

Books and Authors

The United States Navy¹

In parting with Louisiana, Napoleon said: "I have given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride." Remembering what the infant navy of the Colonies had accomplished during the Revolution, there was in 1803 already a basis for Napoleon's prophecy. How this prophecy was fulfilled nine years later is narrated in the last two hundred pages of the first volume of Edgar Stanton Maclay's "History of the United States Navy," a handsome octavo, with large clear type, bound in navy blue, the front cover effectively ornamented with a symbolic design in raised bronze.

Through access to the French naval records, Mr. Maclay has been able to add considerably to our knowledge of our two and a half years' naval war with France which began in 1798; but all access to the British Admiralty archives was refused him. Mr. Maclay has, in the main, done his work well. We recognize portions of his material as having been utilized for magazine articles during the past few years; and if we have any fault to find with his style, it is in his dropping from the picturesque style of these portions to the set narrative, which results in a certain unevenness in his manner of telling the story.

The book opens with an introduction in which are considered the excuses put forth by English naval writers for the disasters to the British navy in the War of 1812, in which the vessels of the United States were victorious in fifteen out of eighteen engagements, with a startling disparity of killed and wounded in favor of our vessels, showing the deadly accuracy of their fire. It may be interesting to note that in the last great sea-duel between American and English gunners—it being believed that the Alabama had many of these aboard—there was the same difference in gunnery, the fire from the Kearsarge being as deadly as that poured into the English ships by the American frigates in the War of 1812. Mr. Maclay finds one cause for the British naval disasters in that war in the overweening confidence of the British officers, who had been spoiled by their too easy victories over the French and Spanish. It seems to us that much of the matter in this introduction should rather have been incorporated into the narrative of the War of 1812.

Naturally, the most interesting chapter in the account of our navy during the Revolution is that which tells the story of the engagement between the Bonhomme Richard and the Serapis, in the German Ocean. There can be no doubt that Paul Jones was the hero of the greatest sea-duel ever fought. Many remarkable circumstances give dramatic interest to this battle. The fact that the severest fighting was done by moonlight; the quickness with which Captain Jones utilized every expedient which chance threw in his way; his reply, "I have not yet begun to fight," when the Englishman, seeing his desperate plight, asked if he had surrendered; the endurance displayed on both sides, unsurpassed in naval history; and the final surrender of the Serapis, reduced to a wreck, while the victorious vessel was herself on fire and in a sinking condition—the Bonhomme Richard actually went down the next morning, and the victors returned to port in the Serapis—combine to render Captain Jones's victory a most extraordinary one. It was one with great odds against him. At the first broadside two of his 18-pounders burst, and the whole battery was abandoned, so that he had only 12 and 9-pounders to rely on. The Bonhomme Richard was a refitted merchantman, whereas the Serapis was a new frigate. During the action the Englishman fouled the Bonhomme Richard with his jib-boom, and Captain Jones, knowing that his only chance lay at close quarters, lashed with his own hands the spar to his rigging. At a critical juncture, the Alliance, a vessel of Jones's squadron, hove in sight, and Jones, relying on her aid, considered the battle his; but her French captain

treacherously fired into the Bonhomme Richard, head, stern, and broadside, seriously damaging her, and killing and wounding a number of men. Jones had many English prisoners, taken earlier in his cruise, aboard his ship. These had been released without authority, and were creating great confusion. Circulating the report that the Serapis was sinking, and that their only safety lay in keeping the Bonhomme Richard afloat, Jones induced his prisoners to man the pumps and fight the flames with frantic energy.

We wish the author had added to his account of this action Walt Whitman's spirited poem, in which the story of this great sea-duel is told with extraordinary terseness and vigor:

Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

The second part of Mr. Maclay's history is taken up with the wars with Tripoli and France, and the third part with a portion of the War of 1812. Spirited accounts are given of the famous chase of the Constitution (Captain Hull escaping from his numerous pursuers only by the adroit use of every device known to seamanship), and of the various frigate and sloop actions. In the first frigate action, that between the Constitution and the Guerrière, Hull reserved his fire some time after the enemy opened, several of his own men being killed. With perfect discipline, the American gunners stood at quarters until, when about forty yards off the enemy's bow quarter, Captain Hull gave the order to fire. Then the Constitution belched forth a storm of iron hail that carried death and destruction to her opponent, which in forty minutes was rolling dismasted in the trough of the sea. Later in the war, Lawrence, in the Hornet, sunk the Peacock in eleven minutes. The Constitution is our "Old Ironsides," which is still preserved at the Portsmouth Navy-Yard, we believe.

