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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
JOHN FISKE
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I



John Fiske.

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THE
LIFE AND LETTERS OF
JOHN FISKE

BY
JOHN SPENCER CLARK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

Disce ut semper victurus, vive ut cras moriturus



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TO
ABBY MORGAN FISKE
THE WIFE OF JOHN FISKE AND THE INSPIRER
OF MUCH THAT IS FINEST IN HIS WRITINGS
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED



PREFACE

JOHN FISKE was not a voluminous correspondent; hence we have not many self-revealing letters to intimate friends and kindred thinkers, regarding his wrestling with some of the great themes which from time to time engaged his mind. The absence of these desirable data is, however, greatly minimized by the possession of his deeply interesting personal letters to his wife and his mother, and of his diaries in which the innermost feelings of his nature are disclosed. These, taken in connection with his published writings, enable us to make out quite a full record of his subjective activities, which, when considered in relation to the seething thought of the time as a stimulating objective environment, yield copious material for a "Life" of Fiske in both its unity and its variety.

In the correspondence between Fiske and Spencer, and in the letters of Fiske describing Spencer, we get pleasanter impressions of Spencer's personality than from any other source. To the end, Fiske was thoroughly loyal to Spencer, while immensely broadening his philosophy; at the same time it must be admitted that Spencer withheld the public acknowledgment of indebtedness to Fiske which he so freely admitted privately.

Preface

In the preparation of this work I have been greatly assisted by George Litch Roberts, the lifelong friend of John Fiske, who appears in these pages, and who, after an honored career at the bar, carries into the period of life when the shadows lengthen all the enthusiasm for science and philosophy which marked his early years. Fiske and Roberts, as they came to their maturity, differed somewhat in their philosophic views; but their friendship was never broken, and Roberts has cheerfully aided in the preparation of this work as a tribute to the memory of his friend. To his criticism and his wise suggestions much is due.

I also wish to make acknowledgment of the great assistance I have received at the Boston Athenæum. My special demands upon this library have been many and oftentimes perplexing; but they have always been met with the utmost consideration and kindness by its scholarly librarian Charles Knowles Bolton and his assistants. No small portion of my work has been done in the alcoves of this fine library, overlooking the Granary Burying-Ground, where sleep, in the midst of the great city's traffic and roar, many of New England's distinguished worthies of years gone by. My experience here is a delightful memory.

JOHN SPENCER CLARK.

BOSTON, *October 1, 1917.*

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*The illustrations for this book were selected
under the supervision of Mrs. John Fiske*

INTRODUCTION

JOHN FISKE has an exceptional and honored place in American literature. He was a ripe scholar, possessed of a great fund of well-ordered, accurate, useful knowledge; he was a profound philosophic thinker, well versed in the world's speculative thought; he was an able and fair-minded critic, ever alert to detect the good in men and things; he was an eminent historian, gifted with remarkable powers of insight into the cosmic principles which underlie the social, religious, and political organizations of mankind; at the same time he had such a rich endowment of æsthetic tastes so combined with exquisite humor, that he was keenly responsive to the beauties of nature and of art in all their varied forms. If to these characteristics it be added that in the art of thought expression he possessed a literary style of great simplicity, beauty, and power, we have the subjective causes which have given him a distinctive place not only in American literature, but also among the deepest thinkers of our time.

But Fiske was not only fortunate in his subjective endowments; he was equally fortunate in the period in which his life was cast — the latter half of the last century — in many respects the most

Introduction

memorable period in the history of human thinking. His life was synchronous with this great period, the turmoil of which in philosophic, scientific, religious, and social thinking raged all about him as a mighty objective environment and which, breaking upon his highly endowed subjective mind, brought forth the many intellectual treasures the world so greatly admires to-day. Indeed, when the life of Fiske is considered in its relation to his subjective endowments, on the one hand, and to his objective environment on the other, it is seen that his life in its totality was a distinct embodiment of the highest, most comprehensive definition of all life — "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations."

Hence much attention is given in this biography to the environing conditions of thought which surrounded Fiske from his early youth, and which, in one way or another, served as an impelling force to his mind.

Fiske's life on its productive side was of a two-fold character: that of a scientifico-philosophic thinker combined with that of a philosophic historian. He did not live to see his contemplated task in either form of activity completed, but he did see great and significant progress in thought in both.

As a philosophic thinker he takes a prominent place as a protagonist of the doctrine of Evolution, as the process by which the cosmic universe with

Introduction

man's place in it has been brought into being, in conformity to immutable law. As consistent with this doctrine, he affirmed four important corollaries: a theistic basis for all cosmic phenomena; ethical principles an outcome from man's social experience; man's immortality a rational hypothesis from cosmic phenomena; religion the rational adjustment of man to his environment.

In the realm of philosophic thinking Fiske lived to see the vital problems of life and conscious mind lifted by science out of the narrow mythical categories of theology, and centering around the consideration of their rightful place in a cosmic universe where matter and energy, and life and mind are harmoniously interrelated.

At the same time he was cognizant that as yet no positive knowledge exists as to how the two orders of physical and psychical phenomena of the universe are interrelated; and also that two radically different hypotheses are dividing rational thought on this supreme point in philosophic thinking: the one, affirming that matter and energy are ultimate and self-existing, that life and mind in all their varied forms from plant to conscious man, are potential in matter and energy, and that they become manifest wholly under cosmic conditions — materialism; the other affirming that life and mind in all their varied forms, particularly in conscious man, are manifestations of a force or power entirely distinct from cosmic matter and energy, a

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force imparted to matter and energy in some unknown way by a postulated Infinite Eternal Power, the Source and Sustainer of all that is—spiritualism. Fiske did not leave any doubt as to his acceptance of the latter hypothesis.

As a historian Fiske took for his theme the unfolding of one of the great epochs in human history: The discovery of the Western World; the transplanting to this new world of the elements of the social and political organizations of Europe; the rise and the establishment of the Republic of the United States; the reflective influence of this Republic upon the political organizations of the world.

He was only enabled to lay the foundations of the great historic undertaking he had in mind, with intimations here and there of his ultimate conclusions regarding the fundamental principles which govern political development. His narrative was brought down to the Inauguration of Washington as the first President of the great Republic. He had fully equipped himself for tracing out, in the first century of its political existence, through the interplay of the twin evolutionary forces common to all forms of democratic political organization, — local liberties or differentiations on the one hand, combined with provisions for national integration on the other hand, — the rise of powerful political parties whose dissensions culminated in a great civil war, in which were displayed some of the

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noblest characteristics of humanity, and which was illumined by types of personal character unsurpassed in the records of any other race or people — all culminating in the firm establishment of the most powerful political organization of the globe, a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Would that we had to-day Fiske's ripe judgment upon this present world turmoil, when our National Government is laying its hand upon every citizen demanding that he play his part, not only in defending his own interests, but also in doing his bit towards making the political condition of the world safe for democracy.

There can be no question but that Fiske would find, in the despatching of American soldiers to contest for the establishment of democracy in Europe, the legitimate evolutionary outcome from what he had affirmed was the greatest event in human history since the birth of Christ: The voyage of Columbus into the Sea of Darkness in 1492.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JOHN FISKE
VOLUME I.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN FISKE

CHAPTER I

HIS PATERNAL ANCESTRY — THE GREEN FAMILY

JOHN FISKE was born at Hartford, Connecticut, on the 30th of March, 1842. His father was Edmund Brewster Green. His mother's maiden name was Mary Fisk Bound. His father and mother were married at Middletown, Connecticut, September 15, 1840. At his birth he was given the name of Edmund Fisk Green. For reasons which will appear later his name was legally changed in 1855 to John Fisk. In 1860 he added an *e* to his surname.

We have but slight record of the family of Edmund Brewster Green back of his father, Humphrey Green, who was born in Salem County, West New Jersey, October 15, 1770. Humphrey Green was of a Quaker family, an only child, early left an orphan, and brought up by his grandparents. He was a man of notable personality, with qualities to hand down. In appearance he was a staunch, old-fashioned gentleman, of large, stalwart frame, carrying himself with that dignity and self-respect characteristic of a fine military bearing. He was a free-thinking Quaker, with a mind of his own. He

John Fiske

was noted for his great memory, and was respected by his neighbors as a man of wide knowledge and practical ability.

Humphrey Green was twice married. His first wife was Ann Buzby, of Quaker ancestry. By her he had two children. For his second wife he married, February 19, 1807, Hannah Heaton, of Downs Township, Cumberland County, New Jersey, a daughter of Levi Heaton, who served in the Revolutionary War, and a grand-daughter of the Baptist clergyman, the Reverend Samuel Heaton. At this time Humphrey Green was an extensive landholder in Newport, Cumberland County, and had given an acre and a half in Downs Township on which to build a Methodist Episcopal Church. Subsequently he removed to Smyrna, Delaware, and settled in the timber belt of Thoroughfare Neck where he farmed and dealt in ships' timber. At this time he was a faithful attendant at Quaker meetings and was a noticeable figure riding to and from the Quaker Meeting-House at Duck Creek Crossroads.

Six children were born of Humphrey Green's second marriage, three sons and three daughters, of whom Edmund Brewster was the eldest son. He was born in Smyrna January 3, 1814, but later went with his parents to Philadelphia where Humphrey Green became a merchant in the coastwise trade, and owned vessels that plied between Philadelphia and Norfolk. Humphrey Green lived to the ripe old



HUMPHREY GREEN

His Paternal Ancestry

age of ninety years and died March 12, 1860, in the full possession of his mental powers.

Humphrey Green was a man of means, and as Edmund Brewster Green gave decided indications of scholarly tastes it was decided to send him to Wesleyan University at Middletown, Connecticut, then the leading Methodist college of the country. Accordingly, young Green was entered at Wesleyan University in 1834, in the class of 1838, and his studies were mainly in the literary and scientific courses.

He was a good student and knowledge came easy. He had an attractive personality with very engaging manners. He was quite noticeable in his dress in that he wore the Southern style of soft hat and flowing cloak, which were in marked contrast to the stiff hats and prim, tight-fitting coats of the Northern students. He was popular at the college, and made friends among the young people of the town.

On leaving the University Edmund Green read law in the office of William L. Storrs, of Middletown, an able lawyer and a judge of the Superior Court of Middlesex County, Connecticut. His predilections, however, were for journalism and politics, and in 1840 he became the editor and part proprietor of the "New England Review," a weekly Whig journal published at Hartford, which was then one of the two capitals of the State of Connecticut. The "Review" was a journal of high

John Fiske

character, and in former years it had had for editors George D. Prentice and John G. Whittier.

In the mean time Edmund Green had become engaged to Mary Fisk Bound, who with her widowed mother was living with her grandfather, John Fisk, one of the most estimable and honored citizens of Middletown. Young Green's acquaintance with Mary Fisk Bound began early in his college days and quickly ripened into a strong attachment. She was a young woman of great beauty and charming personality, vivacious and independent. She had been carefully brought up after the New England fashion, was well educated, and possessed marked artistic ability.

Soon after assuming his editorial position at Hartford, Green regarded his business prospects as well established. Accordingly, on the 15th of September, 1840, he and Mary Fisk Bound were married by the Reverend Dr. Crane at the Fisk homestead in Middletown. The young couple began their united life at Hartford, and on the 30th of March, 1842, a son was born to them, the subject of this memoir, and was given the name of Edmund Fisk.

But the journalistic venture at Hartford did not prosper. Green made many excellent friends among the Whig politicians of the State, but the Connecticut field was not large enough to satisfy his ambition — it did not give full scope to his powers. In 1843 he sold out his interest in the

His Paternal Ancestry

“Review,” and essayed journalism in behalf of Whig principles in the City of New York. He found the effort uphill work, and he gained a very limited and precarious income. The day for the great Metropolitan journals with their large editorial staffs had not yet come; and during this period three master minds, James Gordon Bennett, Horace Greeley, and Henry J. Raymond, were laying the foundations of the powerful daily journalism that was to be. Mrs. Green bravely shared the struggles of her husband, and to eke out their slender income, she taught in private schools for young ladies in Newark and New York City.

When Edmund Green and his wife left Hartford, they were glad to accept the offer of the grandparents to take charge of their infant son until they should establish a home of their own. We shall return to the son's maternal ancestry and his Middletown environment when we have followed the fortunes of Edmund Brewster Green a little farther to the end.

The election of General Zachary Taylor as President of the United States in 1848 and his inauguration in 1849 were great triumphs for the Whig Party. As Edmund Green had for years been an ardent advocate of Whig principles, and as he had strong support among the leaders of the party in New York and Connecticut, it was natural, in view of his labors and sacrifices in behalf of the party principles, that he should turn his attention to

John Fiske

Washington for some substantial reward now that his party had come into power. In the winter of 1849 and 1850 we therefore find him in Washington, seeking office with the very highest credentials from the political Whig leaders in Connecticut and New York. He was for some time private secretary to Henry Clay, at that time one of the leading statesmen of the country. He applied for positions in the State, the Interior, and the Treasury Departments. He was strongly commended by Mr. Clay, in an autograph letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, as one who "unites to excellent attainments and qualifications for business, the manners, deportment, and character of a gentleman of honor and probity."

His political support was indeed strong and of the best character; but the Whig Party had been long out of office and the scramble for place was great, and the new Administration had to face a series of political obligations entered into by its supporters which necessitated to a large degree an obliviousness to purely personal claims. It needed time to adjust itself to its duties and to its political obligations. In the summer of 1850 the situation was still further complicated by the death of President Taylor and the accession to the Presidency of the Vice-President Millard Fillmore.

Green could not wait the slow development of political manipulation. At one time an important office was apparently within his grasp — that of Surveyor-General of Oregon. He had been advised



MARY FISK (BOUND) GREEN



EDMUND BREWSTER GREEN

His Paternal Ancestry

of his appointment and was then tricked out of it in a way he could not understand. Thus, after several months spent in pursuing illusions of office in the Treasury and the Interior Departments, he came to the conclusion that the Whig Party was ungrateful, and in the autumn of 1850 he returned to New York.

The year 1850 was marked by a prodigious excitement, world-wide in extent. Two years before gold in unprecedented quantities had been found in the streams and in the surface deposits of Coloma County, California. These discoveries were so extensive and the mining so easy that the story spread throughout the world, and started an immense emigration to California across the plains and over the mountains, and by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Edmund Green joined this great movement, and sailed for Panama on his way to San Francisco in December, 1850. On arriving at Panama he stopped to study the prospects for business on the isthmus incident to this rushing of populations to the new El Dorado. The conditions appealed to his journalistic proclivities, and he at once began the publication of a weekly newspaper — the "Panama Herald." He was measurably successful in this undertaking. It soon became a semi-weekly, and a little later a tri-weekly publication. In the spring of 1852 Green came up to New York and Middletown for a short visit. He returned to Panama in June, 1852. On the 4th of July following he delivered, at

John Fiske

the request of the American residents, an oration at Panama. This address was marked by a good knowledge of American history, by scholarly taste, and great felicity of style. One week later, July 11, 1852, he died very suddenly of cholera. His loss was greatly felt at Panama, where he had gained a position of much influence through his enterprise, his probity, and his genial personality.

HIS MATERNAL ANCESTRY — THE FISKE AND THE BOUND FAMILIES

Having given the paternal ancestry of the subject of this memoir, and having seen him placed in the charge of his grandparents, we now return to the Fisk family at Middletown, to trace as briefly as possible his maternal ancestry through the two New England Puritan families, the Fiskes and the Bounds, which were united in his mother.

The Fiske family was of a pure New England Puritan type. It was descended in unbroken lineage for a period of over four hundred years from Simon Fiske, Stadhaugh Manor Parish, Laxfield, Suffolk, England, who was born in the reign of Richard II, — that is, before 1399, — and who died in 1463 or '64. The full record is an honorable one. In the sixteenth century the Fiskes were considered very daring and troublesome heretics. John Noyes of Laxfield was burned alive in 1557, by order of "Bloody Mary"; and Foxe, in his "Booke of Martyres," mentions that Nicholas Fiske, Noyes's



STADHAUGH MANOR, LAXFIELD, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND
Homestead of the Fiske family from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.
(June 4, 1880)

His Maternal Ancestry

brother-in-law, visited him in prison. Cotton Mather, in his "Magnalia," has anecdotes of how these heretics were persecuted. Robert Fiske, fifth in descent, fled during the persecutions to the Continent (possibly to Geneva, as that was the resort of the Suffolk Protestants at that time), but after the accession of Elizabeth, he returned and settled at St. James, South Elmham, Suffolk. Before his flight he married Sybil Gold, by whom he had four sons, William, Jeffrey, Thomas, and Eleazer, and one daughter, Elizabeth. From Robert and Sybil came all the Fiskes who settled in New England in the seventeenth century. Robert Fiske died in 1602.

The daughter Elizabeth married — Bernard of Custridge Hall, and was the grandmother of John Locke, the great English philosopher of the seventeenth century. The descent we are pursuing was continued through the son Thomas, who married Margery (surname not given), and who lived at Fressingfield, Suffolk. Thomas died in 1611. He had three sons, Thomas, James, and Phineas; and two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. The line was continued through Phineas, who came to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1641, and moved to Wenham in 1644. He was a man of note; was constable and selectman of Wenham, captain of militia, and in 1653 was a representative in the General Court of Massachusetts. Phineas had three sons, James, John, and Thomas, all born in England. The line was continued through the son John, who we find

John Fiske

was constable at Wenham in 1645, and in 1669 was representative in the General Court. The Christian name of John's wife was Remember. He had three sons, John, Samuel, and Noah; and two daughters, Elizabeth and Remember. This John died in 1683. The next in line was his son John, who was born in Wenham in 1654 — the first Fiske born in Massachusetts. He practised medicine, and in the annals he was called Dr. John. He married Hannah Baldwin, of Milford, Connecticut, in 1682. She was descended from an old English family in Cheshire. Dr. John moved to Milford in 1694. He was a man of substance, as appears by the deed of his estate in Wenham, which he sold in 1693. Dr. John had four sons, Phineas, Ebenezer, John, and Benjamin.

Continuing the line through the son John, we find that this representative of the family was known as Captain John Fiske. He was born at Wenham in 1693 and was decidedly a man of mark. He was town clerk of Middletown in 1722, was ensign in 1729, lieutenant in 1732, captain in 1735, quartermaster of the Eleventh Connecticut Regiment in 1744, representative to the Connecticut General Court in 1742. He wore a wig and sword, and was "very stylish." He had a negro slave, appraised at a value of £35. He was twice married. His first wife was Hannah, to whom he was married in 1716, and by whom he had three children, John, Hannah, and Martha. He often dropped the *e* in his surname. He died in Middletown in 1761.

His Maternal Ancestry

Next in order is Captain John's son, who was known as John, Jr. He was born in 1718, and lived at Middletown. He succeeded his father as town clerk of Middletown in 1761 and he was also clerk of the Superior Court. The records of this member of the family are very slight. By Ann Tyler, a second wife, he had a son Bezaleel, who was born at Middletown in 1744. There is no record of the death of John Jr., but it probably occurred in 1777, as in that year his son Bezaleel succeeded to the town clerkship. Bezaleel was married in 1768 to Margaret Rockwell, by whom he had a son John, born in 1772. Bezaleel Fiske held the office of town clerk for twenty years, till 1797, when he was succeeded by his son John. Bezaleel Fiske lived to the ripe old age of eighty-six years and died in 1830.

Great probity of character is conspicuous in the line of the Fisk family we are pursuing: for this reason the following lines, written by Bezaleel Fiske, in his eighty-fourth year, and in which the pleasanter side of the grim theology of the time is somewhat reflected, are of interest: —

ON A WATCH

Could but our tempers move like this machine,
Not urg'd by passion nor delayed by spleen;
But true to Nature's regulating power,
By virtuous acts distinguish every hour —
Then health and joy would follow as they ought,
The laws of Nature and the laws of thought —
Sweet health to pass the present moments o'er,
And everlasting joy when time shall be no more.

John Fiske

Bezaleel's son John succeeded to the town clerkship of Middletown in 1797 — the fourth Fiske to hold this office in the order of succession. His first wife was Polly Merrill, of Killingsworth, Connecticut, to whom he was married August 10, 1793. His second wife was Olive Cone, to whom he was married in 1837. By his first wife he had six children, four sons, and two daughters. His second child was a daughter, Polly, who was born March 11, 1795. Polly Fisk was married in 1817 to John Bound, of Middletown. Of this marriage there were six children, two of whom grew to maturity—John Fisk Bound,¹ born in 1819, and Mary Fisk Bound, born June 21, 1821.

As we have already seen, Mary Fisk Bound was married September 15, 1840, to Edmund Brewster Green. Of this marriage we have also seen that a son was born March 30, 1842, who is the subject of this memoir, and who at his birth was given the name of Edmund Fisk Green.

The Bound family, which in the ancestral line we are pursuing was united with the Fiske family in 1817 by the marriage of John Bound to Polly Fisk, was no less Puritan in character, and no less honorable in its descent, than that of the Fiskes. Its ancestral line runs back, through the Bound, Francis, and Hall families, to John Hall, who was born in

¹ Founder of the financial house of Bound & Company, of New York.



POLLY (FISK) BOUND
Grandmother of John Fiske



JOHN FISK
Great-grandfather of John Fiske

His Maternal Ancestry

England in 1627, and who died in Medford, Massachusetts, in 1701. From one branch of the Hall family in Medford was descended Francis Parkman, and thus we have a clear family relationship between the two eminent historians Francis Parkman and John Fiske.

And now, having established the subject of this memoir in the helplessness of his infancy in the Fiske family at Middletown, and having put in order his family antecedents which have revealed, on the paternal side, the sturdy, free-thinking, genial qualities of the Quaker, in contrast, on the maternal side, with the strict, religious character of the Puritan, embodied in the attractive personality of his mother, we will leave him to be brought through the critical period of his infancy, while we make ourselves acquainted with some of the physical and social characteristics of Middletown, which served for his environment during the period of his boyhood and his youth.

Following the death of Edmund Brewster Green, his widow, Mary Fisk Bound Green, continued her teaching in New York City and vicinity, leaving her son, Edmund Fisk Green, in the care of his grandparents in Middletown.

CHAPTER II

THE MIDDLETOWN ENVIRONMENT—JOHN FISK— THE FISK HOMESTEAD

READERS familiar with the historical works of John Fiske know the importance he attached to the town as the basis or unit for all social or political organization. How much he was aided in the development of his thought in this direction by the influence of the environment of his early years, we cannot say. This, however, may be said: that if, in view of his important work in the world, a place had been sought with special reference to its salutary influence upon his youthful mind, it is doubtful if more fitting surroundings could have been found than were presented by the physical and social conditions of Middletown between the years 1840 and 1860.

It was a typical New England town of the period, of the best sort. It was beautifully situated on the west bank of the Connecticut River, about sixteen miles below Hartford, and twenty-five miles above Saybrook, where the river enters Long Island Sound. The town lies on an elevation of land which runs along the river for about a mile from north to south, and between two tributary streams, Little River on the north and Sumner's Creek on the south. The land rises from the river in a gentle slope

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to the height of about a hundred and fifty feet, and then forms a sort of plateau extending nearly a mile westward, where it slopes into a broad valley reaching to the Meriden hills beyond. On a portion of the western side of the plateau there rises, quite abruptly, a small elevation called Indian Hill. Along the whole front of the eastern slope the noble river sweeps with slow, majestic power on its way to the Sound. At the southern end of the slope, and directly in front of the southern end of the town, the river makes a sharp bend to the eastward, forming almost a right angle in its course. This bend in the river, the slow current, and depth of water are the conditions that gave to Middletown in years gone by a commodious inland harbor for the prosecution of a prosperous shipping and shipbuilding industry.

The main street of the town runs along the whole face of the slope, a short distance up from the river, and parallel with its course from north to south. The principal business buildings are along Main Street, and the educational buildings and the private residences, picturesquely placed in broad, elm-shaded streets, cover the upper face of the slope and the plateau beyond. Indian Hill has been taken as a cemetery.

At the time when this narrative begins—1840—Middletown had about ten thousand inhabitants, mainly of New England ancestry. It had a rich historical background of colonial experience and

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character running back to the first settlements in the Connecticut Valley about the middle of the seventeenth century by seceders from "My Lords the Bretheren" of the Massachusetts Bay colonies, by settlers from adjacent Connecticut colonies, and also by seceders direct from England. Middletown itself was settled in 1650, and its founders had all the strong and distinguishing characteristics which marked the people of the great Puritan exodus. They had but little property and they had to begin a new social life under the most trying conditions. Their first dwellings were hardly a shelter from the wind and the storm. Their food was meagre and their clothing of the crudest kind, and they were surrounded by tribes of hostile Indians who naturally resented this powerful, unbidden intrusion into their domains. The privations and suffering bravely and cheerfully encountered by these early pioneers cannot be conceived by their descendants of the present generation.

The demands of their religion were of the first consideration in their minds, for it was the "heroic age of theology, when John Cotton used at bedtime to sweeten his mouth with a morsel of Calvin"; accordingly we find in the earliest Middletown records appropriations for building a meeting-house twenty feet square, with provisions for calling the people to service by the beat of a drum. They were none the less attentive to matters of practical, everyday life. People in our day sometimes wonder

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at the strong hold the protective idea — the protection of home industry — has among the people of New England. The idea was indigenous among them from the first; it grew out of their needs and conditions. The early records of our New England towns are full of provisions for the promotion of home industries. In the Middletown Records of 1658 we find a grant to “shomaeker eagellston ” of “a peas of Meddow, he ingaging to inhabit it seven years upon it and also doth ingag to endeavour to sut the towne in his trade for making and mending shoes.” It also appears that to get a blacksmith to come among them they offered him a hundred pound lot, he pledging himself “to inhabit upon the land and to do the Townes worck of smithing during the term of four years, before he shall make sale of it to any other.” Wiser than the protective legislators of our day, these simple-minded Puritan promoters of home industry required their beneficiaries to render specific public services for the favors granted.

For one hundred years — 1650 to 1750 — Middletown grew but slowly, and its Records during this period are mainly “the simple annals of the poor,” save where they are irradiated with matters pertaining to the Indians, to questions of church doctrine or discipline, and by assertions of the right of self-government in local affairs coupled with the desirability of corporate representation in all matters affecting the federation or well-being of the Connec-

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ticut colonies as a whole. It is a well-known historic fact, that out of the experience of the practical working in unison in the Connecticut colonies or towns of these two forms of political association — an experience which clearly demonstrated that separate communities could harmoniously preserve their autonomy in local affairs while federated for mutual protection and welfare — came the Connecticut Compromise, which in the memorable Constitutional Convention of 1787 was a vital factor in the formation of the Constitution of the United States, and gave to that immortal document its two most distinctive features — equal representation of States, coupled with a representation of the people as a whole.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Middletown had grown to a population of nearly five thousand. It was larger than Hartford or New Haven, and was the most important town in Connecticut. The growth of the New England colonies had by this time developed an active shipping trade with the West Indies whereby New England's agricultural products and her fisheries were exchanged for such staple articles as salt, sugar, molasses, and rum. The colonists had also ventured into the East India trade, and Middletown from its situation on the largest river, with prosperous-growing towns and well-cultivated farms on either side, with a commodious harbor easily accessible from the sea and contiguous to excellent facilities for

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shipbuilding and repairs, was well situated to engage in these various lines of colonial commerce. Accordingly the town became between 1750 and 1775 a shipping port for the West and East India and China trade hardly second to any other port in New England.

This trade, with the shipbuilding which followed in its wake, was very prosperous, and together they brought much wealth to the town; they also diversified the occupations of the people. In 1770, among fifty persons registered as engaged in business on Main Street, seventeen were in one way or another — as merchants, shipowners, skippers, rope-makers, etc. — connected with the shipping of the port. What is particularly noteworthy in this record of occupations is the frankly stated fact, that a Captain Gleason and a Dr. Walker were slave-dealers.

This prosperous shipping business was almost wholly destroyed by the Revolutionary War. It revived somewhat when the war was over, but owing to the changed conditions of commercial intercourse with other nations that followed upon the establishment of the Government of the United States, and to the new spirit that entered into the commercial relations between the people of the respective States, Middletown was, by its isolation from the sea, heavily handicapped for meeting the new conditions in competition with the larger and more accessible ports of Boston, Providence, New

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York, and Philadelphia. Consequently, in 1840, the shipping business of Middletown was but a reminder of a former prosperity.

The manufacturing period of later years, involving corporate management and entailing large numbers of foreign laborers and trade-union associations, had not yet set in. The few industries that existed were small and had grown up with the shipping industry or were the outgrowth of local needs or of limited individual enterprise. In 1840 the town had not entirely differentiated itself from the country; and on market days Main Street, alive with farmers whose loaded trams gave ample evidence of the rich agricultural country, also testified to the existence still of barter trade between the farmer and the storekeeper or trader. It was, moreover, the day of stage-coaches, and the only means of public transportation to the interior, to Hartford or New Haven, to Providence or Boston, was by stages, and their arrival and departure were matters of no little interest in the daily life of the town. Then, too, Middletown was the county seat of Middlesex County and when the courts were in session another centre of interest was created; if a noted case was being tried, the whole town became interested in the result.

In this community in 1840 the people were well-to-do and the social life was as yet unstratified. The contrasts of great wealth on the one hand and of poverty on the other did not exist. The people

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generally knew each other, as well as their family histories, and personal interests were freely intermingled. The descendants of the prosperous merchants, shipowners, and traders of the colonial days were numerous and among them were persons of education and character, who, with their moderate fortunes of inherited wealth well invested, and their comfortable style of living, gave a quiet, refining influence to the social life of the town. This circle had been increased by well-to-do families from other places who had been attracted to Middletown by reason of its delightful location, its well-shaded, beautiful streets, its healthfulness, and its many comfortable homes, so that in 1840 it was one of the most beautiful residential towns in New England.

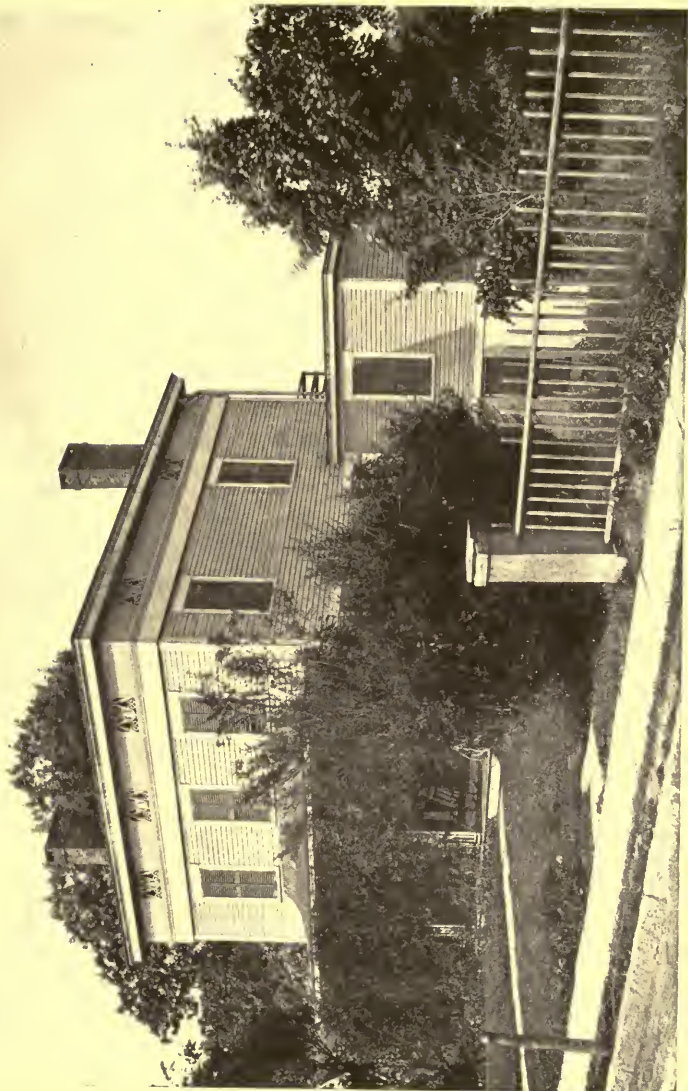
It can also be said that Middletown comprised a religious community of a distinctly New England character. The Sabbath was duly respected, and attendance at prayer meeting and church was universal. In the social life of the town, church membership was an indispensable prerequisite for social recognition. There were six churches — two orthodox Congregational, one Episcopal, one Baptist, and two Methodist — in which were presented four phases of evangelical faith and doctrine. Among these churches the Episcopal and the two Congregational churches were the more prominent by reason of the greater number and the social standing of their members. The preaching in all these churches was of the strictest evangelical character, and in the

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Congregational churches particularly the grim theology of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards was emphasized more than the simple, humanizing religion of Jesus.

The Wesleyan University — a Methodist college — was also an important factor in the social and religious influences of the town, by reason of the number of students and the learning and high character of members of the faculty. In later years the University has greatly broadened in its ideals of religious truth, but at the period we are now considering, it was the express purpose of the institution to present knowledge bound in the fetters of a particular scheme of theology.

In this community of good citizens, among the remarkable men of that day, and in some respects the most remarkable, was John Fisk. He was town clerk and treasurer, clerk of the Superior Court, county treasurer and clerk of probate at the same time, — five different offices which he filled with ability and to the satisfaction of the public. The great and growing confidence reposed in him was shown in the fact that just previous to his death in 1847 he had been elected town clerk and treasurer for the fiftieth year in succession. He was in very truth a walking encyclopædia of the town's civic affairs. He was a member of the First Congregational Church and took part in all its activities. John Fisk was a great reader of good literature and was especially fond of the Waverley Novels, often



THE FISK HOUSE, MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

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carrying one in his pocket so that when leisure moments came in the course of his official duties he could amuse himself by dipping into its pages.

Judge William D. Shipman, an honored member of the New York Bar, had occasion to practise in the Middletown courts at this period. Fifty years after he was a great admirer of the writings of John Fiske. In a letter to Fiske's mother, Mrs. E. W. Stoughton, anent her son's philosophical works, dated October 23, 1896, he gives the following pen-picture of John Fisk, the old town clerk and the clerk of the Superior Court: "Whenever I see the name of John Fiske, I strike off the final 'e' in Fiske and my memory goes back to his great-grandfather when the latter was clerk of the courts in Middlesex County and clerk of pretty much all the municipal, judicial, and ecclesiastical organizations in Middletown. I recall his visage, his snuff-colored clothes, his gold-bowed spectacles, and the quiet way in which he swore the witnesses and did his other clerical duties, even in a case involving a death penalty, and then took a novel from his pocket and serenely read while great lawyers were contending at the bar."

John Fisk was moderately well-to-do. Being a frugal liver, he had managed to accumulate from the returns of his various public offices a small competence, and he lived in a modest way in a very comfortable house on Union Street. In 1840 he built himself a more commodious house

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on Hanover Street, a most desirable location, with fine spreading elms in front, and with ample grounds in the rear, over which there was an extended view down the broad, slowly flowing river with the eastern hills beyond. It was in his former house on Union Street that his granddaughter, Mary Fisk Bound, was married to Edmund Brewster Green on the 15th of September, 1840. It was to the Hanover Street home that their son, the subject of this memoir, was brought in the autumn of 1842 bearing potentially in his infantile brain the strong, virile traits of the Quaker and the Puritan.

CHAPTER III

THE FISK HOUSEHOLD — BOYHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

1847-1854

THE Fisk household in 1842 consisted of John Fisk, the town clerk, "a jolly, fun-loving old man"; his second wife, Olive Cone Fisk, "the dearest, heartiest soul in the world"; Polly Fisk Bound, John Fisk's daughter by his first wife and grandmother to the infant boy, "a little, alert old lady, very refined and beautiful"; and four sons, Henry, John, Charles, and Frederick. Charles was a civil engineer. It was an orthodox family of the liberal sort, and all the members attended the First or North Congregational Church of Middletown.

John Fisk, as has been said, was a great reader, and in the house were many books of a stimulating character to a young, inquiring mind. There were the Bible, with the standard orthodox Commentaries; "Pilgrim's Progress," that simple yet powerful dramatization of Christian character and experience, which has a place in English religious literature second only to the Bible; and that volume so consolatory to the believer in Calvinistic theology, Baxter's "Saints' Rest." For histories there were Josephus with its Christian interpel-

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lation, Rollin's "Ancient History," Goldsmith's "Greece," Froissart, Gibbon's "Rome," Robertson's "Charles V," with its masterly introduction of European history, Prescott and Hume. In biography there were Plutarch's "Lives"; the Lives of many religious worthies, including John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards; Sparks's "Life of Washington" was also there. In general literature there were the "Iliad," the "Arabian Nights," "Don Quixote," and the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Walter Scott. To these should be added the textbooks of Henry Fisk on English and Latin grammar, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and astronomy.¹

In this family and with these surroundings Mary Fisk Bound had grown to womanhood shedding the charms of her attractive personality over the entire household, and her early marriage left a sad void in the family circle.

Under the tender care of his grandparents, Edmund Fisk Green emerges for our notice, when about four years of age, a slender, shy, open-eyed, inquisitive boy, with an extraordinary memory and an insatiable desire to know about things. He seemed not to forget anything that came under his observation, and he had already learned to read, mainly by his own efforts. To see a book or a

¹ This list of books should be particularly noted; for, in the development of the mind whose unfolding we are to trace, nearly all of these works were put under tribute.

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newspaper excited his curiosity, and to have a person read from either using words, some of which he understood, excited him still more. When a story was read to him, he became as deeply interested in the process of reading as in the story itself — he wanted to know how the reader could tell just those words in the print. When it was explained, and he was shown how words differed from each other, he began working by himself — picking out words, and then running to his grandmother, or whoever would help him, to have them named. In this way he soon mastered quite a vocabulary of printed words, and then began to relate them as in speech. In fact, before any one had thought of teaching him his letters or sending him to school — there were no kindergartens in those days — he had taught himself to read, mainly through his own exertions. We shall see later that he learned music in much the same way. Furthermore, in these beginnings for the mastery of his native English language, we have foreshadowings of that deep interest in philological studies which was a marked characteristic of his mature years.

In these days of character-foreshadowings, we should note his great regard, let us say his deep respect, for books. As soon as he had learned to read, he began to look upon books as the most desirable of possessions; and his pride in such as came to him, and his thoughtful care of them, are prominent among the incidents related of his very early

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years. As the story of his youth unfolds, it will be noted how ready he was to sacrifice everything for books. They were always the chief measures of value in his mind.¹

When Edmund was about three years of age his grandmother married Elias Lewis, a worthy citizen of Middletown, who, with Sallie, his daughter by a former wife, became members of the Fisk household. Mr. Lewis's daughter took great interest in Edmund and encouraged all his efforts to learn about things and to do things.

As soon as Edmund could read with understanding, everything in the way of print that came under his notice had to yield tribute to his desire to know what it was about; and then he was equally desirous of telling what he had learned. This twofold form of mental activity went out in every direction. He early began to observe the activities of people, and what he saw others do, he wanted to do himself. In these early years, therefore, he was interested in his grandmother's embroidery and was delighted when he could lend a hand, meanwhile telling what he had been reading about.

Among the incidents of this period of which he retained pleasant recollections were the semi-annual visits of Eliza Cotton, a sort of peripatetic boys' tailor for a few of the Middletown families. This

¹ This respect for books always restrained him from marking or in any way defacing them. In his Cambridge library the volumes that were his constant companions bear only the marks of respectful usage.

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was before the days of regular tailors for boys, or of ready-made clothing; and throughout New England there was hardly a town that did not possess one of these indispensable public servants. They performed two important social functions: they helped to clothe the needy, and being, as it were, the repositories of the social gossip of the town, they entertained their patrons with incidents in the lives, and particularly in regard to the clothes, of their neighbors, as interesting and as fully embellished with personal flavor as are to be found in the present weekly newspaper.¹

Eliza Cotton was an exceptionally intelligent woman of good family, and for her own character she was greatly respected. She took great interest in Edmund, and he became very much attached to

¹ This peripatetic tailoring is one of New England's lost arts. James W. Brooks in his reminiscences of Petersham, Massachusetts, a town which is to figure quite largely in future pages of this work, speaking of one of this honorable guild of craftsmen, Mary Ann Howe, says:—

"How familiar to some of us her big shears, and goose, and pressing-board, and big steel thimble, that for many years went from farm to farm, to cut and stitch and press the clothing of the farmer, and his boys, at fifty cents a day. How her keen wits gauged his character and habits, as her tape took measurements of his tabernacle of flesh! An industrious and helpful being, the product of whose honest and ill paid toil was many a generous deed in life, and a handsome sum bequeathed at death. How rough her left forefinger where the needle pricked it; and what conscience went into the jerk of her linen thread as she drew our buttons home to stay—an altogether excellent woman—although it must be confessed, she wrought such a similarity of expression in the fore and aft of our trousers, as to remind us of the breeches of the little chap whose mother said, that when too far away to see his face, she could never tell whether he was going to school, or coming home."

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her, looking forward to her visit with pleasure for two reasons, she was interested in his books and his reading, and she would let him help in her work. In helping her, he learned to sew with much skill. His interest in needlework was no indication of effeminacy in his nature or his tastes, but was prompted by his desire to know how to do what he saw had a useful purpose, and also to be helpful in the doing.

Another of Edmund's activities of these early years was his delight and facility in preaching to his grandparents and imitating their minister, the Reverend Dr. Crane, a preacher of the strict orthodox school who gave to his exposition of the orthodox creed a manner duly impressive. The remarkable thing about these personations was their accuracy in the collocation of words; whole sentences, which to Edmund must have conveyed but little or no meaning, were reproduced with great fidelity. These personations were not prompted by any desire to burlesque. His active little mind took in the religious exercises as a part of the reality going on about him, and back of all his expression and wholly unobserved by his elders, he was forming conceptions of God and Heaven and Hell, which, so far as we can get at them, reflect in their naïve truthfulness the materialistic anthropomorphic preaching to which he was an attentive listener.

He has given such direct testimony as to his con-

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ception, at this period, of God and His methods of judgment that his words are well worth quoting:¹

"I imagined a narrow office just over the zenith, with a tall standing-desk running lengthwise, upon which lay several open ledgers bound in coarse leather. There was no roof over this office, and the walls rose scarcely five feet from the floor, so that a person standing at the desk could look out upon the whole world. There were two persons at the desk, and one of them — a tall, slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear — was God. The other whose appearance I do not distinctly recall, was an attendant angel. Both were diligently watching the deeds of men and recording them in the ledgers. To my infant mind this picture was not grotesque, but ineffably solemn, and the fact that all my words and acts were thus written down, to confront me at the day of judgment, seemed naturally a matter of grave concern."

Perhaps it was the death at this period, February 17, 1847, of his great-grandfather John Fisk, full of years and honorable service, and with the respect and esteem of the whole community for his upright character, that served to impress upon Edmund's mind such a vivid conception of God and his method of keeping account of the conduct of people here on earth.

In the ample grounds of the Fisk homestead Edmund had a plot of ground given him for his own

¹ See *The Idea of God*, by John Fiske, p. 116.

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cultivation. This garden was a never-failing source of interest, and in watching and tending the germination and development of plant life, he not only made himself acquainted with the more obvious facts of our common vegetable and flora culture: he also laid in a stock of direct personal observations of nature's processes which were of much value in later years when tracing the theory of Evolution from the inorganic in nature to the organic — that is, the beginning of life and its development through the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

It is noteworthy in these very early years that Edmund was an obedient, dutiful boy with an innate consideration for others. These traits will appear as distinct elements in his character as his life unfolds. We have simply to note them as active at the very beginning. Closely connected with these traits was another very pronounced one, which was a fitting complement to the others — a strong self-propulsion towards doing useful work. He seemed to find pleasure in his tasks. Never was it necessary to put pressure upon him. He was self-directed from the first. He was a remarkably healthy boy physically, and there was nothing morbid in his intellectual make-up. While he was not robust, he had no ailments. He loved outdoor sports, and was especially fond of rowing, and as soon as he could handle oars he had a boat on the river. In short, he early presented remarkable mental power in happy combination with a healthy, responsive, physical

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organization — a combination that enabled him to find pleasure in both work and play; and when he did not have agreeable companions, he could work and play by himself.

Edmund began going to school when he was between four and five years old. He was sent to a private primary school kept by a Miss Wilcox, and he was so slight that he was sometimes carried on the shoulders of his great-grandfather Fisk. This was a school where very young pupils were inducted into the elements of knowledge after the methods of sixty years ago, when all primary education began with the presentation of the abstract symbols — in language, the letters with their combination in simple words; in mathematics, the nine digits with the four forms of arithmetical process, all learned mnemonically. Penmanship, oral spelling, composition, some reading, and a little geography were included in the course. This elementary schooling was continued for nearly two years, and Edmund proved an apt pupil.

But he did not confine himself to his studies. He early began to use them in enlarging his powers of independent acquisition. He was not content to limit himself to school requirements. When six years old he could read readily, and as in his home there were some of the great works in general literature, these were put under tribute by his inquiring mind. Even the dry textbooks of Charles Fisk were examined, "to see what they were like." At six, he

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began the study of Latin, under whose instruction does not appear; and at seven we find him reading Cæsar. History, language, and mathematics were his first loves, and before he was eight he had read Plutarch's "Lives," Rollin's "Ancient History," Josephus, Goldsmith's "Greece," "Arabian Nights," "Pilgrim's Progress," and had dipped into Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope.

We have seen that during this period his mother was engaged in teaching in New York City and Newark, New Jersey. Her visits to the Middletown homestead were frequent, and occasionally Edmund visited her. As soon as he had acquired sufficient skill in penmanship to express his thoughts in writing, letter-writing, telling his mother of his interests and what he was doing, became a source of great pleasure to him. Fortunately these letters have been preserved, and in them we have a record of his youthful development, a record of his studies, his reading, his amusements, his ambitions — all put forth spontaneously as it were, in the service of a dutiful affection, a record all the more valuable because of its naïve, unconscious truthfulness.

The first letter is of date March 17, 1850, when Edmund was nearly eight years of age. It is written on both sides of a half-sheet of letter paper, and with a bold, heavy hand. There are no erasures or blots on the sheet. It is the letter of a real boy, containing a mixture of local incidents, personal experi-

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ences, domestic matters, and ancient history. His reference to Artaxerxes indicates that he had been browsing in Rollin's "Ancient History," or Goldsmith's "Greece," or Xenophon's "Anabasis." Only one word is misspelled — "witch" and "wich" for "which." The following is the letter *verbatim et literatim*: —

MIDDLETOWN, March 17, 1850.

Dear Mother —

There has been a terrible fire about a fortnight ago. Mr. Johnsons & Mr. Parmalees and Elliots, Mr. Storrs & a part of Mr. Putnams all burnt down and several other buildings got on fire. Grandmother lost all her magazines wich she had brought to Mr. Putnams to get bound, & yet I slept through the whole of it! I got a new "Gladius"¹ the other day out of the new house witch John is building. There are 12 men out there to work and every one of them is John. I am tired of hearing John all the time. It is all the time John you go and take hold of that end of the log, and John you go and take hold of the middle of the log and John you take hold of this end of the log and John you pry up the log and it is all John all the time. There were 4 Artaxerxes viz Artaxerxes Smerdis, Artaxerxes Longimanus Artaxerxes Mnemon and Artaxerxes Ochus. Don't you think this a bad letter? The other night Bridget said there was just enough oil to last that night the next night she said the same so I asked her what made her say there would be just enough for last night, and then say so again to-

¹ Sword.

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night. Bridget said oh I brought out the balance tonight.

We all send our love.

From your affectionate son,

EDMUND FISK GREEN.

It appears that a few weeks later Edmund was visiting his father and mother in Newark, New Jersey. At this time his father was pressing his claims for political preferment, and as he had promises of a substantial position in the government service in South America or on the Pacific Coast, he was hopefully looking forward to getting his little family together in a home of his own. This pleasant prospect in the mind of Mr. Green is indicated in a letter written by Edmund to his Grandmother Green during this visit. This letter is of special interest because of its self-revealing character. It clearly shows that Edmund had been dipping into his Uncle Charles's textbooks and that the pursuit of knowledge was assuming a dominant position in his mind. The letter is as follows: —

NEWARK, N.J., 19th *May*, 1850.

My dear Grandmother Green —

I am very anxious to see you and Aunt Arriana whom I have never seen. Father says mother and I will visit you with him before we go to South America. I am going to Connecticut on Wednesday with grandmother Lewis where I shall have a nice time cultivating my little garden. I am now 8 years old and have read about 200 vols of books on all



JOHN FISKE IN 1850 (EIGHT YEARS OLD)

(From a daguerreotype)

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subjects, particularly on Nat. History, Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Grammar, Mathematics, and miscellaneous things. I have also read Spanish a little. I can't write very well but I shall improve by practice so you must excuse my first letter to you.

Give my love to Aunt Roberts and my cousins and tell them I hope to see them soon.

I remain, dear grandmother,

Your very affectionate little boy,

EDDIE F. GREEN.

In this letter all the words are correctly spelled, and the penmanship, while clearly legible, indicates the hand of a boy not yet brought into complete subjection to his thought. There is added to the letter in the handwriting of Mr. Green the following: "Ed has written the above letter without any assistance, and although he can't write very well, he can talk 'a few' with anybody."

When between eight and nine years of age — November, 1850 — Edmund was placed by his grandmother in a private preparatory school for boys in Middletown, conducted by Daniel H. Chase, a graduate from the Wesleyan University. The public schools in Middletown in 1850 were not what they are to-day, and in this school, which was of excellent repute, boys were prepared for business life or for college. It does not appear at this time that any definite aim or purpose in Edmund's education had been considered. The need of his receiving systematic schooling and the convenient

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location of the school were the reasons for placing him under the charge of Mr. Chase.

Edmund's regular studies at the beginning were English grammar, Latin and Greek grammar, arithmetic, algebra, geography, with attendant exercises in reading, spelling, penmanship, and composition. It is worth while to note in this list the entire absence of many studies which are now universal in primary education in both public and private schools, such as nature study, elementary physics and chemistry, music, art. The advantages of these latter studies Edmund did not enjoy until his college period and then only to a very limited extent. In view of the important work of John Fiske in interpreting to his time the truly humanizing studies, the thought arises, in passing, would the influence of his life-work have been greater had his early educational training been directed to these modern "humanities" as well as to language, history, and mathematics?

Edmund continued in Mr. Chase's school until April, 1853, and here he was brought into close companionship with boys of his own age as well as with boys much older than himself. His studies were the first consideration in his mind and along with them went an ever-expanding range of home reading. He readily made himself amenable to the school discipline and soon distanced his classmates both in deportment and in his studies. His proficiency and the regard he received from the teachers made

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the older boys jealous and they took various ways to annoy him. In some instances they combined to abuse him as only cowardly boys will when they find a boy younger and smaller than themselves. What grieved him most, however, was the defacing of his books. This persecution was carried into the school, until Mr. Chase assigned him a place where he could study undisturbed.

This persecution by his schoolmates tended to drive Edmund the more in and upon himself. There are no complaints in the letters. He is interested in telling only of what is of interest to himself. He is closely observant of what is going on in the town, and thoughtfully listens to the discussions of a question that then divided the people into two parties — the building of a railroad that should connect Middletown with other Connecticut towns as well as with the general outside world. There were some who strongly opposed the movement.

It is interesting to find that long before the days of manual training in education, Edmund had adopted this feature in his self-imposed educational course. This fact appears in the following letter, where the information is given, boy-like, along with matters of local interest: —

MIDDLETOWN, *Sept.* 17, 1851.

Dear Mother —

I have made a splendid shop out in the wood-house. First there is a large box set up on edge on that bench and nail down. Second there are posts

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set up and boards nailed across from post to post so that they form a roof and two sides which is all I want as the front is open and the box forms the 4th side. In the box are shelves to put tools on. Mr. Faxon is dead. Dr. Casey is going away and they are going to have his house for the great Central Bank. They have tore down the old hotel and are going to build up a new one in stone carve work. They have built up that place where the Great Fire was. They have tore down the County Bank and building it up in stone carve work. We all send our love.

From your affectionate son,
EDMUND F. GREEN.

In this little shop Edmund found occupation for stormy days, and here he made many things. The near-by shipyards had many lessons for him, and beginning with a misshapen sloop he progressed in his miniature shipbuilding until he had made a full-rigged frigate with a full complement of guns — the guns being specially cast for him by his friend Mr. Wilcox, who owned a foundry, and who took much interest in Edmund's ingenuity and skill. This frigate was, indeed, a remarkable piece of skilled workmanship, and for it at a local exhibition, he received a prize. Among the treasures in his library at Cambridge none are more interesting than the few mementoes of this little shop — a miniature plane, a compass, and sun-dial.

John Fiske tells us, in later years, that it was largely owing to his visits to the shipyards and his

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making models of vessels that he early became interested in geography, astronomy, mathematics, and navigation — they were of interest because they were of service, they had to do with the sailing of vessels over the ocean.

At this early period his imagination was also actively at work. In one of his letters in the beginning of 1852 he tells of a dream he has had which he calls a "Castle in the Air." It is a boyish extravaganza, and is of interest as showing his growing proficiency in English composition, and also as indicating that he had been feeding his mind with the "Arabian Nights" and other fairy tales. At the close of the letter he tells his mother that at school two other boys and himself have taken the first prize. It is worthy of note that he puts the names of the other two boys before his own.

A few days later he writes and gives such an inventory, as it were, of himself and his studies — such a genuine boy's letter — that the letter is well worth giving in full: —

N.B. When you find a star after a word you must look at the bottom of the page.

MIDDLETOWN, Feb. 25th, 1852.

Dear Mother —

By my Geography of 1850 London is 2,520,000. I have 0 debits and 1200 credits. I went to Thads last Sat. and slid all day on the factory pond. Is there any *moral* to my dream? Next summer I want to study Surveying, Rhetoric & Psychology. To

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day I worked out a very difficult proposition in Engineering 2 more in Surveying & 23 in Legendre of Geometry. I have got in Arithmetic to the cube root. Have you received Grandmother's letter about the worsteds? I have got three compositions on shell-fishes. If * you look in my last letter you will see the 1st prize was Dickinson, Griswold and Green — but Dickinson and Griswold have now 1 Dr. each which leaves me the whole. My garden for 1852 is 55 ft. long and 31 ft. wide. We all send our love.

From your very aff'nate son,

EDMUND F. GREEN.

N.B. Mr. Crofoot is dead and *buried*.

* Feb. 20.

In the spring of 1852, as we have already seen, Edmund's father returned from Panama for a short visit. He and Mrs. Green came to Middletown and Edmund returned with them to New York City and saw his father sail for Panama, where he was soon to end his days. Edmund retained a delightful memory of this last visit with his father, and in after years always spoke of him with much affection and described him as a man of great personal charm.

There were persons in Middletown who, seeing this slender, open-eyed boy on the street, shunning the rough boys who took delight in persecuting him, thought him simply a little coward! If these persons had known the standing of this boy at school, had heard his interested, thoughtful inquiries in the shipyards, had seen him ingeniously at work in his

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own little workshop, had known something of the character and extent of his reading, and had they also been aware of the fact that all the time he was writing to his mother of the things uppermost in his mind — never alluding to the persecutions he endured — they would have formed a worthier estimate of him.

It is one of the fine characteristics of these letters, noticeable all the way through, that they are cheerful, hopeful letters. Edmund has something before him constantly worth striving for, and the letters are the record of this striving, with many incidents by the way; and while they were written solely for the eye of his mother, they give such a naïve mixture of knowledge and boyish expressions in gaining it as to make them of general interest as the record of the mental development of a healthy-minded boy, who loved knowledge and his mother in about equal proportions.

Here are some reflections derived from his studies as well as personal experiences in the pursuit of knowledge that are of interest as showing the workings of his mind. He is studying astronomy and he desires to inform his mother that "it is now about 5850 years since the creation. If a train of cars 30 miles per hour had travelled ever since, it would be 284,000,000 miles from Herschel. To reach him would take 1000 years. To reach Neptune would take 6522 years to come." His economical tendencies are manifested early and many instances might

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be given. For the Fourth of July this year—1852—he proposes to spend but twenty-five cents. But his crowning financial operation was his scheme for getting a copy of Playfair's Euclid, which his teacher had recommended him to study in place of Brewster's *Légendre*—a book he already had. The story should be told in his own words:—

“So after school what should I do but go poking into Mr. Putnams to ask the price of Euclid. One dollar was the Binomial that met my astounded eares. Terrible!!! I could n't buy the book as I had but 55 cents; so I left the store. The next noon I saw George Smith's skates (by the way he was turned out of school for being impudent to Mr. Brewer). At the sight of the skates, a lucky thought struck my head. After school, I took my skates and went up to Mr. Atkins and sold them for 46 cents. So I went poking into Mr. Putnams a second time and got the book, together with some drawing paper to make the figures on. So now I have to use all my instruments because there are some things to do which you can't do with anything else.”

During the winter of 1852-53 Edmund's studies appear to have been Greenleaf's Arithmetic, Perkins's Algebra, Euclid, Latin and Greek grammar, and Cæsar, with geography, English grammar and composition.

In April, 1853, the term closed, and Edmund's schooling with Mr. Chase came to an end. He did not get a prize at the close of the term, something unusual for him. He appears to have made a few

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warm friendships among the boys, and to have become much interested in outdoor sports. He gives his mother a description of the game of "roly-poly," which is particularly noteworthy for its clearness of statement and its good grammatical construction. He was interested in boating, and tells of trading off his old boat for one three times as large. We get glimpses of him in his little workshop, for he tells of making "a seconds clock which will go very well until the weight gets half-way down (about one foot) and then I can do nothing with it. I have taken it to pieces in hopes to put it together so that it will go somehow half decent." His penmanship has greatly improved. It is perfectly legible and begins to show something of that simple elegance that characterized the handwriting of John Fiske in his maturity.

For the six months from April to October, 1853, Edmund studied without instructors and the letters show that he was as faithful to his studies as when under school discipline. In one letter he says: "I study Cicero de Oratore Oratio, 1st Collectanea Græca Majora, Davis's Algebra. I have almost finished equations of the 1st degree. Flint's Geometry, I recite to Prof. Nobody." In this letter he sends an original "Greek Oration" which he particularly requests his mother "not to show to any one because it may have mistakes." The events of the intervening years have given this bit of boyish mental activity an especial value, and it does not

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appear as a breach of confidence, under the circumstances, to give this "oration" in facsimile. Greek scholars will appreciate it as the diversion of a lad eleven years of age, studying without direction.

In addition to keeping his mother informed in regard to his studies, Edmund tells her of the various incidents in his daily boyhood life — of his going to a magician's exhibition and his being called upon to take part in some of the tricks; of his having four shirts with bosoms and collars; a flowered satin vest made over by Eliza Cotton, with some help from himself; and of his grandmother's giving him a new broadcloth suit. He also tells of his forming a boys' club and of his being elected president; of his rambles in the woods, and of his wading in the beautiful Sabetha River; and, most important of all, of some gifts of books from his grandmother and from Mr. Lewis, by which his library is increased to one hundred and eighty-seven volumes. In his naïve record of these various incidents the beginnings of his art of narration are clearly observed.

In October, 1853, Edmund enters another private school in Middletown conducted by a Mr. Brewer, — possibly a teacher previously with Mr. Chase, — where he continued for six months. Shortly after entering this school there was an examination, Edmund's account of which gives us a further insight into his studies and his proficiency.

Πρωμαχραιν ω Φιλνι καλαχρνεων ημλερεν υπομοφ).
Θον αλλδ σός διανοίας παραφορα καεα αιζω δεεημελς.
Είς τε δευη νεχως εαυτην περι κα αχαλινώεωσ ερατοσ.
Ναι ουδέν νοεερινυμ περεδ βασιλειόνοσ, ουδέν φυλαξοσ
ουδέν ονόμοια πάνλεων αγαθός, ουδέν βρλη εχρεοσ
ουδε τόποσ τεεεχομενιετοσ, ουδέν ωψ τεόποσ δεεων χίν-
εωδε. Διακαλίρ τεεεθε δεέδα ουκ βελή οδα βαετοσ.

Εόμυνο Φίox. Γρεέν.

"GREEK ORATION" WRITTEN BY JOHN FISKE AT THE AGE OF ELEVEN
(Facsimile)

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October, 1853.

Dear Mother —

This letter will be all about studies. We had an examination Thursday. I was examined in Greenleaf's Arithmetic; Perkins' and Loomis' Algebra; through 4 books Euclid; through Hedge's Logic; through 4 books Cæsar; 8 books Virgil; 4 Orat. Cicero and the Græca Majora; through the Latin and Greek Grammars; and last, but not least dreaded, through Greek syntax.

Mr. Brewer said I passed an admirable examination. I am reading Sallust which is so easy that I have read 48 chapters without looking in the dictionary. My school report was thus — 9 being perfection: Attendance 7: Arithmetic 8: Algebra 8: Composition 7: Declamation 7: Geometry 9: Greek 7: Latin 8: Logic 8: Deportment 9: Reading 9: Writing 9:— the most perfect report of all: none of the other reports were above 4. I have studied my Sallust this morning and have got 7 cr. making 54 in all. I guess I shall finish him in three weeks and then I shall take Livy. I am reading now about Jugurtha, king of Numidia, and his wars with the Romans: Sallust was governor of Numidia 40 years after, and so had excellent opportunities of knowing about it by the traditions of the people and by the records.

From your affectionate son,

EDIBUS F. GREENIBUS.

P.S. Mr. B. said I was a better scholar than he ever had before.

P.S. 2. If you will bring Anthon's Xenophon's Anabasis 1.25 I will value it more than the broad-cloth suit.

John Fiske

Edmund was so earnest and faithful in his studies that Mr. Brewer cautioned him about studying too hard; evidently without much effect, for the letters bear witness to the great expansion of his mind in various directions, so much so that his school studies seem to have engaged the lesser part of his mental activities. No small portion of his spare time was given to translating Cæsar into Greek ahead of his translating the Latin into English. His reasons for this self-imposed task are characteristic — “It makes the translation into English easier”; and, “I like to see the Greek letters — they look so handsome.” He was fond of drawing maps, and read history with the maps before him, thus visualizing his historical acquisitions as much as possible. He committed to memory hundreds of dates of important events just for mental exercise. With his expanding knowledge he felt the necessity of having a systematic method of noting down for ready reference special subjects of interest as they came to his attention in his studies and in his reading. He therefore made a chronological record of important events from 1000 B.C. to 1820 A.D. as a sort of historical framework around which to group his historical acquisitions. This record filled a small quarto blank book of sixty pages. He also began an alphabetical commonplace book which he made out of some paper purchased with seventy-one cents given him by his mother for spending-money. This record and this commonplace book

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have not been preserved: the fact, however, that thus early, and of his own motion, he began to put his knowledge into order in his mind, and also to systematize his acquisitions, is especially worth noting in view of what we shall see later — his marvellous command of his wide and varied historic knowledge.

After studying with Mr. Brewer for about six months Edmund appears to have left the school (in April, 1854) and again to have studied at home without an instructor for about a year. During this period his mother visited Middletown frequently, and Edmund's letters are fewer than formerly, and less definite in regard to his studies and his reading. Nevertheless, in the few letters that were written we get interesting glimpses of his daily boyish life as well as evidences of his mental activity expanding in various directions. And here should be given in his own words the story of his purchase of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon.¹

“By the beginning of 1854 I had read most of the *Collectanea Græca Majora* with the aid of Schrevelius' Lexicon in which the meanings of the Greek words were given in Latin. This I found very inconvenient and I longed for a good Greek-English dictionary; but my grandmother thought five dollars a great sum for so unpractical a luxury as Greek.

¹ From a manuscript note of John Fiske's, in the copy of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon in the Fiske Library at Cambridge, written in 1883.

John Fiske

I then began to earn money. Among other things I learned that an Irishman, named Hennessey, would buy old bones at 37 cents a barrel. I picked up bones here and there till I had got five barrels which brought me \$1.85. In other ways I raised my fund till it amounted to about \$3.40, when my grandmother, seeing my determination, suddenly furnished the remainder of the \$5.00 and in June 1854 I became the jubilant possessor of this noble dictionary, which I have ever prized most highly, as I count the knowledge of Greek one of my most spiritual possessions."

A panorama depicting various incidents in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" came to Middletown at this time, and an illustrated poster of the exhibition was placed in the post-office. Bunyan's immortal work was one of Edmund's classics, and he studied this poster carefully as he daily came for the mail. So impressed was he by it that he made a reproductive drawing of it.¹ He managed by pasting together several small sheets of paper to get a sheet of goodly size, and then on his visits to the post-office he would fix the features of the poster distinctly in his mind, and on his return would draw them out on his sheet. His drawing is of interest

¹ Edmund's reproduction of this poster has been preserved and is now owned by Herbert Huxley Fiske. It bears the following inscription: —

"Early in the summer of 1853, when I was eleven years old, a panorama of Pilgrim's Progress came to Middletown; and while it was there, a picture representing the scenes of the allegory was hung up in the Post-Office and excited my intense interest and admiration, as Bunyan was one of my favorite authors. I used to stand before

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as showing the inherent tendency of his mind to grasp serious subjects, and also to render some account of its activity, while dealing with them.

He hears a lecture on metals, and also attends the Commencement exercises at the Wesleyan University of which he gives excellent, thoughtful accounts in his simple, lucid style. One letter of this period gives a bit of verbal self-criticism that is worthy of note as showing that in these early years he was awake to subtle distinctions in the use of words. He had given his mother quite an account of some military operations in the Crimean War, then raging, and he closed with this sentence: "If anything has been stated wrong it is (that I have) understated (it)." He then scratches out the words in parenthesis and adds: "I scratched out these words because the statement might be taken in a different sense from what I meant."

The only allusion to his reading during this in-
the picture and study it every day on my way home from Daniel Chase's school. I presently tried to reproduce from memory its principal features. After making this sketch, I wished to introduce the human figures; but was not satisfied with my crude attempts to draw a man. So I decided to leave it for my mother, on her next visit to Middletown, to draw the men, and marked provisionally, with numerals, the places where they were to come. I intended afterward to fill out the minor details of shrubbery, etc., somewhat as already filled out to the left of Palace Beautiful. But with the pause thus necessitated, the work stopped, and was by and by forgotten. Now, after thirty-six years, finding it — folded, frayed and torn — among some old papers, I have had it mounted and framed as a keepsake for my son, Herbert Huxley Fiske, who is about the same age that I was when I made this sketch.

JOHN FISKE.

Cambridge, June 6, 1889.

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terregnum year is a remark in a letter of August 30, 1854, that at last he has finished Gibbon's "History of Rome."

The question had now arisen as to the direction of Edmund's future education — for college or for practical life. His decided predilections for knowledge, his remarkable powers of acquisition and memory, his self-imposed studious habits, and his good physical health, all united with strong, upright traits of character, seemed to demand a college education as their fitting complement. In the year 1854 Mrs. Green received a proposal of marriage from Edwin Wallace Stoughton, of New York City. Mr. Stoughton had been a warm personal friend of Mr. Green's, and he had known Mrs. Green for several years and greatly admired her. He was a self-educated man with a wide practical knowledge. He had a notable and impressive personality, which indicated great force of character. Without assistance he had won his way to a leading position at the New York Bar. He had a large circle of friends in other professions as well as in his own; and, enjoying an ample income, he sought to surround himself with the amenities of social life.

Mrs. Green was an exceptionally attractive woman in the full maturity of her powers. To her personal attractions were added many intellectual gifts. She had a keen appreciation of art in its three-fold forms of literature, music, and painting; at the

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same time she took a deep interest in the leading social and political questions of the day. In addition to these characteristics she possessed the charm of a dignified, gracious manner which placed every one at ease in her presence: in short, she possessed in a marked degree the endowments essential to leadership in refined social life.

Mr. Stoughton's proposal appealed to Mrs. Green. By his abilities and his triumphs over difficulties he had won her admiration; while his professional and social standing were assured.

But Mrs. Green could not forget her son and her duty to him. She longed to have him with her, and in addition to her devoted affection for him, she also felt a great responsibility for his educational bringing-up in view of the very extraordinary mental powers he had already put forth, coupled as they were with certain character elements — all of which gave promise, under proper training, of a mind of exceptional power on reaching its maturity. She took Edmund, young as he was, into her confidence. She assured him that her first duty was to him, and that any prospects that did not include his happiness as well as her own would not be considered by her. Edmund's ready response shows a remarkable maturity of mind for a boy twelve years of age. He told his mother of his great love for her and how it would grieve him to have any one come between them so that she should lose any of her love for him. But he did not want her to make

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any sacrifice for him. He was happy with his grandmother. His wants were few; and with a few years more of study he could take care of himself. He did n't need schools or teachers; he knew how to study by himself; in short, he showed, along with his manly consideration for his mother, the simple optimism of youth.

In the latter part of 1854 Mrs. Green accepted Mr. Stoughton's proposal of marriage. The question then arose as to Edmund's future home. His mother wanted him with her, now that she was to have a home of her own. The grandparents, however, were inconsolable at the thought of giving up their charge, having tended him through his infancy and early boyhood, just as he was entering on the most interesting period of his development, and they could not relinquish him without much sorrow. It is probable that the decision finally reached was largely owing to the wishes of Edmund himself. Much as he loved his mother, he did not wish to live in New York City. He hated its confinement, its narrow streets, and its noise. He loved Middletown, its quiet, its freedom, its nearness to the country where he could enjoy nature at his will. He dearly loved his grandparents, and their home was the only real home he had known. He wished to remain with them; and in his boyish way he pleaded to have his wishes respected. They were respected, and it was decided that he should remain with his grandparents.

CHAPTER IV

THE MARRIAGE OF MRS. GREEN TO MR. STOUGHTON
— THE CHANGE OF NAME TO JOHN FISK — TWO
YEARS AT BETTS'S ACADEMY, STAMFORD — JOINS
ORTHODOX CHURCH, MIDDLETOWN

1855-1857

MR. STOUGHTON and Mrs. Green were married at the Fisk homestead in Middletown in March, 1855. As it had been decided that Edmund should remain with his grandparents, it seemed eminently proper that his surname should be changed so as to express his identification with the Fisk family of which he was then the sole male representative. This being granted, and several of his ancestors having worthily borne the Christian name of John, — particularly his great-grandfather who had died in recent years leaving an honored name, — it seemed equally fitting that he should take this Christian name also. Accordingly he was given the name of John Fisk, and the change of name was duly legalized in September, 1855, by the Superior Court of Connecticut.

Henceforth in our narrative, therefore, the subject of this memoir will appear *in propria persona* as John Fisk.¹

¹ The use of "e" in his surname does not appear until he reaches college in 1860. By an error in printing the Harvard Catalogue for

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Immediately following the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton arrangements were made for John's going to the Betts Academy, a well-established preparatory school at Stamford, Connecticut, in close proximity to his mother, so that she could visit him and he could visit her.

In April, 1855, the letters to his mother over his new name begin. The first letter, under date of April 26, relates mainly to his getting ready for going to Stamford. He tells his mother that he is going to take forty books with him, not including Lardner, which he will also take; that he has put all his nicely bound books from downstairs, and up garret, in order in his book-case. He also tells her that his grandmother has given him a large black trunk with his name on it; and that she has put one hundred dollars in the bank for him because he has taken his great-grandfather's name. He also tells of his closing up various boyish financial operations which leaves him four dollars to take with him, all given with the methodical accuracy of an official trustee. Then, too, he gives a list of the persons on whom he is to make parting calls, not omitting Bridget, an old family servant. The penmanship of this letter is very legible, and in appearance it reflects the characteristics of a mature mind, and yet he asks his mother to excuse his writing because he is so

this year his surname appeared as Fiske. As his ancestors had been free to use or drop the "e," according to their good pleasure, he took a like liberty and retained it.

At the Betts Academy

“ecstatic.” That he takes pride in his name is shown by the evident practice he has given to the form of his new signature. It has a resemblance to the signature of his great-grandfather, who was a fine penman.

On May 1, 1855, Mrs. Stoughton took John to Stamford and placed him in charge of Mr. Betts, the principal of the school. One week later he writes his mother the following letter: —

STAMFORD, *May 7, 1855.*

Dearest Mother —

You promised me that you would come to see me within a week. By the time this reaches you it will be a week. I am very homesick and if you come up it will cheer me very much. Never mind your housekeeping affairs. I would have written you before but Mr. Betts reads all the letters the boys send, and I was afraid to write. But Mr. Betts says I may write just what I please. I have got my garden ready for planting. Walter and I sleep in No. 3. Each room has two beds in it; one single the other double. I am very comfortable. I have enough to eat, warm bed, and Mr. Betts is very kind, but still I have an irrepressible longing to see home. To see Grandma Fisk take naps in her rocking chair in the corner; to sit by the side of the stove in the dining-room writing; to sit with Julia Nichols and talk about the war;¹ and to see Grandma Lewis, Mr. Lewis, and Mary and Allen Griswold.

I am going to write to Grandma Lewis as soon as

¹ The Crimean War.

John Fiske

I have finished this. I want to write a long letter but cannot find any more to say.

From your very affectionate son,

JOHN FISK.

P.S. Be sure to come Wednesday if you don't stay more than an hour. Oh, how I shall look for you Tuesday 8th. I am getting along very well with the boys. I shall plant musk and watermelons only. It rains very hard.

The letter to his grandmother is interesting in that it shows his dutiful consideration for all members of the family; and then the postscript! observe the fine feeling in it.

STAMFORD, *May 7, 1855.*

Dearest Grandma —

You must come down before the first of June. I cannot say but a few words. I am very homesick although surrounded with every comfort that heart can wish. If you do not write me a letter I shall not write you one. It seems as if I had been here six months instead of six days. Walter and I sleep together. I like it better than sleeping alone. Give my best love to Grandma Fisk, Mr. Lewis, Allen Griswold, Mary, Miss Julia and all.

From your affectionate grandson,

JOHN FISK.

The next morning he added the following postscript:—

“I am getting along very well with the boys. They are very polite and use no bad language. I did not mean to hurt your feelings by saying that I should not write until you wrote me.”

At the Betts Academy

Looking at the originals of these letters, and observing the legible handwriting, their freedom from blots, or erasures, or misspelled words, as well as the generally correct punctuation, one can hardly realize that they were the easy product of a boy just turned thirteen years of age.

The Betts Academy was a well-conducted school of the period. Order and method prevailed under the influence of a genial religious feeling. John readily made himself amenable to the school discipline, and the following extracts from a letter to his grandmother, apropos of her visiting him, written after being in the school a fortnight, are of interest as showing his studies and his purpose to transcend the school requirements in his private study and reading. The pride he takes in his home library is also shown, as well as the distinct and orderly way in which he has the several works in mind: —

“I get up at $5\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock every morning, am dressed and ready for prayers in 15 minutes. At $6\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock we have breakfast. From 8 till 10 I study Greek. Then there is half an hour recess. From $10\frac{1}{2}$ till 12 I study mathematics. From 2 till 4 Latin. At 6 o'clock we have supper. From $7\frac{1}{2}$ till $8\frac{1}{4}$ I study Latin Prose. From $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 I read. The playhours are from 7 to 8 A.M., from 1 to 2 and from 4 to 6 P.M. Every Wednesday morning we draw. Every Saturday morning we speak or write compositions. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons we go of an excursion. . . . We have a library in the

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school-room with books for the use of the scholars. It is not one-third as large as mine though.

“If you look in my book-case in the china closet, you will find ‘Kuhner’s Greek Grammar’ bound in black cloth with a morrocco back; ‘Evenings with the Old Story Tellers,’ bound in blue muslin; ‘Johnston’s Natural Philosophy,’ bound in yellow leather, and ‘Second Book Practical Anatomy and Physiology,’ bound in green muslin, with red morrocco back. Please bring them. . . .

“I have ten hills of melons — five of each kind. Probably these will yield 20 or 30 melons.”

The real boy nature comes out at the close of this matter-of-fact letter where he says, “You want to know what you shall bring me; bring me ‘suthin good.’”

From the composition and penmanship of these letters it might be thought that their excellence is owing somewhat to the criticism of the principal of the school. It can be said, however, that in these particulars the letters are in no way superior to what had preceded them.

Subsequent letters show an increasing interest in his studies as well as in all the personnel of the school. His language teacher thinks him deficient in Latin and Greek, although he is the youngest boy in his class, and has already read the whole of Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, Sallust, Suetonius, several books of Livy, a dozen orations of Cicero, and some of his philosophical writings, with more or less of Ovid, Catullus, and Juvenal.

At the Betts Academy

Mr. Betts, observing John's predilection for study over everything else, early forbade his studying during play hours. John's comment is, "Now having once got out of doors I hate staying in school as bad as the other boys." His accounts of the various amusements, of the Fourth of July celebration, and of the school excursions are models of simple, lucid narration. He early writes a composition on the sun and also one on Sir Isaac Newton. He reads Irving's "Knickerbocker's New York." His marks are very uniform, and remarkably high. One incident connected with his marks is worth giving in his own words as it shows how well balanced his mind was at this early age: —

"I am going to relate to you an incident which shows the bad results of idleness. Tuesday afternoon I talked to Charley Sterling in school thinking I would have plenty of time for my lesson. All of a sudden the class in Sallust was called. I knew nothing about the lesson and was simply obliged to look on. On Wednesday morning, Mr. Betts, when the lesson was called, he read off, 'John $7\frac{2}{3}$.'"

John's first term at the Betts Academy closed the last of September, 1855, and he returned to Middletown to spend the vacation with his grandparents. It seems that the school vacations then were in the months of April and October. Two incidents in this vacation are of interest as showing a growing appreciation of his personal appearance and also that the idea of going to college is firmly

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fixed in his mind. For the first time in his life he is to have a tailor-made suit, of which he gives this brief but lucid description: —

“My coat is to be of black broad-cloth to come an inch below my knees. My pants and vest were done Saturday night. The pants are small black and brown plaid. Grandma thinks they are the prettiest I ever had. The vest is dark brown with narrow satin stripes cutting it into squares.”

His grandmother has given him a room for his study into which he has gathered his books and his various belongings, and the idea of going to college distinctly appears in his description of this room and its contents: —

“I have got the north bed-room for my study. I shall have it when I go to college. Before the east window is the large black rocking-chair; in the Northeast corner is the high table which stood in the upper front hall, and on it is the little book-case with 116 books. On the north side is the black sofa. At the west end of the sofa is a chair. Two chairs on the west side. In the middle of the room is the table which stood in the back parlor before the looking glass. It has got a red table-cloth on it; and my writing-desk, and blank books, and box of instruments and father’s ‘*reliquæ poetica*’ are arranged on it so as to look as business-like and as much like Mr. Stoughton’s table as possible.”

This description was accompanied by a very complete diagram showing the shape of the room and the precise location of every article referred to.

At the Betts Academy

It is perhaps unnecessary to point out the unconscious logical arrangement of the details in this description, but what we should particularly note is the keen sense of order here manifested. This is a character trait which we shall see manifested in later years, in the orderly arrangement of his wide and varied knowledge. This room became his great pride, and his retiring place during a very important period in his intellectual development.

John's second term at the Betts Academy — November 1, 1855 to April 1, 1856 — does not appear to have been marked by any incidents of special significance. The latter part of November he thinks of writing to his Grandfather Green, but being perplexed as to how he should sign the letter, he does not write. His studies for the term appear to have been mainly given to Latin, Greek, and geometry, with an intimation that he might have had some textbook chemistry. Being near New York City his mother visited him often; hence the letters were not so frequent, nor were they as full of detail as when he was writing from Middletown. He mentions having written two compositions, one of sixteen pages on the Crimean War, and one of nine pages about the ancient Romans — a subject he confesses he "had not nearly exhausted." His marks during this term were exceptionally high. One week he was perfect in everything — the highest record ever attained in the school.

At the close of the term in March, 1856, the ques-

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tion arose as to his preparing to enter Yale in the following September. At this time there was no thought of his entering any other college than Yale. That he possibly could have entered as freshman was admitted, but as he was only fourteen years of age his mother decided against his making the attempt and so he returned to the Betts Academy in May, but with the purpose in his mind of entering Yale as sophomore the next year.

The following letter written to his mother a little later gives a glimpse at his studies, and also shows that he was going about his college preparation in a very definite, self-reliant way: —

STAMFORD, *June 25, 1856.*

Dear Mother —

In reply to your questions I can say that in my studies I am progressing about as well as usual. I am commencing the 2nd book of Virgil and the 3rd of Trigonometry and have entered upon a new Greek author, "The Death of Socrates," by Plato. I have written no poems this summer. Mr. Osborn says he thinks I can enter Yale next summer in the sophomore class, and as you had rather have me do that than enter freshman this year, I think I will do it. After the time of Henry Eno leaving here — which will be the last of next month, I shall commence the freshman studies, — Livy, Xenophon, Latin Prose Composition.

The letters to his mother and grandmother during this term show, in addition to a fine feeling of dutiful consideration, a growing breadth and serious-

Religious Stirrings

ness of thought, while his simple, lucid style in his accounts of the various incidents of the school life continues as a very noticeable feature. The political contest that was then going on is reflected in the letters. This was the first Republican Presidential campaign under Frémont, with Buchanan and Fillmore as opposing candidates. The sentiment of the school was wholly in favor of Frémont, and we have this bit of political vaticination, which reflects somewhat the nature of the contest that was being waged: "If Fillmore or Buchanan should be elected we shall be ruled by Paddies, or Dutchmen, for the next four years."

