin in God, and more particularly in the *mind* of God, is transmitted to, and through, the minds of men, according to Joubert. "Dieu multiplie l'intelligence, qui se communique comme le feu, à l'infini. Allumez mille flambeaux à un flambeau, sa flamme demeure toujours la même" (I, 15). This transmission of illumination—and we may note, in this *pensée*, that the source of light (the torch) is also a source of heat—is incomprehensible to man save by introspection. "Dieu nous parle tout bas et nous illumine en secret. Il faut, pour l'entendre, du silence intérieur; il faut, pour apercevoir sa lumière, fermer nos sens et ne regarder que dans nous" (I, 17). Elsewhere Joubert says, "Dieu éclaire ceux qui pensent souvent à lui, et qui lèvent les yeux vers lui" (I, 100).

All these *pensées* express ideas which Arnold considered essential to the "better apprehension" of God and Christianity which he sought to bring about. The first presents, metaphorically, the same God whom Arnold shows as a power capable of fusing the intellectual, intuitive, and emotive strains in the mind which contemplates him. Arnold's definition of religion stipulates that emotion both *lights up* morality and *enkindles* it; the love of God gives both

³ Cf. also I, 90: "Pour arriver aux régions de la lumière, il faut passer par les nuages. Les uns s'arrêtent là; d'autres savent passer outre."

⁴ *Paradiso*, ed. C. H. Grandgent (Boston, 1933), XXXIII, 90.

warmth and light to our thought and our conduct. What the love of God does for Arnold, God himself does for Joubert, who was less anxious to eschew *Aberglaube*. As the torch illumines other torches, other representations of light and warmth, so the idea of God creates in the thought of men a union of intelligence and feeling.

The thesis of the second *pensée*—"Dieu nous illumine en secret"—is basically an embroidering of the injunction of Jesus (Matt. 6:6): "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Arnold emphasizes in his theory of religion the necessity of an action similar in nature and result to the "closing of our senses" which Joubert advocates. He calls it "the annulment of our ordinary self" (*Paul*, xxx), which brings about the "grace and peace" which are "the essence of religion" (*Last E.*, 377). Arnold always considered the senses as the dominant force in the ordinary self, and regarded the control of their clamorings as one of the chief duties of the moral man.

When M. Littré . . . traces up, better, perhaps, than any one else, all our impulses into two elementary instincts, the instinct of self-preservation and the reproductive instinct,—then we take his theory and we say, that all the impulses which can be conceived as derivable from the instinct of self-preservation in us and the reproductive instinct . . . are the matter of *conduct*. . . . How we deal with these impulses is the matter of *conduct*,—how we obey, regulate, or restrain them; that, and nothing else.

(*L. and D.*, 16-17)

One of the most interesting—and perhaps, to the modern reader, amusing—passages in *Literature and Dogma* occurs in the eleventh chapter, "The True Greatness of the Old Testament," where Arnold indulges in a lengthy exposition of the French doctrine of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. The French develop the ordinary or apparent self more tactfully, more sensibly than any other people; but it remains a self which *ought not* to be developed.

And why? Because the free development of our senses all round, of our *apparent* self, has to undergo a profound modification from the law of our higher *real* self, the law of righteousness; because he, whose ideal is the free development of the senses all round, *serves* the senses, is a *servant*. But: *The servant abideth not in the house for ever; the son abideth for ever.*

(*L. and D.*, 361)

To Arnold, as I have said before, Joubert must have seemed very

un-French on this point. Joubert quotes fondly a friend's remark that he seemed a spirit who had happened upon a body (Prél., p. 90); and a perusal of the *Pensées* shows clearly that his spirituality and denial of the claims of the senses are uncompromising—some might say, almost to the point of prudishness.⁵

Arnold's capsule formula for "il faut . . . fermer nos sens" is stated in *St. Paul and Protestantism* (71): "To die with Christ to the law of the flesh, to live with Christ to the law of the mind." He regards this, with considerable insight, as "Paul's central doctrine," and emphasizes it proportionately. Joubert's final epigrammatic statement of his position is "Ferme les yeux, et tu verras" (I, 89).

In I, 113, Joubert writes: "Chaque jour il faut prier [à Dieu], attacher sa pensée sur cette lumière qui épure." This statement, coupled with "Dieu éclaire ceux qui pensent souvent à lui," and translated, as Arnold would say, from metaphor into science, becomes something very close to Arnold's definition of prayer.

All good and beneficial prayer is in truth, however men may describe it, at bottom nothing else than an energy of aspiration towards the eternal *not ourselves* that makes for righteousness,—of aspiration towards it, and of cooperation with it.

(*L. and D.*, 43, fn. 1)

In this definition, prayer appears as both thought and action; the "energy of aspiration," beginning in the mind, translates itself into the kinetic energy of "co-operation." Joubert seems to give greater emphasis to the potential energy of prayer, to consider it as purely a mental and spiritual activity. This impression is heightened if we consider such aphorisms as "Le ciel est pour ceux qui y pensent" (I, 33) and "Penser à Dieu est une action" (I, 46). These two *pensées* seem to indicate an attitude, on Joubert's part, which Arnold would have considered well-nigh pure Hellenism; they are certainly, taken in isolation, examples of a more extreme Hellenism than "C'est le bonheur des hommes quand ils pensent juste," the remark of an unidentified Frenchman which Arnold quotes in *Culture and Anarchy* (123). But we must not forget that Joubert values right action more than right thought, in the last analysis, as a previously quoted passage (p. 14, *supra*) shows. What both men would agree on is the necessity of right thought as a prerequisite for righteous action, and the inadequacy of right thought without the subsequent right action.

⁵ An entire chapter is given over to a definition of modesty (VI, "Qu'est-ce que la Pudeur?").

Arnold's great difficulty in his religious writings appears most clearly in a book which is not really one of them, in the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy*. At bottom, he is a Hebraist; all his spiritual energies, left to themselves, would be ranged on the side of conduct, of that right action which is three-fourths of life. But his intelligence reminds him that, great as doing is, England needs thinking, the clear-sightedness which Hellenism gives. Consequently he can affirm that "our race will, as long as the world lasts, return to Hebraism" (*C. and A.*, xlvi), while at the same time asserting the need for Hellenism: "Now, and for us, it is a time to Hellenise, and to praise knowing; for we have Hebraised too much, and have over-valued doing" (xlv). To return to Hebraism one must first have gone away from it; and England in his day needed to go away from Hebraism, which had showed her how to walk by her best light, to Hellenism, to get the best light to walk by. When Hebraism and Hellenism are well blended, a right religion will be among the results.

To walk staunchly by the best light one has, to be strict and sincere with oneself, not to be of the number of those who say and do not, to be in earnest,—this is the discipline by which alone man is enabled to rescue his life from thralldom to the passing moment and to the bodily senses, to ennoble it, and to make it eternal.

(*C. and A.*, xlvi)

This "discipline" is true religion. One of Joubert's paragraphs (I, 49) anticipates this sentence in almost every point—in emphasizing light and action, in recognizing the power of emotion, and in expressing distrust of the senses.

Nous sommes éclairés parce que Dieu luit sur nous, et nous sommes droits parce qu'il nous touche. Dieu nous éclaire comme lumière; il nous redresse comme règle. Cette règle, non discernée, mais sentie, sert de point de comparaison à nos jugements dans tout ce qui doit être estimé par une autre voie que celle des sens.

Finally, one of Arnold's poems, containing extensive hints of his religious thought and making important use of the imagery of light, is worthy of notice here. It is his last important poem, "Westminster Abbey," written on the occasion of the death of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Dean of Westminster.

Stanley was a progressive Anglican, one of the founders of the movement which today is termed Broad Church. As the poem makes abundantly clear, he was a close approach to Arnold's ideal priest,

as he was to the ideal of Arnold's father. Trilling characterizes Stanley as "liberal, humane, effecting that synthesis of piety and intelligence that Thomas Arnold so desired" (68).

When Arnold entitled the poem "Westminster Abbey" and built it around the legend of St. Peter's consecration of the edifice, he was probably not thinking merely of the fact that Stanley was being buried there, or even of the fact that he had been Dean of the Abbey at the time of his death. Rather, he must have reflected that in no other position Stanley had held, not even during his professorship at Oxford, had he exercised so great a liberalizing influence on the Church. How well Stanley expressed the ideal of a national clergyman in a national church, and how earnestly Stanley tried to make of the Church what Arnold thought it should be—"a great national society for the promotion of what is commonly called goodness . . . through the means of the Christian religion and of the Bible" (*Last E.*, 345)—is shown in the account of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

In Westminster Abbey he found the material embodiment of his ideal of a comprehensive national church. . . . It was one of the objects of his life to open the abbey pulpit to churchmen of every shade of opinion, to give to laymen and ministers of other communions opportunities of speaking within its walls. . . .

As a preacher he pursued the same objects. . . . He insisted that the essence of Christianity lay not in doctrine, but in a Christian character. He tried to penetrate to the moral and spiritual substance, which gave vitality to forms, institutions, and dogmas, and underlay different and apparently hostile views of religion. On the bed-rock, as it were, of Christianity he founded his teaching, because here he found the common ground on which Anglican, Roman catholic, presbyterian, and non-conformist might meet.⁶

In the poem Stanley is celebrated as the second Peter of Westminster. As St. Peter is said to have consecrated the Abbey with supernatural light, so Stanley hallowed it with his own intellectual and spiritual light, perhaps less miraculous but not therefore less valuable. Arnold's catalogue of Stanley's luminous qualities is itself enlightening.

It seem'd, a child of light did bring the dower
Foreshown thee in thy consecration-hour,

* R. E. Prothero, Lord Ernle, in *DNB* s. v. "Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn."

And in thy courts his shining freight unroll'd:
Bright wits, and instincts sure,
And goodness warm, and truth without alloy,
And temper sweet, and love of all things pure,
And joy in light, and power to spread the joy.
(ll. 74-80)⁷

Sweetness, joy, intelligence, truth, purity, and goodness are the important components of Stanley's light. The list is noteworthy because, while the elements of light which may be thought of as purely human in origin or nature ("wits," "instincts sure," "temper sweet," "love of all things pure," "joy in light, and power to spread the joy") are in the majority, there are also elements ("goodness warm," "truth without alloy") which, in Arnold's scheme, originate outside the nature of man. Arnold insists that man did not create morality (*G. and B.*, 142); his minimal definition of God he defends because it "can be verified" (*L. and D.*, 322), because it is true, and since it exists outside ourselves we do not create truth. It is important to realize this, since a careful reading of the catalogue casts some doubt on a distinction which Bonnerot attempts to make between the attitudes of Joubert and Arnold toward light.

Alors que Joubert est convaincu que toute lumière vient de Dieu, Arnold se persuade qu'il possède sa propre lumière et que de bonheur consiste à "vivre dans la lumière de son âme." La lumière n'est donc pas pour lui une illumination, un mystère, mais seulement le terme symbolique, moral et intellectuel plutôt que spirituel, représentant les deux tendances maîtresses de l'homme, la sincérité de la Conscience d'une part, et, d'autre part, la Curiosité, l'élan de l'Intelligence.
(281)

It is certainly true that Joubert thinks of man as being far more dependent on God than Arnold would allow—not only for light, but for all things. It is true also that Joubert regards God as Person, and Arnold does not; and light emanating from a Divine Person will to many people seem more "spiritual," more of an "illumination," than light whose source is a vaguely defined transcendent power for which men search with "an energy of aspiration." But to say that light is for Arnold no more than a "symbolic term, moral and intellectual rather than spiritual" is to miss some of the complexity of Arnold's attitude toward religion. Had Stanley's light consisted only of Conscience, Curiosity, and Intelligence, Arnold would scarcely have drawn a parallel between Stanley's career and

⁷ The complete text of the poem is found in *Poems*, II, 297-304.

the truly exalted legend of the consecration of the Abbey. Had Stanley created his own light out of his own soul, Arnold would not have referred to him as "Bringer of heavenly light" (l. 120); nor would he have used the other extended comparison in the poem, that of Stanley and Demophoön, "The charm'd babe of the Eleusinian king" (l. 85). Demophoön played unharmed among the flames, not because of any grace inherent in his nature, but because he was favored by a power not himself: "His nurse, the Mighty Mother, will'd it so" (l. 86).

The poem is remarkable, not only for the high value it sets on light and the skilful use of light as a symbol, but for the noble passage which asserts the final triumph of light. Culture, Arnold said in prose, has a passion yet greater than its love for sweetness and light, which is "the passion for making them prevail" (*C. and A.*, 40). In this, his last great poem, Arnold transforms the passion of desire into the purer passion of vision, and tells us that light *will* prevail.

And thou, O Abbey grey!
 Predestined to the ray
 By this dear guest over thy precinct shed—
 Fear not but that thy light once more shall burn,
 Once more thy immemorial gleam return,
 Though sunk be now this bright, this gracious head!
 (ll. 171-176)

With equal assurance Joubert had said, "Dieu ne fait rien que pour l'éternité" (I, 16). Light will and must triumph, because the power not ourselves is ceaselessly working for the augmentation of light. (Note the fact that the Abbey is "predestined" to receive Stanley's light. No writer on Arnold seems to have remarked this curious use, for a quite serious purpose, of an example of *Aberglaube* which one might not have thought particularly congenial to his mind.) And the power works to spread light, Joubert would have added, because it (or he) *is* light. "Il en est la lumière et le soleil: c'est lui qui illumine tout: *In lumine tuo videbimus lumen*" (I, 53).

The imagery of light, used primarily to symbolize the intellectual and intuitive aspects of religion, has then a prominent place in the religious writings of Arnold and Joubert. Both use light as a symbol of a spiritual illumination whose source is outside the mind of man. This is one of their chief similarities. In many instances where Joubert uses the imagery of light to decorate a religious idea—Joubert being concerned, far more than Arnold, with epigrammatic condensation and verbal adornment of his thought—

Arnold will be found to express a very similar idea, though devoid of the embroidery.

But there is more to religion than mental illumination; and Arnold and Joubert regard two other facets of religion with quite similar attitudes. There is conduct—the righteousness to which Arnold says religion must "bind" us (*L. and D.*, 20), and which made of Joubert's religion "une loi, un joug, un indissoluble engagement" (I, 62). And there is emotion—the piety which for Joubert is the soul of all religions, and which creates "the poetry of the heart"; the undefined but powerful emotion which lights up Arnold's morality as it did that of Israel, and which gave Israel "poetry and eloquence" (*L. and D.*, 39), which were worth far more than the attainments of metaphysically minded Aryans like the Bishops of Gloucester and Winchester. For Arnold and Joubert, these three—intelligence, conduct, emotion—are a trinity of religious powers. They are perhaps not equal in importance; but their natures are distinct, and their end and aim the same.

3 / "The Light of Each Man's Lamp": Joubert and Arnold's Criticism of Society

La multitude aime la multitude, ou la pluralité dans le gouvernement; les sages y aiment l'unité.

Déplorables époques que celles où chaque homme pèse tout à son propre poids, et marche, comme dit la Bible, à la lumière de sa lampe!

Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, XIV: 3, XVIII: 5

When I began to speak of culture, I insisted on our bondage to machinery, on our proneness to value machinery as an end in itself, without looking beyond it to the end for which alone, in truth, it is valuable.

We habitually live in our ordinary selves, which do not carry us beyond the ideas and wishes of the class to which we happen to belong. . . . But by our *best self* we are united, impersonal, at harmony. We are in no peril from giving authority to this, because it is the truest friend we all of us can have; and when anarchy is a danger to us, to this authority we may turn with sure trust.

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*

Joubert and Arnold lived in, and wrote about, epochs which were primarily periods of political and social upheaval. While Joubert was writing his *Pensées*, France was experiencing successively the First Empire, the fall of Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourbons. This last event was accompanied by an atmosphere of reaction against Republic and Empire alike. In the period 1814-1824, the aristocrats of the south of France fomented the "White Terror" and organized the Society of the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin, reactionary movements in state and church respectively. During the last three of these years of Joubert's life, the so-called "ultra-royalists" were in control of the government, and extremely restrictive laws were passed to regulate elections and the

press and to increase the political power of the Church. The Revolution of 1830 was eventually to demonstrate that the people as a whole were not willing to renounce the guarantees of public and private liberty which the Republic and the Empire had first presented to them; but at the time of Joubert's death the powers of the Right had France in a fierce if not firm grip.¹

The years of Arnold's greatest social and political interest (1864-1882) were years marked by a different kind of upheaval in England, a quieter upheaval, and one whose driving force was liberalism, not reaction. Education and the franchise were being gradually made available by legislation to larger and larger numbers of the English people. Power was passing from the hands of landowning Churchmen to those of manufacturing and shopkeeping Dissenters. The fact that these changes were accomplished by legislative action did not mean, however, that they took place without opposition, opposition which at times took the form of physical violence. The years 1866-1870 saw some of the most violent political agitation to affect England since the Reform Bill of 1832; *Culture and Anarchy* and *Friendships' Garland*, Arnold's best-known works of social criticism, appeared during these years marked by crisis and conflict. (*Culture and Anarchy* was published in 1869; *Friendship's Garland* appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* during 1866, and in book form in 1871.) Briefly, this four-year period was marked by the failure of a moderate electoral Reform Bill in March, 1866; the Hyde Park riots, perpetrated by disgruntled members of the lower classes in July of that year; the passage (by a Conservative Parliament) of a far more radical and sweeping Reform Bill in 1867; Fenian disorders in Chester, Manchester, and London, and left-wing Protestant riots in Birmingham, also in 1867; and the disestablishment of the Irish Church (by a violently Liberal Parliament) in 1869. It was a time when to the moderate, reflective Englishman the anarchy of Arnold's title seemed an imminent danger.

To phrase the common response of Joubert and Arnold to their respective times negatively and with reference to Arnold's own dichotomy is easy: both are against anarchy. What is anarchy? The answers which both give are descriptive of personal behavior rather than social. For Joubert, it is the condition described in one of the epigraphs to this chapter: "chaque homme pèse tout à son propre

¹A thorough discussion of these years may be found in John B. Wolf, *France: 1815 to the Present* (New York, 1940), ch. 2, "The Reaction Versus the Revolution."

poids, et marche, comme dit la Bible, à la lumière de sa lampe." For Arnold, it can be phrased simply in the words of a chapter title from *Culture and Anarchy*: "Doing as One Likes."

Anarchy exists first, then, and in its simplest form, in the minds and actions of individuals; if it is dominant in the minds and actions of a sufficient number of individuals, it makes its presence felt in society. The dominance of anarchy in the minds and actions of individuals is secured by a false and exaggerated notion of personal liberty. In his essay "Joubert," Arnold quotes five of Joubert's political *pensées*, and four of them have to do with liberty. Three will be particularly relevant here.

Demandez des âmes libres, bien plutôt que des hommes libres. La liberté morale est la seule importante, la seule nécessaire; l'autre n'est bonne et utile qu'autant qu'elle favorise celle-là.

(XV, 5)

La subordination est plus belle que l'indépendance. L'une est l'ordre et l'arrangement; l'autre n'est que la suffisance unie à l'isolement. . . . L'une est l'accord, l'autre le ton; l'une est la part, l'autre l'ensemble.

(XV, 14)

Liberté! liberté! En toutes choses justice, et ce sera assez de liberté.

(XV, 15)²

To these may be added a neighboring aphorism which, although not quoted by Arnold, states even more clearly than these the idea of true liberty which was Joubert's, and which with little modification became Arnold's.

La liberté publique ne peut s'établir que par le sacrifice des libertés privées. Dans cette admirable institution, il faut que les forts cèdent une partie de leurs forces, et les faibles une partie de leurs espérances. . . . Une liberté diminuée, communiquée et répandue, vaut mieux que celle qui est entière et concentrée.

(XV, 13)

When Joubert speaks of "liberté" without modification or qualification, then, he is speaking of something which he believes to be bad or at least unsatisfactory, to the individual and to society. It is better for the individual to be morally free, and for society to have a public liberty of which subordination is an essential part, than for

² Cf. *E. in C.*, I, 300, for Arnold's English versions.

society to be made up of individuals each with an idiosyncratic lamp to walk by.

Arnold, too, dislikes the multitude of lamps, and is fairly sure that few of them emit any real light. He declares, in *Culture and Anarchy* (46-47), his design of showing that "random and ill-regulated action,—action with insufficient light, action pursued because we like to be doing something and doing it as we please, and do not like the trouble of thinking and the severe constraint of any kind of rule" is "a practical mischief and dangerous to us." It is dangerous because it is the use of personal liberty *for its own sake*, with little or no reference to the social desirability of one's actions. This is the worship of machinery.

In our common notions and talk about freedom, we eminently show our idolatry of machinery. Our prevalent notion is . . . that it is a most happy and important thing for a man merely to be able to do as he likes. On what he is to do when he is thus free to do as he likes, we do not lay so much stress.

The worship of machinery, the paying of homage to means and the ignoring of ends, is the bane of every class in England—Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace alike; and not least of "Our Liberal Practitioners," with whom the last chapter of *Culture and Anarchy* is concerned. These men advocate the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the Real Estate Intestacy Bill, and the "bill for enabling a man to marry his deceased wife's sister" (*C. and A.*, 188) as desiderata whose attainment will add to the happiness of mankind by increasing the liberty of Englishmen to do as they like. What is wrong with these projects is that they are attempted "in a mechanical way, without reference to any firm intelligible law of things, to human life as a whole" (*C. and A.*, 194-195).

To such an extent is the worship of machinery carried that it becomes a kind of slavery, Arnold avers. His ideal citizen, like Joubert's, is the man who is mentally and morally free; and mental and moral freedom, unlike the power to do as one likes, is acquired by culture.

The statement and amplification of Arnold's definition of culture take up many pages of *Culture and Anarchy*, as indeed is proper, when we recall that it is from culture that the only effective check to anarchy can come. Culture is, basically, "a study of perfection" (*C. and A.*, 7); and its constant concern with perfection, both achieved and potential, is what makes it so necessary for a society which worships machinery.

What distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and institute. . . .

Now, if culture, which simply means trying to perfect oneself, and one's mind as part of oneself, brings us light, and if light shows us that there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes, that the worship of the mere freedom to do as one likes is worship of machinery, that the really blessed thing is to like what right reason ordains, and to follow her authority, then we have got a practical benefit out of culture. We have got a much wanted principle, a principle of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy which seems to be threatening us.

(*C. and A.*, 7; 57-58)

Arnold wants to substitute a society directed by "right reason" for a group of individuals directed by a love of their own liberty. The "right reason" of Arnold's ideal society is similar to the "justice" of Joubert. It is derived ultimately (by way of a long Western tradition including Aquinas and Milton) from the idea of intellect combined with principle as the best guide for a man's life, which is one of the chief subjects of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and is expanded in his *Politics* to cover the life of man in society. To Joubert "justice" is far more than a primarily legal regulation of human relationships; he has even less love for machinery than Arnold, and his "justice" is Plato's, "the effect of harmony and order in the soul."³ Certainly the source of his "justice" is as exalted as that of Arnold's "right reason." "Les droits du peuple ne viennent pas de lui, mais de la justice. La justice vient de l'ordre, et l'ordre vient de Dieu lui-même" (XV, 1). With this sort of justice manifested in society, there will indeed be no likelihood of the exaltation of "doing as one likes" as a principle of action.

This justice, like Arnold's culture, is first and essentially an inward thing; individuals must manifest it in their own dealings before it can be made the characteristic of an entire state. Those in-

³ Plato, "Gorgias," in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York, 1871), V, 95.

dividuals who manifest justice have true liberty and do not need formal, or mechanical, liberty. "Que gagnent à la liberté les sages et les gens de bien, ceux qui vivent sous l'empire de la raison, et sont esclaves du devoir?" (XV, 12)

As to the way of acquiring this justice, this right reason, for an entire society, Arnold finds it in "the idea of the whole community, *the State*" (*C. and A.*, 94). The true idea of the State, existing in the minds and informing the actions of its citizens, is culture's highest political form. Opposed to it are the myriads of "ordinary selves," individuals glorying in their personal liberty, and the amplified "ordinary selves" which are the social classes of Arnold's England. (Arnold might well have borrowed from his language of religious controversy and called these "magnified and non-natural ordinary selves.")

The emphasis placed in *Culture and Anarchy* on the baneful effects of too great an attention to class in society is great and worthy of notice. It is there chiefly as an answer to such rival prophets as Carlyle, Robert Lowe, and Frederic Harrison—apostles of the aristocracy, the middle class, and the working class respectively. The chapter "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace" is concerned with far more than assigning to those classes the apt and amusing epithets which form the title. Its purpose is to show that no one class, even in the persons of its best and most capable representatives, is fit to govern England, because so long as class is a criterion of ability to the English political mind, the "best self" of the English people will not be developed.

This concept of the State as the embodiment of a people's "best self" is not presented, it is important to note, as Arnold's idea of the end of political endeavor. The end of political endeavor is "a *harmonious* perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and . . . a *general* perfection, developing all parts of our society" (*C. and A.*, xiv). No one can reasonably assume that such an end will be achieved the moment a good State begins to function. The good State is designed to lead those of its members who have not yet perceived the rightness of this end, and there will be many such, toward it. Here is another indication of the basically Aristotelian cast of Arnold's political thought.⁴

⁴ Cf. the *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford, 1921), bk. VII, ch. 1: "Each one has just so much of happiness as he has of virtue and wisdom, and of good and wise action"; and ch. 2: "That form of government is best in which every man, whoever he is, can act for the best and live happily."

That the State must be created in the image of an English "best self" which is perceived and embodied by men who are governed by right reason, shows Arnold's idealism; that this State must in its turn aid in the creation of an individual "best self" in each man who is not so governed, shows his practicality. Arnold knows very well that the power which the men of right reason have is that of their example, not that of numbers; he does not hope that they will be, in any foreseeable future, a nose-count majority.

In each class there are born a certain number of natures with a curiosity about their best self, with a bent for seeing things as they are, for disentangling themselves from machinery, for simply concerning themselves with reason and the will of God, and doing their best to make these prevail;—for the pursuit, in a word, of perfection. . . . They have, in general, a rough time of it in their lives; but they are sown more abundantly than one might think, they appear where and when one least expects it, they set up a fire which enfilades, so to speak, the class with which they are ranked; and, in general, by the extrication of their best self as the self to develop, and by the simplicity of the ends fixed by them as paramount, they hinder the unchecked predominance of that class-life which is the affirmation of our ordinary self, and seasonably disconcert mankind in their worship of machinery.

(*C. and A.*, 92, 93)

These two groups of men, the men of right reason and the men who follow their ordinary selves, are named in "Numbers," one of the *Discourses in America*, as "the remnant" and "the majority" respectively; and they correspond quite exactly to the two groups in a Joubert *pensée* at the head of this chapter (XIV, 3). Arnold's "majority" is Joubert's "multitude," those who love "plurality in government"; Arnold's "remnant" is equal to Joubert's "wise men," who love unity. The opposition of unity and plurality in Joubert is a prefiguring of the opposition of "best self" and "ordinary selves" in Arnold.

Arnold makes his position on the function of the State clearest, perhaps, when he quotes other men. He calls Renan "one of the staunchest . . . friends of human perfection" (*C. and A.*, 127), and quotes him, adding italics, on the action of the State: "A Liberal believes in liberty, and liberty signifies the non-intervention of the State. *But such an ideal is still a long way off from us, and the very means to remove it to an indefinite distance would be precisely the State's withdrawing its action too soon.*"

But it is when he quotes Joubert that Arnold's gradualist attitude receives its best elucidation. In "The Function of Criticism at

the Present Time" he quotes XV, 2: "C'est la force et le droit qui règlent toutes choses dans le monde; la force, en attendant le droit." He goes on to translate the aphorism, rather freely, and to explain what he believes should be the relation of force (the State) to right (right reason).

(Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready*; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right,—*right*, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*,—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, should depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it.

(*E. in C.*, I, 12-13)

Right reason informs political power and gradually transforms it, and its subjects along with it, until the millennial day is reached when reason is the only power, directing all the actions of all men.

Even in the perfect society, however, the chief blessing is not liberty from political power, but order without political machinery. In his high valuation of order in society, too, Arnold is at one with Joubert. Joubert begins his chapter "De l'Education" with the statement (XIX, 1): "L'idée de l'ordre en toutes choses, c'est-à-dire de l'ordre littéraire, moral, politique et religieux, est la base de toute éducation."⁵ It is one of the bases of Arnold's culture also, for without it culture could scarcely oppose anarchy successfully; it is the "firm intelligible law of things" already referred to.

That order is better than liberty—or, in Joubert's terms, that subordination is better than independence—appears in Arnold's criticism of Mr. Chambers' bill (*C. and A.*, 180-184). When he discusses this proposed act, whose end is to legalize the marriage of one's deceased wife's sister, he quotes the apothegm of "a distinguished Liberal supporter"—"Liberty is the law of human life"—only to deny, not its truth, but its "absolute validity."

We no more allow absolute validity to his stock maxim, *Liberty is the law of human life*, than we allow it to the opposite

⁵ Note the *kinds* of order to which Joubert refers. "Literary, moral, political, and religious"—these are also the headings under which Joubert's work is discussed by Arnold in "Joubert," with only one difference, the separation here of "moral" and "religious."

maxim, which is just as true, *Renouncement is the law of human life*. For we know that the only perfect freedom is, as our religion says, a service.

(*C. and A.*, 182)

And the service, of course, is to our "best self," to "the idea of a perfected humanity." This is Joubert's "subordination," not of one social class to another, but of all men to right reason; and the result will be, as Joubert said, "order and arrangement, harmony, the whole."

