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Canada Greet the Apostle of Culture

This year marks the centenary of Matthew Arnold's visit to Canada in 1884. It came at the end of his four-month lecture tour of the United States in the winter of 1883-4, during which time he gave seventy lectures before a total of some 40,000 people, lecturing on 'Literature and Science,' 'Numbers,' and 'Emerson.' The Canadian leg of the tour omitted the lecture on Emerson, occupied only ten days, and included Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec and Montreal. The celebrated American tour has been documented ad nauseum — the Canadian portion hardly at all — which is indicative of the relatively undeveloped state of Canadian intellectual history as compared to American. His gruelling experience in the United States was such that he looked forward eagerly to a more congenial environment in Canada.¹ From the University Club in Saint Louis he wrote to his old friend Goldwin Smith, the transplanted Regius professor from Oxford, accepting his invitation to stay at The Grange in Toronto:

It was a great pleasure to be met on my arrival in this country by your kind invitation, and all through the tota discriminia rerum which I have had to encounter, I have looked forward to a visit to you as a consolation... We can only stay two nights, I fear, but that will be better than nothing. My daughter is gone back to the gaieties of New York, and will not be with us in Canada; travelling in the cold weather has been more trying to her than to her mother or me.²

The Arnolds arrived in Toronto on Tuesday 12 February and went straight to The Grange. Toronto in 1884 was celebrating its semi-centennial; it was Loyalist and Protestant to the core, being the largest English-speaking city in Canada and boasting a population in excess of 105,000. It was the heart of English Canada: busy and commercial, wealthy and very Scottish in character. The business elite was represented by this Scottish element, who exercised considerable influence upon higher education and religious institutions. Yet the city was not without paradox: it consumed inordinate amounts of Scotch whisky,

nourished a flourishing temperance movement, and forbade its new streetcars to desecrate the Sabbath.³ Near University and College new immigrants and transients flooded into The Ward, containing some of the worst slums in North America. The water supply was inadequate and contaminated, while the unsanitary living conditions of many workers and their families gave Toronto a mortality rate higher than many other North American cities. Low public health standards posed a threat to affluent citizens in their fashionable districts which more than anything else initiated proposals for reform.⁴ Nevertheless such realities were ignored in a centennial description of the city which basked in civic pride and extolled civic virtue:

Toronto never looked better. On this point both citizen and visitor were agreed. The "muddy little York" of other days had effloresced into a beautiful and attractive city, with every prospect of it becoming more beautiful and increasingly attractive. No doubt Toronto is greatly favoured by natural advantages. It is pleasantly situated. Its climate is good. Its surroundings are most favourable, and its facilities for an extensive commerce are of the highest order....It ought never to be forgotten by any Torontonians, that he is a citizen of no mean city, and that as such it is his duty as well as his privilege, to seek the good of the place in which he dwells.⁵

The period from 1880 to 1910 was one of industrial growth and development in Canada as the National Policy got underway, and Toronto got caught up in this fever of industrialization and material expansion. English Canada was staunchly pro-British, yet because of geography and the all-pervasive influence of her giant neighbour to the south, she was to a large extent also part of the democratic new world. W.L. Morton has observed the nature of the democratic principle which found expression in the sectarian provinces. He noted the 'persistent and concerted undermining of the original national constitution of Confederation until it was converted into a federal state as near republican as the American model as possible, and rested on provinces made sovereign by the democratic idea.'⁶ Although the trend towards industrialization and democratization was resisted by an idealistic elite, empiricism triumphed over idealism in Victorian Canada because the latter was incapable of giving philosophical support to the dominant scientific and technological needs of the age. This sectarian provincial democracy with the conservative trappings of the British connection would respond coolly to Arnold's anti-democratic views, while respecting him as a cultivated man of letters.

The press welcomed the famous son of Arnold of Rugby, for no well-known poet had visited the city since Sir Thomas Moore's tour of York in 1804. It was arranged that he should give his public lectures at

the Shaftsbury Hall which was located at the corner of James and Queen streets. It was here he gave the lectures on 'Literature and Science' and 'Numbers' on the Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday evening to what one newspaper described as "large audiences of serious, intellectually-inclined people."