And now we find John's mind beginning to be deeply exercised on the subject of religion. He had accepted the faith of his mother and his grandparents as a matter of course, and regarded the customary religious observances as quite in the natural order of things — matters that were settled and were to be accepted without question. Then, too, the Betts school, while not sectarian, was strictly evangelical in character, and attendance at prayers and church services was obligatory. Just what particular experiences roused John's religious feelings does not appear. It is a fair supposition that to his upright, well-balanced mind, religion came as wholly in the natural order of things; and that as his ideals of life enlarged he seemed to see in the Christian faith the complement to all positive knowledge — what was unknown to man was known to God,

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so that religion, the manifestation of man's faith in God, "who doeth all things well," was the fundamental part of all human knowledge.

Whatever may have been the direct, impelling causes of his religious feelings, certain it is that during this term they were so thoroughly roused that he went beyond the school requirements in his attendance upon the religious exercises: indeed, he went so far as to request his mother not to visit him on Wednesday or Friday evenings, as he had meetings on those evenings. A little later he formally joined the North Congregational Church in Middletown.

During this term he appears to have had difficulty with one of his eyes. He writes, August 18, 1856: "I have been putting my drawing into effect. I went with Mr. Betts about a month ago to survey a lot for a new church. I drew several large plans and maps for the deacons of the church. My eyes have troubled me very much in consequence." His school record during this term is, for deportment, perfect; while for his lessons, the average is $9\frac{3}{8}$ perfect.

John's devotion to his studies and his ambition for an early entrance at college combined with his religious earnestness gave his mother grave concern over preparing for college at his early age. With his great desire for knowledge and his faithfulness to his studies, it was apparent that his physical constitution could not stand the strain he was willing to

Joins Orthodox Church

put himself under, and that his ambition must be checked, at least for a period. Accordingly, toward the close of the term his teachers seriously advised him to give up his idea of entering Yale the next year as sophomore, to take things easier, to come back and take another term at the school and not try to enter above freshman. John accepted this advice — in part — and returned to the school in November for the winter term.

During these last two terms his visits to his mother and her visits to him were frequent, so that we get in his letters but few particulars in regard to his studies. Apparently they were confined to Latin, Greek, and English grammar, with readings and translations of the classics, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. His reading is evidently quite excursive, for he asks his mother to bring him a copy of "Hudibras," which he wants very much; and he writes an essay on the "Habitability of Planets" and one on the "Augustan Era," in the former of which he made the point, familiar now, but new then, that Jupiter and Saturn, owing to their great size and slow refrigeration, are in a much earlier phase of development than Venus and the Earth. Then, too, he appears to have been dwelling upon the thought that the tracing-out of God's Providence in history would be a suitable work for his mature years.

On January 2, 1857, John writes his mother a letter of four pages, portions of which are of special

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interest as reflecting the profoundly serious character of his religious feeling, as well as marking a stage in his religious development. The letter opens with an excuse for not writing for some days because of illness. To use his own words: "I, John Fisk, have had the mumps! For a week my enlarged face rested upon a double chin." And here is a bit of adolescent moralizing, which shows how seriously his religious experience was affecting the whole order of his thought: —

"The old year has fled: those many happy hours which it has witnessed — that happy visit¹ are fled likewise. It has gone, all gone. Those lost opportunities can never be recovered: those hours of pleasure will never return: those scenes have fled and live but in the past. Oh, may this new year be the witness of yet happier scenes to you, as well as to myself dear mother; and to all dear to us. May we live so that in future years we may look back upon it as one spent in the service of the meek and lowly Jesus."

And this is his felicitation of the advent of the New Year: —

"Hail New Year! It welcomes me with a glad smile as it beholds me reading Cicero, Xenophon, and Ælian; and peradventure, dipping into Algebra, or poring over the rules of Latin composition. Farewell, O Virgil! thou hast been a source of pleasure as well as profit. Many a '9' hast thou given

¹ Evidently a reference to a visit from his mother, when he confided to her his deep religious feeling, and received her sympathy.

Religious Development

me; never has the bitter '7' risen from thy pages to meet my unwelcoming eyes."

The letter closes in the following serious strain:—

"Mother, I wish you many 'Happy New Years'; and that we may meet to spend a happy eternity in Heaven is the prayer of your son,

"JOHN FISK."

The letters during the remainder of the term have but little general interest, save as showing his faithfulness to his studies and as reflecting somewhat the seething adolescent impulses that were coursing through his brain. His school record for the whole term was very high — the highest ever attained in the school — deportment, perfect: lessons, 353.85 out of a possible 380 as perfect.

At the close of the term there was the usual school exhibition, with speaking and prizes for both composition and speaking. John won the first prize for an oration on "Silent Influences" — the prize, awarded by three clergymen of Stamford, being for both the composition and the delivery. In a long letter to his mother John gives a graphic account of the exhibition and the awarding of the prizes. This letter is marked not only with all the felicities of style we have had occasion to notice in previous letters; it also shows an innate trait of character remarkable in a boy of his years — a clear sense of justice and a desire to do justice to others, and especially when unfortunate in presenting their

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claims. Although John was the hero of the occasion, — the youngest in the graduating class, having the highest school record ever attained in the school, and the winner of the first prize, — yet in his account of the affair he says as little of himself as possible, while he warmly praises his competitors and shows his greatest interest in the boy who failed through embarrassment: in short, he gives a clear idea of the excellence of his own performance by the generous praise he gives his competitors.

John received for his prize a copy of Cowper's "Works" in one octavo volume bound in morocco; he also received from his teacher, Mr. Osborn, "a Greek Testament, a cunning little thing with maps." These volumes he always prized as mementoes of his happy days at Stamford; and they remain to-day, in his library at Cambridge, among the cherished souvenirs of his educational period.

And thus, having just passed his fifteenth birthday, John's schooling at Stamford came to an end; he left the Betts Academy with the affectionate regard of his classmates, his teachers, and Mr. Betts; and he returned to Middletown, wearing, as he tells us, "a tall silk hat as an emblem of manhood."

CHAPTER V

RETURNS TO MIDDLETOWN — PREPARES FOR ENTRANCE AT YALE — GENERAL READING — HUMBOLDT'S "COSMOS" — DAWNING RATIONALISM — MUSICAL DIVERSIONS — PASSES FRESHMAN EXAMINATIONS FOR YALE — DECIDES TO GO TO HARVARD

1857-1858

JOHN'S return to Middletown in April, 1857, was only to take up another phase of his educational training. His purpose was to enter Yale as sophomore the following September. In this purpose he had the approval of his mother, and he sought a tutor to review him in the freshman studies. In the course of his inquiries he heard of an unattached clergyman, the Reverend Henry M. Colton, who had recently opened a preparatory school for boys in Middletown, and who had an excellent reputation at Yale for scholarship, and also for his success in preparing students for the entrance examinations. John called upon Mr. Colton with reference to getting assistance in continuing his preparatory studies during the summer, and he gave his mother an exceedingly graphic account of the interview. In view of the subsequent relations between John and Mr. Colton, and also as an illustration of John's power of personal characterization at this early age, the letter is of particular interest: —

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MIDDLETOWN, *May* 26th, 1857.

My dear Mother, —

I went to Mr. Colton's on Saturday, and the substance of the proceedings is as follows after the usual preliminaries — statement of case, etc., etc., etc.

He has seven boys, all sons of nabobs. His terms are \$500. per annum for his boarders!!! and about \$40. for me until August 1st. Whew!!! He wished to know what course I intended to pursue with him — Latin, Greek, etc., etc., etc. I said I wished to review everything. He made some question about what I had studied, etc., — looked very profound!

Just then Dr. Taylor came in to see him about some hymns for the choir on Sunday. Glad to see me — son of Mrs. E. W. Stoughton, residing in New York — grandson of Mrs. E. Lewis in Middletown — residing with, and under care of his grandmother, etc., etc. To which Mr. Colton replied — “Oh!”

Dr. T. “He is quite young to go to college?”

Mr. C. “Oh! Ah! Ugh! not more than 18 or 19 I should say.”

Dr. T. “He is only seventeen.”

J. F. “I am only fifteen.”

Mr. C. “Ha, Ha, Ha!!!”

Exit Dr. Taylor.

Mr. C. “Do you know German?”

J. F. “No, sir!”

Mr. C. “Do you know French?”

J. F. “No!”

Mr. C. “Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!”

J. F. “Why?”

Mr. C. “Why!!! Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!”

Returns to Middletown

J. F. "Why should I understand French and German? they are not required." (You see I was beginning to get mad at his rudeness.)

Mr. C. (not heeding me). "Oh! you want to say I graduated when I was 19. You want to seem smart and precocious! You want to swell up and be big,— Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!! etc., etc."

Well, after he had got through with his everlasting guffaws, he said I had no business to go to college (Yale especially) at 15; 't would kill me, wear me out, etc., tremendous hard time of it—and all that lingo. But you see he wanted to get me for a whole year or two. (Ah! thought I, you don't come that.) He is going to have a row-boat. His marks are from 0 to 300 — pretty minute system that. He is very liberal, etc., has had his 7 "nabobs junior" six months on twelve Greek pages!! Wants to do the same with me! Marks boys for sitting badly, for hesitating, for saying a word twice over; and spends more time I should think with his 300 marks than with his pedagogical duties.

He is not possessed of an extraordinary degree of politeness, though a very fine scholar; thinks he is just the smartest man in creation — self-made man, educated himself, etc. Talks all the time about himself, gabbles continually. Little weazen-faced man of about 35, hard brow, cold eyes, spectacles, high cheek-bones, light hair, shaggy eye-brows, no beard, small nose of no particular species; on the whole *rather* decidedly plain. Very pleasant face though odd way of speaking; very 'set' and can't be silenced: chilling repulsive feeling came over me when I saw him: and before I had talked with him five minutes I hated him like sixty. Very strange, be-

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cause he was pleasant as could be. He talked, taking it for granted that I did n't know anything, and seemed to have imbibed the idea that money was not an indigenous crop where I lived. When he thought I was 18 years old he was as civil as could be; but when he found I was only 15 he talked quite differently.

We have come to no agreement as yet; and I most ardently hope that I shall never have him for my boss. I would rather have Mr. Chase or "Mr. Squeers" 2000 times. His price is stupendous — perfectly alarming. \$40. for three months schooling! Mr. Chase would be only \$8. That was his price when I used to go to him. It can't be much more now.

At any rate I don't want to go to him if you had just as lief have me recite to Mr. Chase. I don't like *that* particularly; but out of two evils I would choose the least.

I guess you will get used to the beaver by mid-summer. Good-bye.

JOHN.

But John's dislike of Mr. Colton was overborne in the mind of his grandmother by Mr. Colton's reputation for scholarship and for his influence at Yale. Speaking of Mr. Colton's influence at Yale John writes: "Grandmother (Mrs. Nickleby like) was so elated at that, that she persuaded me to go to him — said she was willing to pay. So we went in the afternoon and fixed it up."

His first day's experience with Mr. Colton was indeed discouraging. He writes his mother: —

Prepares for Yale

“Yesterday I went and with all his fine (?) teaching he has got a set of dunces. Oh, I thought, if he could only hear us at Mr. Betts! Why, such recitations as yesterday’s, would be considered at Stamford as reflecting shame on both school and teacher. Mr. Colton wants to see you and convince you of the *feasibility* of my staying out. Staying out of College and going to Mr. Colton’s!!!! I have no words to express my contempt and indignation at the proposal unless I repeat the significant particle. Bah!!!”

Three days’ experience in the school, however, brought a complete change in John’s mind in regard both to Mr. Colton’s methods of teaching and his own early entrance at college. The reasons for his change of mind are frankly given; and we have here a clear instance of his open-mindedness and his power of self-control which enabled him to face a very unpleasant situation with a course of action based upon sound judgment, and quite in opposition to what he had, upon imperfect knowledge, set his mind. The following extracts are from a letter dated May 30, 1857, to his mother: —

“I like Mr. Colton’s method more and more. He is without doubt a wise, kind, though very eccentric, man. But just think how different from what I am used to. I study three hours and a half upon one third of a page in Greek! What do you think? I have to give a flowing translation which is not always easy. I have to trace *every word* through its different phases and dialectic changes. I have

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to find and give the corresponding word in Latin, Hebrew, Sanskrit, German and sometimes in French; so that although I have only been with him three days, I can already see the beautiful and wonderful relations of these parallel languages."

We shall have occasion, in subsequent years, to observe John's great interest in comparative philology. Here we have to note the beginning of that interest. Having become a convert to Mr. Colton's method, John now takes under favorable consideration Mr. Colton's suggestion of postponing his college entrance for two years or more and giving the time to a broader and more thorough preparation than he had hitherto considered. Mr. Colton brought some strong arguments in support of his suggestion, basing them on John's extreme youth and his exceptional interest in his studies — two points which, united as they were in his case, would inevitably lead to excessive mental strain and bring on a mental break-down before he could finish a thorough college course. John repeats Mr. Colton's arguments, and then adds: —

"Suppose I should go to Mr. Colton a year or two and get well grounded in this thorough system of education, and then keep studying and teach school, and go to college when I am 21 or 22 years old and then take the valedictory and render myself immortal! for a Yale valedictorian is immortalized. I don't want to do this; but I think it is best. I have but one life to live and I cannot live too well. I cannot learn too much, nor take too high

His Studies

a niche in the Temple of Fame. Now I am urging you to let me take a course which is disagreeable to me; but I do want to stand high in college."

How well the fine-tempered boy comes out in this paragraph! What a pity that he had no adequate preparatory or college ideal to turn to at this interesting period! He seems to have been left in the final determination to his own choice. The preparatory course for an early entrance at Yale was abandoned, and John put himself under Mr. Colton's educational guidance for an indefinite period and immediately settled down to his studies in his usual thoroughgoing way.

John gave an account some years later of this change of purpose with Mr. Colton with the results that flowed from it, and his succinct account has a fitting place here.

"I began reading with him (Colton) just for a few weeks until I could go to Yale and I got so much in love with his methods of scholarship, that I studied with him over two years and got steeped in Greek to the very ends of my toes, besides getting an excellent reading knowledge of German. I often wonder that I staid with him so long, for his manners were odious. He was cross, rude, unreasonable, ill-tempered, furious in his outbursts of anger — quite a savage — and I hated the sight of him: but I liked his teaching."

We have not the particulars of all his studies with Mr. Colton. It is evident, however, that he

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put himself into full conformity to Mr. Colton's requirements, and that he took up the study of German, algebra, and Euclid, in addition to Latin and Greek. He tells us in his letters that at this time he could read easy Greek like Plato or Herodotus at sight. His reading was not in scraps as boys usually read Greek, but he would take up an oration of Lysias and read it through; and the "Iliad" he would read continuously.

The latter part of July of this year — 1857 — he went to the Yale commencement, taking in Stamford by the way, and his account of the trip has all his felicity of style. Knowledge of his probable early entrance at Yale had preceded him, and while in New Haven he visited two college societies and he was "bored like sixty" to join them. What was of greatest interest to him on this trip was his hearing an address by Wendell Phillips, which he says was "perfectly splendid — one of the finest things I ever heard."

It was while John was settling down at Colton's that he became acquainted with George Litch Roberts, a junior at the Wesleyan University. Roberts was possessed of a strong, self-reliant character, and was John's senior by five years; but as both were earnest students, and as they had much in common in their ideals of the knowledge that was of most worth, as well as in their musical tastes and religious beliefs, this disparity of years was not felt between them, and their acquaintance ripened

Interest in Music

into an intellectual companionship which, as we shall see later, had a strong, stimulating effect upon John's intellectual development as he came to maturity.

Another incident of this period must be referred to, as we are to see an influence radiating from it, which, permeating the whole of John's subsequent life, gave to it no small degree of its richness and fulness. A friend had left with his grandmother for safe-keeping a piano. John became greatly interested in playing upon it, and gave to this diversion a goodly portion of his spare time. Having a "good ear" he worked by himself until he could play such works as Mozart's Twelfth Mass, "just to see what they were like." He could find no encouragement in those days for learning the piano; and when in later years we are to see him finding his greatest solace from his intellectual labor in mastering its "wonderful harmonies," we shall do well to recall this early unpremeditated experience with a friend's piano.

The awakening of John's interest in music was coincident with the rise of his religious feelings, and having joined the choir of the North Church he sought among other interests to give his religious emotions musical expression. Accordingly at this period he composed a number of musical compositions, some of which are of a decidedly religious character. These compositions have been preserved, and are of interest, not only by reason of the neat-

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ness and the technical accuracy of their execution, but also by what they show of his musical proficiency, gained without any instruction.

At the opening of the year 1858 John was approaching his sixteenth birthday, and he reveals himself as in good health, enjoying physical exercise, and with his mind, free from any outside pressure, expanding in several directions. He is so well satisfied with Mr. Colton's methods that he has settled down to his studies with great ardor. In Greek, Latin, and German he is studying the grammatical construction and syntactical relation of the three languages; and to this end he is working simultaneously with two or more grammars of each language for the purpose of getting various views on essential points, and then discussing these points with Mr. Colton. In mathematics he is working with Euclid to the fourth book, and in algebra with the textbooks of Loomis and Peirce. He is delighted to find Mr. Colton so thorough; and in addition to his day study, he assigns two evenings a week to study purposes.

As the year progressed, Spanish was added to his language course, and he became greatly interested in "theming" — that is, in tracing out the origin and significance of words in the Greek and Latin languages, and their modifications and significations in the modern languages. Nearly every letter during the latter half of the year contains one or more of these themes.

His General Reading

And here is a comment on the exercise of theming, not unworthy of a mature philologist, which he drops by the way: —

“Nothing like Theming to give one a broad view of language. It gives one the thoughts which lie in the mind, and which call forth words to embody ideas, and to develop the words into genera and species.”

John's language work leads to a study of the philological essays of Gibbs and of Key, and also to a careful reading of Davidson's and of Ladewig's Virgil. More than this, these philological readings reawakened John's interest in ancient history, and he reread Rollin down to Greece, and then he took up Grote's "History of Greece." That this historical reading was of a thoughtful character is shown by an incidental remark: —

“I am reading the sixth volume of Grote. He must be a genius, or he never could use such splendid language as he does in describing the Peloponnesian War. He seems to approach the grandeur of his model Thucydides — or, to use the new orthography, Thoukydidês.”

In mathematics during this year, John advanced in algebra to Maclaurin's Theorem inclusive; while in geometry he seems to have confined himself to working out a few theorems, some of which he gives, particularly one developed from the proposition of Pythagoras which was proposed for demonstration

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by the "Mathematical Monthly," and which he worked out himself, and "without once referring to Euclid." As a sort of mathematical diversion he read Sir William Hamilton's essay on "Mathematics."

Phrenology was a subject of wide popular interest in those days, and John became greatly interested in the rough-and-ready way of reading character inculcated by it. He read very thoughtfully Fowler's works on "Phrenology," then very popular, and immediately began to apply the "Theory of Bumps" to himself, to his mother, to his friend Roberts — in fact, to all his friends — in the interpretation of their characters. His phrenological readings are to-day very amusing, yet we must not forget that during the first half of the last century, phrenology played an important part in the development of what is now known as rational psychology.

John's miscellaneous reading during this year is not only a further illustration of his mental activity; it is also an indication of the high order of his intellectual tastes, for what a mind in the process of unfolding selects for its diversions reflects its inherent character or tastes no less than its positive activities. In addition to what has been given, his reading comprised Dickens's "Little Dorrit," "The Old Curiosity Shop," and "Barnaby Rudge"; Emerson's "English Traits"; Bayne's essays on Macaulay and Tennyson; Shakespeare's poems;

His General Reading

Milton's "Lycidas"; Comstock's "Elements of Geology"; Hugh Miller's "The Testimony of the Rocks"; Humboldt's "The Cosmos"; and Mackie's "Life of Leibnitz."

That these works were read with a similar thoughtfulness to that which marked his study-reading, is shown in the letters. In speaking of "Barnaby Rudge," he says: "I think it surpassed by none of his other works. I don't know which of Dickens's works is the best, but I think they can never be surpassed." Of Shakespeare and Milton he says: "I think Shakespeare better than Milton, just as Homer is to Sophocles, or Virgil to Lucretius." He was so impressed by Mackie's "Life of Leibnitz" that he gave his mother a complete sketch of the life of the great philosopher, closely written on three letter-sheet pages, and without blot or erasure.

The most significant of his comments on his reading are with reference to Humboldt and his great work, "The Cosmos." We have here to note particularly a dawning interest in cosmic phenomena, and that he appears to have had a dim apprehension of the great discussion over "origins" that was soon to follow — that was already in the air; for we see him reading Hugh Miller, the orthodox champion of special creations, almost coincidentally with his reading of Humboldt's profoundly suggestive work. Of deep significance, therefore, in the life of John Fiske are the following questions

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which he puts to his mother at this time, with reference to Humboldt and to his "Cosmos": —

"Do you not consider Humboldt the greatest man of the 19th century, and the most erudite that ever lived? Does not the 'Cosmos' exhibit more vast learning than any other uninspired book?"

These questions of John Fiske, bearing date of 1858, are the first dawnings that we find of the subject of Cosmic Evolution in his mind.

John's musical diversions are continued through the year. In view of what we are to see later these early musical experiences are worth noting. He joins a musical association of which Roberts is a member, and he reads Marx on "Musical Composition" and studies various oratorios. He begins the composition of an opera which he calls "The Storm Spirit," and gives an analysis of the theme, expressing the hope that during his vacation there may be some good opera or oratorio performing in New York City, that he may attend with his mother. He adds: "I don't want to attend any American opera after studying the works of Schubert, Mendelssohn, and their less distinguished Italian contemporaries."

In music, as we shall see, in literature, architecture, painting, and sculpture, his instinctive taste strikes true from the first — he demands the best.

And with all his interests, his religious duties were not neglected. "Something of a revival" was going on in Middletown this year, and John appears to have taken an active part in the various forms of

Music and Religion

service at the North Church. He and Roberts were members of the choir, he taught in the Sunday School, was interested in the Bible Class; and during the revival interest, he specifically assigned two evenings a week to the revival meetings, in the conduct of which he not only led the singing, but also took an active part in the speaking. In brief, he appears to have accepted the Calvinistic interpretation of the Christian faith without reservation; and in all his studies and in all his acts he seems to have been actuated by a sincere desire to conform his life to the highest ideals of Christian conduct.

At the opening of the year 1859 John had come to about the limit of Mr. Colton's philological and mathematical knowledge, while in his historical studies he had gone far beyond Mr. Colton; nevertheless, he continued to recite to him till July. His regular studies during this period were Greek, Latin, German, French, Spanish, spherical geometry, trigonometry, and conic sections. In his language studies he gave much time to theming and to the careful reading of classic writers in each language. In one of his letters he remarks: "I have just done with the first book of the 'Iliad.' Splendid but rather hard"; and again: "I am studying the 'Iliad' with the greatest minuteness through the first six books. I shall investigate the theme and history of every word. The remaining 18 books I shall read straight through." He also reviewed the freshman studies at Yale.

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The latter part of July he went to Yale and took the freshman examinations and passed very creditably, as appears from a letter of July 26, 1859: —

“I missed only one question and that was in arithmetic. A tutor asked me to find the present worth of a sum of money. I told him I was not prepared on mercantile problems. He smiled and gave me a sum in square root of decimals which I did. Another tutor asked me for the 3d Prop., 2d book, Euclid. I gave it, demonstrated it, and gave the schol. in algebra. Another examined me a long time in algebra — particularly in surds. I answered all his questions without hesitation, did the sums: he said, ‘You have a decided taste for mathematics, have n’t you?’ But the best of all was my examination in Greek by Prof. Hadley. I read two pages without stopping to look it over beforehand. He asked me to decline nouns, conjugate verbs, etc., etc.; then points in syntax, then euphonic laws; finally a lot of themes. Said he, ‘What does “hyperesias” come from?’ (This word means ‘hard labor’ and means ‘hypo’ — ‘under,’ ‘eiresia’ — ‘oars’). I answered, ‘As the Greeks must have had to work very hard in order to propel their immense triremes, I suppose they called anything done “under oars,” “hard service.”’ Said he, ‘That is sufficient for you, Mr. Fiske. I see that your preparation has been singularly fine!’

“Colton says that Hadley was delighted, and astonished at me. I have my certificate of admission signed by President Porter.”

Having passed the freshman examination at Yale so creditably, John now has a strong desire to post-

Decides to go to Harvard

pone his college entrance for another year and to enter Harvard rather than Yale, because, as he says, "the course at Harvard is very different and very much harder," another reason being the more liberal intellectual atmosphere at Harvard. In pleading his case he says: "It is true that the instruction at Harvard is conducted with less strictness than at Yale. It is a bad place for a careless scholar, but unequalled in facilities for an ambitious one."

In his desire to enter Harvard instead of Yale, John had his way; and so his college entrance was again postponed and for another year—until September, 1860.

But John's desire to enter Harvard rather than Yale had its origin in quite other considerations than those arising from differences in methods of instruction at the two colleges. In fact, the change of college—the preference of Harvard over Yale—was only one of the effects produced by the great revolution that took place during the year 1859 in all John's inner life.

Before following him, therefore, in his preparation for and his entrance at Harvard, we must review his religious inquiries and experiences with their causes during this eventful year, for, as will appear, all his subsequent thinking was vitally affected by certain philosophical and religious conclusions he reached at this time.

We have seen that during the year 1858 John

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was pushing his inquiries in various directions, and particularly along the lines of physical phenomena and human history. We have also seen that, having accepted in all sincerity the Calvinistic faith of his family and of his Puritan ancestors, he had entered upon the observance of his religious duties with great earnestness.

Actuated by such a desire for "the knowledge that leadeth unto wisdom," the reading of Gibbon, Grote, and Humboldt could not fail to stir his thought in various directions; and nothing could be more in the order of his thinking than that, after converse with these stimulating and suggestive minds, in addition to his general knowledge of classic literature, he should be led to inquire, in the finest spirit of a Christian believer, into the foundations of the religious faith which he had accepted as embodying the highest truth vouchsafed to the human mind.

Certain it is that, at the opening of the year, he reveals himself as earnestly seeking light on certain religious problems that were engaging his thought; and that we may the better follow him through his own personal experiences in his search for religious truth, and the more clearly perceive the character of the religious faith he did so much to promote, we should get clearly before us the fundamental dogmas of Christian theology with their verifications, which he found confronting him as an ultimate philosophico-religious system at the opening of his

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inquiries, an implicit belief in which was regarded by all evangelical Christians as the essential part of all true religion.

Then, too, it is highly important that we get these dogmas, with their implied philosophic system, clearly before us at this stage of our narrative, not only because of Fiske's personal experience in emancipating his own mind from their baleful tyranny, but also because his emancipation was coincident with the rise of the philosophy of Evolution, — a philosophy based on science and "the sweet reasonableness of the human mind," — to the setting forth the religious implications of which we are to see him, at his maturity, giving the full measure of his powers as a co-worker with the most eminent scientists and philosophic thinkers of the time.

These dogmas of Christian theology, claiming to be the presentation of ultimate truth as to the Infinite Power back of the physical universe and of conscious man, together with the dealings of this Infinite Power, concisely stated were as follows: —

Dogma I. The Bible a sacred Book. Divinely inspired by the Infinite Creator of the cosmic universe it contains His messages to man.

The Old and the New Testaments contain the Divine Creator's messages to man, and also His covenants regarding man's Fall, his Redemption, and his future state.

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These Testaments are to be implicitly accepted by man as containing the highest truth. Submitting these divinely inspired records to criticism, in the light of science, or of historic evidence, or of reason, is infidelity; and shows a want of faith in the Divine Creator; and a disbelief in His method of creating and sustaining the cosmic universe, including His creation and subsequent dealings with conscious man.

Dogma II. The Infinite Creator a Trinitarian Godhead.

The assertion of an eternal uncreated Trinitarian Godhead, existing from everlasting to everlasting; omniscient and omnipotent; just and terrible in judgment, yet most merciful and forgiving; the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and all that in them is; composed of three Divine Persons in one: —

God the Father.

God the Son.

God the Holy Ghost.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma III. The creation by fiat of the physical universe by God the Father, and His direct personal care and supervision of it.

The assertion of the creation of the inorganic physical universe out of hand in definite time by the omnipotent power of God the Father and its sustentation and control by His ever watchful care. This dogma makes the whole physical universe subject not to universal law, but to the temporary will of the asserted Creator.

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The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma IV. The creation of the organic world of vegetal and animal phenomena out of hand by Divine fiat; their endowment with the property of life and its power of propagation.

The assertion that the creation of the vegetal and animal kingdoms, with all their multifarious forms of existences, was done out of hand, in definite time, by the omnipotent power of God; and that he endowed these creations of His hand with the mysterious property of life, and its power of propagation.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma V. The creation of man as a perfect being; his disobedience and fall; his condemnation; the total depravity of the human race.

The assertion that God created, out of hand, Adam and Eve in His own likeness, as perfect human beings and as the progenitors of the human race; that Adam wilfully disobeyed God's express command; that God thereupon condemned Adam and his posterity to eternal punishment therefor — thereby establishing the total depravity of the human race.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma VI. God plans man's redemption and salvation through His Son; the Covenant of Grace.

The assertion that God the Father mercifully stayed His hand, and devised a scheme for man's

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redemption and salvation through His Son; who in the fulness of time was to descend from Heaven; was to be miraculously born into the world; and was to reveal God's complete plan, and give God's complete message to man. This Son was then to be crucified; was to arise from the dead and ascend into Heaven and resume His place at the right hand of God the Father in the final judgment of mankind. Only those who believe in the Divinity of the Son and His divine mission were to be saved.

The only verification of this stupendous dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma VII. God chooses the Hebrew people as a special portion of the human race through whom to carry out His plan for man's redemption and salvation.

It is asserted that God selected the Jews as a chosen people for the carrying out of His purpose; that He revealed Himself to them exclusively; that He gave them an inspired record of His creation of the universe and its creatures; that He gave them a code of laws written on stone with His own hand; that by inspired messages He prescribed how they should worship Him, as well as the main features of their social intercourse; that by many miracles He attested His watchful care over them, as well as His displeasure at their sinful acts; that, above all, He kept alive in their minds, through the inspired teachings of their Prophets, their belief that in the fulness of time their Messiah or Redeemer would come.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

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Dogma VIII. Christ appears on earth as the Son of God and as man's Redeemer: His perfect life; His crucifixion; His resurrection; His ascension.

It is asserted that at the beginning of the Christian era, Christ appeared in Judea as the Son of God; that He had a miraculous birth; that He was anointed with the Holy Spirit; that He led a perfect life; that He taught the doctrines ascribed to Him; that He performed miracles; that He was crucified; that He arose from the dead; that He ascended into Heaven.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma IX. The descent of the Holy Ghost.

It is asserted that the descent of the Holy Ghost took place at a Pentecostal festival; that it was a visible confirmation of the Divine mission of Christ; that it was an assurance to the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would henceforth be an ever-active Divine force in the world, tending to lead men to believe that God was still merciful; and to embrace Christ as their only means of salvation.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma X. Resurrection — A Day of Judgment — Immortality.

This dogma is presented as physical phenomena yet to come, in the working-out of the Divine plan for man's redemption and salvation. There is to be a Day of Judgment, when Christ is to appear in great power and glory, when the dead are to be raised

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and all mankind are to be judged in righteousness for conduct here on earth. The righteous are then to be separated from the wicked and awarded eternal joy in Heaven; while the wicked or the unredeemed are to be condemned to eternal punishment in Hell. Christ's resurrection and ascension are adduced as physical proofs of the dogma.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Dogma XI. The existence of Satan, an evil spirit in rebellion against God the Father, and ever active in endeavours to thwart God's holy purposes regarding man.

Until recent years the existence of Satan as a rebellious spirit of superhuman power was asserted by Christian theology with hardly less positiveness than was the existence of God Himself. To the inspiration of Satan was attributed much of the crime and wickedness which afflict mankind; and fifty years ago Satan and his machinations to draw persons to his abode were not exceptional topics for pulpit discourses.

The only verifications of this dogma presented to human reason are Dogma I and Milton's "Paradise Lost."

Dogma XII. Heaven and Hell.

It is asserted that Heaven is God's holy dwelling-place somewhere beyond the conception of the human mind; where the Redeemed of earth are to enjoy the Divine Trinity in company with the holy angels forever; that Hell is a place somewhere set apart where the unredeemed of earth are to suffer

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endless punishment in company with Satan and other evil spirits.

The only verification of this dogma presented to human reason is Dogma I.

Professor Eucken has well said: "There is a tremendous logic about the development of these dogmas which cannot be broken in the middle: he who wants one cannot refuse the others."¹

These dogmas were venerable in their antiquity, and in their origin and historic development they were a connecting link between the philosophico-religious systems of the ancient and the modern world — in fact, it was claimed that they embodied and transcended all the higher phases of ancient philosophy. Considered by themselves these dogmas presented a mighty drama of existences wherein God, the physical universe, organic life, conscious man, virtue and sin were all accounted for; and wherein man's religious and moral duties in the conduct of life with their rewards and penalties were distinctly set forth — the whole presenting a complete and rounded philosophico-religious system embracing all existences with the Ultimate Cause and teleological purpose underlying the whole.

This mighty drama was presented to human reason as resting upon one fundamental fact — which must in no way be questioned — the fact that the Bible, the sole authority for the scheme, was a divinely inspired Book and contained God's mes-

¹ *Eucken and Historical Christianity*, by E. Hermann, p. 107.

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sages to man, and hence transcended all other knowledge. During the Christian centuries great thinkers had beaten these dogmas into shape and had related them for ready comprehension by the common mind until they had become, as it were, integral parts in the consciousness of the Christian world, while upon them had been organized a vast system of ecclesiasticism through which the spiritual relations between God and man enshrouded in the dogmas were presented to imagination and to religious faith in the most impressive forms of architecture, literature, music, and art.

It is becoming somewhat the fashion, in these later days of science and new religions, to look with a feeling akin to supercilious disdain upon these dogmas and to credit them with but little good in the moral and intellectual development of mankind. We may admit the gross anthropomorphic as well as the mythical character that pervades them; the bitter persecutions and the terrible destruction of human life that have attended their promulgation as a system of religious faith may all be admitted; yet it must be conceded that these dogmas have enshrouded far beyond any other religious system a religious truth of the utmost significance; a truth which was dimly apprehended in the ancient civilizations, and which philosophic thinkers of all ages have recognized as lying back of all experiential knowledge; a truth which by its majestic spiritual import held European society together

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during the turbulent period of the Middle Ages and which modern science is now confirming as the ultimate truth of all cosmic phenomena — the existence of an Infinite Eternal Power from whom all things have proceeded; whose Divine nature is reflected in the universe of material things, but most of all in the moral consciousness of man, and that this Eternal Power is ever further revealing itself through the moral progress of the race. Now, it is an inevitable corollary to this ultimate truth of science — the revealing of the Infinite Divine Power through moral man — that between the Divine Creator and the individual human soul there is, and always has been, a direct spiritual relation which is strengthened as the cosmic knowledge and the moral life of man broadens.

Viewed in this light these dogmas have borne an important part in the intellectual and moral development of mankind. During the long period in which man was slowly stumbling forward with his scientific knowledge to a rational conception of the physical universe, the conscious human mind, and the Infinite Eternal Power lying back of both, these dogmas enshrouded this great religious truth: that between this Infinite Eternal Power and every individual soul there exists a direct spiritual relation which is ever working to greater fulness of individual life — a truth which man's arts, in their varied forms of architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, and music, fully confirm.

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With the progress of modern science, this great religious truth has been undergoing a steady process of dogmatic denudation; and as this denuding process has gone forward, the great enshrouded truth has ever come forth in a clearer light as of vital significance to the intellectual and moral well-being of mankind.

During the middle period of the last century there came a number of culminating discoveries in the physical, the biological, the psychological, the philological, and the sociological sciences, accompanied by results in Biblical criticism, which entirely discredited the dogmatic assertion of the special Divine inspiration of the Bible, thereby completely annulling the binding force of the Christian dogmas as ultimate truth.

The nature and the full philosophic bearing of these discoveries will appear a little later when we come to consider the philosophy based on the doctrine of evolution. In 1859 the Christian world was discussing these discoveries, with the results of Biblical criticism thrown in, mainly from the viewpoint of dogmatic theology; and thus a new phase was given to the long contest between theology and science.

In this contest the most eminent theologians took a hand. They saw that they were facing a more serious issue than ever before, and they rushed with the utmost vehemence to the defence

¹ See vol. II, chap. xx.

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of the Christian dogmas as the embodiment of Divine truth. They were unsparing in their condemnations of the new revelations of science and in Biblical criticism as the height of infidelity, as deliberate attempts to invalidate the truths of revealed religion.¹ In the crusade against these new forms of infidelity no terms of objurgation were too severe against such fair-minded investigators as Lyell, Hooker, Asa Gray, Huxley, Tyndall, Wallace, Darwin, Mayer, Faraday, Joule, and Helmholtz; or against such rational critics as the authors of "Essays and Reviews," Matthew Arnold, Buckle, Renan, and the Tübingen School; or against such noble religious teachers as Channing, Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Bishop Colenso. In fact, the immediate effect of the new revelations of science and of Biblical criticism was a hardening of the theologic heart against all scientific knowledge and against any questioning of the special Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, resulting in an emphatic reassertion of the old dogmatic claim that there was, and must ever remain, a broad line of demarcation between the sacred truths of theology and the experiential knowledge derived from soci-

¹ People whose memories go back to fifty years ago can recall sermons by scholarly clergymen, in which it was seriously maintained that the palæontological discoveries attesting man's animal origin and great antiquity were but evidences of the adroit work of Satan in creating these fossils, and so distributing them as to confuse men's minds in regard to the Divine truth of creation revealed in Genesis. Happily the days for such presentations of Divine truth no longer exist.

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ology and science; in short, that the latter must ever be interpreted by the former.

John Fiske was seventeen years old when his rapidly expanding mind, eager in its search for truth, was brought within the circle of this profound discussion between dogmatic theology on the one hand and science and Biblical criticism on the other. It was not in his nature to do things by halves; and his religious feelings being as we have seen thoroughly aroused, and his inquiries showing him that the religious faith he had accepted rested wholly upon these dogmas as truths of the highest import, he could not rest content until he had brought them together and interrelated them in his own mind. When he had done this, when he had got them with all their implications interrelated as into a complete and rounded whole, it then appeared that the religion founded on these dogmas did not present as its vital elements the love of a Divine Creator "who doeth all things well," and ethical conduct among men as the essential condition for individual fulness of life, so much as it emphasized a belief in certain supernatural phenomena that were to be accepted wholly on faith. In fact, it appeared that the real religious elements — love to God and love to man — were so completely enshrouded in a series of unverifiable assertions in regard to God, the physical universe, and man, that it was not only impossible

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to bring the reasoning mind to bear upon them in any rational way; it also appeared as the purpose of the dogmas — if they may be said to have had a purpose — so to stifle the mind in its aspiration for religious truth that it should be forever restrained from seeking other light on the great problems of existence than that vouchsafed by the dogmas themselves.

The collocation of these dogmas, therefore, started trains of thought in John's mind in various directions. He saw more clearly than ever before why in Christian literature so much importance was attached to the dogma of the special inspiration of the Scriptures — the placing of the Bible in authority over and above all other sources of knowledge. He saw that this was done, not because of the intrinsic religious truth the Bible contained, — the love of God and the love to man, — but because such an alleged divinely inspired record of God's dealings with man was necessitated as a foundation for the scheme of Man's creation, his fall, his redemption through Christ, and the conditions of his future existence, as well as for the placing of the scheme beyond the reach of any criticism based on verifiable knowledge.

John's reason at once stumbled over this stupendous assumption of the Divine authority of the Biblical record, at this placing all other knowledge subordinate to it, at this begging the whole theologico-religious question at the outset. As he studied

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his Bible and brought under review his historic and scientific knowledge, and saw how radically the profoundly impressive scientific record of the development of the cosmos and its inhabitants, as interpreted by Humboldt, Lyell, and the biologists, differed from the crude, childish cosmogony of Genesis, and how the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, which knew not the Christian dogmas, yet presented, as interpreted by Grote and Gibbon, some points of moral and religious advantage over Christian civilization, John's whole religious nature was deeply stirred by the manifest incongruities between the revelation of the Divine Creator as asserted by dogma and the verifiable revelation given by science and by history. He began to question in the very sincerity of his heart, "Is this Christian religion as set forth in these dogmas the ultimate measure of the Infinite Creator of the physical universe, of the human soul? Can it be true that this religion is a veritable form of worship and conduct instituted by the Divine Creator of all things for man's special behoof and salvation; is the human race under such a fearful doom; and do such portentous consequences to the eternal future of all mankind depend upon individual acceptance of the conditions of salvation as set forth in these dogmas?"

Similar questions have often arisen in the minds of sincere Christian believers, and Christian literature has many answers. John's answer was the complete emancipation of his mind from bondage

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to these dogmas, his firm grasp of the vital religious truth that they partially revealed, and his subsequent efforts to set forth this truth, not simply as consistent with, but rather as the necessary complement to the broadest scientific knowledge — in a word, his answer was his intellectual life as we are to see it unfold from this point.¹

¹ Years after, in a conversation I had with Fiske in regard to these dogmas and the hold they had on the evangelical Christian mind down to the promulgation of the doctrine of Evolution, he said in substance: —

“I can never forget the feeling of revulsion I experienced when I first brought these dogmas together in my mind as an interrelated whole. I had received them from time to time as elements in the religious faith which I had accepted as Divine, without any question whatever. When, however, in my seventeenth year, I sought to bring my religious views under a rational interpretation, I found it was required that these dogmas should first be posited as the embodiment of all ultimate truth. I then tried to get clearly before me the scheme of cosmic creation and sustentation which these dogmas set forth; and what a mighty drama of Infinite and finite coexistences stood revealed! Both orders of existences appeared as inextricably immeshed in a mass of metaphysical assumptions, wherein science was disowned, where reason was discredited, and where blind, unquestioning faith was regarded as the only passport to true Christian knowledge. Fortunately science was then giving a nobler and a more verifiable knowledge in regard to cosmic creation and the meaning of human life, as well as yielding a far higher conception of the Infinite Power back of the cosmos than could be derived from these dogmas, and I was not long in freeing my mind from their benumbing influence.

“With more mature thought, I came to see the great spiritual truth enshrouded in these dogmas; and a wider acquaintance with the philosophy of history, led me to see that the dogmatic coverings of this great truth had been of immense service in its protection and its development while knowledge was slowly being organized through science, for its verification in human experience. And now the Christian world is beginning to see that religious and social progress consists mainly in the freeing of this great spiritual truth from the dogmatic wrappings it has outgrown.”

CHAPTER VI

SELF-PREPARATION TO ENTER HARVARD AS SOPHOMORE — WIDE READING — BREAKS AWAY FROM CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY — SOCIAL OSTRACISM — LEAVES MIDDLETOWN FOR CAMBRIDGE

1859-1860

THUS far we have been tracing the life of John Fiske through his boyhood and youth under the influence of his family and his home surroundings, his elementary schooling and his preparation and his passing the examinations for entrance at Yale College. We have had frequent occasion to note his strong self-propulsion for knowledge, his orderly methods of study, his remarkable intellectual attainments, his high ideals of the life of a scholar, and his deep religious convictions. We are now to follow him into a broader field of experiences, and for the ensuing four years particularly we are to observe him as intellectually developing under three closely interrelated conditions: in his preparation for and as an undergraduate at Harvard; as a student of philosophy and religion in the new era of scientific thought then opening; and in his steadily widening social relations. To use Mr. Spencer's definition of life: we are to observe him during this formative period in his "continuous adjustment of

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internal relations to external relations." This plan of observing him will entail considerable particularity in regard to the external relations.

It having been settled in August, 1859, that John should enter Harvard instead of Yale, he determined to enter as sophomore or junior; and to prepare for such an advanced entrance, he planned for several months' study by himself in Middletown and then to finish with a tutor at Cambridge. His plans for his studies show the same orderly provision we have had occasion to note in previous years. Each study had its hour and its time limit. In the required languages at Harvard he was already prepared; nevertheless, he took up Latin, Greek, and German with fresh ardor, and added Italian and Hebrew thereto; he also provided for persistent comparative study of the structural features of the several languages supplemented by careful readings in the classics of each. In mathematics he prepared to review his geometry and algebra, to go twice over the freshman requirements, and to anticipate some of the sophomore requirements, and to finish in Cambridge.¹

¹ The following is a list of the textbooks and philological and classical works studied during this preparatory period: Becker's *German Grammar*, Key's *Latin Grammar*, Ollendorff's *French Grammar*, Xenophon's *Anabasis* (ed. Anthon), Xenophon's *Cyropædia* (ed. Owen), Virgil's *Æneid* (ed. Ladewig), Sallust's *De Bello Jugurthino* (ed. Jacobi), Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico* (ed. Kraner), Fénelon's *Télémaque*, *Iliad*, lib. I-VI (ed. Anthon), Chapman's *Homeric Hymns*, *Ciceroni's Orationes Selectæ*, Sallust's *De Conjuratone Catilinæ* (ed. Jacobi), Arnold's *Latin Prose Composition*, Part I, Eaton's *Elements of Arithmetic*, Day's *Algebra*, Euclid's *Elements* (ed. Playfair), Racine's *Les*

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Having thus laid out his preparatory course he writes his mother in a moment of gratulation: "How thankful for Harvard and self, instead of Yale and Colton."

While this self-imposed course was substantially carried out, it is interesting to note that by mid-winter, 1860, his scientific and philosophic reading had awakened in his mind the importance, in a truly philosophical education, of a knowledge of science in addition to a knowledge of the languages and mathematics. Accordingly he puts this question to his mother: "Would a scientific education be of advantage to me or not? This question I would like some experienced person to answer. I am inclined that way, though I love classical studies and find no trouble in them. A scientific course which includes the sciences and German would not interfere with my private study of Latin and Greek. I shall read all the works of antiquity anyway." He appears to have answered the question himself, and by a preparation in science which was not at all called for at Harvard at that time.¹

Frères Ennemis, and his *Alexandre*, De Staël's *L'Allemagne*, Peirce's *Geometry*, Vergani's *Italian Grammar*, Gesenius's *Hebrew Grammar* (begun), Peirce's *Algebra and Trigonometry*.

¹ His scientific reading during 1859 and the early part of 1860 comprised the following works: Agassiz's *Principles of Zoölogy* and his *Essay on Classification*, Johnston's *Natural History*, Turner's *Chemistry*, Lambert's *Practical Anatomy and Physiology*, Lardner's *Astronomy and Physics*, Chambers's *Elements of Zoölogy*, Milne-Edwards's *Elémens de Zoölogy*, Cuvier's *Le Règne Animal*, Redfield's *Zoölogy*, Herschel's *Outlines of Astronomy*, Laplace's *Système du Monde*, Dalton's *Human Physiology*, Peaslee's *Human Histology*,

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His thoughtful manner of self-study is indicated by his passing remarks anent his studies in the languages and in classic literature. Speaking of language he says: "It is the objective correlative to the subjective reason or mind"; and in speaking of the origin of languages we have this: "The similarities of languages do not prove that they all sprang from one primitive dialect." These remarks are indicative of his mental alertness in grasping significant points in his studies. But here is something that is distinctly self-revealing. He has procured a copy of Rawlinson's Herodotus containing the discoveries revealed by the cuneiform writings, and he is jubilant: "Just the thing," he says, "to read with Grote! How blest I am to learn such things before college! What a treasure to the mind is a critical and extensive acquaintance with ancient history! Grote is a philosopher; he lays open the Hellenic mind and traces beautiful thoughts and lovely guesses on every

Wilson's *Human Anatomy*, Duglison's *Human Physiology*, Gray's *Structural and Systematic Botany*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Vestiges of the *Natural History of Creation*, Viery's *Philosophie de l'Histoire Naturelle*, Ampère's *Sur la Philosophie des Sciences*, Thompson's *Inorganic Chemistry*, Williams's *Principles of Medicine*.

In years to come, we are to see him discussing questions of the highest philosophic import growing out of the interrelations between the physiological and the psychological forces in the human organism. We may marvel at his ready command of the varied scientific knowledge involved in the discussions. We should note here, therefore, that in this self-directed scientific study and reading of this early period, we have the beginning of his scientific acquisitions; and the thing to be particularly noted is the fundamental character and the high quality of these acquisitions.

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page. His chapter on Socrates is perfectly enrapturing."¹

John's preparation for Harvard was completed at Cambridge; but before entering upon that very interesting phase of his preparatory work, we must stop to note quite another phase in his life in Middletown during the year 1859 and the early part of 1860 from that of the preparatory student we have been considering.

We have seen that during the latter half of 1858 he was greatly interested in ancient history as portrayed by Rollin and by Grote, and also in the development of the physical universe as presented by Humboldt. During these months, therefore, while all this preparation, first for Yale, and then for Harvard, was going forward, questions of the highest import in religion and philosophy were engaging his mind.

Humboldt's "Cosmos" was one of the really great works of the middle period of the last century. Its encyclopædic learning, its lucid arrangement of subject-matter, its eminent fairness on controverted points, and its entire freedom from dogmatic presuppositions gave it the character of an impartial textbook of physical science; while its record of wide and rare personal experiences, all given in a graphic, easy-flowing style, secured for it a wide circulation among fair-minded readers throughout the world. It was a masterly summing-up of the

¹ See Grote on Fiske, *post*, p. 312.

Humboldt and Grote

results of cosmic science, a presentation of the cosmic universe as "that which is ever growing and unfolding in new forms," and it came as a significant preparation for the doctrine of Evolution which was soon to follow.

John read this work with deep interest, and he could not but contrast the physical universe as presented by Humboldt accompanied by positive, scientific verifications, with the wholly different presentation given by dogmatic theology without any scientific verifications whatever. His questioning of the theological dogmas as the embodiment of all ultimate truth had its origin, therefore, in 1858 when he was reading Humboldt's great work contemporaneously with Grote's "History of Greece."¹

This questioning once started in Fiske's mind could not be suppressed; the more he investigated and reflected, the greater seemed the variance between the positive, verifiable truths of science and the unverifiable claims of theology. And his historical reading perplexed him still more. Early in 1859 he took up Gibbon's "History of Rome," and Gibbon's fifteenth and sixteenth chapters in addition to Grote's portrayal of Hellenic civilization led him seriously to question the credibility of much of the Biblical history. The points of contrast between the Hellenic and the Jewish civilizations were great and showed much in favor of the former

¹ See *ante*, pp. 84, 88.

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over the latter. If dogmatic theology was true, then the whole Hellenic civilization was foolishness, and its great exemplars, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, were expiating for misspent lives in Hell.

John's reason was staggered with such a confrontation, and he reveals himself during the early part of 1859 as in a greatly perturbed state of mind over his religious questioning and as earnestly seeking light. He was greatly encouraged in his search for truth by contact with two congenial minds — the Reverend John Langdon Dudley, pastor of the South Congregational Church, Middletown, and his student friend, George Litch Roberts.

Mr. Dudley, although the pastor of an orthodox Congregational church, was a clergyman of exceedingly liberal views for the time. In philosophic thought he was a sort of Fichtean Emersonian Transcendentalist, who was endeavoring to find points of agreement between the assumptions of Christian theology and the claims of the Transcendentalists of the innate existence in the consciousness of man of the Divine Immanence that makes for righteousness. Mr. Dudley was cheerily optimistic in his religious faith and saw the good in life. He was a great comfort to John at this time, for he had a sympathetic, appreciative feeling for the experience through which the latter was passing. We shall meet with him in years to come.

Young Roberts, as we have seen, had all of John's ardor for knowledge. He was also animated with a

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spirit of free inquiry, to such an extent that he did not acknowledge any subject as too sacred for the fullest investigation in the light of reason; in brief, he possessed the true critical spirit with perfect frankness in self-expression. John and Roberts were much together in their church relations as well as in their musical diversions; they also took long walks together discussing the subjects uppermost in their minds; and as their philosophico-religious interests broadened they grew into a close intellectual relationship which was stimulating and helpful to both.

John had another friend in Middletown who aided him much in his studies and his reading and for whom he always cherished a kind remembrance — Joseph Whitcomb Ellis. Mr. Ellis was an alumnus of Wesleyan University, and at this time he was a teacher of mathematics in the Middletown High School. He was a good mathematician, and was well read in science. He had a choice library which contained the mathematical works of Lagrange, Laplace, Goss, and Peirce; as well as representative works in science and philosophy. Mr. Ellis was a liberal-minded Swedenborgian in his belief, and to encourage John in his pursuit of knowledge he gave him the free use of his library — a kindness which was greatly appreciated.

It was in many ways unfortunate that at this period of his religious questioning John should have had dogmatic Christianity preached to him in

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its most repulsive form. His pastor at the North Church, Middletown, the Reverend Jeremiah Taylor, D.D., was in no sense a learned man, either in history or in Biblical criticism, much less in science. His sermons, therefore, partook of vigorous assertions of the divinity of dogma, combined with ignorant condemnations of the recent advancements in science and in Biblical criticism. These advancements in knowledge he alleged were only fresh devices of Satan to discredit the religion of Christ divinely revealed in the Bible.

John's fairness of mind is shown at this point. He was not ready to give up his Christian belief without investigation; and so we find him reading, in addition to a very broad course in science and history, such works in sound orthodoxy as Hugh Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks," Walker's "God Revealed in the Creation and in Christ," Walker's "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation," Wayland's "Intellectual Philosophy," Isaac Taylor's "The World of Mind," Edwards on "The Will," Hickok's "Rational Psychology," Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," Hopkins's and Alexander's "Evidences of Christianity," Alford's "Prolegomena to the Gospels," Campbell and Douglas on "Miracles," Watson's "Reply to Gibbon and Paine," and Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural" — the last then regarded as a masterpiece in the defence of Christian theology.

In his investigations John's mind appears to have

Influence of Buckle

been centred on the Christian dogmas as a whole — on the theologic claim that they presented a completely rounded philosophical system of all existences; and it further appears that he early became impressed with the conviction that the defenders of these dogmas almost wholly ignored science, and rested their defences mainly on assumptions rather than on positive verifications. In regard to Bushnell's work he writes, a little later, "The rhetorical work of Bushnell, with its total ignorance of physical science, did more to shake my faith than anything else."

It was while thus investigating for ultimate truth — in May, 1859 — that Roberts brought him the first volume of Buckle's "History of Civilization in England." Few books published during the last century made such a stirring of philosophic and religious thought as this. Its laudation of science over metaphysics, its proclamation of the superiority of external or natural forces over internal or subjective forces in the development of civilization, its bold grappling with many accepted philosophic conclusions and religious beliefs, and its great display of learning, — all presented in a vigorous, attractive style, — fairly took by storm the unsettled condition of philosophic thought of sixty years ago, and set serious-minded thinkers to a careful reëvisagement of the philosophic verities that underlie human well-being. The book made a profound impression on the public mind, and the discussion it

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called forth was an interesting prelude to the far deeper philosophic discussion which came, a little later, with the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species," with its philosophic complement, Herbert Spencer's theory of Evolution.

Fiske fairly devoured Buckle. The book stirred his thought to the uttermost. His own reading gave him great equipoise in weighing Buckle's arguments. In Buckle's main contentions he found much to dissent from as well as much to agree with. He finished the volume with a greatly clarified mind and with the conviction that it was "a great and noble book, written by a great and noble man."

Later thought has somewhat lessened the value of Buckle's contribution to the great discussion of which it was the forerunner. It had an immediate effect upon Fiske's mind, however, in two directions. In the first place, it led him to focus his thought upon the important part played by nature in the development of civilized man, and upon the need of a philosophy which should present the objective world of phenomena as revealed by science and the subjective world of human consciousness as revealed by civilization in harmony with some universal principle which could absorb both in unity or purpose. In the second place, it was the culminating influence which completely freed his mind from bondage to dogmatic theology. Two years later we are to see him writing an article on Buckle which

Abandons Dogmatic Christianity

stands to-day among the best judgments upon this eminent thinker that have been published.

It was no easy matter for John to break away from the religious faith in which he had been bred, and which he had himself embraced in full credence of its Divine origin and character. Granting its assumptions, dogmatic theology gave the Christian believer something veritable to tie to. Denial of its Divine origin and character left the mind apparently without a positive hitching-post in the vast swirl of cosmic phenomena. That John fully realized the significance of the change, and that the breaking-away was attended with distress of mind, the letters bear witness. In this hour of trial he could not appeal to his mother or to his grandmother. They could not understand him. He could turn for sympathy only to his friend Roberts, who was passing through a similar experience; and both found comfort and encouragement in their broad-minded friend Dudley.

By midsummer Fiske's abandonment of dogmatic Christianity was complete, and the following remark in a letter to his mother in July is indicative of what was passing in his mind: —

“I must not try to write about the Trinity in a letter: I will tell you what I think about it when you come. If the system is true, orthodoxy, Unitarianism, and Swedenborgianism are alike false.”

His mother came to see him shortly after, and he opened his mind to her in regard to his change of

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religious views freely and frankly. He pointed out how unphilosophical and how unreasonable the orthodox scheme of theology appeared to him as a basis for religious faith; that the existence of a personal, triune Godhead as the first Great Cause and as a Divine Ruler was an anthropomorphic assumption; that the Mosaic cosmogony by which a universe was created by fiat out of nothing was unthinkable; that the creation of man — also by fiat — as a perfect being was opposed to all the teachings of science; that man's temptation, fall, and redemption through Christ had no valid historic verification; while the existence of a veritable Heaven and Hell, where the Divine Ruler eternally rewarded or punished mankind for its *belief* or *non-belief* in Him, had no justifiable basis in reason or experience. He assured her that with no honesty or sincerity of heart could he any longer believe in a religion based on such foundations — a religion which made such a monster of God and held such a frightful doom over the greater portion of the human race, a doom which included some of the noblest characters that have ever lived.

His mother could neither say nor do anything to oppose him. She found comfort, however, in his assurance that he regarded atheism as more unreasonable and unthinkable than dogmatic theology, and in the fact that his ideals of moral conduct were heightened, while his desire to prepare himself for service through a thorough course of col-

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lege training showed no abatement whatever. Realizing, therefore, that if he was in error, he could be convinced of the fact only through his own experience, she let him go forward; but, grievously for him, without her sympathy or understanding.

Resuming John's personal experiences in Middletown, we find that during the latter part of 1859 the change in his religious views began to have effect upon his religious conduct. He no longer believed in the orthodox theology or the religious faith based on that theology. Out of filial regard for his grandmother he had retained his connection with the North Congregational Church, where he had to listen to such presentations of religious truth by Dr. Taylor as this:—

“But at this point of the discussion a scene bursts upon my vision: it is from the depths of eternity. A multitude of holy angels enter singing ‘Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty’—but the scene changes. Envy enters into the breast of the mightiest of that angel host. He asserts his dominion against the Father. Consternation reigns in Heaven; but Christ sent by Jehovah hurls in holy wrath and Godlike vengeance that rebel host to hell,” etc.

Such crude expositions of “Divine truth” outraged all John's religious nature, and we can easily understand his indignant outburst in giving his mother an account of the sermon: “I wished some one had pitched him out of the pulpit in the same way.”

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Dr. Taylor's sermons reflected the religious unrest of the time and abounded with ignorant prejudice against what was termed "scientific infidelity," as well as with bitter invective against the rising school of "scientific infidels" who would discredit God's inspired messages to man.

John could not endure such preaching. He began to absent himself from the communion service, and finally he withdrew from church attendance altogether. He felt that with his disbelief in the Christian dogmas it was pure hypocrisy to appear as their supporter. He was supported by his friend Roberts. They acted together, and it soon became current throughout the town that young Fiske and Roberts, the two brightest young minds and the two most exemplary young men in the North Church, had turned infidels.

In a conservative, orthodox community like Middletown of fifty years ago, to be called an infidel was one of the severest terms of social reproach. There was charity for the moral delinquent, and even for the burglar, for they might be reclaimed by subscribing to the dogmatic orthodox creed; but for the infidel, the disbeliever in the creed itself, one who boldly denied the inspiration of the Bible and the Divinity of Christ, he had no title whatever to social recognition; he was to be regarded, in fact, as the foe of all social and religious order; and all the more dangerous if well educated and of unexceptionable moral character.

Social Ostracism

John's pastor, Dr. Taylor, was greatly exercised at the outbreak of such a virulent form of heresy under his own preaching. He felt it not only a scandal to the orthodox Christian faith, but also an imputation upon his own faithfulness in presenting the dogmatic foundations of that faith. He must bestir himself. He called upon Mrs. Lewis, John's grandmother, to get more light upon the cause of John's "backsliding." This true Christian woman, firm in her belief that moral conduct is the real test of religious character, stoutly maintained that John could not be an infidel. "Why," said she, "he never did a bad thing in his life; and then, he is such a faithful student." "Yes," said Dr. Taylor, "that makes him all the worse. He does not believe in the inspiration of the Bible nor in the Divinity of Christ; and he has given up the church." Still she maintained he could not be an infidel; and in the innocence of her heart she took Dr. Taylor into John's library to see the fine collection of books he had got together, all of which she knew he had read.

Alas, to the heresy-hunter the exhibit was too conclusive! There side by side with books of sound orthodoxy were many ancient classics, and the works of Humboldt, Voltaire, Lewes, Fichte, Schlegel, Buckle, Cuvier, Laplace, Milne-Edwards, De Quincey, Theodore Parker, Strauss, Comte, Grote, Gibbon, and John Stuart Mill. Dr. Taylor had no praise to bestow upon such a collection of books in the hands of his young parishioner; and in

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response to the inquiry as to what he thought of them, he could only shake his head.

Shortly after, Dr. Taylor had an interview with John himself. John frankly stated his views in regard to the inspiration of the Bible and in regard to creation and the Divinity of Christ, with the reasons therefor. He also stated that to his mind the dogmatic presentation of God was belittling and vulgar, when compared with the conception of a Divine Creator and Sustainer which reason, informed by science, must postulate as the Ultimate Source of all things. Dr. Taylor was not equipped for parishional service against such views. He could only condemn them as rank infidelity. John then said: "You see where I stand. Why not expel me from the church?" Dr. Taylor replied: "That we cannot do unless you commit some gross act of immorality." "That," said John, "I pray God I may never do." Dr. Taylor then asked: "How do you explain your conversion?" John replied: "You will find that accounted for in Esquirol's 'Des Maladies Mentales.'"

Finding that John was not to be brought back to the church by any means at his command, Dr. Taylor resorted to the course usually pursued in such cases by clergymen with narrow minds. He began to decry John in the most unjust manner. There was hardly any epithet too opprobrious to apply to him. He was an atheist, an infidel, a blasphemer, a hypocrite, an immoral person, and

A Religious Storm-Centre

finally he was a Unitarian.¹ As a result, this modest, scholarly youth found himself a religious storm-centre, as it were, in the orthodox community of Middletown, which swept reason, justice, and even common courtesy entirely out of consideration. Worst of all, it brought great distress of mind to his grandmother. At the church gatherings she was subjected to expressions of sympathy, made personally poignant by being accompanied by reflections upon the base conduct of John in turning against all the precepts of his Christian training. With his whole life before her as an open book, wherein on every page was written his dutiful consideration for others as well as his faithfulness to his studies, she could not understand how it was possible for him to become such a moral reprobate as Dr. Taylor had pronounced him to be.

In her sore perplexity she went to John and asked him if it was true that he did not believe in the Bible and in the Divinity of Christ. He told her that in the way in which the Church and Dr. Taylor presented the Bible and Christ he did not believe, but that in a far higher and nobler interpretation of

¹ I have never been able fully to understand just why it was that in orthodox communities of fifty years ago the name "Unitarian" had such an opprobrious signification. I recall that about this period I was visiting, in Western New York, the family of a Presbyterian deacon. The deacon's wife, a most estimable woman, told me, as a Bostonian, that during her girlhood she lived in Boston; and then, with much seriousness, she added: "I then attended Dr. Channing's church. I have since deeply repented; but I don't think it ever did me any harm."

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them he did believe. And then, as patiently and as simply as possible, he tried to explain to her his conviction that the Bible, although containing much of error and superstition, was still the greatest of books; that the real Jesus of history, although perverted to men's minds by the Christ of dogma, was still the noblest character that ever lived; while over all was a Divine Creator and Ruler, of whose wisdom, goodness, and power the human mind can form no adequate conception.

Accustomed to regard the positive, dogmatic assumptions which formed the basis of her religious faith as divinely inspired messages to man, the dear old lady could hardly grasp the implications or the meaning of this purer, more abstract faith; but she found comfort in John's assurance that his belief in a Divine Creator, "Who doeth all things well," and in upright conduct as the imperative condition for fulness of life, was stronger than ever.

Another incident in John's Middletown experience should be given, as it shows that at this early stage he was getting his mental acquisitions into order for effective use either in argument or for lucid exposition.

There was living in or near Middletown a retired orthodox clergyman, the Reverend Jonathan Ebenzar Barnes, D.D. Dr. Barnes was a contributor to religious magazines, and had published one or more articles in the "New Englander," then a distinctly representative organ of dogmatic theology,

Controversy with Dr. Barnes

especially in its philosophic bearings or implications. Dr. Barnes had much local reputation as a scholar, and occasionally prepared students for college. His orthodoxy was sound. He knew John as a youth of good family and of studious habits. He had heard of his heretical opinions and of his withdrawal from the North Church. Out of his Christian feeling, he wrote John a friendly letter, in which, as an older scholar and a student of philosophy, he offered by correspondence to guide his steps through the "specious" mazes of the "Positive Philosophy" then current, to the goal he felt sure he would ultimately reach, "Christ and Him crucified," as the ultimate truth of all philosophy.

John was somewhat piqued at the tone of this letter, notwithstanding the evident good intention of the writer. Its quiet assumption that all knowledge, all philosophy outside of Christian theology was foolishness; and that he, in his eagerness for knowledge, owing to his extreme youth, was greatly in need of a friendly Christian adviser seemed slightly too presumptuous. Then, too, it would appear that John welcomed the receipt of this letter as a fitting opportunity to defend his heretical opinions. Accordingly, in answering Dr. Barnes, he not only stated his reasons for giving up the orthodox Christian faith, he also challenged Dr. Barnes to the defence of that faith. The letter is too long for insertion here. It was a remarkable production for a youth who had but just turned his

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eighteenth year. Its points may be summarized as follows: —

First. His faith was *not* shaken by the “specious” philosophy of the “Positivists”; he was convinced of the insufficiency of the “evidences” of Christianity long before he knew what “Positivism” was.

Second. He considers the “internal evidences” of Christianity as presented by its supporters, including the originality of its doctrines; the unique character of Jesus and its ethics. These points he analyzes with great clearness and impartiality, and he finds no satisfaction in them.

Third. He next considers the “external evidences,” the miracles, the prophecies, the historic record in the different books of the Bible; the argument from existing institutions and from the rapid spread of Christianity. He applies to the evidences adduced on these points the canons of logic and historic criticism and finds that they do not stand the test.

Fourth. He interrogates metaphysics, but does not find much to rest upon in “Kant’s negations or Fichte’s beautiful dreams,” or anything of the kind he touched. The metaphysicians appear to have neglected or ignored science, and to have established a cosmogony of their own in place of the well-established truths of science.

Fifth. He interrogates science. Here he finds rest; for in the verifiable phenomena of the universe he finds a revelation of its Divine Creator, written in hieroglyphics — the sacred language which science is daily translating into the dialects of mankind.

Controversy with Dr. Barnes

The letter closed with this quotation from the early philosopher Thales: —

“ Πάντα πληρῆ θεοῦ.”

All things are full of God.

Dr. Barnes acknowledged the receipt of the letter and expressed himself as pleased at the evidences it gave of John's "industry." He promised a full reply later. That reply never came.¹

From contemporary evidence and from the fact that John's mind was too well balanced to accept any negative philosophy, it appears that at this time the ultimate problem of philosophy as the quest of reason, had shaped itself in his mind substantially as follows: —

- I. Granting the existence of the world of subjective phenomena as revealed in individual consciousness and as objectified in the various elements and phases of man's civilization;

¹ During this period — that is, the year 1859 and the first quarter of 1860 — of active searching for a new base for philosophic thinking we have John's record of reading the following works in addition to the works named on page 106: Grote's *History of Greece*, the last six volumes; Arnold's *History of Rome*, and also his *Later Roman Commonwealth*; Merivale's *History of the Romans*, Gibbon's *History of Rome*, Guyot's *Earth and Man*, Coleridge's *Religious Musings*, Bayne's *Essays*, Upham's *Mental Philosophy*, Ferrier's *Institutes of Metaphysic*, Schlegel's *Philosophy of History*, also his *Philosophy of Life*; Finlay's *Greece under the Romans*, Hallam's *Middle Ages*, Thompson's *Outlines of the Laws of Thought*, Fichte's *Nature of the Scholar*, and *The Destination of Man*; Hume's *History of England*, De Quincey's *Philosophical Writers*, several volumes of sermons and addresses by Theodore Parker, Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, and *Past and Present*; Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, Paine's *Age of Reason*, Max Müller's *Survey of Languages*,

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- II. Granting the existence of the universe of objective phenomena as verified to human consciousness or mind through experience;
- III. Granting that the human mind has never been able to penetrate with any verifiable experience the causal mystery that enshrouds the world of subjective, and the universe of objective, phenomena, and their interrelations;
- IV. Granting that the creation or emanation of these two orders of phenomena out of nothing is an unthinkable proposition to the reasoning mind;
- V. What, then, as the very basis of philosophic thinking, must the rational mind postulate as the Ultimate First Cause back of all phenomena; and what must be its method of manifestation or revelation to the human mind?

To the solution of this problem John's intellectual powers were now fully roused, and he took up its solution as a quest for a higher and purer philosophic religious faith than he had known. This quest he took up at this early period with as sincere and lofty a devotion as ever animated knight of the Holy Grail; and it was pursued, in addition to his collegiate and legal studies and his subsequent literary work, without any intermission for the ensuing fifteen years, forming, as it were, a background to

Vie de Voltaire, par Condorcet; Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, Whately's *Elements of Logic*, Mills's *System of Logic*, Wallon's *Histoire de l'esclavage Ancienne*, Rousseau's *Confessions*, Comte's *Philosophy of Mathematics*, Newman's *History of the Hebrew Monarchy*, De Wette's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought*, Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*.

Social Ostracism

his intellectual life during this period. The ground he covered in this quest was immense, and his method of investigation, as we shall see, was remarkable for its fair-mindedness as well as its breadth; and it was an investigation which brought him to some ultimate philosophical conclusions which he embodied in his "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," published in 1874 — one of the most important philosophical works of the last century.

Meantime, while all this deep study was going forward and all this high thinking was taking shape in John's mind, his life in Middletown was most unhappy. Socially he was practically ostracized from homes where he had formerly been cordially welcomed. On the street he was shunned by his acquaintances, and was pointed at as the "Infidel of the North Church," while in his own home at his grandmother's, where all his life he had received affection and encouragement in his studies, he was not at all understood and consequently was without sympathy in his high purpose. His letters bear witness to his great mental perturbation and to the "dull and sunless days" through which he passed; and in the midst of it all he plaintively appealed to his mother to let him get out of Middletown, and be freed from the atmosphere of ignorance and religious intolerance which had such a depressing influence upon his mind.

His mother granted his request, and on the 18th of May, 1860, he left Middletown to prepare for his

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collegiate life at Cambridge under more congenial surroundings. He left with a saddened heart; for he could not forget that back of the persecutions of the past few months all the tender recollections of his boyhood and youth were indissolubly linked with the dear old town.

Just forty years after, Middletown celebrated the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of her civic existence. She chose for her orator on this memorable occasion the most eminent of American historians and one of the profoundest thinkers of the time, proud in the consciousness that during the period of his boyhood and his youth he too had trod her pavements: he too had breathed her air.¹

¹ Longfellow's poem "Nüremberg" contains his beautiful tribute to Albrecht Dürer, as "the Evangelist of Art." In this tribute occurs the following line:—

"That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air."

In borrowing the sentiment of this line, I have made some slight verbal changes in it, to fit the time conditions of the narrative as well as change of person.

CHAPTER VII

BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE

1860

YOUNG Fiske arrived in Boston Friday afternoon, May 18, 1860, and immediately went out to the home of Mr. J. G. Bradford in the suburban town of Quincy, by whom it had been arranged he should be definitely prepared for the Harvard examinations to be held the last of August.

Fiske's first interview with Mr. Bradford revealed the fact that the latter entirely misunderstood what was desired. He supposed that Fiske was to be prepared for the freshman entrance at Harvard. When he found that a preparation for sophomore — and possibly junior — entrance was desired, he frankly said he was not qualified to give such a preparation; and he advised Fiske to seek a tutor acquainted with the requirements of the sophomore and junior examinations.

And thus, far from home and among strangers, young Fiske found himself at the outset of his new life thrown upon his own resources to meet a rather embarrassing situation.

The eminence of Mr. Stoughton at the New York Bar had given him a wide acquaintance with the leading attorneys and jurists of the country, and the

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charming personality of Mrs. Stoughton had added to this professional acquaintance social relations of the highest character. In Boston, Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, formerly Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and greatly honored for his dissenting opinion in the famous Dred Scott case, one of the most important cases ever brought before the Supreme Court, was the warm personal friend of both Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton — in fact, the two families were socially intimate. Since his retirement from the Supreme Bench, Judge Curtis had resumed active practice, and was at this time the most distinguished member of the Boston Bar. In his practice he had associated with himself his brother, George Ticknor Curtis.

Fiske in his perplexity bethought himself to apply to Judge Curtis for counsel. Accordingly, the next morning he found his way to Judge Curtis's office. He was received by George Ticknor Curtis, whom he describes as "a very stiff man, but quite good-hearted," who told him that the Judge was out of town for the day and advised him to pack up his things in Quincy, and to see the Judge in the evening. In the evening he called on Judge Curtis at his home, 32 Hancock Street, Boston, and what followed is best told in Fiske's own words in his first letter to his mother written the following Monday: —

"I found the Judge's house easily. Delightful man — received me with the kindest of welcomes,

Consults Judge Curtis

and urged me to stay at his house. I declined at first, but as he urged me warmly I stayed. He introduced me to his nephew Greenough, a freshman, and to his daughters — the eldest, Miss Bessie, is a lovely girl. I felt at once perfectly at home with the family. Sunday morning I went to church with them at Kings Chapel — a Unitarian church retaining a part of the Episcopal service. I heard a Unitarian minister but no one could tell the difference. I supposed he was an Episcopalian until Miss Minnie (who is Miss Curtis number two) informed me. After church Miss Minnie and I took a walk to see the common and the mill-dam. In the afternoon I went to church with Miss Minnie. After church the Judge invited me to take a walk with him — we went to Long Wharf and to Faneuil Hall. The evening I spent talking about philology with Miss Bessie; she knows something of Latin, Italian, French, and German, and she delights in such studies.

“This morning the Judge very kindly went to Cambridge with me, and leaving me with Greenough to look at rooms, he called on President Felton to find a tutor for me. Meanwhile I examined the rooms in the house where Greenough was, and I engaged a study room for the summer at somewhere about twenty dollars. The room is one of the pleasantest in Cambridge and in full sight of the college. There is no table connected with it, but board can be had for from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per week. The Judge said on returning I could do no better, that is why I took the room. The Judge found a tutor, a resident graduate, named Bates, highly recommended by Felton. His terms are enormous — two

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hours a day at \$1.00 per hour; that will come to \$172.00 by Sept. 1st. It will be more than my tuition in college for the whole two years. I made no engagement with Bates but said I would call on Friday, at 12 o'clock. I did not like to make such a stupendous bargain without consulting you.

I returned here to the house of this most enchanting of men. I don't know when I was ever so fascinated by any one. Indeed, harmony and love seem to reign through the whole family. Never before was I treated with such kind attention; and to-morrow, I shall leave for Cambridge in love with all the family, from the Judge, to his representative of four years, who spent Sunday morning playing marbles with me on the carpet."

Fiske began his Cambridge life on Wednesday, May 23, 1860, in a house in Holmes Place kept by "the ancient" Royal Morse. The house was next door to the house which was the birthplace of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Both houses long since gave way to the more imposing buildings of the Harvard Law School. The letters give full particulars of his getting settled for a summer of efficient study.

Mrs. Stoughton readily assented to all John's arrangements and also to the engagement of Bates as tutor, and so on Monday, May 28, 1860, he began his definite preparatory studies. On the advice of both Judge Curtis and his tutor, he gave up the idea of trying for a junior entrance and settled down for the sophomore examination. His preparatory

Visits George Ticknor

reading and studies were not at all exacting for him. They comprised: —

- Reading*: Peirce's "Analytic Geometry."
Smyth's "Differential Calculus."
Thompson's "Inorganic Chemistry."
Reviewing: Latin and Greek Grammar and Composition.
Latin and Greek prose and poetry.
Geometry, algebra, and arithmetic.

Early in June he received a visit from his friend Roberts, who was then balancing in his mind the choice of a profession — teaching or the law. They took counsel with Judge Curtis on this point. The Judge after "drawing Roberts out," strongly advised him to take the law¹ and recommended that he should also consult George Ticknor, the eminent Spanish scholar, who took great pleasure in encouraging young men to lives of professional usefulness. The Judge gave Fiske and Roberts a cordial letter of introduction to Mr. Ticknor. This was an introduction in Boston at that time of the highest social character. Fiske's account of what followed is of much interest: —

"Went up to Mr. Ticknor's study. Most splendid room I was ever in. Mr. Ticknor was most gracious — he advised George to be a lawyer. Then he talked with me — said I had better not get acquainted with the students — 'fast set of fellows'; more, he gave me full permission, 'since I was an

¹ Two years after Roberts entered the office of Judge Curtis.

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earnest scholar,' to come to his library whenever I choose and take away any book whatever which I wanted to read. *Was n't that a great favor?"*

The young men must have made a very favorable impression upon Mr. Ticknor, who was one of the most precise and unimpressionable of men.

Fiske's letters to his mother and to Roberts give full particulars of his activities during this preparatory period. He was delighted with his tutor's method of instruction, and he gave himself unreservedly to it. In addition he read widely and with exceeding thoughtfulness upon the philosophic problems that were working in his mind. We have to note that at an age when most young men would have found themselves pretty heavily taxed to prepare through the summer months for a sophomore entrance at Harvard, he was taking his preparatory work with the greatest ease and giving much the greater part of his time to philosophical studies.

In these studies his friend Roberts went with him hand in hand, so that we have in their correspondence a very high order of self-imposed thinking common to both young men. The few extracts from this correspondence which are to follow will show that, while indulging in the freest thought in religious and philosophic matters, they were as insistent upon upright conduct in all matters pertaining to social life, as are those who maintain that right living can be the product only of certain forms of religious belief.

Settled in Cambridge

Fiske's early Cambridge letters to his mother tell of his delight in getting the choice books from his Middletown library into more congenial surroundings. He has weeded out the less desirable books and has made some additions, so that his library now numbers two hundred and sixty-six volumes, every one of which is identified with a bit of personal experience in his pursuit of knowledge. Conspicuous were a choice selection of the Greek and Latin classics, and a complete edition of the works of Voltaire. Beside these were the works of Gibbon, Grote, Humboldt, Lyell, Darwin, Buckle, Comte, Mill, Spencer, Mackay, Lewes, Lagrange, Donaldson, Emerson, Theodore Parker, and several volumes of Dickens.

He also tells his mother about the adjustment of his furniture and pictures. Over his mantelpiece he has a framed portrait of Humboldt and he has turned his "study table halfway around so as to face the portrait." He has also a portrait of Voltaire in the room. He has seen a full-length statuette of Goethe, which "looks very majestic, in other words very much like Goethe," and he wishes his mother would get it for his room — which she did.

Fiske's Saturdays were usually spent in "mousing among the book-shops in Boston," not only to keep in touch with the new books along his chosen lines of study, but also to see and handle any new or fine edition of a favorite author. He had a great fondness for fine editions of good books, — not

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éditions-de-luxe, but serviceable editions with good print and margins and substantial bindings. To him a good book was far more than a material object, far more than a product of mechanical processes. It was the latter into which had been breathed, as it were, a human soul. His tender regard for good books grew out of his reverent feeling towards them as distinct embodiments of man's spiritual nature.

In a letter to his mother of June 17, 1860; he tells of a visit to the book-store of Little, Brown & Company¹ and in speaking of the interesting books he saw there, he says: —

“I saw the works of all the English Positivists — they comprise some of the first men of the century: —

John Stuart Mill — his works	{	Logic, 2 vols. Political Economy, 2 vols. Philosophical Writings, 2 vols.
George Henry Lewes — “ “	{	Seaside Studies. Exposition of Comte. History of Philosophy. Life of Goethe.
George Grote — “ “	{	Physiology of Common Life.
Henry T. Buckle — “ “	{	History of Greece, 12 vols. Civilization in England.
Sir John Herschel — “ “	{	Outlines of Astronomy. Natural Philosophy. Essays.
Herbert Spencer — “ “	{	Principles of Psychology. Social Statics.
Alexander Bain — “ “	{	Senses and the Intellect. Emotions and the Will.

¹ Little, Brown & Company's book-store and publishing house was at 112 Washington Street, and the firm was famous throughout the country for choice editions of standard English works.

Interest in Positivism

Robert W. Mackay — his works	{	Progress of the Intellect.
		Progress of Christianity.
Charles Darwin — “ “		The Origin of Species.
Sir Charles Lyell — “ “	{	Works on Geology. The
		greatest living geologist.