Trilling, whose opinion of Joubert is not very high, essays a summation of his political theory in these words (200): "A staunch anti-libertarian in the philosophic interest of monarchy, Joubert admired the Chinese fixity of government, order and the abandonment of passion." Like the doctrinaire Liberal's statement which Arnold controverted, this statement contains some truth without being absolutely valid. So far as Joubert's preference for monarchy is concerned, the key word is *philosophic*. It is true that he says, "Ceux qui veulent gouverner aiment la république; ceux qui veulent être bien gouvernés n'aiment que la monarchie" (XIV, 4). The blessing of unity, to Joubert's mind, seems more easily achievable in a state with one head than in a state with many. Yet he does not admire unity without his beloved justice, and his preference is for a constitutional rather than an absolute monarchy: "Tout autorité légitime doit aimer son étendu *et ses limites*" (XIV, 17; italics mine). To say that he "admired the Chinese fixity of government" is to misread somewhat the long paragraph printed as XVI, 92. Joubert says the rulers of the Chinese have often been conquered, "mais jamais leurs moeurs"; and he goes on to ask: "La durée n'est-elle pas un signe de l'excellence, dans les lois, comme l'utilité et la clarté sont un caractère de vérité, dans les systèmes?" His admiration is directed toward the perseverance of worth as manifested in law and custom, rather than the rigidity of human attitudes as shown in the administration of law, which latter is what we more commonly term "government." (The recurrent collapse of dynasties automatically made "fixity of government," in the normal sense, impossible.) Joubert clearly does not respect the mere absence of change, in any case. The laws and customs of the Chinese have endured because they are able to produce a kind of society which Joubert considers very close to his ideal, a society "ou le pouvoir, le ministre et le sujet" are "fortement et . . . distinctement unis, séparés, établis." Joubert does not, it may be remarked, recommend a like system to all nations; indeed, he does not recommend "fixity" as a part of

any political system. "Les constitutions politiques ont besoin d'élasticité; elles la perdent, lorsque tout y est réglé par des lois fixes, et, pour ainsi dire, inflexibles" (XIV, 20). "Fixity in government" is good only insofar as it is founded on, and protective of, unity and justice; and these are qualities of the mind, not of machinery. Machinery should therefore be flexible, that it may be accommodated to advancing concepts of unity and justice. This is not, we can see, very far from Arnold's position.

It must be admitted, however, that Joubert's opinions seem at first sight to be less related to political actualities than Arnold's. Their aphoristic form, and the almost complete absence of topical references, reinforce the illusion of remoteness. By comparison, the Arnold of *Culture and Anarchy* and *Friendship's Garland* is a journalist, though of a far higher order than such a man as G. A. Sala, one of his favorite targets.⁶ These two books contain a wealth of contemporary allusions, many totally incomprehensible, without annotation, to the modern reader. Arnold recognized the journalistic nature of his style in *Friendship's Garland* when he dated the letters of which it is composed from Grub Street. Arnold was writing to his age, and perforce had to write to a great extent of his age. Nevertheless, the political book which is likely to survive the longest is *Culture and Anarchy*; and the parts of *Culture and Anarchy* which are likely to be read longest are those which are relatively free of contemporary material: the Preface, "Sweetness and Light," "Hebraism and Hellenism," and "Porro Unum Est Necessarium."

Culture and Anarchy contains, and develops chiefly in these chapters, Arnold's most famous use of the symbolism of light. This use differs somewhat from his use of light in his writings on religion. Here and in most of his prose it is a symbol of intelligence only, as it is throughout Western intellectual history, and not of any emotional grace added to intelligence. "Of perfection, as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters" (*C. and A.*, 44).

To sweetness and light are opposed the "fire and strength" of Henry Sidgwick, the utilitarian philosopher (*C. and A.*, 145). Sidgwick says that fire and strength are the characteristics of "religion"—of a primarily emotional attachment to righteousness. Arnold, while

⁶ Cf. *C. and A.*, xiii: "a flight of Corinthian leading articles, and an irruption of Mr. G. A. Sala. Clearly, this is not what will do us good." The references *passim* in *Friendship's Garland* often mention Sala's newspaper, the *Telegraph*, when Sala is meant, in a kind of metonymy.

recognizing the importance of emotion in the formation of a religious attitude, will not allow such an oversimplified metaphorical description of religion. "By religion, let me explain, Mr. Sidgwick here means particularly that Puritanism on the insufficiency of which I have been commenting." He means, in other words, Hebraism, which is insufficient because it imagines that only emotion and right conduct are necessary in human life. "With us . . . the ruling force is now, and long has been, a Puritan force,—the care for fire and strength, strictness of conscience, Hebraism, rather than the care for sweetness and light, spontaneity of consciousness, Hellenism" (*C. and A.*, 147).

We must conclude that the flame of feeling, which in *Literature and Dogma* enkindles morality and transforms it into religion, is not to be confused with this Hebraistic fire which consumes all aspects of life not directed by or dedicated to "conscience and moral sense," or else we must suppose that between 1867 and 1873 Arnold's attitude toward emotion in religion underwent a fairly complete *volte-face*. The first of these alternatives, I think, is more tenable.

The dichotomy which Sidgwick sets up, and which Arnold accepts in *Culture and Anarchy*, is between knowing and doing; in *Literature and Dogma*, the less pronounced contrast is between conduct without emotion and conduct with it. And the emotion of *Literature and Dogma* is a specifically religious emotion, which we usually term "piety." The "fire" which Sidgwick extols is a harsher thing; it combines at best a little piety with a very great amount of what we call zeal; and Arnold significantly refuses to consider Sidgwick's attitude as primarily religious. He calls it "Puritanism," and he regards Puritanism as a social and not a religious phenomenon. His literalist opponents of *Literature and Dogma* are nowhere in that book, nor in any other of his religious books, referred to as Puritans. His description of the origin of English Puritanism (*C. and A.*, 137-138) is noteworthy for the absence of any reference to religion, to the Bible, to anything except social and moral considerations.

Puritanism, which has been so great a power in the English nation, and in the strongest part of the English nation, was originally the reaction in the seventeenth century of the conscience and moral sense of our race, against the moral indifference and lax rule of conduct which in the sixteenth century came in with the Renaissance.

The "fire" of *Culture and Anarchy*, then, is emotional zeal directed into avenues of human endeavor which are not proper places for

emotion's influence. The enkindling flame of emotion in *Literature and Dogma* is necessary for the very existence of religion, which without it would remain only morality. The two are not identical; if they are related at all, the first is a perverted and unwarranted extension of the second.

The light of *Culture and Anarchy* is presented in language at once more vivid and more elevated than can be found in any of Arnold's other works wherein the symbol appears. One passage from "Sweetness and Light" will amply illustrate this.

Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive.

(*C. and A.*, 41)

This kind of thought is intelligent, but not intellectualized; the phrase "sensible to beauty" opens the door to right feeling as well as right cognition. When the mental and spiritual perfection which culture studies is fostered by the State and expressed by individuals in their lives, the result will be a "glow" of thought which will illumine the entire nation. Those who in past times walked in darkness will not only see, but dwell in, a truly great light. It is a worthy goal for any society.

Joubert's use of the imagery of light in his political *pensées* seems quite sparing, compared with Arnold's use of it in *Culture and Anarchy*. On the few occasions when it does appear, however, it is in statements which express attitudes quite similar to Arnold's. One of these is the *pensée* about "déplorables époques" which serves as an epigraph for this chapter. Another, in which "nous" stands for the people of Restoration France, pictures them as close approximations of the "fire and strength" men whom Arnold combated; resembling them not in their Puritanism, but in their trust in "the one thing needful"—earnest but unpremeditated action. "Nous sommes, en politique, presque tous remplis d'un feu qui ne fait que nous agiter, et d'un lumière qui ne fait que nous éblouir" (XVIII, 35). And the *pensée* which immediately follows this, speaking of the shadows which are taken for lights, is one of Joubert's expressions of the distrust of machinery which he shares with Arnold, although the machinery here is that of political theory rather than that of action.

Pouvoir législatif, exécutif, etc., ce ne sont là que des chiffres. On a porté dans la politique, et jusque dans la morale, les procédés et presque le langage de l'algèbre; on se sert de mots abstraits au lieu de lettres; on les combine, et l'on croit s'entendre et s'éclairer, parce qu'on a remué des ombres. Et, en effet, ces mots nouveaux, ces notions obscures ne sont pour l'esprit que des ombres sans corps, sans réalité, sans beauté.

(XVIII, 36)

So far as ideas are concerned, the rest of Arnold's political writings offer little more than restatements—stylistic variations and shifts of emphasis—of those contained in *Culture and Anarchy*. The "Geist" of Letter I in *Friendship's Garland* ("I introduce Arminius and 'Geist' to the British Public") is only culture with a German name; the triumph of "Geist" is "the victory of reason and intelligence over blind custom and prejudice" (*F. G.*, 248). "Numbers; or, the Majority and the Remnant" (*D. Amer.*, 1-71) is chiefly remarkable for its emphasis on the saving minority—"the very small remnant which honestly sought wisdom" (15) in Plato's Athens, the "holy seed" which Isaiah said would save Israel—in whom is found an understanding of their "best self." Arnold holds forth a better hope for nineteenth-century nations than Athens and Israel had, because their remnants are larger although not, by definition, large.

In our great modern States, where the scale of things is so large, it does seem as if the remnant might be so increased as to become an actual power, even though the majority be unsound. Then the lover of wisdom may come out from under his wall, the lover of goodness will not be alone among the wild beasts. To enable the remnant to succeed, a large strengthening of its numbers is everything.

(*D. Amer.*, 26)

It is the desire to increase the remnant, both in numbers and in sagacity, which is at the bottom of Arnold's books on education, which deserve at least a brief mention in a study of his social criticism. The three best known—*Popular Education in France* (1861); *A French Eton; or, Middle-Class Education and the State* (1864); and *Schools and Universities on the Continent* (1868)—are the results of Arnold's official participation in a Royal Commission's study of Continental education. A fourth book, not published during Arnold's lifetime, is in many ways more valuable than these as an exposition of his opinions on education. This is *Reports on Elementary Schools, 1852-1882* (published 1889), a complete collection of the reports which he annually presented to the Education Depart-

ment on the conditions of schools, the qualifications of teachers, and the progress of pupils in his inspectorial district.

Arising as they do from professional experience, these reports have an empirical air about them which Joubert's remarks on education do not and were not intended to have. Joubert's chapter "De l'Éducation" contains only sixty *pensées*, all brief, all concerned with "une éducation noble et lettrée" (XIX, 49)—an ideal education, not an actual system observed in its daily workings. Yet some of Joubert's cardinal ideas will be found in Arnold's reports, in those passages which suggest improvements in method and matter.

These suggestions for improvement are found chiefly in the reports for the years between 1862 and 1876. The Report of 1863 was the first made under the Revised Code, a sweeping new education law with whose principles and provisions Arnold was in almost complete disagreement, and whose effects he saw with something close to horror. The Revised Code assumed that the only measure of a school's efficiency was the percentage of students who passed the annual examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic conducted by the inspectors. Each student who failed the examination lost for the school his "grant," the sum which the school was paid by the government for the education of an individual pupil; this system of punishment for presumed inefficiency came to be known as "Payment by Results." To Arnold the most real and most baneful "result" of the Code was that teachers and students alike made it their chief concern to prepare for an examination which attempted to deal with all school children in less time than twelve hours per year in each institution, and which even at its best could not fail to be superficial. Consequently, the teachers taught and the pupils learned a few specific and rather simple examples to illustrate principles in language and mathematics which the students did not really comprehend.

In his Report for 1869, Arnold set down most forcefully and most completely his objections to the Revised Code.

I have repeatedly said that it seems to me the great fault of the Revised Code, and of the famous plan of *payment by results*, that it fosters teaching by rote; I am of that opinion still The school examinations in view of *payment by results* are . . . a game of mechanical contrivance in which the teachers will and must more and more learn how to best us. It is found possible, by ingenious preparation, to get children through the Revised Code examinations in reading, writing, and ciphering, without their really knowing how to read, write, and cipher.

(R.E.S., 136)

He goes on to particularize: the children are given their reading examination from a single book, and consequently they are set to reading this book over and over again during the year, in preparation; their writing test consists of setting down, from dictation, a passage from the same book; their arithmetic test is designed "to ensure that . . . a child shall be able to turn out, worked right, two out of three sums of a certain sort" (137), and this too can be done without any real knowledge: "he is taught the mechanical rule by which sums of this sort are worked, and sedulously practised all the year round in working them."

Here is education not only touched by, but transformed into, the worship of machinery. The mind subjected to such miseducation will be in danger of itself becoming a mechanical thing, Arnold suggests, understanding facts but not the laws which produce and regulate them. Every teacher should resist such a wrong tendency, by refusing to become a crammer, "a mere lader with 'information'" (*R.E.S.*, 258); instead, he should be allowed to emphasize those studies which Arnold calls "formative" (210). Arnold's use of this word is interesting, and the Report for 1878, which introduces it, is one of his most significant statements on the nature of true education.

By "formative" studies Arnold means those which have power to shape the mind and to give it an inclination or direction toward intellectual pursuits. "The great fault of the instruction in our elementary schools . . . is, that it at most gives to a child the mechanical possession of the instruments of knowledge, but does nothing to *form* him, to put him in a way of making the best possible use of them" (*R.E.S.*, 163). Reading, writing, "calculating" of themselves are not formative; but the study of good poetry and of the nature of grammar are formative. The latter bring into play the rational faculty; the former require the use of memory only.

To learn the definitions and rules of grammar is, indeed, but an exercise of memory. But, after learning the definition of a noun, to recognize nouns when one meets with them, and to refer them to their definition, that is an exercise of intelligence.

(*R.E.S.*, 190)

The addition to the curriculum of "formative" subjects, and to the school faculties of persons qualified to teach them, was one of the principal causes to which Arnold dedicated the latter half of his professional career. Some recommendation about these matters is found in almost every report from 1872 on.

Behind this attitude of Arnold's there are of course many influences, not least his own natural predilection for "letters" and other avenues of intellectual culture. But there are also two of Joubert's *pensées* which, taken together, bespeak an extraordinarily similar sentiment about the proper aim of education.

La direction de notre esprit est plus importante que son progrès.

(XIX, 34)

Souvenons-nous-en bien, l'éducation ne consiste pas seulement à orner la mémoire et à éclairer l'entendement; elle doit surtout s'occuper à diriger la volonté.

(XIX, 12)

Direction is to Joubert the most important service which education can give to the mind and the will. If they are shown the right path to pursue, their progress upon it will be assured, and the memory and understanding will be adorned and enlightened naturally. Arnold, seeing progress in a wrong direction virtually enjoined by the Revised Code, and having to examine countless children whose memories had been adorned at the expense of their understanding, may well have called to mind these aphorisms.

Another of Joubert's educational ideals is emphasized by Arnold in this same Report for 1878. This second ideal is that of *simplicity*. "Ne montrez aux enfants rien que de simple, de peur de leur gêner le goût," Joubert cautions (XIX, 25); and on children's reading: "Aux enfants, en littérature, rien que de simple" (XIX, 39). Joubert does not amplify these remarks much. Simplicity in education is but one aspect of that simplicity which, as the next chapter will show, he loved above almost every other quality of the mind and its works.