In 'Literature and Science' he challenged the view that education should be mainly scientific and technical, in keeping with the practical nature of the age. T. H. Huxley whom Arnold had engaged in spirited debate on the topic, had suggested that literature would inevitably have to step down from its favoured position, and that in the future, science rather than culture would supply practical knowledge and modern ethics in an age devoted to rational truth. Arnold responded with a warning against taking culture and literature in too narrow a sense. While knowledge of the details of physical science was valuable, it could not take the place of the collective knowledge of humanity through the ages. To a healthily-constituted mind, what men have thought, felt and done, and what they are still capable of thinking, feeling and doing, is of the utmost importance. If the reformers win the day and the 'humanities' are vanquished, like great Nature herself, they will attempt to return as soon as possible. Above all he deplored the materialistic tendency in modern science, for no system of education can be complete that does not bear upon moral conduct and satisfy the aesthetic sense.⁷

The lecture on 'Numbers' presented the novel idea that only a small portion of the population, 'the saving remnant,' could supply the moral force needed by the state in order for it to survive. While the majority and their actions, in any given society, may sometimes be right: very often they are wrong. The majority, he maintained, could not be relied upon to govern with wisdom, to love righteousness and to delight in the law of the eternal, in the spirit of Plato and Isaiah, for they were lacking in principle. The 'unsoundness' of the majority could be the ruin of the 'remnant' if not withstood. The task of the latter was to ever keep before them: whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are elevated, pure, just, amiable and of good report, should seek first to be healed themselves and then put forth their strength to the conversion of the majority and thus stay the tide of ruin.⁸

Both lectures aroused interest and controversy in Toronto, and there was a difference in his reception here as opposed to the United States. Whatever reservations they might harbour with respect to his ideas, Toronto audiences were courteous and more sympathetic to his austere dignified presence, for they acknowledged his reputation as the Apostle of Culture. The press criticism was restrained generally and of a fairly high intellectual calibre, in contrast to the United States, where

sections of it descended to an extremely low level of spite and invective.⁹ As in the United States 'Literature and Science' was more favourably received, although many disagreed with its conclusions.

The *Toronto World* published two editorials — both pro and con — on the subject of 'Literature and Science' and the ensuing education controversy. Mr. Arnold, it declared, was right 'in believing that the joys and the sorrows, the victories and defeats of men and women like ourselves will ever continue to be of more real interest to the mass of mankind than any truths of material science, however important.' The danger it was felt, was not that science would not get its due recognition, but rather, 'that we may drift towards a hard materialism which cares little about the morals of human conduct or beauty in either nature or art.' It rejected the idea 'that the poet and orator rank before the botanist; that Matthew Arnold is a better specimen of the species man than Huxley or Darwin.'¹⁰ The *Toronto Mail* noted that his influence in England was greater than on this continent. Over there he had a large class of men and women who could appreciate his work and could aid him in its realization, while over here the professional and literary class was small, nevertheless: 'The demand for scientific education of the most practical kind has arisen from the overpowering merchantile and industrial necessities of the people.'¹¹

Suggesting that the technical and scientific training that was expanding across Canada was somehow undesirable was not a popular concept with practical people. By depreciating the burgeoning new education of a Canada in the midst of its industrial 'take-off,' he attacked the most potent idea of an open society: that of progress. In this sectarian Canadian democracy the task of disseminating that doctrine was carried out by a British immigrant elite, that had broken with the Old World by putting its faith in the future of its adopted land, with all its great wealth of natural resources.¹² This group shared an idea of progress analogous to Manifest Destiny, although to a lesser degree in the more conservative Canadian milieu. What they particularly resented was Arnold's assumption that scientific and technical attainments were somehow inferior to 'culture' and the 'humanities,' for to admit this was to diminish all their effort and striving in their adopted land.