“In Germany, to omit lesser names, the Positivists enumerate among their number that of Humboldt and also Ehrenberg — probably the first living zoölogist. In France there is Comte himself,¹ Robin the first anatomist, Littré and Bérard and Pouchet, three of the greatest physiologists, and Verdeil, perhaps the greatest chemist. So it seems at present all departments of science are under the control of Positivism. What does it mean? No previous instance in the history of thought can be found of so many great thinkers uniting under the same standard. I did n't know but you might like to know who the great men are to whose school I belong.”

This extract is of interest, not only as showing the wide range of Fiske's thought at this time, but also as reflecting somewhat the confusion which prevailed in the scientifico-philosophic thought of the period. The philosophic speculations of Auguste Comte were, during the middle period of the century, much in evidence, and were presented with some original and striking suggestions regarding the progressive development of human knowledge. Furthermore, it being claimed that these speculations were based on positive science, and as scientific investigations in various directions were opening lines

¹ Comte was not then living, — he died in 1857.

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of thought in direct opposition to established religious and philosophic beliefs, there was much confusion of thought in the general situation, with a very prevalent disposition to regard the advancements in science as in harmony, if not identified, with the claims of the Positive Philosophy of Comte. In fact, the Comtean philosophy was credited with too much on the one hand, while science was debited with too much on the other hand. It was a false kind of double-entry. It appears that at this time Fiske was more or less in sympathy with the Comtean philosophy. He had studied the Positive Philosophy of Comte with great interest and much care. It does not appear that he had given much, if any, attention to the later sociological vagaries of Comte. In the years to come, we are to see him battling vigorously to defend the doctrine of Evolution — which was charged with Comtean characteristics — against any affiliations with the Comtean philosophy.

In the latter part of June, on one of the Saturday excursions to Boston referred to, Fiske found in the "Old Corner Book-Store" of Ticknor & Fields, the original prospectus of Herbert Spencer's system of philosophy, the publication of which, in quarterly numbers, to be sold by subscription, was announced. In view of what is to follow in the development of Fiske's own mind and in his personal acquaintance with Spencer, the following extracts from the letters are of special interest.

Enthusiasm over Spencer

Writing Roberts under date of June 24, 1860, he says: —

“Oh, George, my soul is on fire! (to use a favorite expression of Horace), for Herbert Spencer is about to execute a gigantic series of Positive books on which he has been at work for years. I will try to get you a printed notice of them before sending this. He cannot finish them unless he gets subscribers enough to sustain him. My name goes down tomorrow — subscription only \$2.50 per year. There will be about ten volumes comprising Organic Nature. There is Biology, Psychology, Sociology, and Morality. Language comes in, too, and the ‘Religion of Science’ will also be treated. George, if I were you, I would put down my name, for every one counts. Mill’s name is down, so is Herschel’s besides Buckle, Lewes, Grote, Mackay, Newman, Froude, Darwin, Lyell, Hooker, Carpenter, Bain, De Morgan, Lieveking, Morell, and many others whom I do not think of.”

Writing the same day to his mother he expresses his enthusiasm over Spencer’s undertaking thus: —

“I will try to get you a notice of Herbert Spencer’s gigantic series of works—a perfect library of Positivism. You will see all about them in the notice. I hope Mr. Stoughton will subscribe. I consider it my duty to mankind as a Positivist to subscribe; and if I had \$2,000,000 I would lay \$1,000,000 at Mr. Spencer’s feet to help him execute this great work.”

Little did he dream in these moments of exultation over this announcement of Spencer’s great

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work that in the years to come he was to be brought into close personal relations with him in the working-out of the latter's philosophic system; and also to become the chief interpreter of its spiritual implications.

The letters, and particularly those to Roberts, show not only great mental activity outside of his preparatory studies; they also show the wide range of his interests under his new surroundings. In the letter of June 24, which contains the above reference to Spencer's undertaking, there is the following passage: —

“I am slamming into German and find ‘Kosmos’ much easier than Lessing. If you ever get ‘Kosmos’ get the German edition. It is splendid, but the translation murders it. I am reading Boccaccio and I find I have stumbled on one of the hardest authors next to Guicciardini. Machiavelli is one of the easiest Italian authors, he is so clear and precise. In Spanish I am reading Navarrete's ‘Veda’ Cervantes prefixed to his edition of ‘Don Quixote.’ The second volume of Lewes's ‘Physiology of Common Life’ is out and he goes into the cerebral part like the devil.”

Fiske is studying Sanskrit and dropping into Confucius, and in a letter of July 8 he says: —

“If you are going to be a lawyer, you will need to learn Sanskrit so as to read the ‘Institutes of Menu.’ Nothing like going to the fountain head. . . . I am reading Confucius, and it is the most infernal piece of nonsense I have got hold of —

Wide Range of Study

neither head nor tail to it. Shape it hath none distinguishable in member, joint, or limb. Though I have read in it for two evenings with praiseworthy diligence, I confess my ignorance of what it is about. The Chinese may understand it; I don't, for my brains are not celestial as theirs are."

And then follows this fine tribute to Humboldt's "Kosmos": —

"Ye Gods: what a book is 'Kosmos.' It is the Epic of the Universe. It would pay to learn German if that were the only book in the language. Every now and then Humboldt quotes some beautiful ode or sonnet of his brother William; e.g.: —

'Wie Gras der Nacht myriaden Welten keimen.'¹

"What a line that is! The entire style of the work is grand and majestic. It is the poem of Positivism; though Peter Bayne says that Positivism chills the poetry in man's nature."

Fiske visited the Harvard Library, and was cordially received by the genial old librarian, Dr. Sibley, whose chief delight was rummaging among old books and papers for the chance of finding a volume or sermon or address not hitherto collected, and Fiske was given free access to the rare books in the library. It is interesting to note that he at once turned to the rare philological works. In an alcove given to philological and Asiatic books he found much to engage his attention. He tells Roberts that there were "books in Sanskrit, Persian, Prakrit,

¹ Like grass of the night myriads of worlds come into being.

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Arabic, Turkish, and all sorts." He itemizes from memory the following: —

"There was W. v. Humboldt's 'Ueber die Kawi-sprache auf der Insel Jawa,' in 3 vols. huge quarto: I am going to read it. They say it is the best philologico-ethnological work out. There was Diez: 'Grammatik der Romanischen Sprachen,' 3 vols.: I am bound to read that; it is the best grammar out, of French, Spanish, Portuguese, Norman Provençal, Italian, and Wallachian. There was Schlegel's 'Etudes sur les langues Asiatiques'; Lassen's 'Institutiones Linguæ Præcriticæ' and 'Indische Alterthumskunde'; Ritter's 'Erdkunde,' about 12 vols.; 'Mahabharata,' 'Ramayana,' and 'Rig Veda' in Sanskrit, bound in red calf. Also Klaproth's 'Asia Polyglotta,' and so many other books that I was driven nearly wild by the sight of them. I tell you your uncle goes into these books like the very devil. No use in being scared. I spend 2½ hours per day on German now, and it is coming by degrees. I shall read it readily by winter. Then I can take out Deiz, and old W. von Humboldt, and Grimm, and cram a deuced lot of philology into my cocoa-nut shell."

Among the subjects uppermost at this time in the minds of Roberts and Fiske was the early history of Christianity, a subject on which both had read widely and thoughtfully. They felt that no true history of this important period in human civilization had yet been written. But light was breaking. German scholarship and historic research had so clearly punctured many of the theologic dogmas of the Christian religion that many minds had begun

Early Christianity

to think rationally on the historic development of Christianity, where they had hitherto accepted what they had been commanded or induced to believe. Nevertheless, there was very little tolerance for rationalistic views on this subject, and we shall see later that among the unfinished projects of Fiske's life — the one that was nearest his heart — was the writing of a popular history of the first five centuries of the Christian era. Bearing on this subject, if not the first suggestion of it, to the mind of Fiske is the following passage in one of the letters of Roberts, apropos of his reading Mackay's "Rise and Progress of Christianity": —

"I wish there was a good edition of the 50 apocryphal Gospels, the 36 apocryphal Acts, and the 12 apocalypses, together with a good critical history of the early Church. It would disabuse the public of their prejudices amazingly. I recommend the work for your consideration."

Fiske spent a Sunday with the family of Judge Curtis, and the Judge and Fiske got into a theologic discussion regarding which Fiske writes: —

"In a respectful way I used the Judge up — cornered him everywhere. The Judge seemed to enjoy it, and appeared puzzled at me. Finally he gave up, beaten, and ordered a bottle of ale and some crackers."

He had a conversation with the Judge about Agassiz, concerning which he reports to Roberts thus: —

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“The Judge can't say that Agassiz is a Christian — only a theist — that's all. I'll tell you a story Agassiz told the Judge about Arago. It seems that Agassiz, Arago, and several other scientific men were dining with the Murchisons. Says Lady Murchison, 'Now, M. Arago, what can be the reason that in France all your men of science, so learned as they are, invariably reject Christianity?' 'Madame,' said Arago rather drily, 'they never give any attention to such matters.' Arago's answer strikes me forcibly as showing how in France Christianity is all a thing of the past.”

The last sentence should be interpreted as referring to the opinion of Christianity among the scientists of France. The high ideals of scholarship held by both Fiske and Roberts is reflected in a passage in a letter of Roberts apropos of a remark by a person in Middletown who knew Fiske but slightly, to the effect that Fiske was somewhat conceited, and that he would get taken down tremendously if he entered Harvard above freshman. Roberts says: —

“I do not think you or any earnest scholar conceited. I would like to know if we both do not deplore our ignorance enough, and see a field broad enough to cure us of complacency at our present attainment.”

Only once during this preparatory period was Fiske interrupted in his studies. About the first of August the hot midsummer weather of Cambridge began to tell upon his physical strength, pushed as it had been in the support of his varied intellectual

Enters Harvard

activity, and he was forced to take a few days' rest at Middletown. On the 10th of August he returned to Cambridge and resumed his studies; and so confident was he of creditably passing the entrance examinations that he engaged his rooms for the ensuing year and set about getting his things in order for an undergraduate three years' life at Harvard.

Thus, with his mind variedly occupied, the summer rapidly passed, and on Thursday, the 30th of August, 1860, Fiske presented himself for examination for the freshman and the sophomore entrances at Harvard.

The examinations lasted three days. They consisted of: —

Written exercises in

Latin Grammar and Composition.

Greek Grammar and Composition.

Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic.

Oral Examinations in

Latin Prose and Poetry.

Greek Prose and Poetry.

Geography and History.

The absence of all requirements in the sciences and in modern languages is noticeable.

Fiske passed both examinations creditably in all subjects, — he was one of six unconditioned, — and at the close he telegraphed Roberts as follows: "Sophomore without conditions. Please promulgate." To his mother he gave a detailed account

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of the examinations; and then he went down to Swampscott and spent Sunday with Judge Curtis and his family, by whom he was most cordially welcomed, and congratulated on the auspicious opening of his college career.

CHAPTER VIII

HARVARD COLLEGE

1860-1863

FROM what we have already seen it appears that young Fiske brought to Harvard a mind well stocked with an exceptional amount of varied, well-arranged knowledge, remarkable powers of application and acquisition, together with high ideals of scholarship and of personal character — in a word, he came fairly as a model student. To trace understandingly his development through the next three years it is essential that we become acquainted with the intellectual and social life that prevailed at Harvard during the period of 1860-1863. This is necessary inasmuch as the more important phases of Fiske's intellectual development took definite shape during this period, and in directions so opposed to the accepted academic thought, and owing to influences so entirely independent of the college, as to relieve us from measuring the student by the college, even if we are not led to some unflattering measure of the college itself.

The freshman and sophomore examinations through which Fiske so easily passed reveal how completely modern science and modern languages — the latter the necessary tools with which to

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master the former — were ignored in the entrance examinations, and even a cursory view of the academic course as a whole shows that at this time Harvard College as an institution of learning was still under the dominance of mediæval ideas of “what knowledge is of the most worth”; and that the great seething, virile thought of the nineteenth century, which was demanding of knowledge verities rather than speculation, which was placing new values on intellectual culture, values based on science and its application to social well-being, had as yet no properly recognized place in its academic course of instruction.

With these facts before us, and as we are tracing the intellectual development of one of the most illustrious of Harvard's alumni, it is well worth while to take a brief glance at the academic course of study and also at the faculty — the governing body of the college — “as they were in themselves” at the time young Fiske was seeking knowledge at their hands. We shall find this diversion of much assistance in tracing our alumnus through his undergraduate experiences.

There were two Presidents of the college during the period — Cornelius Conway Felton and the Reverend Thomas Hill, D.D. For thirty years previous to his presidency, President Felton had been Professor of Greek at the college. He had written upon Greek literature, but he was not distinguished for scholarship. His administration was brief —

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less than two years. President Hill was a Unitarian clergyman. He had been President of Antioch College. He excelled as a mathematician. He was a sincere, devout man; and in the great discussion then opening between Science and Religion, he would have the former held in bondage by the latter. He was not a man of impressive personality, nor was he noted for scholarship or executive ability. He was a very worthy man, but he was singularly out of place as President of Harvard College. Neither incumbent left any marked impress upon the college.

The Classical Department, which comprised instruction in the Greek and Latin languages and literatures, was the best equipped department of the college. It was in charge of three Professors: the Greek, of William W. Goodwin, Ph.D., Eliot Professor of Greek Literature, and Evangelinus A. Sophocles, A.M., University Professor of Ancient, Byzantine, and Modern Greek; the Latin, in charge of George M. Lane, Ph.D., University Professor of Latin. For the Greek, there were two assistant instructors or tutors, and for the Latin, there were four.

While the study of these two languages was required in the first three classes, and was an elective in the senior class, and while a greater teaching force was given to this department than to any other in the college, we have to notice the absence of any adequate provisions for making students

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acquainted with classic history or literature while studying the languages; and classical philology, in the sense in which philology is now understood, does not appear to have been at all considered. One of the most significant points of contrast between the educational ideals of the Harvard academic course in 1860 and that which obtains at present, is shown in the provisions for classical instruction at the two periods.

Of the professors and instructors in this department much that is good can be said. Professor Goodwin was a young man who had studied at Göttingen under the eminent classical scholar Hermann, and he brought to his chair at Harvard a knowledge of the Greek language and literature quite exceptional at the time, as well as an enthusiastic love for the products of the Hellenic mind. The glimpses we get of him during the period under review are highly creditable to his scholarship and also to his influence, which was of an inspiring nature, upon the students. He appears to have been absorbed principally in his own line of work. Technically he was a Greek grammarian, and his influence during the last half-century upon the instruction in Greek at Harvard and throughout the country has been great.

The most distinct personality in the department — if not in the whole college — was Professor Sophocles, who, by reason of his Greek features, his flowing locks, his simple, quaint garb, presented a noticeable appearance. His manners, too, were

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unique — a combination of the courteous gentleman, the scholarly recluse, and the cynic, which caused him as an instructor to appear in various aspects. Many are the incidents related of his severely brusque and unjust treatment of students, partially atoned for by acts of courtesy, which show that a tenderness of heart was as genuine a part of his nature as was his love for his noble language. And he did love his Greek tongue! He seemed to know every Greek word, and its proper use, that has come down to us from the classic period, and his insights into the great masterpieces of Greek literature were the valuable parts of his teaching. He had no patience with indifferent students, but to those who took an interest in the Greek language and literature he was a great help, an inspiration. Often he was unjust in his judgments.¹

Professor Lane was an excellent Latin scholar and he had a fine appreciation of Latin literature.

¹ The following incidents illustrate somewhat Professor Sophocles's manner of dealing with his students: —

A backward student called to explain his remissness and to assure the Professor that he did love his Greek study. "Then name two of your favorite passages," said the Professor. The student named one in the *Iliad* and one in the *Ædipus*. Professor Sophocles then handed him the books, saying, "Find those passages and read them to me." The student, in his reading, revealed serious errors. Said the Professor in his brusque way: "Young man, you do not understand Greek! You have no love for that noble language! You murder it! Enough. I want no more to do with you."

There was much complaint in the class of '63 that the Professor's marks were incorrect, and particularly in the cases of three students who were entitled to widely different marks. On complaint being made, Professor Sophocles replied: "I can't distinguish between you gentlemen. You must take your chances as to what you get."

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Although somewhat reserved in manner he was at heart of a kindly, genial disposition. While firm in his insistence upon the importance of technical drill, he sought to throw students upon their own resources in mastering the grammatical construction of the Latin language and also in interpreting the masterpieces of Latin literature. He was a clear and inspiring lecturer.

The department was fortunate in having as instructor Ephraim W. Gurney, sometime tutor, and later assistant professor in Latin. In the teaching staff of the college no one exercised a more stimulating, healthful influence upon the students than did Mr. Gurney. He was a man of broad culture, with a scholarly love for knowledge — not that of the pedantic sort, but of that knowledge which leadeth unto wisdom. He was an earnest student of the educational, and also the scientific and philosophic, problems of the time. He held his knowledge as a gift for distribution, and his method of teaching was through lending his torch to every one's candle.

It should be mentioned that, although not a feature of the Classical Department, instruction in Hebrew and other Oriental languages was optional to the senior class, the instruction to be given by George R. Noyes, D.D., Professor of these languages in the Divinity School. There does not appear to have been any demand for this instruction among the seniors. We shall see that Fiske, how-

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ever, was prompt to avail himself of it by taking up, as extras, Hebrew and Sanskrit, in his sophomore year.¹

The Department of Mathematics was presided over by Benjamin Peirce, LL.D., Perkins Professor of Astronomy and Mathematics. There were three assistant instructors. Mathematics was a required study during the first two years and was an elective during the junior and senior years.

Professor Peirce was one of the leading astronomers and mathematicians of his time. He had a deeply reverent mind and possessing an active, fertile imagination the heavens were his dwelling-place no less than the surface of our globe. Having crystallized his thought into mathematical formulæ of the widest generality, he explored the vast realms of space and brought forth fresh evidences of the existence throughout the sidereal universe of immutable, ever-unfolding law.

Professor Peirce was one of the most important personalities in the intellectual and social life of the Harvard of his day. His strong features and his flowing locks of iron-gray hair gave him an impressive appearance, and he did not fail to attract attention when strolling through Harvard's classic yard. It was not an infrequent sight to see him and Professor Agassiz strolling through the yard together. His enthusiasm in his own line of work

¹ Fiske read the Bible in Hebrew with Dr. Noyes, who pronounced him the best Hebrew scholar he ever had.

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was great, and his ready command of his vast knowledge, combined with rare powers of exposition, made him an attractive lecturer, and gave to his conversation a peculiar charm. At times, it must be confessed, his enthusiasm in his sidereal excursions led him to soar beyond the grasp of the undergraduate mind. Even in such instances his greatness was fully admitted by his hearers.

Professor Peirce had accepted the theory of Evolution as the Divine order of creation, and in religious belief he was a theist akin to Channing and to Emerson. It may be said that his deep reverence for the Divine Power which he saw back of all the phenomena of the universe was so sincere that no one ventured to measure him with a doctrinal creed. Of him it was truly said:—

“For him the Architect of all
Unroofed our Planet’s star-lit hall.
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.”¹

The Department of History, one of the most important departments of the college, appears to have been sadly neglected. Henry W. Torrey, Professor of Ancient and Modern History, with one assistant, was in charge of the department. The instruction was limited to the freshman and senior classes. Professor Torrey was a very amiable man, but he had not the preparation essential for the head of this department at the college. It appears

¹ Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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that, not unlike Mr. Wegg, he dropped into history "in a friendly sort of way." The character and scope of the instruction shows that the value attached to history in the general academic course was very slight. Better historic instruction is now given in the public high schools.

In the Department of Rhetoric and Oratory, the college tried to hide a really fine scholar and critic in the subordinate position of a literary pedagogue. The department was in charge of Francis J. Child, Ph.D., Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory. Professor Child was an authority on all matters relating to early European, and particularly to early English, literature; and besides, he was one of the best critics of general literature of the day. To Professor Child, with one assistant, was given the task of seeing that in all the classes the students' training in the use of English was consistent with a college course. He went farther. Beyond the formal exercises in grammar and rhetoric, he sought to make students acquainted with the resources of their native language as a vehicle of thought expression, thus lifting mere pedagogic instruction to the higher plane of philologic study. Professor Child was a most genial man. He read his certificate of professorship as an unlimited authorization to lend a helping hand wherever needed, and his life, therefore, was a constant overflow of assistance to students in many directions. In religious belief, he was broad-minded and without creedal limitation.

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He was short of stature and familiarly known by the students as "Stubby" Child, a sobriquet which he made synonymous with rare learning so that it became a veritable title of honor in the undergraduate mind. How Professor Child would have gloried in the provisions that are now given for the study of his noble English tongue at Harvard!

The Department of Modern Languages was under the direction of James Russell Lowell, Smith Professor of the French and Spanish languages, and Professor of Belles-Lettres. He was assisted by two instructors — one in French and one in German. Professor Lowell gave lectures and also personal instruction in Spanish and Italian. The slight value that was then put upon modern languages is shown not only by their absence from the entrance examinations, but also by the fact that in all the college classes their study was optional.

But slight as was the value put upon modern languages and literature in the framing of the college course of study, Professor Lowell made his lectures one of the most valuable, and to some of the students, one of the most attractive, features of the course. He was at the maturity of his rare powers, and his lectures partook of the nature of informal talks. He made them occasions for blending his ripe scholarship, his keen, illuminating criticism, his genial wit, and his profound thought, in a manner wholly his own: in truth, he happily illustrated, in his own case, how "language curtsys to its nat-

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ural king." People familiar with Professor Lowell's "Letters" and "Essays" — particularly his essays on Shakespeare, Dante, Lessing, Don Quixote, and on Modern Languages and Literatures — can readily imagine what intellectual occasions these lectures must have been. Their fame still lingers among the finer traditions of the college.

The provisions for scientific instruction in the academic course were in 1860 very meagre. The fact that the claims of science were entirely ignored in the entrance examinations is indicative of the low estimate that was put upon science as a subject in collegiate education. It appears, however, that its claims had some recognition in the academic course, although the methods of instruction were sadly deficient. There were provisions for instruction in what was designated as three Departments of Science: the Department of Physics; the Department of Chemistry and Mineralogy; the Department of Natural History, Anatomy, and Physiology.

The first of these departments, that of Physics, was in charge of Joseph Lovering, A.M., Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Instruction was given only to the junior and senior classes, wholly by textbook recitations and by illustrated lectures; there does not appear to have been any laboratory work whatever. Professor Lovering was painstaking and precise in all his work.

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He was not an original investigator, but a facile interpreter of the work of others. He was a clear, but not an inspiring, teacher. At a time when the fundamental conceptions of physics were undergoing a radical change it does not appear that he brought any intimation of this fact to the knowledge of his students.

The second of these departments was under the direction of Josiah P. Cooke, A.M., Erving Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy. This department, as a practical feature in the academic course, had been created virtually by Professor Cooke. He was graduated in 1848, when no instruction in chemistry worth speaking of existed at the college. He had, however, much enthusiasm for this branch of science. He saw its great importance in the development of the industrial arts, and he prepared himself, mainly by self-study, to give instruction in it. In 1850 he was appointed to the Erving Professorship and he secured the placing of chemistry as a required study in the sophomore year and as an elective in the junior year — the instruction being by textbooks and lectures. By 1860 he had managed to get together a small equipment of apparatus for laboratory work. The study was still confined to the sophomore and junior classes and the method of instruction continued to be mainly by textbook recitations and lectures: laboratory work was given as an elective in the junior class.

Professor Cooke was an earnest teacher and was

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fertile in devices for utilizing his limited facilities for effective illustrative and laboratory work. It does not appear that in his instruction he paid any attention to the "Correlation and Conservation of Forces," a subject which in 1860 was engaging the thought of the scientific world, and the acceptance of which has been productive of great changes in the fundamental conceptions of chemical and physical phenomena.

Professor Cooke was a deeply religious man, and his lectures were permeated with a sincere desire so to interpret the principles of chemical and physical science that they should appear as but confirmations of the assertions of Christian theology.¹

The third of these scientific departments — that of Natural History, Anatomy, and Physiology — had at this period hardly more than an incidental relation to the academic course. The instruction was mainly by lectures given to the three upper classes. In the junior and senior classes attendance was optional. Incidental as was the instruction in this department, it served to bring some of the

¹ It was the opinion of Fiske, often expressed in later years that "Joby Cooke" — as the Professor was known in the undergraduate life — mixed too much theology with his science for the good of either his science or his theology.

Here it is well to note that in 1860 and 1861 we catch glimpses of a young man reserved in manner, hovering, as it were, between the departments of mathematics and chemistry, positive in his teaching and a member of the faculty, who had already made a strong impression at the college. This was Charles W. Eliot, who, a few years later, as President of the college, was to reconstruct it from its foundations and place it among the great universities of the world.

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students into personal relations with three eminent men of science. These were Asa Gray, M.D., Fisher Professor of Natural History, one of the greatest of living botanists; Louis Agassiz, LL.D., Lawrence Professor of Zoölogy and Geology, one of the world's great zoölogists and geologists; and Jeffreys Wyman, M.D., Hervey Professor of Anatomy, of world-wide reputation as an anatomist.

These eminent instructors were greatly hampered in the presentation of their respective subjects by the absence of adequate facilities for illustrative and laboratory work. Two of them, Professors Agassiz and Gray, figured prominently, as we shall soon see, in the great controversy over the "Origin of Species," a subject which was then engaging the thought of the scientific and religious world. Professor Wyman, although not so conspicuous in the public eye, was an authority in his special subject of anatomy, which he had studied in its relations to all phases of organic life. His personal character was of the highest, and it had a fine, pervasive, ennobling influence in the intellectual life of the college. He was an Evolutionist in his philosophico-religious belief, but he was not disputatious in its advocacy. His life was well summed up by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes: "He suffered long and was kind; he envied not; he vaunted not himself; he was not puffed up; he sought not his own; was not easily provoked; he thought no evil, and rejoiced in the truth."

The Harvard Faculty

In all matters relating to instruction in the sciences, the difference between what obtained at Harvard in 1860, and what obtains now, is simply incalculable.

The Department of Philosophy was in charge of Francis Bowen, A.M., Alford Professor of Religion and Moral Philosophy. The instruction was confined to the senior class. The Department of Philosophy in a college should be the meeting-place where the instruction in the other departments is brought to focus around the ultimate questions of the physical cosmos, the human soul, and the Infinite Power that lies back of both. The wise direction of such a department requires not only a familiar acquaintance with the various departments of human knowledge, but also the possession of the philosophic temper, which enables its possessor to look with equanimity upon all phases of human thinking as adumbrating to some extent the truth regarding the above three questions, the ultimates of all knowledge. Professor Bowen was a Unitarian of the indeterminate religious belief prevailing at the period. He held firmly to the tenets of Christian theology save in regard to the Trinity, a dogma he seems to have ignored; and he sought to interpret the later developments of science as but confirmation of the claims of dogmatic theology. He was bitterly opposed to the doctrine of Evolution in any of its forms, and he found something

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atwist in the arguments of all its advocates. He was not an educated man in science; yet he delivered himself on scientific questions with the air of one who thought his judgment final, and that metaphysical vociferation would prevail over scientific demonstration. Holding an important position at a great epoch in philosophic and religious development, he appears as endeavoring to stifle, rather than as striving to stimulate and direct, the awakening thought of the period. The course of study in this department presents a noticeable assemblage of metaphysico-theological husks. In the undergraduate life of the college, Professor Bowen was known by the expressive sobriquet of "Fanny."

Religious instruction was given a place in the academic course. The instruction was given by Andrew P. Peabody, D.D., Preacher to the University, and Plummer Professor of Christian Morals. It was confined to the freshman and senior classes, and consisted of textbook recitations from Whately's "Lessons on Christian Morals and Evidences" and Butler's "Analogy and Ethics." Attendance at daily morning prayers, and at two church services on Sunday, was compulsory for all students.

Dr. Peabody was of the Unitarian faith, but between the assumptions of dogmatic theology and the affirmations of positive science, he seems to have found a sort of religious resting-place which did not put him in strong antagonism to either side

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in the religious controversy then raging, while it enabled him to draw support from both. This religious peace he sought to share with others. His was, indeed, a kindly soul. He recommended the study of the works of broad-minded, devout thinkers; he preached "the efficacy of good works" as of greater value in life than credal beliefs; and he gained the affectionate regard of the students.

Before passing from the consideration of the academic course, we should take a brief glance at the "Orders and Regulations" of the faculty especially in regard to attendance at religious services by the students, for here we shall see the strong hold the "theological bias" had upon the most "liberal" college in New England.

We have already seen that daily attendance at prayers, and that attendance at two church services on Sunday, were compulsory for all students. We have now to note that non-compliance with these requirements was strictly noted, and more heavily penalized than were absences from, or failures in, recitations or lectures. For instance: a "Private" — that is, a private admonition — was given to a student for his unexcused absence from a *single* church service, while he could "cut" *six* recitations or lectures before being called to account. Again a "Public" — that is, a public admonition — was given to a student for *two* half-day absences from church services, while he could "cut" *twelve*

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recitations or lectures before being subjected to such punishment. And again: a student could be "suspended, dismissed, or otherwise punished at the discretion of the faculty," for being absent from *three* church services, while he could indulge in *eighteen* absences from recitations or lectures before receiving the severest censure of the college. Then, too, in the "scale of merit," attendance at prayers and church services played an important part. In the final summing-up of the term's record there were deducted from the total favorable marks *eight* for every absence from a lecture or recitation, while for "every absence from daily prayers" *two* were deducted, and for "every half-day absence from public worship," *thirty-two* were deducted; and in case a student received a "Private," *thirty-two* were additionally deducted; and if he gained a "Public," *sixty-four* were additionally deducted.

It also appears that a strict record was kept of "all tardinesses at prayers and Sunday services," and that this record was sent to the faculty at the end of each term, and that for every instance *eight* marks were deducted from the rank of the student so reported.

The strictness with which the conforming of students to the religious requirements was supervised is indicated by the following provisions in the "Orders and Regulations of the Faculty for 1860":—

"Every student obtaining leave of absence for Sunday must bring back a certificate from his par-

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ent or guardian or some other accredited person of his having attended church."

"Absences from prayers and Sunday services shall be reported at the Regent's office by the respective monitors every Monday."

"Whenever, in the course of any one term, any student's unexcused absences from prayers shall amount to *ten*, or his tardinesses at prayers to *five*, or his absence from church (half-day) to *one*, he shall be immediately reported to the faculty, and shall receive a private admonition."

From what will appear later, we should note that reading during church services was considered as an offence against "Good Order and Decorum." Then, too, the faculty were not unmindful of the propriety of dress on the part of students; as witness this provision: "On Sabbaths, on Examination Days, and on all public occasions, each student is required to wear in public a black coat with buttons of the same color."

A careful study of the "Orders and Regulations" gives the impression that in the minds of the faculty the greatest delinquency on the part of a student, and the one against which the heaviest penalties should be brought, was the neglect of religious services.

The enforcing of the "Orders and Regulations" with reference to religious services was in the hands of a "Parietal Committee" composed of the officers of the college living within the college walls. This Committee deputized many of its duties to mon-

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itors chosen from approved students of the senior class. Thus, under these provisions, a system of religious espionage was established throughout the college in behalf of requirements which instinctively aroused opposition, which made a virtue of hypocrisy, and which heavily discredited the value of scholarship honors.

Growing out of these religious requirements was a very noticeable sight to be seen at seven o'clock every morning — the rush of students to morning prayers. At the first stroke of the chapel bell, a motley throng of students was seen streaming through Harvard Square, out from Garden Street, and the purlieus of Kirkland Street, all surging into the college yard and all intent upon one thing: getting within the chapel door before the last stroke of the bell. It was, indeed, a motley throng: some were adjusting any old hat to locks of hair much dishevelled; some were putting on collars or tying neckerchiefs; some were getting into coats or adjusting discordant garments; some were making long coats, buttoned closely at the neck, "cover a multitude of sins"; some were hopping on one foot and lacing a shoe on the other; while here and there might be observed students, who, having paid due attention to their sartorial appearance, were proceeding leisurely to the chapel. In one sense the scene was intensely amusing. It was a very distinct presentation of some of the difficulties which surrounded the pursuit of knowledge at Harvard. In



HARVARD COLLEGE YARD

College Halls

another and far deeper sense, the scene, as a whole, showed that the attempt to teach or inculcate religion by a universal, formal observance had made the observance ridiculous. Viewed in its everyday aspect, the call to prayers, with its penalties, had much more the aspect of a roll-call of the students for the purpose of bringing them under the eye of a monitor, to be checked off and counted, than as a summons to a religious exercise.

Reviewing the academic course as a whole and in the light of the "Orders and Regulations," the criticism of the college in 1866, by a distinguished alumnus, applies with even greater force to the college of 1860. At the inauguration of the new era at the college in 1866, the Reverend Frederick H. Hedge, D.D., gave an address before a triennial festival of the alumni and spoke of the then condition of the college thus: —

"The college proper is simply a more advanced school for boys, not differing essentially in principle and theory from the public schools in all our towns. In this, as in those, the principle is coercion. Hold your subject fast in one hand and pour knowledge into him with the other. The Professors are task-masters and police-officers — the President the chief of the college police."

As complementary to this state of things, in 1860, the college halls or dormitories were the Massachusetts, Stoughton, and Hollis buildings. These halls were hardly more than barracks: they were sadly

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deficient in sanitary provisions as well as without the conveniences of common life. Each student had to supply himself with water for all purposes from the pumps in the college yard; and water stood in the cellars of all the halls most of the time. It was not until 1860 — Fiske's entrance year — that gas was put into the halls and the yard lighted.

But the academic course of study and its interpretation by the faculty and instructors were not the only educative influences that were operative upon the broadly developing mind of Fiske during his three years of undergraduate life at Harvard. These three years comprised a portion of an eventful period in religious, scientific, and political thinking at Harvard, the results of which were more or less felt in all departments of the college, while they were prolific of much grave questioning on the part of thoughtful students. As the great activity along these fundamental lines of thinking had a powerful effect upon the expanding mind of Fiske, and as in subsequent years we are to trace his career as a leader in setting forth the philosophic import of these new lines of thought, it is well to take here a brief survey of three important questions — three fundamental subjects of thought, which, by the circumstances of the time, were, during his undergraduate period, thrust, as it were, directly into the very life of the college.

It should be stated that in the course of its de-

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velopment there had grown up around the college some professional and observational schools which were more or less incidentally related to the college, either as giving aid to the instruction or as offering post-graduate courses of professional study. These were the Harvard Divinity School, the Harvard Law School, the Harvard Medical School, the Lawrence Scientific School, an Astronomical Observatory, and a Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. These professional and observational schools, with the college proper, made up the institution known as Harvard University — the whole being under the executive management and control of the President of Harvard College.

The three questions referred to were of a religious, a scientific, and a political nature; and they were focussed at the college mainly through the incidental relations existing between the Divinity School, the Scientific School, and the Law School, respectively, on the one hand; and on the other hand, the college as an institution of learning, with a large body of inquiring students.

What is Unitarianism ?

The first of these questions may be stated thus: Is Unitarianism, as interpreted by the Divinity School, and as accepted by the college, consistent with the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion and the revelations of science ?

For full fifty years the Presidents of Harvard

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College had been clergymen or laymen of the Unitarian faith. For over thirty years the Harvard Divinity School had been the headquarters of Unitarianism in America. Here the great preachers of the denomination had been trained: men like Gannett, Bellows, Furness, Emerson, Osgood, Dewey, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, Frothingham, Ellis, Huntington, Hale, and others. Its leading professors were Unitarians, and on the establishment of the Plummer Professorship of Christian Morals, in 1855, on an endowment from Miss Caroline Plummer, of Salem, Massachusetts, with its accompanying post of Preacher to the University, one of the most distinguished clergymen of the Unitarian denomination, the Reverend Frederick D. Huntington, was selected for the chair. Harvard College, therefore, was rightly regarded as a Unitarian college, and as such it was generally credited with admitting the utmost liberality of thought in all matters pertaining to religious belief.

In January, 1860, Harvard College, the Divinity School, and the Unitarian denomination were all startled from their state of religious complacency by Dr. Huntington's resignation from his professorship at the college, and from his post of Preacher to the University, followed shortly after by his becoming a candidate for orders in the Episcopal Church. Never before in this country did a change in any individual's religious faith and practice make such a profound and widespread impression upon

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the public mind as did this. The prominence, the abilities, the high character of Dr. Huntington gave much denominational significance to his action. It was a severe blow to conservative Unitarianism. It was hailed with great joy by the various evangelical denominations. But the reasons assigned for the change of faith went deeper than mere denominational lines. They were such as to bring under full review the binding force of the fundamental Christian dogmas in the light of modern science and historic and philologic criticism.¹

¹ In an autobiographic article published in *The Forum* for June, 1886, we find a summary of Dr. Huntington's reasons for his change of religious faith: —

"It appeared to H. that beneath the shiftings on the current of speculation, there was a change at work in the whole doctrinal basis of the denomination to which he had belonged. Doubtless that the jejune self-interested moralizing of the Priestley and the English socinian school should be spiritualized by a lofty appeal to consciousness and insight under a direct power of the spirit of God, was an immeasurable gain. St. Paul proclaimed an eternal law when he wrote 'Spiritual things are spiritually discerned.' But Christianity is a revelation. Of that revelation there is a record. Its credentials, its history, the general and reverent consent of eighteen Christian centuries, its marvellous power over civilized peoples hardly less than miraculous, invest it with tremendous sanctions. There is no trace of anything like Christian culture apart from its authority. In open questions it has been, what there must be, a court of ultimate appeal. Hitherto H. had seen it so held in his own as well as in other Protestant bodies. Throughout the Unitarian and Trinitarian polemics, that appeal had been made with confidence by both sides alike. The main question was: What do the Scriptures teach and mean? It was a question of interpretation of documents, hardly a question of whether the documents were authentic and binding. . . . In the short space of twenty years the Unitarian press and pulpit virtually ceased to make a stand on the foundation which had been known as the Word of God. . . . He asked himself: Is there anywhere in ecclesiastical annals, an instance of so swift a plunge downwards in any association of people bearing the name of Christ, simply losing hold of

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Thus, during the period we are reviewing, 1860-63, What is Unitarianism? and, What is its attitude toward modern knowledge? were flung as vital questions into the intellectual life of Harvard.

Fiske, as might be expected, took a deep interest in this discussion; and as we are to see in later years that his mature philosophic thought found a ready welcome among Unitarians generally, it is worth while to pause a bit in our narrative, and take a glance at the kind of religious faith which, under the name of Unitarianism, Harvard was offering at this time to her students, accompanied by such penalties as we have seen for non-compliance with its formal requirements, penalties which were made to weigh so heavily against scholarly honors.

Just a brief chapter of ecclesiastical history. It was under the lead of William Ellery Channing that Unitarianism as a distinct form of religious belief became established during the early part of the last century — 1815 to 1825 — in New England. It came as a quiet protest on the part of a number of

the central fact of revelation? H. could no longer be content with a kind of Christianity destitute of a Christ in whom is all the fulness and power of God, without an inspired charter, without the law and inheritance and corporate energy and universal offer of the gifts and graces of eternal life, in a visible church."

That Dr. Huntington left the college with "strained relations" is evident from the curt mention of his resignation in the Annual Report of the President for the college year 1859-60: —

"Professor Huntington having resigned his place after five years of devoted service, his resignation was accepted at the close of the year, and a special arrangement was made with him by the President to perform or provide for the duties of the office until the end of the following term."

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sincerely religious minds against many of the dogmas of the Calvinistic theology. It grew directly out of the Calvinistic Congregational churches: many of these churches transforming themselves bodily into Congregational Unitarian churches. It was a change of religious faith, without a schism in the church organization.¹ With Dr. Channing, Unitarianism stood for the freest thought in religious matters and the widest toleration for religious beliefs. It affirmed the Divine Fatherhood of God and His creating all things good; it affirmed the innate goodness of the human soul as a part of the Divine Nature, and as possessing conscious reason as a means of knowing the good; it affirmed a belief in God's revelation of Himself: in the world of Nature; in the heart of man, inclining him to worship and to acts of brotherhood; and in the Bible — the last a special revelation of the Divine Will and Purpose; it affirmed a belief in Christ as a divinely inspired man sent as a type for humanity to model itself by.

The enunciation of this comparatively simple form of religious belief brought the Unitarians into a bitter controversy with their orthodox brethren

¹ People outside of New England are often confused by the fact that in New England both the orthodox or Calvinistic churches and the Unitarian churches have the same generic title of Congregational churches or societies. Even Theodore Parker's church had its legal title in the "Twenty-eighth Congregational Society." This anomalous condition of things has its explanation in the text — the original Unitarian churches or societies were simply Calvinistic churches or societies transformed as to their religious belief.

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over points of doctrine in the Calvinistic theology. The Unitarians were charged with leaving the vital elements of Christianity out of their scheme; some of their opponents went so far as to call them downright infidels. But in spite of the opposition the Unitarians steadily grew in numbers, and among them were the most cultivated people of New England; and they soon came to possess a controlling influence at Harvard College.

In 1825 they formed an Association for conference and mutual support; and in order the better to supply their denomination with pastors and preachers they established a Divinity School in connection with Harvard College. They wished to be known as liberal Christians, and by 1830 they had become a powerful religious organization in New England.

But they were not long in religious peace among themselves. Out from their own Association came two heretics, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker, men of the broadest culture, both breathing the same spirit of religious liberty and toleration; and both animated with the same love to God and man that the Unitarians themselves professed. But Emerson and Parker went further than their Unitarian brethren in their dissent from Calvinistic theology. They would have religion consist of heartfelt affirmations of the Divine Fatherhood of God revealed in all that exists; together with affirmations of the brotherhood of man, to be exemplified

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in upright conduct as necessary for the fulness of individual human life; these affirmations to be attended by no sacraments or binding formalities beyond the expression of grateful, cheerful hearts and upright lives.

Conservative Unitarians were shocked at the simplicity of these affirmations, and were frightened at the application of their boasted liberality to these progressives. Like their orthodox brethren of a few years before, they found themselves facing a heresy in their own midst which swept away all theologic dogmas and creeds whatsoever, and to which by their own principles they must extend complete toleration. Had Dr. Channing lived a few years longer, the course of events might have been different. Deprived of his inspiring leadership, the Unitarians lost faith in their affirmations as well as in the great principle of toleration. Accordingly, in the words of Lowell: —

“ They brandished their worn theological birches,
Bade natural progress keep out of the churches,”

and began a retreat. They treated Emerson and Parker shabbily. By sugar-coating with mystical phrases the dogmas of Biblical inspiration, the miracles, the nature and office of Christ, and the Sacraments, the orthodox view of them was made more acceptable to timid souls. With a show of learning, German criticism of Biblical and ecclesiastical history as well as dogma was patronized, and was thought unsuited to the lay mind of New

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England. Much thought was given to speculative philosophy, with but little or no application to the social needs of the time. Science was well bespoken, and in its name the varied phenomena of the universe were presented as evidences of Divine creation and sustentation in conformity to a specially revealed will or purpose. In short, by eschewing Emerson and Parker, Unitarianism shut itself out from the great forward intellectual movement of the period, and about the middle of the century it became an eminently respectable, cultured, self-satisfying form of religious observances. Well might Fiske think, as he did, on his first attendance at a Unitarian Church, that he was present at an Episcopal service.¹

It was between 1850 and 1860 that the scientific-philosophic thought of the nineteenth century broke upon all religious systems, bringing wholly new conceptions of the Divine First Cause and its mode of action in the universe of objective phenomena, and also in the world of subjective phenomena reflected in the conscious mind of man. The effect of this new movement in thought was the reconsideration of all religious dogmas in the light of positive knowledge and reason, and when Unitarianism, with its smug religious complacency, was brought under philosophic envisagement in the light of science and historic criticism, it was found that as a religious organization it had nothing tangible to tie

¹ Cf. *ante*, p. 131.

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to but the three fundamental points given by Dr. Channing: the loving Fatherhood of God, declared in all His work; the brotherhood of man, an essential condition for the fulness of life; and the utmost toleration of thought as absolutely necessary for attaining religious truth — all of which had been compromised by evasions.

There followed a notable parting of the ways: a movement backward as well as forward; and the backward movement had its culmination in the action taken by Dr. Huntington. And his was the action of a sincerely devout man, in whose intellectual make-up emotional sensibility had precedence over ratiocinative methods of thinking. He deliberately chose to set aside (if he knew them) the facts of science bearing upon man's origin and development, as well as the results of Biblical criticism as affecting the truth of a special Divine revelation, that he might give himself up unreservedly to an unquestioning belief in the fundamental dogmas of Christian theology. Of him this can be said, that into his interpretation of these dogmas he imparted such an ethical character and meaning as enabled him to become a preacher of social righteousness hardly second to any man of his time.

Many followed Dr. Huntington's example. In the forward movement, however, quite other personal influences were at work. From his quiet retreat at Concord, Emerson, wholly undisturbed by the religious perturbations of the time, was affirming,

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in words that have taken a place in the aphoristic wisdom of the race, that "the world is a temple whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity"; that "the faith that stands on authority is not faith"; that "reliance on authority measures the decline of religion, the withdrawal of the soul"; that "we can never see Christianity from the catechism; from the pastures, from a boat in the pond, from amidst the song of wood-birds we possibly may"; that "it is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake"; that "there is no pure lie, no pure malignity in nature. The entertainment of the proposition of depravity is the last profligacy and profanation"; that "Ought and Duty are one with Science, Beauty, and Joy"; and that "ineffable is the union of God and man, in every act of the soul." Over all was heard the resonant voice of Parker, as, like a prophet of old, with sublime faith, he cried out from his national pulpit in Music Hall — "On to reason and be a man, or back to Rome and be a chimpanzee."

During the period 1860-63 this fermentation of religious thought caused by Dr. Huntington's resignation was greatly intensified by events we are next to consider. This fermentation was surging all about the Divinity School, and permeated the whole intellectual atmosphere of the college, giving rise to much questioning on the part of thoughtful students and producing a discreet silence on con-

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troverted points by some members of the faculty. We are to see this negative sort of Harvard Unitarianism threatening Fiske with expulsion for opinions which a few years later he was called to expound to the college.

Darwinism, or the "Origin of Species"

The second of the three questions referred to came before the public primarily as a scientific one — whence the origin of the varied forms of the faunal and floral life of the globe. The question was presented in the form of two rival theories: the first by Professor Louis Agassiz in 1858, in an "Essay on the Classification of the Animal Kingdom," in which the theory of special Divine creation of species was very positively asserted; the second, in 1859 by Charles Darwin, by the publication of his "Origin of Species," a work in which he suggested the theory of organic development under the principle of natural selection. He brought forward a remarkable series of original observations in support of his theory. Involved in the discussion of these two theories was the vital question, — the origin of the human race, — and as the conclusions of these two eminent scientists bore, the one affirmatively, and the other negatively, upon some of the fundamental dogmas of the Christian faith, there arose immediately a scientifico-religious controversy, world-wide in its extent, and in which the ablest scientists and theologians were engaged.

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In America, this discussion was centred in a measure around Harvard College by reason of the fact that two of the leading scientists in this country engaged in this controversy and representing the opposing sides were professors in the Lawrence Scientific School and instructors in the college — Professor Agassiz, one of the world's great zoölogists, and Professor Asa Gray, one of the world's great botanists and the firm supporter of the views of Mr. Darwin. The points of difference between these two eminent teachers as to origins of organic life were apparent in their instruction, while the larger scientific implications of their views as to "origins" were set forth in their public discussions.¹

It is not in place here to enter into the full details of the Darwinian discussion. But inasmuch as it was an active element in the Harvard thought of the time, and inasmuch as the labors of Mr. Darwin were a very important contribution to the doctrine of Evolution, in the setting-forth of which Fiske was to take a conspicuous part in subsequent years, and particularly as in years to come we are to see Fiske in close friendly relations with Mr. Darwin growing out of their respective labors in behalf of Evolution, a brief presentation of the origin of the discussion is appropriate here.

The first half of the last century was a period of

¹ Professor Gray published a series of articles on the Darwinian theory in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which were so imbued with his wide knowledge of organic phenomena, and were withal so admirable in tone, that they were a great influence in favor of the new theory.

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great scientific activity, and it was specially marked by searching inquiries into the phenomena of organic life as revealed in the past and present condition of the globe. To this end the departments of geology, palæontology, embryology, zoölogy, ethnology, physiology, and botany were interrogated by able observers intent upon getting at the fundamental facts conditioning organic life, both in its particulars and in its widest generalities.

It is in evidence that these investigators at every stage of their inquiries found themselves face to face with a fresh and greater mystery — the mystery of origins. From the knowledge we now possess of these various investigations, we know that the idea of transformation or development in conformity to changed conditions of physical environment, an idea suggested by Goethe and Lamarck in the early part of the century, was not an infrequent thought in the minds of some of the investigators. This idea, however, being directly opposed to the accepted theory of origin by the direct, miraculous, creative action of Divine Power, and having no sufficient basis in observed phenomena to rest upon, was regarded by the leaders in science as untenable and by theologians as the height of infidelity if not downright atheism. But this opposition could not keep the broadening thought of independent inquirers wholly in subjection. Witness the anonymous publication of "Vestiges of Creation," a superficial book viewed from to-day, but

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a work profoundly significant of the unrest of the period.

In 1850 Professor Agassiz was rightly regarded as one of the great scientific men of the world. His contributions to science had been important and many. His zoölogical knowledge had been acquired largely by personal observations and was indeed profound. He had received from orthodox theologians the titles of infidel and atheist, because, as a geologist, he had denied as Divine truth the Mosaic cosmogony, and as a zoölogist the "one pair" theory for the origin of animal life. In 1855 he undertook a fresh classification of the animal kingdom on the basis of Cuvier's classification in 1817, with the additions that had since been made to zoölogical knowledge. This was a task commensurate with his wide knowledge and his rare powers of lucid exposition.

The first volume of this great work was published in 1857 and it contained an "Essay on Classification" which was a prolegomena to the whole work, in which Professor Agassiz affirmed, with great positiveness and much heat of argument, the direct and miraculous action of the Divine Creator in the origin and distribution of the animal life of the globe; and further, that this special form of creative action had existed through the vast periods of geologic time.

This essay was written in such a trenchant, aggressive style, it was so positive in its interpretation

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of observed phenomena, and was fortified with such a display of apparently supporting authorities, that the scientific world was roused to the consciousness that under a great scientific name Science and Theology were conjoined in giving a special teleological interpretation to the origin, distribution, and sustentation of all organic life. Professor Agassiz went so far as to invoke the aid of metaphysics by claiming that species had no material existence, that they were but objective representations of categories of thought existing in the Divine Mind.

Theologians of all orthodox creeds were delighted. In view of Professor Agassiz's uncompromising advocacy of special Divine creations, the charges against him of infidelity and atheism were overlooked, and he was hailed as the great champion who had at last enthroned a personal, miracle-working God upon a thoroughly scientific basis.

While Professor Agassiz was collecting the materials for his great work, another eminent scientist, an earnest, patient observer of the phenomena of organic life, one who had had exceptional opportunities for personal observations by extended explorations in various parts of the world, and who found himself sorely perplexed satisfactorily to account for the origin and distribution of the great variety of the earth's flora and fauna, had retired to Down, a quiet place just outside London, where he could, the while in communication with leading

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scientists, pursue his quest for a more rational explanation of the origin and distribution of the world's organic life than was afforded by the generally accepted theory of special Divine creations.

The story of the life of Charles Darwin during the twenty years he spent in brooding over the theory of organic development and natural selection with which his name is identified; the honest patience with which he sought facts from every possible source; the care with which he classified the facts and the fairness with which he weighed their evidence both for and against his theory; his correspondence with Sir Charles Lyell, the eminent geologist, with Sir Joseph D. Hooker and our own Professor Asa Gray, two of the most distinguished botanists then living, — a correspondence which shows how these leaders in science, starting in opposition to Darwin's theory, at last became converts to it, so that on its publication they became sponsors for it to the scientific world, — is one of the most interesting chapters in the whole history of science.

Darwin published his theory under the title of "The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," in which he placed himself squarely in favor of the theory of Development or Evolution, as the method by which the world had been peopled with its varieties of organic life. The work was issued in 1859, just two years after the publication of Professor Agassiz's "Essay on Classification." The style was simple, clear, direct, and not in the

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slightest degree dogmatic in tone. The facts presented, however, were so significant, and they were so clearly and logically arranged, as completely to traverse the fundamental points in Professor Agassiz's essay; and further, the points that naturally arose against the theory of Development were so frankly stated and so dispassionately reviewed that no impartial mind could rise from a reading of the work without a respect for the author, even if unable to accept his views.

The publication of the theory made a profound impression on the public mind. It was bitterly attacked by theologians of all schools, as well as by scientists with theological beliefs stronger than their faith in the truths of science. On the other hand, it was cordially endorsed by scientists like Lyell, Hooker, Lubbock, Alfred Wallace, Asa Gray, and particularly by Huxley, the champion debater of the time, who came to its support well equipped with a knowledge drawn from the whole armory of science, and whose pen in the bitter theologic contests that ensued became as potent as the magic spear of Ithuriel.

And thus between the upholders of the theologic theory of special creations and the advocates of the theory of Evolution in regard to the origin and the distribution of the organic life of the globe, an issue was distinctly joined, perhaps the most important issue, in the long contest between Science and Theology.

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As we survey this conflict just half a century after,¹ what a transformation has taken place in all the higher phases of human thinking. The doctrine of Evolution has been accepted by science, causing the remodelling of nearly every one of its departments. Evolution has also given a scientific basis to sociology, the great benefit of which to the social and spiritual well-being of the race cannot yet be estimated. Above all, it is causing all religious creeds to remodel their dogmas so as to present their conceptions of the Divine Power back of all that is, consistent with the manner of unfolding Himself in the universe of material things, as well as consistent with the conceptions of his spiritual existence adumbrated in the ethical consciousness of man. And the one great work of the epoch, the one that rises above all others, and takes its place in the advancement of learning beside the works of Aristotle, the "Novum Organum" of Bacon and the "Principia" of Newton, is Darwin's "Origin of Species."

As we leave this great discussion, it is interesting to note that in March, 1860, shortly before leaving Middletown for Cambridge, Fiske records the consecutive reading of Agassiz's "Essay on Classification," Asa Gray's "Structural and Systematic Botany," and Darwin's "Origin of Species." In this record Darwin and his work appear thus: —

DARWIN, "The Origin of Species."

¹ This chapter was written in 1909.

War Powers of the President

This putting the author's name in capitals was Fiske's way of indicating that Darwin was one of the great thinkers who were influential in shaping his own thought at this period.

The War Powers of the President

The third of these questions grew out of a memorable exigency in our great Civil War struggle. It might be termed "The War Powers of the President." It arose primarily as a legal or constitutional question, but by the disturbed political condition of the time it soon became a political as well as a military question and thus was brought home to every citizen. It had its origin as a political question in the action of President Lincoln in issuing his Proclamation of Emancipation and military orders supplementary thereto for the suppression of the rebellion. These acts were immediately challenged by the opponents of the Administration at the North, on the alleged ground of their unconstitutionality, and a bitter political controversy ensued which for a time greatly endangered the Union cause. This controversy, aside from the great public interest in it, was projected directly into the intellectual atmosphere of Harvard College by reason of the strong divisive opinions regarding it which prevailed in the Law School: the Professor of Constitutional Law, Joel Parker, LL.D., bitterly assailing the President both privately and publicly, while the Professor of Commercial Law,

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Theophilus Parsons, LL.D., was vigorously sustaining him.

In view of the historic importance of this great discussion, and as we are soon to see the serenity of Fiske's student life greatly disturbed by it, and further, as in his mature years Fiske is to give us the best history we have of the growth and the establishment of the Constitution, a brief sketch of the events which brought this "Charter of our Liberties" to its greatest trial, and under his own observation, is in place here.

In the summer of 1862 President Lincoln found himself facing a critical period in his Administration. The partial victory at Antietam had not retrieved McClellan's terrible disaster before Richmond. There were divided counsels in the Administration, and the war languished. Hitherto the war had been conducted on the theory that the issue was simply and only a constitutional one — the protection of an abstract instrument of political organization and the enforcement of its provisions as interpreted by the people of the Northern States. No person, no one in rebellion in the Southern States even, unless a prisoner of war, had yet been deprived of his legal rights to person or property under the Constitution. The moral sentiment of the people of the Northern States, reflected in their opposition to slavery, was strong in the insistence that the institution of slavery, being the real cause of the war, should be made to suffer by the war. This anti-

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slavery feeling had very generally gone to the support of the President, at the same time urging with much impatience more aggressive measures against the "peculiar institution." But the Administration had a strong, unrelenting pro-slavery party at the North to contend with as well as with the Southerners in arms.

President Lincoln, by the summer of 1862, had come to see that the war as it had been conducted by the Administration had no clearly defined moral issue back of it, and that he could no longer find justification in continuing such a terrible conflict as he was waging against the people of the Southern States on the sole issue of an interpretation of the Constitution. He saw the necessity, for the salvation of the Nation, of getting the issue squarely on its merits as a moral issue — a conflict between the idea of freedom and the idea of slavery, and then uniting the moral and political forces of the North in support of his policy.

To this end he moved on his own initiative; and one of the finest chapters in all statesmanship is the history of his skill, his patience, his wisdom, his faith in rousing the dominant moral feeling of the North and focussing it in support of his Proclamation of Emancipation.

This memorable document was issued on the 22d of September, 1862, and two days later the President proclaimed the establishment of martial law and the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*

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throughout the United States, as against any persons "guilty of any disloyal practice in affording aid and comfort to the rebels against the authority of the United States." These two proclamations, with subsidiary orders from the War Department putting them into effect, were issued as war measures; and while they served to unite the loyal people of the North in a more vigorous prosecution of the war, they stirred to greater activity than ever the opponents of the Administration who declared that the President's proclamations were not only unconstitutional, but that they were also subversive of the fundamental principles of republican government — in short, the Administration was more severely denounced than the rebels it was fighting.

Among the prominent citizens in the North who took this position of opposition to the Administration was Benjamin R. Curtis, of Boston, late Justice of the United States Supreme Court, of whose engaging personality we have already had some delightful sketches. Judge Curtis enjoyed the reputation of being one of the ablest judges that ever sat on the Supreme Bench. His knowledge of constitutional law was indeed profound, and he was not identified with any political party.

In this great crisis Judge Curtis, as an independent citizen, felt called upon to speak. In a pamphlet under the title of "Executive Power," addressed "to all persons who have sworn to support

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the Constitution, and to all citizens who value civil liberty," he reviewed in a respectful manner the President's war measures; and in language of great plainness and force, he pointed out how in his judgment the President, under the plea of military necessity, was subverting the Constitution, and establishing in its stead the supremacy of military law.¹

This pamphlet was widely read and the independent position of Judge Curtis gave his views great weight in the public mind. His argument gave the Northern opponents of the President the semblance of a distinct constitutional ground for their opposition, and the issue was brought directly home to Harvard College by the prominence in the discussion of the two professors in the Law School already named. The contest waxed strong and furious. By one party, President Lincoln was branded as a tyrant who ought to be impeached; by the other, Judge Curtis and Professor Parker were branded as traitors who ought to be imprisoned.²

¹ Studying, in the light of to-day, this pamphlet and what followed, we see how clearly the loyal people of the North, in the darkest days of the war, saw the real issue involved in the struggle; and we also see how much wiser was President Lincoln, in his interpretation of his duty under the Constitution, than were the eminent jurists who found its provisions for the protection to persons and property of those who would destroy the Government stronger than its provisions for the protection of those who would save it.

It is said that when Mr. Lincoln had read Judge Curtis's argument, he remarked, in his pithy Rabelaisian way, "I never heard of a patient's acquiring a taste for emetics by being obliged to take one now and then."

² I recall attending public meetings in Boston at this time, and

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The students in the Law School represented both sides in this discussion, and as these students mingled freely, in the college halls and boarding-houses, with members of the junior and senior classes, the current opinions in the Law School, as well as the wide public discussions, had free access to the undergraduate mind. We shall soon see from Fiske's letters how deeply he was impressed by President Lincoln's action, and how closely the discussion we have been considering was brought home to him.

hearing Professor Parker denounce President Lincoln in the severest terms,—he was not given to moderate speech,—and if my memory serves me rightly, the feeling against him in Cambridge was so strong that his friends were apprehensive of some expression of public indignation.

CHAPTER IX

AN UNDERGRADUATE AT HARVARD

1860-1863

WE have seen that Fiske, just previous to his entrance examinations at Harvard, was so confident of passing them that he had engaged his rooms for the ensuing year. In view of the condition of the college halls many parents objected to placing their sons in such forbidding surroundings. Consequently there had grown up around the college a number of boarding-houses, all under the approval of the faculty, which, as living places, were by many students preferred to the college halls. Of these boarding-houses none had a better repute than the one kept by Miss C. Upham on the corner of Kirkland and Oxford Streets. The house gave a full view of the college yard, — Memorial Hall and Sanders Theatre did not then exist, — and it was within sound of the chapel bell, a very important consideration in the pursuit of knowledge at Harvard at this time, as we have already seen.

It was at Miss Upham's that Fiske had taken rooms. They were pleasant rooms and he found much pleasure in getting settled in them, particularly in getting his books and pictures in order. From the particulars he gives, his library must have

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been the most scholarly student's library in Cambridge.

And thus, very happily domiciled, on Monday, September 2, 1860, Fiske began his college life. He continued his letters to his mother and to his friend Roberts, and it is from these letters mainly that the following record of his undergraduate life is made up.

From what we have seen of Fiske's attainments, his methods of study and his ideals of scholarship, together with what we have learned in regard to the academic course of study, it is evident that this course did not present sufficient requirements to give a healthy, varied activity to his inquiring mind. Had he chosen to confine himself to the prescribed course and to work for honors, he could easily have gone to the head of his class. The honors secured by such efforts, however, appeared to him as temporary — they did not seem to him worth the sacrifice of better scholarship to be attained by broader study than was offered by the college course. Accordingly, he deliberately chose to do the necessary work for the recitations and examinations, and to concentrate himself upon his favorite studies of history, philology, literature, science, and philosophy, utilizing, as far as possible in these studies, the facilities of the college.

As his conception of an undergraduate life was quite an exceptional one, it is of interest to see how it was embodied in experience. This can best be

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done by seeing his college life grouped around certain centres of interest with which his mind was engaged during this period. These centres of interest were the following: —

- I. His collegiate work, and his class associations.
- II. His methods of study; the mass of his reading.
- III. His college and living expenses; his book purchases.
- IV. His visit to Emerson.
- V. His literary work.
- VI. His thoughts by the way.
- VII. He receives a "Public Admonition," with a threatened expulsion.
- VIII. The Civil War; its effect upon his mind.
- IX. His engagement to Abby Morgan Brooks.

We will take up these centres of interest in the above order.

I. His collegiate work and his class associations

In regard to his collegiate work it can be said that he did not neglect any study; that he added Italian, Hebrew, and Sanskrit to the language requirements; that he stood high in his classes through the three years; that he creditably passed all examinations, and was graduated in 1863, the forty-seventh in his class. It should be said that his rank would have been near the head had it not been for his cutting prayers and church services, and some

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recitations and lectures. He failed of winning a scholarship in his first, the sophomore, year; simply through cutting prayers. In fact, the only serious dereliction of duty charged against him during the three years was a neglect of religious services.

The excellence of his recitations and the interest he took in his studies soon attracted the attention of some members of the faculty, and we find Professor Child reporting "that the breadth of his views was perfectly astonishing." In mathematics his proficiency is also noted, Professor James M. Peirce speaking of him "as a jewel of a mathematician"; while President Felton, writing to Judge Curtis, says that "Fiske is going to be one of the most distinguished in his class;" in support of his opinion he quotes Bates, the tutor in Latin, as saying that "Fiske was the best scholar he ever had."

But the best testimony to the high quality of his college work is the fact that he established cordial personal relations with several members of the faculty—relations that were continued after his graduation, that ripened into strong friendships which were terminated only by death. Among these may be mentioned his friendships with Professors Lowell, Child, Goodwin, Sophocles, Peirce, Gurney, Wyman, Asa Gray, and Dr. Peabody. From each of these professors he gathered much outside of and beyond their formal teaching; and in his mind these men stood in their personalities more than in their professorial relations for the Harvard College that

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he loved. Particular mention should be made of the friendship which was formed between Fiske and Professor Gurney during the college period. The letters bear witness to the existence of a far deeper feeling between them than that of instructor and pupil. In fact, Professor Gurney appears as *Fidus Achates*, and in this relation we have a reflection of him both as a scholar and a friend.

It does not appear that Fiske came into any personal relations with Professor Agassiz. The reason we can understand — Fiske's strong dissent from Professor Agassiz's theory of special creations in the organic world. This is to be regretted. Agassiz had such a vast fund of valuable zoölogical knowledge, he was also such an inspiring instructor, and with it all was such a lovable man, that Fiske lost much by not establishing personal relations with him while in college. Fiske was less inclined to listen to Agassiz during his college period, inasmuch as both Professors Gray and Wyman were opponents of the special creation theory — they were in fact advocates of the Darwinian theory of organic evolution. He did not establish any cordial relations with either Professor Cooke or Professor Bowen. He regarded both as more earnest in presenting preconceived theological ideas in their respective departments than in presenting the facts of modern science freed from metaphysical interpretation. It is evident that, in a respectful way, he sometimes questioned their conclusions. In chemistry and

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philosophy, therefore, his marks were lower than in other studies.

Among his classmates Fiske was generally liked, but his reserved, studious nature did not invite to close intimacy save with a few. He had a quiet frankness of manner in greeting his friends that was inviting; but he instinctively shrank from everything like boisterous conviviality. There was no suggestion of swagger or pretence about him, and his only dissipation was a pipe and a mug of beer. His studious habits, his excellent recitations, and ready command of his wide and varied knowledge, together with the impressions given by his library, soon made him a marked member of his class. It was not long before the first scholar in the class said to him, "Do you know, Fiske, that your translations in Greek are the astonishment of the class?" In mathematics his proficiency was no less marked. He soon went to the head of the class in this study, and the class feeling was reflected in the remark of a classmate who, on trying on Fiske's hat, said, "Tell you what, fellows, the reason Fiske has got such a big head is because he is such a thundering mathematician." From the records we find that his marks from the first were very high, nearly perfect, save in chemistry — and chemistry was a study he particularly liked. From his letters it appears that he regarded his college studies as mere play.

One or two incidents are worth noting by the way,

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as reflecting Fiske's ready command of his knowledge, as well as the prevailing undergraduate ideas of scholarship. At table a classmate put to him the following questions: The situation of Potidæa, Amphipolis, and Delium; the years of Socrates's birth and death; the circumstances of the battle of Arginusæ. Fiske answered clearly right out of hand, whereupon another classmate said, "What in God's name, Fiske, did you expect to learn by coming to college?" And the following is reported of a classmate who in subsequent years attained high professional honors. Fiske writes: "The other day, when reading over his Whateley's Rhetoric — cried out to me, 'Fiske, what the devil is an enthymeme?' 'Why,' said I, 'it is a syllogism with the major premise suppressed.' 'Well, what in hell is a syllogism?' was the hyperastonished reply. Great Zeus! I thought I should split! There 's a specimen of Harvard scholarship!"

Fiske's comments upon the student life displayed about him are many. His standard of judgment of his fellow students was their scholarship and their love of study. He writes: "Among the students here scholarship is held in disrepute"; "To study closely is considered disgraceful"; "The present senior class, having studied somewhat more faithfully than others, is called 'scrubby'"; "A good recitation is called a 'squirt,' and some fellows have undertaken to call me 'Squirty,' a name which has been fastened on to one of the mathematical tutors

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on account of his superior scholarship." He also gives this incident: "A poll student told me to-day that twenty pipes of tobacco a day would not injure a man as much as six hours of study. I asked that ignoramus if he considered six hours of study much? He replied he could n't say as he never studied over three."

How instinctively he made a fellow-feeling for scholarship the condition of intimacy with fellow-students is shown by a passage in a letter to his mother written about a fortnight after his entrance. The passage also shows his fine democratic feeling — that he was no respecter of persons, save in their love for knowledge. He writes: —

"I have found a nice man here named Ethridge, about 27 or 28 years old; entered Soph. with me. He boards with Dr. Gray at the entrance to the Botanic Gardens, and rooms in the Gardener's house. He is a plain, practical, common-sense man; perfectly simple, very diligent — quite a fun-lover withal. I like him on the whole very much. He is a good scholar but poor; speaks Spanish and Dutch; reads German and French. I went up to see him the other day and he showed me about the Gardens. I wish you could see them. Ethridge has studied Botany a great deal, and has a great love for it; is a real old Darwin man. He has been down to see me once."

In the college societies Fiske does not appear to have taken much interest. He was elected to the O.K. Society, but the letters contain only a brief

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reference to this society and no reference to the other societies.

Athletics were not at this time regarded as absolutely necessary for a college education. Previous to 1860 football played in a ladylike sort of way was permitted; but at the beginning of the college year 1860-61 — Fiske's sophomore year — the faculty prohibited it. This caused much grief among Harvard's young knights of learning, and the letters give full particulars of how, on the evening of September 3, 1860, the class of 1863 gave expression to their feelings at the want of sympathy on the part of the faculty with the ideals of football education. It appears that the class buried their Idol with ceremonial rites in the classic Delta, the field of many a football contest. A procession numbering about one hundred and twenty was formed with officers, a chaplain, a coffin, pall-bearers, grave-diggers, and with muffled drums. All were dressed in mourning and the main body bore torches. They marched through the principal streets about the college and came to the Delta. Here a grave was dug. Then a funeral oration was delivered, and, as the coffin was lowered into the grave, the following dirge was sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" :—

THE DIRGE

Ah! woe betide the luckless time
When manly sports decay,
And foot-ball, stigmatized as crime,
Must sadly pass away.

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Chorus — Shall Sixty-three submit to see
Such cruel murder done,
And not proclaim the deed of shame?
No: let's unite as one.

O, hapless ball, you little knew,
When, last upon the air,
You lightly o'er the Delta flew,
Your grave was measured there.

Chorus — But Sixty-three will never see
Your noble spirit fly
And not unite in funeral rite,
And swell your Dirge's cry.

Beneath this sod, we lay you down,
This scene of glorious fight;
With dismal groans and yells we'll drown
Your mournful burial rite.

Chorus — For Sixty-three will never see
Such cruel murder done,
And not proclaim the deed of shame: —
No! let's unite as one.

This important event occurred on the second day of Fiske's undergraduate life, and he became an interested participator in the ceremonies.¹

Notwithstanding Fiske's intellectual tastes and studious habits he was by no means wanting in the

¹ College boating, while practised to quite an extent on the Charles River, had not developed into anything like its present status in education. Not unfrequently the class clubs entered the holiday regattas of the City of Boston. The boats of those days were quite different in construction from the racing-boats of to-day. President Eliot tells us they served for transportation as well as sport; and were so constructed that while they could conveniently take nine men into Boston, they could not with safety carry out more than six.

Fiske took no interest in football or boating. During his sophomore year he was quite faithful to daily exercise in the Gymnasium; but as his intellectual interests broadened in his junior and senior years his physical exercises gradually diminished.

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fine trait of comradeship, which in college life is manifested in class feeling. A memorable incident occurred in the first term of his sophomore year, which put his class allegiance to a severe test, a test which proved that it was of fine quality.

The incident grew out of an attempt at "hazing" by some members of his own class. It appears that eight sophomores took two freshmen to one of their rooms to introduce them to some of the unauthorized ceremonial mysteries attending collegiate education at Harvard. Another freshman ran and told the faculty — who were holding a weekly meeting — of the highly objectionable educational experiment that was under way. The faculty, or some of the members, led by the President, pounced upon the assembled sophomores and found them with the two freshmen imprisoned in a closet. The next morning the eight sophomores were suspended. So far, in the opinion of the sophomore class, the faculty were justified in their action. But the faculty went further, and forbade any public demonstration by the class in bidding the suspended men good-bye. This edict seemed to the class unjust and uncalled for; and as the suspended members were all very popular, the class decided to disregard the faculty edict, and as a whole to express their regard for the suspended members. This they did by drawing them in an open carriage to the Boston line. There, with much display of affection, they bade the suspended men good-bye and marched back past the Presi-

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dent's house to the college yard — Bowditch, the first scholar of the class, at their head.

In regard to this demonstration Fiske writes: —

“Now this was only intended as an expression of sympathy with those who were sent away, called forth by their many excellent traits of character and their fine scholarship. Had it been some fellows, there would have been no such demonstration; but these were the cream of the class, respected by all and none of them ‘fast.’ No one disputed the justice of the sentence; or intended this as an insult to the Faculty. If such had been its aim I never should have joined it.”

And in regard to what followed he writes: —

“Now I think the Faculty have begun to act shamefully. Bowditch was ‘summoned.’ He is the First Scholar, a grandson of the great geometer and a perfect gentleman. He made a speech to the Faculty, perfectly respectful and conciliatory in its tendency. It met with the manifest approval of some of the Faculty. But the President spoke up: ‘Mr. Bowditch, you have disgraced your illustrious name; you are no gentleman, sir, and all unworthy the name of scholar.’ ‘Mr. President,’ said Bowditch, ‘I came here to render an account of yesterday’s proceedings; not to be insulted.’”

The result was that Bowditch was suspended — a result brought about wholly by the efforts of President Felton and secured by his own vote — the vote of the faculty being *ten* for, and *nine* against his suspension.

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The verdict created intense feeling throughout all the classes. The sophomore class petitioned the faculty in a body asking that Bowditch be recalled or that the whole class be suspended—alleging that the whole class were equally guilty with him.

In time the excitement passed by and all the suspended members returned to the class. Fiske never regretted his action in the matter. We shall soon see that not long after, Fiske himself gave President Felton a still more memorable occasion for displaying his constitutional narrow-mindedness.

Early in his senior year Fiske was elected associate editor of the "Harvard Magazine" — a task which was a great bore to him, but one which he cheerfully undertook as an obligation to his class. During his editorship, he contributed the following articles to the "Magazine": "Ye Vital Principle," "A Very Old Tale," "Diatribes on Archbishop Whateley," "The Life and Teachings of Gotama Buddha."

There were several Emerson men and Theodore Parker men in the various classes, and there is evidence of much religious discussion among the students growing out of Dr. Huntington's resignation and the opening-up of the Darwinian question. We have glimpses of students coming from Agassiz's lectures enthusiastic over his "triumphant vindication of special creations" and of Fiske's quietly tak-

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ing Agassiz's own premises and bringing the argument right around in favor of the doctrine of Development or Evolution. In short, at the opening of Fiske's junior year, his fine library and his command of scientific knowledge gave him the reputation throughout the college of being a well-equipped Darwinian, and of holding philosophic views of a Positivist character — views that were at least open to suspicion. The undergraduate dissensions growing out of the Civil War will presently be considered by themselves.

In Fiske's life, as we are to see it unfold after college, we shall have frequent occasion to note his great interest in music — that music was, in fact, his chief means of diversion, and that he became, principally through self-study, proficient both as a composer and as a performer. During his college life, however, this deep harmonic element in his nature was wholly untouched by anything in the academic course. It was a matter of profound regret that his college course had no provisions whatever for making students acquainted with the artistic principles governing the higher forms of musical expression. His deprivation in this respect was partially remedied, however, by his acquaintance with Professor John K. Paine, which began at the time of Fiske's marriage in 1864, and which ripened into a lifelong brotherly friendship of the most ennobling kind. To know Professor Paine intimately was to enjoy the fruits of the ripest musical culture. We

Methods of Study

are to see much of the effect of this fine friendship in the years to come.

II. His methods of study: the mass of his reading

From his early boyhood we have had frequent occasions to note Fiske's great fondness for books and his passionate love of study. To read and to study were to him the most delightful of occupations and especially if we include composition as related to them or as their complement. The letters are full of the particulars of his devotions. Twelve hours a day, except Saturdays and Sundays, was his regular allowance for reading and study; and this generous allowance was often extended to sixteen hours or more when specially interested in any subject. He had a very clear method in his reading-study, and various hours were apportioned to specific subjects. Throughout the college period he was seeking the fundamental truths of science and philosophy, and the breadth or catholicity of his reading is a noteworthy characteristic, particularly when it is considered that this whole line of study-reading was self-imposed and self-directed. According to his usual methodical custom he kept an accurate account of his reading, and the mere mass of it was something extraordinary. During the three college years he read two hundred and thirty-three volumes containing nearly sixty thousand pages. Most of these works were on subjects requiring the deepest thought. Many were in foreign languages.

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All were thoughtfully read as the extracts from the letters we shall give abundantly show, and as the literary work of subsequent years clearly proves.¹

His mother and Roberts were insistent upon his keeping up a regular course of physical exercise. He did play at exercise in the kind of gymnasium that was then attached to the college; but this exercise was not pursued with just the ardor he bestowed upon his favorite authors—Grote, Gibbon, Donaldson, Humboldt, Voltaire, Mill, Mackay, Darwin, Spencer, Dickens, Scott, Goethe, and many others.

III. His college and living expenses: his book purchases

A student's college expenses are a very clear revealer of both his inner and his outer life. In Fiske's letters to his mother we have quite full details of his receipts and expenditures, so that we have in this account a pretty complete voucher, as it were, for the general uprightness of his undergraduate conduct. From this evidence it appears that the whole cost of his college education did not exceed six hundred dollars a year. This included his living expenses. There was absolutely nothing spent in dissipation of any sort. He gave his mother a pledge at the beginning that he would

¹ The rapidity with which he read was indeed remarkable. The letters make frequent mention of his reading from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pages per day in addition to his studies. As an instance, in one place he says: "I began Müller's *Dorians* to-night, and read ninety pages in about two hours."

College Expenses

not drink wine or spirituous liquors and this pledge he faithfully kept. As has been said already, the extent of his dissipation was a pipe and a mug of beer. His aversion to dissolute conduct, which is a marked characteristic of the letters, was no less marked in his intercourse with fellow students. Yet such is the tendency of the shallow mind to think evil and to see evil even where it does not exist, Fiske the student, owing to the fact that he was a reader of Voltaire, Emerson, Theodore Parker, Buckle, Darwin, and other liberal thinkers, and that he sometimes cut prayers, had gained, at the opening of his junior year, the reputation in certain quarters of being a very objectionable young man. This opinion was undoubtedly heightened by reports of his wide knowledge and his liberal way of thinking. Fiske became conscious of this impeachment of his moral character, and in a letter to Roberts he says: "It is quite amusing to see that *I* have got the reputation of being a dreadful hard fellow, while other students who drink, gamble, and go about with women are pronounced 'only a little fast.' It shows the prevalence of superstition."

With the full particulars that we have of the unfolding of Fiske's life to the full maturity of his intellectual powers, it can be positively asserted that biographical literature presents *no* instance of a mind unfolding to high ideas and ideals with a sweeter, purer life than his.

And yet, in the mind of his mother, kind mother

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that she was, he had a great extravagance — a propensity to buy books. We have seen that from his early boyhood his love of books, and his pride in possessing books, was a dominant passion in his life — in fact, that books were his chief companions. The amount of his “book extravagance” during his college period does not appear to have greatly exceeded one hundred dollars — a college extravagance that most parents would gladly encourage in their sons. Yet, as in the first instance the purchases were books not in any way required in his collegiate studies and as some of them related to subjects regarding which his mother was not in full sympathy with him, she raised decided objection to what she felt was an impulsive act on his part. Let us not criticise her action. If she could not see the propriety of his purchases in this instance, her objection served to bring into clear light certain traits in his character which, if she could have seen them in their relations, would have appeared of far greater value than the cost of the books. The instance is worth giving. No sooner was Fiske settled in Cambridge, in June, 1860, for his examinations than he began to plan his future lines of study in science, philology, history, and philosophy in addition to his collegiate work. His letters to Roberts are quite full of the details of what was gestating in his mind. Falling in with one of Quaritch’s catalogues of rare books for sale, he ordered through Mr. Sever, the Harvard book-seller of that day, the following

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works: Donaldson's "Varronianus" and his Greek Grammar, Wilson's Sanskrit Grammar, Bleek's Persian Grammar, Stewart's Arabic Grammar, Mill's "Logic," von Bohlen's "Genesis," Sainte-Hilaire's "Histoire des Anomalies de l'Organisation." When the bill came in September it amounted to forty-five dollars and his mother gave him a severe chiding for what she thought was a wholly needless purchase. Fiske patiently and dutifully pointed out how essential the books were to the lines of thought he was pursuing and the help they would be in giving him enlarged views in his college studies. He took his mother's chiding much to heart, and for months afterwards the letters show little economies, that he might recoup towards the bill. He even went so far as to propose giving up his dearly prized Thanksgiving visit to his grandmother, that "money might be saved towards that dreadful book-bill."

