

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

NCLC

163

Volume 163

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

*Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Philosophers, and Other
Creative Writers Who Died between 1800
and 1899, from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations*

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Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism, Vol. 163

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 84-643008

ISBN 0-7876-8647-6
ISSN 0732-1864

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
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Arthur Hugh Clough

1819-1861

English poet and essayist.

The following entry provides an overview of Clough's life and works. For additional information on his career, see *NCLC*, Volume 27.

INTRODUCTION

Clough was a notable poet of the early Victorian age, an astute writer and thinker whose reflections on philosophy and religion played a vital role in shaping the dominant British literary culture of his day. Known primarily as an intellectual poet, Clough drew from such diverse sources as ancient history, pastoral poetry, and the Bible to create verse that was at once erudite, provocative, ironic, and earnest. A restless and ardent spirit, Clough persistently questioned prevailing notions of Christianity, morality, and poetic truth, and his work reflects a fundamental ambivalence not only toward the social and moral values of his age, but also toward the power of poetry itself to locate, and reveal, the essence of these values. For many years after his death, Clough arguably remained most famous for his close friendship with the poet and critic Matthew Arnold, a relationship best captured in the voluminous and sometimes intense correspondence that developed between the two men. In recent years, however, scholars have begun to recognize the significance of Clough's own unique contributions to English poetry, in particular his innovative approach to prosody and his experimentation with new forms of poetic meter. Indeed, Clough's radical verse style, coupled with his relentless questioning of Victorian social mores, made him an important and iconoclastic figure in the literary life of mid-nineteenth-century England.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Clough (pronounced "cluff") was born January 1, 1819, in Liverpool, England, the son of middle-class, Evangelical Christian parents. His father, James Clough, was a cotton merchant with business connections in the United States, and Arthur spent much of his early childhood in Charleston, South Carolina. Wary of their son's assimilation into American society, however, the Cloughs sent Arthur back to England when he was ten to complete his education. He enrolled in the presti-



gious Rugby School, which was then under the headmastership of Dr. Thomas Arnold. In stark contrast to Clough's strict religious upbringing, Arnold taught his pupils to develop a sense of moral responsibility rooted in liberal principles. Clough's abilities as both a student and a class leader caught Arnold's attention, and the eminent schoolmaster quickly assumed the role of Clough's mentor. Under his guidance Clough began to question many of his fundamental Christian beliefs. In addition to excelling as a scholar, Clough served as editor of the school magazine. He took his position seriously, considering it a near-sacred duty to help guide the intellectual and spiritual development of his fellow students. During these years Clough also published his first poem, *The Close of the Eighteenth Century*, which was published at Rugby School in 1835. In 1836 Clough earned a scholarship to attend Balliol College, Oxford. His time at Balliol proved disappointing to the young poet, primarily because the Oxford curriculum seemed redundant after the intensity of his studies at Rugby. Still, his undergraduate experiences, in particular the

heated religious discussions that dominated the academic climate at Oxford, played a crucial role in shaping Clough's intellectual and moral attitudes. The religious controversy at the university during these years pitted traditional liberalism against Tractarianism, also known as the Oxford Movement, led by Oriel College fellow John Henry Newman. While the institution's liberal scholars and tutors urged students to adopt a skeptical attitude toward accepted ideas, the Tractarians were more dogmatic in their beliefs. Underlying the Tractarian system was the idea that the Church of England could trace its lineage back to the original church of the Apostles; to Newman and his followers, this continuity represented an inviolable and pure truth, one that transcended the religious skepticism of his detractors.

Clough grappled with uncertainties about Christianity throughout his time at Balliol, as well as during his years as a graduate student at Oriel, where he studied under the tutelage of Newman. Clough did find aspects of Tractarianism appealing, in particular its emphasis on the essentially private nature of religious faith. He objected to the more doctrinaire elements of the movement, however, and while he remained a religious man, his progressive and questioning attitudes, qualities cultivated under the tutelage of Arnold, made it difficult for him to adhere to the Tractarian doctrine. Indeed, when Clough found himself pressured by Newman to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church, he became extremely troubled. His correspondence over the next several years reveals his continued questioning of Christianity. At Oriel he began to study the work of David Friedrich Strauss, who challenged the historical accuracy of the New Testament, as well as the writings of the agnostic philosopher Thomas Carlyle, whom Clough befriended while at Oxford. Eventually Clough resolved that he could not abide by the Thirty-Nine Articles, and in 1848 he resigned both his tutorial post and his fellowship.

