

THE VICTORIAN AGE (1830-90)

1. An Era of Peace: The few colonial wars broke out during the Victorian epoch. **One Continental war - Britain-the Crimean War directly affected Britain-the Crimean War** and the **Franco-German struggle** indirectly Britan.

2. Material Developments:**It was an age alive with new activities. There was a revolution in commercial enterprise, due to the great increase of available markets.** The new commercial energy was reflected in **the Great Exhibition of 1851**. There was an appalling social condition of the new industrial cities, the squalid slums, and the exploitation of cheap labour (often of children. **The evils of the Industrial Revolution were written by such writers as Dickens and Mrs.Gaskell, and Kingsley.**

3. **Intellectual Developments:** There was quite a revolution in **scientific thought following upon the works of Darwin** and the writings of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. **On the Origin of Species (1859) of Darwin shook the foundations scientific thought.**

Carlyle and Matthew Arnold criticized; Thackeray satirized the snobbishness of the age, Browning's rough mannerisms were an indirect challenge to the velvety diction and the smooth self-satisfaction of the Tennysonian school.

The **Pre-Raphaelites**, led by **Swinburne and William Morris**, proclaimed that of the **artist's regard for his art.** (Art for art's sake)

The 'Oxford Movement' headed by the great Newman made changes in **religious and ethical thought.** It affected many writers like Newman, Froude, Maurice, Kingsley, and Gladstone.

The most popular form of literature, the novel responded with a will. The middle years of the nineteenth century were the richest in the whole **history of the novel.**

6.The Achievement of the Age. The general literary level was very high; and it was an age, moreover, of spacious intellectual horizons, noble endeavour, and bright aspirations.

The Study of Poetry

By Mathew Arnold

1. Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he who finds himself, loses his misery.
2. Journalism is literature in a hurry.
3. Wandering between two worlds, one dead, The other powerless to be born.

Author	Mathew Arnold, poet and cultural critic
Birth	1822, England – The valley of Thomas
Death	1888
Cause of death	Heart failure
Post	inspector of schools and Professor in Oxford in 1857
Period	Victorian Age
Family	His father Thomas Arnold was headmaster of Rugby School, and his brother Tom Arnold was literary professor, and William Delafield Arnold was a novelist and colonial administrator.
Called as	a sage writer- a chastises and instructs the reader on contemporary social issues.
Pen name/ pseudonym	under the pseudonym "A," he published <i>The Strayed Reveller</i> a collection of short lyric poems
Introduction	Touchtone method in criticism- The term used for Middle class- Philistine
Works	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems - 18492. <i>Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems</i> - 1852 The poem is written on Greek theme.3. <i>Poems</i> – 18534. <i>New Poems</i> - 1867: It contains famous critical preface. It contains poems <i>Dover Beach</i> and <i>A Summer Night</i>.5. The Scholar Gypsy: The poem is written on the life of Clough.6. Culture and Anarchy – 1869. <i>It</i> is a series of periodical essays by <i>Matthew Arnold</i>, first

	<p>published in Cornhill Magazine 1867-68 and collected as a <i>book</i> in 1869. The preface was added in 1875. <i>Arnold's</i> famous piece of <i>writing on culture</i> established his High Victorian..</p> <p>7. Literature and Dogma - 1873: It deals with poetry and religion.</p> <p>8. Sohrab and Rustum: It is based on a Persian theme.</p> <p>9. Memorial Verse: It mourns on the death of Wordsworth, Gothe and Byron.</p> <p>10. Thyrsis: It was an elegy on the death of Clough.</p> <p>11. Essays on Criticism (1865 and 1889): This is his prose work contains the best of his critical work</p>
<p>He has read Bhagvad Gita. His view of culture is best described by light and sweetness.</p>	

The Study of Poetry

About the work

Author: **Mathew Arnold**

Publication year	1880
Published	The essay was originally published as the introduction to T. H. Ward's anthology, <i>The English Poets</i> in 1880. Later in Essays in criticism second series
Type	Criticism, an Aesthetic study
Theme	Estimates of poetry
Subject	Arnold is fundamentally concerned with poetry's "high destiny." He believes that "mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us" as science and philosophy will eventually prove flimsy and unstable. It concerns itself with articulating a "high standard" and "strict judgment" in order to avoid the fallacy of valuing certain poems too highly, and lays out a method for discerning

	only the best and therefore “classic” poets. Feeling and sincerity are paramount , as is the seriousness of subject: “The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner.”
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The study of poetry

“The future of poetry is immense, because poetry is worthy of its high destinies, our race, will find an ever surer and surer stay.