If there was a certain qualified acceptance of some of the ideas of the first lecture, such was not the case with the second which was most vigorously rebutted in the press. He was soundly berated by the *Globe* for his lack of an 'effective remedy to propose for the evils which he effects to deplore and condemn... Mr. Arnold, we should hope, has not yet altogether parted company with Christianity, although he studiously ignores it both as a fact and an influence.'¹³ For its part the

Toronto News took decided issue with his contention that mankind tended to be corrupt and unintelligent, save for the 'remnant.'

Though the tendency of the lecturer's argument was decidedly anti-democratic, it is just to note that he deprecated any attempt to revert to absolutism or oligarchy as a means of enforcing the rule of the remnant.

The most perceptible flaw in the lecturer's reasoning is the non-recognition of the fact that the majority are neither 'bad' as he puts it, nor yet good in the highest acceptance of the term. Human nature is a compound and strangely - mixed article. Men are subject to conflicting passions.¹⁴

The influential *Christian Guardian* expressed doubt that the anti-democratic doctrines he espoused would find many admirers in Canada, or in any other country where the people feel that 'a man's a man for a' that.' There was no good ground for assuming that wisdom was only to be found with the cultured minority and folly with the multitude. While it was true that great minds often gave leadership to the masses, this often depended upon factors other than culture, for knowledge of the classics will not make people 'good and pure, nor make them think alike on all questions.' In any case the educated people of any community are just as likely to differ in their evaluation of a great question as are the mass of the people.¹⁵

The most cogent criticism was to come from the periodical press. Goldwin Smith's friend, the noted essayist and polemicist, William Dawson LeSueur, wrote a brilliant critique of Arnold's North American lectures for *The Week* (28 February, 1884, 196), in which he took issue with the doctrine of the 'remnant' and the contention that majorities are always wrong, and incapable of sound opinions and good principles:

But surely there are minorities and minorities, and it would be somewhat hazardous for a man to conclude that because he was in a minority he was therefore in the right. How is the particular minority that holds the truth to be distinguished? What is the explanation of the fact, if it is one, that truth lodges itself in minorities? Finally, must the minority that holds the truth always remain a minority, or should it aspire to become a majority? Then, if it should become a majority, what will happen to it in a moral sense? Will truth, inevitably gravitating towards minorities, pass over to the vanquished party?

This was reasoned criticism of the highest order. It came therefore as no surprise to find Goldwin Smith commending LeSueur to Arnold as "the best critic Canada has."¹⁶

The generally uneasy response to 'Numbers' and the doctrine of the 'remnant' was not only an empirical reaction to idealist elitism, but a realization on the part of Canadians that they were a small population

of only four million in an environment that was largely hostile outside the large metropolitan centers. They hardly wanted to be reminded that as a consequence, their 'remnant' would be pitifully small compared to that of the United States with its much larger population, and presumably much larger 'remnant.' Arnold made little or no attempt to adapt his lectures to the concerns of his Canadian audiences, and as we shall see in Montreal, was to display a remarkable ignorance of Canadian society and the complex nature of French-Canadian nationalism.

Before leaving Toronto, Goldwin Smith who chaired the lectures, took his guests on a whirlwind tour of the University of Toronto campus, under whose patronage Arnold had originally applied to lecture, but due to the short notice involved it had been impossible to make the necessary arrangements in time. Arnold was much taken with the campus, and declared it to be one of the best that he had seen anywhere. The party toured points of interest around the campus and looked in upon a metaphysics lecture being given by Professor Young. Reporting on the visit *The Varsity* declared wryly: 'The fact is coincident that the lecture should have been on Herbert Spencer, as professor Young and Matthew Arnold's opinion of Spencer lie in the same groove.'¹⁷