IV. His visit to Emerson

One incident which occurred at the beginning of Fiske's college life, and was wholly unconnected with his college course, deserves a setting by itself, and should be given in his own words: this is his visit to Emerson. How greatly in the development of his own thought Fiske was influenced by Emerson has hardly been noted. When we come to the consideration of Fiske's mind at its maturity and with the evidences then at hand, we shall see that he re-

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garded Emerson as the true protagonist of Evolution; that he clearly "insighted" it as the Divine order of creation before science had laid the foundations upon which the doctrine could be established. We shall also see that Fiske was a free partaker of the Emersonian philosophy as a source of noble thinking pure and undefiled.¹

Early in his sophomore experience Fiske made the acquaintance of Edward Dorr McCarthy, a very brilliant but erratic student, quite radical in his general views and acquainted with the leading radical men of the time. McCarthy was somewhat acquainted with Emerson, and about the middle of September he asked Fiske to join him in an excursion to Concord for the purpose of calling on Emerson. Fiske gladly accepted the invitation and the next day he gave an account of the visit, to his mother and to Roberts. The account of the visit is essentially the same in both letters. The following is the account given in the letter to his mother with a few words interpolated from his letter to Roberts:—

CAMBRIDGE, *Sept.* 16th, 1860.

My dear Mother:—

Yesterday I shall never forget. McCarthy was going to drive up to Concord to see Ralph Waldo Emerson with whom he is quite well acquainted, and to try to get a school for the winter. He came and got me to go too. We got to Mr. Emerson's

¹ See vol. II, chap. XXXVI. See also vol. II, chap. XXVII, Emerson and Herbert Spencer.

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about 7 o'clock. The family were just through tea and Mr. Emerson was out. He soon came in and McCarthy introduced me. He welcomed us warmly and said he was going out to supper alone and we had better come out and take tea with him. He had just that winning, Judge Curtis like way which compels assent, and so we went out and took tea with him, while Mrs. Emerson and his daughters sat sewing at the other end of the table. He talked with us about all sorts of things: with McCarthy about Carlyle and other literary men; and with me about Bichat, Voltaire and Buckle. He says that Buckle is the master mind of the age; that Voltaire deserves all the praise that Buckle has given him, if not more. About Bichat he ran into raptures.¹ I did n't expect to find him booked on science, but I find him tremendously so. I was astonished not only at his learning but also by his wisdom and his goodness. I thought him the greatest man I ever saw.

But most of all he liked to talk about Carlyle. He showed us a daguerreotype which Carlyle had given him when he last saw him. He told anecdotes about Carlyle some of which were amusing. He said that Theodore Parker went to see Carlyle one Sunday evening, and found him alone over a great bowl of whiskey punch ladling it into his mouth with a tablespoon. "Why, Tom," said Parker, "what on earth are you doing?" Carlyle's face was radiant. "Why, I take a whole bowl of whiskey punch every Sunday night, Theodore, don't you?" said the old Scot.

We talked some time. Emerson's voice is a very

¹ Marie François Xavier Bichat, a celebrated French physiologist and anatomist, 1771-1802.

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deep bass. I felt as much at my ease as I would with an old acquaintance; there was something so charming, so simple and unaffected and exquisitely-bred about Emerson.

At last we got up to go, and Emerson said he was very glad indeed to have seen us, and hoped we would come and see him again. Of all the men I ever saw, none can be compared with him for depth, for scholarship, and for attractiveness, — at least so I think.

With this expression of youthful enthusiasm over his first meeting with Emerson, it is in place to note that in the years to come, we are to observe that in Fiske's personal contact with Nature in her quiet moods or in her grand and sublime aspects, with the world's masterpieces of literature, sculpture, painting, music, and architecture, as well as with other of the most eminent thinkers of his time, his own thought instinctively strikes true as to what is ennobling in nature, in art, and in human character.

V. *His literary work*

At the close of Fiske's sophomore year, July, 1861, the *furor scribendi* was full upon him. The second volume of Buckle's "History of Civilization in England" had just been published, and the reading of it brought back a recollection of his reading of the first volume two years before and the effect produced upon his mind. Since then he had reread the volume twice, and had weighed well its general argument in connection with a wide course of his-

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torical and scientific reading, inspired by his acceptance of Spencer's theory of Evolution. Wider knowledge had led him to see serious defects in Buckle's contentions; and much as he admired some portions of Buckle's general argument, there were some points he desired to bring under a critical review. The publication of the second volume invited him to the task. Rather a heroic courage, this, entering the lists against one of the master minds of the age, by a youth who had only just turned his nineteenth year.

Yet was Fiske nothing daunted. The letters during the summer vacation of 1861 reveal him as in active preparation, reviewing his authorities. The latter part of September we see him in the midst of composition. On the 14th of October, — let us mark the date, — the article is finished. Before sending it to the "National Quarterly Review," where it was published in the number of that journal for December, 1861, he submitted it to his friend Professor Gurney, who was warm in its praise, assuring Fiske that "it was the ablest, most just, and philosophical review of Buckle that had been written."

Reading this article to-day we note the easy grace with which, in opening, he surveys the phenomena of political and social development as presented by eminent thinkers previous to Buckle; then we note the perfect fairness with which he states Buckle's contentions, and the frankness with which he

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assents to some of them. The significant feature of the article, however, is his firm grappling with Buckle's main contention, "Intellect *vs.* morals in the development of civilization," in which Buckle substantially affirms that all progress is owing to the growth or expansion of man's intellectual nature, while his moral nature remains stationary. Fiske takes a square issue with Buckle on this point; and, basing his argument on the law of Evolution, he marshals his wide knowledge of both science and history with great skill; and, to use his own words, he "bangs Buckle's argument all to pieces."

Throughout the article Fiske's respect for Buckle as a thinker of rare independence and force is apparent, and he closes with this fine tribute: —

"With respect to Mr. Buckle's work, an unprejudiced mind can have but one opinion. It is calculated to awaken independent thought, and to diffuse a spirit of scientific inquiry. Written in an easy and elegant style, it will be read with pleasure by many who would not otherwise have the patience to go through the subjects of which it treats. Thus, grand and startling in its views, impressive and charming in its eloquence, it cannot fail to arouse many a slumbering mind to intellectual effort. Such has its tendency already been, and such will it continue to be. . . . Whatever may be thought about the correctness or incorrectness of Mr. Buckle's opinions, the world cannot be long in coming to the conclusion that his 'History of Civilization in England' is a great and noble book, written by a great and noble man."

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This article was fully abreast with the Evolutionary thought of the time. Since his first reading of Buckle in 1859, Fiske had made a careful study of the philosophy of Auguste Comte, in the light of Mill and of Lewes; and he had also followed Spencer, so far as Spencer had developed his theory of Evolution. All this line of philosophic thinking based on science was known as "Positivism," and was supposed to reflect the philosophic vagaries of Comte. We shall see later the difficulties both Spencer and Fiske had in freeing the doctrine of Evolution from any implied affiliations with the Positive Philosophy of Comte. This article bears evidence of Fiske's study of Comte, but it has none of the vagaries of the latter. Nor has it any marks of juvenility. The argument is clear, compact, and logical in its arrangement, while the style is remarkably simple and easy in its flow. There is no suggestion of pedantry in it; no attempt at fine writing. In short, the article has all the marks of a skilled, practised debater. As such it at once appealed to Professor E. L. Youmans, the champion in this country of the doctrine of Evolution, and was by him sent to Spencer, as evidence that the light of Spencer's philosophy was breaking in America. We shall see later that both Spencer and Lewes were desirous of knowing who wrote the article.

Fiske's next literary effort was not until near the close of his senior year. By this time he was

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pretty thoroughly grounded in the theory of Evolution. Spencer had formulated a very substantial philosophic basis for the theory in his immortal work "First Principles," and it remained for the specialists in the various departments of science to gather impartially the facts from the two worlds of objective and subjective phenomena for collation and integration under this theory. What a new light was thrown upon, what a new impulse was given to, all branches of scientific inquiry by the promulgation of this theory is a story which belongs to the history of science to tell. Philology, as soon as scholars began to study language as a natural growth and not as a manufactured product, as soon as they had begun to see that its origin and development were largely conditioned by objective surroundings, took on a new character. It could no longer be regarded as a metaphysical study with no rational *raison d'être* back of it. Rather, it was seen to be a subject broadly open to scientific observation, and that it was related to other branches of science at many points. The middle period of the last century saw much stirring of philological thought in the direction of its scientific character and also of its scientific relativity. Fiske, as we have seen, in his boyhood days was deeply interested in philological studies; and we have had occasion to note his quick appreciation of philological works whenever he came in contact with them. When, therefore, he came to see the full implications of

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Evolution, and that language was a subject which presented a fruitful field for investigation under the illumination of this new scientific searchlight, he turned to his philological studies with greater interest than ever.

The letters tell us of his frequent dipping into these philological studies during his college days, and in the months of March, April, and May, 1863, while preparing for his graduation, we see him actively engaged in writing an essay on "The Evolution of Language." When the essay was finished he submitted it to Professor Gurney, who pronounced it "splendid." He then offered it to Dr. Peabody, the editor of "The North American Review," who promptly accepted it, and it was published in the "Review" for October, 1863.

In this essay Fiske took as his text the philological theories of Max Müller, Renan, and Spencer, and with the ideas of these thinkers as a basis, he reviewed the whole philological question as to the origin and development of language, undertaking to show that the growth of human speech has conformed throughout to a fixed regular law of Evolution.

After clearing away, as inconsistent with an attempt to give a rational explanation of language, the two alternate theories that "it was invented by an academy of mute philosophers, or that some super-human instructor came down with grammar and dictionary and taught mankind the rudiments of

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speech," he gave a rapid survey of the results of philologic induction. These he claimed had established the fact that there were root words which were the ultimate constituent elements of all languages; that these root words were of two kinds: predicative, expressing actions or existences, and demonstrative, denoting locality. A rational system of classification was then seen to be that which recognizes as its basis a degree of coalescence between roots, and that this degree of coalescence was an index of a certain degree of integration. Integration and differentiation were then traced as prime factors in the development of language, not only in the coalescences of roots, but also in the concentration of syllabic sounds and in the increasing logical coherence of clauses. Moreover, the generation of dialects, the rise of parts of speech, the growth of widely divergent words from a common root, and the development of widely divergent languages from a common stock, were seen to be pronounced instances of differentiation or linguistic evolution. The external causes of the evolution of language were then considered, and emphasis was put upon coherence and stability in social relations — a stability implied in family relationships which are alike removed from Turanian nomadism and from Chinese immutability.

In the development of his argument the results of philological science seem to have been at his ready command. The ideas of Tooke, Schelling,

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Humboldt, Grimm, Bunsen, Bopp, Müller, Gannett, Donaldson, Becker, Renan, Rapp, Diez, and Spencer are cited so apropos and illustrative of his own thought that they seem to drop into place in his argument as a matter of course. This relieves the essay from the taint of pedantry. While immensely learned, the points are so clearly and logically arranged and the style is so lucid that any person acquainted with the declension and grammatical arrangement of words can readily understand the general argument.

The article was one which appealed, of course, only to scholars. One eminent reviewer said of it:—

“This is by far the most thoughtful and elaborate article in this number of the ‘Review.’ The author has something of the tone and trend of the ‘great reviewers’ in his style, and we are glad to see one who can leave the nervous, jack-o’-lantern style of our New England Transcendentalists, and talk like a man of some growth, stature and dignity.”

Professor Youmans was quick to detect the quality of the article; and we shall see a little later, how he sought out Fiske and induced him to open correspondence with Spencer.

Of Fiske’s contributions to the “Harvard Magazine” during his senior year, already alluded to, it can be said that they bear witness to his wide reading and the fertility of his thought. His “Diatribes on Archbishop Whateley” is an instance of how pungent he could make his criticism of theologic

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assumptions when fully roused, while his brief article on Buddha is a fine illustration of his fair-minded historico-religious criticism. He did not republish this article in his collected works because he intended to do the subject greater justice in a complete essay.

"Y^e Vital Principle" is a brief undergraduate burlesque on the metaphysical manner of argumentation. It is of interest as showing that at this time Fiske's thought, even in its lighter moods, was centred around the ultimate questions of philosophy.

"A Very Old Tale" gives us a glimpse of the working of his mind in a humorous way in the regions of classic fable. This "Very Old Tale" and his "Class Supper Ode" are the only instances we have of his invoking the muse.

It is a little remarkable that Fiske, with his high order of thinking, his great familiarity with the masterpieces of poetry, and his rare musical gifts, should not have felt impelled at times to self-expression in poetic form. This apparent anomaly is in a great measure accounted for by the high poetic quality of much of his prose. We shall see later that in the expression of fine and noble feeling through the medium of elegant prose no writer of his time has exceeded him.

VI. His thoughts by the way

There is a common saying, very much in evidence in some branches of industry, that "a good

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workman is known by his chips." Fiske's undergraduate letters are so full of fine bits of thought incidentally thrown off by him while "hewing to line," as it were, in his various studies, that a few examples of his thoughts by the way are in place, as showing how continuously and naturally and easily his mind was working with great themes.

His mother has asked him the meaning of "ham" in Petersham — a town we are to know a great deal about in the years to come. Fiske replies, quite incidentally, with the following interesting bit of philologico-historic information: —

"'Ham' means town or village. It is kindred with 'home' in old Teutonic. 'Hamlet' means a little village — 'let,' like 'leaflet,' a little leaf. Appended to the names of towns we have 'ham,' 'wick,' 'stead,' 'burg,' 'ville.' 'Wick' is from the Latin 'Vicus' — a village. 'Vicus' comes from 'victim' the participial of 'vivere,' to live, and is kindred with 'victuals,' 'vital,' 'vivacity,' and a host of words. 'Stead,' as 'Barnsted,' comes from 'stadt' — town, that which stands. 'Ipswich' — 'Ips' and 'vicus.' 'Burg St. Edmunds' — 'Burg' and 'St. Edmunds.' No use in filling a quire called up by association. Suffice that the ends of towns show the different conquerors of England.

Wick is Celtic.

Ham is Danish.

Sted }
Stead } are Saxon.
Burg }

Ville is Norman French.

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“Language is a witness that cannot give false evidence.”

Fiske is reading Lewes's “Life of Goethe,” and with it he is also reading Goethe's “Faust.” He writes: —

“I had no idea that Goethe was such a miraculous giant of intellect. His mind was clear and objective, almost positive. As a poet he must be placed almost on the level of Shakespeare; and his conception of the Law of Development in the organic world will place him in the first rank of scientific thinkers; while his universal learning could put to despair the most assiduous plodder Germany has ever produced. Lewes says, ‘Faust’ is the greatest poem of modern times; and I will say that I never before came across such a marvellous poem in my life. The metres in ‘Faust’ are magical; the most exquisite little short verses, light and airy as gossamer, are mingled with, or rather followed by, as the thought changes, massive hexameters which pound like the tramp of a thousand battalions.”

He is reading the Old Testament in Hebrew with Dr. Noyes, and his penetrating eye has caught an anachronism in the sacred record. He writes thus:—

“This week I found a Chaldee word in the Elohim document. There was no Semitic Chaldee however until after David. What could that Chaldee word be doing in a document written by the festive Moses? The Elohim is the earlier document you know.”

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There is much in the letters regarding his philological studies. He is reading Garnett's "Philological Essays," and he says: —

"Garnett's analysis of the verb is glorious and is based on an immense induction from the principal languages of both continents. He shows it to be simply a *noun* or other part of speech always in combination with a pronoun in an oblique case. This is said by Donaldson to be a great discovery and he proves it in regard to the Greek verb in Cratylus."

There are many references to Donaldson, the eminent English philologist and Biblical critic. In one letter Fiske says: —

"I have read nearly the whole of Donaldson's 'Varronianus' this week. It gives some most wonderful revelations as to the origin of the different original races, particularly those of ancient Italy."

Speaking of Donaldson's death in 1861, from overwork, he says: —

"I don't wonder at it, for I believe he had read every square inch of paper that had been dirtied by ink since the world began."

One of the important scientific books of the time, and one that has been of much influence upon the development of physical and chemical science during the last half-century was Grove's "Correlation and Conservation of Forces." This work Fiske read with great eagerness and he comments thus: —

"Grove's work is just the thing. He shows that heat, light, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity,

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and motion can all be transformed into one another and are but manifestations of one and the same force. What I like best of all in the book is that the author entirely abstains from bringing in metaphysical ethics or entities. He writes in a positive spirit, and everything he writes is forcible and striking."

Fiske's comments upon President Felton's Greek scholarship are of interest, not only by reason of the latter's long service at the college as Professor of Greek, but also because we are soon to see him administering to Fiske a "Public Admonition." Fiske is reading Grote's "History of Greece" for the second time and in a letter to Roberts he expresses himself thus: —

"I am disgusted to see that Felton, in his notes on the 'Clouds of Aristophanes,' embraces all those old-fashioned Kronian ideas about the 'base principles of the Sophists' and the 'corruption' which they produced in Athens during the Age of Pericles and the Peloponnesian War. . . . He likewise amuses himself with blackguarding Klion and the Athenian constitution. . . . I consider Grote's chapters on the Sophists and on Socrates to be two of the best chapters I ever read."

In this same letter he gives quite a full sketch of the life and works of Voltaire, with the judgment upon him of Goethe, Humboldt, Carlyle, Buckle, and others. In closing he says: —

"When we consider the immense influence which Voltaire's writings have had upon the European

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mind, we may perhaps affirm that he did more than any other single man to destroy (dogmatic) Christianity. It may be well however to remark that he never mentioned the Founder of Christianity except in terms of the deepest respect."

The very earnest public discussion of dogmatic Christianity at this time, occasioned by the resignation of Dr. Huntington and the publication of Mr. Darwin's great work, can hardly be conceived. This discussion was greatly heightened by the publication in England and America of a remarkable volume of seven "Essays and Reviews" by seven prominent English churchmen, in which there was given out a distinctly evangelical call for a more rational interpretation of Scripture and dogma, in the light of science and Biblical criticism, than had hitherto prevailed. Accordingly, we find Fiske giving much attention to ecclesiastical history, especially in its bearing upon dogma. The many bare-faced assumptions by Christian apologetics for the Divine origin of the principal dogmas of the Christian religion; the long and terrible struggle the human mind has undergone to free itself from bondage to these dogmas, together with the fact that through ecclesiastical intolerance belief in them was still enforced, made Fiske indignant that in these later days the love for knowledge and the search for truth should be held in subordination to belief in a dogmatic religious creed.

His conviction that the great body of Christian

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believers were ignorant of the facts regarding the origin and development of the Christian dogmas finds frequent expression in the letters. In a letter to Roberts he has occasion to refer to the Christian forgery of the account of Jesus in the eighteenth book of Josephus and to the opinions of the scholars of the first centuries of the Christian era regarding the doctrines of the early Christians (some extracts were given), and he says: —

“Of course, if Christianity had been anything in A.D. 80 or 90, Josephus would have spoken of it. The Christians must have felt the force of this, or they would not have forged a passage to suit themselves; and may we not infer from these extracts that Christianity was an insignificant thing in the 3d century when a man like Plotinus knew it only through one of its most heretical forms; while men of genius like Lucian and Porphyry rejected it with contempt — Porphyry showed up its shortcomings with an erudition unequalled until modern times. Dogmatic Christianity reigned supreme in the Dark Ages of ignorance; and the first heralds of the new dawn of the intellect — such as Abelard were heretics, and the men of three or four centuries after, such as Vanini and Giordano Bruno were downright infidels. Talk about its miraculous progress! When Plotinus in the 3d century had hardly heard of it; when Mohammed, one century after his death was acknowledged as Prophet from Delhi to Cordova; and when Mohammedan science and learning was all that kept the lamp of knowledge from expiring. While Christians were going through their mummeries to save their souls the Kalif Al

Dogmatic Christianity

Mamum was observing stars and measuring a degree on the surface of the earth."

Many extracts from the letters might be given showing Fiske's bitter hostility at this time to dogmatic Christianity; and this feeling was intensified by the discussion going on about him, and as we shall further see, by his own college experiences. In later years, however, we are to see him give Christianity a place in his scheme of philosophy as embodying the highest phase yet reached in the development of the religious nature of man, and as undergoing a process of development to a higher stage of religious manifestation.

There are, of course, many references to Spencer in the letters. All are of interest as showing how readily Fiske's thought responded to Spencer's as the latter was unfolded, but three extracts must suffice the purpose here. In a letter to Roberts he says: —

"The 5th number of Spencer¹ concludes the explanation of the change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous — differentiation — and the remaining numbers are to be taken up in explaining the change from the indefinite to the definite — integration. I see that the old fellow is gradually proving that the Law of Evolution is itself a corollary from the Persistence of Force, and consequently possesses the highest deductive as well as the highest possible inductive proof."

¹ Spencer was then bringing out *First Principles* in "Numbers."

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Again: —

“ I read Spencer on the ‘Laws of Organic Form’ last night, but it was so *omnisciently* learned that I could barely understand it. He brought up as illustrations, nearly one hundred kinds of plants of which I knew absolutely nothing. He brought them in with such perfect coolness, and proceeded to argue from the way the leaves are cleft and the petals arranged in each kind, with such an apparent unconsciousness that other people did n’t know all the vegetables in creation that I began to think myself a block-head. However, though I did n’t know all the facts, I was enough of a naturalist to appreciate the argument; and he showed that same *amazing* power of thought, and that same inconceivable amount of learning he shows in whatever he undertakes to write about. I felt a sense of *awe* after closing the book as if I had been holding communion with Omniscience; and this I never felt when reading any one else. During a country ramble with Lewes in 1851, he, Spencer, happened to pick up a buttercup, and as he drew it through his fingers so as to alter the shape in a curious way, an idea struck him which he has since developed into one of the greatest discoveries of the century. In reading this one thinks of Newton and the apple.”

And again: —

“ I am more and more persuaded that Spencer is the greatest thinker of this time. He has found the *summum genus*; he has made all the specific divisions and sub-divisions; and has not only pointed out the methods of constructing a Positive philosophy, but has also constructed one.”

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In the letters are equally thoughtful references to Grote, Bunsen, Gibbon, Comte, Humboldt, Max Müller, Lyell, Calvin, Tocqueville, Dickens, Bulwer, Huxley, Tyndall, Herschel, Darwin, Agassiz, and others. The foregoing extracts are sufficient, however, to show the general tendency of Fiske's thought at this period, and how far and away it was beyond the college requirements.

VII. He receives a "Public Admonition," with a threatened expulsion

And yet, notwithstanding his excellent scholarship and his exemplary personal conduct, Fiske was *persona non grata* to some members of the Harvard Faculty, who fain would have had students measured, not by their attainments and general uprightness, but rather by their religious beliefs and their observance of church services. Mention has been made of the reputation Fiske achieved during his sophomore year of being a pretty well-equipped Darwinian. He was also credited with holding the heretical opinions of Emerson and Theodore Parker, as well as being infected with the highly objectionable virus of Positivism.

The opening of his junior year, therefore, reveals him as a "suspect" with some members of the faculty who appear to have been apprehensive of his "silent influence" among the students. Accordingly, he was closely "observed" by the Parietal Committee for discipline on the slightest occasion. And the

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committee had not long to wait. In October, 1861, he was caught *flagrante delicto* in a high "misdemeanor." He was "observed" reading in church from a volume of Comte and was promptly "summoned."

Students had read in this church without censure for years, and Professor Goodwin said that Fiske was probably the least guilty of all. On answering the summons he was first questioned by the President in regard to his religious views. Fiske frankly stated his disbelief in many of the dogmas of Christian theology, and was equally frank in expressing his adherence to what was then termed, for want of a better name, the Positive Philosophy. He was then taken before the faculty and charged with disseminating infidelity among the students and with gross misconduct at church by reading during the service. The effort was made to interrelate the two offences by presenting the latter as the natural outgrowth of the former — a desire to show a disrespect for the Christian faith.

Fiske met the two charges in a manner characteristic of the fair-minded youth that he was. He had no apologies to make for his opinions; and he dissociated the two charges as having in his mind not the slightest relation to each other. He denied having in any way tried to influence the religious views of others; asserted that such an effort would be wholly against his principles; and that he respected the views of others as much as he wished his own respected. As to the misconduct at church

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he frankly admitted that it was unjustifiable; that if it had been meant as a deliberate insult to the Christian faith, it would have been also an insult to the college, and there could be no punishment too severe for such misconduct. He fully justified the faculty for calling him to account. He did the act unthinkingly, but that was no excuse; he had violated a regulation of the college; he apologized and assured the faculty there would be no repetition of the offence.

The President and Professors Bowen and Cooke were very bitter — Professor Bowen contending that the misconduct at church was not only a legitimate outcome, but was also a mild form of manifestation, of such reprehensible doctrines as were held by Fiske — and they wanted him suspended for a year. They would have carried their point had it not been for the very active part taken by several members of the faculty, and especially by Dr. A. P. Peabody, who maintained that it would be a disgrace to the college to suspend one of the best students simply for reading in church and especially after an ample apology had been freely made.

Fiske was let off with a "Public Admonition." He read no more in church, nor do we hear of charges against him of disseminating infidelity among the students; but we do hear of the prevalence of opinions very similar to his, all through the junior and senior classes, while they appear to have been rife among the members of the faculty itself.

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The most significant fact, however, connected with this church incident is President Felton's subsequent action. It appears that under date of October 16, 1861, he wrote Mrs. Stoughton, giving his version of the affair, — which does not differ materially from the foregoing account, — and closed his letter with the following courteous, but no less positive, admonition, as to the result which would attend her son's giving any further expression to his religious views while at college. He said: —

“Your son's good character in general, and his faithful attention to his studies, induced the faculty to limit the censure to a Public Admonition. I have only to add, that while we claim no right to interfere with the private opinion of any student, we should feel it our duty to request the removal of any one who should undertake to undermine the faith of his associates. I hope you will caution your son upon this point; for any attempt to spread the mischievous opinions which he fancies he has established in his own mind, would lead to an instant communication to his guardian to take him away.”

It should be noted that this church incident and this letter of President Felton to Mrs. Stoughton are coincident with Fiske's completion of his article on Buckle, which was finished, as we have seen, October 14, 1861. A cursory glance at that article, with its evidences of wide reading and deep thinking on some of the profoundest problems that can engage the human mind, shows how far and away

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was the thought of this upright youth beyond the minds of his instructors, who would fain have found in his "daily walk and conversation" reasons for expelling him from college.

It is a significant commentary on this letter of President Felton's, threatening the expulsion of Fiske if found guilty of disseminating Positive or Evolutionary ideas among students, that eight years later, in the first dawn of the new era at Harvard, Fiske should be officially called by the new President to expound these same ideas to the college.

VIII. The Civil War: its effect upon his mind

And still the record of these eventful college days is incomplete. These well-preserved letters of fifty years ago, with their display of a noble love for learning, coupled with high ideals of personal character, show yet another phase of the life of this scholarly student which is of great interest to-day, as reflecting somewhat the terrible ordeal through which the Nation was passing.

We have already seen how the main issue in the great Civil War struggle was projected into the college life through the Law School: we are now to see how the undergraduate life was affected thereby.

The baleful effect of this fearful conflict was at the outset severely felt in the quiet, academic shades of Harvard. In the spring of 1861 every class experienced the sundering of class ties through the resig-

John Fiske

nations of students from the Southern States, or by the departure of loyal students who resigned to join the Union Army; and Harvard's peaceful yard resounded with military preparations in response to President Lincoln's "call to arms." Harvard's noble Memorial Hall is an eloquent witness to the patriotism of her sons.

At the outbreak of the war Fiske appears to have been indifferent to the issues involved in the struggle. His youth and his scholarly tastes had precluded his taking an active interest in the political discussions which had preceded the war. He saw no vital difference between the contending political parties. Strongly anti-slavery in his own views, the political issues appeared to him mainly as questions of more or less slavery. The outbreak of the war, therefore, found him so deeply interested in the profound philosophic questions then coming forward, and so engrossed in his studies, that he was in great measure oblivious to the social, industrial, and political questions involved in the struggle.

This attitude of mind is not surprising, for the only direct issue presented by the Northern States or by the Administration was a political one — the saving of the Union under a Constitution which legalized human slavery. Fiske's friend Roberts, however, was alive to the deeper issues involved in the struggle, and in April, 1861, he wrote Fiske a very thoughtful letter on the two diverse forms of political and social organizations presented by the

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Northern and Southern States, in which he pointed out what might be expected in case the war should be prolonged.

Fiske did not reply to the political portion of Roberts's letter, but he did write giving full particulars of his reading. Roberts then chides him for his indifference to the condition of the country and the impending struggle; whereupon Fiske writes:—

“What fools people make of themselves about this confounded war! Why, I forget there is a war half the time. What's war when a fellow has 'Kosmos' on his shelf, and 'Faust' on his table?”

One is reminded by this sententious remark that a good portion of “Faust” was written when all Germany was engaged in the great Napoleonic struggle, and that Goethe has been subjected to much criticism for his apparent national indifference.

But with the whole nation aroused, Fiske could not long remain indifferent, and the events of the war soon brought his eminently philosophic mind to the realization, in the pithy words of Lowell—

“That civilyzation *doos* git forrid
Sometimes upon a powder-cart.”

During the winter and spring of 1862, in full sympathy with the Union people of the North, he became an interested observer of the gathering of the Army of the Potomac under General McClellan for the campaign against Richmond. With a feeling of loyal pride he saw this magnificent army officered

John Fiske

by the ripest experience and the best blood of the Northern States and thoroughly equipped with all the munitions for offensive warfare. Never before in human history was there gathered a nobler army for a nobler purpose than was this Army of the Potomac; and never before did an army go forth to combat with greater confidence on the part of its supporters in its ultimate victory.

With dismay Fiske saw this heroic army when within sight of Richmond caught in the treacherous swamps of the Chickahominy, where, divided by an impassable stream and without the possibility of concentration, it was attacked by a greatly inferior force and was compelled to fight defensively day after day, until, banged and beaten in detail, it was at last driven, after immense losses, to the shelter of its guns on the banks of the James, whence it was rescued by the naval transports.

It is impossible for the present generation to realize the effect of this disaster upon the people of the Northern States, accompanied as it was by an effort on the part of General McClellan to shift the responsibility for the disaster on to the War Department, and also by a letter from him to the President advising the latter as to the political conduct of the war. This letter was a strong pro-slavery document. Fiske became thoroughly aroused, and he expressed in strong language his opinion as to McClellan's incapacity, and his indignation at his attempt to "play politics" in the face of such a disaster.

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Three months after McClellan's defeat before Richmond, September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued his first Proclamation of Emancipation, followed by more vigorous measures for the prosecution of the War. How these measures were received by many influential "constitutional" people at the North we have already seen. How they were received by the loyal people of the North is clearly reflected in the following extract from a letter of Fiske's, written September 24, 1862, two days after the Emancipation Proclamation:—

"What a splendid thing the President's Proclamation is. I am really enthusiastic about the war now. I feel as if we were fighting henceforth with an end in view. I hope that the fiendish institution of slavery, which has hitherto made me ashamed of America, is at last to fall. I always was a red-hot anti-slavery man in principle, but never cared much for the success of a war that was to leave us on this question just where we were before. I always felt that union was impossible without abolition. I think the Union cause is better off now than ever; and if this Proclamation takes effect, I shall consider homely 'Old Abe' the most glorious ruler we ever had. I am studying the war hard, *strategy* and everything."

Fiske's manner of studying the war strategy was characteristic of his thorough way of doing things. He subscribed to the "New York Daily Times." He then procured large maps of the various fields of military operations which he fastened to the

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walls of his rooms, and with pins of different colored heads he was able on his maps to follow the movements of the contending forces. Every evening after supper he took his strategy lesson.

But what is of special significance, in view of Fiske's future history of the Federal Constitution, and his subsequent thought as to its practical working, was his deep interest in the Constitutional questions that now arose from President Lincoln's exercise of the war powers of his great office.

In the autumn of 1862 the political opposition to President Lincoln was focussed around the candidacy of Horatio Seymour for Governor of New York; and the issue was the alleged usurpation of unconstitutional power by the President. This phase of the contest was brought directly home to Fiske, not only by reason of his warm personal regard for Judge Curtis, but also by the fact that the views of Judge Curtis were shared by Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton — and they were all heartily supporting Mr. Seymour. Fiske, however, did not waver for a moment in his support of the President; and in a letter to his mother, after expressing a wish that she would read John Stuart Mill's pamphlet on "The Contest in America," he says: "When next you see me you will find me full to the brim of war and politics — a fierce anti-secession and anti-slavery man."

Shortly after, he received from his mother a letter, in which, besides giving him her own views,

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she sent him a batch of the politico-constitutional literature of the day, in which the Administration was presented as a greater foe to the country than the Southerners in arms. Fiske's loyal indignation knows no bounds: and in a letter under date of November 3, 1862, — the day before the New York election, — he frees his mind. This letter contains one paragraph which to-day has a historical as well as a deep personal interest: —

“Oh, I cannot sleep in peace until I know the result of to-morrow's election in New York. If all were confided to our armies it would be well; but here is a great secession party arisen at the North, and calling itself Democratic! what shall we do? Just think of voting for Horatio Seymour and Fernando Wood! It is high time to suspend Habeas Corpus, when treason is rife in every dwelling. Much as I love liberty of thought and speech, it were better to have a despotism than this horrible anarchy. What is the use of getting up these immense armies of 600,000 men and building iron-clad fleets, if we are going to have a hornet's nest of treason growing here at home. I am getting discouraged. I hear treason and nothing else talked all the time. If Lincoln would hang the leaders of the Democratic party, and kick McClellan out of the army, it would be well; but such a result is too good to be hoped for.”

Some worthy people might say that the foregoing extract was rather an extravagant ebullition of a somewhat heated youthful patriotism. Neverthe-

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less, it reflects with great truth the terrible ordeal through which President Lincoln's Administration was passing, as well as the depth of feeling of the loyal people of the Northern States who were determined that the Nation in its entirety should live, and that the disgrace of upholding slavery should be removed forever from its Constitution.

From this time forward Fiske's absorbing interest in the success of the Union cause never lessened. He carefully followed Grant's campaign against Vicksburg, as well as the movements of the contending forces around Washington; and the letters give instances of sharp altercations with students of "Secesh" proclivities. To Mr. Lincoln's letters in 1862 and 1863 to various persons, defending his Administration, Fiske paid particular attention, regarding them as the best and clearest expositions of the war powers of the President under the Constitution that were called forth by the President's exercise of "Executive Power."

IX. His Engagement to Abby Morgan Brooks

Still another phase of Fiske's life during his college days remains to be told. Not his study, not his writing, not his college rank, not his patriotism are the full index of his intellectual activities during this memorable period. No record of his collegiate life would be in any sense complete that did not include his romantic acquaintance with Abby Morgan Brooks, their engagement, and the ennobling

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influence of their betrothal upon the whole range of his intellectual activities during his junior and senior years. Briefly as this story must be told, it will be seen that it reveals an affectionate element as a marked characteristic in Fiske's intellectual make-up; and that this element is a fitting complement to his love for knowledge, in that it gives to the latter its finest zest — a desire to share its triumphs and honors with another.

There is further reason for this story here with much particularity of incident, for in the years to come we are to see this betrothal experience, of which we have such an interesting and faithful record, unfold and ripen into a domestic life of great richness and fulness, carrying with it, in ever-increasing measure to the very end, the fine, ennobling flavor with which it began.

At Miss Catharine Upham's, where, as we have seen, Fiske had taken rooms, there were a goodly number of boarders. Professor and Mrs. Child were there; and, in addition to a few undergraduates like Fiske, there were students from the Law School, as well as some young women attending Professor Agassiz's school for young ladies. Among the students from the Law School was James W. Brooks, of Petersham, Massachusetts, who, having been graduated at the Law School in 1858, was now pursuing some extra studies. The elder sister of Mr. Brooks, Abby Morgan Brooks, had previously been a student at Professor Agassiz's school, and

John Fiske

had also boarded at Miss Upham's. She had many friends in Cambridge, and during the spring of 1861 she was much with her brother at Miss Upham's.

Miss Brooks enjoyed intimate social relations with Professor and Mrs. Child, and Professor Child had frequently spoken of young Fiske as one of the very best scholars in the college. He seemed to take pleasure in telling of Fiske's devotion to his studies, of how he economized his time, and especially of his library — a most extraordinary one for a student. Miss Brooks being with Professor and Mrs. Child one morning at prayer time, he took her to the window and said, "With the first stroke of the chapel bell, Fiske will start and you will see a race to reach the chapel door on the last stroke." Sure enough, the first stroke brought a rush from the house, and then, with rapid strides across the Delta, where now stands Memorial Hall, Fiske reached the chapel just as the last stroke announced the closing of the doors.

"This," said Professor Child in his genial way — "this is the devotion we see every morning."

Miss Brooks and Fiske, although they lived in the same house for several weeks in the spring of 1861, did not meet until the evening of June 11, at a lawn party given for Miss Brooks previous to her leaving for her home at Petersham. They then met casually, and Fiske was introduced to her. They had a pleasant general conversation of less than half an hour; and on her remarking that she was

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leaving the next day, he expressed his regret that he had not met her before, and the hope that he might have a further acquaintance in the autumn.

Miss Brooks was favorably impressed. Fiske was deeply so; and the impression with him endured. She was much in his mind during the summer vacation. Soon after his return in September he learned that Miss Brooks was planning to go to Chicago in October, with the intention of spending the winter there with her brother John. He was so deeply interested that he decided upon prompt action. He would go at once to Petersham, have an interview with Miss Brooks in her home, and, as a preliminary to a better acquaintance, ask for the privilege of a correspondence. Accordingly, he got a week's leave of absence from the college for the ostensible purpose of seeking a school for teaching during the winter, and on Friday, September 13, 1861, he set out for Petersham, by way of Athol — a pilgrimage which involved at its farther end, by reason of the train arriving too late for the coach, a tramp of nine miles on foot. The long tramp was without adventure, save that at a roadside watering-place he was accosted by some country folk, probably by reason of his somewhat blousy costume, with a question which reflects the agitation of the time — "Be ye a solger"? Fiske could only assure his questioners that he had no belligerent intentions.

The day was fine. It was one of those September days in New England when all nature seems at-

John Fiske

tuned. The glories of autumn's rich foliage were just beginning to manifest themselves in the occasional burning bush, the scarlet maple, and the variegated tints creeping over the woodlands. As Fiske plodded the long rise of road from Athol to the high plateau of Petersham, every step forward was the revelation of an ever-increasing charm, until, as he reached the summit, he found spread before him a scene of indescribable beauty and of singular impressiveness, as on either hand the respective valleys with their ridges of wooded hills, just blushing with autumn's coming colors, rolled miles and miles away.

As Fiske moved onward he was profoundly affected by the beauty of the surrounding country, and as he approached Petersham, lying a little below him on the southern slope of the plateau, he stepped aside to survey the whole scene with this hamlet lying so quietly before him, its church spire gilded by the setting sun and rising so picturesquely among the trees, and to speculate upon what these surroundings held in store for him.

Could he only have known! In the years to come we are to see this temporary resting-place transformed in his mind into a veritable Mount Pisgah; we are also to see this romantic adventure ripen, in the midst of these beautiful surroundings, into the holiest of human ties. Further, we are to see these surroundings so made a part of his own life that they are to become a measure of nature's beauty in many

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Old-World places famous for their scenic charms, while they are also to serve as a fitting setting to some of the profoundest thinking that can engage the human mind.

Fiske was graciously received by Miss Brooks and the other members of her family — her mother, her brother James and sister Martha. At first he sought to disguise the purpose of the visit under the plea that he was looking for a school to teach during the winter. James Brooks, however, soon saw through this gentle subterfuge, and on his remarking “that there was n’t much to call a young fellow to such an out-of-the-way place as Petersham unless he has some object of special interest in view,” Fiske smiled, and frankly admitted, “That’s just my case, Mr. Brooks!” His errand, therefore, was revealed and he remained in Petersham until the following Wednesday.

He saw Miss Brooks several times. She was very gracious, and his regard for her greatly increased. Just before leaving he asked for the privilege of a correspondence, and he accompanied the request with the assurance that there was not an act of his life that he was not perfectly willing she should know. Somewhat confused by the directness and the evident purpose of the request, Miss Brooks thanked him for his desire for a further acquaintance and told him she would be pleased to correspond with him were it not that she was under certain obligations that would prevent her doing so

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at present. Seeing his evident embarrassment, she delicately gave him to understand that she was not engaged to be married. Feeling that it would be impertinent to press for further explanation of the nature of her obligations, Fiske let the matter of the correspondence rest for the present. By her gracious manner Miss Brooks placed him at his ease, and on his leaving, she thanked him for his visit, telling him that she would be in Boston for a few days previous to going to Chicago, and that it would give her pleasure to see him there.

Fiske returned hopeful if not confident. What could be the nature of the obligation Miss Brooks was under? Was it a promise to some member of her family given to protect her from all "entangling alliances," or was it a bit of womanly tactfulness or reserve thrown out as a protection against a rather impetuous suitor? In either case he felt that he had made decided progress in his suit. He had enlarged his knowledge of the conditions, and he had announced his purpose, which had not been rejected. Further than this, he had found Petersham the most delightful place he had ever seen; that the Brooks family and homestead fitly represented the best type of the pure New England character; and that Miss Brooks, in her own home, appeared to much better advantage even than on the occasion of his chance meeting with her in Cambridge. He determined, therefore, to follow up his suit on the visit of Miss Brooks to Boston.



ABBY MORGAN BROOKS

(From a miniature made in 1861, shortly before her engagement to John Fiske)

Engagement to Miss Brooks

In the meantime her ideal in his mind is greatly heightened and becomes a fresh source of inspiration to his thought. He goes at his Buckle article, which we have already seen was under way, with renewed ardor, the while hoping that ere long she may read it and like it, and that he may be able to tell her that she was in no small degree an elemental force in its composition.

Just as he was leaving for his Thanksgiving visit to his grandmother, Fiske learned that Miss Brooks was spending Thanksgiving week at her brother's in Boston. He called upon her on his way to his train, but did not find her at home. He cut short his visit to his grandmother, and returned on Saturday of the Thanksgiving week. In the evening he called upon Miss Brooks and was cordially received. During the interview he asked if she was willing to explain the nature of the "obligations" to which she had referred in their conversation at Petersham. This she said she was perfectly willing to do, and it was arranged that he should call the next Monday afternoon for the explanation.

It is needless to say that Fiske was prompt in keeping the appointment, and it is quite probable that he "cut" a recitation or lecture in so doing. He found Miss Brooks knitting socks for the soldiers, a very general occupation then for loyal women, and he "lent a hand" in the unwinding of the yarn.

The "obligation" proved to be a promise to her brother John that she would not enter into cor-

John Fiske

respondence with any gentleman without his consent. The evidence is abundant that Miss Brooks was under the thoughtful care of her brothers. In the course of the conversation, she told Fiske that she had thought much over his proposal of a correspondence since his Petersham visit, and inasmuch as her mother and her brother James had no objection to her engaging in it, she had decided to ask the consent of her brother John. They parted with mutual expressions of much good-will, not again to meet until Miss Brooks's return in the spring.

Miss Brooks was delayed in getting away by reason of the departure of her brother James for Paris as Vice-Consul with John Bigelow, and she sent Fiske a brief note in explanation. He responded by sending her a copy of his article on Buckle, then just published. On Christmas Day he received a letter from Miss Brooks in which she acknowledged the receipt of the article and expressed her profound admiration of it. Best of all, she told him that her brother John gave his cordial consent to their correspondence.

Fiske was supremely happy, and in his New Year's letter to his mother of January 1, 1862, he gave her the full particulars of his acquaintance with Miss Brooks, and he wished his mother "A Happy New Year" in nine different languages!

In replying to Miss Brooks's letter assenting to their correspondence, Fiske expressed his great

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pleasure at her approval of his Buckle article, and added, "More than one sentence in it was framed with the thought that you were one day to read it; and since you like it, what more could I desire?"

He proposed, for their better acquaintance, that they exchange confidences and tell each other what they had felt, studied, thought, done; and as an evidence of the strength and sincerity of his own feeling he enclosed a letter he wrote her on the evening of their meeting at Miss Upham's the previous June — a letter he had withheld. In this letter he asked for "an occasional" friendly correspondence, and then added: —

Something almost compels me to write this, though I readily imagine how assuming I may appear in doing so. But I can sincerely say that were the state of things now to exist, of which we read in fairy fable, and were some beneficent genii to ask me what boon of all I would soonest have granted me, I should at once answer this — that you might deign to bestow upon me the favor for which I have just asked. Should you think best to refuse this request, I beg you to think no more of it. I am yours, with deep respect,

JOHN FISKE.

In the exchange of confidences which followed, there are delightful passages of self-revealing on both sides. On his part he gives, in a simple, truthful way, charming sketches of his past life from his earliest boyhood; of his father, his mother, his grandparents; his Middletown life, his schooling,

John Fiske

his religious experiences, his search for truth and his high ideals of scholarship, which are in accord with the presentation in the foregoing pages. Miss Brooks responded with equal frankness and gave an account of her life as a member of a cultured New England family in the midst of the pleasantest surroundings; of her educational training and the freedom of her mind from religious sectarianism or intolerance; and then, with fine womanly feeling, she expressed her appreciation of the upright, manly traits in his character, her deep sympathy with him in his aspirations, and her desire to follow him as far as possible in his scholarly pursuits.

Only a few, comparatively, of the fine passages in Fiske's letters can be given here. The letters as a whole are another witness to the uprightness of his character and the breadth of his knowledge, as well as to the fact that through his affections he was being stirred to still broader and nobler ideals of life and of duty.

He spent his winter vacation in Middletown, and he gives Miss Brooks the following bit of evidence that she possesses rare magical powers: —

“I brought to Middletown, for vacation study, the text of the Hebrew Bible with the theoretic comments of several old tobaccoy, lager-beery Germans, a book on Hebrew syntax, a book on Sanskrit inflections, and several other highly interesting and profitable works of a similar stamp. Just for variety, I brought along Dante and a book on zoölogy.

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Ordinarily, I should have been engrossed in these interesting works; but since I have come within the radius of your attractive power, which extends more than 1000 miles, — the *attraction* NOT diminishing as the square of the distance increases, — I feel compelled to write to you rather than to study. So Q.E.D. you must be a magician of no ordinary power.”

Miss Brooks has given him a sketch of her educational training, and he comments upon it with such ripe judgment that we forget it is not a mature, experienced mind that is speaking: —

“I supposed you must have acquired a familiarity with French, and I am very glad to know that you have studied Latin and German. After all, my dear girl, you have hit upon those dialects which are most useful and most fraught with pleasure. I mean especially French and German, though I would not discourage the study of Latin for young ladies. Still, Latin has less charms for me than the others. I have got a thorough acquaintance with the grammar and structure of it and some little facility in translating; but from what I have seen of Roman literature I think it so dry and dull, so wanting in freshness and thought and feeling, that it seems *almost* a waste of time for a young lady to study it when she *might* be spending her leisure on German — a language of *eternal* freshness, beauty, and poetry. Of all the languages I have looked into, I know of *none* which possesses such intense and growing fascination, such exquisite beauty, such exhaustless wealth of learning, thought, fancy, and emotion as the German. I will make but one

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exception to this — the dear English, which, thank Heaven, we know already. But next to your own language you can learn no other which will so richly repay you as German.”¹

Miss Brooks modestly told him that she had “a smattering of Latin, a little French and German, some geometry, a trifle of history, and more or less of current literature.” He responds: —

“That is very promising. Don’t laugh! I am in earnest. It looks chaotic to be sure, but the wand of the Positivist conjurer can bring shape and order into the mass. ‘A smattering of Latin’ is all you need for *my* purposes; ‘a little French and German’ can soon become much French and German; ‘some geometry’ can grow into a perception of the position and scope of mathematics and into wide views of space, etc.; ‘a trifle of history’ may develop, imperceptibly, into a knowledge of the unfolding of the human intellect in all ages and countries. I know I could do all this if I were with you. Besides, I could tell you ‘anecdotes’ of any or every science, which would be sweeter than fairy-legend.”

Speaking of his own linguistic acquirements he says: —

“I can’t *talk* in *any* language but my own; but I read in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon. Then with hard study I can decipher sentence by sentence

¹ When Miss Brooks was studying Italian with Mr. Fiske during their engagement, he carefully preserved in his notebook all the Italian exercises written by her; the lessons came to an end with the reading of *I Promessi Sposi*, by Alessandro Manzoni.

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Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Sanskrit; and there are some few which I have dipped into without doing much, either because they have little literature, or because I have no time for them — Zend, Gothic, Wallachian, and Provençal. Persian and Arabic I long to know, but I despair of ever having the time to learn them; there is so much to be done in other things. Before long anatomy, physiology, and kindred sciences will engross me, and I am afraid I shall have to bid a last farewell to philology.”

Even at this early age, he has a clear conception of the need of an underlying philosophy which shall unify all knowledge; hence this fine passage: —

“There are so many things to be learned, that at first sight they may seem like a confused chaos. The different departments of knowledge may appear so separate and conflicting, and yet so mingled and interdependent, as to render it a matter of doubt where the beginning should be made. But when we have come to a true philosophy, and make *that* our stand-point, all things become clear. We know what things to learn, and what, in the infinite mass of things to leave unlearned — and then the Universe becomes clear and harmonious.”

Fiske is greatly pleased to know that Miss Brooks wishes to follow him in his scholarly pursuits, and he tells her how he would have her follow him. The passage in which he tells her this is worthy of special note, in view of their intellectual companionship, as we are to see its future unfolding: —

John Fiske

“Believe me, these pursuits are sweet and pleasant as no others are: they never weary, they never satiate. Yet for all that I would not have my darling a book-worm. I would not care to have her immensely learned and wise — do you appreciate and not misunderstand the feeling? I would have her ‘follow me,’ as she says, ‘in my pursuits.’ I would have her sympathy in them. I would impart to her the ideas which keep coming into my mind. Then I would love her *so* dearly, and honor and respect her *so* deeply and truly, that the thought of her — that her blest influence would keep me ever from the wrong, and call forth all that is best and holiest in me. God grant that it may be so.”

Such a correspondence (and these extracts indicate the character of the thought which imbued the letters) led, as might be expected, to an early engagement. On the return of Miss Brooks in March, 1862, she spent a few days in Boston and the engagement was announced. On her return to Petersham the correspondence is resumed and we have further revelations of her inspiring influence upon his mind. His thought turns to the means of gaining a livelihood for them both after his graduation, and very naturally, with his youthful optimism, he looks forward to engaging in some form of literary work. The following passage reflects his state of mind: —

“I am going to work now, and the thought of you will inspire me to new exertion. I am going to

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study more thoroughly than ever the Hebrew language, history and mythology, and trace the confluence of ancient philosophies and theologies into the great stream of thought which issued in Christianity; then the rise, culmination and decline of dogmatic Christianity, till its forms fell away and the deep religion which lay beneath them was taken up by Positive philosophers and grew into the world religion announced by Herbert Spencer, the greatest of the sons of men! Won't it be glorious when I can pursue these studies with you by my side, and some day write a history of the religious development of mankind. I am confident that the happy time will come. No use in despairing. What a book I could write if you were sitting by me. 'On dira dans mille ans, "O, l'œuvre vive et tendre, brûlante encore!" Mais, c'est qu'elle était là!' Don't you believe it is so? I will show you some day."

At this time his friend Roberts had also become engaged, and the high philosophico-religious feeling that animates both young men finds expression in the following terms. After the departure of Miss Brooks for her home at Petersham, Fiske writes Roberts thus:—

"The last twelve days have been by far the happiest of my life. I know now what it is to be loved. I am at last SAVED. My religion is the religion of love. My God is the Eternal incarnate in my beloved. I hate this infernal college life of poll-debauchery which is going on about me, and look forward to the time when we shall together lead the life of the Eternal man."

John Fiske

Roberts promptly responded:—

“It is with the greatest pleasure that I read your letter, and I again feel that we both have the same noble aims, the same ambitious purposes, the same religion, the same creed — but not the same Gods. For I perceive that this religion is polytheistic, considered socially; but considered with reference to the individual worshipper, monotheistic. This is the grand reconciliation of the past with the present — the grand paradox of the universe. Man pronounces a creed which is more mystic than the Nicene — a creed wherein not three only, but an infinite number of pure and holy Beings are confounded in the person of the Eternal Woman. But the worshipper finds his Saviour, his Redeemer, his Evangel in that one Divinity of his free choice, before whom there are no other Gods.”

Space forbids further extracts from these interesting letters. The ennobling influence which entered into Fiske's soul through his engagement to Miss Brooks is apparent during the remainder of his college life, broadening his sympathies and heightening his purposes, and in the years to follow we are to trace it as an enriching influence to the very end.

In closing the account of this episode in Fiske's college life, it only remains to be added that Petersham soon became endeared to him beyond all other places; that he made occasional visits to Miss Brooks which involved heavy penalties against his “honors” for recitations and religious services

His College Rank

unduly "cut," while Petersham absorbed the principal part of his subsequent vacations. In the years to come, we shall see that in his personal calendar of memorable days, the 13th of September was always held in tender regard as the anniversary of his romantic journey to Petersham, when to him, foot-sore and weary, its beauties and its interests were first revealed.

And so, faithfully going through his college exercises, completing his essay on the "Evolution of Language" for the "North American Review," reading widely on scientific and philosophic subjects, following with great interest Grant's campaign in Mississippi as well as the movements of the contending armies around Washington, the while looking forward with radiant hope to the "large excitement that the coming years would yield" when he should be united to the object of his affections, Fiske's senior year at Harvard comes to its close, and on the 15th of July, 1863, he was graduated with his class, while the great Union victories at Vicksburg and at Gettysburg were echoing through the land.

At his graduation Fiske supposed that owing to his marks he stood near the foot of his class, and he did not care enough about the matter to find out what his rank was. Several years after, he was in the Dean's office overhauling the books, when he

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came across the records of his class and he writes his mother: —

“I found I stood 47th among 112 and my name ought to have been printed: eleven names were printed which stood lower than mine. The amount of my deductions for absences, etc., was above 5000. Omitting these from the amount, and calculating my rank on my marks *on my examinations* alone, I should have stood first for senior year, and fourth or fifth for the whole course. My average percentage for senior year was almost unprecedentedly high. But the measles spoiled it: I lost six weeks and never cared enough about it to make them up.”

CHAPTER X

FAILS TO GET POSITION AS TEACHER OR AS TUTOR AT HARVARD — ENTERS THE HARVARD LAW SCHOOL — ADMITTED TO THE BAR — HIS GENERAL READING — OPENING OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH SPENCER — MARRIAGE

1863-1864

DURING the latter half of his senior year Fiske's thought was much given to the choice of a profession. Spurning the thought of being dependent upon his mother, and at the same time desirous of being married, the letters reveal the balancing in his mind of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the two professions — law and teaching. Each was considered from two viewpoints — as a means of earning a livelihood, and as giving at the same time opportunity for the pursuit of his scientific and philosophic studies. The law was the choice of his mother, while his own preference was decidedly for teaching. Following his own inclinations, he secured before graduation commendations for his scholarship from Professors Peabody, Lowell, Child, Gurney, and Bowen, and also one from Mr. George Ticknor. He was somewhat surprised at getting a commendation from Professor Bowen, and he says regarding it: "Professor Bowen is a fellow who loves to argue and likes opposition, and

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he has taken quite a fancy to me because I pitch into him."

Thus equipped, the securing of a good position as instructor in the classic or modern languages, or in history, in a high school or in a well-established private school, did not appear to him as a matter likely to be attended with much difficulty. He also felt quite confident that his scholarship and the personal good-will of Professors Peabody, Lowell, Child, and Gurney would secure him a position as tutor at the college should he desire to begin teaching there.

We have seen that during the latter half of his senior year, he was busily engaged upon an essay on the "Evolution of Language" for the "North American Review." While finishing this essay, he sends Miss Brooks the following declaration of his purpose to push the teaching project as soon as the essay is off his hands: —

A MOVE SOON TO BE MADE
A SCHOOL
TO BE TAKEN

Wonders
To be done

But without experience in teaching, the getting of a position as instructor that would warrant his being married was not a matter of such easy accomplishment as appeared to the student Fiske. His

Choice of Profession

first contact with the conditions of practical life brought him to a distinct realization that "experience" was not wholly a philosophic term and limited to the theory of knowledge; but that it embodied something tangible, something negotiable in the interchange of social service which takes place when a person earns his living.

Before his graduation Fiske made application to Dr. Francis Gardner, the Principal of the Boston Latin School, and to Dr. J. D. Philbrick, the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, for any position as instructor in the languages or in history at their disposal. His letters of commendation and his modest, scholarly bearing secured for him courteous consideration; and it was while pressing his case in Boston that he learned of a vacancy in the High School in Charlestown, which had not then been annexed to Boston. It appears that he applied to the Committee of the Charlestown High School for the position in July. His application was well received. There were twelve applicants — all recent graduates — and he was made to feel that he was the preference of the Committee. He was much elated. The action of the Committee was postponed from time to time during the summer, and until early in September, when a fresh candidate appeared, — one who had had several years' experience in teaching, — and he was elected.

During the period of suspense Fiske was at Petersham and at Middletown, and plans for his

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marriage and for settling down to a life of strenuous labor as teacher, student, and occasional writer on the many philosophic questions that were engaging public attention, were much in his mind. It disappointed him greatly to learn — as he did during this period — that one line of teaching, which he felt sure he could fall back upon in case of necessity, was not open to him — professional work at Harvard College. He consulted Professor Gurney about applying for a tutorship. Professor Gurney frankly told him that his application would not be favorably received in the minds of some of the faculty; that his reputation as a pronounced Darwinian would preclude any consideration of his exceptional qualifications as a tutor.

It appears that during these few weeks of uncertain waiting and partial discouragement, he found a sort of solace as well as mental recreation in reading the Waverley Novels. He gave himself with perfect *abandon* to the charm of the "Scotch Romancer." After reading "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" and "The Bride of Lammermoor" he writes his mother thus: —

"I am almost or quite as much delighted with Scott as with Dickens. What a rich treat I shall have in the score or so of novels I am now going to read! In view of the delight now in store for me I am almost inclined to forgive myself for not having looked into Scott before. What a great writer he is!"

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The other reading he indulged in during this period was Spencer's "Biology," which was then appearing in numbers. He has secured a photograph of Spencer, and he gives his mother the impression the portrait makes upon his mind: —

"Spencer's face is a magnificent one. There is something not quite perfect about the mouth; but the eyes are like those of a lynx, and the grandest I ever saw. Taken all together, the effect of the head and face is as imposing as Newton's; while at the same time the expression is gentle, humorous, and lovable, in the extreme."

We also get from the letters of this waiting period other glimpses of the great Civil War struggle, particularly what followed in the wake of the decisive victories of Vicksburg and Gettysburg — how Boston and Cambridge were alive with rockets and candles; how the draft riots in New York made Fiske apprehensive for his mother's house there; how the draft was being enforced in Cambridge; how Fiske had escaped, while a "secesh" classmate who had ridiculed Lincoln and had jeered at "Mr. U. S. Grant," had been drafted; and how "Copperheads," believing that Lee would capture Philadelphia, had bought gold at \$1.45 which they were now selling at \$1.28.

Failing to get a position as instructor in a high school, and finding that he was *persona non grata* for a tutorship at Harvard, Fiske realized that he must look to some other profession than that of

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teaching as a means of support and that his marriage might be indefinitely postponed. He now turned his attention seriously to the law. All through his college course his mother and Mr. Stoughton had held before him the study and practice of the law as a proper sequence to his collegiate studies. He had, however, steadily refused to entertain the thought of giving up the pursuit of scientific knowledge in the very interesting era that was opening before him.

But now that he was graduated and found himself facing the question of a self-supporting profession, with the desire of being married uppermost in his mind, and with the profession of teaching not practically available to him, he turned to the consideration of the law as offering the best way out of the difficulties that confronted him. He reviewed the whole situation calmly, and after consulting with Professor Gurney and Judge Curtis, he writes his mother, under date of September 19, 1863, — two days after the Charlestown decision, — as follows:—

“As soon as I have thought things over a little and discussed with Abby, I want to come to New York, if it is convenient, and talk with both you and Mr. Stoughton. Writing is a poor means of communication. I am quite sure that my present views will please you and Mr. Stoughton; and Mr. Gurney thinks it of the first importance that I go to New York in person as soon as I have seen Abby. Don't telegraph for me, but let me take time and be mysterious for a few days. I think,

Chooses the Law

perhaps, you will not be sorry at my failure, when you hear what it has brought me to.”

After a full consideration of the situation with Miss Brooks, and with her hearty consent, he decided to accept the law, and he went to New York to see his mother and Mr. Stoughton.¹ He was received with special cordiality. His decision was highly commended, and he was encouraged to think that the law, in some of the higher phases of its practice, would afford ample scope for the employment of his eminently philosophical and judicial mind. That Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton were

¹ In this connection the following letter from Judge Curtis to Mr. Stoughton is of interest: —

BOSTON, *September 22, 1863.*

Dear Stoughton, —

Some time last spring we had a conversation about the choice of a profession for John, and I then told you, if I remember, quite decidedly that I did not think he had best study law. My reasons, I believe, were, that I thought he was better adapted for a teacher, a profession now of much importance and of increasing consideration. I have lately had some further means of judging, from intercourse with him and conversations with Roberts about him, and I think I ought to write to you and say that I believe I expressed too confident an opinion, and that I am inclined to change it. I should trust Roberts's opinion rather than my own. From conversation with him I suppose he is getting much inclined to study law. His friend, Professor Gurney, strongly advises it, and Roberts is very much of the same opinion. And having reflected a good deal upon it, I certainly should not dissuade him if I would be asked what my opinion is. I have therefore thought I ought to write to you and say that you should not be influenced by *anything* I have heretofore said to the contrary.

Yours always,

B. R. CURTIS.

E. W. STOUGHTON, ESQ.,
NEW YORK.

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greatly pleased at the turn his thought had taken is evident from the fact that they made ample provision for his taking a two years' course of study at the Harvard Law School, at the same time assuring him that on his admission to the bar — for which the course at the Law School was a preparation — he should have their hearty assent to his marriage.

Fiske returned to Cambridge in a happy state of mind. He now had a definite purpose before him, the accomplishment of which was to take precedence of all other interests. His entrance at the Law School bears date of October 7, 1863.

As the Harvard Law School was at this time the leading law school of the country, a glance at its course of study and its requirements is not without interest. The course of study embraced "the various branches of the Common Law and of Equity; Admiralty; Commercial, International and Constitutional Law, and the Jurisprudence of the United States." There were but three instructors or professors, and the instruction was mainly by lectures. Students elected their own lines of study, could enter at any time and without examination; and upon the certificate and recommendation of the faculty — and on payment of all dues to the college — could receive, without any examination whatever, the degree of Bachelor of Laws. The only requirement was with reference to the degree, and this was that eighteen months' study of the law

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should be the condition of its award. There seems to have been a genial "go-as-you-please" air about the whole school.

The letters to his mother give many incidents connected with his settling down to his new line of work — such as arrangements for convenient study, allotment of hours to his legal studies, his enthusiasm for these studies, his provisions for scientific, historic, and philosophic reading, as well as for incidental work. We will note a few of them.

During the latter half of his senior year we saw him writing his essay on the "Evolution of Language." The essay was published in the "North American Review" for October, 1863, and he received as payment for it the very moderate sum of forty dollars. This money he appropriated to his convenience in working, and he gives his mother the particulars as follows: —

"My desk came yesterday. It is the most beautiful piece of furniture almost that I ever saw. I take the more pride in it that it is peculiarly the fruit of my own brain. In the first place, I paid for it — within \$3 — by writing that article; and only, I designed the whole thing, leaving nothing to the cabinet-maker but to put my ideas into wooden shape. I take more pleasure in it than in almost any chattel I ever possessed."

In another place he tells his mother that he has "got a Worcester's Dictionary, for in reading law, a lexicon is an absolute necessity. I have occasion

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to use it at least two dozen times a day. I had no English dictionary before."

That he began his new line of work in his usual systematic way is shown by his general plan, which he gives as follows: —

"My plan is to study law from 8 A.M. to 4½ P.M., then go to the gymnasium and bowling alley till 6, and then have the evening for side study. As soon as I get a little more settled, I shall set apart some special time every week for writing letters."

What was the nature of his side study is partially revealed in the following incidental passage: —

"George ¹ has been here all the afternoon and evening, and we have been discussing a little law, and reading together about Cause and Effect, and trying to ascertain the date of the passage of the Earth's perihelion through the vernal equinox."²

In the beginning, his comments on his legal studies are of interest, especially upon the classic "Commentaries" of Blackstone which came first in his order of legal study. In an early letter to his mother, he says: —

"Since Wednesday morning I have been steadily engaged on Blackstone, the first volume of which I shall finish to-morrow. Then I shall commence Story on Bailments and read it and Blackstone to-

¹ His friend George Litch Roberts.

² In a letter to Miss Brooks, referring to this astronomical calculation, he says: "We found the year, viz. 3987 B.C., but couldn't succeed in ascertaining the *exact day*."

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gether. I am perfectly enraptured with Blackstone. I scarcely ever read anything so interesting in my life. I get so engrossed in it that I can hardly bear to leave it to go to bed. I am inclined to think that this notion of the law being 'dry' is all humbug, and that I shall find it as attractive as any study I ever pursued."

And a few days later he writes: —

"I have been working hard at law all this week — have got well along in the second volume of Blackstone, and by to-night shall be half through Story on Bailments. I have also read 'Rob Roy,' which probably closes my account with Scott for the present — barring his remaining 'Tales of a Grandfather.' I never knew what I was talking about when I professed a dislike for the law. The subject of 'Contingent Remainders,' is said to be one of the driest in the whole science, but from what I get of it in Blackstone I think it perfectly fascinating; and as for Bailments, it is as pretty reading as Trigonometry."

To Miss Brooks he writes in the same strain: —

"I am really getting in love with the law. My scholarly habits are beginning to tell. Instead of taking it up with a listless dilettante air like those fellows who don't know how to study, I am going right into it just as I have been wont to go into other things 'head over heels.' I think I have got into my true sphere now."

By the end of October Fiske is completely settled in his former student rooms, Holyoke Place, Cam-

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bridge, and is fully "squared away" in his attack upon the law, the while keeping up his scientific, historic, and philosophic studies; and at the same time watching with intense interest the movements of the contending armies in Virginia and eastern Tennessee.¹ From the letters we have these further glimpses of his state of mind, his surroundings, and his manner of working.

In a letter to Miss Brooks he says: —

"The day is perfectly divine, and the sunlight just beginning to creep in at the bay-window on the plants, looks so mild and dreamily beautiful that it makes me feel perfectly happy — like one of Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters. I think myself in that blessed land —

'In which it seemed always afternoon.'

"These beautiful October days are the pleasantest in the year to me. Now that I have begun to quote poetry, and since I am smoking my after-dinner pipe, let me quote Scott's exquisite lines about tobacco: —

'The Indian leaf doth briefly burn;
So doth man's strength to weakness turn;
The fire of youth extinguished quite,
Comes age, like embers dry and white.'

And to his mother he writes: —

"I am all alone; nobody comes to hinder me, and so the coast is clear. I mean to make it a rule to read

¹ To Miss Brooks he sends diagrams of the military movements in the two fields of operation.

Visited by E. L. Youmans

one volume of Law and one volume of Science or History every week, except when I write instead of extra reading. This can be done in 6 hours per day for Law, and 4 for Science. I am going to study like a biquadrated Joseph Scaliger."

But his quiet life as an isolated student at law was not to continue. His two essays — the one on Buckle and the other on "Language" — had attracted the attention of thoughtful minds in England and at Cambridge, and it may properly be said that the progressive thought of the time sought him out, and in two notable ways that had a marked effect upon his young, expanding mind. The manner in which his quiet student life was invaded is given in a letter to his mother, November 2, 1863. The letter covers five closely written pages, and evidently was written at different times. He writes:—

"I have a great deal to say and must be brief on each subject. Youmans, the author of the Chemistry, has called upon me. He got Buckle republished in this country, was attracted by my article, and tried to discover the author, but could n't. He knows Spencer, Lewes, Mill, Tyndall, Huxley, Bain, Lyell, Morell, and all the great thinkers. He told Spencer that my article on Buckle was the ablest one that had been written on that subject. Spencer wanted to see the article, and told Youmans to hunt up the author by all means. Lately Youmans saw my last article, found out who wrote it, and came out to see me. He wishes me to write to Spencer *at once* and says that both Spencer and

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Lewes want to know the author of the Essay on Buckle. He tells me to send Spencer both articles, and await a reply.

“Youmans manages the publication of Spencer’s serial. He is going to issue an edition of Spencer’s Essays and wants me to write an Introduction for it, which I have agreed to do — a popular thing, you know, about ten pages, for American readers.

“Youmans promised to send a copy of Draper’s work,¹ and if he thinks to send it, I think I can write an article on it in time for the April number of the ‘North American Review.’ Youmans came out and spent the afternoon with me yesterday, and George and I went in and took supper with himself, wife and sister at the Parker House.”

Fiske interrupts his narrative of Youmans’s visit to speak of the change of editors of the “North American Review,” and what the change signifies to him.

“The ‘North American’ has again changed hands. Peabody is superseded by C. E. Norton and J. R. Lowell. Norton has just sent down to me to come and see him at once, for he wants me to keep him supplied with critical notices and also to write an article whenever I have time. The ‘Review’ is going to give double pay, viz: \$2. a page instead of \$1.00. Of course I shall accept. I am going over to see him as soon as I have mailed this. I think I am being taken up in great style. Bully! is n’t it?”

¹ *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, by John William Draper, M.D., LL.D., Professor of Chemistry, University of New York.

Visited by E. L. Youmans

That the visit of Youmans was a predominating influence in his mind, and that Youmans gave him much interesting information in regard to the personnel of his English friends, is evident from the closing paragraphs of this letter, where the following particulars in regard to Spencer, Lewes, and George Eliot are abruptly introduced:—

“Spencer is forty-two years old — bachelor. — Lewes is forty-six, married to Marian Evans; a big imperturbable Englishman; has written ‘History of Philosophy,’ ‘Comte’s Philosophy of the Sciences,’ ‘Life of Goethe,’ ‘Philosophy of Common Life,’ — (his *chef d’œuvre*) ‘Studies in Animal Life,’ ‘Seaside Studies’ — the last I have read two or three times — also a Spanish drama, ‘Ranthorpe,’ a novel, and several dramas. He is now writing a ‘History of Science.’ Mrs. Lewes has made \$35,000 off of ‘Romola.’

“Spencer has been a Civil Engineer by profession — has never been to college but is by all comparison the most learned man living. His power of concentration is so intense as to be dangerous, for it brings the blood rushing to the head so that he has to desist from work and go out and play. He is six feet high, rather slender, very graceful, prodigious head, quite bald, voice very melodious and rich; temperament very nervous and excitable. Youmans calls him the kindest and dearest old fellow that ever lived; says his conversational powers are absolutely miraculous; most magnetic man he ever saw. Takes great interest in our war and sides with the North. Gets mad if anybody says a word for the South! bangs into the London *Times* and the

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aristocracy for their course in the matter. Youmans says all the scientific men abroad are for the North. Nobody for the South but old fogies like Brougham."

Youmans was a very inspiring man. His life had been a struggle against obstacles that would have daunted an ordinary mind. Born into a family life where prudent living was a necessity, where good literature was common, and where serious thinking on questions of social life and duties prevailed, he early became imbued with high ideals of social serviceableness. Just as he was preparing for college he became afflicted with partial blindness, which at times became total, and which made consecutive, persistent study impossible. He never recovered from this affliction. Notwithstanding such a heavy physical handicap he struggled bravely on in his pursuit of knowledge; and at the age of thirty he had become, through his own exertions, one of the best-informed scientific men of his time. He then thought to put his knowledge to use; and through lectures, essays, and textbooks, he became, in a national sense, an "Interpreter of Science to the People."

In 1860 he was among the first persons in America to recognize the significance of the new school of thought rising in England and crystallizing around the scientific researches of Lyell, Huxley, Tyndall, Faraday, Grove, and Darwin, with its philosophic culmination in Spencer's Law of Evolution. Nor

Visited by E. L. Youmans

was he slow to perceive the bearing of this thought upon theology, upon education—in fact, upon all the interests of social well-being. His wise counsels induced the eminent publishing firm of D. Appleton & Company to undertake the publication in America, on a copyright basis, of the works of these eminent English scientists. This led to a visit to England by Youmans in 1862 and to his personal acquaintance with the whole group of English scientists and thinkers who made the middle period of the last century the most memorable in the history of science. His intelligent enthusiasm won their respect, and he returned with assurances of their hearty coöperation in his efforts to make science a fundamental feature in the education of the people.

It was while engaged in various projects to this end that he fell in with Fiske's two essays mentioned above. He saw at once that here was an American scholar whose erudition was of full measure, and who was gifted with remarkable powers of lucid exposition. Youmans saw the need of such a thinker and writer properly to present the new philosophy of science to the American public, and he sought out Fiske, as we have seen.¹

This visit of Youmans was the beginning of a warm personal friendship between the two men, which had no interruption until the death of

¹ In his endeavor to find the author of the two essays, Youmans made inquiry of a clergyman in Boston, and was told that "they were written by a young atheist in Cambridge, named Fiske."

John Fiske

Youmans in 1887. In the years to come, we shall see them working side by side in the propagation of ideas common to both, with Fiske's fine tribute to the memory of his friend when that friend's hand was still. At present we should note two things: that this visit is the first substantial recognition of his thought that has come to Fiske outside his own personal circle; and also, that it brings to him direct personal knowledge of the group of English scientists and thinkers whose thought was so largely influencing his own, and in so sympathetic a way, that he feels that in support of the higher phases of his own thinking, friendly hands are stretched out to him across the sea.

Norton's request for contributions, and Fiske's visit to Norton, which followed at once, were only a little less gratifying to Fiske than the visit of Youmans. The "North American Review" had long been the representative organ of the best scholarship in America; and now that its editorial control had passed into the hands of such scholars as James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton, a personal editorial request for contributions was one of the most flattering recognitions an American scholar could receive.

In his call upon Norton, Fiske was received with such courtesy and marked appreciation that the call insensibly lengthened to a visit. The conversation ranged over a wide variety of subjects in classic and mediæval history, literature, and art; it also

Visits Charles Eliot Norton

covered the general principles of criticism applicable to the interpretation of life both in the past and the present. In this delightful atmosphere, Fiske for the time being forgot all about the law, and yielded himself without reserve to the simple yet helpful way in which Norton bore himself as scholar, critic, and adviser. In after years Fiske referred to this visit as one of the most helpful incidents in his life. We shall see later that some thirty years after Norton also held a distinct and pleasant remembrance of this interview.¹

These visits of Youmans to Fiske and of Fiske to Norton, occurring almost simultaneously, were significant events in the life of Fiske. He was not yet twenty-two years of age. His intellectual output had been but incidental in his college life, and yet it was of such mature character as to attract the attention of leaders of thought in England and America. His gratulatory remark, therefore, to his mother, that he thinks he is "being taken up in great style," was only the expression of a naïve youthful enthusiasm fully warranted under the circumstances. The letters are absolutely free from all

¹ As this paragraph is being written, — October 22, 1908, — the obsequies attendant upon the close of the life of Charles Eliot Norton — scholar, teacher, and eminent citizen — are being paid. Among the many tributes to his memory it is to be regretted that none can come from the scholar and historian whose advent into literature Norton so cordially welcomed forty-five years ago. What Fiske would have said of Norton to-day would have been a scholar's appreciation of a scholar, with a historian's estimate of eminent citizenship, expressed in language befitting the subject and the occasion.

John Fiske

pedantic conceit. With his mother he is perfectly open and frank because he wishes her to share in every honor that comes to him.

From this time forward we have to recognize in Fiske's mind a growing sense of "touching elbows" in the great world of thought he saw surging around him, but before tracing further the interesting phase of his philosophical activities, we must follow him in his legal studies for the next few months, as they were the dominating consideration in his life at this time.

These studies, as we have seen, were given the complete right of way in his allotment of study hours, and in his letters to his mother and to Miss Brooks there is revealed a Boanerges sort of energy in his manner of pursuing them. To Miss Brooks he writes: "I am in the highest imaginable spirits: nothing agrees with me like a regular furious set-to at Books." He did not find the various legal textbooks as easy or as entertaining reading as the classical "Commentaries" with which he began. Yet no subject daunted him. All the required textbooks were taken up in order and plunged into with perfect *abandon*, their special points mentally digested and put in place in his orderly mind. His comments on some of the textbooks through which he waded are many, but most of them are without special interest to-day, owing to the changes that have taken place in recent years in the courses of study in the leading law schools of the country. It can be

His Legal Studies

said, in a general way, that he took the "Commentaries" and the works on "Contracts" and on "Maritime Law" with delightful ease, hiving much philosophic thought therefrom; that while he regarded the subject of "Notes and Bills" as clearly presented, he yet found "that 1300 pages of endorser and endorsee, acceptor and payee, grantor, etc., etc., gets rather insipid before it is all read"; that he found the textbooks on "Real Property" "the very salts and senna of reading" — one of which so completely exhausted his patience that he characterizes it as "detestable: the style is clumsy, inelegant, ungrammatical, lame, feeble, muddy, inaccurate, systemless, metaphysical, ambiguous; while the thinking is but a little more lucid than the style."¹

But no irritation over the subject-matter of his legal studies could check his steady progress to their mastery for the immediate end he had in view — his admittance to the bar and marriage. The two years' course of study at the Law School was de-

¹ To Miss Brooks he sends, in a playful way, the following extract from one of his legal textbooks — a bit of feudalism — as a sample of the "nice reading" he finds in his legal studies: —

"The tenant cannot in an avowry avoid the lords possessory right, because of the seizin given by his own hands. This writ does not lie for tenant in tail; for he may avoid such seizin to the lord by plea to an avowry in replevin. The writ of mesne lies when upon a subinfeudation the mesne lord suffers his tenant paravail to be distrained upon by the lord paramount. In such case, the tenant shall be indemnified by the mesne lord; and if he make default therein, he shall be forejudged of his mesnality, and the tenant shall hold immediately of the lord paramount."

John Fiske

signed as a proper preparation for admittance to legal practice, and it was embodied in some thirty-seven volumes of legal lore. After six months' study Fiske saw that he could compass the course in much less than the allotted time — in fact, within nine months! This accomplished, he regarded his admittance to the bar assured, and then the way was clear to his marriage in the following autumn. With this plan in mind, and to guard against any misunderstanding of the condition attached to his marriage, he had the condition of his admittance to the bar distinctly reaffirmed by both Mr. Stoughton and his mother. This secured, he bent himself unreservedly to his legal studies for the next three months. His scientific and philosophic studies are much curtailed. His critical and essay writings are entirely given up, and he gives graphic pictures of his ploughing his way through such works as Abbott on Shipping, Stearns on Real Actions, Stephens on Pleading, Greenleaf on Evidence, Story on Equity Pleading and Jurisprudence, Long on Sales, Byles on Bills, etc. — the course closing with the eminently practical and entertaining work, the General Statutes of Massachusetts.

To be examined for admittance to the bar, it was necessary that he should be recommended to the examining board by some reputable lawyer. Fiske thought of Judge Curtis for a sponsor: but would the Judge recommend him on the basis of *nine months'* preparation? He sounded the Judge by

Admitted to the Boston Bar

asking if it was possible to pass the examination with a year's study. The Judge very positively assured him it was not — such a thing had never been heard of, and the examination was much more thorough than formerly. Fiske saw he could get no assistance from the Judge in his project. Not at all disheartened, he took another method of approach. He got from Professor Parsons, of the Harvard Law School, a certificate of membership, attendance, general character and intelligence; and through his friend Roberts was introduced to Judge George White, of the Probate Court. Judge White, upon being told of Fiske's college training, his literary work, and his having taken the two years' course of reading at the Law School, very readily consented to propose him for examination and admission to the Boston Bar. What followed is best told in Fiske's own words, in a letter to his mother under date of July 13, 1864: —

“I was admitted to the Bar Monday morning. Last week Tuesday, I went into Court and passed an eight hours' written examination, answering every question at length, and correctly. There were 39 questions. I was then told to come in Monday, and learn the result. On Monday morning I was admitted, took the oath of office, and received my certificate—Judge Russell saying I had passed ‘a most excellent examination.’ I did not expect to be examined in writing, or on Tuesday; but supposed that the Judge would appoint some attorney to examine me orally, on Wednesday or Thursday.

John Fiske

However, I am glad that it was in writing, on the whole, for I was thereby enabled to work up my answers into better shape. I felt dreadfully tired. I feel as if I could bid good-bye to Law with goodwill until October."

He duly signs this letter—"John Fiske, Attorney at Law."

The condition precedent to his marriage having been fully complied with, preparations for this important event in his life engrossed his attention to the exclusion of all else—save the reading of Scott's novels—during the remainder of the summer of 1864. Before following him to this long-looked-for consummation of ennobling companionship, we must return to the previous November and trace what followed from Dr. Youmans's visit to Fiske and Fiske's visit to Norton—in other words, take note of some of the things that Fiske did in those hours for side study he had so carefully reserved from his legal studies.

His letters and his record of his reading show that during the following winter and early spring his mind was as active along the main lines of scientific, historic, and philosophic thinking as ever—as active as though he knew not law. The following titles of some of the works he read show that he ranged over a wide variety of subjects, while his letters make it clear that he read thoughtfully, and always with a definite purpose. Among the works read were Huxley's "Man's Place in Nature";

Side Study and Reading

“Authority in Matters of Opinion” and “Observation in Politics,” by Sir George Cornwall Lewis; Maine’s “Ancient Law”; Irving’s “Mahomet and his Successors”; the Korân; several volumes in Italian, including Vico’s “Scienza Nuova”; Mill’s “Political Economy”; Weiss’s “Life of Theodore Parker”; Youmans’s “Chemistry”; Draper’s “Intellectual Development of Europe”; Renan’s “Vie de Jésus”; “Autobiography of a Dissenting Minister”; and he read again the works of Spencer and of Buckle.