Arnold's emphasis on simplicity, for the particular purposes of the Report, is founded on practicality. It is directed against a movement, in some educational circles of Arnold's day, toward the use of supposedly wonder-working new "methods" of teaching, most of them founded on the work of Pestalozzi. Arnold urges teachers to attend more closely to the significant (the "formative") in their subject matter, and when they have this well in hand no sophistication of methodology will be necessary.

The best thing for a teacher to do is surely to put before himself in the utmost simplicity the problem he has to solve. He has to instruct children between the ages of four and thirteen, children, too, who have for the most part a singularly narrow range of words and thoughts . . . He has to give them

some knowledge of the world in which they find themselves, and of what happens and has happened in it; . . . He has to do as much towards opening their mind, and opening their soul and imagination, as is possible to be done with a number of children of their age and in their state of preparation and home surroundings.

There is the problem for him. He will find that in seeking to solve it he can quite well work on the old lines without busying himself with new and (so-called) scientific theories of education.

(*R.E.S.*, 213, 214)

“Opening their mind, and opening their soul and imagination”—this is for Arnold the true aim of all instruction. It is also a necessary preliminary to the right direction of the will, since for the will to be directed rightly, it must be controlled by an informed intelligence. Joubert would probably subscribe willingly to Arnold’s statement of the teacher’s problem.

In summary, Arnold and Joubert may be found in agreement on some very fundamental aspects of social theory and practice: the danger inherent in an overvaluation of personal liberty, the error of worshipping action and machinery, the eminent worth of order and justice in a state. Both men may be classed as moderates in social and political thought, with Joubert the more conservative of the two, and in that largely reflecting his times. Arnold’s chief contribution is his concept of culture as a “social idea” (*C. and A.*, 42) which includes and helps to propagate order, justice, and right reason. His life’s work as an inspector of schools was a valiant attempt to transform this “social idea” into a living reality for English schoolchildren. Indeed, in all his efforts as the apostle of culture to the society of his day, Arnold attempted to actualize these basic ideas which he shared with Joubert. The ideas themselves were almost certainly not taken directly from Joubert; their most probable origin was in Arnold’s extensive reading of the earliest political scientists, Plato and Aristotle. But Arnold’s regard for the epigrammatic ability with which Joubert stated social views derived from the same source is well supported by the evidence of quotation and allusion in his own essays.

4 / "The Pure and Antique Clearness": Joubert and Arnold's Literary Criticism

Soyez profond en termes clairs, et non pas en termes obscurs. Les choses difficiles deviendront à leur tour aisées; mais il faut porter du charme dans ce qu'on approfondit, et faire entrer, dans les cavernes sombres, où l'on n'a pénétré que depuis peu, la pure et ancienne clarté des siècles moins instruits, mais plus lumineux que le nôtre.

Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, XXIII: 36

I have pointed out how widely, in translating Homer, a man even of real ability and learning may go astray, unless he brings to the study of this clearest of poets the quality in which our English authors, with all their great gifts, are apt to be somewhat wanting—simple lucidity of mind.

Matthew Arnold, *On Translating Homer*

To Joubert and Arnold, it seemed evident that the critical spirit could find few more congenial or more important occupations than the consideration of literature. The four concluding chapters of Joubert's *Pensées*, two hundred pages out of a total of seven hundred, are given over to literary criticism: "De la Poésie," "Du Style," "Des Qualités de l'Écrivain et des Compositions littéraires," and "Jugements littéraires." Arnold's three volumes of *Essays in Criticism*—the first two of which, with *Culture and Anarchy*, remain his most significant prose work—frequently express opinions on matters other than literary, but for all that are firmly based upon the authors and the literary works which are their subjects. *Essays in Criticism*, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, *On Translating Homer*, and such occasional shorter essays as "Preface to the Six Chief Lives from Johnson's Lives of the Poets" (in *Irish Essays*)—these contain the bulk of Arnold's "jugements littéraires," and form no small part of his total prose production.

All these works were written after Arnold had read Joubert, with the exception of *On Translating Homer*; we can trace in them

frequent shared sympathies as well as some reasonably certain influences. In addition, Arnold wrote one early critical essay which is worthy of notice here, because it manifests several critical attitudes, already well formulated, which probably made him more than ordinarily receptive to Joubert's ideas. This is the Preface to his *Poems* of 1853.

The Preface begins, like most of Arnold's literary criticism, with attention to a particular work—in this case, one of his own. The dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna*, which had occupied the place of honor in the volume Arnold had published the previous year, was not reprinted in this book; and approximately the first third of the Preface is devoted to a justification of Arnold's action. Arnold omitted the poem because, in his opinion, it was lacking in the elements which constitute true literary art. From an exposition of the elements lacking in *Empedocles*, Arnold proceeds naturally to a discussion of these elements in the abstract: "the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations, and at all times" (*Pref.*, 274).

The elements of poetry are of two kinds: those embodied in the subject and those manifested in the author's treatment of the subject. The only subjects of which true poetry can be made, Arnold says, are "human actions" which are "interesting" and "excellent." "What actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race" (*Pref.*, 275). The excellence of an action arises, not only from its permanent appeal or "interest" to the human affections, but from its cathartic power upon those affections; and it derives this power from the qualities of will—resolution and nobility—exhibited by the man whose action it is, and necessary in order that the action may be performed. The excellent action provides, by its nature, relief for the suffering of its performer and for the aroused emotions of spectators and readers.

The plot of *Empedocles* belongs to a group of situations which have not this excellence, and for this reason it was not reprinted.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur

in actual life they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

(*Pref.*, 273)

The "morbid" situation—passivity and suffering without a climax of resolution and action—cannot give enjoyment to the reader, whereas the excellent action, though often tragic, can. "It is not enough," Arnold says (*Pref.*, 272), "that the Poet should add to the knowledge of men, it is required of him also that he should add to their happiness." In the same paragraph he quotes Schiller as saying, "The right Art is that alone, which creates the highest enjoyment." Poetry must "inspire and rejoice the reader"; it must "convey a charm, and infuse delight." A tragic situation, with resolution and action, can produce the happiness which Trilling describes as "the stability or poise of the faculties . . . the quieting of the mind in equilibrium. . . . Nothing can assure that eventual equilibrium save action, for by action all the confusions of the emotions are cleared" (Trilling, 137-138). The "morbid" situation is nothing but "the confusions of the emotions"; Empedocles broods on religious questions and doubts, and his only action is to commit suicide.

Arnold, in making these comments and in removing *Empedocles* from the canon of his works, is attempting to combat, in his literary world and in himself, a popular poetic tendency which he regards as pernicious. At the middle of the century, an ephemeral but vocal literary faction—now known by the name a parodist gave them, the "Spasmodics"—argued, by precept and example, that poetry's function was simply to picture what one might call the soliloquy of a passion, or the struggle of several, within the poet's mind.¹ Arnold quotes the remark of an unidentified critic only to disparage it; the critic is uttering a Spasmodic tenet, and in Arnold's terms is promoting morbidity.

The modern critic not only permits a false practice; he absolutely prescribes false aims. "A true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history," the poet is told,

¹ As W. E. Aytoun, the parodist mentioned, put it: "The office of poetry is to exhibit the passions in that state of excitement which distinguishes one from the other" ("Firmilian," in *The Works of W. E. Aytoun* [London, 1921], p. 295). Whether passions, in a "state of excitement," are not just as likely to fuse as to separate seems a legitimate psychological question. Joanna Baillie's *Plays of the Passions* seem, in philosophy as well as diction, to be recognizable forerunners of such Spasmodic productions as Alexander Smith's *A Life Drama* and Sidney Dobell's *The Roman*.

“is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry.” And accordingly he attempts it. An allegory of the state of one’s own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No, assuredly, it is not, it never can be so: no great poetical work has ever been produced with such an aim.

(*Pref.*, 281-282)²

It may be questioned here whether Arnold, who was sometimes prone to literalism in statement and interpretation, realized at this time that the Aristotelian “action” of tragedy is partially and sometimes largely mental; *ethe* and *pathe* may be represented (as indeed those of Empedocles are) by soliloquy or by a number of devices which are not in Arnold’s sense actions. However, the critic’s statement, as a description of poetry’s highest possible achievement, is ridiculously oversimplified. Arnold turns from it, and gives his own formulation of the poetic *summum bonum*: the poet is “most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature” (*Pref.*, 281).

For the artistry by which this noble action is presented, Arnold uses a term which he will return to, eight years later, and will make central to his literary criticism—*the grand style*. This is the style pre-eminently of the Greeks; it made of their works “the highest models of expression” (*Pref.*, 277). Arnold does not define the grand style in the Preface, but he describes it as he finds it in the Greek writers.

Their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence; because it is so simple and so well subordinated; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys.

(*Pref.*, 277-278)

The grand style may be grand in effect, but it is humble in attitude; it is necessary and at the same time ancillary to its noble subject, and those writers who have achieved the grand style have all the time kept the excellent action uppermost in their thought. With the Greeks, “the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration” (*Pref.*, 277). This is what makes familiarity with classic literature so necessary for the writers of Arnold’s own time; for, left to themselves, they have reversed

² Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, as its subtitle (“The Growth of a Poet’s Mind, An Autobiographical Poem”) makes clear, fits the unknown critic’s specifications remarkably well; and Arnold disliked it (*E. in C.*, II, 98).

this emphasis: "With us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action."

The Preface presents several of the basic critical principles which Arnold's later work was to amplify: the supremacy of subject over treatment, of matter over manner, of the whole over the parts; the essentially Aristotelian character of the poetic subject—"men in action," action which is the sequel of resolution and the bringer of joy to the reader; the grand style, a mode of expression characterized by simplicity of utterance and fidelity to "the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys"; and the superiority of classic over modern authors, owing to their more perfect apprehension of these artistic requirements. One very important axiom of Arnold's criticism remains; it will appear for the first time in the essay on Joubert. Before considering that essay, however, it will be profitable to look at the *Pensées* and note some of the congenial ideas and expressions which Arnold found there. What he found is to some extent indicated by the quotations in *Essays in Criticism, First Series*; but these show only certain aspects of Joubert's critical view, which in its totality is remarkably conformable to Arnold's cast of thought.

Joubert's classical predilections are shown in the *pensée* which is an epigraph to this chapter (and which is one of Arnold's citations in "Joubert"), and they appear throughout his four chapters of literary criticism. He values the classical authors for their clarity, and also for the closely related quality of simplicity, both of which enabled them to present profound thoughts understandably. Although, as we shall see, Joubert was rather more sympathetic to Plato than to Aristotle, in one of his paragraphs on the latter philosopher he attributes to him four qualities which are the sum, in Joubert's mind, of classic virtues: "exactitude, facilité, profondeur et clarté" (XXIV, i, 23). Of these the first and last are most important. They may well be considered the basic criteria by means of which Joubert separates good writing and thinking from bad.

On Joubert's exaltation of clarity as a literary virtue, an entire essay might be written. It is the hallmark of all poetry: "Le caractère de la poésie est une clarté suprême" (XXI, 29). No less is it necessary to the aphorism, Joubert's own art form.

La netteté, la propriété dans les termes, la clarté sont le naturel de la pensée. La transparence est sa beauté. Il en résulte que, pour se montrer naturelle, il faut de l'art à la

pensée. Il n'en faut pas au sentiment; il est chaleur, l'autre est lumière.

(XXII, 115)³

"Transparence" is the beauty of the *pensée* to Joubert; "lucidity of mind" is later to be the chief grace of good writers to Arnold. The use of "netteté" here is interesting. Its primary lexical meaning, "cleanness" or "purity," is certainly evident here; in context, such secondary senses as "unity" and "distinctness" seem to be present also. All of these are qualities which Joubert strove to exemplify in his own writing and thinking. When propriety or suitability of language is added to "netteté," which in this passage seems to denote primarily a quality of thought, clarity will be the natural result, and the *pensée* will be beautiful in its lucidity. Significantly, none of this lucidity can be produced by the agency of sentiment, or emotion, for the nature of emotion is warmth and not light; its flame does not clarify.

Clarity cannot be achieved, Joubert warns, if the author's eye is upon himself rather than his subject or his reader. While the man who seeks exactness and clarity may be accused of "affectation," the writer who regards himself is guilty of the far greater sin of "pretention."

L'affectation tient surtout aux mots; la prétention, à la vanité de l'écrivain. Par l'une, l'auteur semble dire: *Je veux être clair, ou je veux être exact*, et il ne déplaît pas; il semble dire par l'autre: *Je veux briller*, et on le siffle. Règle générale: toutes les fois que l'écrivain ne songe qu'à son lecteur, on lui pardonne; s'il ne songe qu'à lui, on le punit.

(XXIII, 38)

When an author thinks only of his reader, in Joubert's sense, he is also thinking truly of his subject, because he regards his reader as an inquirer to be enlightened concerning the subject. The writer who thinks chiefly of himself is in a way considering his reader too, but rather as a spectator to be impressed. Consequently he takes less trouble to clarify his thought; he wishes to shine, but has no light, "et on le siffle." The distinction between affectation and pretense

³ Note the distinction between heat and light here. This distinction, which has been the subject of some comment in connection with other aspects of Joubert's thought, appears implicitly in a more famous passage—the criticism of Mme. de Staël (XXIV, v, 35). After admitting that she had "un esprit supérieur," he says: "Son imagination a été séduite par quelque chose qui est plus brillant que les vrais biens: l'éclat de la flamme et des feux l'a égarée. . . . Les passions sont devenues à ses yeux une espèce de dignité et de gloire." Arnold paraphrased this *pensée* but did not directly quote it (*E. in C.*, I, 296).

may seem slight to English-speaking persons, and the complacent attitude toward affectation is difficult to share or to sympathize with.⁴ But in affectation there is not, as there is in pretense, the will to deceive and to be self-deceived. And it is the *motive* which gains pardon for affectation from Joubert; the desire to be clear and exact can cover a multitude of sins with its own virtue.

The search for exactness and clarity, while it may bring forth affectation, more often produces what Joubert calls "le naturel exquis," as opposed to "le naturel vulgaire" (XXIII, 40). What is the naturally exquisite in literary style? It is

l'expression juste, l'expression simple, l'expression la plus convenable au sujet mis en question, à la pensée qu'on a, au sentiment dont on est animé, à ce qui précède, à ce qui suit, à la place qui attend le mot.

The naturally exquisite is quite far from the preciousness which the term "exquisite" so often connotes to the twentieth-century mind. Joubert gives much more attention to style, to expression, than Arnold does in the Preface, or in any of his criticism except perhaps *On Translating Homer*, yet for Joubert no less than for Arnold expression in itself is a secondary thing. The right expression is always "simple" and "convenable au sujet." Joubert's strictures on style and expression which do not remain subordinate to their subject are severe.

Quand l'image masque l'objet, et que l'on fait de l'ombre un corps; quand l'expression plaît tellement qu'on ne tend plus à passer outre pour pénétrer jusqu'au sens; quand le figure enfin absorbe l'attention tout entière, on est arrêté en chemin, et la route est prise pour la gîte, parce qu'un mauvais guide nous conduit.