Next day the Arnolds moved on to Ottawa where they were the guests of the Governor-General and Lady Lansdowne at Rideau Hall. Nearly forty years earlier Arnold had been private secretary to Lord Lansdowne's father, when the famous Whig statesman and art lover had been president of the council during the Liberal ministry of Lord John Russell. Under his patronage Arnold had been introduced into society and obtained his appointment as an inspector of schools. In Ottawa the 'Numbers' lecture was given in the Grand Opera House on Saturday evening, 16 February, with his Excellency the Governor-General graciously consenting to take the chair. Commenting on the audience the *Ottawa Daily Citizen* remarked that it constituted 'a very representative remnant of the most intellectual people in Ottawa, and Mr. Arnold could hardly help having the grateful feeling of being fully appreciated by them.' As for Arnold: 'He looks anything but a typical poet or philosopher as he faces his audience, tall and symmetrical, with dark hair slightly silvered... English evening costume, and the traditional English lisp and hesitancy of utterance, he might pass far more readily for a "pheasant-breeding lord," as Baron Tennyson phrases it, than one of the lords of thought.'¹⁸

Then as now the chief activity of Ottawa was politics; the 'Numbers' lecture on the unsoundness of the majority was seized upon by the Liberals to use against their Conservative opponents under the leader-

ship of Sir John A. Macdonald. Observing the 'unsound' majority in parliament, the *Ottawa Daily Free Press* commented:

If we are to derive comfort from the doctrine of the remnant, and there is some comfort to be derived from it, we must also be capable of receiving and holding fast the austere but true doctrine of the unsoundness of the majority, and of the certainty that this unsoundness, if not withstood and remedied, will be their ruin...

The unsoundness of that majority and the certainty of their ruin because of their unsoundness!

Mr. Arnold was not aware of the tremendous significance of his words uttered in the hearing of the most unsound majority in the world, when applied to the situation at the capital of the Dominion.¹⁹

In contrast to the Toronto press comment, newspapers in the capital, while summarizing the 'Numbers' lecture offered little in the way of criticism of its philosophical context; rather they seemed to concentrate more on the social aspects of the Arnold visit. The audience for the Ottawa lecture might well have been larger, but for the fact that Arnold had to change the scheduled date to the Saturday evening, in consequence of a tight itinerary for the Canadian tour. This probably explains why on the evening of the lecture, Sir John A. Macdonald was holding a convivial dinner party at his Ottawa residence. It is reasonable to suppose that some of his eighteen invited guests might have joined Ottawa's intelligentsia for the important occasion had not the dates clashed. One cannot escape the feeling that the 'Old Chieftan' felt more at home entertaining political friends and cronies, than paying his respects to the Apostle of Culture.

Two Canadian poets would react strongly to the Arnold visit. The English-Canadian poet Archibald Lampman lived in Ottawa where he held an appointment with the post office department of the civil service. He would be much stimulated by Arnold's lecture and the idea of a 'high plane' of culture applied to universal standards of excellence in poetry. In Montreal, as we shall see, the French-Canadian poet Louis Fréchette would react very differently.²⁰ The week-end in the capital had been short but pleasant for Arnold, but the highpoint of his visit would come in Quebec City, where the Arnolds planned an overnight stay prior to Montreal — the final stop on the tour. Quebec City proved to be a triumphant success while Montreal constituted a near-disaster.

Just prior to his return to England Matthew Arnold wrote to his brother Walter: 'Quebec is the most interesting thing by much that I have seen on this continent, and I think I would sooner be a poor priest in Quebec, than a rich hog-merchant in Chicago.'²¹ He was captivated by the old-world charm and sincere hospitality of the Québécois, who

in turn opened up their hearts to 'un grande poete anglais' who spoke to them in their own language with such fluency and polish. The Arnolds arrived in the city from Ottawa on the morning of February 18th, stayed overnight, and left by train for Montreal early the next morning. While in the city they were the guests of Mr. George Stewart, who was a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, vice-president of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society, and editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. They were afforded civic honours by the Mayor, the Hon. F. Langelier, who conducted the party on a tour of Laval University. At an afternoon reception two hundred guests mingled with the Arnolds, who in turn found the Quebecois to be 'delightful' and 'amiable' people. The *Quebec Daily Mercury* took pleasure in advising its readers that Arnold had waived his \$150 fee to lecture in Quebec gratuitously, in order not to miss the opportunity of a visit to the ancient capital of Lower Canada.²²