The volume concludes with the operations on the Great Lakes, and Porter's famous cruise in the Pacific with the Essex.

Mr. Davidson's spirited illustrations and maps and diagrams enhance the value of the work, which, strange as it may seem, is the first continuous record of the brilliant achievements of the United States Navy.



An "Apostle of Evolution"²

Now and then a truly original worker arises. Such men are precious; their memory should live. In this book John Fiske gives us a sketch of the life of a man of this kind—Edward Livingston Youmans. For many years fate seemed against this man. Born in modest conditions, his younger days were those of hard work. Industrious, intelligent, a diligent reader, a clear thinker, the young man was looking forward to a college education and a career. Then blindness came upon him, disarranging his plans, and for nearly thirteen years making success seem almost hopeless. But even then he was working constantly and supporting himself by such literary work as he could secure. With his devoted sister's help, he worked for months upon a history of the progress of discovery and invention. Just before it was completed Mr. Putnam published a work of similar scope and character. At this time of disappointment family affairs were in an unfortunate state: what wonder that the blind man should lose his courage? We hear him saying, "I must give up this struggle; it's of no use going on in this way; my case is hopeless." But brighter days were coming. Mr. Youmans devised an ingenious series of colored diagrams illustrating the principles of chemistry, which met with great favor. The encouraged author went on to a new work—a text-book of arithmetic on scientific principles. A second time he suffered a bitter disappointment. "Horace Mann had just published an arithmetic on precisely the same plan. But he was not to be ever thus cut out from the credit of his ideas; he had been for some time urged to prepare a chemistry text-book to accompany

¹ *A History of the United States Navy from 1775 to 1893.* By Edgar Stanton Maclay, A.M. With Technical Revision by Lieutenant Roy C. Smith, U.S.N. In 2 Vols. Vol. I. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

² *Edward Livingston Youmans: Interpreter of Science for the People.* By John Fiske. D. Appleton & Co., New York. \$2.

his diagrams. This at last he did," and it appeared in 1851. It was an immediate and pronounced success, over 150,000 copies having been sold. "In every State of the Union teachers and pupils welcomed the book. . . . At that time a spark of enthusiasm was no more expected in a text-book of chemistry than in a treatise on contingent remainders, but in Youmans's pages the chemical elements were alive."

About the time of the appearance of this text-book Mr. Youmans regained his sight. At the same time he began to lecture upon scientific subjects. Fiske describes his first effort:

Probably no lecturer ever faced his first audience without some trepidation, and Youmans had not the mainstay and refuge afforded by a manuscript, for his sight was never good enough to make such an aid available for his lectures. At first the right words were slow in finding their way to those ready lips, and his friends were beginning to grow anxious, when all at once a happy accident broke the spell. He was remarking upon the characteristic instability of nitrogen, and pointing to a jar of that gas on the table before him, when some fidgety movement of his knocked the jar off the table. He improved the occasion with one of his *bons mots*, and as there is nothing that greases the wheels of life like a laugh, the lecture went on to a successful close. At the end of the series a general wish was expressed that the lectures should be repeated in a larger audience-room. This began an important career of lecturing. Mr. Youmans greatly enjoyed the work, and certainly did much good by it.

Youmans was the "Apostle of Evolution" in America. In every way he tried to further its cause. He interested the Appletons in the publication of American editions of Tyndall, Huxley, Bain, and other English writers. Early interested in Mr. Spencer's philosophy, Mr. Youmans did much to advance it in this country. Mr. Spencer's writings were not, at first, very successful in England in a pecuniary way. The support of America was relatively great. At one time Spencer's work came near to collapse. At this juncture Youmans interested himself:

It is delightful [says Mr. Fiske] to remember the vigor with which our dear friend took up this task. It was more of "his kind of work," and, as usual, it was successful. The sum of seven thousand dollars was raised, and invested in American securities in Mr. Spencer's name. If he did not see fit to accept these securities, they would go without an owner.

Mr. Youmans took the gift to England, and had the satisfaction of seeing the work going on. Absolute forgetfulness of himself in service of others was one of Youmans's most striking characteristics. His was a truly noble and beautiful character. In one place his biographer says: "And from that time forth, it always seemed as if, whenever any of the good or lovely things of life came to my lot, somehow or other Edward Youmans was either the cause of it, or, at any rate, intimately concerned with it."

Important labors of Mr. Youmans were the "International Scientific Series" and the "Popular Science Monthly." The former was a series of uniform volumes, for intelligent but non-specialist readers, prepared by the master workers in the different sciences. The series has been successful beyond all expectation, and comprises some seventy important works. These appear simultaneously in England, France, Germany, and America. Some of them have also appeared in Russia and Italy.