(XXII, 110)

Joubert's concern for simplicity appears perhaps most directly in one of his maxims on education, part of which is quoted in the preceding chapter. After prescribing for children's reading "rien que de simple" in literature, he explains: "La simplicité n'a jamais corrompu le goût; tout ce qui est poétiquement défectueux est incompatible avec elle" (XIX, 39). It must be noted that Joubert is not speaking of mere stylistic simplicity, which is often truly affectation. In *On Translating Homer*, Arnold remarks that in French

⁴ Arnold sometimes found it so. Cf. *E. in C.*, I, 312: "No doubt, if a man wishes to be a great author, it is to consider too curiously, to consider as Joubert did."

there is a useful word to distinguish such "semblance of simplicity" (314) from the real thing. "The real quality it calls *simplicité*, the semblance *simplese*. The one is natural simplicity, the other is artificial simplicity." Wordsworth's "Michael" is a work of *simplicité*; his "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" is one of *simplese*. Joubert never confuses the two. *Simplicité* is a quality of mind, as well as of expression, and the mental quality is necessary to all literary endeavors. "On peut donner de la simplicité à la richesse; il faut le faire même dans tous les genres" (XXIV, iv, 11).

His passion, as it may most properly be called, for exactness is a characteristic which Arnold chooses to emphasize in "Joubert" (*E. in C.*, I, 284-285). The passages which Arnold quotes are, with one exception, from Joubert's preliminary chapter, descriptive of himself and his ideals. It is easy to see how a man who in his eagerness tried to get at ideas and "to do without words" if they were in the slightest degree unnecessary, and who described his auctorial mission in such a phrase as "Ce n'est pas ma phrase que je polis, mais mon idée" (Prél., p. 95), would appeal to the kindred critical spirit which Arnold was developing in the early 1860's.

Most of the literary *pensées* which Arnold thought important enough to quote in "Joubert" are judgments on particular authors. Some, like those in the preceding paragraph and at the head of this chapter, are concerned with Joubert's love of clarity, simplicity, and exactness; Arnold is at pains to communicate this attitude.⁵ Oddly, several paragraphs upon a subject with which Arnold had recently dealt—paragraphs expressing opinions with which Arnold was in fairly complete agreement—are not quoted. Yet it may be assumed that the pleasurable surprise of discovering Joubert's estimate of Homer and of what Arnold had called "the grand style" added considerably to his appreciation of Joubert.

The lectures *On Translating Homer*, published in 1861, together with the *Last Words* published the following year in answer to Arnold's opponents, began as a study of the art of translation and rapidly broadened into a definition of literary nobility and an attempt to show the reasons for its absence from nineteenth-century England. It is a criticism as much of the men and the ethical conditions which produce literature as it is of literature itself, and as

⁵ Cf. *E. in C.*, I, 307. "He thought the truth was never really and worthily said, so long as the least cloud, clumsiness, and repulsiveness hung about the expression of it. Some of his best passages are those in which he upholds this doctrine." By their position in the essay, these two sentences serve as a general introduction to all the quotations.

such it is a significant expression of the scope of Arnold's mind. As a work of literary criticism, it is most important for its full description of the grand style, which the Preface of 1853 had dealt with only by hints and indirections.

"I think it will be found," Arnold says (*Trans. H.*, 289), "that the grand style arises in poetry, *when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject.*" This is no simple definition. Included are the human qualities of the artist ("a noble nature") and a restriction upon subject matter ("a serious subject"), as well as those qualities in the writer and his art which one is more apt to associate with literary style ("poetically gifted . . . with simplicity or with severity"). And in spite of Arnold's assertion that the definition "contains no terms . . . which themselves need defining," most readers will find that the use of the word "severity" makes the explanation and illustrations which follow (290-291) necessary for an adequate understanding of Arnold's meaning.

The distinction between "severe" and "simple" is more than a mere attempt at classification; it seems to be also, to judge from the kind of treatment given each style, a reflection of Arnold's literary value system. Arnold says (*Trans. H.*, 290): "In a former lecture I pointed out what . . . severity of poetical style is." He is evidently referring to the discussion of Milton (224-225); but while the concept is there, the word is not; "austere" is the closest substitute, and in writing on Milton Arnold emphasizes "fulness" and "condensation," rather than austerity. Even after Arnold has gone through the process of exemplifying the grand style severe, it is far from being as clearly defined as the style of Homer. Arnold's "severity" is little more than our modern "compression," added to the general characteristics of the grand style. It is certain that Arnold preferred simplicity to severity: "Both these styles, the simple and the severe, are truly grand; . . . But the simple is no doubt to be preferred" (*Trans. H.*, 292). Doubtless he also felt more at ease when discussing simplicity. There is very little of the "severe," it may be remarked, in any of the famous touchstones.⁶

⁶ Jacques Maritain, in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York, 1953), makes a useful distinction between poems which are "obscure in essence" and those which are only "obscure in appearance." The latter, he says, are *clear* in essence, and he describes them in terms which at once resemble and illuminate those which Arnold uses to describe the grand style severe. Arnold describes Milton's style thus (*Trans. H.*, 224): "Milton charges himself so full with thought, imagination, knowledge, that his style will hardly contain them. . . ."

Homer's own grand style is given a much more specific description. Arnold isolates four qualities of Homer, at once his most important properties and those least grasped by his English translators.

The translator of Homer should above all be penetrated by a sense of four qualities of his author;—that he is eminently rapid; that he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his manner and ideas; and finally, that he is eminently noble.

(*Trans. H.*, 162)

Of these four characteristics, the last—here, as on page 289, referring to the nobility of the artist's mind rather than the nobility of the subject—is the most important for the purposes of Arnold's lectures, for it is the quality most completely missed by Francis Newman, the latest translator to enter the Homeric lists. Newman's translation failed "more conspicuously" than others because it lacked nobility; and it lacked nobility, Arnold strongly hints elsewhere, because Newman was not noble. "To make a man's poetry rapid, as to make it noble, nothing can serve him so much as to have, in his own nature, rapidity and nobleness. *It is the spirit that quickeneth*" (*Trans. H.*, 219).

So the grand style is even more eminently noble than simple, and it is exercised by a noble spirit as well as upon a noble subject. It will be seen that this concern with nobility and with the human nature of the artist is very similar to that manifested throughout one of the important treatises of classical criticism—*On the Sublime*, attributed to Longinus. This work had prior to Arnold's time influenced a number of literary and aesthetic theorists, among Englishmen most notably Edmund Burke (*A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757) and Sir Joshua Reynolds (*Discourses Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy*, 1769-1790). Arnold's statements about and attitude toward "nobility" are almost duplications of the classical author's views on the sublime. Also, both writers (Arnold much more than his predecessor, however) are interested in those

All this fulness, this pressure, this condensation, this self-constraint, enters into his movement, and makes it what it is,—noble, but difficult and austere." Maritain says of poems which are "obscure in appearance": "Their obscurity comes in reality . . . from the heavy concentrated intelligibility and the complexity of logical connotations with which they are burdened" (p. 194).

conditions in their societies which inhibit the activities of noble souls and the production of noble art.

The eighth chapter of *On the Sublime* enumerates five "principal sources" of sublimity.⁷ These are of two kinds: the first two, "the power of forming great conceptions" and "inspired passion," are qualities found in the nature of the artist; the others—the formation of figures of speech, "noble diction," and elevated composition—are qualities found in the artistic expression itself. In this basic enumeration no limitation is placed on subject matter, but the two classes of sublime qualities otherwise correspond to Arnold's division of nobility into that of the creator and that of his creation.

The ninth chapter begins with the assertion that "the first of the conditions mentioned, namely elevation of mind, holds the foremost rank among them all." Unfortunately, after twenty lines of discussion of this topic, the manuscript breaks off; several pages are missing at this point. Yet in this small space we have such sentences as "Sublimity is the echo of a great soul" and "The truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts" to show us how closely parallel the main theses of Longinus and Arnold are. Since "elevation of mind" is the fountainhead from which all elevation of style must flow, it is obviously of supreme importance, and a writer like Francis Newman or Hesiod⁸ who lacks elevation of mind is truly without "the one thing needful."

A natural consequence of this concern with the artist's nobility or lack of it is the emphasis placed by both authors on the ignobility of their times. The presence of a defect in the whole fabric of society will at least partially explain its presence in the life and work of society's individual members; it will also serve, by contrast, to heighten the value of that good quality which is its opposite. Longinus touches on this only in the forty-fourth and last section of his treatise, but this placement of the discussion and the seriousness of his tone show that he regarded the problem as a serious one. His condemnation of the spirit of his age is not very similar to Arnold's, for his chief animus is directed against the love of luxury and the spiritual sloth which results from it.

Among the banes of the natures which our age produces must be reckoned that half-heartedness in which the life of all of

⁷ All quotations from *On the Sublime* are from the translation by W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge, England, 1899), pp. 57-63 and 161.

⁸ In *On the Sublime*, a line from Hesiod is given (p. 61) as an example of complete and obvious absence of elevation; the poet, describing Sorrow, wrote: "Rheum from her nostrils was trickling."

us with few exceptions is passed, for we do not labour or exert ourselves except for the sake of praise and pleasure, never for those solid benefits which are a worthy object of our own efforts and the respect of others.

Arnold's criticism of his age is found mainly in *Culture and Anarchy* and *Friendship's Garland*, rather than in *On Translating Homer*, and has been discussed in the previous chapter. Not the absence of energy, but the omnipresence in English life of an energy not adequately directed by intelligence, was for him one of the chief causes of ignobility, in Francis Newman as much as in political figures like John Bright. But the conclusion reached by both men is the same: sublimity and nobility are not fostered by the conditions of modern life.

This growing preoccupation with nobility on Arnold's part is closely akin to a similar attitude which informs all Joubert's literary criticism. Joubert has his own criteria by which the grandeur of a style may be judged, and the nobility of the author's spirit is one of the chief among them. "Le plus humble style donne le goût du beau, s'il exprime la situation d'une âme grande et belle" (XXII, 82). When Joubert writes of particular authors, he usually considers the question of their spiritual nobility, explicitly or implicitly. Corneille and Racine are compared, and Corneille is given the palm, because his works manifest a grander spirit, although those of Racine are more artistically finished. "Beaucoup plus parfait que Corneille, et moins grand, Racine doit être moins révé" (XXIV, v, 8). The *pensée* which precedes this is even more illuminating. "On reproche à Corneille ses grands mots et ses grands sentiments; mais pour nous élever, et ne pas être salis par les bassesses de la terre, il nous faut en tous des échasses" (XXIV, v, 7). Here we see the weakness inherent in any exaltation of nobility—the overrefined distaste for "les bassesses de la terre." Words and sentiments which are merely grandiose will truly be stilts, artificial aids to an artificial elevation; and an elevation so reached will have little in common with "la situation d'une âme grande et belle." Arnold occasionally notices this tendency in "Joubert," but criticizes it only mildly, because (as will shortly appear) it is a tendency which he shares.

To Joubert, nobility is an obligation which both the artist and his work must fulfil. Arnold's own esteem of nobility, in 1861, is scarcely less high. In 1853 he had echoed Schiller's judgment that art is dedicated to Joy; eight years later he seems almost to be at one with Joubert's opinion, clearly implied if not declared, that art is

dedicated to Nobility. To some extent this is the difference between *The Strayed Reveller* and *Merope*, manifested in criticism; but there is actually less distance between these standpoints than might be imagined. For Arnold, joy is always "inspiring"; it raises and ennobles the human soul. His conception of the noble nature of joy, implicit in the Preface of 1853, is most succinctly expressed in the poem "Obermann Once More" (1865):

And yet men have such need of joy!
But joy whose grounds are true;
And joy that should all hearts employ
As when the past was new. . . .

What still of strength is left, employ
That end to help attain:
One common wave of thought and joy
Lifting mankind again!

(*Poems* I, pp. 312, 315, ll. 237-240, 321-324)

The joy which springs from truth and is the companion of thought is indeed a noble force in the life of man.

Arnold must have noticed, in reading the *Pensées*, two interesting parallels between his remarks on Homer and those of Joubert. Arnold says that Homer is "rapid" and emphasizes this quality of his style, listing it first and discussing (*Trans. H.*, 163-168) the failures of Chapman and Cowper when they attempted to reproduce it. Joubert counsels all writers of "serious" poetry to imitate that swiftness of movement, coupled with grandeur of expression, which Homer uses in depicting action.

Il faut que le vers sérieux avance à grands pas, et non en piétinant. Il doit donner à la rapidité, quand il veut la peindre, le marche des dieux d'Homère: "Il fait un pas, et il arrive."

(XXI, 36)

Joubert opens his twenty-fourth chapter, "Jugements littéraires," with a paragraph on the translation of Homer into French, which expresses some opinions similar to Arnold's thoughts on English versions.

Il n'y aura jamais de traduction d'Homère supportable, si tous les mots n'en sont choisis avec art et pleins de variété, de nouveauté et d'agrément. Il faut, d'ailleurs, que l'expression soit aussi antique, aussi nue que les moeurs, les événements et les personnages mis en scène. Avec notre style moderne, tout grimace dans Homère, et ses héros semblent des grotesques qui font les graves et les fiers.

(XXIV, i, 1)

The desire for "nouveau" may seem at first to indicate a preference for the faddish in language, such as Francis Newman certainly possessed or was possessed by; but such a desire would be greatly at variance with the whole tenor of Joubert's criticism. The right style for a French translation of Homer is "novel" in relation to the neo-classic French style of Racine and Boileau and their eighteenth-century followers; it would be something new to French literature, and the next sentence explains why. The style should be as "antique" and as "naked" as the plot and characters require, and the modern style in French poetry meets neither of these specifications. On the contrary, it makes Homer grotesque. The Alexandrine of Parny, like the ballad measure of Newman, is no fit vehicle for nobility—of subject, of style, or of soul.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that Arnold, when he came to write "Joubert" (1863), declared that the French writer's literary maxims possess a "purged and subtle delicacy" (*E. in C.*, I, 319). Purged of modern ignobleness and morbidity by his love and understanding of the classic authors, made delicate by his understanding of the relation of writer to work, spirit to subject and style, Joubert had, in Arnold's eyes, accomplished the task which Arnold set before himself as man and critic: "to preserve perfectly true the balance of his soul."

Arnold chose for quotation in "Joubert" eighteen *pensées* which are concerned with literature and literary criticism. Eleven are about individual writers, all of whom are either Greek classics or French neo-classics. Arnold's selection here is significant. He wishes to show that Joubert admired, but did not worship, the practitioners and the restorers of "the pure and antique clearness." Particularly he wants to show that Joubert was not to be taken in by superficial imitators of the ancients, who have the grand manner but not the excellent subject or the noble spirit.