Our religion has materialised itself in the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. **Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact.** The strongest part of our religion is its unconscious poetry.”

Arnold quotes from ‘*The Hundred Greatest Men*’. *The Hundred Greatest Men*, in his opinion, go with us and govern us in all our study of poetry. We are invited to follow ‘*The English Poets*’ who contributed stream to the world-river of poetry. We should **conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly**. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to **higher destinies**.

Poetry interprets life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science will appear incomplete without it.

Wordsworth calls poetry “the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science”; “the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge”.

We must **set our standard for poetry high**, since poetry, to be **capable of fulfilling such high destinies**, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment.

French literary critic, Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: “Charlatan as much as you please; but where there is not charlatanism?” Sainte-Beuve answers, “Yes, in politics, in the art of governing mankind.

Charlatanism is impermissible to confuse or obliterate them. The distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance for in poetry.

It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. The criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true rather than untrue or half-true.

The best poetry has a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us. The real estimate of poetry is the only true one.

The two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate are fallacious. **Both fallacies are natural.**

The French have become diligent students of their own early poetry, the study makes many of them dissatisfied with their so-called classical poetry, the court-tragedy of the seventeenth century.

M. Charles d'Héricault, the editor of Clément Marot says that "the cloud of glory playing round a classic is a mist as dangerous to the future of a literature as it is intolerable for the purposes of history." "It hinders us from seeing more than one single point, the culminating and exceptional point; the summary, fictitious and arbitrary, of a thought and of a work.

Historical estimate gives us a human personage no longer but a God seated immovable amidst His perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus.

Everything depends on the reality of a poet's classic character. We must read our classic with open eyes, and not with eyes blinded with superstition. It may be said that the more we know about a classic the better we shall enjoy him. But the case here is much the same as the case with the Greek and Latin studies of our schoolboys.

The historic estimate is to affect our judgment and our language when we are dealing with ancient poets; the personal estimate when we are dealing with poets our contemporaries. **Cædmon, amongst our own poets, compared to Milton** is a dangerous abuse of language.

French critic, M. Vitet, comments upon that famous document of the early poetry of his nation, the Chanson de Roland. It is indeed a most interesting document. William the Conqueror's army at Hastings, The jocolator or jongleur Taillefer marched before the Norman troops, singing "of Charlemagne and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux". It is suggested that in the Chanson de Roland by one Tuoldus or Théroulde, a poem preserved in a manuscript of the twelfth century in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The poem has vigour and freshness. The Chanson de Roland is the best. Roland, mortally wounded, lay himself down under a pine-tree, with his face turned towards Spain and the enemy.

The touchstone method is used for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently for touchstone method.

He quoted from **Homer**, the poet's comment on Helen's mention of her brothers a line or two of **Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth's** expostulation with sleep or Hamlet's dying request to Horatio or Miltonic passage from **Paradise Lost** which cost Ceres all that pain To seek her through the world."

These few lines are enough to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, **to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.**

They are in **the matter and substance of the poetry**, and they are in its **manner and style**. Both of these, the substance and matter on the one hand, the style and manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power. Aristotle's profound observation that the superiority of poetry over history consists in **its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness**

The superior character of **truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner.**

The early poetry of France, with our own poetry, in its origins, is indissolubly connected. The seedtime of all modern language and literature, the poetry of France had a clear predominance in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The two divisions of that poetry, **its productions in the *langue d'oïl*** and its productions in **the *langue d'oc*, the poetry of the *langue d'oc*, of southern France**, of the troubadours, **is of importance because of its effect on Italian literature. Dante and Petrarch** brought forth, classics. The predominance of French poetry in Europe is due to its poetry of the *langue d'oïl*, the poetry of northern France and of the tongue is now the French language.