The breadth of Fiske’s thought at this time is indicated by his giving attention, in this “storm and stress” period of his affairs, to a seventeenth and eighteenth-century thinker like Vico. We have, however, a ready explanation in the fact that Vico was one of the first of modern thinkers to give a philosophy to history based on natural law. Vico’s place in modern thought was discussed by Fiske and Norton at the visit referred to, and Norton loaned Fiske his copy of the “Scienza Nuova.” Fiske’s comments on the work illustrate his thorough method of study. He says:—

“It is the driest, obscurist metaphysicalist book I ever got hold of. Confucius is a more lucid writer. ‘Mortgages’ and ‘Remainders’ are pleasanter to peruse. And still it has many capital ideas—some of them quite Maine-y-Cornwall Lewisy—enough to keep me from throwing down the book, even while I curse at its clumsy phraseology.”

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During the winter Fiske was giving serious thought to a rationalistic philosophy of human history, with the idea of embodying his thought in a review of Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe." In his search for this philosophy he had better rewards than anything he found in Vico. One of the first thinkers of this period along the lines of ethical and jurisprudential evolution was Sir Henry Sumner Maine, whose profoundly thoughtful essays on "Roman Law" and "Ancient Law" were not only the most important contributions ever made by any Englishman to historical jurisprudence; they were also extremely valuable contributions to the doctrine of Evolution in its application to human society.

It might well be expected that the thought of Sir Henry Maine would find a hearty reception in Fiske's expanding mind. What really occurred is given in a letter to Miss Brooks written immediately after reading Maine's "Ancient Law." He writes: —

"I have passed through an Era, and entered upon an Epoch in my life. Thursday evening I began Maine's 'Ancient Law,' and read it all day New Year's, finishing it at exactly twelve in the evening. No novel that I ever read enchained me more. I consider it almost next to Spencer. It has thrown all my ideas of Law into definite shape. It has suggested to me many new and startling views of social progress. It has confirmed many new generalizations. I scarcely ever read a work so exceedingly

Side Study and Reading

suggestive. In fact it *suggests* far more than it *says*. Almost every proposition in it may be made the foundation of a long train of thought. But what it hints at, what it expresses, is wonderful.

“He lays open the whole structure of ancient society; penetrates into the ideas of primitive men; discovers the origin of International Law; explains the notion of succession to property, and shows how wills arose; points out the origin of the idea of Property; shows the progress of the idea of Contract and of our moral notions of Obligation; shows how Criminal Law has grown up; illustrates the progress of men’s ideas of Justice; lays bare the whole structure of the Feudal System, and exhibits the condition of society in the Middle Ages; traces the history of Roman jurisprudence; shows up the social condition of India, Russia and Austria; explains the influence of Roman law on theology, on Morality and on Metaphysics; shows the way in which national thought depends on its language — O, my dear! it is perfectly GLORIOUS! I am going to read it over and over until I know it by heart.

“And I am going to get you so posted up that you can read it. Years of study are richly rewarded, when they enable one to experience such an intellectual ecstasy as I felt New Year’s day! When I came out to dinner and heard the fellows talking the small-talk — the *stuff* that people talk when they have nothing in them to let out — you can’t imagine how dreadfully low and worthless their pursuits and ideas seemed to me. O, my dear! there is nothing in this world like SCIENCE; nothing so divine as the life of a scholar!”

John Fiske

It was with his review of Draper's work in mind that he also read at this period "Irving's Life of Mahomet and his Successors," and also the Korân, suggested by Draper's laudation of Saracenic science, social well-being, toleration, and culture, in contrast to the ignorance, squalor, immorality, and persecution that prevailed throughout Christian Europe during the Dark Ages. Fiske did not write his contemplated essay on Draper, but the thoughts he gathered while holding the subject in mind he utilized later in his essays on "Rationalism" and "The Laws of History." Here it is interesting to note the effect produced on his mind by the reading of the Korân. Writing to Miss Brooks he says:—

"I have nearly finished the Korân, and though it is a tedious piece of reading, requiring a great deal of patience and attention to wade through its intricate oriental sentences—yet I cannot help being amazed at its wonderful eloquence, its sublime poetry and its lofty morality, as well as its extensive knowledge of Eastern traditions.

"Mohammed must have been one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived to have composed such a book, without knowing how either to read or to write. That he did compose nearly all of it, can hardly be doubted. The work bears every evidence of genuineness. To any one that has read it, it is easy to see how the Arabians must have looked upon him as inspired, or even how he might well have deemed himself so, without having recourse to any of the old theories of his being an impostor.

The Korân

"I expect to finish it on Monday; I am glad that I have read it; for I can now appreciate the history of the Arabs far better than before. Our ideas of Mohammedanism which we get from its enemies mostly, are extremely distorted and falsified. People don't scruple to lie about it. The Korân is continually accused of being sensual. On the contrary it is as free from sensuality as the New Testament; and far more so than the Old Testament. Its ethical tone is not quite equal to the New Testament; but much higher than the Old. On the other hand, as a specimen of sublime composition it excels the New Testament, but falls short of the poetic books of the Old. But when I consider it as the work of one man, and that an untaught man, then am I stupefied at the magnitude of the genius which produced it."

The wide variety of his interests is reflected throughout the letters. Intellectually he seems to have been busy every waking hour of the day, and yet there does not appear to have been any hurry or confusion in the steady working of his mind.

He is guiding Miss Brooks in a course of reading in ancient history, and the following are among the suggestions he gives her; — they show how orderly his historical knowledge is in his own mind.

"CANON OF BELIEF

"All Roman history previous to the invasion of Italy, by Pyrrhus, is largely myth, legend, and fable. Authentic contemporary records begin with Pyrrhus. This has been decisively proved by Sir

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G. C. Lewis since Arnold wrote. I do not mean that early Roman history is all false, but that it is very unreliable."

And here he counsels her in a way that reflects the scope and accuracy of his own historic knowledge: —

"Yes, read your Roman history next, if you like. As a general rule it would be best to read Greek history first; but it is *always best* to read what we feel most in the mood for. Study can't be governed by recipes.

"When you tell me how you are getting along, please tell me by the events, thus: 'I am in the reign of Henry VIII,' or wherever you may be in English history. Similarly in Greek and Roman history, where there are no reigns to go by, tell me at what war or other great event you have arrived. Any event or man mentioned at random will do, for I have them all tabulated in my mind."

And here we have a passage which reflects his deep feeling in regard to the Athenians and to Athens, apropos of Miss Brooks's reading in Greek history: —

"Their twenty-eight years' resistance to almost all the rest of Greece combined is one of the grandest things in history. I will quote the surpassingly beautiful lines of Byron to Athens in 'Childe Harold': —

'And still his honeyed wealth Hymettus yields;
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain-air;

Literary Writing

Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds —
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but *Nature* still is fair.'

"Is n't that divine? Apollo is the Sun, you know. I think that one of the most exquisite things ever written. It brings the tears even when I write it. The history and life of Athens have always taken hold of my feelings intensely. Its career is one of the sublimest things in the world's history. Were n't you deeply interested in that glorious struggle with the Persians at Marathon, at Plataea, at Thermopylae and Salamis?"

We have had occasion to notice Fiske's keen appreciation of fine thought wherever found. In a postscript to a letter to Miss Brooks we find the following gem: —

"The Vedas, inculcating forgiveness, say: —

"'The tree withdraweth not its shade from the woodcutter.' —

"Is n't this splendid? Nothing in the Bible surpasses it in my opinion. The beauty of the figure is perfectly irresistible."

Fiske's literary writing during this period was limited to two review notices — Mill's "Political Economy" and Youmans's "Chemistry." Both were written for the "North American Review." The review of Mill was marked by a clear, mature handling of a very abstruse subject, and it was accepted with cordial approval by Mr. Norton. The review of Youmans's "Chemistry" Mr. Norton declined, because of Fiske's hearty commendation

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of the new views in chemistry which Youmans had introduced into his work, — views which then were not accepted at Harvard, but which have since been *universally* accepted and have fairly reconstructed chemical science. Fiske had no difficulty in getting the review accepted by the “Atlantic,” as we shall see a little later.

But the most interesting feature of Fiske’s life at this period was his growing interest in Herbert Spencer and the opening of their correspondence. His letters to his mother show that Spencer’s personality — what he could learn of it — strongly impressed him. In one of his letters he expresses a wish that his mother would paint him a portrait of Spencer from a photograph which he sends her. Of this photograph he says: —

“The principal thing about the face is the expression of the eyes and that is given in the photograph to perfection. I think I had rather have a picture of him as good as my head of Galileo than anything else in the world almost.”

He advises his mother to read Spencer’s essay on the “Nebular Hypothesis,” saying: —

“It is the greatest production of the human intellect since the Principia of Newton. With Laplace’s own data he proves what Laplace could n’t.”

After the visit of Youmans, Fiske brooded much over the idea of writing to Spencer as Youmans had suggested. He hesitated, awed apparently by



HERBERT SPENCER

Correspondence with Spencer

the thought of Spencer's greatness. In January he received a letter from Youmans in which the latter said that Spencer had read Fiske's essay on the "Evolution of Language" with marked approval; and again he urged Fiske to write Spencer without delay. After some further deliberation Fiske wrote Spencer the following letter: —

PETERSHAM, MASS., *February 20, 1864.*

My dear Mr. Spencer: —

I have known you a long time through your writings and have felt a strong desire to become personally acquainted with you, but the fear of appearing presumptuous has hitherto restrained me from taking any steps to secure that end. This apprehension has, however, been allayed by recently-occurring circumstances.

Early in November I received a visit from Dr. E. L. Youmans, of New York, who had heard of me as the author of two Essays; the one entitled "Fallacies of Buckle's Theory of Civilization," published in the "National Quarterly Review" for December, 1861; and the other entitled "The Evolution of Language," published in the "North American Review" for October, 1863.

Dr. Youmans encouraged me to gratify my long felt desire of writing to you, and advised me to accompany my letter with the two Essays just mentioned as the most appropriate means of introduction. Both articles have fared somewhat roughly in the hands of the Editors; and especially the latter one — several entire passages were omitted by the late Editor of the "N. A. R." — an exhibition of moral cowardice none the less reprehensible because

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born of Christian narrowness, and accompanied by Christian intolerance. The most important of these omissions I have inserted in manuscript, thus restoring the Essay, as nearly as is worth while, to its original form.

The first article, written when I was nineteen years old and had but recently become acquainted with your *Discovery*, marks a transitional phase in my thought. I was brought up in the most repulsive form of Calvinism in which I remained until I was sixteen years of age. My skepticism, excited in 1858 by geological speculations, was confirmed in the following year by the work of Mr. Buckle.

At the time when I reviewed Buckle I was just passing out from Comtism. During six months of incessant study and reflection my former idols were all demolished. Having successively adopted and rejected the system of almost every philosopher from Descartes to Professor Ferrier, I began the year 1860 with Comte, Mill, and Lewes. I then favored the scheme of acquiring a general knowledge of all the sciences in their hierarchical order as laid down by Comte, which scheme was eventually carried out. I first noticed your name in Mr. Lewes's little exposition of Comte early in 1860, and the extract from "*Social Statics*" there given led me to put down my name for "*First Principles*," before there could have been as yet more than a dozen subscribers.

It is unnecessary to enter into further details. The influence of your writings is apparent alike in every line of my writings and every sentence of my conversation: so inextricably have they become intertwined with my own thinking, that frequently

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on making a new generalization, I scarcely know whether to credit myself with it or not.

I graduated at Harvard last summer and am now connected with the University as a student of Law. It is my purpose to occupy the leisure time left by my profession in working out a complete theory of the origin and evolution of Language after the manner sketched in my Essay on that subject.

Associated with me to some extent in my studies, and endeavoring to carry the same principles into Jurisprudence, is Mr. George L. Roberts, an attorney in the office of Mr. Justice Curtis.

If the articles which I now send meet with your approval, I can desire nothing better. Hoping sincerely that the encouragement and assistance which you have so long unconsciously given me, you will not think it unworthy to consciously vouchsafe,

I am, yours truly,

JOHN FISKE.

TO HERBERT SPENCER, ESQR.,
LONDON, ENGLAND.

Spencer's reply was as follows:—

29 BLOOMSBURY SQ., W. C.,
March 26, 1864.

My dear Sir:—

Excuse the delay in replying to your letter of February 20th. I have been so busy with a pamphlet that I have in hand that I have been able to attend to nothing else.

It is very refreshing to me to meet with so much sympathy as that expressed in your letter. The

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account you give of your intellectual progress from a narrow form of theology to wider beliefs is interesting; and the amount of labor and thought you have evidently gone through in the course of this change implies an unbiased search after *truth* very unusual — would it were more usual. It is a satisfaction to me to find that after traversing such wide and various fields of speculation as those you describe, you should express so decided an adhesion to the doctrines I have set forth. As your fellow-countryman, Emerson, remarks, "One's own beliefs gain in strength on finding that another's coincides with them."

Thank you for sending copies of the two essays with the manuscript additions. I had already seen the one in the "North American Review." After reviews of the ordinary unthinking kind it was pleasant to read a review which showed not only power of appreciation but also power of independent thought. Judging from the indications given in that article I doubt not that you will render important service in elaborating the doctrine of Evolution in its application to Language. By all means persevere; and encourage your friend Mr. Roberts to do the like in his department. The field is so vast a one that it requires more than one labourer to work in it.

The pamphlet named at the outset as having so much absorbed my energies since receiving your letter, is on the "Classification of the Sciences," with an appendix rebutting the current idea that I belong to the school of Comte. This will be issued here in a few days; and I hope will be issued in the United States some few weeks after you

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receive this. I will request Professor Youmans to forward copies to you, and to Mr. Roberts.

I am, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

HERBERT SPENCER.

TO JOHN FISKE, ESQR.,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,
U.S.A.

That Fiske was delighted to receive this recognition from Herbert Spencer — a recognition which, considering Spencer's habitual reserve, was remarkably cordial — the following bears testimony. The letter was at once shown to Roberts and was then sent to his mother in New York, with whom Miss Brooks was visiting, with the following hasty comments:—

“I have had a splendid letter from Spencer — hardly dare to send it by mail. Yet I will put it in with this. Give it to Abby to bring back with her when she comes. Treat it as carefully as if it were a scroll of Al Korân just *tumbled* from the Prophet's pen — which he did n't use, by the way, as he could n't write.”

Having by April fully made up his mind that he would prepare for the bar examination to be held in Boston in July, Fiske gave up all writing during the intervening time, and concentrated his mind upon his legal studies, as we have seen, with an occasional dip into his philosophical studies. His review of Youmans's “Chemistry,” which Norton declined,

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was readily accepted by the "Atlantic Monthly" and was published in the August number of that magazine for 1864 — thus becoming his first contribution to the magazine that subsequently came to regard him as one of its most valued contributors.

Reviewing Fiske's intellectual activity in its variety and its totality, during the nine months in which he was preparing for admission to the bar, one cannot but be impressed both by its quantity and its quality. His law reading speaks for itself. His general reading centering around the doctrine of Evolution reflects not only his own predilections, but also the philosophic trend of the time. An examination of the leading journals of thought during this, the middle period of the last century, shows most convincingly the great unrest that was affecting all phases of religious and philosophic thinking, arising from the then recent advances in science and their bearing upon all the interests of social well-being.

Fiske was not insensible to this great discussion. He could not be. He was surrounded by an atmosphere of doubt and speculation as to absolute verities, the like of which had never before occurred in the development of human thinking, and he was simply seeking for the truth. We shall soon see what these advances in science were that were producing such momentous changes in the development of human thought. At present we have only to note that

His Marriage

the study of the law—even under the very exceptional conditions we have been considering—could not crowd out, could hardly diminish, Fiske's activity in the pursuit of his favorite studies in science, history, and philosophy. And this statement should be made—during these months of persistent, strenuous mental labor, he was cheered, encouraged, and sustained by the ever-considerate, sympathetic affection of Miss Brooks. The state of his mind just before his examination for the bar is reflected in this passage in one of his letters: "Tell you what, my dear, Petersham hills will look pleasant, if I am a member of the bar when I next see you."

Following his admission to the bar, the letters to his mother give interesting details of his and Miss Brooks's happy coöperative work in furnishing and arranging his student rooms at Holyoke Place, Cambridge, in which they were to begin, in a modest way, their wedded life. These letters show his ever-thoughtful consideration for his mother and his grandmother.

On the 6th of September, 1864, at 11.30 A.M., John Fiske and Abby Morgan Brooks were married by the Reverend Edmund B. Willson, assisted by Dr. A. P. Peabody, at Appleton Chapel, Harvard University, Cambridge. This was the first wedding in Appleton Chapel, and Professor Paine played the organ on the occasion.

CHAPTER XI

GIVES UP LAW FOR LITERATURE — PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY — ESSAYS ON LAWS OF HISTORY — GROTE'S OPINION — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SPENCER — NEW ERA AT HARVARD — UNIVERSITY REFORM — BRYCE'S "HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE"

1864-1866

FISKE'S practice of the law was brief and uneventful. On his return from his wedding journey he sought office room with an established attorney, where, by paying a portion of the rent, he could have a desk, and thus to some extent come into touch with professional practice. He had the good wishes of a number of influential friends, and Mr. Stoughton's extensive clientage required occasional professional work in Boston. After applications in a few directions he finally secured desk-room with Edward F. Hodges at No. 42 Court Street, where on the office door his name duly appeared as "Attorney at Law." He was afterwards in the office of David P. Kimball for a time. Desiring to obtain the degree of LL.B. from the Harvard Law School, he kept his connection with the Law School as student for another year, and took part "on the wrong side" in a moot case. In July, 1865, he received his degree.

He was as methodical in his practice of the law as in his literary work, and was faithfully at his

Attorney at Law

office desk five hours a day. But clients were not forthcoming. Meantime he seems to have given himself largely to the reading of modern fiction as represented by the novels of Scott, Dickens, Hawthorne, George Eliot, Charles Reade, Dumas, Bulwer, Thackeray, and Charles Kingsley. This fiction reading appears to have been interspersed with quite a wide range of general reading in philology, history, science, and philosophy, and with very little law. His admiration for Scott and Dickens finds frequent expression, as well as his strong liking for Thackeray, Charles Reade, and George Eliot. Hawthorne he does not like at all, and he expresses himself thus — "Hawthorne's 'Marble Faun' and 'House of Seven Gables' are trash. 'Scarlet Letter' is bearable."

The record of his reading shows that the works of Spencer, Darwin, Mill, Lewes, and Lyell were read and re-read, while the letters reveal the fact that the whole tenor of his thought was centring around the evolutionary philosophy. And this fact seemed to enlarge his sympathies and interests in various directions, as a few extracts from the letters will show.

Fiske's historical reading included Prescott's "Ferdinand and Isabella," and "Philip the Second," together with Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic" and his "United Netherlands." Fiske comments upon Prescott and Motley as historians thus: —

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“I like Motley better than Prescott. He treats tyranny more disrespectfully. If a king like Philip II is a rake, a bigot, a burglar, an assassin, he calls him so, instead of his speaking of his ‘arbitrary and somewhat unscrupulous policy.’ While, on the other hand, his reverence for a great defender of human rights, like William the Silent, almost amounts to worship. Motley is a historian of the People. Prescott of Kings and Nobles: so that, although Prescott is a rather better writer, I consider Motley much more of a historian. Motley’s style is a little too jerky and mannerish, but it has vitality.”

His thought is turned to making a list of the men who should be placed in the first rank for intellectual power, and he is struck by the fact that “Florence has been the birthplace of four men of the first order of genius — Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Machiavelli; and Galileo, although born in Pisa, was of a Florentine family.”

Speaking of Shakespeare, he says :—

“I am angry because I am so ignorant of Shakespeare. I have thought of beginning at once and reading him through, interrupting Spanish history for the purpose.”

Writing of a translation of Goethe’s “Faust,” he says:—

“The prayer of Margaret to the Virgin is, in the German, one of the most heart-breaking things in poetry. I have never read it without crying aloud.

Essay Writing

The translation is as good as it could be made; but not having been done by miracle, it necessarily fails to produce the combined effect of music and meaning, of sound and sense, which the German does."

Referring to his philological studies, he says:—

"Getting a lot of languages is like getting a lot of money. You have to keep at it all the time in order not to lose your acquisitions. A word has a tendency to slip out of one's head, much as a quarter has a tendency to crawl out of one's pocket-book. With sufficient digging and scrubbing, however, I suppose that both words and quarters could be saved and accumulated."

While waiting for clients and reading discursively in various directions, Fiske's thought was centring around questions pertaining to man's sociological development and the application to these questions of the doctrine of Evolution. Two subjects along the lines of historico sociological inquiry were brought freshly before him by the publication of Max Müller's "Lectures on the Science of Language" and Lecky's "History of Rationalism in Europe." He took these two works as texts for writing two essays, entitled "Problems in Language and Mythology" and "The Conflict of Reason with Bigotry and Superstition." Both essays were published in the "Christian Examiner," the leading organ of the Unitarian denomination.

The latter essay was first sent to Norton for the "North American Review." Norton accepted it

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with marked approval "as an excellent piece of work," but, after keeping it for several months, he returned it for some changes, which Fiske, as a careful student of mediæval and modern history, could not make. This essay is especially noteworthy for its fine spirit of critical equilibrium or tolerance throughout. Having occasion to review the whole history of Christian superstition, bigotry, and persecution, he writes not at all in the spirit of a partisan, but with the fairness of an Evolutionist, who saw, beneath the perturbations of European society from the beginning of the Christian era down to the present time, the steady unfolding of ever-higher ethical ideals, as well as of conduct based on those ideals; in other words, the slow but steady metamorphosing of Christianity itself through the evolution of its own ethical and spiritual content.

During this period of waiting, Fiske reveals himself to his mother through his reading, his thought, his writing as frankly as before his marriage. On July 21, 1865, his daughter Maud was born, opening, as we shall see, through parenthood, a fresh and deeply interesting phase in Fiske's character.

Still few clients: and facing the future with a family on his hands, it appears that, during the autumn of 1865, thoughts of giving up the law and devoting himself to literature, science, and philosophy were forcing themselves on Fiske's mind. His experience of a year in an endeavor to unite the practice of the law with the pursuit of his favorite

Gives up Law for Literature

studies had shown him that the task was a hopeless one, that they had nothing in common, and that one must be given up.

But he hesitated to give up a definitely formed purpose. He writes: "My obstinacy comes in and says, 'By George, I won't give up what I have once tried, unless I have to!'" And so, at the opening of the year 1866, we find him still in doubt as to his future course — literature and philosophy or the law. His predilections were all for the former, while his respect for the wishes of his mother and of Mr. Stoughton restrained him from decisive action. But his mother and Mr. Stoughton were not unobservant. They saw his desire to respect their wishes and the uncomplaining way in which he had entered upon a course of professional life that had for him but few attractions; while his letters revealed the great activity of his mind along the new lines of thought which science was now opening for human consideration. His mother and Mr. Stoughton, therefore, clearly saw that any form of professional life that would compel him to give up his favorite studies would be a perversion of his remarkable intellectual powers, and they readily acquiesced in his proposal to give up the law and concentrate himself upon a literary life, with whatever results the future might unfold.

This decision having been reached early in 1866, in the spring of this year Fiske took his little family for a while to his grandmother's home in Middle-

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town, Connecticut, where amidst the scenes of his youth he could quietly get his thoughts into order and make a beginning upon the various literary projects that for some time had been shaping in his mind.

In the first place, he seems to have made a careful inventory, as it were, of his intellectual property, to see where his mental capital was most advantageously invested for productive working. He realized that while he had a fair grasp of the general principles underlying the physical, chemical, and biological sciences, he was not an original investigator in any one of them. He saw that his chief acquisitions were in the mathematical, the historical, and the sociological sciences, with a decided taste for philosophic science; that is, the science of the sciences — the ultimate postulates of the human mind as to the origin and destiny of the phenomena of the physical cosmos and human consciousness, as well as to the reality that lies back of all cosmic phenomena.

This survey of his intellectual equipment was accompanied by an equally thoughtful survey of the historical and sociological sciences, wherein it appeared that the record of human history was still to a large extent under bondage to certain theologico-historic assumptions which denied to the various historic periods all causal sequence, and made them the unrelated, mysterious workings of a Divine personality whose methods of dealing with

The Doctrine of Evolution

humanity were forever inscrutable to the reasoning mind. Fiske's chief acquisitions were in these sciences, and he had been a careful student of Vico, Lessing, Herder, Comte, Mommsen, Grote, and Buckle in their efforts to free the historic record of civilization from its bondage to theologic dogmas. Further, he was familiar with the recent advances in the ethnological, the philological, and the economical sciences, wherein the existence of some deep-seated physico-sociological laws governing man's relations to the cosmos and to his brother man were clearly adumbrated. Again, he had come to the acceptance of Spencer's definition of life — "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations" — as the law of the organic world and the master key to all social phenomena. The doctrine of Evolution in its physical and sociological bearings meant to him the reënvigoration of human knowledge for the synthetic production of higher ideals of character and life than had prevailed in previous dispensations, and hence, the presentation of the bearing of this doctrine upon all the higher interests of humanity seemed to him to be his special vocation.

That Fiske clearly saw that his generation was passing through a memorable epoch in the unfolding of civilization, and that he realized what the doctrine of Evolution meant to the social well-being of the future, is evident from his letters and his essays, while those who enjoyed his personal

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friendship bear testimony to the radiant hope with which (in the face of much discouragement) he entered upon his task.

One thing should be specially noted here. Among scholars in America he stood practically alone in his advocacy of Evolution. The only scholar with whom he could have familiar converse on this subject was Professor Gurney, but he was too closely identified with the negative feeling prevailing at Harvard, in regard to the scientific thought of the time, to act other than as a friendly, conservative adviser. He sympathized with Fiske in his aspirations and his ideals, but he could not counsel Fiske to their advocacy. It is difficult at the present time to understand the bitter feeling the doctrine of Evolution brought forth at Harvard a generation ago. The doctrine was associated with Darwinism, or man's simian ancestry, and Agassiz stood forward as the great scientific champion of the theological dogma of special Divine creation. His word was law, in both science and philosophy; and as he had characterized Darwinism as but an ephemeral phase of English thought, and was active in championing the idea of special Divine creation throughout the organic world, the whole philosophic weight of his teaching was thrown directly against any rational philosophy of organic life, or of human history. Both were regarded as but the mysterious workings of a Divine will, and this Divine will was but an outcome from the finite mind of man. Hence,

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as we have already seen, the courses in philosophy and history were wholly unworthy of the college.

It is worth noting that at this time, while Fiske was preparing himself for a ministration a little later at Harvard which was to be one of the first steps in a significant change in all departments of the university, he was practically isolated in his thought from all the Harvard influences. And yet he was not isolated from the active world of thought that was surging around every independent, fair-minded thinker. Free to give his mind its natural tendency, he turned to the philosophy of history as offering, through the new light of Evolution, rich fields for exploration.

The first fruits of his intellectual freedom were two essays on the "Laws of History," in which he reviewed some theories of historical development recently set forth by Goldwin Smith, William Adam, John W. Draper, and Sir Henry Sumner Maine. He sent these essays to George Henry Lewes, the editor of the "Fortnightly Review," the organ of liberal thought in England, and they were promptly accepted. These essays were not republished by Fiske, for the reason that he used their main points in his subsequent writings. They are of interest, however, in tracing the development of Fiske's thought, by reason of the emphasis he put upon certain points which have since held no unimportant place in the philosophic discussion of history. These points were: —

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First, he asserted the existence of a universal law of life governing all organic phenomena — a law as operative in the development of human society as in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, a law which had been defined by Spencer as “the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.”

Second, he claimed that human history should be regarded in relation to its origins, and also in regard to its wholeness as embracing a fundamental ethical content.

Third, he denied the volitional theory of history both in regard to its being the product of man’s free will, or the product of a Divine Will, so long as the latter is limited to the finite conceptions of man—the Divine Will of theology.

Fourth, he postulated the existence of “an all-pervading, all-sustaining Power, eternally and everywhere manifested in the phenomenal activity of the universe, alike the Cause of all and the inscrutable essence of all, without whom the world would become like the shadow of a vision and thought itself would vanish” — a power far transcending any possible conception of the human mind, and whose manifestations in human history are to be truly traced only by a careful and reverent study of “the conditions of co-existence, and the modes of sequence of historic phenomena.”

In his notes for the essays there appears the following fine passage which does not appear in his text: —

“Though the history of our lives written down by the unswerving finger of Nature presents motive and volition in an ever unbroken sequence, yet the

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detached fragments of the record, like the leaves of the Cumæan sibyl caught by the fitful breeze of circumstance, and whirled wantonly hither and thither lie in such intricate confusion that no ingenuity can enable us wholly to reconstruct the legend. But could we attain to a knowledge commensurate with the facts — could we reach the hidden depths, where according to Dante,¹ the story of Nature scattered over the universe in truant leaves, is lying firmly bound in a mystic volume, we should find therein no traces of hazard or incongruity.”

In summing up the points in these two essays Fiske says: “Doubtless to many persons the views here maintained may seem all but atheistical. They are precisely the reverse. Our choice is no longer between an intelligent Cause and none at all. It lies between a limited Cause, and one that is without limit”; and he adds that the conception of a presiding Will, the product of the finite mind, “is a truly shocking conception.”

We should note the distinction that Fiske makes here, for we shall see him emphasizing it again and again in the years to come. He does not deny the existence of God. What he denies is the power of the finite mind to conceive God. What he affirms is the existence of a Divine Being transcending the power of the human mind in any way to measure or to limit. What he denies is the existence of any

¹ Dante's *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 85: —

Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna
Legato con amore in un volume
Ciò che per l'universo si squaderna.

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such limited Being as dogmatic theology has imposed on the Christian world.

The first of these essays attracted the attention of the eminent historian George Grote, who, in writing his friend Alexander Bain, under date of September 4, 1868, says: —

“The same number [“Fortnightly Review” for September, 1868] contained also an admirable article upon the ‘Science of History,’ written with great ability and in the best spirit by an American whose name I never heard before — John Fiske. I am truly glad to find that there *are* authors capable, as well as willing, to enunciate such thoughts. This article is the first of an intended pair: it contains the negative side exceedingly well handled. I scarcely dare to hope that the positive matter in the sequel will be equally good.”¹

It was while engaged upon these essays that Fiske, through his friend Youmans, heard with profound sorrow of Herbert Spencer’s contemplated abandonment of the further development of his philosophical system owing to the want of sufficient support. Fiske was stirred to prompt action in Spencer’s behalf, and he sent to the “New York World” a brief yet remarkably lucid exposition of the philosophy of Spencer with the following earnest plea for its support: —

“One of Mr. Spencer’s eminent countrymen remarks that the closing of his series of works would

¹ *Life and Letters of George Grote.*

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be a blow to English thought and a shame to English education. The disgrace would not be England's alone, but would fall more or less upon the whole civilized world. Mr. Spencer's discoveries, though the production of one country and one epoch are destined to become the heritage of all nations, and of all time and all are interested in seeing that they are not permanently brought to a close."

Fiske's thought at this time turned strongly toward Spencer personally. His deep interest in the latter's philosophy, his isolation in America as an advocate of that philosophy, together with the knowledge of Spencer's financial embarrassment in the publication of his work, all combined to produce in Fiske's mind a feeling of profound respect, if not veneration, for Spencer himself. The feeling of the two men toward each other and the difficulties under which they were both laboring in the propagation of their philosophical ideas are reflected in the sort of autobiographical letters that passed between them at this time: —

Fiske to Spencer

MIDDLETOWN, CONN., June 3, 1866.

My dear Mr. Spencer: —

I have allowed two years to elapse without writing to you, from a natural unwillingness to encroach upon your valuable time. At present, however, I have something to tell that may interest you. But first, let me say, that since my first letter to you I

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have graduated at the Law School, been admitted to the Bar, become a husband, and a father, practiced law a year, and abandoned the profession in disgust. I have made the discovery that I am, as regards my constitutional relations to my environment, an idealist and not a realist; and that in order to accomplish anything *worthy* I must not seek to quit my ideal world. I have therefore come to a quiet country town where I expect to stay (alone with my books and family) until some philological professorship or other place, which "practical" men cannot fill shall take me away. I shall devote much time to acquiring a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and Greek, as the basis of future labors; and hope from time to time to write articles, as a means both of mental training and of material support.

At Dr. Youmans's request, I recently wrote for "The World," a New York paper, a short exposition of the Law of Evolution adapted to the comprehension of newspaper readers. There is nothing remarkable in the article, but as it relates to your philosophy I send you a copy. I also sent copies to Mr. Mill and Professor Huxley, neither of whom I have the pleasure of knowing but who as I thought might be interested in it by reason of its subject.

To come to what I had chiefly in mind in beginning this letter — I hope to publish next year a volume of essays illustrative of your philosophy, entitled "Essays of Evolution," unless I can find a better title. It will consist of the following essays: I, the Evolution of Language; II, Language and Mythology; III, The Evolution of Written Language; IV, The Laws of History; V, Buckle's

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Theory of History; VI, The Positive Philosophy; VII, Ancient Science; VIII, The Influence of Rationalism. I wrote number VIII six months ago, but the Editor of the "North American Review," after enthusiastically accepting it, has returned it unpublished. It will, I trust, appear elsewhere before long and then I will send you a copy. Number IV is nearly finished and I have offered it to Mr. Lewes for the "Fortnightly." The rest all exist in embryo, except number VII, in which I may include some remarks on Mr. Lewes's Aristotle. Number V, which I think I sent you, will be greatly improved. Into number VI, I wish to introduce some considerations respecting your true relations to Comte and Mill. It seems to me that a book of this sort will not be wholly without *raison d'être*, even though it may contain but little that is absolutely new under the sun.

May I ask if you know of an English periodical which will publish an article on Positivism? I hardly dare apply to the "Westminster"; and in the "Fortnightly," also, the ground is taken up. I shall be obliged to depend to a great extent on English reviews, for the Editor of the "North American" looks askance at everything written from my point of view. It is indeed almost impossible to deal with him, and all the other periodicals here are, I grieve to say, orthodox (except the "Christian Examiner," which is pecuniarily poor).

The proposed abandonment of your series of works has filled me with consternation and sorrow, but I cannot bring myself to contemplate that abandonment as final. I live in the hope that the

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present state of things will sometime be changed and that your scheme will be ultimately completed. Whatever can be done in my humble way to excite interest in your work will always be cheerfully done, and as I grow older, I trust that I shall be able to do more than at present.

With all the deep affection and respect of a disciple, I am, my dear sir, very truly yours,

JOHN FISKE.

Spencer to Fiske

88 KENSINGTON GARDENS SQUARE,
LONDON, June 19, 1866.

My dear Mr. Fiske: —

Your letter, received the other day, gave me much gratification as one coming from so active a sympathizer was sure to do. I read it, however, not with a uniform feeling of pleasure; for some of the passages giving me an account of your personal affairs and prospects and intentions caused me some regret. Judging from my own experience I fear that you will meet with much difficulty in getting an adequate demand for the kind of writing with which you propose to occupy yourself. Besides the very limited number of periodicals sufficiently liberal to admit articles of the kind you have sketched out, there is even among such liberal ones, a very general unreadiness to receive such articles, on the ground that they are unattractive to readers. As I have myself had ample proof in the case of the "Westminster Review," it frequently and I believe generally happens, that periodicals established for the purpose of propagating liberal opinions, but presently having to struggle for existence from want of sufficient support, are prone to subordinate their

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original aims to the cultivation of a light literature that will bring more readers, and while there comes to be a great anxiety to secure lively articles, the graver articles, having for their aim the diffusion of the ideas which the periodical specially represents, come to be looked at coldly, and to be postponed or declined in favor of articles of a more popular kind.

Possibly this state of things may be less marked in America than it is here: you have a larger public interested in advanced opinions. This aspect of the matter will I fear be unexpected and disappointing to you; for you appear to imply the hope that there may be a larger sphere for philosophical writings with us, than with you. This, however, as I have hinted, is by no means the case, and I fear there will be great difficulty in getting places here for articles of the kind you describe.

Dr. Chapman, the Editor of the "Westminster," who has all along been under pressure to make as much income as he can by it, has been in the habit of obtaining a considerable proportion of gratuitous articles — articles of the graver kind being more especially those for which he is least willing to pay. This, as you may suppose, is an obstacle in the way of those who have not established relations with him. I will, however, name the matter to him — mentioning more especially the article on the "Evolution of Written Language" as one which he might look upon favorably, because it gives some promise of facts of popular interest. The only other periodical besides the "Fortnightly Review" which occurs to me as a possible sphere is "Macmillan's Magazine." I will speak to Professor Masson on

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the matter if I can see him before leaving town, and will read him the titles of the articles you propose — some of which I think he may consider available.

Thank you for the copies of papers you have been so good as to send me, as also for the labor you have bestowed on the clear expositions they contain, which will, I doubt not, be of great service in diffusing general and approximate conceptions. The volume you name would I think help very much to popularize the general doctrine as well as strengthen it by further illustrative matter. To the average mind the special applications to minor groups of the phenomena are more instructive than more general expositions; and are especially desirable as steps by which they may ascend to a comprehension of the whole. I hope, therefore, that you will be able to fulfil your intentions; and shall be heartily glad to hear that you make the book remunerative.

Respecting my own affairs to which you so sympathetically refer, you will perceive by the notice appended to the forthcoming number, that I have cancelled the notice of cessation issued with the last. An unforeseen event — the sudden death of my father — has changed my position so far as will enable me to continue my work without going on sinking what little property I possess; as I have been doing year by year ever since I began writing books. I shall therefore persevere as hitherto, and hope, indeed, after the completion of the present volume, to proceed somewhat more rapidly.¹

Very truly yours,
HERBERT SPENCER.

¹ The references in these letters to the cessation by Spencer of his work on his philosophy and its resumption do not tell the whole

New Era at Harvard

These letters are of interest as showing how difficult it was at this time (1866) to get any phase of the doctrine of Evolution before the public, even through the periodicals devoted to the propagation of liberal thought. Both Spencer and Fiske lived to see the day when anything they might write on the subject would be gladly welcomed by the leading periodicals and at the highest rate of payment.

In the meantime events were taking place at Harvard which were destined completely to change the ideals of education and the methods of instruction throughout the university. The recent discoveries in the physical and chemical sciences and their applications in the arts and the industries, the results of investigations in the physiologico-sociological sciences and their social import, the advances in historical, philological, and Biblical criticism and their bearing upon men's religious beliefs and ideas of causation, were bringing great changes in the vocations of the people and opening new avenues for scholarly research. They were also presenting human life in its sociological aspects as of supreme importance, as well as emphasizing, as never before, that the outcome of University education should bear directly upon the production of the

story. The month following these letters (July, 1866) Youmans called upon Spencer and presented him with seven thousand dollars in good securities, and a beautiful gold watch of American manufacture, as an expression of appreciation from his American friends. (See Spencer's *Autobiography*, vol. II, p.165. Fiske's *Life of Edward L. Youmans*, p. 215.)

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broadest efficiency in individual social serviceableness.

In a way, Harvard was not insensible to the onward trend of the deeper thought of the time. With men like Benjamin Peirce, James Russell Lowell, Asa Gray, Ephraim Gurney, Jeffries Wyman, Francis J. Child, William W. Goodwin, and Louis Agassiz as members of her staff of instruction, she could not be. Yet the best aspirations of her faculty were held in check or thwarted by a system of control wholly undemocratic in character, and which held the administration tied to mediæval ideals and methods of education which had been practically outgrown.

This year 1866 distinctly marks the beginning of a new era in the life of Harvard. As an outgrowth of her Puritanical foundation, the college had since 1810 been held in a sort of vassalage to an external ministerial and political control, exerted through a Board of Overseers. The duties of this Board were not well defined, nor were its prerogatives clearly established. Since 1851 the Board had consisted of the Governor of the State, the Lieutenant-Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of the State Board of Education, the President and the Treasurer of the College, and *thirty other persons elected by the joint action of both houses of the State Legislature*. The thirty persons elected by the Legislature were citizens of the State eminent in the professions and

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they represented more or less the local religious and political interests of the State. By virtue of its political creation and its vaguely defined duties, the Board assumed much authority; and often, through its affirmative and its negative action, proved a serious obstruction to needed changes in the conduct of the university, while the very nature of its local, political creation stood as a bar to any broad interest in the university on the part of its alumni.

In 1865 some broad-minded members of the alumni sought to break up this archaic ministerial and political alliance in the control of the university. They succeeded in getting an act through the Massachusetts Legislature on April 28, 1865, by virtue of which the State entirely withdrew from any further connection with the Board of Overseers, both on the part of its executive officers and through the Legislature. By this act also it was ordered, that, beginning with Commencement Day, 1866, all future members of the Board should be elected by the alumni of the college.

Accordingly on Commencement Day, July 19, 1866, the new method of electing the Board of Overseers was inaugurated; and as the alumni on this occasion held one of their triennial festivals, the orator of the day, the Reverend Frederick H. Hedge, D.D., an alumnus of the class of 1828, and a liberal-minded Unitarian clergyman, took the occasion of the coming of the alumni as an electorate

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into the government of Harvard as a fitting opportunity for offering some suggestions as to needed reforms at their *Alma Mater*.

Dr. Hedge was outspoken in his condemnation of the educational ideals and methods that then prevailed at Harvard. He described the college "as a place where boys are made to recite lessons from textbooks, and to write compulsory exercises, and are marked according to their proficiency and fidelity in these performances, with a view to a somewhat protracted exhibition of themselves at the close of their college course, which, according to a pleasant academic fiction, is termed their 'Commencement.'"

After this arraignment, Dr. Hedge pleaded for the abolishment of the whole system of marks and college rank and compulsory tasks, and for the freedom of a true university — freedom for the young men to select their studies and their teachers from the material and the personnel that was offered to them.

The address was an inspiring call to the alumni, now that they had become invested with no small degree of responsibility for the future conduct of the university, so to use their power that their beloved *Alma Mater* might "lay off the *prætexta* of its long minority, and take its place among the universities, properly so called, of modern times."

Fiske came up to this Commencement for his degree of M.A., and heard Dr. Hedge's address.

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Shortly after I met him with Professor Gurney. Fiske was delighted with the address, and was full of enthusiasm for the possible development of Harvard, now that the shackles which had bound her to the past had been broken and her alumni had become a positive force in her government. In the course of the conversation Fiske expressed the hope that Dr. Hedge's address would be supplemented by a more detailed statement of what the reform at Harvard should be, and the ground upon which it should be based. Professor Gurney then said: "John, why don't you write such a paper yourself? You can do it." "Yes," said Fiske, "but I am not sufficiently known, and I don't know where I could get such a paper published." I then said: "There is no doubt but Mr. Fields would take it for the 'Atlantic Monthly,'¹ as he is greatly interested in this whole question here at Harvard, and has arranged to print Dr. Hedge's address in the next number of the 'Atlantic.'" Professor Gurney immediately said: "John, here is your chance. You are just the man for this task. You know the conditions here and what the nature of the reform should be. Go in and identify yourself with the new movement!"

The next day I brought the matter to Mr. Fields's attention, and he was only too glad to follow up in the "Atlantic" Dr. Hedge's address with such a paper as Fiske proposed. Accordingly I

¹ James T. Fields was then the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and I was one of its publishers.

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arranged with Fiske for an article on "University Reform" of about ten pages. He sent me the article in November following, and Mr. Fields was so greatly pleased with it that, in paying for it, a substantial sum was added to the stipulated price. The article was published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for April, 1867.¹

One cannot read this article to-day without being impressed by the clear insight with which Fiske viewed the various problems of University education that then confronted Harvard and the judicial fairness with which they were brought under consideration. He defined the object of university education to be the teaching of "the student how to think for himself, and then to give him the material to exercise his thought upon." He then adds: "When a University throws its influence into the scale in favor of any party, religious or political, philosophic or æsthetic, it is neglecting its consecrated duty, and abdicating its high position. It has postponed the interests of truth to those of dogma." His appraisal of the distinctive values of the mathematical, the scientific, the historical, and the classical studies, and his adjustment of them in a well-rounded scheme of University education, were very clearly set forth, while his suggestions for introducing the elective system under the varied conditions of elementary education which

¹ My recollections in regard to this article are confirmed by Fiske's letters to his mother, written at this time.

University Reform

so seriously handicapped every freshman class at Harvard, show the thoroughness with which he had studied this very perplexing phase of the general problem.

As might be expected, he emphasized the importance of providing for fine scholarship at the university, by establishing a course of post-graduate instruction. This, however, was not, perhaps, the immediate need of the college so much as the getting a right appraisal of the undergraduate studies, with good methods of instruction. He, of course, touched upon some of the police regulations by which the undergraduate life was so absurdly harassed, but in no unfilial way — these shortcomings were simply survivals of obsolete social conditions and should be quietly brushed away.

The argument and the whole tone of the article were admirably adapted to further the object for which the best friends of Harvard were then working — a reform and not a revolution in the conduct of the university. The article was widely read, and it served a good purpose in crystallizing opinion in regard to the nature of the reform. It distinctly identified Fiske with the new movement, albeit his well-known Evolutionary views—or his Positivism, as Darwinism or any phase of Evolutionary thought was then called — tended to make him *persona non grata* to some of the leaders in the movement.¹

¹ This article, entitled "University Reform," is included in Fiske's collected works, in the volume *Darwinism and Other Essays*.

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The record of his brief literary sojourn in Middletown may well close with the following jubilant extract from a letter to Roberts concerning James Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire." This is another instance of his "striking true" in his estimates of the really fine things in literature. Under date of December 16, 1866, he writes: —

"Well, my boy, I have finished Gibbon at last, and have derived therefrom much healthful nutriment to my soul as well as to my notebooks; having made upwards of 400 notes on the 8 vols. But now, O Ζεὺς Σωτήρ! Yesterday and to-day I have had the greatest intellectual treat since I first read Maine.¹ I have one of the good old fits of enthusiasm upon me. Get, old fellow, out of the Athenæum, and read Bryce's 'Holy Roman Empire.' Cæsarism, Papacy, Feudalism, World-Empire, World-Church, Guelfs, Ghibellines, Territorial Sovereignty, mediæval philosophy, politics, religion — mediæval ideas generally — are all elucidated here as never before. It will clarify your ideas of history more than almost any book you ever read. And it is written in a charming style to boot. Worth reading once a year as we used to say of Mill's 'Logic.' Yes, sir, James Bryce, B.C.L., of Oriel College, Oxford, is one of the rising stars of the age. Do get it and read it; it can be read as quickly as Maine. By Jove, the rising generation in England is hard at work. I am eager to get hold of E. A. Freeman's 'Lectures on the Saracens.' I think of reviewing Bryce, using its principles to illustrate the late war in Germany."

¹ See *ante*, p. 286.

CHAPTER XII

THE REFORM AT HARVARD UNDER WAY — MOVES
TO CAMBRIDGE — DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL LIFE —
REVIEW AND ESSAY WRITING — DIVERSIONS —
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SPENCER

1866-1868

MEANWHILE dissatisfaction with the Reverend Thomas Hill as President of Harvard was increasing. A most worthy man in the ordinary amenities of life, and well fitted for pastoral duties, he was without any high degree of scholarship and was lacking in executive efficiency. He was therefore singularly out of place as Harvard's chief executive at this very important period in her development. The first convocation of the alumni for the election of members to the Board of Overseers gave clear indication that in the new electorate, now invested with a large degree of responsibility in the conduct of the university, there was a very positive feeling that the first step in the way of reform was the complete breaking up of the current idea that the presidency of the university was a sort of perquisite belonging to the clergy of the Unitarian denomination.

The participation of the alumni in the government of Harvard started, therefore, at the very beginning, with ideas of reform in various directions.

John Fiske

This was a development Fiske had not considered when he retired to Middletown. By the time he had finished his article for the "Atlantic," however, he was made aware by Professor Gurney and others of the rapid spread of the reform movement now that it had a *status* in the government itself of the university. He bethought himself, therefore, to return to Cambridge and establish a home in close proximity to the college, where he could be in touch with the friends of the reform movement and ready to lend a hand whenever needed. In this project he was encouraged by his friends in Cambridge. He also had the support of his mother and Mr. Stoughton as well as of Mrs. Fiske's family. Consequently the month of March, 1867, saw him very happily settled in a house of his own at 123 Oxford Street, Cambridge.

Fiske's domiciliation at Cambridge was coincident with the publication of his article on "University Reform" in the "Atlantic Monthly," and he was cordially welcomed by all the liberal-minded people connected with the university. Mr. Longfellow, Professors Lowell, Peirce, Child, Gurney, Gray, and Goodwin were very emphatic in their commendations of his article as well as cordial in welcoming him back to the social life of Cambridge.

It would be pleasant to linger over the letters of this period to his mother, in which he gives in a delightful way the details of the ups and downs



JOHN FISKE IN 1867

Moves to Cambridge

attendant upon his youthful experience in home-building, where provisions for literary work and high philosophic thinking were made coincident and harmonious with the details of his domestic social life. In the midst of all, his second child, Harold Brooks Fiske, was born.

The letters give so many touches of a purely personal character, revelations of the finely tempered soul behind the scholar and the critic, that a few extracts are in place here. After getting his family settled in the new home he writes: —

“Our house is rather a *gem* in its way, being perfectly convenient — all the rooms being very pleasant and there is lots of sunshine coming into it. It is such a jolly feeling to be in a home of my own, and back among literary men, that I boil over with good nature all the time — don't get cross at *anything*, and so get credit for being a gem of a boy! When it is really only the result of circumstances. I have thus far been up at six o'clock every morning, and have done a good slice of work before breakfast.”

In a letter a few days later he reveals his æsthetic taste. His mother had given him a sum of money as a birthday present, and in acknowledging its receipt, he writes: —

“After some discussion and contemplation I resolved to put it into something — yea even into the *one* thing — which our house lacked, to wit: a picture for the parlour chimney-piece. So after a thorough inspection of the treasures at De Vries',

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Abby and I selected a magnificent engraving; viz. Benvenuto Cellini in his workshop at Fontainebleau, showing his newly-finished statue of Jupiter Tonans to Francis I and some members of his court. The group is very grand; all the separate pieces are portraits. Cellini stands in a noble attitude in the centre, pointing to the great statue elevated on the right; his sculptor's tools and a few unfinished works lie around. King Francis and his Mistress, the Duchesse d'Etampes, sit in carved, high-backed chairs to the left, gazing at the statue just uncovered. On the back of the Duchesse's chair leans Margaret de Valois, Queen of Navarre, and grand-mother of Henri Quatre. Behind her stands her husband Henri d'Albert; by her side, Catherine de Medicis, and her husband, afterwards Henry II. In the background is the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, chief of the house of Guise. The faces are so good that I recognized most of them at once. Nothing could be finer than the *tout ensemble*; and nothing could have gone further to make our parlour pleasant and elegant."

From the very beginning of his daughter Maud's learning to talk, Fiske became a close observer of her linguistic development, and the letters are many that make mention of her naïve efforts to conjoin sound and meaning in her childish prattle. Let one instance suffice. He had already reported her use of the phrase "pick-a-wow"; he now adds:

"She has developed the phrase 'pick-a-wow' into 'peck-a-boo,' from which I think that 'pick-a-wow' was meant for picture book. I shall quote her

Domestic Life

'puttaba' for apple, as it throws some light on the origin of language. She can say 'dear' and 'papa'; but putting them together makes 'dear-wawa.' Now this change occurs regularly in Welsh compounds, and throws great light on the consonantal structure of the Aryan languages."

Fiske's reading at this period, while as discursive as ever, was yet in its general trend related to modern culture, which, by the great advancement in the sciences, was assuming a new significance in his mind. His writing at this time was confined to book reviews, many of which were really essays, in which is shown the ready command he had of his wide and varied knowledge. The more notable among these review-essays were: "The Life and Works of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing," by Adolf Stahr; Longfellow's "Translation of Dante"; Alger's "History of the Doctrine of a Future Life"; Felton's "Greece — Ancient and Modern"; Youmans's "Culture for Modern Life"; Whitney's "Lectures on Language"; Matthew Arnold's "Celtic Literature," etc.

The quality of his review writing was such as to make it in great demand, and periodicals and journals like the "North American Review," the "Atlantic Monthly," the "Christian Examiner," the "Nation," the "New York World," and the "Boston Advertiser" were solicitors for review notices of important works; so much so that during the summer of 1867, Fiske writes: —

John Fiske

"I am terribly busy to-night as usual, but must turn aside from work a minute to give you a bit of surprising news. You will be proud to hear that I have been elected a Member of the American Oriental Society. I was notified of it to-day by a note from Prof. Whitney (Prof. of Sanskrit at Yale). I was thoroughly surprised by it, not expecting anything of the sort for some years to come."

"I have had my fill of book-noticing for one while; but the end does n't seem to have come. More work is offered me than I can do. I don't expect to make a business of this transient work: but it will do for a while."

With his usual discursive reading and this review writing, and at odd times working upon the plot of ground that surrounded his house, the summer of 1867 was passed. The autumn found him well established in a home of his own, and free to work out the various literary projects that were germinating in his mind. His social surroundings were indeed pleasant. William D. Howells, recently called to the editorship of the "Atlantic Monthly," was a near neighbor. Norton's delightful home was not far away. Longfellow, Lowell, Child, and Asa Gray among others had called, and had welcomed him and Mrs. Fiske to their homes: while Gurney, J. M. Peirce (son of Benjamin Peirce), N. S. Shaler, Chauncey Wright, William James, the psychologist, John K. Paine, the eminent composer, and his faithful Middletown friend, George L. Roberts, were frequent visitors. In this widely

Wide Reading

cultured atmosphere Fiske found not only generous appreciation, but also much stimulating thought.¹

The letters for 1868 reveal still further Fiske's simple, happy domestic life, his methodical way of working, his constantly expanding thought, his great productiveness, and his steadily growing reputation.

The expanding minds of his children and their childish ways are a constant delight, as well as of deep interest to him. We get charming glimpses of little Maud — especially of her incursions into his library, and her arrangements of his books according to her childish fancy instead of their subject order — and his treatment of her visits as pleasant episodes in his daily routine of work, rather than as troublesome interruptions.

Fiske's reading this year covered more than a hundred volumes in English, French, and German, comprising the latest thought along the lines of history, philology, physiology, the sciences, and philosophy, with a generous mingling of general

¹ One incident connected with this period is worth relating. Fiske and Chauncey Wright — the best of friends — while in agreement on the question of Darwinism, were in apparent opposition in regard to many points in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Their discussions were many and were often prolonged to a late hour. One summer evening the discussion had been exceptionally vigorous; and when Wright started for home, Fiske set out to accompany him a little way. Fiske walked to Wright's gate, and the discussion not being finished, Wright walked back to Fiske's gate. Not having then arrived at any concluding point, the two started again for Wright's home — and this gate-to-gate discussion was continued until the light of a new day forced its postponement.

John Fiske

literature. Complementary in a measure to his reading was the production of some twenty essays or book reviews, the more notable of which were essays on "Liberal Education" and "Myths of the New World," published in the "North American Review"; and reviews in the "New York World" of Lewes's "History of Philosophy," Motley's "United Netherlands," Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" (in which Fiske's religious ideas are clearly indicated), Froude's "Short Stories on Great Subjects," Freeman's "Norman Conquest," Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," Taine's "Philosophy of Art," and George Eliot's "Spanish Gipsy."

Some of these papers were republished by Fiske in his volumes of essays; all were characterized by a wealth of learning bearing upon the several subjects treated, and also by a spirit of judicial fairness in statement and discussion that reminds one of that master of critical style, Sainte-Beuve.

We have also to note that at this time there was shaping in his mind the project of a work about the size of the first volume of Buckle's "History of Civilization in England," to be entitled "Studies in Philosophy"; a work "that would be an illustration, though by no means a mere exposition, of the views of Mr. Spencer."

During the latter part of the year Fiske indulged in a bit of polemical criticism that attracted no little attention at the time, and which showed

Essay Writing

his quality as a skilful debater. James Parton, a popular writer, had published a little book entitled "Smoking and Drinking," in which he sought to maintain the two theses, that the coming man would not smoke, nor would he drink wine. It was a very superficial work made up of illogical assertions and perversion of much physiological knowledge; yet it was warmly welcomed by anti-tobacco and temperance reformers, as a conclusive argument against the use of tobacco and of alcohol in any form or degree whatever.

Fiske's attention as critic, or public reviewer was called to the book; and, as in his psychophysiological investigations he had given much attention to the effects of narcotics upon the human organism, he thought the great importance of temperance in the use of tobacco and alcohol could be much more convincingly shown, through a clear and popular presentation of the laws of physiological action in regard to these two narcotics, than through the heated assertions of ignorant social reformers who denied all virtue to them whatever in pharmacology, and who saw in their use the source of all social ills. Accordingly he took Mr. Parton's essay under consideration, and applying to it sound physiological and pathological knowledge combined with common sense, he so completely shattered its contention that no rejoinder was attempted.

Fiske's essay was published by his friend Henry

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Holt, in a little volume under the title of "Tobacco and Alcohol: It does Pay to Smoke — The Coming Man will Drink Wine." The essay attracted much attention at the time, and Fiske received many commendations of it from leading members of the medical profession. In tracing the development of Fiske's philosophic thought, the essay is of interest as showing the wide diversity and accuracy of his knowledge.

Among his pleasurable recreations of the year, two are especially worthy of note, because of their high artistic character and his intense enjoyment of them. These were the Readings of Charles Dickens from his own works, and the presentation of a series of great tragedies by Edwin Booth and Madame Janauschek in combination. In his recreations as in his serious work Fiske's taste invariably asserted itself in demanding what was best. He instinctively guarded his mind against wasting itself on frivolous things. We have seen his great fondness for the works of Charles Dickens, whose various characters became in his mind familiar friends. The Readings by Dickens in Boston, in which (with his great mimetic power) he gave masterly personations of some of the characters he had created, was one of the chief artistic features of the season. Fiske entered into the enjoyment of these Readings with a full appreciation of their quality, as he found Dickens hardly less

Diversions

great in the presentation of character through the dramatic art than in creating character through the literary art. As a result of these Readings Dickens's characters had a new birth in Fiske's mind. They became more distinctly Dickensized, and remained his faithful companions to the last.

Fiske was profoundly impressed by the dramatic genius of Janauschek. As a dramatic artist he placed her beside Mrs. Siddons. He gives a fine bit of critical appreciation in a description of her rendering of Lady Macbeth; but what is of greater interest is the account of a call he made upon her. Fiske had made her acquaintance in New York. Under date of November 4, 1868, he writes: —

“Yesterday I called on Janauschek. Had a most delightful time and staid two hours. For about half an hour we talked in German, and I succeeded in talking it very well. Then we changed to English which she has learned since April. Then we mixed up languages just as came handy, and so had a most charming talk. I found her to be very highly cultivated, her knowledge of things being by no means limited to tragedy and acting. Her talk was so entertaining, her eyes so bright and her face so full of expression, that I thought it about as great a pleasure to sit and talk with her as to see her on the stage. We talked about Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, Goethe, Corneille, German politics, mythology, and all sorts of things. I told her about Maud's strutting about with a tragic air and calling herself Janauschek, and she was exceedingly pleased at the idea. She professed herself to be

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crazy over children, and said she wished I would call again and bring *das kleine Mädchen* with me. Perhaps I shall if I can get time. To-night, Abby and I are going to see her in Mary Stuart."

I have reserved, as a fitting close to the record of this year, the following letter of Fiske to Spencer, as it has a sort of autobiographical interest.

OXFORD STREET, CAMBRIDGE,
September 27, 1868.

My dear Mr. Spencer: —

Having for some time felt an inclination to write to you in reply to your letter of June 19, 1868, I am now stimulated to do so by the circumstance that I wish to ask a favour of you.

(Fiske asks Spencer to have sent to him two numbers of the parts of the "Biology," which he had failed to receive, and which he could not get in America.)

I am better able now than when I received it, to answer your letter expressing misgivings as to the possibility of my succeeding in a literary career. I could then only hope: I can now point to something achieved. I now laugh at the times when I dreamed of paying my monthly bills by means of money earned from English reviews. I soon learned that magazines alone would never give work enough to keep one from starving; and that in order to succeed, I must attach myself to a daily paper. I therefore made an arrangement with Mr. Marble, editor of the "New York World," to write for him *causeries* on literary and philosophical subjects as

Letter to Spencer

often as I pleased. His terms were so generous that my ability to earn is limited only by my ability to produce; and that, in point of quantity, is about 300 columns, equivalent to two or three octavos per year. Thus, so far as money goes, I am certainly prospering. In March, 1867, I became the owner of a pleasant little house in Cambridge, and planted with my own hands the maples which I hope will shade me in my old age. I live in my library, walled with books, like a mollusc in his shell, writing six hours, reading six, and sleeping nine, all days except Sunday: always well, and hardly ever more than pleasantly weary; and have reason, therefore, to believe that I am "seeing my best days." The difficulty of doing anything elaborately and the necessity of constantly writing crude thoughts, occur to trouble me: but these things, with due economy of time, may by and by be changed. At any rate, my thoughts are always busy with philosophical subjects; and this is certainly far better than to be wasting one's strength, physical, intellectual and emotional in harassing law-cases.

I have published no magazine articles during the past two years except one on "University Reform," in the "Atlantic Monthly," April, 1867, upon which, I am proud to say, the University have seen fit to base several reformatory acts; and one on "Liberal Education" in the "North American Review" July, 1868. Of my two papers on the "Laws of History," after a delay of more than two years, the first has appeared in the "Fortnightly"; and when I behold every one of the gross typographical errors (such as would not pass unchal-

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lenged by the first proof-reader at our University Press, and which I carefully corrected on the proof-sheets in 1866) conscientiously reproduced, it is difficult to bear the sight with philosophic resignation, or wholly to refrain from the use of language having theologic implications. In the second of these papers on the "Laws of History" there are some speculations which, though too briefly stated, may perhaps interest you. In a future paper in the "North American" I hope to devote fifty pages to what I have said in the last six or eight of the second part of the present article.

I am eager to see your "Psychology" finished and your "Sociology" begun, and gladly hailed the appearance of No. 20 as an indication that you were again going to work with renewed health and vigour. It was with pleasure that I heard, some time ago, that you were coming to this country, and it is with disappointment that I see spring and autumn go by without bringing you. When you come, you will doubtless not fail to look at Cambridge; and I shall esteem it a favour if you will consider my house and myself entirely at your service, so long as you like to be about here.

Meanwhile, dear Sir, believe me,

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN FISKE.

CHAPTER XIII

A MEMORABLE YEAR TO HARVARD AND TO FISKE
— ELECTION OF CHARLES W. ELIOT AS PRESIDENT — FISKE CALLED TO LECTURE ON THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY — ELIOT'S INAUGURATION — WIDE EFFECT OF FISKE'S LECTURES

1869

THE year 1869 was a memorable one in the history of Harvard and a very important one in the life of Fiske. In September, 1868, the Reverend Thomas Hill resigned as President of Harvard, and the year 1869 opened with the Reverend Andrew P. Peabody acting as President *ad interim*. There was much strife as to the professional character of the person who should be chosen to fill the vacancy; that is, as between a clergyman and a professional educator. Conservative people, impressed by Harvard's long line of clerical Presidents, would follow precedent; and all those friends of Harvard who wished to see a distinctly religious character maintained in the administration of the university, albeit that religious character was of the negative Unitarian faith of the period, would fain have a candidate selected from the Unitarian clergy. On the other hand, the newer life and fresher thought which were permeating the great body of the alumni had already gained several strong repre-

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sentations on the Board of Overseers, who saw a better state of things for their beloved *alma mater* only through the complete breaking-up of the clerical domination of the past, and the bringing of the University, in all its educational provisions, into line with the conditions of modern culture and social development. These representatives of university reform naturally sought a candidate for President among professional educators rather than among clergymen.

In December and January this Harvard Presidential canvass appears to have been in a sort of tentative stage of crystallization around two candidates, the Reverend Andrew P. Peabody, D.D., the candidate of the conservative party, and Professor Ephraim W. Gurney, the candidate of the reform party.

At the height of the discussion James Russell Lowell and E. L. Godkin, the editor of the "New York Nation," asked Fiske for a trenchant article for the "Nation," on the situation at Harvard, with special reference to advancing the candidacy of Professor Gurney. Fiske wrote the article, which was published as an editorial in the "Nation" of December 31, 1868, under the title of "The Presidency of Harvard College." It was an admirable article, well balanced against both toryism and radicalism, and holding even scales for rational reform.

In view of what took place a short time after,

A Memorable Year

the following paragraph from this article is of interest: —

“To sum up, then: What we do not want is a mere business man, a fossil man, an ultra-radical man, or a clergyman. What we do want, is a man of thorough scholarship — not a specialist, not a mere mathematician, or physicist, or grammarian; but a man of general culture, able to estimate at their proper importance the requirements of culture, and at the same time endowed with sound judgment, shrewd mother wit, practical good sense. If such a man is to be found among those who have already taken a part in the management of the college, so that he will come to his new office with some adequate knowledge of the work before him, so much the better; he will be the better able to understand what the college needs. If he should also happen to be found among those who have been graduated within the past twenty years, he will be the better able to understand what the present time requires.”

The article made a great impression at Cambridge. It presented the whole situation so clearly and fairly that it practically killed the candidacy of Dr. Peabody, while it paved the way for a greater reformer than Professor Gurney.

Shortly after the publication of Fiske's article in the “Nation,” there appeared in the “Atlantic Monthly” for February, 1869, the first of two articles entitled “The New Education—Its Organization”; the second appearing in the March number. These two articles comprised, first, a re-

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view of the recent attempts in this country to organize a system of practical education based chiefly on the pure and applied sciences, the modern languages, and mathematics, instead of upon Greek, Latin, and mathematics as in the established college system; and, secondly, a discussion of what should be the preparatory training of a youth who is to enter a scientific or technological school by the time he is seventeen years old.

Under these two subject divisions was clearly set forth the need of a high-grade technical education for the youth of America, to be developed harmoniously, side by side with, and out of similar preparatory schooling for, the broadest collegiate education. These articles were written by Charles William Eliot, Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and one of the recently elected members of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College. They attracted wide public attention, and since they revealed the possession by the writer of a clear comprehension of the needs of higher education in the two fields of technological training and collegiate culture, together with a full knowledge of the various problems attending all higher education arising from the varied conditions of preparatory or secondary education throughout the country, attention was at once directed to Professor Eliot as a candidate for the Presidency of Harvard. There was much beside in his favor. He was an alumnus

Election of President Eliot

of the class of 1853. He had been Assistant Professor in the Departments of Mathematics and of Chemistry. He possessed executive ability of a high order, and was in the prime of manhood. All these considerations, fused as they were in a personality marked by great force of character, made Professor Eliot particularly acceptable to the advocates of reform at Harvard, and after a short canvass, he was, on the 12th of March, 1869, chosen President of the University by the Corporation, and this choice was confirmed by the Board of Overseers on the 19th of May following.

Fiske, as may well be supposed, took great interest in this election, and although his predilections were strong in favor of Professor Gurney, he readily acquiesced in the choice of President Eliot. And he had not long to wait for the institution of great and wise reforms, in which he was to bear a part, in both the ideals and methods of education throughout the university.

Before entering, however, upon the significant changes which soon began at Harvard, and which were fraught, as we shall see, with great importance to the subsequent life of Fiske, we should pause to take a glance at his domestic and literary life during the first half of this year 1869. The letters reveal the same abounding delight in his home surroundings and especially in the expanding minds of his children — that we have noted in previous years. On the 10th of May, a second son,

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Clarence Stoughton Fiske, was born into his family circle.

The letters also reveal the high order of his thought. His reading appears to have been mainly of a philological character, while his productive writing was limited to three essays — "Ancient and Modern Life," published in the "New York World"; "The Genesis of Language," published in the "North American Review"; "Are we Celts or Teutons?" published in "Appleton's Journal." He also gave much thought to collecting material for, and preparing a volume on "Liberal Education," as well as one on the "Evolution of Language." But these two projects did not materialize — for, as we shall soon see, he had his mind and his hands full of work in another direction.

One incident of this period is worth noting as showing his growing reputation as a thinker and a writer. He received from responsible parties in New York an offer of the editorship of a free-trade journal at a salary of six thousand dollars per year. This offer he declined.

It was in June, while absorbed in the problems of language and their bearing on the doctrine of Evolution, and also while mulling over his projected volume on Education, that he received from President Eliot a call for a special service at the university which roused all the enthusiasm of his nature. It appears that President Eliot was preparing, among other things, to inaugurate his administra-

Lecturer at Harvard

tion by bringing within the pale of the university provisions for the broadest interpretations of philosophy. To this end, while allowing Professor Bowen, from his chair of philosophy within the college, to fulminate at will against recent progress in philosophic thinking, he determined that under the auspices of the university undergraduates and all persons interested in philosophic discussion should have critically and fairly interpreted the "thoughts that move mankind" embodied in the leading philosophic systems — especially in the modern systems. Accordingly, he arranged for the academic year 1869–70 seven courses of university lectures on Philosophy, two of which were to represent recent philosophic thought — thought which had been particularly taboo at Harvard.

The first of these two courses in significance at the time was the one on "The Natural History of the Intellect," by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The significance of this course arose from the fact that ever since Emerson's famous address before the Harvard Divinity School in 1838, and while during the intervening years his thought had been a great illuminating moral force in the culture of the modern world, Emerson, as a philosophic thinker, had been *persona non grata* at Harvard.

The second of these two notable courses was one on what was then called "The Positive Philosophy." At this period the English Evolutionary school of philosophy had not been clearly differentiated

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from what was known as the Scientific or Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte. As the latter was first in the field and had found some favor in England, the rising Evolutionary thought in England, also based on Science, was by theologians identified with Comtism, and by them baptized with all the philosophico-atheistical vagaries that they read into the Positive Philosophy of Comte. The reader should bear in mind that this was in the year 1869, when the bitter theological controversy started by the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" and Spencer's "First Principles" of Evolution was at its height, and that Positivism in the public mind was the summation of infidel philosophy and included along with the vagaries of Comte, Darwinism and Spencer's theory of Evolution. President Eliot appears to have seen somewhat the opposing philosophical principles that were jumbled together in the popular conception of the "Positive Philosophy"; and it is a fair inference that he desired such an exposition of this philosophy as should clearly set forth both its Comtian and its English Evolutionary connotations. For this purpose he selected Fiske.

The high purpose and the moral courage of the new President could not have been better shown than in inaugurating his administration by these two acts — the summoning of Emerson and Fiske, with their respective subjects, into service at the University in the highest department of knowledge.

Lecturer at Harvard

Fiske responded favorably to President Eliot's request, and his reasons for doing so are fully given in a letter to his mother of July 5, 1869. He writes:

"As you will see from the enclosed slip, I have been chosen as one of the university lecturers on Philosophy for the year 1869-70. The subject on which I have been especially invited to deliver a course of from 12 to 20 lectures, is Positivism. . . . Eliot invited me, and I accepted *sur le champ*, for it gives me a chance to elaborate the book which I have had lying in scraps for 4 years on this subject. There are two aspects from which this event may be viewed — the sentimental, and the practical.

"I. From the sentimental aspect it is worthy of notice, that only 8 years ago I was threatened with dismissal from college if caught talking Comtism to any one. Now, without any solicitation on my part, I am asked to expound Comtism to the college, and defend or attack it as I like. This shows how vast is the revolution in feeling which has come over Harvard in 8 years, and which is shown among other things in the election of such a President as Eliot. I silently regard this as a triumph for me, and the pleasantest kind of vengeance!

"II. Practically, this is a very great honour, and is considered so by every one — to be chosen as lecturer along with such eminent men as Emerson and Cabot. Furthermore, if I do myself credit in the lectures, my success for the future is almost certain. The days of old fogyism here are numbered, and the young men are to have a chance. I have a chance now to come out strong, as Mark Tapley says; and if I improve it I shall be sure to get into the college as professor before a great while.

John Fiske

Eliot has a great liking for me now. He thinks my article helped to get him elected. He saw the best side of my college career. He never had any prejudice against me. He never gave me anything but a perfect mark in my recitations. Now he is prepared to be pleased with anything I may do. He expects me to do a good thing, and I must do it. It won't do to fail or only half succeed. Therefore I want to throw my whole force into this thing, and come out with brilliant success. No subject could have been better selected for me to treat! I have studied Comte off and on, for 10 years; have already mapped out a discussion of his doctrines; have a good many original views about him; have once believed in him, but do so no longer; so that I can criticize him without misrepresenting him; and the subject, moreover, is one of great variety, embracing questions of science, logic, philosophy, ethics, history and religion, so that I can bring almost all my reading to bear upon it. I don't want to have people say merely, that I did very well. I want to make a profound stir, and have people say: 'Well, now here is something new; these are philosophical lectures such as one does n't hear every term.' In short, I want to conquer a permanent position here; and I believe I can do it."

Animated with this high purpose, Fiske spent the rest of the summer in finishing some literary work he had in hand for the "New York World," in revising his essay on "The Genesis of Language" for the "North American Review," in reading Plato and two or three recent works on Positivism, and blocking out his course of lectures in his mind.

Lecturer at Harvard

A good portion of the time was spent with his family at the delightful ancestral Brooks homestead in Petersham; and the letters give charming pictures of his sweet family life with his children in this beautiful old town, which, associated as it was with the tenderest feelings of his nature, he loved to call his home.

Early in September we find him back in Cambridge and fully "squared away" at his lectures. His method of work is of interest as revealing the firm mental grasp of his subject, and also the orderly way in which he held the wide and varied knowledge essential to his purpose at ready command. He first mentally blocked out the whole course of eighteen lectures with a distinctive title for each lecture. There is no indication whatever that he made any preliminary sketch or outline of any of the lectures. I do find, however, that he took into consideration the time at his command — the lectures were to begin October 26 — and that he made a careful computation of the quantity of manuscript to be prepared and the time limit to be given to the preparation of each lecture. The result was that a lecture must be written each week.

Considering the vast knowledge in the departments of science, history, sociology, and philosophy that had to be brought into order and made subservient to the end in view, this was a most extraordinary undertaking. So wisely was the whole

John Fiske

scheme planned, however, so carefully had he measured his own powers, that the course was carried through without the slightest interruption. The lectures when delivered were marked by such a full, lucid, easy-flowing style of exposition, as gave no indication whatever of undue pressure or haste in their composition.

Fiske's article on "The Genesis of Language," to which reference has been made, was published in the October number of the "North American Review." In this article, after a brief survey of the field of philological discussion Fiske advanced some new views in regard to disputed points in the interpretation of linguistic phenomena. Starting with the simple juxtapositive form of objective words as the barbaric genesis of language, he traced, by a process of subjective elimination and integration, the gradual development, through the agglutinative languages, of the present highly complex inflexional or amalgamative languages. In brief, his article was an attempt to apply the principles of Evolution to some of the problems of philology.

Fiske sent a copy of this article, not only to Herbert Spencer, but also to Dr. J. Muir, an eminent Sanskrit scholar at Edinburgh, to Professor Max Müller, the distinguished philologist at Oxford, and to Michel Bréal at Paris, Professor of Sanskrit in the Collège de France.¹

¹ While this article was highly commended for its erudition, Fiske never reprinted it.

President Eliot Inaugurated

Fiske's letters to his mother during October, while showing his steady progress with his lectures, give also an account of an occurrence at Harvard which has passed into history as one of the most memorable events in the life of the university, and from what we have already seen was an event of great significance to Fiske — the inauguration of President Eliot, and his inaugural address. As the delivery at Harvard of such a course of lectures as we are about to consider had been made possible through the action of President Eliot, Fiske's impression of the new President's inaugural address has a historic value as well as a personal interest here. On the 20th of October, 1869, he writes: —

“Yesterday President Eliot was inaugurated. Abby and I went to the Church. The music was perfectly sublime. I don't know when I ever heard anything equal to it. Eliot's Inaugural address was also very fine indeed. I never before heard a speech so grand and impressive. It lasted an hour and three quarters; and during all you might have heard a pin drop, save when the old arches rang with thunders of applause. We are going to have new times here at Harvard. No more old fogyism, I hope. Abby was moved to tears; and I felt 'the chokes come' many times at the grand ideas he put forth. We have got for President a young man and a practical genius. Everybody so far as I know, went away feeling that the light of a new day had dawned upon us. I had a very high opinion of Eliot before, but I had no idea of what was in him,

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till I heard him yesterday announce his views. In the evening I went to his reception.”¹

Another incident connected with these lectures and related to the philosophic ideas they were to set forth is of interest here — the interchange of letters between Fiske and Herbert Spencer. Only the main points in the letters will be noted.

Under date of October 6, 1869, Fiske sends Spencer proof-sheets of his article in the “North American Review” on “The Genesis of Language” and he explains how he proposes to elaborate this in connection with his essay on “The Evolution of Language,” published in 1863, into a volume which should be an illustration of the law of Evolution applied to language. He tells Spencer this volume “will set forth results of philological as well as philosophical value, obtained by the application of your doctrine and method to a set of phenomena which you have not yet come to treat

¹ As the inauguration of President Eliot was such a memorable event in the history of Harvard, I give an extract from the charge of the President of the Board of Overseers, the Honorable John H. Clifford, as he placed the keys, the ancient charter, and the seal of the college in President Eliot’s hands, — these being the symbols and the warrant of the authority conferred upon him as Harvard’s official head, — and also President Eliot’s response.

President Clifford said: —

“When, sir, the far-reaching issues that are involved in the great trust now confided to you, and the influence its wise, faithful and efficient performance is to exert upon the country and the world are measured and understood; when we reflect that we indulge but a reasonable hope in looking forward from your period of life, that through this day’s proceedings your hand will be instrumental in leading the minds and moulding the characters of a larger number of the best youth of the country than were guided by any of your

Correspondence with Spencer

in detail"; and he asks for any suggestions Spencer has to offer on his proposed task.

He then gives some particulars in regard to the course of lectures he has in hand — the circumstances under which he was called to deliver them, the ground he proposes to cover, and the difficulty he finds in the endeavor to give an interpretation of the philosophy of Evolution under the title of "Positive Philosophy," by reason of the various connotations of Positivism in the public mind. He calls for a new title for the new Evolutionary philosophy — one that shall differentiate it entirely from the "Philosophie Positive" of Auguste Comte. He does not think Spencer's proposed title, "Synthetic Philosophy," sufficiently generic.

This statement in regard to the lectures leads predecessors, — it is no exaggeration to say, that the ceremony surpasses in interest and importance any that accompanies the investiture of ruler or magistrate with the functions of civil government, however imposing or significant they may be. . . . Tendering you, therefore, the awaiting confidence, the cordial sympathies and the ready coöperation of the Fellows and Overseers, — in their name and in their behalf, I now greet and welcome you as the President of Harvard College."

President Eliot's response: —

"*Mr. President*, — I hear in your voice the voice of the Alumni welcoming me to high honours and arduous labours, and charging me to be faithful to the duties of this consecrated office. I take up this weighty charge with a deep sense of insufficiency, but yet with youthful hope and a good courage. High examples will lighten the way. Deep prayers of devoted living and sainted dead will further every right effort, every good intention. The university is strong in the ardor and self-sacrifice of its teachers, in the vigor and wisdom of the Corporation and Overseers, and in the public spirit of the community. Above all, I devote myself to this sacred work in the firm faith that the God of the fathers will be also with the children."

John Fiske

him to refer to the great changes that have taken place at Harvard during the past eight years — since the time when, as an undergraduate, he was threatened by the President with immediate expulsion if detected in disseminating “Positive” ideas among his fellow students; whereas he has now been called to expound to the students from the lecturer’s chair these same “pernicious opinions.” He then tells how the change has been brought about, by overthrowing the clerical domination of the college and placing the governing power in the alumni, who, as an electorate, choose the Board of Overseers. Fiske concludes his statement thus: “So the university governs itself: the alumni elect competent men for Overseers, who choose a modern man for President, who appoints a Spencerian as lecturer — and this is the house that Jack built.”

Spencer replied to this under date of November 1, 1869: —

“I congratulate you, Harvard, and myself, on the event of which your letter tells me. It is equally gratifying and surprising. That eight years should have wrought such a change as to place the persecuted undergraduate in the chair of lecturer is something to wonder at, and may fill us with hope, as it must fill many with consternation.”

Spencer approved of Fiske’s proposed volume on language, and made some pertinent suggestions, but admits that he is hardly prepared to offer any

Correspondence with Spencer

positive criticism. He finds Fiske's programme of his lectures inviting, but regrets the use of the title "Positive Philosophy," and fears that the confusion between Comtism and English Positivism will be worse confounded. He writes: "The scientific world in England, in repudiating 'Comtism,' repudiates also the name 'Positivism' as the name for that general aggregate of scientific doctrine to which they adhere." He then makes this suggestion: "Why should you not by using some neutral title avoid committing yourself in any way? Might not such a title as 'Modern Philosophy' or 'The Philosophy of the Time' or 'Reformed Philosophy' — or something akin, answer the purpose?"

The whole tone of Spencer's letter shows his appreciation of Fiske's growing power.

