

**MATTHEW  
ARNOLD'S  
NOTEBOOKS**

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Matthew Arnold's Notebooks by Matthew Arnold & Mrs. Wodehouse

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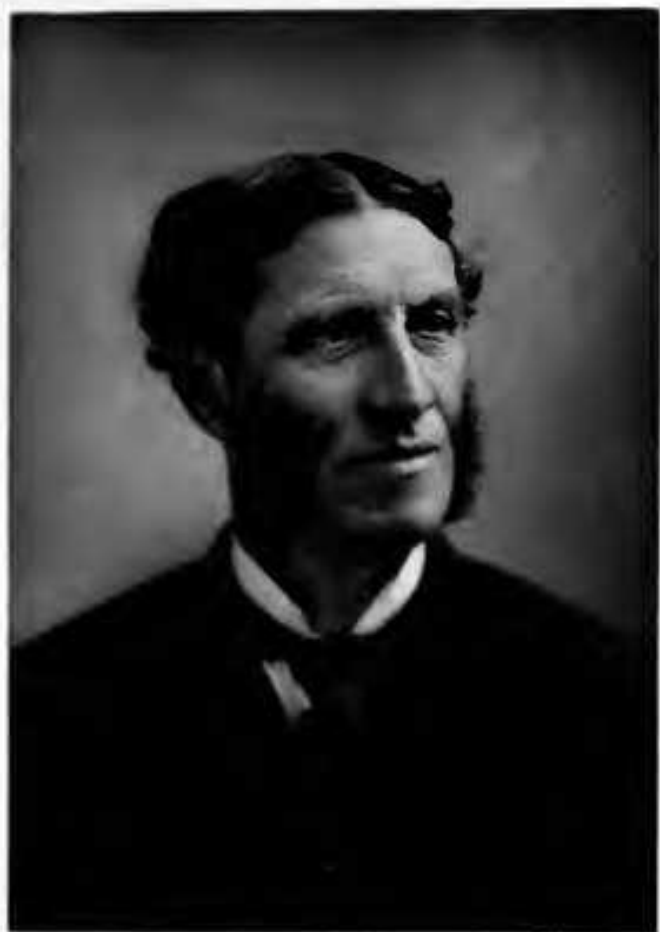
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**MATTHEW ARNOLD & MRS. WODEHOUSE**

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Matthew Arnold. -

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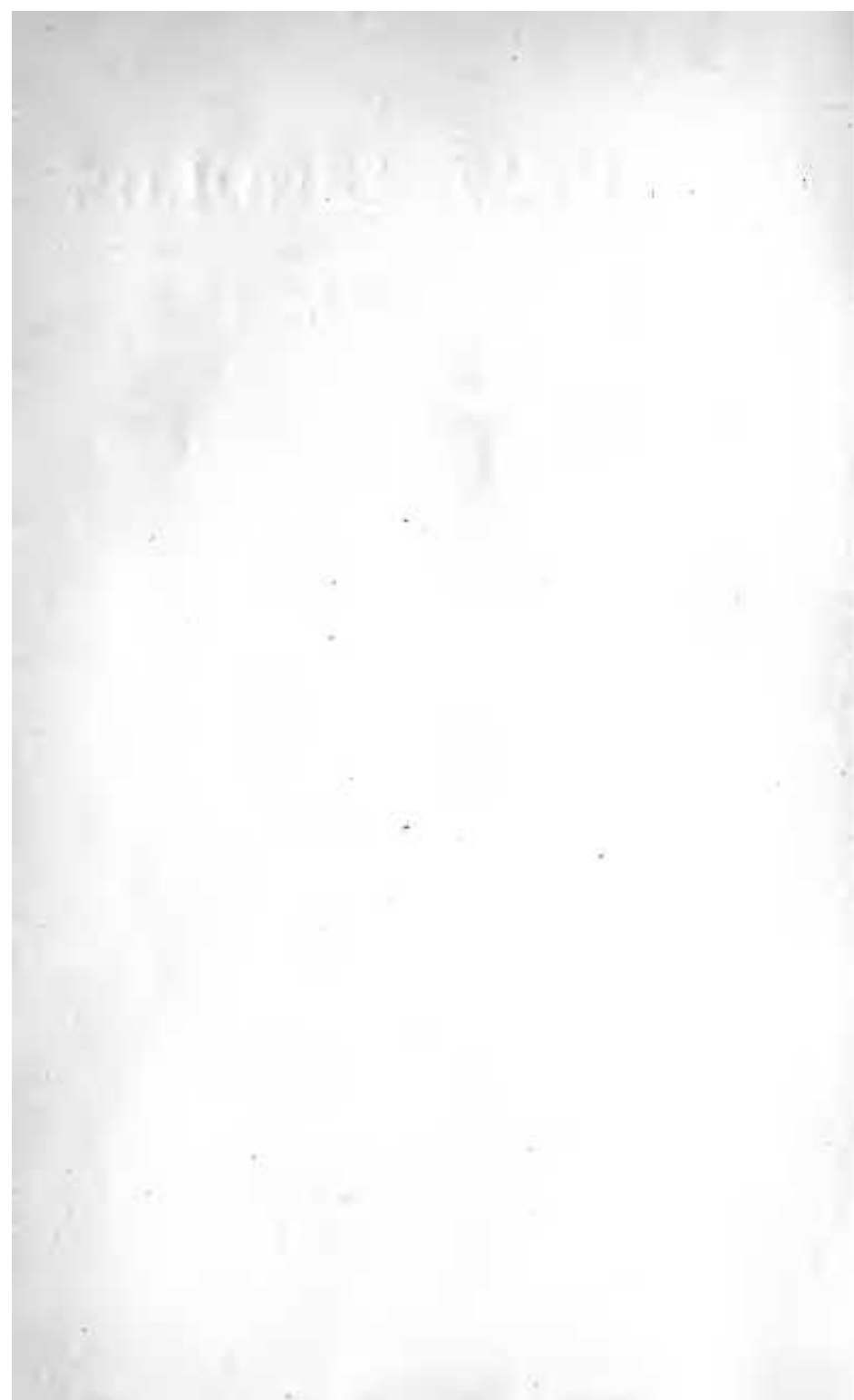
WITH A PREFACE  
BY  
THE HON. MRS. WODEHOUSE