During his time at Oriel, Clough also met Matthew Arnold, the son of his former headmaster, with whom he shared many of the same intellectual tastes and beliefs, and with whom he would become lifelong friends. Clough often traveled with Arnold to the Lake District and Scotland, outings that would provide the background for Clough's first major poem, *The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich* (1848). The year the poem was published, Clough traveled to Paris; there he made the acquaintance of American transcendental philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who urged Clough to question his religious beliefs even further. Upon returning to England, Clough was offered a position as principal of University Hall, an institution for Unitarian and Presbyterian students at University College, London. While he waited to begin his new job, Clough and his friend Thomas Burbidge published *Ambarvalia* (1849), a col-

lection of poems they had written at Oxford. A journey to Rome that same year inspired several new poems, as well as the longer work *Amours de Voyage* (published first in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1858, then in the 1862 edition of his *Poems*). Clough took up his post at University Hall in October 1849, but the university's secular leanings quickly proved antithetical to his belief in the need for a moral foundation in education, and he soon became unhappy in his new work. During this period of frustration, Clough traveled to Venice, a journey that inspired another poem, *Dipsychus* (published posthumously in 1865; *dipsychus* is a Greek word meaning "the double-minded man").

In Venice Clough also met his future wife, Blanche Smith. Clough's decision to resign from University Hall in 1851 complicated their efforts to get married, and for the next three years he earned a living writing for periodicals and working as a private tutor, in addition to revising John Dryden's translation of *Plutarch's Lives* (1859). Clough and Smith finally married in 1854. The marriage effectively ended Clough's career as a poet, and some biographers have suggested that he found a measure of contentment in domestic life that quieted the intellectual turmoil that had previously inspired much of his work. During the last years of his life, Clough became involved with politics and devoted a great deal of time and energy to assisting his wife's cousin, author and political radical Florence Nightingale, in lobbying the British government on issues of health policy. In early 1860 Clough fell ill and undertook a series of travels around Europe to improve his health. While traveling he began work on a new poem, *Mari Magno* (published posthumously in 1862 in *Poems*), a series of narratives by ocean travelers modeled after Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. His health continued to worsen, however, and toward the end of his life he came down with a severe strain of malaria and may have suffered a stroke. Clough died in Florence, Italy, on November 13, 1861, and was buried in the city's Protestant cemetery.

MAJOR WORKS

Most readers are familiar with Clough's work through a handful of short poems that have appeared in anthologies. In such poems as "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth" and "Qua Cursum Ventus," Clough combined meticulous attention to the rules of verse with complex and deeply personal meditations on the nature of religious belief. It is Clough's longer poems, however—notably *Amours de Voyage*, *Dipsychus*, and *The Bothie*—that are generally regarded as his masterworks. Clough's chief distinction as a poet is his use of dactylic hexameters: six poetic feet per line, dominated by the dactyl (e.g., the syllabic pattern of "Michigan" or

"Canada": stressed-unstressed-unstressed). Usually considered incompatible with English pronunciation and phrasing, hexameters experienced a brief English revival in Victorian poetry. Clough achieved an unusual measure of success in bending the form to his aesthetic and philosophical interests; *The Bothie* and *Amours de Voyage* represent two significant examples of English hexameter verse. Another hallmark of Clough's verse style is his use of narrative, including realism, multiple voices, and a range of linguistic styles, to create a framework for his philosophical ruminations. In *Dipsychus*, for example, Clough employed a prose frame for a poetic dialogue between Dipsychus, an intellectual and idealist, and the Spirit, who puts his faith in worldly pleasures and pragmatism.

