

**MATTHEW ARNOLD:**  
**A Life**  
 by Park Honan  
 McGraw-Hill, 1981  
 496 pp. \$19.95

Matthew Arnold (1822–88) grew up under the long shadow of his father, the liberal but demanding headmaster of England's famous Rugby School. Dr. Arnold died while Matt was still an indolent student at Oxford, but the poet who wrote "Dover Beach" and the critic who penned *Culture and Anarchy* never forgot his father's strong sense of duty. In this excellent biography, Honan, a reader in English at Birmingham University, shows that this stern moral legacy probably damaged Matthew's career as a poet. Not only did it compel him to leave an easy sinecure for the socially responsible position of school inspector, a grueling and ultimately frustrating job; it also eventually led to moralizing in his verse. The man who had first written poems to please his mother came to believe that poetry, as the essential voice of culture, must carry on the civilizing mission that was once, in the Middle Ages, the work of the Church. Burdening his verse with philosophical instruction, he gradually suppressed his best poetic instincts—though happily this did not happen until after he had produced an impressive body of work. Heavily burdened by job and family, he still managed to write, albeit more criticism than poetry. Stiff at first, his prose soon developed grace and quick flashes of insight. In essays, lectures, and books, Arnold made his eloquent argument for a broad humanist education, available to all, as the best defense against social anarchy.

### *Science & Technology*

**EMERGING COSMOLOGY**  
 by Bernard Lovell  
 Columbia, 1981  
 208 pp. \$14.95

New discoveries about the nature of the universe are often suppressed by the prevailing cosmology, until theory eventually catches up to them. Lovell, a Royal Society astronomer, recounts this process of resistance and gradual acceptance from Aristotle's time to the present. Thomas Aquinas's tempering of literal biblical views with Aristotelean science in the 13th century, for instance, was a monumental achievement, but, Lovell notes, it also helped forestall widespread accept-