The 'Literature and Science' lecture was given in the evening in the hall of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society in Morrin College, Quebec, with Mr. Langelier in the chair; it was given in French before a capacity audience. Arnold was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the delighted audience, and at the end of the evening a spontaneous exchange of compliments arose, in which he quoted Taine and his statement that since the Dark Ages only France and England had maintained a continuous tradition of great and powerful literature. He declared that the more each nationality knew of the other's literature, the better friends they would become.²³ The old city of culture and ancient traditions had worked a spell upon him, for he achieved an instant rapport with the Quebecois. *Le Journal de Québec* declared appreciately:

M. Arnold n'est pas un orateur. C'est un philosophe, un poète et un diseur. En parlant, il rythme ses pensées, scande sa phrase. Sans avoir l'air d'y mettre de l'art, il empoigne son auditoire en lui développant des idées sont si près de l'idéal et de la poésie!²⁴

The positive response to Arnold's plea for a less materialistic culture, and his affirmation of the supremacy of literature over the study of practical science, was in marked contrast to the general response in English Canada. The cultivated Québécois elite cherished the old traditions and perceived in Arnold a kindred spirit, harkening back to their glorious past, at present challenged by the philistine imperatives of Anglo-American progressivism, utilitarian commerce and industrialization. Arnold expressed his feelings in a letter to his friend Fontanes: 'I was extremely interested in Quebec and in the French people there. They came to hear me speak on Literature and Science,

gave me an excellent reception, and were pleased at my talking French to them. The Englishman of these parts is apt to be what I call a philistine, and a philistine of a hard type; and so is the Yankee too—indeed of a yet harder type than the Englishman.²⁵ In Quebec the Apostle of Culture had obviously touched a responsive chord in the depths of the French-Canadian psyche: which made the event that occurred in Montreal all the more extraordinary.

Montreal's merchantile greatness had been founded on the Fur Trade and the activities of its shrewd Scottish merchants. By the time of Confederation in 1867 it was a city of great wealth, influence and economic progress. It continued to expand its boundaries and consolidate its position as the commercial and communications center of Canada. It had been a transatlantic port since 1853, while in 1860, the Prince of Wales had opened the great Victoria bridge spanning the St. Lawrence river. The power in Montreal resided firmly with the Anglophone majority: at the time of Arnold's visit in 1884, chief magistrates were still chosen alternatively from the French and English communities, although the latter made up only one quarter of the total population, which was overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. Montreal was to prove an anti-climax for Arnold, and what occurred there was to assume greater significance than it deserved, set as it was against his personal triumph in the ancient capital of New France.

Arnold gave both his lectures in Montreal but to relatively small audiences. When the Arnolds arrived on Tuesday 19 February, the *Montreal Gazette* extended a welcome to the distinguished son of Arnold of Rugby, while expressing some cautious doubts as to his religious ideas. The *McGill University Gazette* in its review of the 'Literature and Science' lecture deplored what it termed the 'literary decadence' existing in the city of Montreal, and went on to declare with some feeling: 'Such a low state have we now reached that our *litterateurs* may be counted by the half-dozen, we cannot find enough people anxious to fill a small hall, and three-fourths of those who did go to hear him were not intelligent enough to appreciate what he said.'²⁶ His complex religious views were troublesome to large sections of the Protestant community, particularly those who remembered his illustrious father. He was attacked for the vagueness of his religion and for his lack of creed, and castigated for his criticism of dissenters, for this showed that 'the gospel that he preaches has not even the power to reach his own soul.'²⁷ As in Ottawa, some support was offered for the 'Numbers' lecture, but only as a means of attacking the government of the day with its 'unsound majority.' He did not tone down in his 'Numbers' lecture some harsh references to the 'lubricity' and moral state of modern France, which prompted John Lesperance, an elo-

quent bilingual French-Canadian and a member of the Royal Society of Canada, to write a spirited letter of protest to the editor of the *Montreal Gazette*.²⁸ These responses reflected the tense climate in Montreal, and the cultural, racial and religious differences that existed: this 'touchiness' magnified the testimonial luncheon incident which caused distress to sensitive Canadians of both nationality groups.