Thematically Clough's poetry explores questions of morality, truth, and physical and ideal love. Indeed, Clough distinguished himself as a Victorian poet through his treatment of sexual morality, in particular women's sexuality, writing more frankly and in a more egalitarian spirit than most other writers of the era. Among his most sensual poems is "Natura Naturans," published in *Ambarvalia*. In this poem Clough depicted sexuality in idealistic terms, as the abundant generation of life found in Eden itself. *The Bothie* tells the story of Philip, a young English college student on vacation in Scotland. Though Philip falls in love with Elspie, a young Scottish girl, he also finds himself physically attracted to two other women: Katie, a lower-class peasant, and the noblewoman Lady Maria. In describing the differences among the three women, Clough examined the varying roles of women in society, while the sensuality of the pastoral setting provides a contrast with prim Victorian London. Claude, the hero of *Amours de Voyage*, reluctantly falls in love with Mary Trevelyan, although chance and inaction prevent them from uniting. The title character of *Dipsychus*, confronts repeated sexual temptation in Rome, urged toward hedonism by the Spirit. Neither Dipsychus's idealism nor the Spirit's materialism appears in a wholly positive light, however, and the poem reveals not only the mean-spirited, objectifying nature of the Spirit's attitude toward women, but also the constraints placed on women by Dipsychus's elevated view of their innocence and purity. Clough's treatment of religion in his poetry suggests a reluctance to embrace either atheism or Christianity. In "The Latest Decalogue," the poet updated the Ten Commandments for the Victorian age, transforming God's law into a severe reproach of modern Christians, whose obedience to the rules of the church, in Clough's stern but satirical view, stems from vanity and selfishness rather than love. Clough's most famous statement concerning Christianity appears in "Easter Day, Naples, 1849." The poem includes the line "Christ is not risen," arguably one of the boldest religious declarations in all of Victorian poetry. Clough repeatedly returned to religious themes and motifs in his work. The posthumously

published long poem *Adam and Eve* contains a refutation of the doctrine of Original Sin, while both *Amours de Voyage*, and *Dipsychus*, involve metaphoric departures from Eden.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

With the publication of *The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich* in 1848, Clough earned a reputation as a talented poet of unequaled intellectual honesty. Ironically his friend Matthew Arnold was among his earliest critics, objecting to Clough's intense self-consciousness and his unorthodox poetic style. In Arnold's elegiac poem "Thyrsis," published five years after Clough's death, Arnold depicted his friend as a seeker lost in the religious controversies of his time, cut down by fate before he could fulfill his early promise. This view of Clough persisted well into the twentieth century, and even his admirers admitted that his poetry could be inelegant and unpolished. Clough's standing was bolstered significantly in the 1960s, however, when scholars like Isobel Armstrong, Walter Houghton, and Michael Timko began to recognize his kinship with literary modernists, particularly in the strong satirical bent of his verse. Around the same time, the discovery and publication of Clough's previously unknown writings inspired a series of new biographies by Katherine Chorley, Robindra Kumar Biswas, and Evelyn Barish Greenberger. Since the 1990s scholars have begun paying closer attention to Clough's unorthodox use of hexameters, as well as his blurring of literary genres and techniques, particularly in his narrative poems. Portraying the poet as a forward-thinking experimentalist, such critics as Meg Tasker, E. Warwick Slinn, and Erik Gray have also praised Clough for his prescience in addressing social and literary concerns that are still relevant in the twenty-first century.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- The Close of the Eighteenth Century, A Prize Poem* (poetry) 1835
- A Consideration of Objections against the Retrenchment Association at Oxford during the Irish Famine in 1847* (essay) 1847
- The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich, A Long-Vacation Pastoral* (poetry) 1848; revised as *The Bothie of Tobernavuolich for Poems, with a Memoir*, 1862
- Ambarvalia* [with Thomas Burbidge] (poetry) 1849
- Plutarch's Lives, the Translations Called Dryden's Corrected from the Greek and Revised*. 5 vols. [translator] (essays) 1859
- **Poems* (poetry) 1862
- †*Letters and Remains* (poetry, essays, and letters) 1865

‡*Mystery of the Fall* (poetry) 1869

The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough.
2 vols. (poetry, essays, and letters) 1869

Letters of Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hugh Clough
(letters) 1932

Poems (poetry) 1951

Correspondence of Arthur Hugh Clough. 2 vols. (letters)
1957

Selected Prose Works (essays) 1964

The Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough (poetry) 1974

*Among the poems included in this collection are *Amours de Voyage* and *Mari Magno*, and some of the songs of *Dipsychus*.

†Includes a complete version of *Dipsychus*.

‡Also known as *Adam and Eve*.

CRITICISM

John Addington Symonds (essay date December 1868)

SOURCE: Symonds, John Addington. "Arthur Hugh Clough." *Fortnightly Review* 10, no. 24 (December 1868): 588-617.