As both letters refer to the confusion of thought that then existed in regard to the nature and implications of Comtism, Positivism, and the rising philosophy of Evolution, a brief explanation is in place here.

For a number of years the "Philosophie Positive" of Auguste Comte had been in the field as a philosophy based on science, as a philosophy freed from all ontological metaphysics — in short, as the last word in philosophy. While it made parade of much scientific and historic knowledge, and while it contained many suggestive insights into the great universe of cosmic phenomena, as a philosophical system it was so overlaid with Comte's

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purely subjective ideas, and was withal so atheistical in its implications, that it met with the utmost hostility from the theological world, and only a limited, quasi-support from the scientific world. Positivism, therefore, in the public mind, was classed as a sort of scientific atheism.

About 1860 the philosophy of Evolution arose out of the discovery of the correlation of physical forces by Mayer, Joule, Helmholtz, the scientific labors of Darwin in tracing the origin of species in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and the philosophic thought of Herbert Spencer, seeking for some universal principle underlying the whole realm of the cosmic universe. This philosophy presented the cosmic universe, including man, as forever unfolding, as evolving from a lower to a higher stage of phenomenal existence. It was also founded on science, and presented all knowledge as relative to human experience, as conditioned by human experience. It could not rest, however, on the relativity of knowledge as an ultimate datum, and it therefore postulated as its final ultimate the highest ontological conception that has been given in the whole history of philosophy — an Infinite and Eternal Being, far beyond the determination of science, far beyond the power of the human mind to cognize, as the source and sustentation of the whole cosmic universe.

This Evolutionary philosophy, by reason of its rising above and beyond all metaphysical onto-

Evolutionary Philosophy

logical speculation, was not comprehended in its profound theistic implications by the theological folk. It was by them denounced as atheistic in character, and at one with the Positive philosophy of Comte — as in fact the Comtian philosophy in an English guise.

¶ We shall see both Spencer and Fiske contending for years to come against this confusion of thought in regard to the Positive and the Evolutionary philosophies. At present we have to note Fiske's purpose, which was to show the completeness of a philosophy based on the doctrine of Evolution as an explanation of the Cosmos, and by contrast to point out the very serious shortcomings of the philosophy of Comte. He labored, however, under one serious disadvantage — alluded to by Spencer — a public misconception of the scope of his lectures. The title was a misnomer. They were called "Lectures on the Positive Philosophy": they were, in fact, "Lectures on the Evolutionary Philosophy *versus* the Positive Philosophy."

While Fiske's direct purpose was the setting-forth of philosophic doctrine, he was well aware that the religious implications of this doctrine would not find acceptance among the believers in a revealed religion, in a religion based on theological dogmas transcending scientific verification. He well knew that by such people the profoundly religious character of the Evolutionary philosophy would be entirely overlooked, and that he would

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come under severe condemnation as an atheist and an infidel. Yet he was not deterred from expressing his full thought; and the sincerity of his conviction that he was setting forth a Divine truth of a higher, more commanding religious character than any born of theological assumptions — a truth that would ultimately become universal among thinking men — was so strong, that it gave to his whole exposition a deeply reverent tone.

The lectures began October 26 and were continued to December 10, 1869. Ordinarily they would have passed without special comment beyond the collegiate circle. The audience, although appreciative, was small and not in the slightest degree revolutionary in character. Yet an explosion was at hand. Professor Youmans, in New York, ever on the lookout for opportunities to advance the Spencerian philosophy of Evolution, arranged, with Fiske's consent, for the publication of the lectures unabridged in the "New York World." The first lecture appeared in the "World" for November 13, 1869, with a little flourish of the editorial trumpet over the significance of such a course of lectures at Harvard. Immediately an alarm was sounded at what was called "Harvard's Raid on Religion," and a wave of bitter objurgation and denunciation broke forth from the religious and a portion of the secular press, against Harvard, President Eliot, Fiske, and the "World," in which it was charged that the institution and

Effect of his Lectures

publication of these lectures was "part of a plan obtaining among free-thinkers to disseminate far and wide attacks upon the system of revealed religion."

This outburst of religious intolerance, so widespread and so virulent in character, fairly startled the quiescent conservative feeling in Cambridge into questioning as to what the new President would do to avert impending danger to Harvard from such an aroused state of religious feeling. But President Eliot apparently was not in the slightest degree disturbed. He appears to have accepted as a governing principle in the highest teaching of the university the wise saying of Jefferson, "All error may be safely tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it." He knew what Fiske was trying to do — that in a critical way, marked by thorough knowledge and great fairness, he was trying to rid the true Positive Philosophy of science of the unphilosophical vagaries of Comte and give it an interpretation in harmony with the English school of scientific thinkers — men like Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Lyell, Mill, Bain, etc. Therefore, he met the situation with perfect composure, and in the midst of the hubbub, he took occasion to express to Fiske his approval of the lectures and requested their repetition the following year, with an additional course devoted more particularly to the presentation of the philosophy of Evolution from the English viewpoint.

John Fiske

Fiske had much to cheer him, from his outside audience, against this wholly unreasoning theological rattle-t'-bang. The most significant of all the sympathetic expressions he received came from the everyday readers of the "World." I have before me as I write at least a hundred of the letters sent to the editor of the "World," and sent by him to Fiske; and they are indeed a revelation. They are from professional men, business men, and working men throughout the country, and they testify, by the varied interests they represent, to the great craving that exists in the public mind for the highest philosophic truth when presented with fullness, clearness, and honesty.

When the lectures were over, Fiske was tired. For over three months his mind had been at extreme tension, without any relaxation whatever. He had in eighty-two days written six hundred and fifty-four pages, quarto letter-paper manuscript, hardly looking into a book save to verify quotation or date. He writes thus: "I feel like a cat in a strange garret with my work done. I can actually take a nap in my hammock without telling Abby to come and rout me out in half an hour."

After a few days of absolute rest he went to visit his mother in New York. There he met many of his friends, particularly Professor Youmans, Henry Holt, the publisher, Manton Marble, the editor of the "World," Mr. E. L. Godkin and John Dennett, of the editorial staff of the "Nation," and several

Effect of his Lectures

old classmates. He was everywhere received with marked appreciation, and Dr. William A. Hammond, late Surgeon General of the United States army, and an eminent alienist, gave a dinner in his honor, where to a company of distinguished scientists he was introduced as the expounder of the new philosophy of science.

Thus the year 1869, which opened with Fiske's plea for a new administration at Harvard that should place the university in line with modern progress, came to an end, having witnessed a series of changes at the university that more than realized his fondest hopes — changes which had called him to service of the very highest character in behalf of his beloved *alma mater*, the performance of which had placed him foremost among the leaders of liberal thought in America.

CHAPTER XIV

RENOMINATED AS LECTURER AT HARVARD — SIGNIFICANT LETTER FROM SPENCER — TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO THE PROPAGATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION — ACTING PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT HARVARD — STUDIES AND LITERARY WORK

1870

EARLY in January, 1870, President Eliot renominated Fiske as Lecturer on the Positive Philosophy for the academic year 1870-71, and the nomination was confirmed by the Board of Overseers without opposition. This fact, in connection with the wide interest aroused by his first course of lectures, led to a significant change in the whole tenor of Fiske's thought — gave it, in fact, quite a new direction and purpose. We have seen that ever since his graduation his thought had been concentrated mainly upon philological questions, in the endeavor to establish in the genesis and development of language the working of the law of Evolution — a purely scholastic piece of work.

The wide discussion which followed his lectures, even in their newspaper form of publication, and the request by President Eliot for their repetition and enlargement, brought to his consideration a far more important task than the tracing-out of

Renominated as Lecturer

the law of Evolution in any single department of knowledge — a no less important task than the setting-forth of the theory of Evolution as a dynamic principle underlying all Cosmic phenomena, with its theistic, its ethical, and its religious implications.

It is true that some of these implications had been touched upon in the lectures recently given; but as the lectures were prepared without any definite purpose beyond combating the idea that the theory of Evolution was synonymous with the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, Fiske could not think of letting the lectures as delivered stand as in any way an adequate presentation of the doctrine of Evolution.

The response to his lectures, in the way of both condemnation and approval, was clear evidence to Fiske's mind that a presentation of the new doctrine, stripped of all "Comtism" and with its legitimate philosophical implications clearly set forth, was greatly needed; and during the winter of 1870 we find him giving serious thought to this important undertaking. He weighed the whole matter in his usual methodical way. He saw that such an undertaking would necessitate a thorough review of the sciences — particularly the historical and sociological sciences, as well as a careful review of the modern schools of philosophy in the light of recent advances in biology, ethnology, physiology, and psychology. He also saw, as conditioning the

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proper execution of such a task, the necessity of a visit to London, for he could not think of bringing out a work on such a subject without consulting with Spencer and the leading English scientists.

While considering this project, Fiske received the following significant letter from Spencer: —

37 QUEEN'S GARDENS.
BAYSWATER, LONDON, W.
February 2, 1870.

My dear Fiske: —

Our friend Professor Youmans has duly forwarded me, from time to time, copies of the "New York World," containing the reports of your lectures. Though my state of brain obliges me to be very sparing in the amount of my reading, and though, consequently, I have not read them all through, yet I have read the larger parts of them; and of the latter ones I have read nearly or quite all. This fact shows that they have produced in me an increasing interest. Taken together they constitute a very complete and well-arranged survey of the whole subject, which can scarcely fail to be extremely serviceable, especially when it comes to be repeated in an improved form, as I learn from Professor Youmans it is likely to be next session.

Into the latter lectures especially, you have put an amount of original thought which gives them an independent value. Indeed, in several of the sociological propositions you set forth, you have to some extent forestalled me in the elaboration of the doctrine of Evolution under its sociological aspects. I refer to the dominance you have given

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to the influence of the sociological environment, and to the conception of social life as having its action adjusted to actions in the environment, which you have presented in a more distinct way than I have as yet had the opportunity of doing. When, some two or three years hence, you get a copy of the first volume of a set of doubly-classified Sociological Facts, which has been in course of preparation for upwards of two years by Mr. Duncan (who now holds the pen for me), you will see that I have made the character of the environment, inorganic, organic and sociological, a conspicuous element in the tabulated account of each society, with the intention of tracing the connexion between it and the social structure.

You have made out a better case for Comte than any of his disciples have done, so far as I am aware. Or, perhaps, it seems so to me because you have not joined with the more tenable claim, a number of untenable claims. If the word "Positive" could be dissociated from the special system with which he associated it, and could be connected in the general mind with the growing body of scientific thought to which he applied it, I should have no objection to adopt it, and by so doing accord to him due honour as having given a definite and coherent form to that which the cultivated minds of his time were but vaguely conscious of. But it seems to me as the case stands, and as the words are interpreted both by the Comtists and by the public, the amount of *correct apprehension* resulting from the adoption of the word will be far outbalanced by the amount of *misapprehension* produced.

John Fiske

In so far as I am myself concerned, I still hold that the application of the word to me, connotes a far greater degree of kinship between Comte and myself than really exists. I say this not simply in virtue of a reason which you naturally do not recognize in the way that it is recognized by me. I refer to the fact that the elements of my general scheme of thought which you have brought into prominence as akin to those of Comte (such as the relativity of knowledge and the deanthropomorphization of men's conceptions), have never been elements that have occupied any conspicuous or distinctive place in my own mind — *they have been all along quite secondary to the grand doctrine of Evolution, considered as an interpretation of the Cosmos from a purely scientific or physical point of view.* You may judge of the proportional importance which these respective elements have all along had in my mind, when I tell you that as I originally conceived it, "First Principles" was constituted of what now forms its second part; that along with the succeeding volumes, it was intended to be a detailed working-out through all its ramifications of that conception crudely set forth in the essay on "Progress, its Law and its Cause," and that I subsequently saw the need for making such preliminary explanation as is now given in Part I (The Unknowable) *simply for the purpose of guarding myself against the charges of atheism and materialism, which I foresaw would most likely be made in its absence.*

If you deduct the doctrines contained in this part, and the doctrines set forth in the reply to M. Laugel, which were not consciously included

Letter from Spencer

in my original scheme — if you conceive that as I originally entertained it, and still consider it, as essentially a Cosmogony that admits of being worked out in physical terms, without necessarily entering upon any metaphysical questions, and without committing myself to any particular form of philosophy commonly so called; you will begin to see why I have all along protested, and continue to protest, against being either classed with Comte or described as a Positivist in the wider meaning of that word. If you bear in mind that my *sole original purpose* was the interpretation of all concrete phenomena in terms of the redistribution of Matter and Motion, and that I regard all other purposes as incidental and secondary; and if you remember that a cosmogony as so conceived has nothing in common with the Positive Philosophy, which is an *organon* of the sciences; and further, that a Cosmogony as so conceived is not involved in that general Positivism that was current before Comte or has been current since; you will see why I regard the application of the word Positivist to me as essentially misleading. *The general doctrine of universal Evolution as a necessary consequence from the Persistence of Force, is not contained or implied either in Comtism or in Positivism as you define it.*

I have gone thus at length into the matter, partly because I want you to understand most fully the grounds of my dissent, which you probably have thought inadequate; and partly because it might be that in preparing your course for a second delivery, the explanation I have given may lead to some modification of statement.

John Fiske

Hence it happens that when certain views of mine which are in harmony with those of Comte, are put into the foreground as implying a fundamental kinship which makes the same title applicable to both, the inevitable result is to exhibit, as all essential, these quite secondary views, which I should have been content never to have expressed at all; and by so doing to put into the background the one cardinal view which it has been, and still is my object to elaborate.

Pray do not suppose that in saying all this, I am overlooking the sympathetic appreciation which is everywhere manifested throughout your lectures, or the frequent passages in which you have seized the occasion to draw contrasts and to point out the essential differences. But I have gone thus at length into the matter with the view of showing you a ground for my dissent which you have probably never perceived.

I was glad to gather from Professor Youmans that your lectures were being favorably received. I should hope that the appreciation has continued to grow as you have progressed toward the end of your series. Let me add that I hope you have not suffered in health by the close application you must have entailed on yourself in preparing so elaborate a course of lectures in so short a time.

I am, very sincerely yours,
HERBERT SPENCER.

The significance of this letter lies, not so much in what it reveals of Spencer's thought regarding Comte and the Positive Philosophy, as in what it reveals of Spencer's attitude at the time toward

Letter from Spencer

the ultimate questions of all philosophy with their religious implications. This letter clearly states that he regarded these ultimate questions as of "incidental and secondary importance"; that in his scheme as originally planned they were entirely ignored; and that their consideration in his "First Principles" was an afterthought, introduced, not as necessary to his argument, but, as he says, "simply for the purpose of guarding myself against the charges of atheism and materialism, which I foresaw would most likely be made in their absence."

This letter is perhaps the clearest evidence we have of Spencer's wholly indifferent attitude toward the Christian religion, and especially toward the Christian conceptions of God and of the brotherhood of man. It has been felt by many that the implications of the doctrine of Evolution as presented by him completely sweep away the fundamentals of the Christian religion without leaving in their stead any tangible religious truth for the mind to grasp; that while destroying that which the Christian of whatever sect has for ages been taught to regard as the highest verity — a distinctly personal, knowable God — he offers in its place nothing but a vague intellectual generality or abstraction.

This letter, coming at a time when Fiske was giving serious thought to devoting himself to the exposition of the new doctrine, produced a cry-

John Fiske

tallizing effect in his mind. He felt that Spencer was making a grave mistake in minimizing the religious implications of his great doctrine. In Fiske's mind these implications, with their bearing on the religious faith and social well-being of Christendom were by no means unimportant considerations, in that, rightly interpreted, they enlarged the Christian conception of God from a purely finite anthropomorphic conception to that of an Infinite Eternal Being incapable of being conceived by the human mind; a Being of whom the cosmos is but a phenomenal manifestation. And the subjective implications of the doctrine were no less ennobling, inasmuch as he found deeply implanted in the human consciousness a feeling of dependence upon, and aspiration towards, a Being or Power transcending finite experience, together with certain innate ideas of ethical conduct in social relations — the whole conditioning man's fulness of life, whereof his various civilizations are but the evidences of his progressive development.

And further, these philosophico-religious implications were of supreme importance in Fiske's mind; not only because they formed the highest aspect of Spencer's profound definition of life — "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations"; but also because they were intellectually constructive in their nature, and prepared the way for higher and purer religious and

Acting Professor of History

social ideals than had obtained in any previous system of philosophy.

While his mind was thus seething with these profound philosophico-religious questions Fiske wrote two articles, one entitled "The Jesus of History," and the other, "The Christ of Dogma."¹ These two articles were a clear, impartial summing-up of the results of New Testament criticism at the time; and were intended as a prelude to a work which had been near his heart since his college days, a work the preparation of which he was looking forward to amidst all his subsequent engagements with the deepest interest; a work to which he proposed to give the title "Jesus of Nazareth and the Founding of Christianity."

In this winter of 1870, therefore, Fiske decided that he would devote himself to the exposition of the doctrine of Evolution with special regard to its religious and social implications, as a most important task.

And yet with such a noble purpose he did not escape the relentless heresy-hunter. In January of this year Professor Gurney, the University Professor of History, was elected Dean of the Faculty; and President Eliot nominated Fiske to occupy Professor Gurney's chair for the spring term, as Acting Professor of History. It was a good test of the "liberality" of the Board of Overseers as well

¹ These two essays were subsequently published in his volume of essays entitled *The Unseen World*.

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as of Fiske's prospects of advancement at the college. The orthodox element in the Board of Overseers, chafing under the steady progress of President Eliot's liberalizing policy, was roused to opposition, and a vigorous protest to Fiske's confirmation was promptly made. It was openly charged that Fiske was a pronounced atheist, and the more dangerous because of his learning and ability. It was alleged that the Board had gone to the extreme limit of toleration in confirming him as Lecturer on Philosophy: to go further and sanction his occupancy of the chair of History, even temporarily, would be an insult to all the traditions of the college. The opposition was, indeed, bitter. Several members lost their temper, and vowed they would take their sons away from the college. The confirmation was referred to a special committee, who reported in favor of Fiske; and yet it required the utmost persistency on the part of President Eliot, supported by the very positive action of such broad-minded clergymen as James Freeman Clarke and Edward Everett Hale, — members of the Board, — to carry the nomination through. Fiske was confirmed, but by a bare majority.¹

¹ The following letter from the Reverend James Freeman Clarke to his friend, the Reverend William R. Alger, is of interest here: —

JAMAICA PLAIN, February 17, 1870.

Dear Alger: —

I thank you for your note, and wish I had received it before the meeting of the Board of Overseers. I decided to recommend the Board to concur in the appointment of Mr. Fiske, for after reading the reports of his lectures in the "New York World" I saw that he

Acting Professor of History

In the teaching of history Fiske found congenial labor. His specific task as Acting Professor of History was the interpretation of mediæval history to the senior class, and it was a great pleasure to him to come in contact with a group of fresh young minds in the exposition of one of his favorite studies. He met his class for recitation or lecture twice a week, and the class appear to have been greatly pleased with their instructor. Here are a few extracts from the letters:—

“*May 26.* Gave my seniors an extempore lecture yesterday on the services of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages and they seemed to like it a good deal. . . . James Freeman Clarke witnessed a recitation of mine last week, and he seemed to like the way I did it. . . . To instruct 120 cheerful and gentlemanly fellows is not an unpleasant task. I shall be rather sorry to get through.”

“*June 8.* Had my last recitation Monday and was vociferously clapped and hurraed by the class for a good-bye and am invited to more

was no more of an atheist than Mansel was an atheist. I do not in the least agree with his philosophy, nor that of Herbert Spencer. I believe we can *know* God, though we cannot comprehend Him; just as we know a great many other facts which neither the understanding nor the imagination can grasp. The knowing, however, goes deeper than either. But if a man does not call *himself* an atheist, I shall not call him so; because from my premises *my* logic would lead *me* to that conclusion. So I decided to recommend Mr. Fiske, which made a majority of the Committee, and perhaps a majority of the Board on that side. I shall hope some day to know Mr. Fiske, whose vigorous and clear thoughts are very interesting to me.

Very truly yours,

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

John Fiske

'spreads' on Class-day than a man can go to in a month."

It was hoped by Fiske's friends that a better understanding of his philosophical views, and the demonstration of his rare qualifications for historical instruction would greatly mitigate, if not entirely overcome, the theologic prejudice against him at the college, so that he might at least be given the Assistant Professorship of History. But it should be considered that the controversy over Darwinism and Evolution was at its height, and that Positivism, Darwinism, and Evolution were jumbled together by the theological folk as the latest form of scientific infidelity, which not only antagonized common sense, but also insulted a divinely revealed religion by presenting man with his rational mind as descended (we should now say ascended) from a Simian ancestry. It should also be considered that the theologic dogma of man's special creation by Divine fiat was affirmed within the college as an ultimate truth of science by Agassiz, with all the weight of his great influence.

Fiske's pronounced Darwinian and Evolutionary views had the effect, therefore, of uniting all these influences into a bitter opposition to his holding any permanent position in the instruction at the college; and the opposition was so pronounced that President Eliot did not again nominate him.

Fiske's labors in the Department of History, for

Studies and Literary Work

the spring term of 1870 were therefore the full extent of his instruction, but by no means the measure of his work at Harvard.

Notwithstanding his duties as Acting Professor of History and the claims of philosophy upon his thought, Fiske did not at any time neglect his classical or his philologic studies. In his mind these studies, along with music, appear to have been regarded as diversions, albeit to most persons the manner in which the diversions were pursued would seem a serious form of study. This personal characteristic, however, should be noted, — for it appears throughout Fiske's whole intellectual life, — he found a supreme pleasure in whetting his thought upon the intellectual masterpieces of the race, and tracing in them the development of language as a vehicle of thought expression. Of his classical reading at this time he writes: —

“I am getting to read Greek almost like English. I began the ‘Odyssey’ last Sunday, and at odd moments have read two thirds of it in five days. I believe there is no intellectual pleasure like that derived from reading the Greek poets. Divine old creatures.”

During the summer and autumn of 1870, Fiske's chief activities were given to writing a series of papers on popular mythology and superstition for the “Atlantic Monthly,” some book reviews for the “New York World,” and to studies in the history of music, with the purpose of writing an

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article on the philosophy of music. This article was never written; and as I look over the preparation for it, — bearing in mind his rare musical gift, — I cannot but express a regret that he never carried out his purpose. He greatly enjoyed writing the mythological articles, and they were warmly appreciated by Mr. Howells, then editor of the "Atlantic," — indeed, the letters reveal delightful neighborly interviews between editor and contributor during their preparation.

The book reviews for the "New York World" comprised such works as Proctor's "Other Worlds than Ours," Dalton's "Hereditary Genius," Huxley's "Lay Sermons," Lankester's "Comparative Longevity in Man and the Lower Animals," Darwin's "Descent of Man," and Gladstone's "Juventus Mundi — The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age."

These reviews were not mere "book notices." They were real reviews, and in the choice of subjects and method of treatment there is shown the steady broadening of the Evolutionary doctrine in Fiske's mind, with its application to a wide variety of subjective phenomena. The review of Gladstone's "Juventus Mundi" was in Fiske's best vein, and was a clear and scholarly presentation of the fact that while Gladstone, as a statesman, might notably succeed in holding a "fretful realm in awe," as a classical scholar, in the philological and historical sense of the term, he was sadly de-

Book Reviews

ficient. Fiske showed the fairness and fine quality of his criticism by heartily commending Gladstone's classical enthusiasm amid his great public duties, as well as his "extensive and accurate knowledge of the *surface* of the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey.'" "

In common with all thoughtful minds Fiske was profoundly stirred by the Franco-Prussian War, then raging, upon which he comments thus to his mother: —

"The downfall of Napoleon pleases me much. He has been a fearful curse to France, killing her morally, while cheating her with an appearance of material prosperity. I hope this will be the last of the Bonapartes. The Prussian success does not surprise me unless by its wonderful rapidity and completeness. I had n't the slightest expectation that the French could withstand them. To understand how the best class of Frenchmen regard Bonapartism you should read Taxile Delord's 'Histoire du Second Empire.'" "

On November 16, 1870, his third son, Ralph Browning Fiske, was born. And during this latter half of 1870, side by side with these varied interests, his second course of Harvard lectures, assigned to the spring term of 1871, were mulling in his mind.

CHAPTER XV

SECOND COURSE OF HARVARD LECTURES — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SPENCER AND DARWIN — LECTURES ON EVOLUTION — PERSONA NON GRATA AT LOWELL INSTITUTE — ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN AT HARVARD — AGASSIZ ARTICLE — SAILS FOR QUEENSTOWN

1871-1873

THE year 1871 opened to Fiske with a task before him of no slight nature — the delivery of thirty-seven lectures on Philosophy, the last nineteen of which were yet to be prepared, while of the first eighteen many were to be materially revised. The lectures were to begin February 15, and were to continue twice a week until the 15th of June. The letters during January reveal Fiske as completely absorbed in thinking out the nineteen new lectures preparatory to their composition, and it is interesting to note what the “thinking-out” process was. It consisted of getting into his mind, first of all, through pure mental abstraction, a very definite conception of his object. This done, the writing out of his thought became to him comparatively an easy matter. I find no indication whatever that he made any sketch plan of the course, or that he even made any notes or references to authorities; and yet the lectures, when

Second Course of Lectures

written out, fairly bristled with apposite quotations from authorities in all departments of knowledge. In fact, we have in his preparation for, and writing-out of, these Evolutionary lectures, another illustration not only of his method of working, but also of the thorough command of his wide and varied knowledge, and the readiness and logical force with which he could marshal it in the exposition of his ideas.

It was while thinking out these lectures on Evolution that Fiske clearly saw his way to weave into them, as a permeating woof of thought, three considerations of the very highest import in developing the doctrine of Evolution into a philosophical system. These were, first, the complete demonstration of the fact that there was not, nor could there be, any possible congruity between the Positive Philosophy of Comte and the philosophy of Evolution. Secondly, the positive, teleological, constructive nature of a philosophy founded on Evolution, in that it posits an Infinite and Eternal Being "everywhere manifested in the phenomenal activity of the Universe, alike the cause of all and the inscrutable essence of all, without whom the world would become 'like the shadow of a vision,' and thought itself would vanish." Thirdly, the identification of the religious implications of such a philosophy with the two fundamental elements of the Christian religion — love to God and love to man. On the first point Spencer and Fiske were

John Fiske

in accord: the second and third points, as we have seen, Spencer regarded as of incidental and secondary importance.

The thirty-seven lectures were delivered precisely as planned — the last on the 14th of June. The audience was small, with a slightly increased number for the concluding lectures on Evolution, notably by a few clergymen and students from the Divinity School. While not large, the audience was a thoughtful and responsive one. The publication of the Evolutionary lectures in the "New York World" promptly followed their delivery. They were widely read; but their publication did not cause any such outburst of theological denunciation as attended the first series. The fact was, the theological folk saw that they had a new antagonist to face; one who was far from setting forth any Comtian or atheistical doctrine; one who was backed by the highest authorities in science; one who was in very truth presenting a higher, a purer form of theism than obtains in any Christian creed; and who was giving to existing ethical morality, on the basis of individual and social conduct, an origin and a binding force far transcending anything found in the assumptions of Christian theology.

Fiske was, of course, desirous of getting Spencer's opinions on several points in the lectures, and especially on his treatment of the sociological and religious bearings of Evolution. Accordingly, he

Correspondence with Spencer

sent copies of the lectures to him, and from the exchange of letters that took place the following extracts are made.

Under date of September 29, 1871, Fiske writes Spencer: —

. . . After much incubation on the subject, I have come to think that you are right in refusing to accept the appellation "Positivist" in any sense in which it is now possible to use the word; and I can see many points of difference between your philosophy and that of the Littré school, which escaped my notice last year, and which are quite fundamental, albeit not very conspicuous on a superficial survey of the case. . . .

As the clear statement of the points of agreement and difference between your philosophy and Positivism is a matter of much importance, I hope that, if you can spare the time to look over the first part of lecture 18th, you will do so, and kindly communicate to me any criticisms which may occur to you. I should like also to know what you think of the term "Cosmic Philosophy" and "Cosmism." In the 19th lecture, the significance of these terms is still further illustrated.

Besides this I should like to invite your attention to lecture 11th on "The Evolution of Intelligence," and especially to lecture 17th on "Moral Progress." In the latter I have rudely sketched a theory of the transition from animality to humanity, from gregariousness to sociality, as determined by that prolongation of infancy which is itself due to the increasing complexity of intelligence. I do not know that I have been anticipated in this

John Fiske

theory, and it seems to me to be a valuable contribution to the discussion of the origin of society. It would give me great pleasure to know what you think of it. . . .

. . . Before publication, I feel it very desirable to come to England, and talk things over with you and with Lewes, Mill, and Huxley. I should also like to secure an English copyright on the book. Always desirous of seeing you more than any one else in the world, I now feel that I can make "business" a legitimate excuse for leaving home for a few weeks. If I can possibly bring it about, I shall sail for England early in the spring.

In reply to your kind inquiries after my health and private circumstances, I may say, figuratively, that to the strength of a gorilla and the appetite of a wolf, I add the capacity for sleep of a Rip van Winkle. Having a wife and little daughter and three little sons to take care of, and having a strong "*goût du bien-être*," not to call it a taste for luxury, I may find it rather hard to get on. Still, I find that literary work pays better than I ever expected it would. This is partly due to the generosity of Mr. Manton Marble, proprietor of the "New York World," who has always given me unstinted space in his columns, and paid me at high rates.

Rumour tells me that you are in better health than usual, and ready to proceed rapidly with your work. I am getting very impatient to see the "Sociology," and the rapid appearance of the last four numbers of the "Psychology" I have hailed with unseemly and barbaric laughs of exultation. One of my dearest hopes is to see you finish the whole work, and then go back and insert the unwritten

Correspondence with Spencer

portion on inorganic phenomena; and one of my most earnest labours will be to do what little I can in helping to secure for the results of your profound studies, the general recognition which they deserve, and are surely destined to obtain.¹ . . .

Hoping before long to meet you, I am

Yours faithfully,

JOHN FISKE.

The particular lectures in regard to which Fiske especially desired Spencer's criticism were those dealing with the evolution of human intelligence and the development of theism and of moral and religious ideals through the working of the unknown evolutionary principle of life — a principle which had been defined by Spencer as "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." In point of fact, Fiske's request was a courteous way of asking Spencer to define himself, on the subjects of theism and religion, more completely than he had yet done in the setting-forth of his philosophy.

Under date of November 27, 1871, Spencer replied: —

My dear Mr. Fiske: —

The packet of lectures safely reached me along with your letter. Thank you very much for them. Already I had read a good number of them with

¹ In Fiske's original draft of this letter he wrote, and then cancelled, the following: —

"I trust you will not tyrannize over later generations as Aristotle did; but I am sure they will rate you as high as he was rated in the Middle Ages."

John Fiske

much interest (some of them brought by Youmans, and others sent to him), but several were missing, and I am glad to have a tolerably complete series. They cannot fail to be of immense service by presenting the general view in a comparatively moderate space. Beyond the advantage of brevity, however, they have the great advantage of being a coherent re-presentation of the doctrine as it appears to another mind, a re-presentation which cannot fail to be helpful to many. To the great value which your lectures thus possess in their expository character, has to be added the farther value they derive from the original thought running through them, which here and there elucidates and carries out the general doctrine to great advantage.

It is satisfactory to me to hear that the course is likely to be repeated in Boston this winter, and that you contemplate subsequently embodying it in a volume. Good arrangements can doubtless be made for you here, under the general system of international publication which Youmans has been doing so much to inaugurate. It will give me great pleasure to see you in England, and to do what I can toward furthering your aims. Mill, you will not, I fear, be able to see. He is now at Avignon and intends, I am told, to spend most of his time there henceforth; coming to England only for a few weeks, probably in the summer. But with the others you name, I shall have pleasure in bringing you in contact.

. . . I have not had time to read, or re-read those particular lectures, or parts of lectures to which you refer, for I have been recently pressed in finishing

Correspondence with Spencer

some work that had to be done to date. Either soon, or else before you come, I hope to prepare myself to say something about them.

Meanwhile, respecting one of the questions you raise, — that of the title, — I may as well say what has occurred to me. To put my view in its most general form, I should say that a system of philosophy, if it is to have a distinctive name, should be named from its method, not from its subject-matter. Whether avowedly recognized as such or not, the subject-matter of philosophy is the same in all cases. If it is consistently interpreted as that order of science which unifies the sciences (and it has from the beginning had unconsciously, if not consciously, this character), then its subject-matter has all along been essentially the same. The speculations of the Greeks had reference to the genesis of the cosmos, just as clearly as the doctrine of Evolution has. And if so, it seems to me that the title "Cosmic" is not distinctive. It applies to the system of Hegel, of Oken, and of all who have propounded cosmogonies. The word expresses simply the *extent* of the theory, and may be fairly applied to every theory which proposes to explain all the arrangement of things — even though it be the theory of final causes. Having regard to this requirement, that the title for a Philosophy shall refer not to its subject-matter, which it must have in common with other Philosophy, but to its method, in which it may more or less differ from them; I continue to prefer the title "Synthetic Philosophy."

This and various other questions, however, we can discuss at length, when you come to England.

John Fiske

Respecting the final revision of your lectures before publication, I would suggest that you should, if you can, obtain the criticisms of experts on the respective divisions of science dealt with. Here and there there are statements and hypotheses which seem to me open to criticism; while they are not essential to the argument it is *very important* to avoid giving handles to antagonists. In the popular mind, a valid objection to some quite unimportant detail of an argument, is very often taken for a disproof of the argument itself.

I am glad to have good accounts of your health and vigour. There is plenty of work to be done, and it is satisfactory to hear of one otherwise able to do it, who is at the same time physically strong enough.

Very sincerely yours,
HERBERT SPENCER.

While the general tenor of this letter gave Fiske great encouragement, it left a tinge of disappointment in his mind, in that Spencer had evaded his request, for *particular* criticism on the lectures dealing with the application of the law of Evolution to the development of human intelligence, to theistic, to moral, and to religious ideals. He was further disturbed by Spencer's strong insistence upon "Synthetic Philosophy" as a suitable title for a philosophy based on Evolution — a title which seemed to Fiske neither generic nor in any way distinctive.

Two years later, we shall see these points again brought under consideration, when Fiske, in per-

Correspondence with Darwin

sonal conference with Spencer in London, was revising his lectures for publication.

Fiske also sent copies of the lectures to Darwin, and the following correspondence ensued. As we have here two self-revealing letters: the one from a young man with rare mental endowments, seeking with the utmost sincerity of purpose the highest truths in science and philosophy; the other from one of the world's greatest scientists, wherein we see a mind serenely poised after a contribution to human knowledge of the very highest import, and ready generously to welcome fresh thought from whatever source, I give the letters entire:—

Fiske to Darwin

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *October 23, 1871.*

Mr. Charles Darwin:—

My dear Sir,— Since it came in my way, in discharge of my duties as lecturer at the university, to notice your discoveries in so far as they bear upon the organization of scientific truths into a coherent body of philosophy, it has been my intention to write and seek the honour of your acquaintance, forwarding to you, as a sort of letter of introduction the reports of my lectures.

A few days ago I met your two sons at dinner (who afterwards kindly called at my house) and I gave to Mr. F. Darwin the reports of a few of my lectures to transmit to you. I cannot however resist the temptation to write to you, and tell you directly how dear to me is your name for the magnificent discovery with which you have enriched

John Fiske

human knowledge, winning for yourself a permanent place beside Galileo and Newton.

When your "Origin of Species" was first published, I was a boy of seventeen; but I had just read Agassiz's "Essay on Classification" with deep dissatisfaction at its pseudo-Platonic attempt to make metaphysical abstractions do the work of physical forces; and I hailed your book with exultation, reading and re-reading it till I almost knew it by heart. Since then "Darwinism" has formed one of the pivots about which my thought has turned. And though I am no naturalist, and cannot claim any ability to support your discovery by original observations of my own, yet I have striven, to the best of my ability, to point out the strong points of your theory of natural selection, and to help win for it acceptance on philosophic grounds.

There is one place in which it seems to me that I have thrown out an original suggestion, which may prove to be of some value in connection with the general theory of man's descent from an ape-like ancestor. In the lecture on "Moral Progress" (which along with others your son will hand you) I have endeavoured to show that the transition from Animality (or bestiality, stripping the word from its bad connotations), to humanity, must have been mainly determined by the prolongation of infancy or immaturity, which is consequent upon a high development of intelligence, and which must have necessitated the gradual grouping together of pithecoïd men into more or less defined families.

I will not try to state the hypothesis here, as you



CHARLES DARWIN

Correspondence with Darwin

will get a clearer statement of it in the lecture. I should esteem it a great favour if you would, after looking at the lecture, tell me what you think of the hypothesis. It seems to me quite full of significance.

I am on the point of giving a few popular lectures in illustration and defence of your views. You will see from the papers, which I have sent you, that I am an earnest admirer of Mr. Herbert Spencer — a thinker to whom I am more indebted than I can possibly tell; and who has been so kind as to give me some of his personal advice and assistance by way of letters during the past seven years. I hope before next summer to visit England, and I count much upon seeing you, as well as Mr. Spencer and Mr. Huxley. Meanwhile and always, believe me, dear sir,

Yours with deep respect,

JOHN FISKE.

Charles Darwin to Fiske

DOWN BERKENHAM, KENT,
November 9, 1871.

My dear Sir:—

I am greatly obliged to you for having sent me, through my son, your lectures; and for the very honourable manner in which you allude to my works. The lectures seem to me to be written with much force, clearness, and originality. You show also an extraordinary amount of knowledge of all that has been published on the subject. The type in many parts is so small that, except to young eyes, it is very difficult to read. Therefore I wish you would reflect on their separate publication; though so

John Fiske

much has been published on the subject that the public may possibly have had enough.

I hope this may be your intention; for I do not think I have ever seen the general argument more forcibly put so as to convert unbelievers.

It has surprised and pleased me to see that you and others have detected the falseness of much of Mr. Mivart's reasoning. I wish I had read your lectures a month or two ago, as I have been preparing a new edition of the "Origin," in which I answer some special points; and I believe I should have found your lectures *useful*; but my manuscript is now in the printer's hands, and I have not strength or time to make any more additions.

With my thanks and good wishes,

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES DARWIN.

P.S. By an odd coincidence since the above was written I have received your very obliging letter of October 23d. I did notice the point to which you refer, and will hereafter reflect more over it. I was indeed on the point of putting in a sentence to somewhat the same effect, in the new edition of the "Origin" in relation to the query — why have not apes advanced in intellect as well as man? but I omitted it on account of the asserted prolonged infancy of orang. I am also a little doubtful about the distinction between gregariousness and heredity. Memo. case of baboons.

When I have time and thought, I will send you description.

When you come to England, I shall have much pleasure in making your acquaintance; but my

Lectures on Evolution

health is habitually so weak, that I have very small power of conversing with my friends as much as I wish.

Let me again thank you for your letter. To believe that I have at all influenced the minds of able men is the greatest satisfaction which I am capable of receiving.

CH. DARWIN.

These letters of Spencer and Darwin confirmed in Fiske's mind the wisdom of his purpose to devote himself to the exposition of the philosophy of Evolution, and he now sought engagements for a course of lectures presenting Evolution as a philosophic system, or for single lectures presenting special points in the system, such as "The Meaning of Evolution," "Evolution and Comtism," "The Nebular Hypothesis," "The Composition of Mind," "Darwinism," "Science and Religion," etc.

During the winter of 1872 he delivered the complete course of lectures in Boston, and he had reason to be well pleased with the manner in which they were received by a popular audience. The audience was sympathetic from the beginning, and two of the lectures he repeated by request. At the concluding lecture, the expressions of gratitude for the new light he had thrown on the deepest of all problems — man's relations to the Infinite — were so marked that Fiske was greatly affected thereby. Writing to his mother, under date of March 31, 1872, he says: —

John Fiske

“My concluding lecture — on the ‘Critical Attitude of Philosophy toward Christianity,’ in which, as the consummation of my long course, I throw a blaze of new light upon the complete harmony between Christianity and the deepest scientific philosophy, was given Friday noon, and was received with immense applause. You ought to have been there. I suppose there was *some* eloquence as well as logic in it, for many of the ladies in the audience were moved to tears. Many were the expressions almost of affection which I got afterwards, and tokens thereof in the shape of invitations to all sorts of things, concert tickets, etc., etc. Abby and I held a regular levee for about an hour. Several people told me that their lives would be brighter ever after hearing these lectures; that they had never known any pleasure like it, etc., etc.; and as these things were said with moistened eyes, I have no doubt they came from the heart. To me it is a delight to have made so many friends. . . . The best effect of it will be to destroy the absurd theological prejudice which has hitherto worked against me, chiefly with those people who have n’t had the *remotest* idea of what my views are.

“I have long known that my views needed only to be known to be sympathized with by the most truly religious part of the community of whatever sect; that when thoroughly stated and understood, they disarm opposition, and leave no ground for dissension anywhere — and this winter’s experiment has proved that I was right.”

And yet, at this very time, while preaching this profoundly religious philosophy, and holding to a

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faith in the fair-mindedness of people that they would understand the highest philosophic and religious truth when properly presented, Fiske could not, because of his heretical opinions, speak before the Lowell Institute of Boston, an institution especially established for the dissemination of knowledge among the people.

It appears that President Eliot sought to have Fiske invited to give his course of lectures before this institution. He was not successful; and he gives the result of his effort in the following letter to Fiske: —

HARVARD COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,
27 March, 1872.

Dear Mr. Fiske: —

I have done my best with Mr. Lowell about a course of lectures for you, and on some accounts he would like to give you one. But public attention has been called to your religious opinions — through no fault of your own — and Mr. Lowell does not feel able to disregard in such a case the following expression of the wishes of the founder of the Lowell Institute: —

“As infidel opinions appear to me injurious to society, and easily insinuate themselves into a man’s dissertations on any subject, however remote it may be from the subject of religion, no man ought to be appointed a lecturer, who is not willing to declare his belief in the Divine revelation, of the Old and New Testaments, leaving the interpretation thereof to his own conscience.”

John Fiske

I could not declare my belief in the "Divine revelation" of the Old Testament and I don't believe you can; that is, in the accepted sense of the words "Divine revelation."

I am very sorry for this obstacle to your progress; but I beg you not to be discouraged, and not to abandon faith in the force of scholarship, and sincerity, and in the real and ultimate liberality of this community.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

To JOHN FISKE, Esq^r.

In spite, however, of theological opposition, Fiske's reputation for fine scholarship, for fair-mindedness in the discussion of controverted points of doctrine, and for rare powers of philosophic exposition, steadily broadened. He was fortunate in his friendships. In New York his friends, Professor Youmans, Henry Holt, John R. Dennett, and W. P. Garrison (of the "Nation"), Homer Martin (the artist), Benjamin Frothingham (his classmate), and a few others, were active in radiating, as it were, from the Century Club—at that time the centre of literary, scientific, and artistic thought in New York—influences in his favor, as the chief exponent in America of the new philosophy of Evolution. The result was that soon after the close of his lectures in Boston, he was called to give four lectures in New York—one at the Century Club on the "Composition of Mind," and three on "Evolution" at the Cooper Union.

Growing Reputation

The result was all that his friends could desire — to hear him was, in the court of reason, to be persuaded in behalf of his doctrine. And this, with the profound discussion over the origin of man opened up by Darwinism, drew to the consideration of his doctrine an ever-widening circle of thoughtful minds.

Personal honors were not wanting. While in New York William Appleton, the publisher, gave a "Cosmos Dinner" in his honor, and among the distinguished guests were William Cullen Bryant, Abram S. Hewitt, Dr. William A. Hammond, George Ripley (literary editor of the "New York Tribune"), Professor Youmans, and Dr. Austin Flint.

John Hay, then one of the editors of the "New York Tribune," also gave a dinner in his honor.

Meanwhile, the influence of Fiske's thought, unknown to himself, was spreading in the West, and he received a call from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the delivery of the complete course of Evolutionary lectures with a guaranty of at least five hundred dollars for the course. The call was accepted for the following September, and its fulfillment became (as we shall soon see) a memorable experience in his life.

At this time Fiske had under consideration an appointment as non-resident Professor of History at Cornell University. President White of Cornell was in full sympathy with Fiske's philosophical

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views, and he very much desired to have the new university rising at Ithaca, New York, give recognition to the new school of scientific philosophy. Very properly, therefore, he turned to Fiske for assistance. Why Fiske did not accept an appointment which at the time would have been a conspicuous honor, was owing to a call to service in behalf of his own *alma mater*.

This call is set forth in the following letters to Fiske from Professor Gurney and President Eliot.

Professor Gurney to Fiske

CAMBRIDGE, 18th May, 1872.

Dear John :—

I proposed to Eliot, some time ago, that you should be offered Abbot's place in the Library.¹ I am glad to say that he has taken to the idea more and more, and I dare say, has communicated with you.

As I had thought the matter over with care before proposing it to him, I hope I shall have a chance of talking about it with you, before you give an answer at any rate.

Very truly yours,

E. W. GURNEY.

This note was immediately followed by the offer to Fiske, by President Eliot, of the position of Assistant Librarian at Harvard College. The offer was cordially accepted, and in a few days Fiske

¹ Ezra Abbot was Assistant Librarian; but owing to the infirmities of the Librarian, John Langdon Sibley, Mr. Abbot had for some time been the Acting Librarian. He had tendered his resignation.

Assistant Librarian at Harvard

had the pleasure of receiving the following letter from President Eliot:—

HARVARD COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,
29 May, 1872.

JOHN FISKE, Esq^r.

Dear Mr. Fiske:—

You were duly appointed Asst. Librarian for the ensuing academic year by the Corporation on Monday last with a salary for the year of \$2500.

This appointment was to-day concurred in by the Board of Overseers, with one dissenting voice. You had better have a talk with Mr. Abbot about getting instructed in the work, after you have paid your respects to your official superior, Mr. Sibley.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

This unsolicited appointment came to Fiske as a most gratifying surprise. And it came at a time of special need. While his philosophical lectures had greatly extended his reputation, they had taken a great deal of time from his productive literary work and this had brought him but very slight return. He was therefore somewhat exercised over his financial future. His new appointment gave an assurance of a modest and steady income, although it brought a round of exacting duties which left but little time for literary and philosophical writing, or for lecturing. It was the hope of his friends that this appointment would pave the way for his advancement to a professorship at the college.

John Fiske

Fiske's work at the Harvard Library did not begin until October. During the summer he was busy getting settled in a new home at No. 4 Berkeley Street, Cambridge, and in finishing various literary matters,—among them getting his "Atlantic Monthly" mythological papers ready for publication in book form under the title of "Myths and Myth-Makers,"—and also in making himself acquainted with his duties as librarian.

On July 22, 1872, his second daughter, Ethel, was born.

The month of September was given to the delivery of his Evolutionary lectures in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I regret that I can make room for but a few extracts from the very deeply interesting letters to Mrs. Fiske, in which Fiske so graphically sets forth his experiences during this his first isolation at a distance from all his home surroundings.

On his arrival at Milwaukee he was cheered by the good prospect for his lectures. There had been a sale of over one hundred season tickets. He was especially pleased to find that the lectures were to be given in a Unitarian Church.

He gives his first impressions of Milwaukee thus:—

"There is celestial music of brass and reed bands. The city is very beautiful. I am ravished with the yellow Milwaukee brick. Never saw anything so picturesque for building material.

"No language can do justice to the beauty of

Lectures in Milwaukee

the weather and the climate, the blue loveliness of Lake Michigan, and the cheery brightness of the city. The streets are lively here on Sunday; beer-shops wide open, and street music — quite European. I have Germans at my lectures, and am smiled on at the big beer-garden where a glass is ordered for the 'Herr Professor,' as I make my appearance about 4 P.M."

He meets two old friends, the Reverend John L. Dudley, formerly of Middletown, Connecticut, and a sort of spiritual adviser in his youth, when Fiske was passing through his trying religious experiences;¹ and his classmate Jeremiah Curtin. We shall meet with both these old friends later. Of the former he writes: —

"I should be lonely, and homesick, were it not for Dudley with his good old smile, and his dreamy talks about philosophy. The old fellow's black hair is getting plentifully streaked with gray; but he is the same dear old dreamer, myth-maker, and poet, that he always was. His house is quite a little garden of delights."

Of Curtin, Fiske writes: —

"Thursday who should call to see me but the world-renowned Jeremiah Curtin, with whom I spent all day Friday, and who left for Russia yesterday morning. Jerry is still on his muscle linguistically — speaks now more than 40 languages fluently, and reads about 25 or 30 more. During the past few years he has been exploring the by-ways

¹ See *ante*, p. 110.

John Fiske

of Slavonic Europe, and can now talk in every Slavonic language almost as readily as in English — so he says, and I have no doubt he can. I found him possessed of a very plethoric budget of amusing and instructive experiences.”

Here is a passage in a letter written September 17, which reflects the deep tenderness of Fiske’s nature: —

“Eleven years ago to-day was the day I asked you to write to me up at Petersham.¹ O, if we only were in Petersham now (dearest spot on earth) with our precious little flock! I am eaten up with homesickness, and think if I can ever see New England again, I shall be content never to travel at all! I crave every word from home as a drunkard craves his liquor, and the kindest thing you can do for me will be to write a little almost every day, even if it is only half a page, so that only I may see an envelope directed by you, when I go for my mail. Do keep writing, and tell me about all the little ones — don’t leave one of them out!”

And here is the record of the beginning of an acquaintance that deepened into a warm personal friendship which lasted to the end of Fiske’s life: —

“Monday I was handsomely treated by a universally accomplished young man by the name of Peckham.”²

¹ See *ante*, pp. 245-48.

² George William Peckham, City Librarian, Milwaukee; President of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Letters; and author of several notable contributions to entomological science.

Library Work

Of Mr. Peckham's many courtesies, of Fiske's pleasant meetings with many cultivated people, German refugees and Catholics among the number, and of the public interest in his lectures, which increased to the end, the letters make frequent mention.

Fiske returned from Milwaukee, by way of New York, stopping there three or four days to visit his mother and to receive the felicitations of his friends Youmans, Holt, Dennett, and others upon the favoring prospects that were opening before him.

Fiske began his official work at the Harvard Library the 1st of October, 1872. The Library at this time contained some 160,000 volumes with a great quantity of unclassified and uncatalogued material consisting of pamphlets and unbound volumes. For several years Fiske's predecessor, the eminent Biblical scholar and critic, Professor Ezra Abbot, had been engaged upon the great task of bringing this in many respects unorganized collection into condition for ready reference through what is now known as the card system of cataloguing, — a system then comparatively new, — whereby the whole collection of books and pamphlets was to be alphabetically catalogued by titles, and then these titles classified by subjects, and the subjects also alphabetically catalogued. Professor Abbot's work had been greatly hampered for want of assistants, and at the time of his resignation the cataloguing was greatly in arrears.

John Fiske

Of his varied duties as librarian, Fiske has given such an interesting account in his published volume, "Darwinism and Other Essays," that I need not dwell upon them here, further than to say that the carrying-on of the cataloguing of the Library with the means at his command was a pressing need and one that he had to face. While he did not bring to his task any practical experience in the clerical routine work of the library, he brought something far more necessary to its practical needs, — a service wholly exceptional in character and without which the library would have been even more severely handicapped than it was during this period of transition to the great practical library that it is to-day. This service was his power of classification arising from his familiar acquaintance with the various departments of human knowledge, whereby he was enabled to carry on in some measure, although checked by serious obstacles, Professor Abbot's scheme of having the contents of the library classified and catalogued by subjects as well as by titles.

Fiske entered upon his duties with great ardor and soon brought himself in conformity with the routine requirements. He quickly mastered the conditions for the work of cataloguing, and planned for expediting the work; but just as he had got his plans ready for the consideration of the Committee on the Library there came the great Boston fire, November 9 and 10, 1872, by which Harvard

Library Work

College met with a heavy loss in its invested funds. For a time, it seemed as though a material reduction in expenditures would have to be made throughout the college; and the letters reveal Fiske as facing not only the giving-up of his plans for expediting the catalogue work, but also the probable reduction of the present inadequate library force, with perhaps a reduction of salary for those who remained.

By the prompt action of the friends of Harvard, however, the current needs of the college were provided for by the raising of a generous relief fund, and the administration was relieved from the necessity of curtailing in any marked degree its existing very economical expenditures. Fiske's plans, however, for expediting the cataloguing of the library had to be postponed.

Obliged to suspend that portion of his work as librarian most congenial to him, Fiske soon settled down to the daily routine of supervising the clerical work of the library, and during the ensuing six months, — November, 1872 to May, 1873, — his literary work was entirely suspended save the writing each month of two or three pages of "Science Notes" for the "Atlantic Monthly." During this period two things worthy of note occurred — the publication of his book on "Myths and Myth-Makers," and the repetition of his lectures on Evolution in Boston. His Myths volume was his first book publication, and it was felicitously dedi-

John Fiske

cated to his friend Howells.¹ The book was very favorably received both in America and England, and as we shall see later, it formed a very memorable introduction of Fiske to George Eliot.²

The repetition of his lectures in Boston in the winter of 1873 attracted a much larger audience than on their first delivery at Harvard, and they were attended with even more marked expressions of appreciation than were given to their delivery in Boston the year previous. Indeed, their close brought to him a tribute the most gratifying he could receive, and one that touched his deepest feelings.

Among his hearers in Boston was Mrs. M. A. Edwards, a lady of great refinement and intelligence, who became profoundly impressed with the importance of the religious implications of the philosophy of Evolution as presented by Fiske, and who saw a supreme act of social service in assisting Fiske to get his ideas before the public in published form. On hearing that Fiske was withholding his lectures from publication until he could make it convenient to consult with Herbert Spencer, Darwin,

¹ The dedication was as follows: —

TO MY DEAR FRIEND
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS
IN REMEMBRANCE OF PLEASANT AUTUMN
EVENINGS SPENT AMONG WERE-WOLVES
AND TROLLS AND NIXES
I DEDICATE
THIS RECORD OF OUR ADVENTURES

² See *post*, p. 484.

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Huxley, and other Evolutionists in England, Mrs. Edwards, with true womanly delicacy, sent a note to Mrs. Fiske enclosing a check for one thousand dollars, which she wished appropriated to the expenses of a journey to England for the revision of Fiske's lectures for publication in the light of the Evolutionary thought prevailing in England.

A most enthusiastic family council was at once held. The next step was to get a leave of absence from the college — and here, President Eliot met Fiske's application in the most cordial spirit, telling him he should "seize the opportunity by all means"; and to give Fiske ease of mind, he not only had his leave of absence granted, he also had his appointment as assistant librarian *made permanent*.

With every obstacle to his long-looked-for European trip removed, Fiske turned his thought to arranging a detailed plan of his journey. I have before me his itinerary of four and a half letter-pages in his clear, beautiful handwriting, in which, after a careful study of the European means of transportation, he projected a plan for every day's activity during the entire Continental journey. While the plan was not carried out in all its details, — he at first thought of visiting Greece and Constantinople, — the itinerary, as originally laid out, is a self-revealing autobiographic document, in that it unmistakably shows what were the dominant interests in European history and civilization in Fiske's mind, as he contemplated bringing

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a goodly portion of the physical features of the European continent under direct observation.

It is evident that he proposed to observe European civilization in the light of Spencer's law of life — "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." Hence we see him proposing to observe Nature with her external provisions for human life, together with man's utilization of her forces for convenient living as well as his artistic creations — especially his architecture — expressive of his spiritual life. And then, as supplementary to all these, Fiske longed to look upon places made memorable by great lives — lives which have left the human race their debtors. Hence in his original plan he proposed to look upon what remains of the physical and social environment of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as upon the surroundings of Marcus Aurelius and Cæsar, of Dante and Michael Angelo, of Shakespeare and Newton, of Voltaire and Goethe.

As one of the principal objects of his visit to England was to consult with Herbert Spencer, as soon as he had completed his arrangements for sailing he advised Spencer of his projected visit by the following letter: —

HARVARD COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *June 8, 1873.*

My dear Mr. Spencer: —

At last I seem likely to see you face to face. An unexpected and surprising stroke of good fortune

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enables me to spend a year in Europe. I shall sail from Boston in the 'Olympus' August 12th reaching Queenstown, I suppose August 22d. I shall land there and run through Ireland and over to Glasgow; and my further plan is to go slowly through parts of Scotland and England, reaching London about the middle of October.

I should now like very much to know whether you are likely to be in Scotland or northern England in September, so that I might run across your path? Also when are you likely to return to London for the winter? When are Mr. and Mrs. Lewes likely to have returned to London? Mr. Darwin has invited me to visit him, at his place in Kent: am I likely to be able to accomplish all these things by reaching London about October 15th and remaining there till Christmas?

I intend to take a room in London and devote myself to completing and publishing my lectures in book-form. If this can be accomplished by mid-winter, I hope then to go to Italy, and thence in April to Germany and thence in July to Switzerland, returning to America in August — I should be glad to spend the whole year in England, but as I may not again have an equally good opportunity to visit the Continent, I feel that I ought not to let this one slip. During the past two years my health has suffered somewhat from overwork and monotony; and I think a good deal of variety for one year will bring back some of the youthful snap.

I count more upon seeing you than upon anything else connected with my journey; and I hope to get a few good talks with you without making too great demands upon your time.

John Fiske

Youmans has just sent me a specimen of your Sociological Tables, and I am very much interested in it. I hope the "Sociology" itself is not to be long delayed.

With warm anticipations of the coming autumn I remain,

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN FISKE.

In addition to arranging for the conduct of the work at the library during his absence, Fiske had two pieces of literary work to do before sailing — the writing of an essay on Darwinism, or "From Brute to Man," for the "North American Review," and an article on Agassiz for the "Popular Science Monthly." The letters reveal him tugging at his task during the intervening hot July days, cheered by visions of the Scotch Highlands, which he seemed to see near at hand. Both articles were finished on time, although work on the Agassiz article was continued till the last moment. Just before starting for the steamer he writes: —

"Chauncey Wright dropped in and solaced — or distracted my last packing moments with philosophy. But I fixed up my Agassiz article, in spite of him." Fiske's purpose in the Agassiz article was to show that Agassiz's opposition to Darwinism was individual and personal, was not based on a complete knowledge of Darwin's contribution to the great discussion, and was not in accord with the leading scientific thought of the time. Fiske duly

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appreciated Agassiz's important contributions to science, and was by no means insensible to the charms of his rare personality; but he was deeply stirred at the wholly undue weight which the theological world was attaching to Agassiz's opinions, making him a sort of pope on ultimate scientific questions, notwithstanding the fact that the scientific world was against him. Hence Fiske was goaded into a criticism which, had he known the critical condition of Agassiz's health, he would have greatly modified. His object was to bring Agassiz's contention for the special creation of man by Divine fiat, which was then a vital religious as well as an important scientific question, under the broadest discussion.¹

August 12, 1873, Fiske sailed from Boston for Queenstown, on the Cunard steamer "Olympus."

¹ The article was published in the *Popular Science Monthly* for October, 1873. Agassiz died December 14, 1873. Through his teaching, through his public lectures, and through his personal sacrifices in establishing his great Museum of Natural History at Cambridge, a monument to the very doctrine of Evolution which he condemned, Agassiz had won the hearts of the American people, who felt his death as a national loss. Under these circumstances Fiske's article was untimely, and so far as it was considered in America, was regarded as unjust. Quite a different opinion, however, in regard to the article was expressed in England, as we shall see a little later when Agassiz's position as a scientist was brought under discussion by some of the foremost thinkers and scientists of the time.

CHAPTER XVI

DIVERSIONS — PIANO PRACTICE AND MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS — BEGINS COMPOSITION OF A MASS — PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT AND RELIGIOUS FEELING — DOMESTIC LIFE IN CAMBRIDGE AND PETERSHAM

1871-1873

Now that we have seen Fiske set sail for England for the purpose of completing his philosophic task, before following him through his English experiences which made the visit a memorable epoch in his life, it is well to turn back and briefly note two forms of diversion which accompanied the phase of his intellectual life that we have been pursuing.

We have had frequent occasion to note his strong musical taste — we might say, his passion for music. It is evident that had he chosen to devote himself to music, he would have become distinguished in the musical profession. As it was, he became greatly respected by leading musicians, as a keen appreciator and critic of the higher forms of musical composition and rendering. It is interesting, therefore, to note that at this important period of his life, when he was grappling with the greatest of themes that can engage the human mind, his musical taste asserted itself, and in two directions — in piano studies for the mastery of

Musical Diversion

the piano as a means for musical expression, and in musical composition.

Fiske's piano studies were an after-dinner diversion of an hour. He was aided in this practice by his friend Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie, of whose generous assistance he writes to his mother under date of March 2, 1871, thus:—

“ My amusements at present are limited to playing piano duets with the orthodox minister's wife, our warm friend, once a week. She is a most finished and artistic pianist, and it is about as useful to me as taking lessons. I felt much encouraged and flattered by the invitation. I take the hour between the close of lecture and dinner each Wednesday. We began with Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and shall by-and-by take something harder. I learn much in this way, and am getting into the true way of fingering.”

And a little later he writes:—

“ We are now on Mozart's four-hand Sonata in D and several polonaises. I have mastered a Nocturne of Chopin all but two bars. If you ever see a concert programme with Mendelssohn's Meerestille Overture on it, don't fail to go and hear it. You would never forget it. It is one of the most marvellous pieces of harmony ever conceived. It is like the music of angels.”

Fiske became very proficient with the piano, so much so that he could readily extemporize upon it, and thus it became to him a great means of mental relaxation, of expressing feelings through harmo-

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nies and without words. He soon put his musical proficiency to service in giving form to his religious feeling. I find mention of two hymns composed at this time with these suggestive titles, "Come unto Me," and "A Hymn of Trust." The latter was in E_b major with modulation in C sharp minor, and he says of it: "I composed it last evening. It is good, I think."

Under date of December 24, 1871, he writes: —

"I have sketched the Qui Tollis of my Mass, soprano solo, semi-chorus, full chorus in D minor. I am trying to avoid my fault of too complicated harmony and excursive modulation, and so far feel more satisfied with it than with any of my older things. I don't know as I shall finish it, for a Mass is a long thing, and I get no time to write what I have already composed of it. Sometimes my head is bubbling and boiling with harmonies as I go about in the horse-cars or on foot."

A little later: —

"My Mass has spoiled, for the time being, my piano practice. I have scored the Kyrie and Gloria, and composed the Qui Tollis, Quoniam, Cum Sancto Spiritu, and got half-way through the Credo. The accompaniments bother me. I can hear the violins, clarionets, hautboys, flutes, trumpets, drums and organ coming in where they ought: the double-basses crooning, the cellos sighing, etc., but I don't know how to write for these instruments, and so shall have to be content with a plain organ accompaniment. Not much matter though, as I

Composing a Mass

shall probably never hear it any way except with the ears of the imagination. Two or three musicians have examined the score as far as it has gone, and like it. John Paine says the melody and harmony are good, some of the themes grand — at any rate, a few bars per day of it serve for a relief to the mind.”

And still later he writes: —

“My Mass has got thus far: —

“1. Kyrie Eleeson — Chorus — Adagio.

“2. Gloria in Excelsis — Chorus, Allegro Moderato.

“3. Qui Tollis — Solos and Chorus Larghetto.

“4. Quoniam — Solo Allegretto.

“5. Cum Sancto Spiritu — Fugue Allegro Conbrio.

“6. Credo — Chorus — Allegro.

“7. Et incarnatus est — Chorale Andante.

“This makes just half of the whole Mass. The ‘Crucifixus’ — an alla breve fugue — is taking shape in my head. You will like this music even as sketched on the piano. Paine says, it contains much that ‘a great composer need n’t be ashamed of.’ The harmony is for the most part simple, and the general style rather *antique*. The ‘Cum Sancto’ is a very rapid and spirited fugue — a style which I always supposed beyond my reach — but I did it in one after-dinner hour — I don’t know how.”

In 1872 he was still at work upon it. On April 11, 1872, he writes: —

“I have finished my ‘Crucifixus’ and sketched

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the 'Resurrexit,' so that the Mass is two-thirds done."

The last mention of the Mass in this connection was February 6, 1873, when he wrote: —

"I am studying Cherubini on counterpoint, and am working at the 'Pleni Sunt Coeli' of my Mass — which I am making an elaborate fugue, the parts entering at regular distances and intervals, and working up into a tremendous climax with a long cantus firmus."

It may be said that there is a marked inconsistency here between Fiske's philosophical thinking and his musical feeling — that while intellectually he had no place for Christian dogma, yet in his heart he made the Eucharist the subject of his sublimest feeling and aspirations.

But there was no inconsistency. In his philosophical system Fiske regarded the Christian dogmas as outgrown symbols of religious thought and belief which had served their purpose — and a great purpose — in the development of man's religious thought; and he was so justly minded that he could survey with impartiality and with a sympathetic feeling, the centuries of Christian history when the Eucharist was the deepest, the profoundest expression of the religious feeling of mankind. His Mass was an attempt to give expression to this feeling in its historic, poetic sense, with all the enrichment he could give to it through the musical art. His philosophy and his Mass, therefore, were in accord

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in this, that both affirmed the religious emotions as the deepest impulses of the human soul: the Mass was an attempt to give to this feeling an artistic, historic form. In the same sense he regarded the oratorios of Handel, Bach, and Haydn as the highest expression of religious emotion, and he could enter into the full enjoyment of the "Creation," the "Elijah," or the "Messiah" without thought of their dogmatic significance. There are many who recall occasions when the great oratorios were produced by the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston — how the profoundly impressive choral parts quite overcame him.

In Fiske's mind Christianity was the mightiest drama in human civilization: it was his rare gift that he could appreciate it with the feeling of the poet as well as with the critical judgment of the philosopher.

Fiske was preëminently a domestic man in all his tastes and feelings. His home was the centre of his life, his "earthly paradise." And the letters, while revealing the workings of his mind on the profoundest questions of philosophy, constantly bear witness to the tender regard and solicitude, the deep affection, he had for his wife and his children. The anniversaries of the main events in his courtship and marriage were never forgotten, and we already have had occasion to note how tenderly they were cherished if perchance he was away from his home. His patience with and his delight

John Fiske

in his children, which have already been noted, reflected the happy poise of his mind in his intercourse with them. He delighted in their childish propensities to know about things, and he had a ready sympathy for them in all their little misfortunes. One of his chief delights was to picnic with them: if in Cambridge, at Spy Pond, a beautiful sheet of water a couple of miles or so distant; if in Petersham, in the many attractive places roundabout, such as Tom's Swamp, Philipston Pond, and "Cut-Supper" Wood, so called by William James; a beautiful spot, where he and the Fiskes were wont to tarry beyond the supper-hour. The picnics at Spy Pond were of special interest. They were usually made on Sunday. Apropos of this statement we have a letter to his mother of November 12, 1873: —

"Next Sunday Abby and Harold, Clarence and I are going to take a car to Arlington and then walk around Mystic Pond, a most exquisitely beautiful bit of country road of six miles. We shall take a basket of sandwiches and ale, and picnic under a giant oak tree and have a good time. Possibly the weather may turn cold and prevent us, but so far the season is warm and we hope to carry out this little November picnic. These little Sunday frolics with Abby and the children make up my greatest happiness. And how I bless the day when I can enjoy life with them!"

Partly for such excursions Fiske had had made from his own design a double perambulator, or

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push carriage, large enough to take in two, and, if need be, three, of the children. Into this carriage he would pack Maud and Harold and sometimes little Clarence, and then pushing the carriage he would wend his way through the market gardens of North Cambridge and Arlington to the pond, supremely happy to put aside for the time being all the problems of philosophy to make himself one in the little world of his children's delights and imaginations. Occasionally his friend John K. Paine was one of the party, and on one excursion he met James Russell Lowell, who, looking at his precious freight, said in the vernacular of Hosea Biglow, "I wish they wuz every one on 'em mine."

And then there was the annual June visit to Boston of Barnum's Circus, which was looked forward to every spring by the little Fiskes with the fondest anticipations. One of my pleasantest recollections of Fiske is his appearance on one of these happy occasions with Maud and Harold on either side and little Clarence in his lap, and his own countenance — to use a Dickens expression — "one vast substantial smile."

This becoming a companion with his children in the little world of their concerns produced at times striking effects when the children, having been brought into contact with his larger philosophic thought, endeavored in a naïve, childish way to appropriate this thought to their own experience. Maud and Harold were not excluded from

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the library when intimate friends like Paine, William James, Howells, Chauncey Wright, Professor Gurney, or Roberts were calling, and when the conversation turned, as it often did, on the great problems of Evolution. The children were quiet, thoughtful observers and listeners; and reflections of the library discussions were not unfrequently taken upstairs and seriously applied to questions less complicated than that of Evolution. On one occasion a difference of opinion arose between Maud and Harold over some weighty matter in their experience, when the following argument was overheard: —

“Well, Maudie, I guess it was due to the eccentricity of the earth’s corbit.”

“No, Hally, I *think* it was due to the convaporation of Saturn’s rings.”

The fine poetic side of Fiske’s nature is clearly reflected in the following passage in a letter to his mother of June 19, 1872, in which he sketches his immediate home surroundings: —

“As I sit here at work and occasionally glance out of the window, I might imagine myself in thick woods. I cannot see the street or any other house — nothing but a little Gothic church spire over the tree tops. Still I get plenty of sunlight all day — it breaks in through the leaves. Though in the very centre of Cambridge the stillness is profound, almost like Petersham. The song of birds is almost the only sound which comes in from morn till night — little sweet twitters, with now and then

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a distant cock-crow. It is a delicious place. Now and then I hear a little voice, and, looking out, see Maudie's flax, or Clarence's or 'Barley's' little red head down among the bushes; or perhaps Winifred Howells, reading to Maud under the apple-tree."

And now, August 11, 1873, the time had come when Fiske must leave his little flock for a whole year's absence. They were all in Petersham. The day before leaving he took them to drive to the various places made dear by associations. He left at six o'clock in the morning, and the parting was "sorrowful and heavy." His ride to the cars at Athol, nine miles distant, took him over the same road he had walked nearly twelve years before, on the occasion of his first, romantic visit to Petersham. As he came to the rise in the road, a short distance from the village, — giving an overlook of the village, — and which he had called Mount Pisgah,¹ as he said, "from here I got my first view of the Holy City," he turned to look back at a scene which was now familiar to him; and at once there came surging through his mind the series of events which had followed from that romantic adventure of September 13, 1861, and which had knit him to Petersham as the dearest spot on earth.

The next day, just after going on board the steamer, he sends a good-bye message to Mrs. Fiske containing this request: —

¹ See *ante*, p. 246.

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"I must have a pickerwow¹ of basket-wagon, with yourself on back seat holding Ethel, and all the other babies artistically disposed. It will be better without me: for it will be as if I had just stepped out, and was looking at the rest of you. Don't forget to send this to me."

¹ "We shall see that this particular "pickerwow" was of much interest to Fiske's friends in England.

CHAPTER XVII

VOYAGE TO QUEENSTOWN — VISITS CORK, BLARNEY CASTLE, LAKES OF KILLARNEY, AND DUBLIN — REACHES CHESTER — FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ENGLAND AND ENGLISH PEOPLE — A HURRIED TRIP TO LONDON WITH HIS FRIEND HUTTON, THENCE TO LIVERPOOL — VISITS THE LAKE DISTRICT — EDINBURGH — SCOTCH HIGHLANDS — CATHEDRAL TOWNS — IPSWICH — CAMBRIDGE

1873

FISKE reached Queenstown August 23, 1873, after an uneventful voyage of eleven days. He made a few friends on board, and with the captain, McDowall, "a jolly old Scot who liked a pot of beer and a pipe," he soon established friendly relations. With the captain he usually had a good "chin-wag" after lunch or before going to bed.

At Queenstown he left the steamer for a trip through Ireland which comprised a visit to Cork, to Blarney Castle, to the Lakes of Killarney, and to Dublin. During this trip he surrendered himself completely to the beauty of the Irish landscape and to the charm he felt in the naïve characteristics of the Irish people. The letters show such penetrating observation, such keen appreciation of nature and life and human history, that it may be doubted if Ireland ever had a more sympathetic visitor. From the Imperial Hotel, Cork, he writes Mrs. Fiske, August 24: —

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"I got off at Queenstown and am doing Ould Ireland. This is a dear old quaint hotel, ever so comfortable. No words can describe my delight in the beauty and sleepiness of Ould Ireland and at the queer Corkonian Paddies. I laughed yesterday till I cried. How lovely the old walls covered with thick ivy! To-day our party, six in number, are going to Blarney Castle in jaunting cars. We go to Killarney to-morrow. I feel new life in my veins."

Fiske gives a delightful description of Cork, and he was intensely amused by the Irish in their own home. The slow deliberation that characterized all forms of social activity greatly impressed him. This is the first thing one notices, and coming in contrast with our Yankee hurry gives the impression that everything is slower than "stock-still." Speaking of the waiters at a sleepily served dinner he says: —

"You will never know what slowness is till you have visited Ould Ireland. Barley at dressing time is lightning compared with 'em."

Of his visit to Blarney Castle he gives an amusing account, and particularly of his attempt to kiss the well-known Blarney stone: —

"I prostrated myself, and Williams and Ingalls took tight hold of my ankles, and I got nearly out to the cussed thing, when all at once I became aware of the horrible distance between me and the ground below, and my head was turned, and I became sea-sick, and said, 'For God's sake, pull me back!' So they hauled me in, and I said, 'Blast

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all beetling eminences henceforth, and let those kiss the Blarney stone who are willing to lean over a place higher than a church steeple with nothing to hold on to but their ankles.' "

Fiske's most interesting experience in this Irish journey was his visit to the Lakes of Killarney. Many as have been the visitors to these lakes it may be doubted if their poetic charms ever had a keener appreciation than was brought to them by this young American who, fresh from the experiences of a nineteenth-century civilization, saw for the first time in the midst of nature's surpassing loveliness the ruined vestiges of a mediæval civilization which had passed away, and with whose history he was familiar.

How deeply, how profoundly he was impressed is shown in the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Fiske written at Killarney:—

"And now let me change the scene to fairy Killarney. Away ocean voyage! Away groves of Blarney! Off with you, into dim antiquity! For it is now August 27th and I have been at Killarney since Monday morning, and what I have gone through here just crowds a year into three days. It seems whole ages since I saw Blarney Castle. For this place is one that fascinates you like the wand of a fairy, so that minutes here are as good as months elsewhere. I used to think I knew what a fine landscape was; but now I give it up. Killarney beats them all, even Petersham. We got here Monday in time for noon lunch; and after lunch

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started for the Muckcross Abbey — a wonderful old place built in 1190, and now covered with ivy, with a gigantic yew-tree, 700 years old growing in the court-yard.

“I lingered and lingered here over the old graves, and the old hearth-stones, till my less romantic friends yanked me aboard of the wagon, and we proceeded to Dinis Island and there took a four-oared boat for the Middle Lower Lakes. I won't say anything about these lakes, for anything like an adequate description of them would fill quires of paper, and would seem like raving to any one who has not seen them. And now the climax. We did many things which I don't allude to, but to dear Innesfallen I must give a word or two. Of all the islands which God ever made this is the most sweet and truly heart-resting paradise. As I walked about the sacred precincts, I felt such thrills as I never felt before — the hoary old monastery, built more than thirteen hundred years ago, now fallen into the richest ivy-grown ruins, but with the outlines of every room and every fire-place still distinct; and the landscape lovely beyond everything my wildest imagination ever conceived — a perfect heaven on earth. Stupendous ash trees, — one of them 40 feet in circumference, and others but little less, — enormous beeches, with their dark iodine-tinted leaves, and their stems standing ten feet in diameter; amazing holly-trees of a size that would do credit to a New England maple; and round, above, below, and everywhere, the omnipresent ivy, with leaves four inches in breadth and the deepest of deep greens. And then the blue lake visible through every vista

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whichever way you turn; and beyond, the grand Kerry mountains, like a dozen or twenty Monadnocks piled one upon another in desolate, awe-inspiring grandeur! And when amid all this wondrous glory of nature I sat down for a moment on the grave of an old friar¹—dead more than a thousand years—and tried feebly to look about and take in all the miraculous picture—I felt the chokes come and the tears in my eyes, and I knew that words would be utterly powerless to describe any such thing, you must feel it to know it; but I will say that I never before had, and somehow can hardly hope to have again, such a moment as I felt in Innesfallen. . . .

“I wandered once more along the whispering aisles of this temple of loveliness. I sat down just inside the door of the ruined monastery where there was a bit of dry stone, and looked out at the gigantic ash-tree, and in my fancy filled the scene with the stalwart figures of those grand old monks—men of mighty placidity, begotten of trust in God—who in the days of the decrepit Roman Empire, built their refuge here, secure amid the deep lake-waters from sacrilegious attacks. All the long, long past, richly freighted with memories came rushing by me, as I sat listening to the soft dropping of the summer shower on the holly leaves, and to the song of the thrush—at my feet a grave where one of these heroes of Christianity had slept these thousand years.

“I waited till the sunlight came once more flickering through the leaves, and then took a last lingering look, and went away—

¹ He enclosed a fern leaf from the grave of the old friar.

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“Sweet Innesfallen! fare thee well,
May calm and sunshine long be thine;
How fair thou art let others *tell*,
While but to *feel how fair*, be mine.”

From Killarney, Fiske went direct to Dublin — “a stupid ride of nine hours through a tame and uninteresting country.” He tarried but a couple of hours in Dublin, and then set out for Chester by way of Kingstown and Holyhead. He reached Chester in a rain-storm, weary after his Irish journey and fearfully hungry. He took a stroll about the town, it having “cleared up,” to get his English bearings. He strolled along the famous “Rows,” and also on the city walls, “and then moused around among the droll old dens of the town.” He also attended vespers in the cathedral, where he heard some good music. He was delighted with Chester, and his first impressions can best be given in his own words: —

“O Zeus, and all the other gods of Olympus, what an old place! I can’t try to describe it; and so before I leave, I shall send you a guide-book giving an account, and some views, of the town. I am supremely happy here, and shall explore it from the sole of its head to the crown of its foot.”

He tells of the good things he finds to eat, and adds: —

“I mention these little things to show you what an abundance of animal vigour the sea voyage, and the seeing of novelties have awakened in me.

At Chester

I feel the blood bounding in my veins. I run up three flights of stairs, two steps at a time, to my room without puffing."

At Chester he found letters awaiting him and among them was a cordial welcome from his genial friend Laurence Hutton. Fiske's joy was great and he writes: —

"Glory Hallelujah! Hutton comes here to-day, and I have secured a room for him next to mine. He sails for America a week from next Tuesday, and till then he will be with me."

The two friends explored Chester quite thoroughly. They walked in nearly all the "Rows," through the market in the evening, around the walls, and visited Eaton Hall, the seat of the Duke of Westminster.

The letters show how keenly Fiske was alive to his new surroundings. What most impressed him at Chester was the sort of English homogeneity of all he saw about him. Hitherto in America he had seen the Englishman as he had seen the Irishman, the Scotchman, the Frenchman, the German, each isolated from his own social habitat, and more or less in antagonism with his surroundings. Here, for the first time, he saw the Englishman in his own social home with everything downright English about him. The buildings had a sort of uniform English character, the shop-signs all bore English names, the shopkeepers, the clerks, the officials, the servants were all English, save here and there

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a stray Scotchman or Irishman, who served by a little contrast, to emphasize the universal English character.

Fiske from the very first felt much at home in this English environment. Not only did its social homogeneity impress him; there was also a straightforward, outspoken, pay-as-you-go honesty in the social life as a whole which challenged his admiration. Of course he had to notice the many contrasts in speech, language, and social customs between this distinctly old and unified form of social life and the opposite, new, composite character of the social life of America. But the interest in his observations arises principally from the fact that he does not philosophize; he simply gives his impressions without other thought than to interest, for the time being, the persons to whom he was writing and whose main interest was in his own enjoyment.

Fiske did not fail to note the strong English propensity for good, substantial living, and the letters are at times quite appetizing from the relishing way in which he sets forth the beef, the mutton, the puddings, the ale, and the wholesome, savory manner in which they were served. The characteristics of the English system of railway transportation — so different from what obtained in America — he had to note, especially as he experienced, as all American travellers do, the annoyance of being tied to one's "luggage"; and he expresses the

Impressions of England

opinion that "the Yankees can teach the English people a good many things about railway conveniences that they have n't yet dreamed of."

With his musical ear, so sensitive to vocal harmony, he notes much unpleasantness in the English speech. He says: —

"The English talk just as if they were Germans! So much guttural is very unpleasant, especially as half the time I can't understand them, and have to say, 'I beg your pardon?' Our American enunciation is much pleasanter to the ear."

Fiske's plan was to go from Chester to Liverpool, where he was to meet his sister-in-law, Miss Martha Brooks, who had been spending some time in Europe, see her aboard ship on her homeward journey, and then to strike north for Glasgow and Edinburgh, taking the Lake District on the way. But Hutton, who was also to sail for America in a few days, induced Fiske to change his plan, to run up to London for a few days and to get his first impressions of London with him. So they rushed from Chester up to London and took lodgings at 11 Craven Street, Strand, "a jolly and cheap lodging-house taken straight from Dickens's novels." Fiske found Hutton "the most delightful of travelling companions. He knows the economical ways of doing things. We had charming, cosy breakfasts together in our rooms, and then would sally forth about town, and meet at 6 P.M. to dine at some French restaurant — and so I have picked up a

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good many notions about London, and when I get back it will seem homelike."