He quotes several *pensées* on Plato, saying that Plato "has never been more truly described" (*E. in C.*, I, 322) than by Joubert. It is to Plato's clarity and light that Joubert gives his praise. "Il éclaire, il met de la lumière dans nos yeux, et place en nous une clarté dont tous les objets deviennent ensuite illuminés." Plato's function is not so much to teach us as to prepare us to learn; as a bringer of light, he stimulates us to engage in that free play of thought which to Arnold is the beginning of culture. But sometimes, Joubert says, this light is not shed on anything very important; the subject is not of an excellence to match the spirit and the manner. Readers who have watched Plato's manner and spirit expend themselves on the

minutiae of the *Laws* would probably agree. Consequently Joubert adds a cautionary statement, whose concluding sentence Arnold also quotes (XXIV, i, 10): "Il y a en lui plus de lumière que d'objets, plus de forme que de matière. Il faut le respirer et non pas s'en nourrir." It is well to be warned about any man, even Plato, who has a tendency to substitute manner for matter; Arnold and Joubert would agree on this.

The judgments of Joubert on "the grand century" which Arnold quotes are minority opinions, both in Arnold's time and in Joubert's. They are presented because Arnold hopes they will do something to correct false estimates of the authors with whom they deal. After admitting (*E. in C.*, I, 323) that "English people have hardly ears to hear the praises of Bossuet," he introduces a lengthy paragraph praising Bossuet. On the other hand, he considers Joubert's commentaries on Racine, no fewer than four of which he quotes, to be valuable because they serve as an antidote to "the exaggerated French estimate" of him. They will seem a harsh corrective to most open-minded readers of Racine. Arnold even applauds a passage (XXIV, v, 15) in which Joubert joins the names and talents of Racine and Boileau, to whom he adds Pope as a third star of the second magnitude. The comparison of Pope and Boileau is a critical commonplace; but Racine seems to have so little in common with them, in matter and manner, that we are startled at this judgment. Arnold and Joubert would answer that in nobility, or rather in the lack of it, lies the clue to Racine's inferior stature. "Ceux à qui Racine suffit," Joubert says (XXIV, v, 13), "sont de pauvres âmes et de pauvres esprits"; and Racine deserves praise only for succeeding in a very dubious enterprise—"pour avoir rendu poétiques les sentiments les plus bourgeois et les passions les plus médiocres." Racine did not, like Corneille, write about excellent actions and noble passions; he presented instead, according to Joubert, pictures of the state of what G. K. Chesterton would call "potty little minds" inflamed by turgid emotions.

Modern readers will probably find *Andromaque* or *Hippolyte* marked less by the ignoble than by the absence of much of the frigidity which characterizes all but the best of Corneille's plays. Both Arnold and Joubert fail to realize that an excessive striving after nobility leads to the diminution of the human qualities of the "men in action" which are necessary to the very existence of a work of art. Where nobility is involved, their critical sensitivity frequently degenerates into finickiness. Joubert shows this defect most clearly in his extended and exaggerated praise of Guez de

Balzac (XXIV, iv, 5-10). Few English readers know more of *Le Socrate chrétien* and its author than a footnote in histories of literature tells them. Balzac's book has elegance of expression as its only merit; the ponderous, humorless title hints at the exalted platitudes which make up the work. But, because the platitudes are noble (though shopworn) and the expression elegant (though inflated), Joubert praises Balzac in this strain: "Balzac, un de nos plus grands écrivains, et le premier entre les bons, . . . est utile à lire, à méditer, et excellent à admirer." Nothing half so enthusiastic as this, by the way, is said in the *Pensées* about Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, or La Bruyère.

Arnold's overrefinement appears in a situation where it is far more damaging to him—not in acclamation of a mediocre writer, but in derogation of a very great one. His essay on Keats, in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, begins with a deprecation of Keats's sensuousness which is characteristic enough of Arnold, but which in its concern with personality rather than poetry and its bland assumption of superiority is entirely beneath the level of real criticism. Never does Arnold appear to such complete disadvantage, as man and critic, as when he quotes one of Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne and goes on to evaluate it:

We have the tone, or rather the entire want of tone, the abandonment of all reticence and all dignity, of the merely sensuous man, of the man who "is passion's slave." . . . It has in its relaxed self-abandonment something underbred and ignoble, as of a youth ill brought up, without the training which teaches us that we must put some constraint upon our feelings and upon the expression of them. It is the sort of love-letter of a surgeon's apprentice which one might hear read out in a breach of promise case, or in the Divorce Court.
(*E. in C.*, II, 75-76)

It is only just to Arnold to say that he goes on to look for "something more than sensuousness, for signs of character and virtue" in Keats, and finds them. Condemnation was not the purpose of the article; but it begins the article, it was never modified, and it stands as a monument of priggishness, as absurd in its horror of the "ignoble" as the Third Fellow's words in *She Stoops to Conquer*: "O damn anything that's *low*, I cannot bear it."

Some of this excessive sensibility is shown by Joubert when he writes, and by Arnold when he quotes, such a maxim as XXIII, 128.

Avec la fièvre des sens, le délire du coeur et la faiblesse de l'esprit; avec les orages du temps et les grands fléaux de

la vie, la faim, la soif, le déshonneur, les maladies et la mort,
on fera tout qu'on voudra des romans qui feront pleurer;
mais l'âme dit: "Vous me faites mal."

Arnold introduces his translation of this passage by saying (*E. in C.*, I, 320): "Here is another sentence, worthy of Goethe, to clear the air at one's entrance into the region of literature." It is indeed a statement to clear the air, and the whole universe, of much of the subject matter for literary art. Both Joubert and Arnold tend here to confuse the events and passions of human experience with the wrongheaded or imperfect use of them which has been made by inferior writers of all times. So far as these misfortunes are depicted for their own sake, unassociated with any noble action or thought on the part of the sufferers, they are "morbid" situations in the terms of the Preface of 1853; and novels which make us weep, and do no more for us, are usually pollutions of the literary atmosphere. Nevertheless, without "les grands fléaux de la vie" the noble actions and thoughts necessary for good literature could scarcely exist, since their nobility is only a measure, according to certain predetermined standards, of the adequacy of their response to experience.

When Arnold quotes another *pensée* of almost equal supersensibility (XXIV, v, p. 225), however, an element of the "affreuse réalité" which Joubert decries in literature rises in him and makes him demur mildly: "Most of us, alas! are what we must be, not what we ought to be,—not even what we know we ought to be." Arnold was to write later, "It is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world" (*E. in C.*, II, 33); he was never to agree with Joubert that it is *necessary* for literature to concern itself with a sphere "plus belle que le monde."

Certainly the greatest importance of "Joubert," in both the history of Arnold's thought and that of modern literary criticism, lies in the fact that it contains the earliest formulation of one of his most famous dicta. After speaking of "the two orders" of writers, those famous for all time and those known primarily to their own generation, he says that their work "is at the bottom the same,—a criticism of life. The end and aim of all literature, if one considers it attentively, is, in truth, nothing but that" (*E. in C.*, I, 331).

That Arnold intended this to be noted as a significant pronouncement is shown by his use of italics as well as by the high degree of generalization. In "Joubert," however, the idea is dropped from consideration as soon as it is stated. In later essays, most notably "The Study of Poetry" (1880) and "Byron" (1881; both printed in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*), Arnold qualifies and

reinforces this statement; consequently, these essays are more important than "Joubert" as manifestoes of his critical position. The very fact that he first used the phrase in "Joubert," however, leads to the speculation that he found in the *Pensées* some concept or statement that impelled him to formulate it.

Trilling, remarking on the fact that Arnold "is writing of Joubert when he first uses the phrase" (179), says that Arnold meant the phrase to carry only a "literal" meaning—the simple signification of "judgment," which is one of the primary meanings attached by the common reader to the act of criticism.

Joubert was no architect of a golden world but a critic, in a very literal sense, of this brazen world; Arnold simply meant that Joubert put his finger on aspects of life and judged "Good" or "Bad." So poetry (or literature generally), Arnold feels, sometimes by accident and implication but sometimes by intent, says "Good" or "Bad."

Trilling opposes this "literal" interpretation to that given by H. W. Garrod, which is "that insofar as a work possesses organic unity it is a criticism of the chaos of life" (178).⁹ This sort of criticism is judgment too, but judgment not by intent nor even necessarily by implication, but by example.

The accuracy of Trilling's estimate of the nature of Joubert's criticism may well be questioned. In all the *Pensées*, only the last long chapter concerns itself entirely with discriminating between good and bad aspects of this present world—specifically with the good and bad aspects of some four-score writers and their work. The twenty-three preceding chapters are concerned—as the fervent Platonist which Joubert was, and which Arnold recognized him to be, was concerned—with the ideal concepts of education, government, and religion, among others, rather than with the adequacy or inadequacy of human efforts to make them materialize. "Sans modèle, et sans un modèle idéal, nul ne peut bien faire" (IX, 39). I have remarked, in the preceding chapter, how abstract, how far removed from actuality and contemporaneity, Joubert's writings on politics and education are, compared with Arnold's. In them Joubert is not attempting to condemn existing evil, to uphold existing good, or even to distinguish between the two, much of the

⁹ Most of Garrod's assessments of Arnold are contained in the collection of lectures entitled *Poetry and the Criticism of Life* (London, 1931). Three of the eight lectures deal with Arnold's poetry; a fourth, entitled "Methods of Criticism," reveals Garrod as an intelligent interpreter of Arnold's literary theory to a new generation.

time. He is trying to display the "modèle idéal." In fact, he perceives the limitations of writers who give us only judgments and condemns such practice. "Il est bon d'écrire ses vues, ses aperçus, ses idées, mais non pas ses jugements. L'homme qui écrit toujours ses jugements, place partout devant ses yeux des *Calpe* et des *Abila*. Il en fait des *nec plus ultra*, et ne va pas plus loin" (XXIII, 67). That Joubert makes an honest attempt to conform his critical practice to his theory is shown by the careful segregation of his "judgements" from his other work and by their placement at the end of the book, where their relation to what has preceded them is not so much climactic as appendicular; they are by-products rather than end-products of his critical method.

What Arnold himself meant by applying to literature's relation to life the name of "criticism" is perhaps best shown in the essay on Wordsworth. After using the phrase,¹⁰ he says:

The greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question: How to live. . . . The best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life*.

(*E. in C.*, II, 105-106)

The italics in this passage, like those in "Joubert," show us what Arnold regards as significant; they show us that the highest degree of importance to be found in this important phrase belongs not to "criticism" but to "life." Our literature must "enter into the meaning" of this word; and how is this to be done? By applying to life, its events and their movement, the "moral ideas" which life has evolved. This application is not necessarily didactic nor philosophical; in fact, Arnold prefers that it not be, and condemns *The Excursion* because it is:

The *Excursion* abounds with philosophy, and therefore the *Excursion* is to the Wordsworthian what it never can be to the disinterested lover of poetry,—a satisfactory work. . . . But however true the doctrine may be, it has, as here presented, none of the characters of *poetic* truth.

(*E. in C.*, II, 109-110)

¹⁰ In the later essays, Arnold substitutes "poetry" for "literature." This change probably should not be regarded as particularly significant; the later essays are about poetry, while "Joubert" is about prose, and the change of subject made the change of word reasonable and helpful.

The application of moral ideas must be "powerful and beautiful," because power and beauty are "the characters of *poetic truth*." They are characters found in both the manner and the matter of the best, the truly classic literature. A statement of moral ideas without the power and beauty of poetry will probably criticize life, in Trilling's phrase, by pointing to the Good and Bad of existence and exemplifying the Good, if at all, only in its matter. A work of literary art will criticize life by manifesting the Good and Bad, in whatever combination is most suitable to its purpose, in its matter; it will also in its manner evidence such aspects of Good as power, beauty, clarity, and nobility, to the end that life may find in literature the means of self-understanding and self-improvement.

To what extent is Arnold's reading of Joubert connected with his formulation of the statement and the theory that "literature is a criticism of life"? In writing of criticism per se, Joubert indicates that understanding rather than judgment is its aim: "La connaissance des esprits est la charme de la critique; le maintien des bonnes règles n'en est que le métier et la dernière utilité" (XXIII, 144). Here again, in his own words, we have something very close to a denial of the critical aim which Trilling attributes to him. The similarity to this of Arnold's chief aim in criticism is marked. "To see the object as in itself it really is"—so he states it in *On Translating Homer* (302); and to this goal he pressed steadfastly, for the most part, throughout his life. Occasionally, most notably in his religious criticism, we see him turning slightly from this high intellectual aim; but this happens in an area of mental activity where the great conflict in Arnold's nature, between Hellenism and Hebraism, was particularly hard fought, and never really won by either side.

If, then, both the duty and the reward of criticism lie in understanding authors' works, and through their works their minds, what are the duty and the reward of the works themselves? Joubert answers this briefly and pointedly. "Il n'y a pas eu un seul siècle littéraire dont le goût dominant ne fut malade. Le succès des auteurs excellents consiste à rendre agréable à des goûts malades des ouvrages sains" (XXIII, 137). Taste in literature stems from taste in life, and the taste and the life may both be (Joubert says they almost always are) sick. Good authors meet this sickness, not with exhortations to be healthy or denunciations of disease, but with "ouvrages sains" whose health is "agréable à des goûts malades."

Spiritual health is agreeable to the spiritually ill when it is shown to them in simple contrast with their unfortunate state. To

do this both Good and Bad must be depicted, but Good is emphasized and Bad is treated as the effect of Good's absence. "C'est toujours avec des clartés qu'on doit représenter les ombres, et avec des beautés qu'il faut figurer les défauts" (XXIII, 79).¹¹ Such a portrayal of life—more idea than reality, Joubert says (XXIII, 78)—is faithful to life in the highest sense, because it is true to the ideals which life has evolved. This faithfulness produces a truer picture of the actualities involved, since they are related to the ideals which they express or deny; and the spiritual accuracy, so to speak, of the presentation ennobles the data of life. "Nos idées, en effet, sont toujours et plus nobles, et plus belles, et plus propres à toucher l'âme, que les objets qu'elles représentent, quand, d'ailleurs, elles les représentent bien."

The conception of literature as a "criticism of life" is one of two major critical ideas developed by Arnold in his later years, the other being the "touchstone" theory stated in "The Study of Poetry." Arnold's own definition of literary touchstones and their uses can hardly be improved upon in paraphrase; it is worth reproducing unabridged.

Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them; it may be very dissimilar. But if we have any tact we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them.

(*E. in C.*, II, 12-13)

While Arnold says that no other method of judging literature is more useful than that of the touchstones, he does not say that all other methods are useless. Nor does he appeal to the touchstones as if they were Urim and Thummim, which by themselves can help us to the understanding of other poetry. They can help us to find in other poetry "the presence or absence of high poetic quality," but more than this is needed for the full comprehension of any work of art. Arnold does say (*E. in C.*, II, 15) that "even by themselves"

¹¹ Cf. one of Arnold's praises of Homer's style (*Trans. H.*, 189): "He does not rise and sink with his subject; on the contrary, his manner invests his subject, whatever his subject be, with nobleness."

these lines can preserve our critical faculty from error; but this statement is qualified by the clause "if we have tact and can use them." Critics who have tact and ability are not likely, to put it mildly, to attempt to use the touchstones in isolation, separated alike from their sources and all other critical methods. And preservation from critical error is not necessarily synonymous with revelation of critical truth.