[In the following excerpt, Symonds examines Clough's religious views, portraying him as an earnest seeker who was also painstakingly skeptical. Symonds offers a close reading of *Amours de Voyage*, asserting that the poem's protagonist, Claude, embodies Clough's poetic exploration of intellectual self-consciousness and the problem of inaction, and merits comparison to such figures as *Hamlet* and *Faust*.]

The chief value of Clough's religious poetry appears to consist in this—that he sympathised at a very early period with the movement that is unquestionably going on towards the simplification and purification of belief, and that he gave an artistic expression to the thoughts of earnest seekers and questioners in the field of faith. In doing so he did not innovate, or ruthlessly destroy, or sentimentally bewail the past. He simply tried to reduce belief to its original and spiritual purity—to lead men back to the God that is within them, witnessed by their consciences and by the history of the human race. The primal religious instincts of mankind are apt in the course of centuries to gather round them metaphysical husks, which are partly protective of the germs within, and partly restrictive of their true vitality. Times arrive at which these outward shells are felt to have become too hard and narrow. They must then be broken through in order to free the kernels that lie within them. The most clear-sighted men at such periods try to discrimi-

nate between what is essential and what is unimportant in religion; but the majority cling always to the human and material rubbish with which it is clogged, as if it were the very living and life-giving divine truth. We might use Plato's simile, and compare the present condition of the Christian faith, as contrasted with the teaching of its great Founder, to the Glaucus of the deep, who rises overgrown with weeds and shells from the ocean, where he has been hidden. To pull away these weeds, and to restore the god-like form to its own likeness, is the desire of all thoughtful men whose minds have been directed to religious questions, and who have not bound themselves to support the existing order of things, or undertaken for their own interests to solidify the prejudices of the mass. Christ himself, by his answers to the questions of the Jews, taught us the principle of returning to simplicity in religious beliefs. He also, by his example, justified us in assuming that the Gospel is not stationary, but progressive; that we may come to know more of God than we knew centuries ago; and that the human race, by extending its intelligence, extends its spiritual insight. It is from this point of view that Clough approaches topics of religious belief and Biblical inquiry.

"My own feeling," he says, "certainly does not go along with Coleridge, in attributing any special virtue to the facts of the Gospel history. They have happened, and have produced what we know, have transformed the civilisation of Greece and Rome and the barbarism of Gaul and Germany into Christendom. But I cannot feel sure that a man may not have all that is important in Christianity, even if he does not so much as know that Jesus of Nazareth existed. And I do not think that doubts respecting the facts related in the Gospels need give us much trouble. Believing that in one way or other the thing is of God, we shall in the end perhaps know in what way, and how far it was so. Trust in God's justice and love, and belief in his commands as written in our conscience, stand unshaken, though Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or even St. Paul, were to fall."

Again he says, with the same confidence in spiritual truth which is the essence of belief in God:—

It is far nobler to teach people to do what is good, because it is good simply, than for the sake of any future reward. It is, I dare say, difficult to keep up an equal religious feeling at present, but it is not impossible, and is necessary. Besides, if *we* die and come to nothing, it does not therefore follow that life and goodness will cease to be in earth and heaven.

This thought is further expressed in a fragment of verse:—

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

The power and dignity of this repose on what is great and good, this total unselfishness and confidence in the Unseen, belong to the highest sphere of religious faith. But it is not the religion of the emotions so much as of the intellect; and therefore it cannot be widely understood and accepted. When the hearer is bidden to discard his hopes of personal reward, and to embrace some exalted conception of the divine character more remote than that of old Anthropomorphism—when he is informed that neither at Jerusalem nor on this mountain must he worship, and that his God is in reality a Spirit—he begins to murmur that there is nothing left for him to live by, no solid and substantial ground to stand upon, no sufficient inducements to virtuous action. And the preacher of so abstract and refined a faith is stigmatised as sceptical, if no worse name be given him. Thus Spinoza, who by the most intelligent men of this century has been represented as a God-absorbed, if not a “God-intoxicated” man, was called an Atheist for professing a theology, the essence of which might be summed up in the one proposition, that he loved God too much to want love back from Him again. And to ordinary minds he *was* Atheistical; for in their sense of the word God he had no God. He had refined and abstracted the idea until it vanished from the sphere of their intelligence.