The "Popular Science Monthly" was another attempt to bring sound scientific matter to general readers. The magazine was founded by Mr. Youmans, and edited by him until his death in 1887. As an editor he was a power, writing ably, boldly, independently, upon the burning questions of the time. Through his journal he has exerted a vast influence.

Such was the work—in part—of this noble man. Debarred by unfortunate circumstances from carrying out his early plans, he nevertheless made a profound success, and richly deserves Mr. Fiske's appellation—*Interpreter of Science for the People*.



A half-century has elapsed since Dr. John Mason Neale, the founder of St. Margaret's Sisterhood, East Grinstead, put forth, in collaboration with Benjamin Webb, the translation of the first

book of the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* of Durandus, a thirteenth-century writer. This book of Durandus enjoys the distinction of being the first printed after the Holy Scriptures, which is an indication of the estimation and vogue it had in the past centuries. The translation calls for no especial comment; the Latin of the versatile Bishop of Mende presents no great difficulties. It appears from the preface that the authors were obliged to use antique copies, with ligatured text; the reader of the present day may, for a moderate price, get the Naples edition, 1859, which is perfectly plain. The really important part of this book, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments*, is the Introduction, on the intention of artists and builders in the Middle Ages to make every detail symbolic. We have always believed that the argument was carried too far. Any one who reads through this whole work of Durandus cannot help perceiving that it contains much whimsicality. The fact is that some elements of ecclesiastical art and ceremony arose from primitive custom, some from the intent to dramatize, some from purposes of utility, some from purely aesthetic motives, and some from desire to symbolize. The last purpose received a powerful impulse from this same "Rationale of the Divine Offices," which Durandus wrote in the thirteenth century. This translation, with its essay, had long been out of print, and become rare and expensive. It is now reissued by Charles Scribner's Sons, of this city, without any alterations or additions that we can discover. The book will, we suppose, always have an interest for students of mediæval art and ritual.

To understand and report things *Overheard in Arcady* one must possess a delicate perception, a nice sense of discrimination, humor, and that lightness of touch which enables one to convey the delicate shadings of character and ideas. These gifts Mr. Robert Bridges possesses, as the readers of "Life" have found out during the past six months, and the charming series of sketches in which he has preserved the conversation "overheard in Arcady" form a very delightful volume. The idea of the book is enticing, but would have been elusive to any but a skilled hand. There is a delightful audacity in the conception of bringing together the characters of an author's brain and then inviting them to sit in judgment on the work of their creator. This is what Mr. Bridges has done. He has brought together the typical characters in the stories of Mr. Howells, Mr. James, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Crawford, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Meredith, Mr. Barrie, and others, set them in skillful contrast with each other, induced each one to speak according to his or her nature, and used the whole contrivance as an instrument of suggestive and at times of very effective criticism. The book shows a very keen perception of the strength and weakness of the different writers discussed, and great skill, in a light and conversational way, of bringing out their strong and weak points. There is a good deal more criticism in this dainty book than in many a volume of more serious aspect. The sketches are of uneven excellence, but the style as a whole is very felicitous, with occasional touches of a very delicate and fine order. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

Professor George L. Raymond's new book, *Art in Theory: An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Æsthetics*, is an essay towards a criticism and reconciliation of the warring theories about the principle of beauty. The speculations of Professor Raymond are deep and acute, and the theory which he propounds is rational. His position is not strictly that of an eclectic, but he does recognize the truths in the various schools of the philosophy of the fine arts, and combines these truths into one, leaving out the errors that, from *a priori* methods, their authors attached to them. The fundamental principle from which he starts out is so clear as to approve itself to the mind of any reader. As a contribution to the history and philosophy of æsthetics, we regard it as having the character of an eirenicon. The general ideas of the foundation of our sense of pleasure which leads us to call some objects beautiful are the same in this work as those laid down in "The Genesis of Art Form," which was reviewed in *The Outlook* (July 29, 1893); therefore we need not repeat what we then said. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.)

The genial Dean of Rochester, S. Reynolds Hole, whose visit to this country has been expected with welcome by many who were charmed at reading his "Memories," has put forth a volume of *Addresses Spoken to Workingmen from Pulpit and Platform*. (T. Whittaker, New York.) Dean Hole is good-natured almost to the point of contemptuousness about the newer thinking of social Christianity. He warns his hearers against expecting too much relief from new methods. His position is substantially that things cannot be much better than they have always been; there have always been poverty, social inequality, civil