The testimonial luncheon in Arnold's honour was held at the Windsor Hotel on Wednesday, 20 February, and was attended by a cross-section of Montreal's intellectual elite, representing both French and English Canadians. Among those present were the poet Louis Fréchette, George Iles, H. Beaugrand, S.E. Dawson, Professor J.C. Clarke Murray, H.R. Molson, Rev. G.H. Wells, and the Ottawa poet John Reade. A detailed report in the *Montreal Daily Star* of 21 February, described the luncheon as initially cordial and convivial. The chairman, S.E. Dawson, introduced the distinguished visitor, and Dr. Fréchette took the floor to recite a poem in Arnold's honour especially composed for the occasion. In response to the toast Arnold spoke of his favourable impressions of Quebec and of the 'advantages to be derived from the circumstances of the two nationalities living harmoniously side by side...he could see that the sceptical and Republican France was not the France that was beloved here. Hence they loved the Catholic France of their religion and the olden times.' He went on to speak of his visit to the Grey Nunnery that morning, and that 'while he had been struck by the watchful care of the sisters and the love and obedience of the pupils and believed it to be a system to be envied and admired, yet he could not effect to conceal his opinion that the Roman Catholic system could not permanently stand.' He noted the narrowness of some Protestant sects and Roman Catholics, and urged the need to unite the two religious groups. He went on to suggest that Canada could not prosper until more liberal views were entertained by the Church of Rome.²⁹

The dramatic effect of these words on such an assembly can be well imagined: Louis Fréchette walked out in protest and the luncheon adjourned on a discordant note. Within a few hours the incident had assumed the proportions of a cause célèbre in Montreal, with the most heated discussion resulting, both pro and con, on the propriety of Arnold's remarks. The *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* for 21 February summed up a widely held feeling in Montreal with its headline for that day: to the effect that Arnold had been 'treading on dangerous ground.' The *Montreal Gazette* of the same day tried to defuse the tense situation, very laudably, by referring to the luncheon incident very indirectly in its published account. The

reaction of the *Montreal Daily Star* was somewhat defensive. It sidestepped the issue of good taste and concentrated on free speech, remarking with some acerbity:

If our distinguished guests are to be silent whenever they approach topics, wherein all the various sections of the mixed community have sensitive feelings, we shall never be able to receive the frank and open criticism which every lover of liberty should welcome.

Speeches which shall be mere echoes of prevalent opinion can neither be as instructive nor beneficial as the temperate utterances of eminent thinkers, who say what they think honestly and politely.³⁰

The cultural duality of the city was exemplified by the reaction of the French-language press which in contrast to that of Quebec City had ignored the Arnold visit until the luncheon incident erupted. In its report *Le Monde* harkened back to the 'Numbers' lecture in which it claimed Arnold had said France was beyond saving because of her moral degradation. (In actuality he had drawn attention to the existence of a large and powerful 'remnant' in France, and held out hope for her eventual salvation, notwithstanding her current moral deficiencies.) In the tense racially-conscious climate in Montreal distortion crept in and both statements were fused together in the public mind. In seeming to attack both the French race and their Catholic religion he was seen to be attacking the very essence of French-Canadian nationalism. The editor of *La Patrie* gave it as his opinion that 'Mr. Arnold in this matter displayed a great deal of bad taste,' and when a complimentary lunch is presented to someone 'no excuse should be allowed for hurting the feelings of those present.'³¹ Sensationalist elements in the French-language press magnified the incident out of proportion and many strong emotions were aroused in consequence. A typical comment was that of *Le Canadien* which declared: 'En respondant au toast de sa santé, M. Arnold en a pris occasion pour insulter les canadiens-français.'³² Despite the sensationalist report based on hearsay one fact clearly emerged: Arnold had seriously offended the religious sensibilities of the French-Canadian community in Montreal.