One great quality of Clough’s mind in regard to religion was its wholly undogmatic character. He regarded all problems with impartiality and calmness. One of his MSS. consists of a series of arguments in which he discusses the great question of belief. Nothing could better illustrate his perfect openness of mind than this process of reasoning. It begins by stating the impossibility that scholars should not perceive “the entire uncertainty of history in general, and of the origin of Christianity in particular.” In this position he coincides with all the fairest and profoundest thinkers of the century. Niebuhr, Grote, Sir Cornewall Lewis, Strauss, Baur, Renan, have all in their own departments shown the doubtfulness of early history, and have endeavoured with more or less success to sift the truth from a mass of error. The historian of Christianity has greater difficulties to contend with than the historians of Rome or Greece; for he has no corroborative evidence of what is narrated in the sacred books, and all his endeavours to bring the truth to light meet with furious antagonism from minds wedded to the old system. But, continues Clough, it is equally impossible for a man who has lived and acted among men not to perceive the value of what is called Christianity. The more he is convinced of this, the less inclined will he be “to base it on those foundations which, as a scholar, he feels to be unstable. MSS. are doubtful, records may be unauthentic, criticism is feeble, historical facts must be left uncertain.” This then is the antithesis with which we have to deal: on the one hand, the history of the origin of Christianity involves the greatest amount of uncertainty; on the other hand, Christian-

ity, as a real and vital principle, is indispensable to the world. Meanwhile, our own personal experience is small and limited; our own powers are narrow, and not to be relied on. “A sane and humble-minded man” (concludes Clough), who is disinclined to adopt the watchword of a party or to set up new views, has no alternative “but to throw himself upon the great Religious Tradition.” One step is gained; but here another difficulty presents itself to the thinker. “I see not,” he continues, “how any upright and strict dealer with himself, how any man, *not merely a slave to spiritual appetites, affections, and wants*—any man of intellectual as well as moral honesty (and without the former the latter is but a vain thing) can dare to affirm that the narrative of the four Gospels is an essential integral part of that tradition.” The words which we have italicised are peculiarly characteristic of Mr. Clough. He was sensitively, almost quixotically, afraid of accepting even a respectable and harmless creed for the sake of merely being comfortable. He saw that in an age of doubt it was a sort of self-indulgence to cling to the old formulas of faith, and that, in one sense, honest questioning was less sceptical than conscious acquiescence. Pursuing this vein of reflection, he condemns the weakness of ignoring scientific or historic doubts “for the sake of the moral guidance and spiritual comfort” implied in submissive belief, or of “taking refuge in Romish infallibility.” At the same time, he is eager to deny that there is anything great or noble or very needful in showing up the inconsistencies of the New Testament: “it is no new gospel to tell us that the old one is of doubtful authenticity.” But cannot a simple-minded man steer between the opposite dangers of bragging Scepticism and Iconoclasm on the one hand, and, on the other, of self-indulgent mysticism? “I believe that I may, without any such perversion of my reason, without any such mortal sin against my own soul, which is identical with reason, and against the Supreme Giver of that soul and reason, still abide by the real Religious Tradition.” But “where,” he asks, “since neither in rationalism nor in Rome is our refuge, where then shall we seek for the Religious Tradition?” The answer to this question is the answer which all good men and all sincere thinkers are becoming more and more ready to accept; it is the answer made by the Church in earlier days; the answer still implied in an old picture which represents Aristotle and Plato among the Apostles of Pentecost:—“Everywhere. But above all,” he adds, “in our own work, in life, in action, in submission so far as action goes, in service, in experience, in patience, and in confidence.” Then follows a very significant sentence which reveals to us the seriousness of Clough’s mind upon this subject, his sense of its deep mystery, his persuasion that all a man’s life is too little in the search for God. “I would scarcely have any man dare to say that he has found it till that moment when death removes his power of telling it.” The answer, however, requires to be expanded. We must