AND A PORTRAIT

*SECOND IMPRESSION*

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## PREFACE

My father used often to say, half jokingly, that if anyone would ever take the trouble to collect all the extracts from various writers which he had copied in his notebooks, there would be found a volume of priceless worth. My mother transcribed a great part of the contents of these notebooks after my father's death ; but she died before she could finish this work.

The note-books or Diaries extend over a period of thirty-seven years. They are little, long, narrow books. The space in them is limited, and they served, not only as his record of official engagements, but as his literary note-books, in which were entered any passages that struck him in his daily reading. Certain favourite quotations appear and reappear, and they furnish living illustrations of many of the principles again and again insisted upon in his prose writings. 'One must,



I think,' he says, in his Preface to the first edition of 'Culture and Anarchy,' 'be struck more and more the longer one lives, to find how much, in our present society, a man's life of each day depends for its solidity and value on whether he reads during *that* day, and, far more still, on what he reads during it.' The dictum first laid down in the 'Essays in Criticism' (Preface), and constantly repeated in some form or other, 'that it is the business of criticism to know and make known the best that is known and thought in the world,' is here shown to be his life-long practice. The quotations are in English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek.

In the blank pages at the end of some of the notebooks, he made a list of all the books he wished to read during the year. Through those books which he did read he drew a black line; these lists I have reproduced at the end of each year's extracts as they occur. In order to present these note-books in the most characteristic and at the same time a compendious form, it has been decided to take every fifth year, unabridged, from 1863 to 1888, the last year of my father's life, besides the earliest entries, brief and irregular,

between 1852 and 1861, which, together, barely equal in bulk the entries for a single year at a later period. On New Year's Day 1882, he wrote to his sister ('Letters,' ii. 196): 'I am glad to find that in the past year I have at least accomplished more than usual in the way of reading the books which at the beginning of the year I had put down to be read. I always do this, and I do not expect to read all I put down, but sometimes I fall much too short of what I proposed, and this year things have been a good deal better. The importance of reading, not slight stuff to get through the time, but the best that has been written, forces itself upon me more and more every year I live; it is living in good company, the best company, and people are generally quite keen enough, or too keen, about doing that, yet they will not do it in the simplest and best manner by reading. However, if I live to be eighty I shall probably be the only person left in England who reads anything but newspapers and scientific publications.'

Excepting the repetitions of those which are noted as recurring in the same year, the passages are printed precisely in the order in which they stand. They were

written in and out, wherever a convenient space offered itself; but there is a deep unconscious significance in the days chosen on the latest entries. The passage chosen for Sunday, April 15, 1888, is from Ecclesiasticus xxxviii: 'Weep bitterly over the dead, as he is worthy, and then comfort thyself; drive heaviness away: thou shalt not do him good, but hurt thyself.' That Sunday afternoon he died suddenly. For the next Sunday, the Sunday after his burial, he had written these other words from Ecclesiasticus: 'When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest; and be comforted for him when his spirit is departed from him.'

ELEANOR WODEHOUSE.

*October, 1902.*