The bloom of this **romance-poetry was earlier and stronger in England, at the court of our Anglo-Norman kings, than in France itself** in the twelfth century.

Southey justly says, "They are the pride of French literature, **nor have we anything which can be placed in competition with them.**"

This constituted for the French poetry, literature, and language, at the height of the **Middle Age, an unchallenged predominance.**

The Italian Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, wrote **his *Treasure*** in French because, "the language is more agreeable and more widely known."

The French romance-writer, Christian of Troyes, formulates the claims, in chivalry and letters, of France, his native country, as "Now by this book you will learn that first Greece had the renown for chivalry and letters: then chivalry and the primacy in letters passed to Rome, and now it is come to France. God grant it may be kept

there; and that the place may please it so well, that the honour which has come to make stay in France may never depart thence!"

Chaucer derived immediately from the Italians, nourished on this poetry, taught his trade by this poetry, getting words, rhyme, metre from this poetry; for even of that stanza are the Italians used.

Arnold **compares Chaucer with Burns**. He says that **Burns has a deep sense of the pathos of human and non-human nature**.

Burns is appreciated for his Scotch and not for his English poems. Most of **Burns poems are preachy**. They do not have 'high seriousness'.

We have only to call to mind the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Dryden commented: "It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is **God's plenty**." And again: "He is a perpetual fountain of good sense." Poetry, this high criticism of life, **has truth of substance; and Chaucer's poetry has truth of substance**.

Chaucer's style and manner of the romance-poetry and then of divine **liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement**, is difficult to speak temperately. They are irresistible, and justify all the rapture with which his successors speak of his "gold dew-drops of speech." **Johnson finds fault with Dryden** for ascribing to Chaucer the first refinement of our numbers. Dryden says that Gower also can show smooth numbers and easy rhymes. Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry; he is our "well of English undefiled," because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement. He makes an epoch and founds a tradition. Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement of Chaucer. And the virtue is irresistible.

A single line is enough to show the charm of Chaucer's verse; that merely one line like this "O martyr soulded in virginitee!

It is from *Canterbury Tale*, *The Prioress' Tale*, the story of the Christian child murdered in a Jewry, "My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone Saidè this child."

Wordsworth has modernised this *The Prioress' Tale*, and to feel how delicate and evanescent is the charm of verse, we have only to read Wordsworth's first three lines of this stanza after Chaucer's.

My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.

The power of **liquidness and fluidity** in Chaucer's verse was **dependent upon a free, a licentious dealing with language**, such as is now impossible. Burns too enjoyed, of making words like neck, bird, into a disyllable by adding to them, and words like cause, rhyme, into a disyllable by sounding the e mute. **Shakespeare or Keats** has a talent akin to Chaucer's, have known how **to attain his fluidity** without the like liberty. **Chaucer is not one of the great classics** and he has not their

accent.. His poetry transcends and effaces all **the romance-poetry of Catholic Christendom**. The immortal poet Dante is beyond Chaucer's reach. It was out of the reach of any poet in the England of that stage of growth.

We praise him, but we feel that this accent is out of the question for him. We are to adopt a real, not a historic, estimate of poetry.

Aristotle assigns **the *spoudaiotes*, the high and excellent seriousness as one of the grand virtues of poetry**. The substance of **Chaucer's poetry**, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity; but it **has not this high seriousness**. Homer's criticism of life has it, Dante's has it, and Shakespeare's has it.

A voice from the slums of Paris, fifty or sixty years after Chaucer, the voice of poor Villon out of his life of riot and crime, has at its happy moments worn as a mark by courtesans. *La Belle Heaulmière* has more of this important poetic virtue of seriousness than all the productions of Chaucer.

The French poet Villon is fitful; the greatness of the great poets, the power of their criticism of life.

[“The name Heaulmière is said to be derived from a head-dress (helm) In Villon's ballad, a poor old creature of this class laments her days of youth and beauty]

Chaucer lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue. **He has poetic truth of substance**, though he has not high poetic seriousness, and corresponding to his truth of substance he has an exquisite virtue of style and manner. **With him is born our real poetry.**

The real estimate has universal currency.