look for the Religious Tradition everywhere, and not expect to find it in Protestantism only, or in the Roman Church, or in Unitarianism. Take the good from each and all. "Whether Christ died for us upon the cross I cannot tell; yet I am prepared to find some spiritual truth in the doctrine of the Atonement. Purgatory is not in the Bible; I do not therefore think it incredible." Again, we must seek it among clergymen, religious people, "among all who have really tried to order their lives by a high standard." Johnson, Hume, and Butler, each in his own way, contributes something to the total. Search the Scriptures, but also search the Laws of Menou and the Vedas, the Persian sacred books and Hafiz, Confucius, the Koran, Greek and Roman literature. Homer, Socrates, Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, Tacitus, can tell us something. This comprehensiveness and liberality of soul correspond with the true spirit of Christianity, of Christianity which is universal and divine because it is truly human; of Christianity which speaks alike to Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, which needs no better evidence than that which is afforded by its parallels in India, China, Persia, Greece—the soul of man in every clime and age. Nor will this comprehensive creed render us less appreciative of Christianity itself. We may travel far and wide, yet not become disqualified for returning "to what assuredly, *primâ facie*, does appear to be—not indeed the religion of the majority of mankind—but the religion of the best, so far as we can judge in past history, and (despite of professed infidelity) of the most enlightened in our own time." To cease to be Christians, to separate ourselves from the peculiar form of Christianity adopted by our forefathers, would be unnatural, if not impossible; for special religions seem to be adapted to special races. Yet we may remember that there are many more Buddhists than Christians in the world, and not imagine that on us alone God's sun has shone. Finally, "it is much more the apparent dispensation of things that we should gradually widen than that we should narrow and individualise our creeds. Why are we daily coming more and more into communication with each other, if it be not that we learn each other's knowledge, and combine all into one? I feel more inclined to put faith in the current of the river of things than because it runs one way to think I must therefore pull hard against it to go the other."

But it is time to pass from these reflections on the nature of Religion to the poems in which Clough has embodied the fervent spirit of his creed. "**Qui laborat, orat**"—is the title of a few stanzas in which the poet questions whether it be not profane to give even the most abstract form to God, and concludes that work is the truest expression of earnest prayer. A similar train of thought is carried out in loftier language in another called "**The New Sinai.**" After tracing the gradual development of the monotheistic idea, and adverting to the cloud and darkness which in modern times have,

through the influence of science on the one hand and superstition on the other, seemed to gather round the throne of God, he eloquently and emphatically expresses his content to trust and wait for the hour of God's own revelation. This is the essence of his religion—to believe in the Unseen, and bravely to embrace a faith without sight, instead of forging an image, and falling down to worship it. A third poem, of a strictly devout character, even more solemn in expression, more full of weighty and condensed thought, develops the same idea: its first stanza may be quoted as an index to the whole:—

O Thou, whose image in the shrine
Of human spirits dwells divine;
Which from that precinct once conveyed
To be to outer day displayed,
Doth vanish, part, and leave behind
Mere blank and void of empty mind,
Which wilful fancy seeks in vain
With casual shapes to fill again.

It is very difficult for those who did not know Clough personally to gather from such notices as we can give, how deep and fervent—how absolute and unshaken—were his religious convictions. But the witnesses of his life are unanimous in assuring us that the principles expressed in the poems we have quoted were the fixed and unvarying rules of his own conduct, the supporting and strengthening springs of his action in the world. Contrasted with these devotional poems are some of a more analytical character, which, however, tend to the same conclusion, that God, falsely figured by the world to itself in various fanciful or obsolete shapes, or else denied with insolence and scorn, is yet supreme and spiritual, felt by those who have preserved an honest and untainted soul, and dreaded with blind terror even by those who pretend to disbelieve in him. Of these, two songs in *Dipsychus*, "**I dreamed a dream,**" and its companion, "**There is no God the wicked saith**" (published in the volume of collected poems), may be cited as specimens. An ironical tone runs through them, and is strangely blended with bitterness, gravity, and a kind of tender regret. They ought not to be separated; for nothing is more true of Clough's mind than that it worked by thesis and antithesis, not reaching a clear synthesis, but pushing its convictions, as it were, to the verge of a conclusion. The poems, for instance, which begin, "**Old things need not be therefore true,**" "**What we, when face to face we see,**" and "**Say not, the struggle nought availeth,**" are in their tone almost timid and retrogressive when compared with "**Easter Day**"; and yet we feel that none of them contain the *dernier mot*. Clough could take the world's or the devil's point of view with wonderful force and vigour. This is clear throughout *Dipsychus*; but it also appears in a published poem, entitled, "**The Latest Decalogue.**" To imagine that when he did so he was expressing his own view would be to mistake the artist's nature altogether.