It seems silly to insist that Arnold does not tell us that the memorizing of some two dozen lines of verse will unfold all poetic mysteries for us. It would be silly, were it not for the fact that two intelligent critics of our day have assumed that he tells us just that. Wimsatt and Brooks say of the touchstone theory: "This open appeal to the chunklet, the sample piece of precious stuff, is a rather startling shift toward the norm of style and away from the initial classic thesis of 1853 that the 'action is all.'"¹² First of all, a very cursory examination would reveal that the majority of these "chunklets" deal in some way with noble actions of the mind. They picture for us the compassion of Zeus, the courage of Satan, the Christian humility of Piccarda in the *Divine Comedy*. Second, and even more obviously, these brief quotations, beautiful and noble though they are in matter and manner, are not sufficient for the complete and accurate presentation of noble actions and emotions. Arnold has to explain and summarize the context from which each passage is taken. These contexts are in every instance fit settings for the jewels; they are also noble depictions of noble actions, and the touchstone passages represent the poetic concentration of this underlying nobility into a few words and lines whose matter and manner are perfectly matched. We will find it almost impossible to use the Miltonic touchstones, for example, if we are not familiar with the action and spirit of all of *Paradise Lost*. Wimsatt and Brooks, when they say that "to make the touchstone test it would seem we do not have to know much if anything about the story" which the poem tells, seem to me to be clearly in error.¹³

¹² *Literary Criticism*, p. 445.

¹³ This statement is connected with a notable inaccuracy in reporting. The authors are writing specifically of Chaucer's "Prioress' Tale"; earlier in the paragraph they speak of a line from another of Chaucer's poems as a "touchstone slightly misquoted." The fact is that none of the quotations from Chaucer in "The Study of Poetry" are presented as touchstones. All they can give us, Arnold says, is "the charm of Chaucer's verse" (*E. in C.*, II, 22); they cannot serve as a guide to what is excellent in other poetry. "Chaucer is not one of the great classics," Arnold says, because he has not "high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry" (24). Wimsatt

There is in Joubert's *Pensées* a paragraph (XXIII, 217) which embodies an idea almost identical with the touchstone theory. The only real difference is in the final clause, wherein Joubert tends to extravagance in praise of short passages—the same extravagance, very nearly, of which Wimsatt and Brooks accuse Arnold.

Quelques mots dignes de mémoire peuvent suffire pour illustrer un grand esprit. Il y a telle pensée que contient l'essence d'un livre tout entier; telle phrase qui a les beautés d'un vaste ouvrage; telle unité qui équivaut à un nombre; enfin telle simplicité si achevée et si parfaite, qu'elle égale, en mérite et en excellence, une grande et glorieuse composition.

Joubert speaks of "mots dignes de mémoire"; Arnold wants the touchstones to be "always in one's mind." Joubert says these words will suffice "pour illustrer un grand esprit" in their author; Arnold goes further and asserts that the touchstones will help us to find "the presence or absence of high poetic quality . . . in all other poetry which we may place beside them." It does not seem too sweeping to say that the lines from the *Iliad*, the *Divine Comedy*, and *Paradise Lost* which Arnold quotes contain much of the "essence"—in style and in attitude toward the subject—of the books: the loftiness and simplicity of the first, the power and devoutness of the second, and the intellectual clarity and emotional intensity of the third. Certainly they all contain "beauties" in profusion within their narrow bounds.

The keystone of the arch is the "simplicité si achevée et si parfaite." So highly does Joubert regard this quality that he says the sentences, lines, and other passages which manifest it are equal in value to the finest complete works of art. This is so because true simplicity is itself "achevée" in several senses—complete and entire, labored at and perfected. It is the perfect relationship of matter and manner, and to Joubert perfection within a small compass is as meritorious as (perhaps because in some ways more difficult than) perfection on a large scale. (Part of this attitude is of course owing to his partiality for his own literary form, the aphorism.)

Now it may be noted that all Arnold's touchstones are examples of the "grand style simple." None are much affected by the condensation and difficult appearance which are the distinguishing marks of the severe. One may reasonably think that their simplicity

and Brooks recognize that this high seriousness is simply a rephrasing of the ideal of nobility in matter and simplicity in manner; what they do not seem to understand is that the ideal cannot be separated from the touchstone theory and that consequently Arnold's critical position has "shifted" very little.

—a term which here may well be extended to include their *simplification*, their power to epitomize the quality of the works to which they belong—was in large part responsible for their choice as touchstones. Arnold will not say with Joubert that the touchstones equal their sources in worth. He does say that they are more than adequate indications of the worth of their sources and of many other works; and their simple completeness of tone and style, their summary capacity, is what makes them so supremely useful as literary points of reference.

From first to last, in speaking of the literary criticism of Joubert and Arnold, the watchwords of this study have been “simplicity,” “clarity,” and “nobility.” The frequency of their use provides an index of the consistency of the two men’s critical approaches to literature. Arnold seeks primarily the first, while Joubert shows a predilection for the second; both, however, think of simplicity and clarity as subordinate to the nobility of matter and manner which alone can make a work of art truly great. It is by their nobility that all works of art will stand or fall; and Arnold and Joubert agree in ascribing the highest measure of nobility (and of simplicity and clarity as well) to the Greek classics. They even, on occasion, fall prey to the same danger inherent in a respect for nobility: the tendency to prefer passionless frigidity to an accurate portrayal of emotion. While it is certain that much of Arnold’s critical theory originated prior to and quite independent of his reading of Joubert, the points of similarity and sympathy remain interesting to consider; and the possibilities of real influence, in connection with the “criticism of life” and the touchstones, add significance to their relationship.

5 / "Rest in the Light"

La sagesse est le repos dans la lumière.
Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, II: 2

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too. . . .

Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
Matthew Arnold, "Thyrsis"

Up to this point, it has been the design of this paper to show specific areas of thought in which shared sympathies bound Arnold to Joubert. If those relationships which may be more strictly termed "influences" are comparatively little discussed, the reason is not that I doubt their existence but that, except as revealed in strictly verbal similarities, such relationships are rarely susceptible of proof in any writer's work. A contemporary English critic, writing specifically of the novel, has uttered words of caution which should be remembered by all who attempt to deal with the relation of one writer and his work to another.

The whole question of literary influence, the indebtedness of one writer to others, is much more difficult and complex than some literary historians seem to think. The apparent influence of an older novelist on a later may, in fact, be no influence at all, in the sense that the later writer's work would have been in some way different had he not known his forebear's, but rather a relation between affinities.¹

It is not likely that, had Arnold never read Joubert, the general tenor of his criticism would be different from what it is. Arnold was forty years old when he first read Joubert; much of his poetry was already written, a few of his critical principles in literature were already stated. The fact that quotations from Joubert appear in

¹ Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (New York, 1958), p. 42.

some of his later works ("The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Culture and Anarchy*) indicates pretty clearly that the approval expressed in "Joubert" is more than mere passing admiration or even sympathy; the passages in question seem to have given point and force to his statements if not necessarily direction to his thoughts. The many similarities in the two men's approaches to particular aspects of life are certainly "affinities," and they are important as such to students of Arnold; but similarity obviously need not be "influence" in Allen's sense.

If, however, we give to the word a somewhat more general meaning—if we use "influence" here to mean a force in the activities of Arnold's mind—we can find evidence of Joubert's importance in the *Note-Books*. These are the collections of maxims which Arnold copied out, week by week and year by year, to meditate and act upon. With one exception,² none of the *pensées* which he entered in the *Note-Books* appear in his published work; this may seem startling, but it does not diminish the value of the *Note-Books* citations. Paradoxically, the *Note-Books* are useful in the study of the literary influences which Arnold experienced largely because the kind of influence they record is not strictly literary.

In "The Study of Poetry" Arnold declares that literature is at its best when it attempts to provide us with a solution of the problem of "how to live." The sentences and paragraphs Arnold copied and often recopied in his commonplace books were for him hints toward just such a practical result. Like Joubert's reading of Nicole, the *Note-Books* were undertaken "with a direct view of practice" (*E. in C.*, I, 323), and they preserve a part of Arnold's inner life which was far more than merely intellectual. The editors, in their Preface, rightly emphasize the essentially devotional character of the *Note-Books*.

As the years went by he more and more regarded life as a problem of attention. Right attending becomes right living.

The note-books mark Arnold's consecration to a life larger than that of the poet and essayist. Whatever one thinks of his studies in religious subjects, few men have tried harder to attend to the great language of faith and to make it the word of their daily lives. The note-books can rightly take their place, we feel, among the best of the books of devotion—the more so, because the devotional parts are so rightly and naturally blended with so much else. The quest for piety is mixed

² XVI, 17 appears in "The Literary Influence of Academies" (*E. in C.*, I, 71).

with fine Attic salt and the bright things of the secular world.
But the piety is there.

(*N. B.*, xiii)

Thirteen of Joubert's aphorisms, quoted and requoted a total of thirty-nine times, are in the *Note-Books*. They occupy more space than quotations from Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Milton, or the *Book of Common Prayer*, to name some other sources whence Arnold drew much inspiration. Perhaps this is the final testimonial to the importance of the *Pensées* in the shaping of Arnold's life and thought.

At first glance it may seem difficult to find "the great language of faith" in the selections from Joubert which are found in the *Note-Books*. They are sober, simple reflections on morality, psychology, and experience. One, which is repeated no fewer than ten times, appearing first in 1862 and last in 1865 (*N.B.*, 15 and 413), will show how these quotations spoke to Arnold—as the voice of experience which he had shared or could profit by. Joubert originally included this sentence in a letter which Sainte-Beuve reprinted, and it was apparently in Sainte-Beuve's book that Arnold first found it.³ It states: "J'éprouve que rien n'augmente autant de découragement que l'oisiveté." In this Arnold evidently found a verbalization of an emotional state which was no less familiar to him than to Joubert. He knew discouragement frequently, and in his middle years almost constantly, in the course of his work as inspector of schools; his *Letters* give ample proof of this.⁴ Several of them also show his despondency was deepened by "oisiveté"—not physical idleness, which he never allowed himself nor was allowed, but the idleness of the mind which accompanied the days crammed with routine tasks. Joubert's discouragement and idleness both were the result of his lifelong invalidism, which rarely permitted him to be active, in body or mind, more than a few hours a day. By means of quite different experiences, the two men arrived at a similar conclusion about one facet of human existence; and Arnold seems to have been comforted and sustained by contemplating Joubert's reaction to it, in literature and life.

Another *pensée*, three times repeated, probably helped confirm Arnold in his opinion that life is "a problem of attention": "Le

³ *Chateaubriand et son Groupe littéraire sous l'Empire* (Paris, 1861), II, 275. Arnold owned a copy of this book (*N.B.*, 413).

⁴ One example will suffice. In a letter to his mother, dated March 24, 1862, he writes: "The gray hairs on my head are becoming more and more numerous, and I sometimes grow impatient of getting old amidst a press of occupations and labour for which, after all, I was not born" (*Letters*, I, 220).

soin de bien dire la vérité et d'appivoiser l'attention est un devoir, une fonction du sage et un marque de sa bonté" (XI, 25). Another was entered in the *Note-Books* six times: "Tout ce qui multiplie les noeuds qui attachent l'homme à l'homme le rend meilleur et plus heureux" (V, 60). This must have aroused a response in a man whose poetry is concerned with the isolation of men from each other to an almost excessive degree. The thought hints toward a cure for the state of mind and society deplored in "The Buried Life," and perhaps helped Arnold to formulate his theory of the State as a unifying and ennobling social force.

It was mentioned earlier in this essay that Arnold embodied his own cultural dichotomy and was both a Hebraist and a Hellenist. A Hebraist at bottom, he realized that his England needed Hellenism badly, and he spent much of his time perfecting his Hellenistic side and serving as a missionary for Hellenism. Yet the nature of Hellenism is not evangelistic; what Arnold's life and his criticism—especially his social and religious criticism—show us is Hellenism celebrated in an essentially Hebraistic fashion. The same critic who said in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" that true criticism is marked by "disinterestedness" (*E. in C.*, I, 20) wrote an essay, in the political phase of his career, on such a piece of legislative minutiae as a Burials Bill. Because his times were out of joint, and he felt called upon to spend most of his time and effort in straightening them, Arnold often had to put the ideal of disinterestedness aside.

As a Hebraist, Arnold admired Joubert's concern for moral and religious values. He felt that Joubert, particularly in his emphasis on chastity and modesty, provided a Hebraistic corrective for the French nation, so prone to worship the Goddess Lubricity. But he saw that Joubert was a natural Hellenist, and that he maintained his spiritual detachment almost without effort. Because Joubert could be disinterested and yet bring his critical powers to bear on the improvement of human life, Arnold praises him for having kept "the balance of his soul" perfectly true.

"La sagesse," Joubert says simply, "est le repos dans la lumière." Rest in the light—calm devotion to the tasks of intellect and quiet enjoyment of its pleasures—is for Arnold, too, one of the happy characteristics of Hellenism. Using a phrase whose origin he attributes to Carlyle, he calls it the sense of being "at ease in Zion" (*C. and A.*, 128). Several of Arnold's favorite writers have this repose, which as it appears in their style may best be termed a kind of calm perspicacity. It is found throughout the *Sacra Privata* of

Thomas Wilson, the eighteenth-century Bishop of Sodor and Man, which Arnold loved and lived by⁵ and which he quoted extensively in *Culture and Anarchy* and his religious books. It is one of the distinguishing features of Spinoza's character, though hardly of his outward life; Arnold must have admired the way in which a man far more embroiled than he was could reach such heights of equanimity.⁶ It breathes through the humble assurance of the counsels of the *Imitation*. And—though it is evidenced considerably less in his writings than in Arnold's own—Arnold felt that Arthur Hugh Clough, by his devotion to things of the mind, had achieved a similar spiritual tranquillity. If "the great language of faith" is interpreted to mean a fidelity, in manner and matter, to the intellectual and spiritual quest, all of these surely possess it.

"Thyrsis" is one of the great elegies of the English language; it is also, as is "The Scholar-Gypsy," one of the language's greatest hymns to intellect, its powers and its joys. Throughout most of his life Clough, Thyrsis, had followed his mind as his chief guide. In so doing, he left behind the world and its desires, and even many of his friends.⁷ Arnold likens both Clough and himself, in their search for truth, to the legendary Scholar-Gypsy; and the description applies equally aptly to Joubert and to all other true Hellenists.

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
 But the smooth-slipping weeks
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.
 ("Thyrsis," ll. 201-210)

⁵ In the *Note-Books*, sixty-eight quotations from the *Sacra Privata* may be found; counting repetitions, Bishop Wilson is responsible for 120 entries.

⁶ Cf. *E. in C.*, I, 372: "A philosopher who professed that knowledge was its own reward, a devotee who professed that the love of God was its own reward, this philosopher and this devotee believed in what he said. . . . It was in this spirit that he lived; and this spirit gives to all he writes . . . a kind of sacred solemnity." He pays the highest compliment he can to Spinoza when he says that his life and character were "*in the grand style*" (374).