The age of Dryden believed itself to have produced poetical classics of its own. Dryden regards that **“the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers.”**

Cowley could see nothing at all in Chaucer's poetry. Dryden heartily admired it. He says that **“there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it though not perfect.”**

Addison compares them with Dryden's own. The stereotyped phrase of approbation for good verse is found in the verse of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

Dryden is the glorious founder, and Pope is the splendid high priest, of the age of prose and reason, our indispensable 18th century. Their poetry was that of the

builders of an age of prose and reason. Arnold says that Pope and Dryden are not poet classics, but the prose classics of the 18th century.

Gray is the only classic of the 18th century. He constantly studied and enjoyed Greek poetry and thus inherited their poetic point of view and their application of poetry to life. But he is the scantiest, frailest classic since his output was small.

Burns lacks high poetic seriousness, though his poems have poetic truth in diction and movement

He is even better than Goethe at times and he is unrivalled by anyone except Shakespeare.

The authority of Wordsworth and Coleridge does not weigh much with the young generation, and there are many signs to show that the eighteenth century and its judgments are coming into favour again.

Chapman, the Elizabethan translator of Homer, expressed in this preface "Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora and Ganges few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm that, the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun." We pronounce that such a **prose is intolerable**.

We find **Milton** writing, "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, **ought himself to be a true poem**." We pronounce that such a prose has its own grandeur, but that it is **obsolete and inconvenient**.

We find Dryden telling us: "What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write." Here we have the true English prose, **a prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how**. Dryden was Milton's contemporary.

After the **Restoration our nation felt the imperious need of a fit prose**. A fit prose was a necessity; but it was impossible that a fit prose should establish itself amongst us without some touch of frost to the imaginative life of the soul.

We regard **Dryden as the puissant and glorious founder, Pope as the splendid high priest, of our age of prose and reason, of our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century**.

Dryden was the inaugurator of an age of prose and reason. He is the high priest of an age of prose and reason.

Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose.

Gray is our poetical classic of that literature and age; He has attained to an independent criticism of life. He lived with the great poets, above all, with the Greeks, through perpetually studying and enjoying them. He caught their poetic point of view for regarding life, caught their poetic manner. Addison and Pope never had the use of them, Gray had the use of them at times. **He is the scantiest and frailest of classics in our poetry, but he is a classic.**

Burns in general belongs to the eighteenth century, and has little importance for us. His name and fame would have disappeared long ago. Nor is Clarinda's love-poet, Sylvander, the real Burns either. He tells us "These English songs gravel me to death. I have not the command of the language that I have of my native tongue. My ideas are more barren in English than in Scotch. I have been at Duncan Gray to dress it in English, but all I can do is desperately stupid." **Burns is appreciated for his Scotch and not for his English poems.** His poems deal perpetually with Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, a Scotchman's estimate is apt to be personal. He reads pieces like the *Holy Fair* or *Halloween*. This world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him. His *Cotter's Saturday Night* is not a beautiful world. Many of his admirers will tell us that we have Burns, convivial, genuine, delightful.

Leeze me on drink! itgiesusmair
 Than either school or college;
 It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
 It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
 Be't whisky gill or penny wheep
 Or only stronger potion,
 It never fails, on drinking deep,
 To kittle up our notion
 By night or day.

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in Burns, and it is unsatisfactory, not because it is bacchanalian poetry, but because it has not that accent of sincerity which bacchanalian poetry, to do it justice, very often has. There is something in it of bravado, something which makes us feel that we have not the man speaking to us with his real voice; something, therefore, poetically unsound.

His admirers tell us that we have the genuine Burns, the great poet, when his strain asserts the independence, equality, dignity, of men, as in the famous song "For A' That, and A' That"

They find his grand, genuine touches; and still more, when this puissant genius, who so often set morality at defiance, falls moralising in

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love
 Luxuriantly indulge it;

There is criticism of life; there is the application of ideas to life. The doctrine of his lines coincides almost exactly with what was the aim and end, Xenophon tells us, of

all the teaching of Socrates. And the application is a powerful one; made by a man of vigorous understanding, and a master of language.

It must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty than the powerful application of ideas to life. Burns, like Chaucer, comes sort of the high seriousness of the great classics. He touches it in a profound and passionate melancholy, as in those four immortal lines taken by Byron as a motto for *The Bride of Abydos*. But a whole poem of that quality Burns cannot make; the rest, in the *Farewell to Nancy*, is verbiage.