Yet some people are so dull as to do this. They are shocked at any one venturing to state a base or wicked opinion, even though his object be to call attention to the contrary, and, by revealing ugliness, to lead the eye in silence to the contemplation of beauty.

In Clough's works there are many stumbling-blocks for such readers—none greater than **"Easter Day,"** a poem about which it is hard to speak, whether we regard its depth of meaning or its high literary excellence. Of the general scope of this poem it is impossible to give a better account than that which is prefixed to it in the volume of *Letters and Remains*. There it is styled "a semi-dramatic expression of the contrast he (Clough) felt between the complete practical irreligion and wickedness of the life he saw going on, and the outward forms and ceremonies of religion displaying themselves at every turn. How can we believe, it seems to say, that 'Christ is risen' in such a world as this? How, if it was so, could such sin and such misery continue until now? Yet if we must give up this faith, what sadness and what bitterness of disappointment remain for all believers who thus lose all that is most dear to them! And he abandons himself to this feeling of grief and hopelessness, only still vaguely clinging to the belief that in earth itself there may be, if nowhere else, a new refuge and a new answer to this sad riddle. The mood of mind which he depicts in such terrible colours is not to be regarded as his own habitual belief. The poem is in no sense a statement of facts or opinions, but a strong expression of feeling—above all, the feeling of the greatness of the evil which is in the world." More, however, remains to be said. For though **"Easter Day"** "is not to be regarded as his own habitual belief," we cannot but consider it to be the expression of a mind steeped in the disintegrating solvents of nineteenth-century criticism. The author has clearly absorbed everything that German commentators have to say upon the subject of the resurrection—nay, more, has, at least at one time of his life, most keenly felt the cogency of their destructive arguments, and in a mood of bitterness provoked by human degradation has given the form of fiery language to the shapeless and uncertain doubts which crowd the minds of a beliefless generation. **"Easter Day"** is unique in the history of literature. It is a poem fully worthy of that name, in which a train of close and difficult reasoning is expressed in concise words—such words as might have been used by a commentator on the Gospels, yet so subtly manipulated by the poet, with such a rhythm, such compactness, such vitality of emotion, as to attain the dignity of art by mere simplicity and power.

For the sake of those who may not have this poem in their hands, we subjoin some extracts. But it must be remembered that quotation in this case is akin to mutilation, and that the poem itself is liable to be misunderstood in its incomplete form:—

Through the great sinful streets of Naples as I past,
With fiercer heat than flamed above my head
My heart was hot within me; till at last
My brain was lightened when my tongue had said—
Christ is not risen!
Christ is not risen, no,—
He lies and moulders low;
Christ is not risen!

* * *

What if the women, ere the dawn was grey,
Saw one or more great angels, as they say
(Angels, or Him himself)? Yet neither there, nor then,
Nor afterwards, nor elsewhere, nor at all,
Hath He appeared to Peter or the Ten;
Nor, save in thunderous terror, to blind Saul;
Save in an after Gospel and late Creed,
He is not risen, indeed,—
Christ is not risen!

* * *

Is He not risen, and shall we not rise?

Oh, we unwise!

What did we dream, what wake we to discover?

Ye hills, fall on us, and ye mountains, cover!

In darkness and great gloom

Come ere we thought it is *our* day of doom;

From the cursed world, which is one tomb,

Christ is not risen!

Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss:

There is no heaven but this;

There is no hell,

Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,

Seeing it visits still

With equallest apportionments of ill

Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust

The unjust and the just

With Christ, who is not risen.

Eat, drink, and die, for we are souls bereaved:

Of all the creatures under heaven's wide cope

We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,

And most beliefless, that had most believed.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;

As of the unjust, also of the just—

Yea, of that Just One too!

It is the one sad Gospel that is true—

Christ is not risen!

Weep not beside the tomb,

Ye women, unto whom

He was great solace while ye tended Him;

Ye who with napkin o'er the head

And folds of linen round each wounded limb

Laid out the Sacred Dead;

And thou that bar'st Him in thy wondering womb;

Yea, Daughters of Jerusalem, depart,

Bind up as best ye may your own sad bleeding heart:

Go to your homes, your living children tend,

Your earthly spouses love;

Set your affections *not* on things above,