

**CIVILIZATION IN THE
UNITED STATES: FIRST AND
LAST IMPRESSIONS OF
AMERICA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649550173

Civilization in the United States: First and Last Impressions of America by Matthew Arnold

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MATTHEW ARNOLD

**CIVILIZATION IN THE
UNITED STATES: FIRST AND
LAST IMPRESSIONS OF
AMERICA**

①
"CIVILIZATION
IN THE UNITED STATES,"

FIRST AND LAST IMPRESSIONS
OF AMERICA

BY
MATTHEW ARNOLD

BOSTON
CUPPLES AND HURD
PUBLISHERS
1888

0902

1511

CIVILIZATION
IN THE UNITED STATES

FIRST AND LAST IMPRESSIONS
OF AMERICA

CONTENTS.

I. GENERAL GRANT. AN ESTIMATE	
PART I.	3
PART II.	33
II. A WORD ABOUT AMERICA	69
III. A WORD MORE ABOUT AMERICA	111
IV. CIVILIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES	157

GENERAL GRANT.

GENERAL GRANT.

PART I.

I HAVE heard it said, I know not with what degree of truth, that while the sale in America of General Grant's *Personal Memoirs* has produced three hundred thousand dollars for the benefit of his widow and family, there have not in England been sold of the book three hundred copies. Certainly the book has had no wide circulation here, it has not been much read or much discussed. There are obvious reasons for this. The book relates in great detail the military history of the American Civil War, so far as Grant bore part in it; such a history cannot possibly have for other nations the interest which it has for the United States themselves. For the general reader outside of America, it certainly cannot; as to the value and importance of the history to the military specialist, that is a question on which I hear very conflicting opinions expressed, and one on which I myself can

General Grant.

have, of course, no opinion to offer. So far as the general European reader might still be attracted to such a history, in spite of its military details, for the sake of the importance of the issues at stake and of the personages engaged, we in Europe have, it cannot be denied, in approaching an American recital of the deeds of "the greatest nation upon earth," some apprehension and mistrust to get over. We may be pardoned for doubting whether we shall in the recital find measure, whether we shall find sobriety. Then, too, General Grant, the central figure of these *Memoirs*, is not to the English imagination the hero of the American Civil War; the hero is Lee, and of Lee the *Memoirs* tell us little. Moreover General Grant, when he was in England, did not himself personally interest people much. Later he fell in America into the hands of financing speculators, and his embarrassments, though they excited sorrow and compassion, did not at all present themselves to us as those of "a good man struggling with adversity." For all these reasons, then, the *Personal Memoirs* have in England been received with coldness and indifference.

I, too, had seen General Grant in England, and did not find him interesting. If I said the truth, I should say that I thought him ordinary-looking,

dull and silent. An expression of gentleness and even sweetness in the eyes, which the portraits in the *Memoirs* show, escaped me. A strong, resolute, business-like man, who by possession of unlimited resources in men and money, and by the unsparing use of them, had been enabled to wear down and exhaust the strength of the South, this was what I supposed Grant to be, this and little more.

Some documents published by General Badeau in the American newspapers first attracted my serious attention to Grant. Among those documents was a letter from him which showed qualities for which, in the rapid and uncharitable view which our cursory judgments of men so often take, I had by no means given him credit. It was the letter of a man with the virtue, rare everywhere, but more rare in America, perhaps, than anywhere else, the virtue of being able to confront and resist popular clamour, the *civium ardor prava jubentium*. Public opinion seemed in favour of a hard and insolent course, the authorities seemed putting pressure upon Grant to make him follow it. He resisted with firmness and dignity. After reading that letter I turned to General Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, then just published. This man, I said to myself, deserves respect and attention ; and I read the two bulky volumes through.