Burns work has truth of matter and truth of manner, but not the accent or the poetic virtue of the highest masters. His genuine criticism of life is ironic.

The **freedom of Chaucer is heightened**, in Burns, by a fiery, reckless energy; the benignity of Chaucer deepens, in Burns, into an over-whelming sense of **the pathos of things;—of the pathos of human nature**, the pathos, also, of non-human nature. The manner of Burns has spring, boundless swiftness. The world of Chaucer is fairer, richer, and more significant than that of Burns. The largeness and freedom of Burns get full sweep, as in *Tam o' Shanter*, or still more in that puissant and splendid production, *The Jolly Beggars* his poetic genius triumphs over it.

The famous scene in **Auerbach's Cellar, of Goethe's Faust, seems artificial and tame beside it, and matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes.**

we have the genuine Burns, in things like "Duncan Gray," "Tam Glen," "Whistle and I'll Come To You, My Lad," "Auld Lang Syne." The real estimate must be high indeed. **Burns has a deep sense of the pathos of human and non-human nature.**

'Prometheus Unbound' issalutaryto place this from '*Tam Glen.*'

Poetry Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth are not the estimates of personal, but personal with passion.

Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be abundantly worthwhile to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of monetary appearances; it never will lose supremacy.

Points

Arnold asserts that literature, and **especially poetry, is "Criticism of Life"**

"Poetry is interpretative by having natural magic in it, and moral profundity".

Arnold's classic poets are Milton, Shakespeare, Dante and Homer.

Arnold states **Geoffrey Chaucer lacks the "high seriousness"** of classic poets.

The superiority of Chaucer's verse lies both in his subject matter and his style. He writes about human life and nature as he sees it. Arnold speaks

highly of **Chaucer's diction and calls it 'liquid diction'** to emphasise the fluidity in the manner of Chaucer's writing which he considers to be an irresistible virtue.

He desires to illuminate and preserve the poets he believes to be the touchstones of literature, and to **ask questions about the moral value of poetry that does not champion truth, beauty, valor, and clarity**. Arnold's belief that **poetry should both uplift and console** drives the essay's logic and its conclusions.

The major part of 'The Study of Poetry' is devoted to **survey of English Poets**.

"The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay".

Arnold wrote that, **"Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete. Dogmas need and tradition for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry"**. He considered the most **important criteria used to judge the value of a poem were "high truth" and "high seriousness"**.

Religion has turned into a **bundle of facts**. **Poetry alone cares for facts**. In the Bible the essential part of religion is its poetry.

Wordsworth calls **poetry "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge"**; our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our **philosophy**, pluming itself on its reasoning's about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but **the shadows and dreams and falsehoods of knowledge?**

Poetry interprets life for us, consoles us, and sustains us. **Wordsworth rated poetry above science**. He called poetry the expression on the face of science, and the spirit of all knowledge. **Our religion and our philosophy are mere shadows**.

The best poetry is what we want; **the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting** us, as nothing else can. **The best poetry forms, delights us**.

Sainte-Beuve French critic relates that Napoleon one day said when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: "Charlatan Pretender to be a doctor) as much as you please; but where is there not charlatanism?"—"Yes" answers Sainte-Beuve, "in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the

glory, the eternal honour is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being"

There are three kinds of estimates of Poetry

They are

- 1. The real estimate**
- 2. The historical estimate**
- 3. The personal estimate**

We judge a writer by his position in history.

A man praises a writer because he appeals to the reader's personal tastes.

M. Charles d'Héricault says that **"the cloud of glory playing round a classic is a mist as dangerous to the future of a literature as it is intolerable for the purposes of history."** French critics have praised the historic estimate. He attacks critics for not using the historic estimate. Every literary work is the product of several historical forces. So **history must be taken into consideration in judging a work.**

Arnold considers the historic estimate as mere "literacy dilettantism" nobody has sufficient time to examine the historical factors.