Fiske found Miss Brooks in London, and together they visited some of the noted places and had several interesting walks about town. As this visit to London was for provisional observation mainly, he did not look up any of the people he was desirous to see, and the letters contain but a few observations upon what he saw. Of the chimpanzee at the Zoölogical Gardens he remarks that "he looks more like a man than a monkey, and I believe he would be called a man if he could talk." He got himself a suit of clothes at Poole's, the famous tailor, and remarks, "I shall not patronize Poole any more; for although the work is all done in the finest style, I *don't* like the cut."

After four days of these preliminary observations in London, September 5, 1873, Fiske, Miss Brooks, and Hutton set out for Liverpool, with the purpose of taking in Leamington, Kenilworth, Warwick Castle, and Stratford-on-Avon by the way. They visited these intervening places, but Fiske makes no observations upon them — he simply notes the fact to Mrs. Fiske that on Saturday, the 6th of September, "the ninth anniversary of our wedding-day, we drove to Kenilworth, then to Warwick Castle, and then to Stratford-on-Avon."

On the following Tuesday he saw Miss Brooks and Hutton sail from Liverpool for America, and then set out alone on his trip to Scotland by way

The Lake District

of the Lake District, so well known on account of its many natural charms as well as from its identification with much that is finest in English literature. He gives quite in detail his coaching and hotel experiences while passing through this famous section of Great Britain's "tight little island," and summarizes his impressions of this District and of English landscape in general to Mrs. Fiske, as follows: —

"I had seen nine lakes, viz., Windermere, Esthwaite Water, Coniston Water, Brothers Water, Ulls Water, Rydal Water, Grasmere, Thirlmere, and Derwent Water — 'some on 'em big and some on 'em little' — and I had acquired definite associations with ten villages; and so I thought the remainder would be more of the same kind.

"The Lake country is exceedingly beautiful, and some of it quite grand; and one can understand why Wordsworth, and Southey, and De Quincey, and others chose to live there, more thoroughly away from all civilization than one would now be in Tom Swamp. But it does n't bewitch me like Petersham. The only scenery that has fairly thrilled me is that of Killarney. Still there was one place on the road to Patterdale so much like Petersham, that it made me cry, for it seemed as if the basket-wagon with you and the little ones was *required* to make the scene complete and comfortable. The Lake country is more American in appearance than the other parts of England which I have seen. As for English landscape in general, it has all the monotony of a face which is perfect in beauty, without any play of expression. I say

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every moment, 'How lovely,' but it does n't charm or interest me one particle. Everything is deliciously clean. The roads are like the drives in Central Park; you never see old tomato-cans, cuttings of tin, piles of brush, etc., by the road-side; every hedge is fresh and thrifty, every field is like green velvet, every house is picturesquely and durably built, the stone walls are unexceptionable, the trees are dotted about in sweet confusion, there are flowers in all the windows, and ivy over all the walls; — in short, it is the cleanest, happiest, most smiling landscape conceivable; and the effect of about a hundred miles of it is to weary the eye so that you are glad to look away from it, and read your guide-book or the newspaper.

"I still say, give me New England for scenery. I can say that I see things in London that would make me like to live there; but I have n't seen any rural part of England which would tempt me to spend my days in it. I still swear by Petersham."

He visited Furness Abbey and makes this note:—

"Furness Abbey is fine for massiveness, but it is very inferior in architecture to Muckcross, and lacks moreover the *tenderness* of the latter. I don't think much of its architecture. There are two styles patched together, and they don't harmonize."

Fiske reached Edinburgh Saturday night, September 13, weary from an all-day's journey, and fairly sickened by the disgusting habits of some drunken Scotch passengers. The next day was a rainy Sunday, and as all active life was suspended by reason of religious faith, his first impressions

In Edinburgh

of the Scotch people were far from favorable. Writing to Mrs. Fiske in the afternoon, in the midst of the prevailing gloom, he gives free expression to his feelings: —

“Such a melancholy frowning set of people as the Scotchmen, of a Sunday, you never saw. This is a land where Puritanism still holds sway. . . . Asceticism and mental acuteness, drunkenness and thrift, somehow manage to get along together.”

But the next day brought an entire change of scene, with a wholly different state of mind, on his part, and the glories of Edinburgh found a keen appreciator. It was while under the spell of this fresh experience that he writes in the following strain: —

“The ancient rhyme goes: —

“ ‘Yankee Doodle came to town
In his striped trowsers,
Swore he could n’t see the town,
There were so many houses.’

“This remark of the acute and sagacious Y. D. will apply to most towns, but it does n’t apply to Edinburgh. Here everything is on top of something else, and wherever you are, you can see a big town around you. Even when you get down to the bottom, the effect is not belied; for then you look up and see another huge town all around in the sky. Never before was such a stunning spread made with an equal amount of granite and mortar. First the New Town is built, in the coolest way, right over the roofs of the Old Town. And then both

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Old and New Towns have a way of running into two-storiedness on their own hook. At one place I actually found three tiers of streets one above another, and crossing each other on superb arched bridges, while the railway burrowed away down in the basement below all else. The effect is astonishingly magnificent."

Then follows quite a full account of the day's experiences from which we take some extracts: —

"This morning I got up with my cold about cured, and the sun shone bright, and the Sunday being over, the town relaxed its severe countenance. After breakfast, I started off afoot in a vagabond way, without any object except to bask in the glories of this glorious place, lit up by one of the most gorgeous September days that was ever seen since the earth began to rotate on its axis. A miraculous atmosphere, such as you don't see six times in a whole lifetime: a most brilliant sun shining through the loveliest, thinnest veil of mist, softening everything, obscuring nothing — just like one of Turner's gorgeous misty pictures, you know — that's the way it looked. I never got so much eye pleasure in a day before.

"First I walked (my brain running riot with musical phrases) up the Calton Hill, and ascended Nelson's monument; then I went to Regent's Terrace to see my Sanskrit friend Dr. Muir — but he was out of town; then I pegged along to Holyrood Palace and saw the portraits of all the Scottish kings — all the bloody, treacherous Stuart tribe — and the bed Queen Mary slept in, and all the scene of Rizzio's murder. . . . Cosy old rooms



EDINBURGH

In Edinburgh

Mrs. Darnley had; I would n't mind living in them myself — and a grand old place it is — hoary with antiquity, long before Queen Mary saw the light. Not one of the long line of her Stuart ancestors whose 'pickerwows' I saw but has walked in those very rooms. And perhaps it has been the scene of more bitter tears and more atrocious villainy, than any other house now standing in Europe. — By the way, look in the 7th or 8th or 9th volume of Froude's "History of England" (I think it is the 8th) and hunt up his magnificent description of the murder of Rizzio and read it. It all came back to me this morning, and every one of the rooms was peopled for me with living figures. You will find Froude behind the piano, among the histories. Do read it *first of all*; it is a great piece of descriptive writing."

Then he walked up the Canongate, and High Street, crossed the Waverley Bridge, and roamed northward as far as he could; then he turned and roamed southward, never losing his way and never asking it, not even consulting the map in his pocket.

Fiske tells of going to the Castle, the Royal Institution, and the National Gallery, only to find them closed; and then, for want of something better to do he made himself seasick by going to the top of Scott's monument. While wandering, purposeless, about the streets he espied a "tram-omnibus" — a horse-car — and to use his own words:

"Happy thought — 'jerk the horse-car!' J. Bull is a sorry idiot in some things; but in the horse-car

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he beats us Yankees quite hollow. Here there are seats on top of the car where you can smoke and enjoy the view."

Accordingly he took the horse-car, not knowing or caring where it went, and was taken through streets he had not seen, out into the country, through lovely suburbs, and finally was brought back through still another part of the town and landed square in front of his hotel.

He gives the following incident as occurring during his stroll about town: —

"I met a Highland shepherd who had never been to Edinburgh before, and did n't know his way to the railway station. I had n't the remotest idea, but here was a definite object to walk for, and so I volunteered and led him along with his dog. He asked so many questions that I was obliged to own that I was an American, and a stranger in Edinburgh. By this time we had got close to the station and great was his astonishment — 'Ne'er been in Edinboro' afore, mon; weel, ye maun ha' hurd it verra weel descaibed!' "

And thus, after an eight hours' walk and a two hours' horse-car ride, he found himself "ripe for dinner"; and at 9.30 "ripe for bed, after a day never once to be forgotten."

The next morning Fiske set out for a week's trip to the Scotch Highlands by way of Stirling. Of this trip he gives a full account to Mrs. Fiske in a letter dated at Inverness, September 21, 1873. He begins as follows: —

The Scotch Highlands

“What a week this has been! I came to see mountains and lakes, and by Jove, I have seen mountains and lakes, and *felt* 'em, I might say, in various ways.— Ben Ledi, Ben A'an, Ben Venue, Ben Lomond, Ben Cruachan, Ben Nevis, and I know not how many more of the Benjamin family—and as for the lakes they are like the long list of one's early loves, and which is the loveliest, I thought I knew when I had only seen the first one, but now I give it up. I have *sailed over* the following— Lochs Katrine, Lomond, Fyne, Linnhe, Leven Lochy, Oich and Ness; and I have walked or ridden by the side of Lochs Vennachar Achray, Leven, Etive, Awe, Tullich, Lydoch, and Eil. A good week's work! ! For simple loveliness give me Loch Katrine, for beauty and grandeur, Loch Lomond, for magnificence, Loch Awe, for awful sublimity, Loch Linnhe.”

It can be well understood that this letter is one of great interest. Fiske's observations, his emotions are depicted so simply, yet so graphically, that the reader fairly feels that he is making the journey himself. A few extracts must suffice to give an idea of his keen susceptibility to the beauty and sublimity of nature, so opulently conjoined, in this region consecrated as it were to human interest by Scotch history, poetry and romance:—

Stirling Castle. “I went all over the castle, from the ramparts of which there is one of the most magnificent views to be had on this planet. The whole Benjamin family in the distance; and an immense plain at your feet, through which winds

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the silvery Forth. In the midst of this plain the rock of Stirling rises sheer into cloudland, and on the very crest of this beetling eminence stands the castle. Below me on the right lay the battlefield of Stirling Bridge, where Wallace defeated the English in 1297 — so that they had to quit the castle. A little farther on are the ruins of Cambuskenneth Abbey. To the left is Wallace's Tower, and beyond that the battlefield of Bannockburn, where Bruce defeated the English in 1314. . . . Every portion of the field was entirely within view — and a soldier of the garrison pointed out to me all the strategic points so that the whole battle came back to my mind with great vividness. Then I went into the so-called Douglas room, where James II basely murdered William, Earl of Douglas, after inviting him to an interview, and furnishing him with a safe conduct — a crime which was regarded with abhorrence even in those fiendish times. I stood in the little bay window where the king stabbed him, and imagined how the servants came in from the little ante-room and threw the body out of the window while others below dug a grave in the garden and buried the great Earl like a dog."

The Trossachs. "At Callander I took the top of a coach for a superb ride of nine miles past Lochs Vennachar and Achray, with Ben Ledi and other Bens towering on the right. It was about 1 o'clock when we reached the Trossach's Hotel, which is famed for its cold *weal pie* (said Mr. Weller, etc.); and after a rather exhaustive experiment upon it, I can say it well deserves its reputation."

Loch Lomond. "The scenery about Loch Lomond,

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for combined grandeur and sweetness *surpasses anything else which I have ever seen*. There is nothing else here which a painter would set before it, though there is other scenery equally impressive in a different way."

Loch Linnhe. "Leaving the Bay of Oban, the steamer entered Loch Linnhe towards sunset. This is a very large lake hemmed in by giant mountains without a trace of vegetation, and the effect is *awfully* sublime. It was the greatest sight I ever saw — fairly overpowering in its weird solemnity. The lake was rough, and its water inky black, with savagely laughing white crests. I felt as if in the black domains of some terrible enchanter."

An Experience at Ballachulish. "After 26 miles of Loch Linnhe, we entered by twilight the beautiful Loch Leven, and stopped at Ballachulish, where I put up at the jolliest inn that I have found in Great Britain. There was an Englishman there who looked the very image of Manton Marble, so that I fell in love with him at once, and when he opened his mouth, it *was* Marble's voice that came out of it. Him I will call M. and his wife was of similar style to Mrs. Edwards; and they both looked at me ever so much, and by and bye we spake together, and they were cultivated and attractive people. M. said I would n't see anything of Glencoe in such a rain, but I said I had made up my mind to despise rain and flood, and so off we started. Rain? Floods? Far from it. Hailstones? By no means. It rained as if some archangel had accidentally tipped over the biggest water-butt in heaven, and sent it all down onto us 'to onct'; it did n't come in drops — the air was

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nothing but solid water, and we were like fishes at the bottom of the sea, and the floods ran across the road so profusely that I wondered they did n't float the coach, and wash us all into Loch Leven. The tempest was such that the driver turned back before we had got to the heart of the glen, and about noon we returned to the inn, where I sent my boots and my ulster to the kitchen to be dried, and went upstairs and changed clothes, and went down into the parlour, where there was a pretty good piano, and began to play with all the zest of a chap that has been famished for a piano for weeks and weeks. I began on the 'Squitch' and extemporised several variations on it, and was going along with great glory when I looked up and saw Mrs. M. seated in the bay-window with hood and water-proof on, looking intently at me, with tears on her cheeks, and then I became aware that there were a dozen people in the room. When I had finished there was a grand clapping of hands; and M. came up and said that was grand, and could I give 'em a dose of Mendelssohn? It was one of my good days, when I can get the cantabile out of a piano, and I played considerable of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Chopin, with genuine applause from all present; and then we all became very sociable, and passed a charming afternoon in conversation and games, and dined together like a family party."

The Pass of Glencoe, and the way thither. "It was a superb morning, and at 8 I started on top of coach for Tyndrum, through one of the grandest roads in Scotland. We coasted along the banks of Loch Etive, passed the ruined Dunstaffnage Castle,

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an old stronghold of the Campbells, passed the Brigg of Awe, — the scene of Scott's story of the 'Highland Widow,' — went through the wild pass of Brander, and approached the head of Loch Awe. Here several of us got down and walked two miles, while the coaches toiled up an ascending grade. It was a lovely walk. For magnificent scenery of the true New England type, Loch Awe surpasses anything I have seen!

“Resuming the coach, we passed through lovely Glenorchy, and then came upon a long stretch of very desolate moorland, with the giant Ben Cruachan in the background. Here some of us crossed a bye-path over steep moorlands, overgrown with heather, while the coach proceeded along the tortuous main road. I enclose a sprig of the heather which I plucked on this lonely spot. Here the scenery is not at all like anything you ever saw in New England. On every hand are steep mountains, rising almost perpendicularly, without one solitary tree to be seen — nothing but heather. The loneliness of the scene is beyond description. It is 'like a lone land where no man comes or hath come since the beginning of the world.' Everywhere barrenness, everywhere blank desolation. After a while we reached Tyndrum, which consists of one granite hotel superbly built in the pointed Norman style, and about two dozen nasty shanties. Here I changed coaches, and bore toward Glencoe. We passed pretty Loch Tullich, and halted at Inveroren, where I tried to see how much cold mutton I could dispose of in ten minutes; and then we passed Loch Lydoch, which is not especially interesting, and then our road lay through utter desolation —

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not a tree, not a house, nothing but mighty hills rising on every hand like icebergs in the midst of the sea. Towards dusk we entered the pass of Glencoe, where the scenery becomes terribly sublime; even the heather appears no longer, the great masses of jagged rock rise three thousand feet sheer up each side the narrow glen and stand like grim giants guarding some unearthly citadel. Here in February, 1692, about forty Macdonalds were foully and cruelly massacred by a body of English troops under Col. Campbell of Glenlyon, at the instigation of Sir John Dalrymple and the Earl of Breadalbane, who had a grudge against the Macdonalds. It was the most perfidious and atrocious thing, I think, that ever happened in Scotland, which is indeed a land of horrors."

To Inverness through the Caledonian Canal. "We were now on the famous 'Caledonian Canal,' which it is thus, and this is the reason of this thusness. Loch Linnhe, as the map will show you, communicates directly with the Bay of Oban. From Loch Linnhe, you pass into Loch Eil, along the banks of which we posted Friday night in our wagonet seeing just enough to see that we were losing a great deal. At the head of Loch Eil stands the village of Banavie. Now between Banavie and Inverness, there lie three magnificent lakes — Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and Loch Ness — and the art of man has joined these lakes with each other, and with Loch Eil at one end, and with the Moray Firth at the other, by a deep canal, so that an ocean steamer can go through the very heart of the Highlands from the Atlantic to the German Ocean. Only as some of these lakes lie high up in the mountains,

The Scotch Highlands

your steamer has to be hoisted up from one lake to another by means of locks, and then let down again. It so happened yesterday that it was a superb day, bitter cold, with a very brilliant sun and no rain at all, — being the *third* rainless day since I landed at Queenstown. You can perhaps imagine how perfectly delightful the voyage was. Part of the time in a canal so narrow that we seemed to be sailing on land right between the most beautiful hills; part of the time ploughing through wild lakes bordered with forests of Scotch fir. It was more fairy like than anything else I have seen. First we passed by Ben Nevis, biggest of the Benjamins, his hoary pate covered with snow; then we sailed through Loch Lochy, which is sublime like Loch Linnhe, only less so; then we climbed into the lofty Loch Oich, away up in the mountains, and passed through exquisite wooded scenery, like that of Loch Katrine, only less so. Then we were lowered down through seven locks, during which operation many of us got 'out and took a walk. Our steerage passengers consisted of a great flock of sheep *en route* for Inverness to be slain for mutton — a circumstance which caused Paine's great chorus — 'He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, yet he opened not his mouth' — to run in my head all day. — No joke about it; such are the queer ways in which big and little ideas tie themselves together. One of these sheep had evidently made up his mind to commit suicide, for he jumped overboard in one of the locks, and was yanked up and rescued by a shepherd's hook inserted under one of his horns. He jumped overboard again, and was rescued by a rope, which was skilfully lassoed

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about his neck, though I should have thought it would have strangled him. Poor sheep! He must have been very desperate; for while we were in the last lock, he tried it again; and before he could be rescued the steamer sort of rubbed against the wall of the lock and crushed him. Exit sheep from this vale of tears!

“Then we entered Loch Ness which is twenty-six miles long and only a mile and a quarter in width, so that it seems like a river. It is more than 1000 feet deep. The scenery on it is very much like that of the Hudson River near West Point. At Foyers Pier we got out and walked a mile uphill to see the Fall of Foyers tumbling down 200 feet into a wild chasm, while the steamer waited for us. At 6 P.M. (of a Saturday) we reached Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, which is very likely the most northerly point I shall ever reach.”

Fiske was obliged to remain at Inverness until Monday morning, and he had an attack of real homesickness, as in his loneliness he pictured in his imagination his little home group gathered in the “obally” at Cambridge. He tells with what eagerness he is looking forward to getting a batch of letters at Edinburgh on the morrow, and there is a touch of tender pathos in his remark, “I hope that among them will be the ‘pickerwow’ of the basket-wagon and its precious freight.” He found occupation, during what he calls “this vile Scotch Sunday,” in writing the letter to Mrs. Fiske, from which the foregoing extracts are taken — it is a letter of twenty-four closely written pages, care-

In Edinburgh

fully punctuated as to its meaning, and without a *single erasure or change of word*.

On Monday, September 22, 1873, Fiske left Inverness, by rail for Edinburgh. The weather was fine, and he found the scenery delightful — “exceedingly like Petersham.” He remained in Edinburgh four days “and got more in love with the city than ever.” He visited the castle, which he thought one of the grandest places he ever saw — standing on a beetling eminence more steep than that of Stirling. He wondered how the Earl of Murray in 1313, with thirty picked men, could have climbed clean up the side, and captured it. He went to the Advocate’s Library, about the size of the Boston Public Library, and thought that as to cataloguing they were way back in the Dark Ages as compared with Harvard. Next he went to the National Gallery, where he found “many splendid pictures by Rubens, Salvator Rosa, Rembrandt, Titian, Paul Veronese, Giorgione, Murillo, etc., and lots of English and Scottish masters.” He says, “I staid there ever so long, and was so stupefied with delight, that going out of doors seemed like waking up into a dull every-day world again.”

This was Fiske’s first experience with a large collection of great masterpieces of representative art, and it is to be noted that his appreciation strikes true in regard to them — he is overpowered by them.

John Fiske

Wednesday was spent in a futile attempt to find an uncle of his friend Hutton, by an excursion to St. Andrews. He partly compensated himself by visiting the ruins of the cathedral and the castle which brought to mind the "eminent virtues" as well as "the somewhat acrid and irreverent temper" of John Knox. He also found much to interest him in the monument to the martyrs Wishart and his four associates.

Thursday he says: —

"I spent a long time in the University Library — about the same size as ours — and was so fortunate as to meet the librarian of the Glasgow University. Had a long talk with the two librarians. The more I see of these things, the more I appreciate the greatness of what Ezra Abbot has done" (for the Harvard Library).

At the library he found that his friend Dr. Muir was not away, but had moved out to Morning-side, one of the suburbs. Accordingly in the afternoon he rode out and called. Dr. Muir was out. He left his card and walked back to the city.

Friday he went to Melrose Abbey, which he says "is a superb ruin, worthy of all that has been said about it." Then he drove to Abbotsford. His comments upon this shrine for all lovers of true romance are brief: —

"Tell you what, my dear, Sir Walter Scott's library is a rouser. The ceiling is a beautiful specimen of oak carving. The house is a regular

In Edinburgh

curiosity shop, and I saw so much that I will not try to tell anything about it."

But Fiske's last experience in Edinburgh was — to himself at least — the most interesting of all. Dr. Muir promptly acknowledged his call by inviting him to dinner Friday evening. What followed is given in a letter to Mrs. Fiske: —

"On returning from Melrose, I had just time to get out to his lovely villa before dinner. He is a very old bachelor and his niece Mrs. Lowe keeps house for him. He had invited to meet me Dr. Findlater, one of the first philologists in Scotland, Dr. Aufrecht who is one of the greatest Sanskrit scholars in the world, and who published many years ago a great work on the Umbrian language. I was at first overwhelmed at meeting so much erudition, all at once, and was afraid I should appear to be a — fool. But I got along very well. They all knew the Myth-book. Dr. Muir said it was '*the finest specimen of lucid exposition he had ever seen in his life*'; and he singled out one or two of my own particular points in a way that showed that he understood both their merit and their novelty. The others appeared to agree with him. Three more modest men, and three more consummate gentlemen, I never met. . . . The dinner was delicious, with some choice wines and the conversation was *ferociously* learned. We discussed the Sankhya philosophy, and all sorts of stuff, and Mrs. Lowe, having lived in India, also enjoyed it, or seemed to. I staid till after horse cars were over, and then Dr. Muir walked part way back to town with me."

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The next morning he left Edinburgh in a state of mind very different from that in which he entered the town a fortnight before. He writes: —

“I left Scotland almost tearfully, after two weeks of such exuberant happiness, as is rarely experienced this side of heaven.”

On his way to London Fiske stopped at the cathedral towns of York, Lincoln, Boston, Peterborough, Ely, and Norwich, and also at Ipswich and Cambridge, and in his letters to Mrs. Fiske we have quite full records of his impressions of the cathedrals of Boston and of Cambridge. The few extracts we can take from these deeply interesting letters show a mind as keenly appreciative of the beauty and grandeur of man's constructive arts as it was responsive to the beauty and sublimity of nature. The cathedrals gave him his first impressions of grand constructive architecture, and how he felt in the presence of these sublime creations he tells in many passages in the letters. Writing from York, he says: —

“After writing some ‘tezzletelts’ I went out again and attended vespers in the cathedral. This, you know, is one of the largest and grandest churches in the world. I believe it is the largest in England. The one at Ely is longer, but this beats it in area. It is a truly magnificent building — lovely and awful, solemn and sweet. It is like music to be in it, and if you go in of a Sunday afternoon you *hear* music too. The organ looks small — probably be-

Visits Cathedral Towns

cause it is in such an enormous place; but when it opens its mouth, there issue forth such stupendous volumes of sound as take your soul right off its feet and float it up, away up, among the dim arches overhead. I never felt so full of inspiration as when the people were going out and the whole vast space was fairly shaking and trembling with harmony, as the organist worked up to the tremendous fortissimo climax of some ancient fugue. This alone was worth the whole voyage across the Atlantic — and the window-tracing is absolutely miraculous. I loafed around entranced till I got 'kicked out,' so to speak. One might spend a month in this holy place. . . . They are always tinkering it, to keep it fresh and vigorous; and indeed are repairing it now in one corner. But the finest windows are just as they were in the thirteenth century."

He sums up his cathedral impressions thus:—

"I have every reason to regard this tour among the cathedrals as a great success. If there is anything in England worth seeing, it is these gigantic and exquisite buildings. The sensation you get when inside of one is something that cannot be described — you must feel it yourself. I have now seen eight altogether, viz., Chester, Carlisle, Durham, York, Lincoln, Peterborough, Ely and Norwich. Of these the first two are not especially grand, though the east window of Carlisle is considered the finest stained window in the world. Durham, I only saw the outside of and that is exceedingly magnificent. Norwich is fine but inferior to Lincoln and Peterborough. York is considered the grand-

John Fiske

est, but I think Ely rivals it. Its length is stupendous, and you get the full effect of this because the screen between the choir and the nave is of open work. Instead of a plain lantern in the centre there is a Gothic dome (the only one in the world) the effect of which is incredibly grand. As you look slantwise across this dome, taking in at one view the entire north transept with parts of the nave and choir—the effect is said to be unsurpassed by any other architectural effect in Europe. The finish of the interior (the carvings, etc.) is far more elaborate than that of the other English cathedrals. It would take a month to drink in the effect of all the curious carvings. At the east end of the choir, there is a superb shrine of carved marble, exhibiting six scenes from Christ's Passion—a marvellous specimen of sculpture, so exquisitely done that you could study it with a microscope and find it perfect:—still there are scores of figures, over a hundred I should say, in these six scenes. The whole is set in a frame-work of mosaics of precious stones—onyx and jasper, and lapis lazuli, etc. . . . The building was terribly defaced by the Puritans who smashed 280 statues in one of the chapels alone, and broke every pane of glass in the church. . . . At Lincoln, they tore up all the oak carvings in the choir, and substituted plain church pews and the effect of these in contrast with the grand Gothic pillars is odd enough. Fortunately at Ely, they left the oak carved seats and stalls, and they are very wonderful. . . . I have learned a great deal about Gothic architecture since Sunday, compared to the little I knew before from books. There is nothing like seeing things."

At Ipswich

When Fiske had finished his cathedral observations at Ely, although in great haste to reach London, being in the vicinity of Ipswich he could not resist the temptation to spend a night at the Great White Horse Inn, made forever memorable in English literature by Dickens, as the house where Mr. Pickwick had the romantic adventure with the lady in yellow curl-papers. From this inn he writes his cathedral impressions just quoted, and appends the following brief account of the inn itself:—

“This old tavern where I am now writing was famous long before Dickens made it immortal. It has been standing here since thirteenth century, and has been the Great White Horse Inn all that time. It is a very ancient building with a paved court yard, and trees in the middle. It is the most picturesque tavern I have ever seen, and is alone worth the short journey to Ipswich. The house is so crooked I don't wonder old Pickwick lost his way in it. Dickens often stopped here, and there was once a 'boots' named Sam Weller. The cooking is very good, and my ancient brass bedstead with its fat feather bed is the most comfortable affair I ever slept on. We must give old England the first prize for home like and comfortable hotels, though as far as railroad travelling goes, I think no language can do justice to the intense feeling of contempt for the British intellect with which it inspires me. Anything more heathenish than an English railway train I have never seen. And they are slower than snails. That 50 miles an hour business is all a myth, except on the Irish mail and one or two other trains. Mostly they

John Fiske

don't make over eighteen miles an hour; and they jolt equal to a horse-car off the track. And they are always, without any exception, 30 minutes behind time."

From Ipswich Fiske went to Cambridge, where he spent two days of rare intellectual enjoyment in visiting various points of interest in the university. He first called at the library, and introduced himself to Mr. Bradshaw, the chief librarian. Mr. Bradshaw received him with great cordiality, took him all over the library containing 300,000 volumes, and explained very fully their system of cataloguing, "wherein," he says, "I maintain that Ezra Abbot has beaten them out of sight."

Among the curiosities in the library, the telescope invented by Newton and used by him in his researches greatly interested Fiske. He says:—

"It looks as much like our Harvard telescope as a bark canoe looks like the steamer Olympus. The greater the wonder at what he accomplished. I never felt more like echoing the sentiment engraved on the pedestal of his statue in Trinity Chapel —

*'Isaacus Newton
Qui humanum genus ingenio superavit.'*"

After a delightful forenoon together Fiske was taken by Mr. Bradshaw to the latter's rooms in King's College for luncheon. Of this courtesy Fiske writes to Mrs. Fiske as follows:—

"Such luxurious college rooms I never saw. The

In Cambridge

librarian is a senior Fellow of the college, has a man-servant of his own and lives like a nabob. We lunched on mutton-pie deliciously cooked, sweet bread and butter and celestial beer! There was a piano, also *fine* 'pickerwows,' bustuettes, and everything jolly. He had seen Stubby Child quite recently. He is rather a swell chap; quite a Don, you know; and perhaps more swell than profound, but very satisfactory in his good-breeding and kindliness of manner."

Fiske explored the buildings and grounds of several of the colleges — King's, Trinity, St. John's, Corpus Christi, Pembroke, St. Peter's, etc., and he writes:—

"The buildings and grounds here so far surpass what we have got at Harvard, that there is no use in talking of them on the same day."

He left Cambridge for London Saturday, October 4, 1873, with the most delightful impressions floating in his mind of the whole university, forming in his imagination the fore-front of a perspective of the seventy-four towns and villages with which he had so recently established associations.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN LONDON AGAIN—TAKES ROOMS NEAR BRITISH MUSEUM—CORDIALLY RECEIVED BY SPENCER AND OTHER EVOLUTIONISTS—ARRANGES FOR PUBLICATION OF HIS BOOK—DISCUSSIONS WITH SPENCER AND OTHERS—RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION—PERSONAL SKETCHES OF SPENCER, DARWIN, LEWES, GEORGE ELIOT, HUXLEY, LYELL

1873

FISKE's delight in getting back to London was something like what he was wont to feel in approaching Petersham, only as he says "less so." He was in great spirits. He writes: "All these fine things I have seen have put fresh blood into my veins. I feel so wide awake and full of vim as I have n't felt before since the days when we first moved to Cambridge."

His first thought was to arrange for the publication of his book, and to this end he desired to consult Herbert Spencer first of all. Accordingly, Sunday, October 5, 1873, the next day after his arrival, he walked out to Bayswater, near the farther end of Hyde Park, Spencer's town residence, but only to find that he was away for a few days. While waiting his return, Fiske called upon William Ralston, an eminent Russian scholar, and assistant librarian at the British Museum. Fiske and Ral-

In London

ston at once took a strong liking for each other, and by Ralston's advice Fiske took lodgings opposite the museum at 67 Great Russell Street. In the museum itself he was given every facility for carrying on his work. He gives the following description of his lodgings and his immediate surroundings:—

“My rooms look right out on the British Museum. I have a comfortable sitting-room and bedroom well furnished, with grate and gas, etc.; and have got a cottage piano on hire. I have my breakfast in my room and dine at a French restaurant near by and am living very comfortably on ten or twelve shillings per day *piano included*.”

He was pleased to find in the same house his classmate Jeremiah Curtin, still in pursuit of linguistic lore, and on his way to the Caucasus, which, Fiske remarks, “being the almightiest Babel of languages on earth, is a paradise for Jeremiah!”

On Thursday Fiske received a cordial note of welcome from Spencer. He called immediately and was very warmly received. Spencer entered heartily into Fiske's plan for an international publication of his philosophical work, and strongly recommended Macmillan for his English publisher. He also offered his good services if any way needed in the negotiation. But Fiske had no difficulty in getting his work accepted by the Macmillans and on precisely the same terms as he had arranged for the American publication with the firm of James R. Osgood & Co., of which I was then a member.

John Fiske

With the question of the English publication of his work decided, Fiske settled down to steady work in revising his lectures and in the writing of a few new chapters in order to round out his Evolutionary thought into the desired philosophic form. He was engaged with this task for four months, and during this period kept his rooms at 67 Great Russell Street, which soon assumed in his mind — so far as any rooms away from Cambridge could — the nature of a home.

It should be borne in mind that at this time the sociological implications of the doctrine of Evolution, in their bearing upon current political, ethical, and religious thought, were under very general discussion by the leading English thinkers, and that Fiske in his work in hand proposed to bring these sociological implications more distinctly under review than any Evolutionist who had preceded him had done. Spencer, it is true, in his "Social Statics" and in his essays, had thrown out many fruitful suggestions along these lines; but his encyclopædic works, "Descriptive Sociology," "The Principles of Sociology," and "The Principles of Ethics," were still in embryo, while his foundational work, "First Principles," had left the thinking world in doubt as to the nature and realm of the Unknowable as postulated by him. Fiske, therefore, had a very definite object before him in this London visit. It was nothing less than the freeing of the doctrine of Evolution from all

Cordially Received

kinship with the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, from all identification with atheism or materialism, while at the same time rounding it out into a philosophic system based upon science; a system consisting of affirmations as to the existence of Deity, accompanied by verifiable data regarding the cosmic universe, with man's place in it with his rational mind, as a unified, ever-developing manifestation of Deity. And it was for the completion of this important task that he desired converse with Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Lewes, Tyndall, Hooker, Clifford, Lockyer, and a few others of the new school of scientific thought in England.

Fiske found himself on his arrival by no means unknown to a goodly number of the English scientific thinkers. His essay on Buckle, his articles in the "North American Review" and the "Fortnightly," together with the reports of his Harvard lectures, which his friend Youmans had widely circulated in England, had already drawn attention to him as an exceptionally well-equipped thinker, as well as a lucid expositor along the new lines of thought which the investigations of science were daily opening to view. Then, too, his trenchant article on Agassiz, published since he had left home, commended him to all the Darwinians in England: so much so, that, to his surprise, wherever he was introduced he not only found himself known, but people also very glad to meet him. Then his bearing was so simple and modest, his

John Fiske

scholarship so broad and thorough, and his speech so unaffected and rich with well-digested thought that he gained the confidence and cordial coöperation of the group of eminent men whose assistance he so much desired.

The letters not only show how cordially he was received by the great body of the English Evolutionists; they also contain interesting particulars of the individual assistance rendered him. Professor W. K. Clifford, the eminent mathematician, rendered him a particularly valuable service, as Fiske says, "by punching through about six pages of my Nebular Hypothesis at once, and so saved me from getting into trouble hereafter." With Lockyer, the astronomer, he had several interviews and an evening's conference on the Nebular Hypothesis and Spectroscopic Astronomy. Of Darwin he sought particularly some information regarding peculiarities in the arrangement of leaves around the stem. He writes: "It was delightful to see what oceans of illustrations Darwin had ready, and how absolutely precise his conception of the case was and how simply and quietly he said what he had to say."

Fiske also had opportunities to ply Hooker, Tyn-dall, Crookes, Galton, Foster, Sir Henry Sumner Maine with questions bearing upon their special lines of investigation; while with Spencer, Huxley, and Lewes he enjoyed the freest possible converse extending over the whole period of his London so-

Letter from Huxley

journal. With Spencer and Huxley he discussed very fully the various aspects of the doctrine of Evolution and its implications upon the future of philosophic thought.

In the midst of these memorials of earnest minds grappling with the profound mysteries of existence, it is pleasant now and then to come across a brief note — a mere scrap of paper — which, redolent of an abounding personality, illumines with a bit of delightful humor the whole Evolutionary surroundings.

We have seen that among Fiske's ancestors in Middletown there were four generations who consecutively held the office of Town Clerk, and that Fiske himself wrote a beautiful hand. It appears that during this London visit, he desired some information regarding *Amphioxus*, one of the lowest orders of vertebrates; and so he plied Huxley with one of his beautiful notes. Huxley, after answering Fiske's question, gives what lawyers would call an *obiter dictum* on the probable working of the Evolutionary process as applied to Fiske's handwriting, which is full of pertinent suggestions:—

Huxley to Fiske

My dear Fiske:—

Amphioxus is quite rightly said to have no brain. The anterior extremity of the nerve end, what represents the spinal marrow, is rounded off without any such differentiation as would give it a title to the name of brain.

John Fiske

I did not expect you yesterday, knowing that Macmillan is wise in his generation, but we shall look for you on Sunday next.

What a pity you did not continue in the line of your ancestors. In another generation or two we might have had a *Homo Townclerkensis* whom the orthodox of the day would have declared to have been specially created in the latitude of Cambridge, U.S.; and they would have justly pointed to the difference between his handwriting and that of *my* progeny (all of whom write badly) as the best evidence of specific distinctness.

Yours very truly,

T. H. HUXLEY.

It was under these favoring conditions that the physical or scientific portions of his work were revised, that the sociological chapters were largely rewritten, and the chapters entitled "Matter and Spirit," "Religion as Adjustment," and the "Critical Attitude of Philosophy" were entirely composed.

Fiske's gratulatory feeling at being enabled to revise and finish his work under such happy auspices, finds frequent expression in his letters. In November he writes:—

"I am thankful to be over here doing this work, where there are so many ready and glad to help me."

And again in December:—

"This is what I always longed for, to be able to revise my book in England, where I can get good



THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

Discussions with Spencer

criticism and advice from competent men, before publishing; and now I seem to be getting my wish accomplished."

Among the many interesting people he met in London was the Reverend Moncure D. Conway, an American Unitarian minister who preached very liberal sermons to a very liberal and intelligent congregation at South Place Chapel, and who enjoyed the acquaintance of all the best thinkers in London. Conway and Fiske became very warm friends, and at Conway's earnest request Fiske occupied his pulpit for two Sundays, giving two discourses on Darwinism, which were received with marked approval.

Fiske's conferences with Spencer were many, and were of an exceedingly pleasant nature. During their conferences two incidents arose of some philosophic interest which are referred to in Fiske's work, but which are more clearly set forth in the letters. The first relates to Fiske's use of the word "Cosmic" in the title to his work, "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy." We have already seen that while Fiske was delivering his lectures at Harvard under the title of "The Positive Philosophy," Spencer objected to the title "Positive Philosophy" being applied to the philosophy of Evolution, and that for his own system he had adopted the title "Synthetic Philosophy." In the latter part of December Fiske was nearing the completion of his work, and with the assistance of Huxley he had decided

John Fiske

upon the following as his general title: "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy based on the Doctrine of Evolution, with criticisms of the Positive Philosophy."

On submitting this title to Spencer, he at once raised objections, evidently the outcome of a feeling that Fiske was in a way giving a title to the philosophy of Evolution, a right or a duty that belonged to himself. Several letters passed: those from Spencer, although perfectly courteous in tone, indicate some degree of personal irritation; while the letters of Fiske are so free from all personal self-seeking in the matter, so direct in setting forth the implications of the word "Cosmic" in the sense in which he has used the term, so emphatic in his desire to clear the doctrine of Evolution from all affiliations with the philosophy of Positivism, and so frank in his acknowledgment of his great indebtedness to Spencer for thoughtful inspiration throughout the work, that Spencer gracefully withdrew his objections, remarking, "All that I wish is that it should be made clear that I did not myself adopt the word 'Cosmic' and do not think it desirable as a distinctive title." The controversy was conducted with such perfect frankness on both sides that its settlement left no feeling of rancor behind.

As the substance of this controversy is given by Fiske in the preface to his "Cosmic Philosophy," none of the letters are given here. It appears that

Discussions with Spencer

Fiske had the cordial support of Huxley during the controversy; and that Huxley strongly opposed the title of "Synthetic Philosophy" when originally proposed by Spencer as a distinctive title for the philosophy of Evolution.

The other incident relates to Fiske's notable emendation of Spencer's phrase "nervous shock" into "psychical shock," in his chapter "Matter and Spirit." This emendation was an important one, and much has been made of it in subsequent psychological and philosophical discussion. Fiske says, in a footnote, that the emendation was *thoroughly approved by Spencer*. In a letter to Mrs. Fiske we have the particulars of the interview at which Spencer authorized the emendation, with just a glimpse at the personality of Spencer that is not without interest. Fiske says:—

"Spencer called yesterday, to see what had become of me. I had n't seen him for two weeks. When he came in, I had just been quoting and altering and mending a very important passage from his 'Psychology,' and apologising in a footnote for the liberty I had taken with it. Just as I had done this he came in and I read it to him, and he *told me to add in my footnote that he approved of my emendation and considered it a bully thing.*"¹

Fiske then adds this pleasing incident:—

¹ This emendation was an important one and struck at a vital point in Spencer's philosophy, where he had unwittingly placed himself in the hands of the Materialists. Emphatic as he was in commending Fiske's emendation, it does not appear that he made any change in his text.

John Fiske

“We went in a cab to St. James’s Square and I sat by while he had his hair cut (what little he has got) and it tickled me to hear him tell the barber: ‘Now hold your scissorrrrrs verrrrrtically, etc.’!!! It is positively wonderful the way he rrrrolls his rrrs.”

How diligently and with what spirit Fiske worked at his task we get glimpses from the letters in frequent passages similar to the following:—

“Next day I got up early and did 8 pages on religion, and worked like *thunder* the rest of the week. . . . To-day I have worked all day and have written 13 bran-new pages on ‘Matter and Spirit.’”

In January, when he saw that the end of his task was near, he writes:—

“Oh, how happy I have been in London! I can never outlive it or forget it. It has been all solid pure unbroken happiness. But after all, Petersham, next summer, *will beat it!!!*”

And when he finishes his task on the evening of February 11, he writes at 10 P.M. in the following jubilant strain:—

“Glory to God!!!

“I have finished ‘Matter and Spirit’ and have been out (feeling hungry) to get a mutton chop and glass of beer in Tottenham Court Road. Glory Hallelujah! MY WORK IS DONE! This has been a profitable four months in London! To get that everlasting big book into shape has been no fool of a job; and it has been well done, too—O, sing Hallelujah!”

Finishes "Cosmic Philosophy"

Here, as we make record of the finishing of his book, which was at the time the completest presentation of the philosophy of Evolution in its bearing upon religious thought that had been made, it is eminently fitting that we insert the following extract from a letter to his mother, written during his stay in London, in which he gives expression to the profoundly religious thought that underlies the whole of his philosophy. His mother had questioned the nature of the comfort his views had for aching hearts, for people in affliction, to which he replied:—

"As for the comfort which 'my science' has for aching hearts, the form of your question shows how little you understand what 'my science' is. If I were to say that my chief comfort in affliction would be the recognition that there is a Supreme Power manifested in the totality of phenomena, the workings of which are not like the workings of our intelligence, but far above and beyond them, and which are obviously tending to some grand and worthy result, even though my individual happiness gets crushed in the process, so that the only proper mental attitude for me, is that which says, 'not my will but thine be done' — if I were to say this, you would probably reply, 'Why, this is Christianity.' Well, so it is, I think. This, however, is my faith, and it is 'a faith which owns fellowship with thought,' as Miss Hennell says. The difference between the Christianity of Herbert Spencer, and that of Mrs. Pickett ¹ is nothing but

¹ Mrs. Pickett was a faithful family servant in Middletown.

John Fiske

a difference of symbols. One uses the language of a man, and the other that of a child.

“But the germ of a faith which sustains Mrs. Pickett is something which Spencer has not got rid of, — it is something which mankind will never get rid of. Read Matthew Arnold’s ‘Literature and Dogma’ and you will see how little he cares for doctrinal symbols, how much he cares for the kernel of the thing. And when my ‘Cosmic Philosophy’ comes out, you will see how utterly impossible it is that Christianity should die out; but how utterly *inevitable* it is, that it should be metamorphosed, even as it has been metamorphosed over and over again.”

And so, with his task of composition finished, Fiske spent a few days in visiting Westminster Abbey, the House of Commons, Westminster Hall, and a few other places of interest which he had not had time to visit before; and in saying good-bye for a season to Spencer, the Huxleys, Mr. and Mrs. Lewes, Ralston, and Macmillan. On Wednesday, the 17th of February, he delivered the last of his manuscript to the printer, and in stating this fact to Mrs. Fiske he takes great pleasure in noting that the delivery was on the twelfth anniversary of their engagement.

On the 19th of February he left London for Brighton, and on the 20th he set out for the Continent, via Dieppe, Rouen, and Paris.

Fiske’s sojourn in London, however, is of gene-

Personal Sketches

ral interest for another reason than the completion of his "Cosmic Philosophy" — his personal sketches of the eminent persons with whom he came in contact. Reference has been made to the reputation that had preceded him, and to the social attentions he received. The latter were indeed remarkable, and they began immediately upon his arrival. His cordial reception by Spencer, Lewes, Darwin, Huxley, and his genial publisher Macmillan, opened to him entrances to the highest intellectual and social converse that London had to bestow. He was given the full privileges of the Athenæum and of the Cosmopolitan clubs — two of the most select and distinguished clubs in London. He dined with the X Club, the most exclusive club in England. Darwin gave him a luncheon. Spencer gave him a special dinner with Huxley, Tyndall, Lewes, and Dr. Jackson. He was Huxley's guest at a dinner of the Royal Society. He was given a special dinner by the "Citizens of Noviomagas," a club of "jolly good fellows." And then, best of all, he was made an ever-welcome guest at the delightful home of Mr. and Mrs. Lewes (George Eliot), the Huxleys, and of his "bonny old Scot" publisher, Macmillan.

It was under these favorable conditions that Fiske had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted, not only with all the persons named, but also with several others hardly less distinguished for their contributions to the science and

John Fiske

the literature of the time; as, for instance, Sir Charles Lyell, Hooker, Foster, Clifford, Lockyer, Proctor, Pollock, Crookes, Galton, Max Müller, Tennyson, Charles Kingsley, Browning, Tom Hughes, Anthony Trollope, James Sime, Lord Arthur Russel, Lord Acton, and others.

Fiske's letters to Mrs. Fiske, to his mother, and to his children written during his London sojourn would fill a volume by themselves. They have been carefully preserved and abound with graphic sketches of the eminent people with whom he was brought into close personal relations in the working-out of his philosophic scheme. They also give full accounts of his social diversions, at the clubs, at the homes of Macmillan, the Huxleys, the Lewes's, of Trübner (the publisher), and others: and they also abound in rare and appreciative criticisms upon the musical entertainments he enjoyed. Then, too, the letters give expression to the ever-painful feeling in his heart at his isolation from his home — from his wife and his children. This feeling of isolation, combined with a feeling of sadness at having pleasures he cannot share with them, permeates all the letters like a sad refrain, revealing the deep tenderness of his nature, and giving to the letters a rare personal charm.

Space can be given to but a few additional extracts from these letters: and these extracts are limited to personal sketches of Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Lewes, George Eliot, and Sir Charles

Herbert Spencer

Lyell, because these persons, beyond all others that he met, had been influential in shaping the current of his evolutionary thought.

Herbert Spencer

The reader, as he recalls Fiske's enthusiasm for Herbert Spencer during his college days, together with his efforts during the intervening years to interpret Spencer's philosophy, that of Evolution, to the American mind, will be interested in getting his impressions of Spencer's personality as derived from their intercourse during this London sojourn.

Fiske's first impressions of Spencer are given in two letters written October 13 and 17, 1873, the one to Mrs. Fiske, and the other to his mother, and the following is the merging, in his own words, of the sketches in both letters: —

"I called on Herbert Spencer last Thursday. He received me very warmly, and we walked back to town together. He is a ferocious walker. I would like to see him and James [Brooks] start out on a wager. He is built for travel. I dined with him on Friday, and narrated my projects and he took great interest. He is exceedingly refined and elegant in manner, and appears like the great man he is, though he seems overworked. He is at last getting a handsome income from his books. I shall see a great deal more of him. I told him all about my infancy chapter, and he says it is a *grand discovery*, and belongs entirely to me! He was very much wrought up by it, and had never *dreamed* of it before."

John Fiske

While this rather meagre presentation of Spencer's personality leaves much to be desired, it confirms in a marked degree the impression we have of him derived from a variety of sources— that he lacked the power of inspiring enthusiasm. But Fiske's veneration for him was so great, he could overlook his personal shortcomings in appreciation of his greatness, and in the following extracts we have perhaps the completest presentation of Spencer's personality that has been given. Writing to Mrs. Fiske, a little later he says: —

“This morning dear old Spencer came in to see me just after breakfast, and staid an hour. He does n't feel very well, having overworked during the summer, without much if any vacation; and he said to me that he would be darned if he would ever again undertake to do any work *on time*. ‘Dear me,’ I told him, ‘have n't you been making that same vow over and over again ever since you were 30 years old, and have n't you invariably busted it?’ Yes, he said, he was always vowing never to do so again, but his vows were *always* busted. . . . The old fellow was as charming as a magician, and we had an almighty fine chin-wag.”

In his account of the dinner which Spencer gave him, at which Huxley, Lewes, Tyndall, and others were present, and at which, he says, “we discussed pretty much the whole universe from cellar to attic,” Fiske writes to Mrs. Fiske: —

“Spencer was benign and admirable as always; and the reverence which all these men feel for him

Herbert Spencer

was thoroughly apparent, in the way in which they listened to every word that came out of his mouth."

And to his mother Fiske writes:—

"You don't seem to know that Spencer is a bachelor. How he came to know so much about bringing up children I don't know, except that such imperial common-sense as his cannot go far wrong on any subject. Of all the men I have ever seen he impresses me as the most remarkably endowed with good straightforward common-sense. . . . This illustrates what I have often thought, that a really good psychologist—a man who really fathoms all the processes of thinking and the methods of reaching conclusions—has an advantage over all other kinds of men. He gets down to the bottom of what they are thinking about. It is now getting to be generally admitted that in all human history, the only men to be compared with Spencer for insight into mental processes, are Aristotle, Berkeley, and Kant. And it is this wonderful insight into the mind which is the secret of that supreme common-sense which he shows in his chapters on Education, and in everything he writes."

A little later he writes to Mrs. Fiske:—

"Then Conway and I went to Spencer's. Spencer was down with his liver, and his stomach, and his back-bone, and caved-in generally, and disposed to be grouty; but he shook my hand in an unmistakably affectionate way, and evidently tried to be as jolly as he could. The more I see of the poor old fellow, the more I pity him from the

John Fiske

bottom of my heart. He is so lonely and so curtailed from want of human sympathy. And I don't see how he is ever going to finish his work with his present health. He thinks it a wonderful day's work, if he can only keep at it from 9 A.M. until noon."

And again: —

"Yesterday I lunched with Spencer, and walked back through Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park with him. It was a beautiful day — warm as summer — and such a delicious grey-blue sky as I never saw before. I was wild with delight. But Spencer never seems to warm up to anything but *ideas*. He has got so infernally critical, that not even the finest work of God — a perfect day — is quite fine enough for him. So he picked flaws with the grey-blue sky, and the peculiar Turner-like light, and *everything*. However, he was very jolly, and we had a grand talk about primitive language, which he has got on the brain just now. His talk is very charming."

It appears that on one occasion, Spencer invited Fiske to luncheon at the Athenæum Club, forgetting that he (Spencer) had an important engagement. At the appointed hour, Spencer did not appear, and Fiske, on his return to his rooms, found a note explaining matters. Fiske sends the note to Mrs. Fiske with the following comments, and with an additional sketch of Spencer's personality:—

"Keep it [the note] as a relic. People would

My dear W. Tiske

My failing memory
 often betrays me into
 sad blunders. When
 proposing to meet you
 at the Athenaeum at 1,
 I quite forgot that part
 of my reason for coming
 into town was an
 engagement in the City at
 that hour. Pray excuse me.
 ever yours
 Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer

give a good deal for some such little scrap, showing how Newton got his head overburdened and made an impracticable appointment with a friend. But Spencer is as wonderful a man as Newton, and this little bit from him is worth as much as the other would be. Poor old fellow! One can easily see that he labours under the weight of his mighty mind, and that the body protests against the quantity of work it has to do in keeping said mind a-going. Thus is the world made; you can't eat your cake and keep it. Books like 'First Principles' are made at the cost of terrible wear and tear of the nerves. But Spencer does n't show it in the same way that Lewes does. He does n't look feeble, but he looks tired. He is wiry, and tough, and athletic, and looks like a very strong man, tired. Lewes looks feeble. That is the difference. I can fear that Lewes may come in with his work half done, but I can imagine it more likely that Spencer may stick to it, tired as he is, for many a year to come. They are a wonderful pair, anyway, and either one of them would have been worth the journey across the ocean to see.

"I showed Spencer the basket-wagon 'pickerwow,' this morning, and also the 'pickerwow' of 'Tick' sitting on the cricket, and of 'Barl' with his hat and waterproof cape-coat on; and I told him how I used to go to Spy Pond with my babies, and he said he should like to be there, and *go along with us!* When I think how lonely he must be without any wife and babies, and how solitary he is in all his greatness, it makes me pity him, and feel very tenderly toward him. When I watched him intently examining the basket-wagon 'pickerwow,'

John Fiske

I felt, though I did not say it—‘By Jove, that wagon-load is worth more than all the *philosophy that ever was concocted*, from Aristotle to Spencer inclusive.’ ”

Charles Darwin

Fiske's veneration for Darwin was hardly less than his veneration for Spencer. While he credited Spencer with being the first thinker of modern times to bring forward the idea of Evolution as the mode of manifestation of an unknown power underlying all the phenomena of the inorganic and organic universe, he recognized Darwin as having furnished the most indubitable proof of Evolution in the organic world by his epoch-making books, "The Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man." Fiske's desire to meet Darwin, therefore, for converse on some of the points in the philosophy of Evolution he was working out, especially in its relation to sociologic man, was hardly less than his desire to meet Spencer.

He learned, however, that Darwin was in quite feeble health, and hesitated about asking for an interview, fearing it would be an intrusion upon Darwin's necessary seclusion. But as he settled down to his task, the desire to consult Darwin became so strong that he was induced to send the latter a note in which he stated his purpose in London and from which the following extract is taken:

"I have known and revered you so many years, that it would give me great pleasure if I could

Charles Darwin

meet you and shake hands with you before leaving England. There are some subjects about which I would fain have a word or two of conversation; but as Mr. Spencer tells me that you are (like himself) feeling poorly at present, and as I know what a bore philosophy is under such circumstances, I shall seek for nothing more than to tell you face to face, how much I, in common with all thinking men, owe to you."

This note brought the following prompt reply from Darwin: —

DOWN, *November 3, 1873.*

My dear Sir:—

I am much obliged for your very kind letter. I am very glad of the nature of the work on which you are engaged. I see so few people that I had not heard of your presence in London. At the end of the week I shall be in London at my daughter's house, and I will on the following week propose your coming to luncheon, which is generally my best time, and I trust this may not be inconvenient to you.

I did receive the "Popular Science Monthly" and read your attack (an attack it was with a vengeance though properly admitting his great services) on Agassiz, with great interest. I have not received the "North American" and shall be very glad to see it, but I can order a copy for myself. Until we meet,

Yours very sincerely,

CH. DARWIN.

On the evening after the luncheon Fiske writes Mrs. Fiske as follows: —

John Fiske

“To-day, I lunched with Darwin and Mrs. Darwin, Mrs. Litchfield (Darwin’s daughter), Frank Darwin (whom I saw in Boston two years ago) and Miss Bessie Darwin, and Dr. Hooker, the greatest living botanist, and Mrs. Hooker. . . . Darwin is the dearest, sweetest, loveliest old Grandpa that ever was. And on the whole he impresses me with his strength more than any man I have yet seen. There is a charming kind of quiet strength about him and about everything he does. He is not burning and eager like Huxley. He has a mild blue eye, and is the gentlest of gentle old fellows. I think he would make a noble picture after the style of mother’s picture which I call ‘Galileo.’ His long white hair and enormous beard make him very picturesque. And what is so delightful to see, as that perfect frankness and guileless simplicity of manner, which comes from a man having devoted his whole life to some great idea, without a thought of self, and without ever having become a ‘man of the world’? I had a warm greeting from the dear old man, and I am afraid I shall never see him again, for his health is very bad, and he had to make a special effort to see me to-day. Of all my days in England, I prize to-day the most; and what I pity *you* most of all for, my dear, is that you have n’t seen our dear grand old Darwin! I think we both felt it might be the last time. He came to the door with me and gave me a warm grip of the hand and best wishes, and watched me down the road till I turned the corner, when I took off my hat and bowed good-bye.”

On the same day, November 13, Fiske wrote his mother as follows: —

Sketch of George Henry Lewes

“Of course I have formed opinions of all these men, but it is interesting to see how they seem in the flesh. There is no doubt that Spencer is the profoundest thinker of all. But Darwin impressed me with a sense of strength more than any other man I have ever seen. Instead of Huxley’s intense black eye, he has got a mild blue eye, and his manner is full of repose. None of these men seem to know how great they are. But Darwin is one of the most truly modest men I ever saw. The combination of power and quiet modesty in him, is more impressive than I can describe. I regard my lunch with Darwin the climax of everything thus far.”

George Henry Lewes

Next to Spencer and Darwin, the man Fiske most desired to meet in the prosecution of his work was George Henry Lewes. We have seen that when Fiske gave up the practice of the law to devote himself to literature, Lewes, as editor of the “Fortnightly Review,” the organ of liberal thought in England, cordially welcomed him as an unhampered contributor, with a more satisfactory remuneration than he had received at home. Then, beside this fact, Fiske had been a careful reader of Lewes’s “Life of Goethe,” his “Seaside Studies,” and his essay on Aristotle; while Lewes’s “History of Philosophy,” with its masterly analyses of the different schools of philosophy from Thales to Comte, had been familiar to Fiske ever since his college days as a sort of textbook of human thinking, illustrating one great evolutionary truth that —

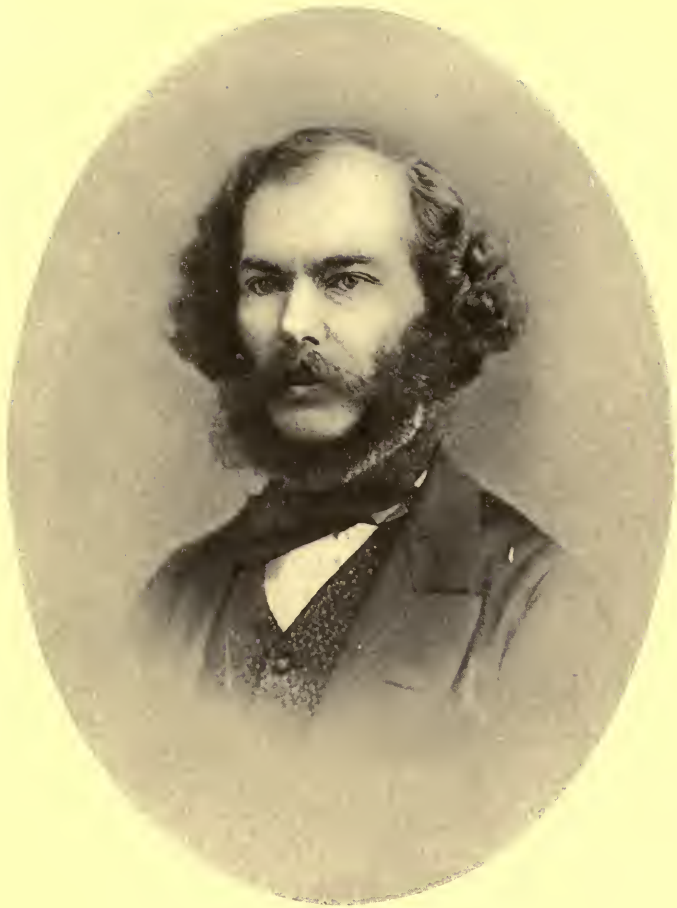
John Fiske

“Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of
the suns.”

Fiske's first meeting with Lewes was by chance in the store of Trübner, the publisher, and under date of October 23 he gives the following graphic sketch of Lewes's personality: —

“Tuesday, I went down to Trübner's store in Ludgate Hill, near St. Paul's, and there I met Mr. Lewes. He looks very old and feeble for a man of 55; somewhat weazen, and little, like Ezra Abbot, and ever so homely — a great deal more homely than his picture. But when he opens his mouth to speak, he becomes transfigured in a moment. I never saw anything more winning than the beautiful and cordial smile with which he met me, and expressed his pleasure at seeing me at last. I had meant to say all that to him, but he forestalled me. His manners are *fascinating beyond all description*, and he took my heart captive at once. I never before saw a man who seemed so full of the divine indescribable something that makes a man different from common men — and all this in spite of his homely, and meagre and puny physique. I don't wonder that he captivated George Eliot. I think he is just the man that any woman would get in love with, who had an eye for the *spirituelle*. We talked about an hour, when he said he must run and catch a train to get home to his wife, for he had promised her not to stay more than three hours in the city.

“The work which he is beginning to publish is one of great scope, and will fill many volumes if



GEORGE HENRY LEWES

Sketch of George Henry Lewes

it is ever finished.¹ But it was with a pang that I heard him allude to the probability of his never finishing it, for it seems only too probable. He said his wife called him her 'Mr. Casaubon'² and kept egging him on to publish and get rid of what he had got on hand anyway — the force of which you will appreciate if you read 'Middlemarch.' He is reading my Myth-book with his wife, and they like it much. I am at last to see the great George Eliot on Sunday, November 23, at two o'clock P.M. They will then have returned to town, and I am to lunch with them on that day. So you can then imagine Hezzy in clover. I am perfectly in love with Lewes."

Lewes gave Fiske, in sheets, a copy of his forthcoming book, "Problems of Life and Mind," and under date of November 18, Fiske writes Mrs. Fiske as follows: —

"I read Lewes's book, ('Problems of Life and Mind') in the sheets, and I consider his treatment of Kant one of the most masterly pieces of philosophical criticism I ever read. I told Darwin about it, and found that he has a great admiration for Lewes's straightforward and clean-cut mind. I have made up my mind that Lewes will have a permanent place in history as the critic of Kant, to say nothing of the other things he has done. What a comical old fellow he is! At *the* dinner the other day [Spencer's dinner to Fiske] I was say-

¹ A history of science, the first section of which was "Problems of Life and Mind."

² Fiske says: "Mrs. Lewes calls it Cas-aü'bon, with the accent on the second syllable, but she says a good many people of that name in England call themselves Cäs'äu-bön, with accent on first syllable."

John Fiske

ing that very soon we should see Evolution taken up by the orthodox. 'To be sure,' says Lewes, 'for don't you see that Evolution requires an Evolver?' Huxley was telling about something I said in my Agassiz article, when Spencer blandly interrupted with 'What will Agassiz say to all that?' 'O,' said Lewes, 'he will say what Louis XIV said after the battle of Ramillies — *Dieu m'a abandonné; et après tout ce que j'ai fait pour Lui!!!*'"

George Eliot

Fiske was no less desirous of meeting Mrs. Lewes — George Eliot — than he was of meeting Lewes. He had been a careful reader of her various books and regarded them as the products of a genius of the highest order. The wide variety of characters she had created into the world of literature, such as Dinah, Mrs. Poyser, Dorothea, Romola, Fidalma, Adam Bede, Caleb Garth, Felix Holt, Tito, Savonarola, and Zarca, he considered unexcelled in modern fiction; while he seemed to see through them all the reflection of a mind that was looking out upon the drama of human life, not with the pessimistic view of the theologic-dogmatist, but rather with an optimistic faith born of a belief in Evolution — "of a power within us, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."

The story of the marital relations of Lewes and Marian Evans (George Eliot) is not in place here. Fiske gave to his mother the whole story, and in closing it he says: —

Sketch of George Eliot

“My notions of these things are almost ascetically strict; but about this case I have always felt (knowing the thoroughly upright and noble character of Lewes, and presuming George Eliot to be no less so) that in all probability they did the very best they knew how; and there are mighty few people who are in a position to go pitching stones at them.”

We have seen that at his first meeting with Lewes Fiske was invited to luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Lewes on November 23, shortly after their return to town. Fiske looked forward to meeting these two people in their own home with great anticipations; and on October 31 he writes to Mrs. Fiske:—

“Remember that on Sunday, November 23, I lunch with Lewes and George Eliot. Imagine Hezzy as hard as you can when that day comes around, and if George Eliot is half as bewitching as her husband, I shall no doubt have a day of it long to be remembered.”

On November 23, with the interview fresh in mind, he writes Mrs. Fiske as follows:—

“To-day, my dear, I have been to the Lewes's . . . And Ralston was there and there never was a room so dark that his presence would n't at once make sunlight in it. And 'Kingdon' Clifford was there, and several others — too many, indeed, for Mr. and Mrs. Lewes had to play hostess to so many that I could n't talk to her half so much as I wanted to.

“Well, what do I think of her? She is a plain-

John Fiske

looking woman, but I think not especially homely. She is much better looking than George Sand. She is n't a blooming beauty, of course: you don't expect that at fifty-two. But her features are regular, her nose is very good, her eyes are a rich blue and very expressive, her mouth is very large, but it is pleasant in expression. Her hair is light and profuse, and she wears a lovely lace cap over it — and looks simple, and frank, and cordial, and matronly, and seems ever so fond of Lewes, and he ever so fond of her. I call her a real good, honest, genuine, motherly woman with no nonsense about her. She seemed glad to see me. She said when my Myth-book came to her (I sent her a copy last summer, as you know), she was sitting on the floor, fixing a rug, or something of the sort, and she got so absorbed in my book that she sat on the *floor* all the afternoon, till Lewes came in, and routed her up! She thought it was a beautiful book; but she had known me ages ago, when I first wrote to Lewes and sent things to the 'Fortnightly.' But she disagreed with me as to the unity of the Homeric poems. I found she was a strong Wolfian! Well, we had a hard battle over it — she and I. I never saw such a woman. There is nothing a bit masculine about her. She is thoroughly feminine. But she has a power of *stating* an argument equal to any man. Equal to any man, do I say? I have never seen any man, except Herbert Spencer, who could state a case equal to her. I found her thoroughly acquainted with the whole literature of the Homeric question; and she seems to have read all of Homer in Greek, too, and could meet me everywhere. She did n't talk like a blue-stocking



GEORGE ELIOT

Sketch of George Eliot

— as if she were aware she had got hold of a big topic — but like a plain woman, who talked of Homer as simply as she would of flat-irons. She showed an amazing knowledge of the subject. But, you see, Hezzy is not a fool on the Homer-question. He knows every bit of the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' as well as he knows the 'Pickwick Papers,' and so he was a little too much for her. On the whole, she was inclined to beat a retreat before we got through, and said she was glad of some new considerations that Hezzy had presented on the subject — though, on the whole, I don't think I converted her.

"I never before saw just such a clear-headed woman. She thinks just like a man, and can put her thoughts into clear and forcible language at a moment's notice. And her knowledge is quite amazing. I have often *heard* of learned women, whose learning, I have usually found, is a mighty flimsy affair. But to meet with a woman who can meet you like a man, on such a question as that of the Homeric poems, knowing the ins and outs of the question, and not *putting on any airs*, but talking sincerely of the thing as a subject which has deeply interested her — this is, indeed, quite a new experience.

"On the whole, I enjoyed Mr. and Mrs. Lewes immensely to-day; and I think Lewes a happy man in having such a simple-hearted, honest, and keenly sympathetic wife. I call them a wonderful couple. Spencer thinks she is the greatest woman that has lived on the earth — the female Shakespeare, so to speak; and I imagine he is not *far* from right. My only sorrow is that the afternoon was not quite long enough; but I shall go there again."

John Fiske

Thomas Henry Huxley

Huxley was one of the men Fiske was most desirous to meet. In Fiske's mind there were four men whose several labors had prepared the way for the theory of Evolution; but before a complete system of philosophy could be developed therefrom their respective labors must be correlated into one consistent whole. These were Spencer, Darwin, Lewes, Huxley. Of these four men Fiske knew Huxley the least, and only as an eminent zoölogist, a valiant defender of Darwinism, and as a bitter opponent of the Positive Philosophy of Comte.

Fiske first met Huxley at the dinner given to Fiske by Spencer, and next at the dinner at the X Club; and from this time forth the letters overflow with sketches of Huxley, and his delightful home surroundings. After the dinner at the X Club he writes to Mrs. Fiske: —

“Huxley seems to have taken a great fancy to Hezzy. He devoted himself almost exclusively to me during the evening, and we had one of the best talks that two poor creeters ever succeeded in getting up together. What a treat it is to meet with such a fine-tempered mind! and none the worse for having a handsome face to reveal itself through!”

And again he writes: —

“I am quite wild over Huxley. He is as handsome as an Apollo. His photograph does n't begin

Sketch of Huxley

to do him justice. I never before saw such magnificent eyes. They are black, and his face expresses an eager, burning intensity, and there is none of that self-satisfied smirk which has crept into the picture. He seems earnest — immensely in earnest — and thoroughly frank, and cordial, and modest. And, by Jove, what a pleasure it is to meet such a clean-cut mind! It is like Saladin's sword which cut through the cushion. When we parted it was a heart-felt grip that I gave his hand, I can tell you. There is no doubt at all that he is a grand man, and a great man, too. There is nothing so pleasant as *seeing* these men after one has known them in a shadowy way so long. Reading their books does n't give you the flesh-and-blood idea of them. But once to see such a man as Huxley is never to forget him."

And a little later he gives the following account of a Sunday evening at one of Mrs. Huxley's "tall teas": —

"Then I went to Huxley's, where we had what he calls a 'tall tea,' i.e., on Sunday they dine early and have an old-fashioned tea at 6.30 with meat. Huxley's house is the nearest to an earthly paradise of anything I have ever seen. . . . After tea Huxley and I retired to his study, which is the cosiest I have seen in England, and had a smoke and the very best talk I ever had. Words can't describe what a glorious fellow he is. Darwin is the only man I have seen that equals him. Spencer does n't begin to. And then Darwin is a dear old grandpa, but Huxley is a younger man, not over 45 or 46, I think,¹ and so I feel more at home with

¹ He was forty-eight.

John Fiske

him. He is very much interested in *the book*, and hopes I will add the chapter on 'Matter and Spirit' which I have been mulling for a year back. We had a splendid talk about the soul. . . . And when I left, Huxley said there would be a plate set for me *every* Sunday, as long as I stay in London, and it will be my own fault if I don't come and use it — in which Mrs. Huxley joined. And I must say, I never met more warm-hearted, loveable people in my whole life."

To his mother Fiske writes: —

"December 11th, I went to a great dinner of the Royal Society, as Huxley's guest. . . . My 'violent' friendship with Huxley began that evening. He attracted me wonderfully the first time I met him at Spencer's. But now I quite lost my heart to him. The next Sunday evening I began going to tea at his house, and now I go every Sunday evening, and am becoming one of the family. It is a lovely family. Mrs. Huxley is a sweet, motherly woman. . . . And Huxley is such an immense-hearted old fellow! Such a great, all-embracing sympathy about him! Such tenderness, such exquisite delicacy, such truthfulness, such a shrewd, sensible, clear head, such immense and accurate knowledge! And his great black eyes — as Charles Reade says, 'the eye of a hawk, with the eye of a dove beneath it.' I never saw another such a man as Huxley, and everybody warms up just so when I express my opinion of him. Sir F. Pollock told me the other day, that there was 'enough goodness in Huxley to make all England Christian, if it could only be parcelled out, and distributed around.' "

Sketch of Huxley

The following note shows the cordial relations which existed between Fiske and the whole Huxley family: —

4 MARLBOROUGH PLACE,
December 26, 1873.

My dear Fiske: —

I have a great mind to say that you will not be welcome at Sunday's "tall tea" in revenge for your entertaining any doubt as to the sufficiency of our general invitation.

But it would be too big a lie for a man who has not had the advantage of being brought up in a pious family. Also I am prepared to play third person competent or otherwise as the case may be.

Have you anything to do on New Year's Day? I mean to interfere with your dining with us. If not it will give us great pleasure to see you.

Any time these eighteen years, with hardly a break, Spencer and Tyndall have dined with us on that day, and we mean to hold high feast this year to contrast with the last two occasions when I have been wretchedly ill.

With the best regards and good wishes from all of us,

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

T. H. HUXLEY.

Fiske accepted Huxley's invitation to a New Year's dinner, where he had the pleasure of meeting Spencer, Tyndall, Michael Foster, and others, around Huxley's hospitable board.

These sketches of Huxley may well close with an incident in Fiske's own experience which he re-

John Fiske

lated at one of the Sunday "tall teas" to the great amusement of the whole Huxley family. On one of his trips to New York, Fiske fell in with an Englishman who expressed much surprise at the great interest Americans seemed to take in the scientific thought of Spencer, Darwin, Tyndall, Lyell, etc. On Fiske's mentioning Huxley as one of the leaders in the new movement, the Englishman broke out: "What, 'Uxley! 'orrid old hinfidel! Why, we don't think *hanythink* of 'im in Hingland. We think 'e's 'orrid. You don't say you hadmire 'Uxley? 'E's perfectly 'orrid!"

Sir Charles Lyell

Among the eminent men of science no one was at this time held in higher honor in England than Sir Charles Lyell, the venerable geologist, whose life was now drawing to a close after fifty years devoted to the advancement of geologic science. Fiske was perfectly familiar with Lyell's geological writings. They had been stepping-stones to his own comprehension of the cosmic universe. He was no less acquainted with the facts connected with Lyell's valiant stand in support of Darwin, on the publication of the latter's "Origin of Species"; as well as with his recantation of previous views in regard to the antiquity of man, occasioned by his acceptance of Darwin's theory of natural selection as a *vera causa* of the multifarious forms of the organic life of the globe.



SIR CHARLES LYELL

Sketch of Sir Charles Lyell

In Fiske's mind Lyell appeared as one of the advanced guard of scientists, who, in the face of theologic ignorance and prejudice, had added immensely to the boundaries of human knowledge, while increasing in men's minds a reverence for the profound mystery that lies beyond. Accordingly, on the 22d of December, 1873, he paid his respects to Sir Charles by calling, being presented by his friend Conway.

Of this memorable interview he writes to Mrs. Fiske the same day as follows: —

“This afternoon Conway and I called on Sir Charles Lyell. Think what an event in one's life, my dear! Here is this old man whose great work was really done forty-four years ago, when grandma Stoughton was a little girl like Maudie, when Comte was a young fellow like Hezzy, and Darwin a boy in college, and Spencer a boy nine years old. Away back in those days he laid the foundations of a work so great and strong, that his name will hereafter hold the same place in geology forever, that Newton's holds in astronomy. Scouted at in the beginning, he has lived to witness his own immortality — to see all men adopting as self-evident the truths which he was the first to discover. A rare good fortune for a man! To see him was like looking at an age gone by. He is probably from 80 to 85 years old.¹ He cannot see much of anything, and walks with difficulty. He was glad to lean on my arm in getting to his easy-chair before the fire. We sat an hour before the bright fire in his lovely

¹ He was eighty-six.

John Fiske

obally,¹ and talked about many things. His mind is as clear and clean-cut as ever — no nonsense about him. And such exquisite politeness! Such a well-bred, courteous, sweet old man! How tenderly he spoke of Agassiz (who had just died) and with how much appreciation of his son Alexander Agassiz, whom he hoped to see elected to his father's place. He had dim and amusing recollections of old Dr. Barratt, of Middletown,² but was not very sure on the subject. He was as keenly curious of all new things as a young man, but owned that he reads nothing now-a-days; and he said in a delicate way, that since Lady Lyell's death, he did n't get much of the good flavor of life. He reminds me very much of Darwin — the same gentleness, the same keenness of glance; the same precision of mind, the same kingly demeanour. It was a great event in Hezzy's life — a thing to tell the babies of years hence, when they have grown up. I am so glad to have seen the dear old man, and had him *lean* on me. He may die of old age almost any day.³ And still his mind is just as young, just as *jolly* as ever. Conway did n't say much, leaving the field to me; but when we had got away, he broke out with his admiration, and our tongues ran pretty fast until we got to where our roads diverged.

And here these interesting personal sketches for the present must close.

¹ His children's nickname for library.

² A former pupil of Lyell's. ³ He died February 22, 1875.

CHAPTER XIX

HIS CONTINENTAL JOURNEY — HIS ORIGINAL PLAN AND WHY CURTAILED — HIS BRIEF STOP IN PARIS AND HIS HASTY RUN THROUGH FRANCE — HIS FOUR WEEKS IN ITALY — SWITZERLAND VIA MONT CENIS — LES CHARMETTES, FERNEY, GENEVA — ROUSSEAU, VOLTAIRE — IMPRESSIONS OF SWITZERLAND — DOWN THE RHINE TO BELGIUM — BACK IN LONDON — FAREWELL VISITS

1873-1874

FISKE'S plan for his Continental journey, which he had worked out in all details before he left home, was a comprehensive one, and it embraced visits to the chief countries, and places of historic interest. The trip was to begin December 20, 1873, and was to take nearly eight months' time. The plan included a visit to Constantinople and Athens. To each country was allotted a definite portion of the time — one month was to be given to France; two months to Italy; three weeks to Constantinople and Athens; three and a half weeks to Austria; six weeks to Germany; one month to Switzerland; one week to the Rhine; and two weeks to Belgium and Holland. With what we know of his historic and philosophic interests, the underlying purpose of this journey, so definitely planned, is apparent. He wished to observe Continental Europe with all the concomitants of modern life, surrounded with the

John Fiske

vestiges of the ancient and mediæval civilizations, out of which the present social and political conditions have grown.

It is to be regretted that this carefully planned journey was not carried out, for a series of letters from him, giving his observations under conditions which brought substantially all Continental history within his purview, would have been a permanent addition to literature — and he certainly would have written such letters. But his stay in England to finish his book had been prolonged two months beyond the allotted period, thus materially shortening his available time for the Continent; and besides, when he was ready to leave England, he had been over six months from home, and was terribly homesick.

This home-longing, this feeling of loneliness when separated for any length of time from his family, was a personal characteristic we have had occasion to notice in previous years, and we shall also have occasion to note it in years to come. On the present occasion this loneliness became almost a veritable disease, and his longing to get home became so great that it led him to cut down his Continental journey to a period of about ten weeks, a limitation of time which only admitted a hasty run through France, Italy, and Switzerland, a mere glance at the Rhenish provinces of Germany, with a very few days given to Belgium.

Then, too, no small portion of his time when not

His Continental Journey

travelling was taken up with revising his proofs, writing the preface, and indexing his forthcoming work, so that his letters are not as full of "impressions" as might be desired. He took pains, however, to gather photographs, as far as possible, of the principal objects of interest to him, and on his return he consecutively arranged these photographs in an album, so that we have his journey, brief as it was, quite copiously illustrated, as it were, by his own hand. And it will be noted that he left England deeply in love with the English people, and their ways; and that throughout his journey he seemed to carry with him a sort of English social yardstick, filled out with subsidiary American notations, with which he measured the social life of the Continental peoples with whom he came in contact: in short, he gives, in a way, the impression of a highly cultivated American John Bull on his travels.

A word in regard to the free, colloquial style of his letters. It should be borne in mind, as has been noted in regard to his English letters, that they were written for the *privacy of his own family*, with *no* thought that they would ever be submitted for publication. Consequently, they abound with sobriquets of the different members of the family, together with familiar childish forms of expression, full of "local color" and well understood in his home. To remove these reflections of his happy home life, these evidences also of the tender work-

John Fiske

ings of his own mind, from even the serious portions of the letters, would take from the letters themselves much of their individual character and charm. His story is best told in his own way.

Notwithstanding the rapidity with which he travelled and his greatly preoccupied mind, his Continental letters, and his photographs, reveal three subjective lines of thought called forth by his observations — his great interest in the remains of the ancient architecture and civilization; his profound admiration for Gothic architecture, and his *seeming* indifference to Renaissance architecture, and Renaissance painting. In these architectural predilections, we get another glimpse of his religious nature and the inherent catholicity of his mind which we have already noted in his musical predilections and creations. No philosophic aversion to Christian theology could close his mind to the beauty, the sublime spiritual impressiveness of Gothic art. It is a fair inference that in Gothic architecture, as in the great Christian oratorios, he saw, he felt, man's spiritual instinct of love and aspiration to a Divine Creator welling up from the very heart of the race, bursting through the bonds of dogmatic theology, and asserting the everlasting reality of man's religious nature. In Renaissance architecture he saw only a misapplied reflection of the greater art of ancient imperial Rome. As the Renaissance period was the beginning of modern civilization, a phase of civilization

His Continental Journey

the foundations of which are laid in a form of social order, based on the democratic idea, which is yet in a process of development to the complete enfranchisement of man, he saw in Renaissance architecture only an attempt to give architectural expression to the new order of thought in an imitative, in a wholly incongruous way. His general unresponsiveness to Renaissance painting, I have noted in connection with his visits to the Louvre in Paris, and to the Uffizi and Pitti galleries in Florence.

The Continental letters begin with a brief one from Dieppe, wherein he gives a sketch of his last day in England, spent at Brighton, and where he found his greatest interest in the famous Brighton Aquarium. Here is one observation:—

“I devoted three full hours to the octopus tank! The octopus (cuttlefish) beats the chimpanzee all hollow. If the chimpanzee looks like a man, the octopus looks like nothing but the Devil. There are nine of 'em in one tank—absolutely diabolical monsters! I am going to write Huxley about the octopus.”