Not all the press comment was negative however; by the end of the visit, though still rather cool, it was decidedly more responsive in the English-speaking community. How much this was due to a closing of the ranks in response to the Fréchette reaction is a matter of conjecture. With typical Anglophone insouciance *The Week* suggested that Fréchette must have been unfamiliar with Arnold's prose writings on religion to interpret his remarks as an insult.³³ Possibly so: but Fréchette could not possibly have imagined that the guest of honour at a testimonial luncheon, would have spoken disparagingly of the religion of the majority in Quebec, nor forecast its inevitable demise.

Doubtless Arnold was influenced in his perception of Canadian affairs through his long-standing association with Goldwin Smith whose acerbity with respect to French-Canadians and their religion hardly needs to be stressed. In the climate of ultramontane ascendancy in Quebec, Smith's anti-Catholic bias bordered on bigotry, and there is every reason to believe that he urged his views upon Arnold. Quite possibly the explanation for Arnold's *faux pas* lay in the fact that he had absorbed some of these views; yet if he did so, they were surely modified by his positive experience in Quebec City and his warm reception by the French-language press there.

Many people believed that Arnold was unconscious of having given offence and was under the impression that he was addressing only Protestants at the testimonial luncheon. Yet in being introduced to his fellow guests surely he noticed French as well as English names? A glance at the guest list and simple common sense should have told him that he would have been addressing a bilingual group of both races and faiths. A little sober reflection on his part and even a limited understanding of the psychological climate of Canadian duality, should have warned him that French-Canadians would be alert to any suggestion of slight. Had Arnold spoken in French in Montreal, given the subtlety and nuance of the French language, one wonders if his remarks would have been more acceptable, or indeed, if Louis Fréchette would have reacted at all.

Arnold was not unaware of the tempest he had unwittingly caused in Montreal, for upon his return to London we find him writing to Goldwin Smith: 'Quebec was the most interesting place we saw in America and the French population there seemed amiable and moderate; at Montreal on the other hand, ultramontanism was in the ascendent...' Making due allowance for the hypersensitivity of the Franco-phone majority, the Apostle of Culture unintentionally inflicted a wound on the French of Montreal. On the other hand, despite his deep devotion to French culture, he was unable to indulge in dishonest cant or flattery. He made no secret of his views on the imperfections of Roman Catholicism or of some of the Protestant sects, or indeed, of organized religion in general. He spoke impulsively without realizing the full consequences of his action, particularly in the ideological climate of Quebec, where French-Canadian nationalism was a fusion of race, language and religion; thus an attack upon the Church was an attack upon the race. This explains the reaction of Louis Fréchette who was a moderately anti-clerical 'Rouge' supporter.

Despite the debacle in Montreal, the Canadian tour was a source of gratification to Arnold, while for their part, Canadians felt a sense of importance that the great man of letters had decided to include them at

the end of his American tour. Their generally more tolerant reception was more than a feeling of kinship for a distinguished visitor from the mother country. A more likely explanation was their realization through the press of his very uneven — at times very hostile — reception in the United States. Notwithstanding their joint participation in the dynamics of North American 'progress,' when presented with an opportunity, however trivial, of asserting their individuality by differentiating their sense of identity from that of their powerful neighbour, Canadians eagerly grasped it. More reserved, more conservative than the Americans, Canadians gave Arnold a respectful and serious hearing, in contrast to the United States, where he was lionized in the South and New England, and reviled in the Middle West. He was brutally treated by the yellow press, in which he was characterized as a bum and free-loader from the Old World, out to make a dollar in the United States by vicious criticism of all that he encountered.