French critic, M. Vitet comments the Chanson de Roland, French epic poem by a Norman poet, Tuold. The jocular or jongleur Taillefer was with **William the Conqueror's army at Hastings**, marched before the Norman troops, so said the tradition, singing "of Charlemagne and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux", . **Vitet judges the ancient French poem, the Chanson de Roland as an incomparable epic.**

Arnold says that **Homer's Iliad deserves such praise and the Chanson de Roland does not deserve such praise.** English critics compared **Caedmon with Milton.**

It gives us a human personage no longer but a **God seated immovable amidst His perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus**; and hardly will it be possible for the young student to whom such work is exhibited at such a distance from him, to believe that it did not issue ready—**made from that divine head."**

Only the real estimate is sound. The real estimate **helps us to enjoy the "best" and the "really excellent" literature.**

Arnold's **touchstone method** is used to detect the presence or absence of **great poetic quality**. He quotes famous passages from Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton. They show in a **concrete form the highest poetic quality**.

According to the **'matter' of great poetry Aristotle is a higher truth and a higher seriousness**. The style of great poetry has great diction and **'movement'**. If the matter of a poem is great, its style also will be great. Similarly, if the style is great, the matter also will be great. **Matter and style are inseparable**.

Arnold applies his touchstone method to find out the excellent poetry.

He has taken of Shakespeare's from **Henry the Fourth's expostulation** with sleep—

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge . . .
and

Hamlet's dying request to Horatio—

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story . . .

Take of Milton that Miltonic passage—

Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek . . .
add two such s as—
And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome . . .
and finish with the exquisite close to the loss of Proserpine, the loss
. . . which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world."

French poems became fashionable in England. Of the **two divisions of that poetry, its productions in the *langue d'oïl* and its productions in the *langue d'oc***, the poetry of **the *langue d'oc*, of southern France**, of the troubadours, is of importance because of **its effect on Italian literature;—the first literature of modern Europe** to strike the true and grand note, and to bring forth, as in **Dante and Petrarch** it brought forth, classics. But the **predominance of French poetry in Europe, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is due to its poetry of the *langue d'oïl*.**

He first examines the **French romance-poetry** of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He **appreciated the French poet Christian's of Troyes. Christian's poetry has weight of substance and the power of style. It has liquid diction and fluid movement.**

Southey says, **“the pride of French literature, nor have we anything which can be placed in competition with them.”**

He **founded a tradition. Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and Keats followed.** But his Poetry is not excellent. He is great because he starts to write poetry in a very early age.

Chaucer's romance-poetry has superiority both in the substance of his poetry and in the style of his poetry. His superiority in substance is given by his large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human. We have only to call to mind the **Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales***. The right comment upon it is **Dryden's here is God's plenty.”** And again: **“He is a perpetual fountain of good sense.”** Chaucer's **poetry has truth of substance.**

Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry; he is our “well of English undefiled”.

His poetry has truth of substance. Then Arnold **quotes a passage from Chaucer's *The Prioress Tale*. He is not a classic poet, because he has not the “accent” of great classics. He does not have the “high seriousness” which Dante and Shakespeare had in there Poetry. Cowley did not admire Chaucer. Dryden rewarded Chaucer as having only “the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune.**

In Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement of Chaucer; at one time it is his liquid diction

Shakespeare and Milton are classics. Wordsworth and Coleridge did not admire Dryden. Chapman and Milton wrote very involved and cumbersome prose. Dryden's prose was simple and easy to follow. Reason was upgraded and imagination was downgraded in the period. Precision and uniformity were qualities of prose and not of poetry. Dryden and Pope also do not have high seriousness and poetic largeness. Dryden is "the splendid high priest of our age of prose and reason".

Wordsworth has modernised *The Prioress' Tale*, the story of the Christian child, and to feel how delicate and evanescent is the charm of verse, we have only to read Wordsworth's first three lines of this stanza after Chaucer's—

My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.

Arnold calls Gray "the scantiest and frailest of classics".

Burns is appreciated for his Scotch and not for his English poems. Most of Burns poems are preachy. They do not have 'high seriousness'.

Arnold compares Chaucer with Burns. He says that Burns has a deep sense of the pathos of human and non-human nature.

