

a night when wives are left at home alone, and tells all the gossip of the neighbourhood and of the surrounding places at 50 cents a night extra. She takes care of children, if they are quiet, at the same price, but if they are noisy she charges double rates. She is doing a good business, and has political aspirations, with an eye to the office of Sheriff at the next election.

A woman in Chicago recently showed her love for her husband in a somewhat remarkable manner. He had been fined in one of the Police Courts for disorderly conduct. He had no money, but said he could borrow the amount if he were allowed to go out to see his friends. This was not permitted. "Here, take this as security," said his wife, placing her three months old baby in the arms of an astonished Court official. She hurried off, saying she would not call for her baby until she had the money to bail her husband. Soon after the baby began to cry, and the police hurried it off to St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum. Later in the day the Court became clement, released the father without his having paid the fine, and the re-united couple went joyfully off to the Orphan Asylum to rescue the baby, who had so successfully pleaded the cause of its erring father. Justice in Chicago is evidently on sentimental lines.

## A Book of the Week.

### MATHEW ARNOLD'S LETTERS.\*

THE publication of Mathew Arnold's letters has been looked forward to with much pleasure by the people who were sympathetic admirers of his poetry and other writings. I must confess that, personally, I have been rather disappointed in them. The large and varied correspondence that he addressed to his friends shows him to have been a most excellent—super-excellent—son, father, husband, brother, and friend, all of which are most admirable qualities in any British citizen, but strange to say they also show him to have been somewhat deficient in a sense of humour. That honest admiration of the work of others which is such a pleasant feature in all the criticism of the poet Swinburne, and many other authors in this the latter end of the nineteenth century, is conspicuously absent from the letters of Mathew Arnold, who was himself in his lifetime so very highly appreciated by his brothers of the pen.

If it did not seem too flippant to speak of a Poet in such homely terms, one might say that he appears from his letters to have been a harmless, blameless, but most undoubted, "prig."

He worked hard and most conscientiously at his profession of school inspecting, and spent much time in visiting and examining foreign schools with a view to improving the organisation and teaching of English schools.

It is curious that all his letters written from abroad should be so monotonously dull and uninteresting. Later in his life when he went to America, his correspondence becomes much more readable, and many of

his remarks upon the political events of his time are shrewd and well worth perusal, the light of later events proving their perspicuity.

Mathew Arnold had a great love of animals and children, and all lovers of these two joys of our existence will like to read his tender and loving notes about them, their ways, habits, and delectable naughtinesses.

It is strange in such a long book—two closely-printed stout volumes—to find nothing that one especially cares to quote or remember, and nothing that strikes one as being especially worthy of a great poet and thinker to write. Indeed when we remember the charming style and lucid writing of Mathew Arnold the poet and essayist—it is surprising!

Not long ago I reviewed a volume of letters in these columns that were a great contrast to the book under our present consideration. I refer to the letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Like the Arnold letters, they were never intended for publication, and were written as a diary of daily doings and thoughts to a friend, but what a different nature they reveal, how full they are of schoolboy fun and good humour, and how keenly and even lovingly that bright noble spirit could appreciate the work of other people, and even where he does not like the work of a rival craftsman, it is never condemned with a toss aside as his older and more severe contemporary judges and disposers of the lifework of other people.

However, comparisons are odious, and we will make no more, except to remark that if men were judged by their published letters (which Heaven forbid they ever should be) how much more lovable a character to his friends the younger letter writer must have been. To his *friends* only, for to his relations Mathew Arnold wrote most charming letters. He was always the most devoted (and rare quality) admiring of papas, and a most courteous and thoughtful son and husband. All these qualities his letters show him to have possessed in a most superabundant degree.

Perhaps it is captious of us to be disappointed that he showed so little wholesome sense of fun, and so little power of discovering talent among the writers of his day. With regard to the latter, he undoubtedly had a high standard which perhaps prevented him from appreciating anything short of the standard of, say, Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante, but with regard to the former his letters betray that he evidently possessed the fault of many earnest-minded people, viz., he took himself and the Arnold family generally far too seriously; and he had not Stevenson's rare gift of being able to laugh at himself and his own productions.

A. M. G.

## Bookland.

### WHAT TO READ.

THE CRISIS.—"The Great War of 189—." A graphic and realistic forecast of the probable course of the next great European War, by Rear-Admiral Colomb, Colonel Maurice, R.A., Captain Maude Archibald Forbes, Charles Lowe, D. Christie Murray and F. Scudamore. (London: Wm. Heinemann.)

"A Memoir of Frances Trollope," by her daughter-in-law, Frances Eleanor Trollope. With Extracts from her Diaries and Letters, and with two portraits.

\* "Letters of Mathew Arnold, 1848—88." Collected and arranged by George W. E. Russell. Two volumes. Macmillan and Co., 1895.

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