The Canadian response to Arnold was regional. Central Canada's empirical utilitarian establishment expressed polite dissent for what they perceived to be the anti-democratic, anti-technological implication of his views; while there was qualified acceptance of his ideas on culture, education and literature, from an idealist elite minority, which was academically based, but lacking in economic and political power. They deplored the soulless utilitarian aspects of modern life, and tended, in the words of S.E.D. Shortt, 'to view political democracy with suspicion, industrialism with distaste, and the new education with outright revulsion.'³⁴ French Canada was not in sympathy with the materialistic mechanical nature of modern capitalist civilization, and responded warmly to Arnold's traditional cultural idealism, based as it was on his linguistic facility and Gallic sympathies. Montreal on the other hand, the center of an artificial, uneasy racial dualism, was to display a distorted reaction which reflected the confrontation of the two solitudes in enforced proximity in a milieu of ideological and religious conflict. There is more than paradox involved in the different reception accorded Arnold by the French-Canadian community of Quebec City and Montreal; there is supreme irony, that this kindest and gentlest of men, should have appeared to the French in Montreal as a bigoted Ontario Orangiste — the worst kind of 'phillistine' — rather than the cultured dispenser of 'sweetness and light' which at heart he surely was.

NOTES

1. For the most comprehensive account of the American tour see Chilson H. Leonard, 'Arnold in America' (PHD thesis, Yale University, 1932); John Henry Raleigh, *Matthew Arnold and American Culture* (Berkeley 1961); Sidney Coulling, *Matthew Arnold and his Critics* (Athens, Ohio 1974). The most extensive treatment of the Canadian leg of Arnold's tour is to be found in B.B. Opala, 'Matthew Arnold in Canada' (MA thesis, McGill University, 1968).
2. Arnold Haultain, ed., *Goldwin Smith's Correspondence, 1846-1910* (Toronto n.d.), 155-6.
3. The Sunday streetcar issue was debated in the community with great bitterness between 1891 and 1897, when the proposal was finally approved by the electors with a margin of 321 votes. The Evangelical Church had defied the Sabbath proposal, while the Roman Catholic Church had supported it, claiming the Sabbath was made for man.
4. See Michael J. Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921* (Ottawa 1979).
5. Rev. Henry Scadding and J.C. Dent, *Toronto: Past and Present, 1834-1884* (Toronto 1884), 330.
6. W.L. Morton, ed., 'Victorian Canada,' in *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto 1968), 322-3.
7. Matthew Arnold, *Discourses in America* (London 1885), 72-137.
8. *Ibid.*, 1-71.
9. Although Arnold was no more flattering to Canadians than he had been to Americans, the former did not manufacture myths about him. Advance articles in the Canadian periodical press defended him from the harsh and unjust criticism he encountered from some quarters in the States. See *The Week*, 3 Jan. 1884, 6; 1 May, 338.
10. *Toronto World*, 13 Feb. 1884.
11. *Toronto Mail*, 13 Feb. 1884.
12. Laurence S. Fallis, Jr., 'The Idea of Progress in the Province of Canada: A Study in the History of Ideas,' *Shield of Achilles*, ed., Morton, 169-81.
13. *Globe*, 15 Feb. 1884.
14. *Toronto News*, 14 Feb. 1884.
15. *Christian Guardian*, 20 Feb. 1884.
16. Haultain, *Goldwin Smith's Correspondence*, 175-6.
17. 'Quicquid Agunt,' *The Varsity*, 16 Feb. 1884.
18. *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, 18 Feb. 1884.
19. *Ottawa Daily Free Press*, 18 Feb. 1884.
20. See Bruce Nesbitt, 'Matthew Arnold in Canada: A Dialogue Begun?' *Culture*, 28, 1967, 53-4.
21. G.W.E. Russell, ed., *Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888* (London 1895), II, 264.
22. *Quebec Daily Mercury*, 19 Feb. 1884.
23. See Opala, 'Matthew Arnold,' 65-71.
24. *Le Journal de Quebec*, 19 février, 1884.
25. Russell, *Letters*, II, 265.
26. *University Gazette*, VII, 1884, 1.
27. *Montreal Daily Witness*, 20 Feb. 1884.
28. See Opala, 'Matthew Arnold,' 89.
29. *Montreal Daily Star*, 21 Feb. 1884.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Le Patrie*, 21 février, 1884.
32. *Le Canadien*, 21 février, 1884.
33. *The Week*, 28 Feb. 1884, 196.
34. S.E.D. Shortt, *The Search for an Ideal* (Toronto 1970), 7.