Arnold moves on to speak about Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth. He does not pass any judgment on their poetry. Arnold believes that his estimate of these poets will be influenced by his personal passion as they are closer to his age than the classics and also because their writings are of a more personal nature.

Finally Arnold speaks about the self-preservation of the classics. A good literature will not be able to surpass the supremacy of the classics as they have already stood the test of time and people will continue to enjoy them for the ages to come. This is the result of the self preserving nature of humanity. Human nature will remain the same throughout the ages and those parts of the classics dealing with the subject will remain relevant at all times thus preserving themselves from being lost in time.

Opening lines
"The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high

destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay.

Closing lines

ut it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of monetary appearances; it never will lose supremacy. Currency and supremacy are insured to it, not indeed by the world's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far deeper,—by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

Important lines

1. "We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto.
2. 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.
3. The best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can.
4. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.

Critic's view

George Sainsbury says in A History of English Criticism: "all literature is the application of ideas of life and to say that poetry is the application of ideas to life under conditions fixed for poetry, is simply a vain repetition.

T.S.Eliot: says, 'His observation that 'poetry is criticism of life' is repeating Aristotle. Nothing novel is contributed as a critic

So good literature will never lose its 'currency' and 'supremacy'

Slip test

MathewArnold: The Study ofPoetry

1. The touchstone method was evolved by
A) T.S.Eliot B) S.T.Coleridge C) Matthew Arnold D) Ezra Pound
2. Touchstone method was applied by
A)T.S. Eliot B) Leavis C) Carlye D) Mathew Arnold
3. The future of property is immense-This line is from
A) Tradition and the Individual Talent B) The Scholar Gypsy
C) The Hero as a Man of letters D) The study of poetry
4. Matthew Arnold is not associated with
A) Objective correlative B)Touchstone method
C) High Seriousness D) Three estimates OF Poetry.
5. Select the work written by Matthew Arnold from the following;
A) What is culture? B) Sesame and lilies
C) Idea of University D) Sweetness and light.
- 6.Whom does Matthew Arnold call "the splendid high priest of our age of prose and reason"?
A) Dryden B) Pope
C) Gray D) Burns
- 7.The infallible method of judging poetry is:
A) Touchstone method B. Historic estimate
C. Real estimate D. Personal estimate.
- 8.Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete ; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.
Who says this ?
A) William Wordsworth B)Matthew Arnold
C) S.T. Coleridge D)T.S. Eliot
9. Matthew Arnold admires Burns for his _____ poems.
A : Irish B : Scotch C : British D : American
10. Matthew Arnold introduced which of the following word into literary criticism to determine the relative value of the passages or poems ?
A : Fallacious B : Parameter C : Evaluation D : Touchstone
- 11.The line "poetry is a criticism of life" occurs in:
A. Culture and Anarchy B. Modern Painters
C. The Study of Poetry D. Sartor Resartus

12. "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry.... our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay." – This claim for poetry is made in
A) Arnold's "The Study of Poetry" B) Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry"
C) Sidney's "An Apology for Poetry" D) Eliot's "Poetry and Poets"
13. Matthew Arnold's "touchstones" were "short passages, even single lines" of classic poetry beside which the lines of other poets may be placed in order to detect the presence or absence of high poetic quality. In his "Study of Poetry" Arnold cited "touchstones" from such non-English poets as Homer and Dante and also from the English poets, Shakespeare and Milton. Which English poet did he disapprovingly call "not one of the great classics" in the list below?
A) Chaucer B) Sidney C) Spenser D) Donne
14. According to Matthew Arnold, 'touchstones' help us test truth and seriousness that constitute the best poetry. What are the 'touchstones'?
A) The purple passages of lyric poetry
B) Passages from ancient poets
C) The lines and expressions of the great masters
D) Passages of epic strength and vigour
15. "Poetry is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". Who, among the following, made the above statement?
A. Dr. Johnson B. Sidney C. Matthew Arnold D. Wordsworth
16. The term 'Cultural Materialism' is associated with
A) Stephen Greenblatt B) Raymond Williams
C) Matthew Arnold D) Richard Hoggart
17. "All great literature is, at bottom, a criticism of life" – this statement is attributed to
A) Thomas Carlyle B) Matthew Arnold
C) J.S. Mill D) John Ruskin