⁷ The keynote of his character is sounded first in line 40 (*Poems*, I, 241). After describing his own reluctance to leave Oxford and the beauties of its surrounding countryside, Arnold says: "But Thyrsis of his own will went away." Clough resigned his fellowship at Oriel in 1848 because increasing doctrinal doubts would not allow him to make the professions of faith required to retain it. For the complete story, see Goldie Levy, *Arthur Hugh Clough* (London, 1938), pp. 66-68.

In the next stanza is the greater part of the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, which tells us that the labor of the mind is its own rest and reward.

Much of Joubert's *Titre préliminaire* is given over to statements of the difficulties of the intellectual search—some caused by his constitutional feebleness, others by his uncompromising idealism. Yet the difficulties, more numerous perhaps for Joubert than for most men, never blinded him to the blessings of the search. “Nos moments de lumière sont des moments de bonheur,” he assures us (XI, 9). We can note in “Thyrsis” a somewhat parallel thought, indicated by the adjectives applied to “light” in line 201. It is “fugitive” because we know it fully only at intervals, at “moments”; it is also “gracious” because in those fleeting instants it bestows upon the seeker the gifts of joy, peace, and certitude (“bonheur”).

In “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” Arnold states what he believes the “true spiritual work” of criticism to be: “to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarising, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things” (*E. in C.*, I, 22-23). Practical considerations, immediate social and literary problems to be solved, frequently hindered Arnold from fulfilling this ideal; they rarely hindered Joubert, whom the circumstances of life allowed to dwell more uninterruptedly with ideals. Because he achieved Arnold's ideal, Arnold's respect for him was augmented almost to reverence at times, and it is summed up in the sentence (*E. in C.*, I, 330): “He is the most prepossessing and convincing of witnesses to the good of loving light.” Joubert convinces not by arguments and literary devices, but by the unity of his life and his art. He had mastered “the problem of attention” in both. Never forgetting the values of Hebraism, the standards of religion and morality, he always brought the light of Hellenism to bear upon the problems of life. His allegiance to light, to understanding, was well-nigh complete; and this insured his importance to Arnold. The words of Arnold about the Scholar-Gypsy's fabled immortality are a poetic parallel to his concluding paragraph on Joubert, for devotion is the reason for the survival of both.

Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire!
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead.
(“The Scholar-Gypsy,” ll. 151, 152)⁸

⁸ *Poems*, I, 233-234.

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Appendix

Following are the translations of those *pensées* of Joseph Joubert which appear in the text of this study. The scope of the translations is restricted to quoted material only; if only part of a lengthy *pensée* is quoted, the translation does not embrace more than the quotation. Phrases which receive no more than a passing reference in the text are not translated.

Wherever possible, Arnold's own versions are used and are identified as his. All other versions are by the author of the study.

The *pensées* appear here in the order in which they are quoted.

CHAPTER 1

XXIII, 84 (p. 1)

In the pure realm of art, a subject must be illuminated by one single ray of light, shining from one point only.

CHAPTER 2

I, 60 (p. 8)

Religion is the poetry of the heart; its enchantments are useful in our lives; it gives us happiness and goodness.

XI, 4 (p. 8)

Truth does not and cannot come from ourselves. In everything that is spiritual, it comes from God. . . . We must first consult God, then wise men and our own souls, in spiritual things.

XII, 32 (p. 10)

How many men become abstract in order to seem profound! Most abstract terms are shadows to hide a void.

I, 9 (p. 10)

The God of metaphysics is no more than an idea; but the God of religions, the Creator of heaven and earth, the sovereign Judge of actions and thoughts, is a power.

I, 6 (Arnold's translation) (p. 10)

May I say it? It is not hard to know God, provided one will not force oneself to define him.

I, 122 (p. 10)

It is their confidence in themselves, and a secret belief in their personal infallibility, that are displeasing in certain theologians.

I, 135 (Arnold's translation) (p. 10)

The Jansenists erect "grace" into a kind of fourth person of the Trinity. They are, without thinking or intending it, Quaternitarians. St. Paul and St. Augustine, too exclusively studied, have done all the mischief. Instead of "grace," say help, succour, a divine influence, a dew of heaven; then one can come to a right understanding. The word "grace" is a sort of talisman, all the baneful spell of which can be broken by translating it. The trick of personifying words is a fatal source of mischief in theology.

I, 133 (p. 11)

The Jansenists love discipline better than goodness; the Jesuits prefer goodness to discipline. The former are essentially learned, the latter essentially pious.

I, 137 (p. 11)

Philosophers are tolerant of Jansenism because Jansenism is a species of philosophy.

I, 101 (p. 12)

The idea of God is a light, a light which guides and gladdens us.

I, 28 (p. 14)

Does God consider fine thoughts equal in worth to fine actions? Will those who have sought fine thoughts, and delighted in them, have a recompense? Will the philosopher and the politician be rewarded for their projects, as the good man will be for his good deeds? Have their useful works merit in God's eyes, like good morality? It may well be; but the reward of the first is not as sure as that of the second, and it is not the same.

I, 61 (Arnold's translation) (p. 14)

Piety is not a religion, though it is the soul of all religions. A man has not a religion simply by having pious inclinations, any more than he has a country simply by having philanthropy. A man has not a country until he is a citizen in a state, until he undertakes to follow and uphold certain laws, to obey certain magistrates, and to adopt certain ways of living and acting.

I, 3 (p. 15)

We know God by piety, the one inclination of our souls whereby God is brought to our door and enabled to show himself to us.

I, 34 (p. 15)

Piety is a sublime wisdom, surpassing all others; a kind of genius, giving wings to the spirit.

I, 2 (p. 16)

In this task of imagining God, the chief means is the human form; the end is light, a splendid light.

I, 15 (p. 16)

God multiplies intelligence, which spreads like fire, continually. Light a thousand torches from one, the flame of the first will remain the same.

I, 17 (p. 16)

God speaks to us in a whisper and enlightens us in secret. To hear him we must be inwardly silent; to see his light, we must close our senses and look only within ourselves.

I, 100 (p. 16)

God enlightens those who think often of him and lift their eyes toward him.

I, 89 (p. 18)

Close your eyes, and you will see.

I, 113 (p. 18)

Each day one must pray to God, binding one's thought to his purifying light.

I, 33 (p. 18)

Heaven is for those who think about it.

I, 46 (p. 18)

To think of God is an action.

I, 49 (p. 19)

We are enlightened because God shines upon us; we are made straight because he touches us. God shines on us in light; he corrects us in law. This law, felt and not discerned, serves as a standard to which we may compare our judgments on all things which should not be valued at the estimate of the senses.

I, 16 (p. 22)

God works only for eternity.

I, 53 (p. 22)

He is the light and the sun. It is he who illumines everything: "In thy light shall we see light."

CHAPTER 3

XIV, 3 (p. 24)

The multitude loves the multitude, and government by plurality; the wise love unity.

XVIII, 5 (p. 24)

What deplorable times, when each man weighs all things in his own balance and walks, as the Bible says, by the light of his own lamp!

XV, 5 (Arnold's translation) (p. 26)

Let your cry be for free souls rather even than for free men. Moral liberty is the one vitally important liberty, the one lib-

erty which is indispensable; the other liberty is good and salutary only so far as it favours this.

XV, 14 (Arnold's translation) (p. 26)

Subordination is in itself a better thing than independence. The one implies order and arrangement; the other implies only self-sufficiency with isolation. . . . The one means harmony, the other a single tone; the one is the whole; the other is but the part.

XV, 15 (Arnold's translation) (p. 26)

Liberty! liberty! In all things let us have *justice*, and we shall have enough liberty.

XV, 13 (p. 26)

Public liberty can only be established by the sacrifice of private liberties. In this admirable arrangement, the strong must give up a part of their power, and the weak a part of their hope. . . . A liberty diminished, communicated, and expanded is worth more than that which is entire and concentrated.

XV, 1 (p. 28)

The rights of the people come not from themselves, but from justice. Justice comes from order, and order comes from God himself.

XV, 12 (p. 29)

Of what benefit is liberty to wise and good men, who live under the empire of reason, and are slaves to duty?

XIX, 1 (p. 31)

The idea of order in all things—literary, moral, political, and religious order—is the basis of all education.

XIV, 4 (p. 32)

Those who would govern love the republic; those who would be well governed love only monarchy.

XIV, 17 (p. 32)

All legitimate authority should respect its extent and its limits.

XVI, 92 (one sentence only) (p. 32)

Is not endurance a sign of excellence in laws, as utility and clarity are indications of truth in philosophical systems?

XIV, 20 (p. 33)

Political systems have need of elasticity. They lose it when everything is regulated by laws fixed and inflexible.

XVIII, 35 (p. 35)

In politics, we are almost all filled with a fire which only agitates us, and with a light which dazzles us and does no more.

XVIII, 36 (p. 36)

"The legislative power," "the executive power," and so on—these are only ciphers. The methods and something like the lan-

guage of algebra have been taken into politics, and even into ethics. Abstract words are used instead of letters; we combine them, and believe ourselves to be enlightened because we have rearranged the shadows. And in truth these novel words and obscure notions are to the mind only shadows without bodies, without reality or beauty.

XIX, 34 (p. 39)

The direction of our intellect is more important than its progress.

XIX, 12 (p. 39)

Remember well that education is not merely the adornment of the memory and the enlightenment of the understanding; it should above all be concerned with the direction of the will.

XIX, 25 (p. 39)

Show children only that which is simple, for fear of corrupting their judgment.

XIX, 39 (p. 39; see page 47 for continuation)

For children, in literature, nothing but what is simple.

CHAPTER 4

XXIII, 36 (Arnold's translation) (p. 41)

Be profound with clear terms and not with obscure terms. What is difficult will at last become easy; but as one goes deep into things, one must still keep a charm, and one must carry into these dark depths of thought, into which speculation has only recently penetrated, the pure and antique clearness of centuries less learned than ours, but with more light in them.

XXI, 29 (p. 45)

The essence of poetry is a supreme clarity.

XXII, 115 (p. 45)

Purity, propriety of expression, and clarity are essential to the *pensée*. Transparency is its beauty. To make the *pensée* appear natural, art is necessary. Sentiment is out of place; it is heat, the *pensée* is light.

XXIV, v, 35 (p. 46, fn. 3)

[Mme. de Stael's] imagination had been seduced by something more dazzling than truth. The brilliance of the flames misled her. . . . Passions in her eyes became invested with dignity and glory.

XXIII, 38 (p. 46)

Affectation belongs above all to language; pretense, to the writer's vanity. By the first, the author seems to say *I wish to be clear*, or *I wish to be exact*, and he does not displease. By the other he appears to say *I would be brilliant*, and we deride him. As a general rule, whenever a writer thinks chiefly of his readers, we pardon him; when he thinks chiefly of himself, we punish him.

XXIII, 40 (p. 47)

[The naturally exquisite is] that expression which is just, simple, best suited to the subject at hand, to the writer's thought, to the emotion that animates him, to what precedes it and what follows it, to the place which awaits the word.

XXII, 110 (p. 47)

When the image hides the object, and a body is made out of shadows; when the expression pleases us so much that we are disinclined to penetrate to the sense beyond; when the symbol absorbs all our attention—then we are interrupted in our journey, and we mistake a highway for a resting-place, because a bad guide is leading us.

XIX, 39 (p. 47; see page 39 for preceding sentence)

. . . Simplicity has never corrupted taste. It is incompatible with everything that is faulty in poetry.

XXIV, iv, 11 (p. 48)

We must bring simplicity to bear upon profusion; this is our task in all the arts.

Prél., p. 95 (p. 48)

It is not my sentences that I polish, but my ideas.

XXII, 82 (p. 52)

The humblest style conveys beauty, if it is the expression of a great and noble soul.

XXIV, v, 8 (p. 52)

Far more perfect than Corneille, yet less grand, Racine should be less revered.

XXIV, v, 7 (p. 52)

Corneille is reproached for his heroic language and emotions. But to raise ourselves, to keep ourselves unsoiled by earthly baseness, we need all kinds of stilts.

XXI, 36 (p. 53)

Serious verse must move forward with long strides and not with tripping footsteps. Swift movement, when it is depicted, should be like that of a Homeric god: "he takes a step, and he is there."

XXIV, i, 1 (p. 53)

There will never be an acceptable translation of Homer whose words are not chosen with art and full of variety, novelty, and harmony. In other words, the style should be as antique and unadorned as the manners, the actions, and the characters it depicts. In our modern style, Homer grimaces, and his heroes are monsters who try to be grave and proud.

XXIV, i, 10 (Arnold's translation in brackets) (p. 54)

[. . . he puts light into our eyes, and fills us with a clearness by which all objects afterwards become illuminated.] . . . He has more

light than he has things enlightened, more style than matter. [It is good to breathe his air, but not to live upon him.]

XXIV, v, 13 (Arnold's translation) (p. 55)

Those who find Racine enough for them are poor souls and poor wits.

XXIV, iv, 5-10 *passim*. (p. 56)

Balzac, one of our greatest writers, and first among those who write well, . . . is useful to read and to meditate upon, and excellent to admire.

XXIII, 128 (Arnold's translation) (p. 57)

With the fever of the senses, the delirium of the passions, the weakness of the spirit; with the storms of the passing time and with the great scourges of human life,—hunger, thirst, dishonour, diseases, and death,—authors may as long as they like go on making novels which shall harrow our hearts; but the soul says all the while, "You hurt me."

IX, 39 (p. 58)

Without an ideal model, nothing can be well made.

XXIII, 67 (p. 59)

It is well to give views, insights, ideas, but not judgments. The man who is always giving judgments is setting the Pillars of Hercules forever before his eyes. He creates a *ne plus ultra* and will not go beyond.

XXIII, 144 (p. 60)

Acquaintance with other intellects is the charm of criticism; the maintenance of rules is only its machinery and its least utility.

XXIII, 137 (p. 60)

There has not been a single period in which the dominant literary taste has not been unhealthy. The success of the best authors consists in making healthy works palatable to sick tastes.

XXIII, 79 (p. 61)

One should always represent shadows with clarity, and describe defects with beauty.

XXIII, 78 (p. 61)

In fact, our ideas are always more noble, more beautiful, and more capable of touching the soul than the objects they represent, if they represent them well.

XXIII, 217 (p. 63)

A few words worthy of memory may suffice to characterize a great mind. Sometimes a single thought may contain the essence of an entire book, a single sentence have the beauty of an extensive work, a single unit be as valuable as several. And there is a simplicity so finished and so perfect that it equals in excellence a noble and elaborate composition.

CHAPTER 5

II, 2 (p. 65)

Wisdom is rest in the light.

Quotation from a letter (p. 67)

I have proved that nothing increases discouragement so much as idleness.

XI, 25 (p. 68)

Carefulness in telling the truth and in regulating the attention is a duty, a function of the wise man and a sign of his goodness.

V, 60 (p. 68)

Everything which increases the links that bind man to his fellows makes him better and happier.

XI, 9 (p. 70)

Our moments of light are moments of happiness.