He was not at all seasick in crossing the Channel, and he found the temperature of France much colder than that of England. On his way to Paris he stopped four hours at Rouen, the richest of the cities of France, in mediæval architecture, particularly to see its three famous examples of the Gothic style—the Cathedral of Notre Dame,

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the Church or Cathedral of St. Ouen, — one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, — and the Church of St. Marclou. He did not make any notes on these fine buildings, but from the photographs he gathered of their special points of interest, it is evident that he was impressed with the differences between the English and the French rendering of the Gothic style. He wandered about, without a guide, until he reached Mont St. Catherine, one of the environs of the city, from which he had a general view which he briefly describes: —

“No pen could do justice to the magnificence of the view, comprising the old city, the two giant cathedrals, the winding river and miles of flat and rolling country round about, — all in a blaze of sunlight, and gorgeous tents of cloud.”

On reaching Paris, February 22, 1874, he went to the Hôtel de Rivoli, just opposite the Tuileries. His first impressions were forbidding: —

“I am up 6 flights of stairs in a bleak, inhospitable little room. Nobody in the hotel understands a word of English, except the proprietor. There is one German waiter whom I fall back on when I want an interpreter, for I can get along much better with German than with French. Everything looks bare and inhospitable here, after cosy old England. Instead of carpets, and warm fires, and chops and ale, they run to glass and gilding and sardines and claret. It is colder than in London, anyway. There is a bright sun, which is one good

Impressions of Paris

thing; but the streets don't seem so cheerful as in London."

After two days' experience things look better, and on February 24 he writes:—

"Which I will now change my tone, and will not blackguard poor Paris. I am now writing out-of-doors (!) at a little round table in front of a café in a sort of triangular square just out of the Rue St. Honoré near the Louvre: before me, a glass of black Bavarian beer, which is better than claret, though not equal to the peerless Bass. I correct my proofs and write 'tezzletelts' [letters] in similar places, because there is no attractive place in-doors. I don't like it as well as an English fireside; but it is a new experience, and that is what I came here for. One can't have London everywhere, and so I will freely confess that Paris is very charming. I never could get to like it so well as London though. My tastes are out and out Teutonic."

Fiske spent nine days in Paris, chiefly, as he says, in tramping around and seeing things: —

"I saw the whole inside of the Louvre, and Palais de Luxembourg, Hôtel de Cluny, Sainte Chapelle, Notre Dame, Panthéon, and heaps else; and 'parcouried' the whole of the Boulevards in all directions, and geographized the town generally, and spent a whole day at Versailles — which is better than anything in Paris. I made it a point to walk up and down the Seine every day whatever else I did. The views on the Seine are exceedingly beautiful. The Seine is prettier than the Thames; but I prefer the grand views, up and down, from

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Waterloo Bridge, to anything here. There is a grandeur about London which one misses here, though this is more beautiful. Perhaps it looks a little like New York — I am not quite sure."

He seems not to have been specially impressed with the pictures in the Louvre. I find it difficult to account for this fact, as he was usually so responsive to great art in *any* of its forms of manifestation. He writes: —

"I have spent the whole blessed day in the Louvre, and have seen more things than I can ever remember. I revelled in the sculptures, and antiques, but was rather disappointed with the paintings. Did n't see anything comparable to the Raphael Cartoons at South Kensington."

Fiske's love of Gothic architecture, of course, took him to the Cathedral of Notre Dame and to "La Sainte Chapelle." He makes no comments on these historic buildings, but he sends several photographs of their details.

Of his visit to the great library he speaks thus:

"Of course I went to the great library in Paris, and got posted as to their tricks and manners. I think old Ezra Abbot knows more than the whole of 'em."

And here is a remark he drops by the way in his Paris letter: —

"The manners of the French are certainly very charming — especially the common people."

Hasty Run through France

From Paris he went to Lyons, where he stopped one day, and tramped all over the town seeing the chief things, and where he also had a lovely little trip in a wee steamer on the Saone.

His next stop was at Avignon, where he was pleased to find the peach trees in blossom. One day was given to visiting the points of interest in this historic city, which was for nearly seventy years — 1309–1377 — the residence of the Popes of Rome and where remains of their palaces still exist. As notes for his “impressions” of this historic place he sent photographs of the remains of an old Roman bridge, as well as of the castle of the Popes.

At Avignon, being so near to Nismes, he turned aside to take a look at the many inemorials of the ancient civilization which are here so well preserved. First he went to see the great Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard, probably constructed by Vipsanius Agrippa in the time of Augustus for conveying water to Nismes; and then he went to Nismes itself. And here he was for the first time in his own experience brought into direct contact with some of the impressive remains of the civilization of the ancient world with the history of which he was so familiar. Of his visit to the Pont du Gard and to Nismes he writes: —

“The Pont du Gard alone was worth coming to France for; but as I can’t describe it you must wait till you see the ‘pickerwow’ which won’t help you

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much. The country round about looks like Petersham, only far inferior.

“Next day I went to Nismes which is well worth seeing. You may believe I was beset by cicerones till I lost my patience and told them ‘Allez au diable,’ and finally lifted my umbrella at one of ‘em whereupon they all *Allez!* Relieved of these pests, I serenely walked straight to the Amphitheatre — which is smaller than the Colosseum at Rome, but completely preserved. It is very fine. As I sat on one of the tiers basking in a southern sun (in about the latitude of Portland, Maine) and trying to imagine how an old fight would have looked, a real fight was kindly gotten up for my benefit. Some workmen, with trowels, etc., were making a few repairs in the arena. Which two of ‘em began to call each other ‘bête,’ ‘imbécile,’ etc., and shrugged their shoulders until their heads were half hid, and pounded and clawed the air, and began to make allusions to each other’s mother, when one of ‘em threw his trowel at the other, and hit the other on the chin, whereat the *hittee* retorted by jabbing a big sort of trident into his assailant’s forehead. Blood ran briskly; and the wounded man began to scream, when other workmen came up and separated ‘em. Bah!”

From Nismes Fiske went to Florence by way of Nice, Genoa, and Pisa.

His first impression of Florence he gives in a letter to Mrs. Fiske of March 20, 1874: —

“If you want to know how Florence seems, read the first chapter of ‘Romola,’¹ where the old chap

¹ The “Proem” to George Eliot’s great novel *Romola*.

In Florence

is standing on San Miniato. I have been there twice. Next to Edinburgh, and Oxford, it is the finest city I have seen. I have been around and seen the outside of almost every thing, and the inside of some things. To-day, I did the Uffizi, and to-morrow, I do the Pitti Gallery.¹ . . .

“I can get along in talking without any trouble, for most folks *do* understand French after all, I find, and on a pinch I can talk Italian. My greatest achievement in linguistics, was yesterday, when I went to the Biblioteca Nazionale and found there was n't a man there who knew a word of English, except to read it!!! Well, darn you, said I, if you can't talk English, I'll talk French, which I did *glibly* for two hours, inquiring into all the details of their cataloguing, treatment of pamphlets, etc., etc., and getting some really good ideas out of 'em. But I could n't have talked French to them if they had understood English.”

Fiske remained in Florence thirteen days and he gives these further details of his observations and experiences: —

“Visited the interior of San Marco, and the Annunziata. These churches did not impress me, though the outside of the Cathedral is superb. The Campanile or bell-tower by Giotto is the most perfect thing, the most beautiful building I have

¹ It seems impossible that, with his artistic nature and his historic appreciation, he could visit these galleries without being profoundly impressed. His graphic sketch of the Sacconi picture in La Certosa Monastery leads us to think that in these two marvellous collections of masterpieces of ancient and modern art, he must have been quite overpowered. Certainly his was the mind to appreciate the full significance of what is here gathered as representative of the highest products of human civilization.

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ever seen, and the bronze gates of the Baptistry, by Ghiberti, are marvellous beyond description. Altogether Florence is a wonderful place. . . .

“Sunday afternoon, I went out to La Certosa, a Carthusian monastery about two miles from the city. It was a gorgeous day. The monastery stands on a high hill from which you get a magnificent view of Florence, and all its surroundings. They are very strict there. No woman is allowed even to come and look at the premises. An old monk, with a coarse white dress that looked as if made of dingy crash, and which covered him from head to foot, escorted us around and showed us the things. In the crypts are some fine tombs by Donatello; and in one of the chapels a great painting, (though quaint) by Giotto. But what pleased me most was a painting by Sacconi, representing a thinker tired and overwhelmed with the mystery of the problem of existence, his book dropped from one hand which lies idly across the knee, while the other hand supports the cheek, the elbow resting on the table. His eyes are half closed, as if in profoundest reverie. All this is as realistic as if done yesterday — it is just like real flesh and blood. But up in the right-hand foreground, wrapped in a cloud-like mystery, are dim forms of archangels, their faces full of sublime sympathy, looking down upon the wearied thinker, while yet beyond is I-know-not-what in the colouring, something utterly mysterious, suggesting ineffable light, and glory like the triumphant final allegro of Schumann’s fourth symphony. Something that seemed to say — the riddle is hard, but behind the veil is an answer yet. I do not know what the painter intended,

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by the picture, but this is what it meant to me. It quite overcame me and brought the tears. The painting was masterly, both in drawing, and in colouring. I do not know who Sacconi was, and no one seems to know unless it was one of the names of Andrea del Sarto, but this picture is hardly in his style, so they say. I have got a book at home, which I think will clear the matter up.¹

“I saw the refectory, the rooms where Pius VI used to live, the cells where the monks live: there is a monk there now who has n't left his cell for 28 years except to step out into the enclosed garden. I lingered long in this garden, and found it hard to tear myself away. You know the little picture—‘Disce ut semper victurus, vive ut cras moriturus’² which I like so much. The same air of profound rest is all about this monastery-garden. In the centre of it is a lovely well, built by Michael Angelo, who seems to have been everywhere, and to have done everything, indomitable worker that he was. The monks make delicious chartreuse—and I bought a flask of it to bring home. . . .

“I drove to the cemetery where Theodore Parker is buried, and there I also saw the graves of Mrs. Browning, and Walter Savage Landor. Why Parker should have gone to Florence for his consumption, I cannot imagine. He might as well have staid in Boston. The Italian climate is excessively bad, for catching cold, and the Italians have a great deal of consumption, and bronchitis. . . .

“‘Hezzy’ is having an awfully good time here in Florence. It is a charming place. I spent a truly

¹ Carlo Sacconi was a draughtsman who lived in Florence about 1718. He prepared many drawings for Florentine Gallery work.

² Fiske had this line inscribed over the fire-place in his library.

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delightful evening last evening at Larkin Mead's.¹ He is one of the gentlest and sweetest fellows I ever saw. I am really enchanted with him. He looks just like Mrs. Howells. I should have known him for her brother, if I had stumbled on him in the interior of Australia."

This Florence letter contains a brief summing-up of his impressions thus far of his Continental journey: —

"How do I like the Continent on the whole? Well, it is all very pretty to look at, but beastly uncomfortable, inhospitable, cold, dreary, and gloomy. I don't cotton to the French people, or to the Italians. I feel lonesome all the time, and homesick for London; and to be honest, I don't enjoy this trip nearly as much as I did the trip to Scotland; for I love the Scotch."

In one of her letters, Mrs. Fiske had intimated that he had never seen Petersham in the resplendent glories of its October foliage; whereupon he promptly gives, from memory, the date and duration of every visit to Petersham, since his memorable first visit September 13-18, 1861, — twenty-four in number. To this list he adds these remarks —

"There, Mrs. Fiske, if you can diskiver any month of the year that is n't represented, you are smarter than Hezekiah. But by Jove, we will go up for a day or two next October, and see autumn

¹ Larkin G. Mead, an eminent American sculptor, lived in Florence. The wife of William Dean Howells was his sister.

In Rome

leaves. The reason they don't have bright autumn leaves in Europe, is because they don't have maples of course! The woodbine, imported into England, turns just as bright red as at home. We can beat all Europe (out of its boots) on trees."

On March 24 he left Florence for Rome, via Perugia.

Fiske was in Rome four days, during which time he visited some twenty-five of the more noted buildings and places of interest. The list, of course, includes the Piazza del Popolo, the Corso, several churches, the Forum of Trajan, the great Forum, the Colosseum, the Tarpeian Rock, the arches of Severus, Titus, and Constantine, the palaces of the Cæsars and of Nero, the Marmentine Prison, the Baths of Caracalla, the Catacombs, the Appian Way, and the statues of Marcus Aurelius, Castor and Pollux, Michael Angelo's Moses, etc.

It appears from his records that his visits to these memorable places, buildings, etc., in this "Niobe of Nations," were devoid of any notable experiences. It also appears that his observations did not at the time stir his mind to much activity in the way of critical or philosophic reflections, yet we must suppose that it was intensely active in both directions.

The two bits of artistic criticism in which he indulged were in regard to the Catacombs and the works of Michael Angelo. Referring to the former he says: —

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“There is nothing interesting there except to say that you have seen them. The bug-a-boo feeling is perhaps the chief attraction. To be sure, there are frescoes — grotesque enough, too. I saw the whale casting up Jonah, — a very sea-sick looking monster.”

Fiske's first reference to Michael Angelo is in connection with his visit to the tomb of S. Pietro in Vincole, where he saw Michael Angelo's Moses, which he pronounces a “wonderful, wonderful statue.” And again, after visiting Sta. Maria degli Angeli, built by Michael Angelo out of a part of the Baths of Diocletian just behind, he says: —

“It is a grand church built by a great architect; but in architecture M. Angelo is surpassed by nameless builders of Gothic, as in sculpture he is surpassed by nameless Greeks. I am not impressed with Italian churches generally, they are too pagan, gaudy affairs. York Minster for me, before the whole of 'em, tho' I have n't seen *St. Peter's yet.*”

On March 29 Fiske left Rome with his friend Adkins — an English traveller he had met in Rome — for a six days' trip to Naples. He writes: —

“Left Rome at 9.40 and reached Naples at 5 P.M. Adkins and I were put into a double-bedded room, up one flight. It is a fine room with sofa, easy-chairs, large writing-table, etc., and Brussels carpet. I could easily throw a stone from my window into the sea. Magnificent situation, and the most comfortable hotel I have found on the Continent.¹ And

¹ Evidently the Hôtel d'Angleterre.

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why? Because it is patronized almost entirely by grumbling Englishmen, who *will have* what they want. Every one here is a Britisher except Hezekiah, and one Hindu — a Brahman, who took honours at Cambridge, about 1864, and is both learned and accomplished — speaking English with absolute perfection, and Italian and French very finely, besides many other languages. Handsome and elegant too, like all the Hindus I have seen. And there is an Englishman on his way home from India — a fine-looking man of Charles Eliot's style, and with such a musical voice that I sit after meals as long as he sits, in order to hear him talk. Also a big, rough-looking English captain, as gentle as a kitten.

“*Monday, March 30.* My birthday. Went, along o' my chum, Adkins, to Pompeii and spent the day there. And now, what's the use of saying anything about it except to tell you to read what Howells says about it,¹ and to say that it was the very greatest day I have had since I left home; and, like Howells, I swear to go again, and very likely shall not? There's no use trying to grow eloquent about it, for it is altogether beyond words. There is nothing else so wonderful or so solemn 'on the earth or under it.' I bought a little book of 'pickerwows' of it, and will explain 'em when I get home. My chum also, thought it was the greatest day of his life, and after dinner we smoked our pipes on the stone parapet by the sea here, listening to the sound of the waves and talking it all over.

“*Tuesday, March 31.* My chum left for Rome,

¹ *Italian Journeys*, by W. D. Howells.

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being tied by a circular ticket good for so many days. Poor chap! he is in Venice by this time. He said I was the best fellow he had ever seen, and he was very mournful at parting. Left alone, I hired a carriage (one-hoss barouche) for all day at 12 francs, and drove through the grotto of Posilipo to Puzzuoli, where I first saw the Temple of Serapis — which is a Greek temple with three great columns left standing. They have all been lowered into the sea by the sinking of the land, and elevated again, and you can see *where* the little beasts have chewed 'em! While I was examining this place, in came an elderly man with his wife and two sons about twenty years old, with very much the air of fine Harvard boys. The old gentleman got very sociable with me; and finally when I put up my umbrella to keep off the sun, I observed that I never had had to do such a thing before in Europe; whereat he was very much surprised at my being an American, and said he should have taken me for a typical John Bull. Which they are New York people, cultivated and pleasant, but I don't know their names nor they mine. It was agreed that our carriages should keep together, and so we kept on to the ruins of Cumæ — (Kymai) the oldest Greek city in Italy. Nothing left now but a bit of the citadel and the Acropolis, and a few scattered stones. From here the direct road to Lake Avernus lies through a tunnel, half a mile long, cut by Agrippa a few years B.C. We drove through, lighted by torches for which the lying, thieving rascal of a torch bearer, demanded three francs, and was glad to get one, when he found it was all he could get. Lake Avernus is very

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lovely, and with the vineyards and fields of wheat, and green peas growing on the slopes all around it, lighted up by intensest sunshine, it suggests Eden, much more than Hades.

“Near by is a hill, some 150 feet high, which was thrown up at one thrust by an earthquake in 1538. We did n't go into the Sibyls' Cave here, because it is bogus — the genuine cave is over at Cumæ. Passed Lake Lucrinus, and came to the sulphur-baths of Nero, where you go into a hole in the side of the mountain and boil in a brimstone atmosphere. Guides pestered us at the entrance; but having little tapers with us, the two young men and I went in, though I did n't go far for fear of catching cold on issuing forth. I will give a specimen of the Italian character. A guide pestered me till I told him (in good Italian) that I did n't want his services, and that he might 'allez au Diable.' He followed after me when I went in, and followed me out to the carriage, and demanded a fee for having showed me the place!!! I again gave him the same directions with emphasis, and told the coachman to drive on. The old fraud held with one hand on to the carriage and followed me a mile demanding the money that I owed him, until at last I ordered cabby to hit him with the whip, and you ought to have heard the fellow as he moved off. The party in the other carriage were similarly pestered.

“Next we reached the Capo d. Miseno, where a beautiful little boy conducted us into an old Roman reservoir, and afterwards up to a place which commands the Bay of Naples, just as Miantonomah Hill commands Newport. All the way up, I was beset with little beggar children, some of

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them as beautiful as cherubs, especially an angelic little girl, about the size of Maudietick, who ran along after me busily crocheting, and whom I offered two pennies for a kiss, but she would n't agree to it, whereupon I gave her the pennies *gratis*, 'perché voi siete bellissima,' as I told her, to the great glee of the other little girls, who evidently admitted her beauty, and felt a common interest in the compliment. Our American old gentleman said he would give a great deal to see me photographed with all those little brown youngsters around me. This was our farthest point.

"Returning, we stopped opposite the Temple of Hermes at Baiæ, for lunch, and my American friends called me to come and share their lunch, which I did willingly. I sat upon the box, and we did eat like Wardle, and the Pickwickians, at the review. During our lunch we were surrounded by Italians of every age and sex, who seemed highly interested in our proceedings, and kept offering us coral, and violets, etc.; and asking for pence, and making such a din that we could hardly hear ourselves talk. The American lady said it took her appetite away, and I could hardly blame her; but to get 'shut of 'em' (as Bridget would say) was impossible! The best fun was after we had finished. Scraps of bread and meat were handed to all, as to so many beseeching dogs, and then there was great clamour for the empty wine-bottle, which at last we gave to a little girl with a big baby over her shoulder, which she bore off the said bottle in the exuberant glee of triumph. We threw away the fragments of eggshells, and one chap began to pick them carefully up, though what he could do with

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'em he knows better than I. Poor wretches! they are poor because they are too lazy to work. They will lie in the dirt by the roadside in the blazing sun, and sleep rather than work. What can be done with such people; they have neither honesty, ambition, nor self-respect. The lowest Irish are far above the level of these creatures.

"After lunch, my friends drove directly back to Naples, but I went to the amphitheatre and Puzzuoli, which was overwhelmed by an eruption of Solfatara, and has been partially dug out. The inside is so complete that you have even the trapdoors where the lions came up through the floor; it is very interesting. Then I went to the now-dried-up Lake of Agnano and saw the Grotto del Cane or place where there is enough carbonic acid to kill a dog in two minutes, and where sulphurous acid comes smoking out of holes in the ground, which yields under your feet if you stamp on it. Last of all I visited the Tomb of Virgil. What do you think of that for 'A Day's Pleasure'?

"*Wednesday, April 1. Yesterday* I took steamer for Capri, touching at Sorrento. Went into the Blue Grotto of which I will only say that you go in by boats through an opening about two feet high in the side of the hill; and within, the water is a most gorgeous blue, and the whole cave shimmers with lovely blue, and it is a wonderful sight. I was more successful with it than Howells, who went in on a bad day.¹ We lunched at the *Hotel du Louvre*, on a balcony overlooking the bay — one of the most glorious landscapes in the world. Capri also has its share of beggars."

¹ See the charming description of Capri and the Capriotes in *Italian Journeys*, by W. D. Howells.

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The next day was spent in Naples, and was given to writing the letter to Mrs. Fiske from which I have quoted, to work on his proofs and on his index, and to strolling about the town and the museum. Here are a few additional extracts from the letter:—

“Naples smells fearfully, and so does Rome. Mother expected me to go crazy over Rome, but save for the antiquities, I think it is a disgusting place. I have seen quite enough of this country to know how lovely it is. Tell Mrs. McKenzie that I think of her here in Naples and fully agree with her as to the surpassing beauty of this country. The glory and beauty of this week at Naples I shall never forget. I don't say that it is better than England, or better than *Petersham*; but of its kind, it is certainly quite a garden of Eden. Naples, too, as a city, is more picturesque than Rome, barring only the Forum and the Capitol.

“My conversation now-a-days is a grand pot-pourri of English, French, German and Italian, so that I don't know what I am talking. I could talk Italian pretty well with another month here.

“Love to all the babies. I saw three little tots, aged 9, 7, and 5, paddling their own canoe on the Bay yesterday, and threw 'em a sou apiece, which they cotched 'em.”

Fiske had planned a visit to Sorrento and also another visit to Pompeii, but his home writing so intensified his home longing, his desire to set his face homeward, that both visits were cut out, and after a brief visit to Herculaneum he returned the next day, April 3, to Rome.

Returns to Rome

His next letter is from Venice, wherein, under date of April 14, he resumes the story of his journey in a very jubilant state of mind: —

“O, my dear! Glory hallelujah!!! PREFACE WRITTEN!!!! Only 150 pages more to be indexed!!! Coming home right away!!!!!! What do you think of that?

“Did n't go again to Pompeii, nor to divine Sorrento, either. (Read Howells's 'Italian Journeys' for Pompeii and Capri. It is one of the most charming books that ever was written — a real work of genius, as you'll see if you ever see Italy, the fairy land.) Got eager to get homeward bound! Went to Herculaneum next morning, and felt richly repaid, though I can see why Howells was disappointed. Went in the P.M. to Rome. Saw a lot more things at Rome, and did the Capitoline Museum and Vatican. But the Sistine Chapel was shut all the time, and I could n't get in. The Pope is full of obstinacy in these days, because he has to play second fiddle to Victor Emanuel. Went to St. Peter's Sunday,⁹ but the Mass was n't worth two cents. I don't see either the grandeur or the beauty of St. Peter's, and I would back York Minster against all the churches I've seen in Italy put together!”

After a stop of two days in Rome he went again to Florence, where he remained three days visiting his friends the Grahams and Meads. Of what he saw in these three days he makes no mention beyond a casual remark that he again visited the Uffizi Gallery. It is noticeable that, although on

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both his visits to Florence he went to this famous gallery, he does not mention impressions made upon his mind by the great collection of masterpieces of ancient sculpture and modern painting gathered there, while he had much to say about them when he reached home. He does not appear to have noted in Florence anything suggestive of Michael Angelo or Leonardo da Vinci, or Savonarola: yet with the varied contributions of these great workers to the world's thought, he was most familiar.

On his way from Florence to Venice, he stopped one day at Bologna. From Venice he wrote his mother, giving her some general impressions of his Continental trip thus far: —

“I believe this is the first time I have written to you, since I left London, and I have been very wicked, I know, but it is very hard to write letters when one is travelling fast, and I have hardly done justice, even to Abby. I have usually told her to send you my letters to her, and so have written less often than I should otherwise have done. I am beginning to get tired of Europe, and anxious to get home. It is eight months now since I left home, and it is a pretty long pull. And besides, I have found travelling on the Continent rather tame after my glorious days in London. I have n't found any trouble in talking French, and Italian, enough to get along comfortably; but it seems very lonesome and dreary to be where you don't hear English spoken. I don't see how the people *can* prefer the Continent to England. I am glad to have seen

Some General Impressions

France and Italy once, but I would n't give a sixpence to visit either country again — not even to revisit Paris. They don't fascinate or draw me, though I enjoy everything I see very much — and especially enjoyed my 32d birthday, at Pompeii, more than any other one day in Europe. Rome, I enjoyed very much — more than I can tell until I have had more time to think about it; but what I enjoyed was ancient Rome, and the sculptures in the Vatican. In modern Rome I can see nothing attractive at all. St. Peter's is neither impressive nor beautiful to me — I think it hideous; and of the dozen or twenty famous churches I saw, none impressed me at all except St. Pauls-Without-the-Walls. I do like St. Mark's, though, here in Venice; and I don't know when I have more thoroughly enjoyed paintings than the Titians, Tintoretts, and Veroneses here in the Ducal Palace and the Academy — especially, on the whole, the Tintoretts. I have been here about a week, and rather hate to go away. I like Venice, on the whole, better than any other city on the Continent, so far, although I am very fond of Florence. It is delicious to go gliding about in a gondola in these quaint old canals; and I am not sure that I don't like the little canals with their labyrinthine twists and continual surprises, even better than the big one. I have got a most comfortable room, in a very queer German hotel just off the Grand Canal, about two minutes' walk from the Piazza. Did you ever see a richer building than the Ducal Palace, unless possibly the palace at Versailles? . . .

“I saw considerable of Larkin Mead; of course I like him very much — never yet saw a Mead that

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I did n't like. The same brightness, sweetness, and simplicity runs through the whole family.

"I go from here to Verona, and then to Milan and Como. Hope to be able to get over either the Splügen or the St. Gothard into Switzerland. If not, I shall go around by Geneva, through Turin. In choosing routes, I find that, whichever one I choose I am sure to enjoy it, but somebody else always assures me I ought to have chosen some other. I shall go down the Rhine from Switzerland to Belgium, and leave out central Germany altogether. I have seen quite enough for this time, and I want to get home! I am much more homesick than I was in London, for I am homesick for home, and for London too."

This letter he signs—"From a *Homesick Philosopher*."

Fiske remained in Venice but seven days, and a goodly portion of his time was given to putting the finishing touches to his book. The photographs he collected, however, show that he managed to see the points of greatest interest, although but few are mentioned in his letters.

His next letter is from Interlaken, dated April 27, wherein he resumes the story of his journey:—

"Since I left Venice, every day has been better than the other. Spent half a day at Verona and then went on to Milan. Went thrice to the Milan Cathedral and ascended the spire. The interior is in some respects grander than any other that I have seen; the façade is ruined by classical doors and

In Switzerland

windows; otherwise the exterior is wonderfully light and beautiful, but not so grand as Lincoln or York. There are upwards of 2000 statues carved on it, — which will serve to give you some idea of the elaborateness of it. Went up the lake of Como, and stopped at Cadenabbia — beautiful place. Went over Lake Lugano and stopped at Luvino on Lake Maggiore, where I was the sole occupant of a big hotel with over 200 rooms. Those swindling Italians at Milan told me that the Splügen and St. Gothard passes were not open, and I was fool enough to believe them, although nearly every word ever yet told me, by an Italian, has been a lie! When I got to the lakes, I found I could get over easily, but I had left my portmanteau at Milan, and so had to go back. I concluded to go by Mont Cenis, and stop at Chambéry, and carry out the dream of my boyhood by seeing Rousseau's home at Les Charmettes. I enclose a picture, and think you will see why I like it — also, some flowers gathered there. I also saw Voltaire's château at Ferney — a much less charming place."

To Switzerland Fiske gave but seven days, and his route was from Mont Cenis to Genoa, thence, via Freiburg, Bern, Interlaken, and Luzerne to Bâle and Strasburg.

Two things are noticeable in his record of this portion of his Continental journey, notwithstanding the haste with which it was made — his interest in Les Charmettes, one of the temporary abodes of Rousseau during his vagrant social life, and his visit to Ferney, so memorable as the home of

John Fiske

Voltaire, when as the "Squire of Ferney" he was the most important personage in Europe.

"The visitor to Geneva, whose studies had made him duly acquainted with the most interesting human personality of all that are associated with that historic city, will never leave the place without making a pilgrimage to the château of Ferney. In that refined and quiet rural homestead, things still remain very much as on the day when the aged Voltaire left it for the last visit to Paris, where his long life was worthily ended, amid words and deeds of affectionate homage. One may sit down at the table where was written the most perfect prose, perhaps, that ever flowed from pen, and look about the little room with its evidences of plain living and high thinking, until one seems to recall the eccentric figure of the vanished master, with his flashes of shrewd wisdom and caustic wit, his insatiable thirst for knowledge, his consuming hatred of bigotry and oppression, his merciless contempt for shams, his boundless enthusiasm of humanity. As we stroll in the park, that quaint presence goes along with us till all at once, in a shady walk, we come upon something highly significant and characteristic, the little parish church with its Latin inscription: — 'Deo erexit Voltaire'; i.e., 'Voltaire built it for God'; and as we muse upon it, the piercing eyes, and sardonic but not unkindly smile seem still to follow us. What meant this eccentric inscription?"¹

Fiske regarded Voltaire as much the greater and much the more fruitful thinker. His estimate

¹ See Fiske's essay, *The Everlasting Reality of Religion*.

Les Charmettes and Ferney

of these two diverse illuminators of eighteenth-century thought accorded with John Morley's, whose judgment upon them Fiske regarded as the fairest, on the whole, that had been given.¹

Fiske's special interest in Les Charmettes arose from the fact that during the early period of Rousseau's social vagabondage it was his abiding place; and when, in his "Émile," he came to set forth his ideas of "Religion according to Nature" in the guise of a profession of faith on the part of a Savoyard Vicar, he drew upon the natural scenery about Les Charmettes for his inspiration, portraying the impressiveness of nature as a religious influence, with all his marvellous powers of exposition. The effect upon the perturbed religious thought of Europe of this fervid appeal to deistic religious sentimentalism is familiar to every student of the literature and thought of the eighteenth century, and Fiske's desire to take a glance at the nature surroundings identified with the production of this remarkable deistic polemic is readily understood.

Of his journey through Switzerland to Interlaken he writes: —

"Heard the organ at Freiburg (one of the finest in Europe) and spent half a day at Bern, a city of great interest to me, historically.² I like everything

¹ See Morley's *Voltaire*, pp. 4-6; Morley's *Rousseau*, pp. 5-7.

² Fiske probably refers to the history of Bern during the thirteenth century, when, after being declared a free imperial city by the Emperor Frederick II, it established a democratic constitutional government, out of which grew a legislative body of two hundred,

John Fiske

about Switzerland. The people are neat and honest, the food is good, and you can get good cigars for two cents apiece! It is a great relief after the everlasting lying and thieving of Italy. I have n't seen any beggars either. However, it would n't be fair to blackguard the poor Italians too much. Switzerland has the advantage of having been a free country for 600 years. In Italy you constantly meet troops of lazy little beggar children, often beautiful, but dirty as poison, holding out their hats for coppers. Here it is a relief to see little boys and girls on their way to school, with books and slates, just as in New England. In many ways it seems more homelike here than anywhere else in Europe. If I had got to live on the Continent, I believe I should choose some place in Switzerland."

He stopped at Interlaken to see the great Grindelwald glacier and also to take in Alpine scenery roundabout — and from Interlaken he writes: —

"I did n't break my neck on the glacier, though I seemed to come rather near it. The eight-mile ride, going and coming, was occasionally pokerish in aspect, but sound in principle, as the hoss was sure footed — a dear honest old hoss. The worst part was the glacier, which, I did n't have arctics on, and found it very slippery, and though I did n't go on the edge of any 1000 foot precipices, I went on the edge of some 50 foot ones, and did n't like it much. But it was a grand experience; to get away up between two big Alps was quite a new sen-

which formed the germ of one of the most remarkable oligarchies of modern European history.

At Interlaken

sation. And then the Ice Grotto! which is fine! We had a truly superb day, only at noon it was hotter than Shadrach's furnace. After doing the glacier, I drove to Lauterbrunnen and lunched on fresh trout just under the Staubbach. Returned to Interlaken and walked up the Heimweh-Fluh through a pine grove very much like picnic grove [Petersham]. So I am awfully tired to-night and call this my very greatest day in Europe so far. At the Bear hotel, at Grindelwald, you are just at the foot of three giant mountains, every one of 'em over 12,000 feet high; and I shall never forget the sensations as I looked out of my bed-room window at 5 this morning.

"I don't know that Switzerland is more *sublime* than Scotland, for nothing can excel in sublimity Loch Linnhe, and Glencoe, and the awful moors by the King's House Inn. I don't know that it is more *beautiful* than Italy, meaning by beautiful 'what the eye admires.' And I don't know that it is any more *lovely* than Petersham — meaning by lovely what the heart clings to. But for sublimity, and beauty, and loveliness *combined*, I say that Switzerland is so far above all other countries, that there is no use in saying any more about it. To compare any other country with it is absurd. You must see it some time. We'll contrive to get a summer vacation over here and give two or three weeks to Switzerland."

It was with profound regret that Fiske here definitely gave up the German portion of his trip, especially his long-contemplated visit to Weimar; for, if there was one particular place on earth he longed to see, it was the one that for fifty years formed the

John Fiske

social environment of the many-sided Goethe. He resumes the story of his journey at Cologne: —

“Been travelling like smoke — went from Interlaken to Lucerne over Lake Brienz, and ‘one hoss shay’ over the Brünig Pass. Splendid ride. Next A.M. got up at 4.30 and went the whole length of Lake Lucerne to Flüelen, omnibus to Altdorf; breakfasted there, and saw Tell’s statue. Grand statue, exquisite little town, magnificent lake, one of the grandest lakes I have seen. Returned by shanks mare to Flüelen, steamer to Vitznau, and halfway up the Rigi by railway. In summer, you pays 12 cents, and goes to the end of the road. Now, you only pay 6 cents and go halfway, and have to walk the balance. Made me puff; but it paid for the trouble. Sublime view, and far grander now than in summer, because there is more snow. Forty-six mountains, over 10,000 feet high, and nine over 12,000 feet. What do you think of that for a ‘pickerwow’? Also nine lakes, and a batch of country measuring 300 miles in circuit. It was a superb day, and I never saw so magnificent a sight before. The point where I stood was about 6000 feet high. Home again (to Lucerne) by steamer, loafed about town an hour by moonlight, and went to bed tired enough!

“Up at 5 next A.M. and went to Strasburg and had three hours there to see the Cathedral. The façade is very fine, but otherwise it was disappointing — far inferior to the English cathedrals. Saw also the remarkable clock there. Every woman in Strasburg carries a baby in her arms. Never saw so many babies before in all my life; had to pick

At Strasburg

my way carefully to keep from stepping onto some baby or other, and crushing it! Went on to Heidelberg, and was too eager for tezzletelts to take benefit of *sleep* next morning, and so got up early and found a huge pile of letters at banker's from you, the bairns, mother, George, Paine (a lovely lovely letter), and Mrs. Ad^{ml} Fanshawe. Also several 'Notices' from Dennett. Did the castle and university — especially library. Next day left at 8 A.M. for Worms. Saw the Cathedral (a second-rate affair), and the new Luther monument, which is sublime beyond description; one of the grandest things I have seen in Europe. Went on to Mayence and saw the Cathedral — a rather fair one; also some Roman remains. Went on by steamer down the Rhine to Bingen just opposite the town where the rats ate up Bishop Hatto.

"Read my Myth-book. Went to bed beastly tired. Got up at 4 this A.M. bright as a lark, and had a superb sail down the Rhine to-day reaching Cologne, at 2.30 P.M.

"The Rhine is not equal to the Hudson, and I think not equal to the Connecticut; but it is very lovely and romantic, and there's an old castle with forty-eleven legends to it, about once a mile. I shall bring 'pickerwows.'"

Here are his impressions of the cathedral at Cologne: —

"The Cathedral here at Cologne is unquestionably the grandest that I have seen externally; internally it is also absolutely perfect; but in impressiveness not quite equal to Milan. The French partly destroyed it in 1795 — but *they* (not the

John Fiske

French) are restoring it fast. Six hundred workmen are at it daily — \$2,000,000 have already been spent upon it, and by 1880, probably, the grand towers, over 500 feet high, will be finished. As for stained glass, that is a lost art, and happy are the old Cathedrals like York, Lincoln, Carlisle (and Cologne) that still keep their matchless old windows — the most glorious things of beauty that the mind of man ever conceived. Ever since I saw the great east window at Carlisle, I have had stained glass on the brain.”

At Cologne Fiske indulged in visions of a few happy days in London before sailing for home.

“A week from this eve I shall probably spend at the 'orrid 'Uxleys', and it will be worth all the past ten weeks put together. I have had a magnificent journey; but *grudge every minute* lost from h'old h'England, and am satiated with sight-seeing, and *am homesick!*”

He was three days in making the trip from Cologne to London, the main incidents of which he gives in a letter from London of May 9, 1874: —

“O my dear! Hezzy's back in London! and in Bloomsbury, too, just around the corner from where I lived before.

“Left Cologne early Monday morning and stopped at Aachen (what the French call Aix-la-Chapelle), which, as you may not know, was the titular capital of the Empire¹ from 800 to 1793. Saw the cathedral and Charlemagne's tomb therein. Did n't see the Amsterdam Dutch, or the Rotter-

¹ The Holy Roman Empire.

Down the Rhine to Belgium

dam Dutch, but rode through a part of Holland (and saw a little of various kinds of Dutch). Stopped at Antwerp, saw the cathedral, and in it the truly stupendous and amazing picture by Rubens — the 'Descent from the Cross' — also several other magnificent pictures by Rubens. Rubens seems to me one of the greatest of all who have held the brush, and I wish I had more time to study him. His 'Last Supper' in the gallery at Milan is immense in conception. By Jove, I am beginning faintly to realize what an amount I have seen and learned these three months.

"Went on to Bruges, and put up at a little one-horse Flemish tavern opposite the Belfry. All this was one day's work. It was 9 P.M. when I reached Bruges, and there was a grand May festival in the great square, which was brightly illuminated, and covered with little tents and booths. I was *awfully* tired, but this waked me up, and I staid out till 12 o'clock. O, how I wished I had the little ones there! If some little 'deils' I know, *had* been there, their wings would have flapped, I know. It was one of the richest and jolliest sights I have seen in Europe — Dwarfs and Giants, operatic performances, 'pickerwows,' hobby-horse-riding, games, trials of strength, etc. I went in for *everything!* laughing and talking with the people; tried my hand at a dead lift, both hands in front and lifted 60 kilogrammes — not quite my own weight (87 kilogrammes), but better than I thought I could do on a dead lift. Also mesmerism, clairvoyance, legerdemain, music — a regular carnival.

"Got up next morning at 7 and went about town a little, which many of the streets are canals, just

John Fiske

as in Venice, but with common boats instead of gondolas. Went on to Ostend, and embarked at 10 A.M. Told the steward to wake me up in time to see the white cliffs of h'old h'England and then went to sleep and slept for four hours. When I got up we were approaching Dover, and could see the shore of France opposite just on the horizon. Gorgeous day. I was absolutely frantic with delight at setting foot on English ground again!

“Went to a beer-shop and drank the 'elth of h'old h'England in a bright pewter mug; and went on to Canterbury, and put up at the Rose Tavern, in Rose Lane — lovely little cosy inn, with white dimity curtains, and jolly little back-parlour, with one lump of cannel flickering in a wee grate. Sat down to a good plain supper of cold roast beef, and home-made bread, pickles and beer; and O how good things tasted!

“Spent all day Wednesday, till 4.30 P.M. in Canterbury — one of the loveliest towns on the face of the earth. Saw the inn where Chaucer's tales were told — an inn no longer, or I would have stopped there. The cathedral is very grand and beautiful, and the King's school so bewitching that I should like to have one just like it for Barl, and Lacry. I also saw St. Martin's Church where Christianity was first preached in heathen England, where Ethelbert was baptized, and where he and his queen Bertha lie buried.

“And, my dear, I always thought England lovely, but what shall I say of these country lanes in May? The beautiful green grass, the wild flowers, the budding hedge-rows, the air heavy with the scent of blossoms, the tinkling cow-bells, the superb great

Back in London

Southdown sheep, the clean little cottages, with their windows all scarlet with geraniums, and the ivy drooping about their eaves. Other countries may be grander, but for pure delicious loveliness, give me an English country lane. No wonder the English poets love to sing of the beauties of spring — and no wonder they love nature so much that Taine does n't quite understand 'em. But *la belle France* is a poor country in comparison.

“Got up to London Wednesday evening, and next day found this room up here near the Museum, where I feel at home. Saw Trübner and Macmillan, and they were awfully glad to see me. Thursday evening called at the 'orrid 'Uxleys'. Huxley was out, but Mrs. Huxley and the children were all around the dining-room table, reading, and drawing, and cutting things out of paper. A general shout went up when 'Hezzy' was announced, and for about two minutes there was a deal of affectionate greeting and hand shaking. Took a cup of tea and spent the evening, and the young people could hardly be coaxed or driven off to bed when the time came, they were so much entertained by my adventures.

“. . . After getting my ticket, I called at Spencer's and found him out, and left a note for him. Went to Conway's and was warmly greeted. Went down to the Royal Institution to see Tyndall, and found him out, but saw Spottiswoode, who told me there would be a roaring dinner of the Royal Society the 21st, after which Tyndall will illustrate some new discoveries of his own on sound. That will be grand, and I am to receive a formal invitation. Was invited to a grand blow-out at Hyde Park Gardens,

John Fiske

last evening, and had to get my trunk and unpack my dress-suit the first thing. Dined alone at the Criterion Grill-Room on Piccadilly, where they broil a delicious rump steak right before your eyes, and serve it piping hot, tender and juicy, with mealy boiled potatoes, a pint pot of unequalled beer, and a bit of cream cheese afterward — a truly royal dinner — for half-a-crown: never made a dinner like that on the Continent. I have learned that a plain steak, cooked that way, is far ahead of all the *filets aux champignons* you can get in France.

“After this *magnificent repast*, I went to the Royal Institution, and heard a lecture by Sedley Taylor, and saw Tyndall. Then went to the party at Hyde Park Gardens, along with Conway, and saw A. J. Ellis, the philologist, Mrs. Linton, who wrote the ‘Girl of the Period’ articles in the ‘Saturday Review,’ and many others. Got to bed at 1 o’clock, which is as early as one *can* do here in London.

“It bids fair to be a busy time the next fortnight. To-morrow, I spend the day at Macmillans, with hopes of much music. Monday, I go to the new Museum of Archæology, and dine at the Royal Institution with Tyndall. Wednesday, there’s a dinner for me at Conway’s. There’s to be a grand dinner for me also at Trübner’s — day not yet fixed. The ‘orrid’ Uxley is to let me know when he’ll have me. No doubt I shall dine at least once at Spencer’s. Next Saturday, I am to go to Debrow to see the Fanshawes, and Monday we are to go to St. Albans together. I shall probably return to London the following day. Besides this, Conway and I are planning a trip to Salisbury together. We propose to

Back in London

leave next week Thursday for Winchester, and see the Cathedral and antiquities, go on to Salisbury and sleep at the Red Lion, famous all over England for beer and stewed eels; and go to Stonehenge next day, see the Cathedral, and return to London — *total, two days*. I grudge the time from London, but fear I shall never forgive myself if I don't see Salisbury Cathedral, the spire of which is thought by many to be the finest in the whole world. And besides all this, I *must* go to Windsor Castle, Richmond, and Stoke Poges; and also hear a debate in Parliament, if possible. Then there is the great exhibition of pictures now, and lots more things. You see I shall be gadding every minute from dawn till dewy eve, and *may* be I shall not write again except just a line before sailing — one steamer before. You know I am safe and among friends, and dreadfully stingy of time. Here I am writing to you, when I ought to be putting the finishing strokes to my Index so as to give it to Clay Monday, and get rid of the proofs of it next week — that job will fill up to-day.

“Now that I am back in London I love it more than ever, and I believe it would n't take much to make me willing to migrate here with all my traps, and stay here *ad infinitum*. You would like it too! It is a place that grows upon one more and more; and you can no more exhaust it than you could compass infinity. Other cities are great: this is without beginning, or end; no human mind can take it all in, and that is one reason why the sensation of *being* here never loses its strange charm.

“But, after all, I stick to Petersham! Good-bye for four weeks, two of which will be nearly gone when

John Fiske

you get this. It will seem mighty good to get to work in the Library again. I feel equal to almost *hany-think*. With 'eaps of love h'all around.

“'EZZY.”

Not all of Fiske's programme for the close of his visit to England could be carried out. His much-desired excursion with his friend Conway to Winchester and Salisbury had to be omitted, for the social courtesies extended to him were of such a cordial nature that he could not well refuse them, and they took up all his spare time. He saw his book, the production of which was the main object of his visit, completely finished, and he sent some last messages to Mrs. Fiske and to his mother, from which the following extracts are taken.

To his mother he writes, May 21: —

“I have had a great time since I returned to London. Spent two days at Debrow. Had a farewell Sunday at Macmillan's. Had a stupendous dinner party at Sherman's, Norbiton Hall, Surrey, at which among others, Gen. Pleasonton was present, and he and I staid all night there. Tuesday there was a grand dinner at Trübner's, and Wednesday at Conway's, and to-night I dined at Spencer's, with Masson, Bain, Lewes, and Clifford. It was a glorious evening, and Lewes was in his most bewitching humour. He kept us in a roar all the evening and Spencer and I fairly laughed till we cried, and my sides are still sore. He is an exceedingly droll man. Masson and Bain are not devoid of wit either, and their brrrrroad Scotch accent helps it.

Farewell Visits

"I also had a grand dinner with Tyndall at the Royal Institution, in the room which used to be Davy's and Faraday's."

To Mrs. Fiske he writes, May 23: —

"I am just going down to Macmillan's to get a complete bound copy of my book to bring home — I pack up to-day. To-morrow, I lunch at Spencer's, make a parting call on the little Oppenheims (at Trübner's) and have a farewell evening at the 'orrid 'Uxleys'. Last evening I spent with Ralston, and he says that Huxley spoke to him about me in 'terms of the *warmest* affection.'

"Lord Arthur Russell got me into the House of Commons yesterday afternoon, and I heard a great debate about nothing — tempest in a teapot. Saw Disraeli.

"I want you to meet me in New York — I shall be very much disappointed if you don't.

"I weigh 192!!"

Glory Hallelujah!!
Book done!!
Coming home!!!
Love to the bairns!!!!
Meet me — in New York!!!!

Amen!

END OF VOLUME I



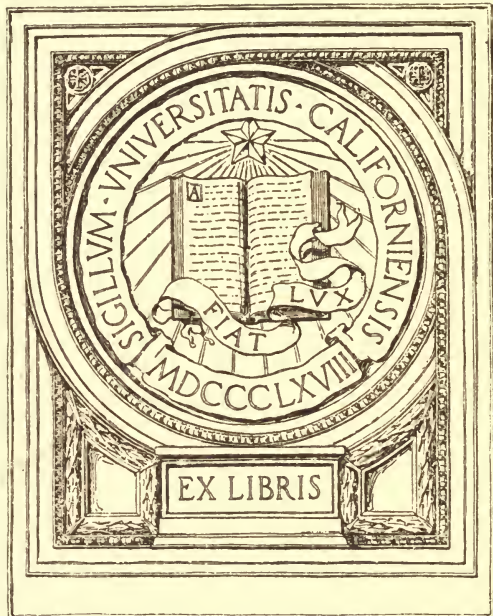
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John Fiske.

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BY
JOHN SPENCER CLARK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

Disce ut semper victurus, vive ut cras moriturus



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FISKE
V.2

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TO THE
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

TO
ABBY MORGAN FISKE
THE WIFE OF JOHN FISKE AND THE INSPIRER
OF MUCH THAT IS FINEST IN HIS WRITINGS
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED



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The birthplace of Mrs. John Fiske, the daughter of Aaron Brooks, Jr., an eminent lawyer and one of the leading citizens of Petersham, Massachusetts. For three generations the town of Petersham owed much of its prosperity to members of the Brooks family, who were extensive landowners and public-spirited men. Approximately two thousand acres of the estate of the late James W. Brooks now constitute the outdoor laboratory of the Harvard School of Forestry. The illustration shows the homestead in its latter-day dress.	
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The illustrations for this book were selected under the supervision of Mrs. John Fiske

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JOHN FISKE
VOLUME II

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN FISKE

CHAPTER XX

THE PUBLICATION OF "COSMIC PHILOSOPHY" —
ADVANCES IN SCIENCE — NEW DEMANDS ON PHIL-
OSOPHY — HERBERT SPENCER PROPOUNDS THE
DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION — FISKE'S INTERPRETA-
TION OF THE DOCTRINE — MAKES AN IMPORTANT
CONTRIBUTION TO THE DOCTRINE — ADDS FOUR IM-
PORTANT COROLLARIES TO SPENCER'S ARGUMENT

1874

FISKE'S home-coming to Cambridge and the greet-
ing of his children were cheering to his heart. Again
united with his family, his joy was unconfined; and
in this moment of gratulation the incidents of his
memorable journey were quite obliterated from his
mind. But he was soon at his work in the Harvard
Library.

In September a duplicate set of the plates of his
work was received from England by his Ameri-
can publishers, James R. Osgood & Co., and in Octo-
ber the work was published simultaneously in the
United States and in England under the title of
"Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy, based on the Doc-
trine of Evolution, with Criticisms of the Positive
Philosophy."

John Fiske

The work bore the following felicitous and altogether appropriate dedication:—

TO
GEORGE LITCH ROBERTS, M.A.
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
THE GOLDEN DAYS WHEN, WITH GENEROUS AIMS IN COMMON,
WE STUDIED PHILOSOPHY TOGETHER,
AND IN CONSECRATION OF THE LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP
WHICH HAS BEEN
AN UNFAILING SOURCE OF JOY AND STRENGTH
TO US BOTH,
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

It should be said that the book made no claim to be the presentation of a system of philosophy devised by Fiske: rather it was presented as an appreciation or an interpretation of the philosophic system outlined and partially worked out by Herbert Spencer, to which Fiske had made some important contributions in the way of showing the relationship of Spencer's system to other systems, as well as in strengthening its applications to man's social well-being and his religious faith. In other words, the work was a fuller presentation of the social and religious implications of the doctrine of Evolution, than had hitherto been made.

A philosophic work, produced under such auspices as we have seen attending this, must perforce traverse, in the light of the scientific advances of the middle period of the nineteenth century, the three fundamental problems of all philosophy: the Cosmic Universe, its origin, sustentation, and meaning; Man, his origin, his possession of intellectual, moral, and religious consciousness and his destiny; and the

“Cosmic Philosophy” Published

Inscrutable Power that lies back of, or is enshrouded in, the phenomena of the physical cosmos and of human life as their ultimate cause or reality — problems of three distinct yet interrelated orders of co-existences, which it has been the aim of philosophic thinkers of all ages to bring into order and unity: into harmony, within the compass of the human mind.

And now the question arises, What were the distinguishing points regarding these three fundamental problems in the philosophic system offered by Spencer, and which were given an appreciative interpretation by Fiske in his “Cosmic Philosophy.”

Before attempting a definite answer to this question, it is essential that we get clearly before us the nature of the philosophic crisis that then existed by reason of the impinging upon the system of theologico-philosophic thought which then prevailed, of three lines of cosmic truth relating to the physical universe, to the organic life of the terrestrial world, and to psychologic and sociologic man which had been established through science; together with the results of a century of profound and reverent critical study of the Bible as a Divine revelation to man.

Speaking broadly, it can be said that down to the middle period of the last century, Christian theology formed largely the intellectual framework or background for pretty much all the philosophico-religious thinking throughout Christendom, on the

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three fundamental problems of philosophy, notwithstanding the various sects, or creeds, or churches into which believers in the Christian religion were divided.

Christian theology, in its distinctly orthodox, dogmatic form, we had under consideration when dealing with Fiske's change of religious views in 1859. A reëxamination of this theologic scheme,¹ for the purpose of abstracting its philosophic content, shows that it claimed to give a definite and positive answer to the three fundamental problems of philosophy, in a series of related Divine truths transcending experiential knowledge: truths which had been divinely revealed to man by the Creator of the universe and of man, and which must be accepted as ultimate answers to all questions of philosophy.

Such being its claims, we have first to ask what of the truth of this theologico-philosophic system itself—its origin and verification?

Candor compels the admission that it had its origin and development into a related and apparently consistent body of thought under conditions of intellectual, moral, and spiritual culture widely different from what prevailed during the nineteenth century. In fact, the statement will not be questioned that all its affirmations regarding the personality of a Divine Creator, the origin of the cosmic universe and its sustentation, as well as in regard

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 109.

A Philosophic Crisis

to man, his origin, his endowment with rational consciousness, his fall, his redemption, and his destiny, were all formulated when the human mind was obsessed by beliefs in supernatural agencies and occurrences; and long before anything like a critical or scientific observation or study of cosmic phenomena or of human life existed.

And if we inquire more particularly, and limit our inquiries to modern times, we see, during the fifteenth century, the emergence of this theologico-philosophic system from a long period of European ignorance and superstition, with its positive, dogmatic affirmations regarding God, the cosmic universe, and man, substantially as they existed in the orthodox theologic creeds of half a century ago.

Pursuing our inquiries still further, we find that during the intervening centuries this system has been constantly on the defensive against the steady advances of science — man's rational inquiry into the nature of his cosmic environment and of his own existence — and that it has been enabled to maintain itself against these advances only by slight concessions here and there; and on vital points appealing to implicit faith in its unverified dogmas as against reason in science; affirming, with ever-increasing emphasis, that ultimate truth regarding the cosmic universe and man was to be found in its divinely revealed message from God the Creator, rather than in man's experiential cosmic knowledge.

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And this controversy remained substantially of this import down to the middle period of the last century, when the advances in the astronomical, the physical, the biological, and the sociological sciences, with their positive verifications, not only upset some of the fundamental dogmas of theology, but also yielded immensely enlarged conceptions of the cosmic universe and man's place in it, as well as nobler conceptions of the Divine Creator, the Source and Sustainer of all things, than were given by theology.

Let us consider the presentation of ultimate truths regarding the cosmic universe, man with his rational mind and the inscrutable Power that lies back of all cosmic phenomena as Source and Sustainer, by the two respective sides to this controversy.

And first, as to the cosmic universe as presented by theology. Here its creation, structure, duration in time, and method of sustentation were all presented in the most positive manner. It was fiatistically created in a few days by a personal Creator and within a period of time comparatively recent.¹ In structure it was given a geocentric character;

¹ Cowper in his poem *The Task*, naïvely reflected, in the following lines, the theologico-philosophic view of creation and its date, as well as the general contempt for geologic science: —

“Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.”

I have before me a recent Oxford edition of the Bible specially

Advances in Science

that is, the earth was made the centre of all things and around it the sun, the moon, and the stars were made to revolve as tributary thereto. And then all the activities, the ever-changing phenomena of this circumscribed geocentric universe were presented as the direct personal acts of its Creator and as evidences of His persistent watchful care over it. In truth, the daily sustentation of this fiat-istically created universe was presented as without established principles of order and of law, and as dependent upon the personal superintendence and good-will of its Creator.

If, now, we turn to the series of related cosmic truths revealed by science, we have the verified evidence of the existence of a cosmic universe widely different in character from that presented by theology. In the first place, there was revealed the existence of a distinctly knowable solar system, heliocentric, instead of geocentric, in structure, and in which the earth held a very subordinate place. Then, beyond this solar system, extending through space inconceivable in its vastness, there was revealed the existence of millions upon millions of giant stars, great blazing suns, many larger than our own sun, and each presumably the centre of a solar system like that to which our earth belongs; together with the fact that our solar system, as well

prepared for Sunday-School teachers, in which the date of the creation of the earth and heaven and man is given as 4004 years before Christ.

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as these millions of blazing suns, had existed for a period of time inconceivable in its duration. And further, there was revealed a still more sublime truth: the fact that these millions of blazing suns with their attendant planets were all interrelated, were ever in motion through space, ever in a process of development from a simpler to a more complex or higher form of phenomenal existence; and that in all their movements and transformations they were held in order and unity by the operation of immutable cosmic law.

And thus, in the middle period of the last century, there stood revealed through science a universe which, in its structure, its duration, its mode of sustentation, presented to the human mind virtually a new heavens and a new earth — a universe of variety, order, and unity so far transcending in vastness and sublimity the crude, childish universe of theology as to leave no comparison between them.¹

And then, as to man. Theology affirmed that

¹ One has only to survey the steady development of the astronomical, the geologic, the physical, the chemical sciences from the period of Copernicus and Galileo in the sixteenth century, when the stellar universe was opened to man's experiential inquiry, down to the middle period of the last century, to note the steady progress of the human mind in bringing the physical phenomena of the cosmic universe into order and unity under the operation of immutable law. And three great discoveries stand out conspicuously in this progressive development of cosmic knowledge. First, the discovery by Newton, in 1685, of the law of gravitation; the cosmic truth that every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle, with a force proportionate directly to their masses, and inversely to their distances apart. Second, the discovery by Lavoisier, in 1789, of

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man — the human race — originated with Adam and Eve, two human beings who were fiatistically created by the Divine Creator, contemporaneously with the creation of the geocentric universe, some six thousand years ago; and that in their creation they were endowed with full intellectual, moral, and spiritual consciousness. It also affirmed that the Divine Creator prepared for them a garden wherein to dwell, and in which He revealed Himself to them and conversed with them; that in this garden He planted a certain tree, the fruit whereof He forbade them to eat. Theology further affirmed as Divine truth that Adam and Eve disobeyed this command, and did eat of the fruit of this tree; whereupon the Divine Creator was very wroth; and He changed, debased, their natures, and expelled them from the garden, and condemned them and their posterity to an earthly life of toil, sin, sorrow,

the indestructibility of matter; the cosmic truth that while the matter composing the material universe is ever in a process of change or transformation, no atom is ever lost or destroyed. Third, the discovery, in the period between 1840 and 1860, by a group of German and English physicists, of the conservation of energy; the cosmic truth that the amount of energy in the cosmic universe is a fixed quantity, which is never increased or diminished; that this energy is convertible into various forms of force, which forces are convertible into one another, and that in these transformations there is no loss or increase of the primal energy itself. Thus it was seen that the cosmic universe was composed of two limited and indestructible elements, matter and energy, and that these two elements were inter-related in a persistent process of cosmic development.

It is upon the immutable character of these three discoveries in cosmic phenomena that the physical and chemical sciences, with their constant additions to the enlargement and ennoblement of human life, have their impregnable foundation.

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suffering, and death; and to a still greater punishment in an eternal life beyond. Thus, as Divine truth, theology affirmed the fall of man: that through the primal disobedience of Adam and Eve did want and sin and suffering and a fearful eternal doom befall the human race.

As against this terrible punishment for inherited sin, theology brought a partial relief: it affirmed that the Divine Creator, in His great mercy for man, had provided a means of escape through a scheme of atonement or redemption by the sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ; which sacrifice had been carried out, and which served as a perfect release from condemnation for the original sin of Adam and Eve to all who would accept it: that is, to all who would accept Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, and would follow his teachings in their conduct towards the Divine Creator and towards their brother men.

The details of this scheme of atonement we have already seen.¹ As a means of relief to man it came as complementary to the affirmation of his fall and his condemnation. How powerfully these two affirmations — man's fall and Christ's atoning sacrifice — have affected the human mind for the past nineteen centuries is reflected in the arts, the sciences, the institutions, the religions, and the philosophies of Christendom. Christian literature abounds with able and ingenious expositions, de-

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 91.

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fences, and attempts to verify this vital humanistic portion of Christian theology; and although these efforts have fared badly in the court of reason, as against the cosmic truths regarding man verified by science, they could not be thoroughly discredited until some other and more rational manner for the causal origin of man and his endowment with intellectual, moral, and spiritual consciousness had been established.

If, now, regarding the origin of man with his rational mind, we turn to the revelations of science down to the middle period of the last century, we find a very different story from that told by theology. As we acquaint ourselves with the researches of the palæontologic, biologic, psychologic, and sociologic sciences, we see the accumulation of a vast body of harmonious evidence, all affirming the development through vast expanses of time of man's physical organism from an animal ancestry; while in regard to his rational mind, the evidence was equally clear that it had been developed out of the egoistic and nascent socialistic feelings or propensities of his animal progenitors; and that in the struggle for existence against environing conditions during the progress from brute to primitive man, these inherited animal feelings or propensities had been developed into psychical powers of a more or less rational, and with a tinge of moral, character. From primitive man to civilized man, the development of intellectual, moral, and spiritual conscious-

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ness, *pari passu* with the development of the human physical organism through contact with environing cosmic conditions, was clearly shown by archæologic remains, by historic records, and by contemporary anthropologic researches.¹

Thus civilized man, with his physiologic, his psychologic, and his sociologic characteristics all in harmony, stood revealed as possessing a rightful heritage in the new heavens and the new earth of science, their fitting inhabitant. More important still, in the court of reason, he was forever freed from the awful doom of theology, and given a progressive development in intellectual, moral, and spiritual consciousness, the full import of which the human mind could not conceive, much less measure.

And now, as to the Ultimate Cause, the Power back of all cosmic phenomena and of human consciousness, which must be posited as a causal basis

¹ These wide and varied researches culminated in 1859 in the profound discovery by Charles Darwin of the cosmic truth that by a process of natural selection — that is, through the interrelated working of the cosmic elements during vast periods of time — there had been differentiated and developed from some simple form of life the infinite variety of organic life with which the terrestrial world had been filled; and it was seen that this cosmic truth applied to the origin and development of man as well as to all other forms of life. In fact, the great antiquity of primitive man was distinctly affirmed by palæontologic and palæolithic discoveries. Also, the geologic, the biologic, the psychologic sciences all affirmed that, as compared with the animals immediately below him in the organic scale, primitive man was identical with them in the physical processes of his origin, in his embryonic development, in his mode of nutrition before and after birth; while in his adult state he exhibited a marvellous likeness to them in his physical organization, as well as in his psychical powers.

Theology and Science

for rational thinking on these profound questions. Here, theology, basing its affirmations wholly on the Bible as comprising a body of divinely revealed truth, positively affirmed the existence of a Divine Creator, to whom was given distinctly human characteristics or limitations. He was presented as the prototype of man — man being created in His image and His manner of creating the universe and man was after man's ways of willing and doing things. And then, His work was so imperfect in its nature as to need His constant personal supervision, with much mending or adjusting to keep it in order. In short, the God of Christian theology was presented as a distinctly anthropomorphic Being; and the work of His hand — the geocentric universe and fallen man — reflected, in its limitations, its want of order, unity, and harmony, His anthropomorphic character.

On the other hand, science, or organized human experience, confessing the subjective origin and conditioned development of the human mind, frankly admitted its impotence to affirm anything positive transcending experience. It saw in the phenomena of the cosmic universe —

“Boundless inward toward the atom,
Boundless outward toward the stars,” —

the exhibition of Infinite intelligence, wisdom, and power, the ultimate sources and nature of which it could not comprehend. It saw, in the phenomena of mind, ranging through the whole animal kingdom

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and finding its culmination in man's arts, sciences, institutions, conduct, and ideals, a vast display of consciousness the ultimate source and nature of which were alike incomprehensible. And of these two orders of phenomena it could only affirm that they appeared to be persistent, to be harmoniously interrelated, and to be forever developing into more complex and higher forms of phenomenal manifestation, in conformity to immutable cosmic law.

In the presence of this vast, orderly display of persistent, interrelated physical and psychical phenomena, science could only reverently postulate, as Source and Sustainer of it all, an Infinite Eternal Power from which all things proceed: an Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent Reality, transcending, in the nature of its existence, the comprehension of the conditioned, finite, human mind.

And one point more. Contemporaneously with the establishment through science of the fundamental cosmic truths we have been considering, there came the result of a century of reverent inquiry into the truth of the theologic affirmation that the Bible was a special Divine revelation from the Divine Creator to man, and hence that it was the embodiment of ultimate truth regarding the cosmic universe and man; and as such transcended all other knowledge — all knowledge derived from experience.

In this inquiry the various books of the Bible were subjected to the ripest critical learning of the

Biblical Criticism

time: as to their authorship and dates of composition; the accuracy of their texts and translations; their mythical and philological characteristics and relationships; their cosmological, biological, and physical affirmations; their diversities and their unities, and how they had been preserved, selected, and collated so as to form a body of ultimate Divine truth.

This was, of course, subjecting the Bible to the same kind of impartial criticism that was given to the sacred books of all other religions as well as to all the literary remains of antiquity. Much contrariety of opinion was brought forth on various points by the inquiry. The rational conclusion derived from it was adverse to the affirmations of theology. This conclusion was to the effect that the Bible was no special revelation from the Divine Creator to man; rather, that it was simply a collection of sociologico-religious literature which reflected with great clearness the life of a primitive, tribal people, surrounded by powerful and more cultured enemies from whom they learned much; a people, ignorant and superstitious, yet gifted with an exceptional degree of ethical and religious feeling, who, in their struggles against their physical and their political environments through an indefinite period of time, slowly advanced along a normal line of intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, which had its culmination in the ethical and religious teachings of Christ and his apostles. In

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short, that the Bible was but one among several collections of sacred writings, all encrusted with error and superstition, and all attesting to the inherence in the human mind of ethical and religious ideas which had their development in conformity to enviroing physical and political conditions.¹

With this invalidation of the theologic dogma that the Bible was a special Divine revelation, and, as such, was the basis of all ultimate truth, the theologic dogmas of the existence of a personal, anthropomorphic God, of His method of creating and sustaining a geocentric universe, of His creation of man and man's fall, condemnation, and redemption, were all left without any verifiable foundation — were, in fact, also invalidated.

And thus, in the middle period of the last century, there came a profound crisis in human thinking; a crisis wherein, on the one side, it appeared that the claims of theology for the ultimate truth of its

¹ As evidence on this point we have only to refer to the memorable contests that followed the publication, in 1860, of "Essays and Reviews," a work written by seven distinguished English churchmen, holding influential positions in the English universities and public schools; and the publication in 1862 of a work by Bishop Colenso on "The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined." Both these works were written in a reverent spirit, and were very moderate in their claims for a rational interpretation of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge. Both were violently attacked by the theologians as undermining all religious truth. The wide discussion that followed brought under review the whole question of dogmas, the verified cosmic truths of science, and revealed the inherent weakness of theology in claiming for the Bible a special Divine inspiration and for its affirmations, regarding the cosmic universe and man, ultimate truths transcending all other knowledge.

New Demands on Philosophy

fundamental dogmas were without verifiable foundations. While on the other side there was presented a series of cosmic truths fully verified in human experience — truths which yielded conceptions of the cosmic universe, its origin, its vastness, its sustentation; of man, his origin, his conscious endowment, his destiny, as well as of the Infinite Eternal Power from whom all things proceed — far nobler than was presented by Christian theology, or any philosophy based on that theology.

Hence, in 1860, following the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species," there came a demand for a new philosophy, one which should recognize the verified truths of modern science as transcending the affirmations of dogmatic theology; which should endeavor to bring the ever-developing physical phenomena of the cosmic universe into harmony with the ever-developing psychical phenomena of conscious mind; and which should present both orders of phenomena as interrelated and as reflecting, in their interrelatedness, the existence of an underlying Reality or Ground as the Source from which all things proceed — in short, a philosophy which should present as its fundamental truth an objective Divine Reality, which in the form of its existence transcends the comprehension of the subjective human mind.

To Herbert Spencer this demand for a philosophy of the cosmic universe based upon the verified revelations of science — a philosophy which should

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bring the whole universe with man's place in it ~~into order and unity with its source and sustaining power — made a strong appeal.~~

Spencer possessed an unsurpassed knowledge of the acquisitions of science, and he was one of the profoundest thinkers of his time. Then, too, he was singularly independent in his thought. He would not accept any important proposition without due verification. His fundamental conception of the cosmic universe was that of a unity held in order by immutable law. Much brooding over cosmic phenomena had led him to question the universal belief that these phenomena were special creations. At the same time there was generated in his mind the conviction that the cosmic universe in all its parts was the outcome of a process of development, and that this process was still going on.

Notwithstanding that science was daily bringing forth facts discrediting the theory of special creations and confirming the theory of development, Spencer was baffled in applying the theory to the phenomena of organic life. In this department of science — biology — the theory of special creations was thoroughly entrenched with the support of philosophy and religion. While Spencer had collected a mass of evidence tending to support the theory of development throughout the organic world, he was yet without a natural *vera causa* which would answer for a positive scientific explanation of the origin of the infinite varieties of species in the floral and

The Doctrine of Evolution

faunal kingdoms and their geographical distribution. He was mulling over this profound subject in 1859, when Darwin brought forth his immortal work on "The Origin of Species by Natural Selection." This work gave Spencer just the help he needed to round out his theory of development, or of Evolution, to the whole of cosmic phenomena.

How influential Darwin's work was in bringing Spencer's evolutionary thought to focus we cannot say. We know that he welcomed Darwin's views as most significant and as giving him important data for the application of his theory of Evolution to the organic world; and that four months after the publication of the "Origin of Species" — March, 1860 — Spencer announced his purpose of engaging in the preparation of a system of philosophy based on the doctrine of Evolution, the scope and aim of which he set forth with much detail.

This announcement was publicly welcomed by over fifty of the leading scientists and philosophic thinkers of Great Britain, among whom were John Stuart Mill, George Grote, Charles Darwin, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Huxley, Sir Charles Lyell, Sir J. D. Hooker, G. H. Lewes, John Tyndall, W. B. Carpenter, Augustus De Morgan, J. D. Morell, R. W. Mackay, David Masson, Alexander Bain, Thomas Graham, Sir John Herschel.

Thus we are brought directly to the consideration of Spencer's doctrine of Evolution which has had such a mighty influence upon all subsequent think-

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ing, and to the interpretation of which, in its bearing upon the spiritual well-being of man, Fiske gave the better portion of his life.

And now, what were the distinctive characteristics of Spencer's projected philosophic undertaking so significantly encouraged by representatives of the highest scientific and philosophic thought of the time?

Briefly summarized, its chief points were as follows: —

I. *An Infinite Unknowable.*

Spencer postulated the existence of an Infinite Unknowable Power as the Source and Sustainer of all things, the nature and form of whose existence transcends the comprehension of the human mind. The existence of such an Infinite Power he found an inexpugnable dictum of consciousness, without which there could be no causal basis for rational thinking, for the human mind cannot rest its fundamentals of thought upon a negation.

Spencer
Infinite
Unknowable

II. *The cosmic universe a revelation of an Infinite Unknowable Power.*

Spencer accepted the cosmic universe, with its multiform phenomena — including man with his rational mind — as a positive revelation of an Infinite Power from whom all things proceed, a revelation which it is the highest duty of man reverentially to study in the light of his experiential knowledge and his rational consciousness. The greater man's knowledge of the nature, unity, and relativity of cosmic phenomena, *pari passu* the higher his conception of the Infinite Power, the Source and Sus-

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tainer of the cosmic universe, as well as his conception of the meaning and purpose of human life.

III. *The knowledge of the cosmic universe that had been established through science.*

Through the investigations of science the phenomena of the cosmic universe had been mapped out into five divisions of phenomenal manifestations more or less interrelated: —

1. *Astronomy*: the phenomena of the stellar and planetary systems.
2. *Geology*: the phenomena of the terrestrial world.
3. *Biology*: the phenomena of living organisms.
4. *Psychology*: the phenomena of adjusting organic life to environing conditions.
5. *Sociology*: the phenomena arising from social aggregation.

Scientific analyses of the varied phenomena of these five divisions revealed certain cosmic truths as well as some profound mysteries: that notwithstanding the infinite variety of forms in which these phenomenal manifestations appear, they all had their base in, and were conditioned by, matter and motion; that through the constant redistribution and integration of matter and motion they were ever in a process of transformation into more complex forms of phenomenal manifestations, many of which are wholly inexplicable. It was also revealed that matter was indestructible; that motion was continuous; and that the intrinsic natures of both were unknown; while there was brought to light a truth of still greater significance: that matter and motion

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in all their redistributions and integrations were conditioned by an underlying unknown force or energy which eternally persists throughout the cosmos, and is never increased or diminished.

with universe
Thus Spencer found that the human mind, in its searchings of the phenomena of the cosmic universe for their ultimate reality, was brought face to face with several insoluble mysteries for which it could find no solution whatsoever: a condition of things which confirmed the inexpugnable dictum of rational consciousness, that the cosmic universe was in its totality and its sustentation a revelation of an order of Being transcending the comprehension of the human mind.

IV. *The truths of the cosmic universe yielded by science implied the existence of a further truth of great importance to man.*

From his wide survey of cosmic phenomena as presented by science, Spencer felt that man was far from possessing all that is to be known of the manifestations of the Infinite Unknowable in the phenomena of the cosmic universe. He saw that man's present knowledge of these phenomena was greatly limited — was principally confined to them in their disparateness. But in his mind there was shaping the idea that the cosmic universe was a related unity, and that these five divisions of its phenomena were its components. Hence he was feeling his way to the logical conclusion, that underlying all the varied phenomena of these components there must be some common dynamic principle which was holding them all in order and unity as a consistently rounded whole, while each was undergo-

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ing a ceaseless change or development. The discovery of this principle appeared to Spencer as the highest quest of scientific research, and its establishment could not fail to throw much needed light upon the problems which exist in the relations between inorganic and organic phenomena, as well as in the relations between organic phenomena and psychical phenomena. In short, in Spencer's mind, to have positive knowledge of a cosmic principle underlying all cosmic phenomena, and which unifies them into a cosmic universe as an interrelated whole, would not only add immensely to man's knowledge of the cosmic universe and his own place in it, but would also greatly heighten his conception of the Infinite Unknowable Power, the Source and Sustainer of it all.

V. Spencer propounded a law of universal cosmic evolution which he set out to verify in the five divisions of cosmic phenomena.

In the widest survey of cosmic phenomena as revealed by analytic science, Spencer found two knowable factors common to them all, and without which none of the phenomena of the cosmos as we know them could exist: these were matter and motion. Having found, further, "that absolute rest and permanence do not exist within the cosmic universe, that every object, no less than the aggregate of all objects, undergoes from instant to instant some alteration of state, that gradually or quickly it is receiving motion or losing motion, while some or all of its parts are simultaneously changing their relations to one another," he was led to the conclusion that the principle he was seeking, a princi-

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ple which would express the truth regarding these universal, ever-changing phenomenal activities and relations, must be found in the continuous redistribution and integration of matter and motion.

Accordingly Spencer hypothesized the existence of a dynamic law of cosmic evolution answering to these conditions, and this law he formulated in the following very abstract terms: —

“Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.”

It was to the task of seeking a verification of this abstract law in the concrete sciences of biology, psychology, and sociology that Spencer gave himself in 1860, in the announcement above referred to.

This is not the place to discuss Spencer and his philosophy. We are too near him to appreciate the full significance of his life-work. His conception of the cosmic universe as a unity, with its phenomena ever in a process of development or transformation into more complex or higher forms of phenomenal existences, — the whole a manifestation of an Infinite Unknowable Power whose form of existence transcended the comprehension of the human mind, — was too sublime a conception to be readily grasped by the mind untrained in science. While his hypothesis of a law of Evolution, whereby all the

Spencer's Work Completed

varied phenomena of the cosmic universe were held in order and unity while undergoing their ceaseless transformations, was so opposed to the universally accepted doctrine of special Divine creations as to be regarded, even in some scientific quarters, as the height of speculative absurdity. Nevertheless, as he proceeded in the development of his thought through his analyses of the phenomena of the organic sciences, it became evident that a thinker of no ordinary capacity had come; a thinker who was finding the sources of truth not so much in the Bibles and dogmas of primitive peoples, as in the reverent study of the cosmic universe with man's place in it, in the light of modern knowledge.

Spencer lived to see the completion of his great undertaking substantially as planned. It was completed in 1896.¹ In the psychological and sociological sciences particularly the influence of Spencer's Evolutionary thought has been immense. Whether his formula of the law of Evolution is complete, whether or not it expresses all the truths involved, particularly in regard to psychical phenomena, may be open to question; but that there is a law of Evolution at the bottom of things, a law which holds the varied phenomena of the cosmic universe in order and unity, while ever in a process of devel-

¹ See the congratulatory letter sent to Spencer on the completion of his philosophy and asking him to sit for his portrait, signed by over eighty of the most distinguished scientists and thinkers of Great Britain. (David Duncan, LL.D., *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, p. 383.)

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opment into higher forms of manifestation, is no longer questioned by cultivated minds. And the whole tendency of modern science is towards the revelation of further truth in this direction. Indeed, science is every day affirming, with ever-increasing emphasis, that the cosmos cannot be at war with itself. The day for belief in special creations has gone by; and that Herbert Spencer was the first to grasp a clear comprehension of the existence of an Evolutionary law universal throughout the cosmos, and that he gave the greater portion of his life to seeking its verification and to pointing out its significance in the interpretation of psychological and sociological phenomena, constitute his title to honor, and give him place among the few great thinkers of all time.¹

From this survey of the rise of the great Evolutionary movement in philosophy during the middle period of the last century, a survey which seemed necessary in order to get a clear conception of the seething condition of philosophic thought in the intellectual environment which surrounded Fiske during the years of his early manhood, and which,

¹ It can be said that during the past half-century the deepest discussions in science, philosophy, religion, ethics, and sociology have centred around the twin propositions of cosmic unity and cosmic evolution, first coherently presented by Spencer in 1860-62. We are by no means at the end of these discussions — indeed, we are in the midst of them to-day. And this fact is clearly apparent: that the acceptance of these twin propositions as fundamental cosmic truths is entering in very widely as a condition precedent to any rational study of cosmic phenomena in its inorganic, its organic, or its psychical divisions.

Broadening of His Thought

as we have seen, profoundly affected his developing thought on the fundamental problems of philosophy, we return to our narrative: the consideration of the essential points in his "Cosmic Philosophy," his contribution to the great discussion then fully under way.

First, however, let us note the direct connection of events in the life of Fiske between the issuing by Spencer of his programme of his philosophic undertaking in 1860 and the publication by Fiske of his "Cosmic Philosophy" in 1874.

It was Fiske's falling-in by chance with a copy of Spencer's programme in the Old Corner Book-Store of Ticknor & Fields, in Boston, in June, 1860, that roused his interest in Spencer and the latter's great undertaking. How deeply Fiske was stirred, we have already seen in his letters of this period to his friend Roberts and to his mother.¹ We have also seen how his interest, flowing from the strong impulse thus started, deepened as Spencer went on unfolding his theory of Cosmic Evolution; how the acceptance of this theory broadened Fiske's thought in every direction; how, as an undergraduate, he was threatened with expulsion from Harvard College if found disseminating his Evolutionary views — misnamed Positivism — among the students; how he opened an interesting correspondence with Spencer; how, a few years later, under a new administration at Harvard, he was called by President Eliot

¹ Cf. *ante*, pp. 138, 139.

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to expound the theory of Evolution under the auspices of the college; how in response to this call he delivered in Holden Chapel two memorable courses of lectures setting forth the fundamental principles of this theory with their philosophic implications; finally, we have seen him five months in London, revising these lectures for publication, the while in conference with Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Clifford, Lockyer, Lewes, and other leaders in the rapidly developing scientific thought of the time.

Thus we have the history of the development of Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy." While treating of Evolution, it was itself a product of Evolution. That it was based on Spencer's theory of Evolution as then outlined in his various essays and in his "First Principles," and partially elaborated in his "Biology" and in his "Psychology," is without question. The high esteem in which Fiske held Spencer, and the significance that he attached to Spencer's ideas, are indicated by the following extract taken from the chapter in which he defines the law of Evolution:—

"In an essay published thirteen years ago, youthful enthusiasm led me to speak of Mr. Spencer's labours as comparable to those of Newton both in scope and importance. More mature reflection has confirmed this view, and suggests a further comparison between the mental qualities of the two thinkers; resembling each other as they do, alike in the audacity of speculation which propounds far-reaching hypotheses, and in the scientific so-

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berness which patiently verifies them; while the astonishing mathematical genius peculiar to the one is paralleled by the equally unique power of psychologic analysis displayed by the other. As in grandeur of conception and relative thoroughness of elaboration, so also in the vastness of its consequences — in the extent of the revolution which it is destined to effect in men's modes of thinking, and in their views of the universe — Mr. Spencer's discovery is on a par with Newton's. Indeed, by the time this treatise is concluded, we may perhaps see reasons for regarding it as in the latter respect, the superior of the two."

But the work was far more than a re-presentation of Spencer's argument. In the development of his system Spencer had paid but little attention to preceding systems of philosophy. While in its comprehensiveness and its unity it transcended other systems, the light we have regarding its production shows that it came from a wholly independent line of investigation, accompanied with an indifference to the thought of others without a parallel in the history of philosophical thinking. Being based largely on the revelations of science, it was alleged by superficial critics to be but an offshoot from the philosophic vagaries of Auguste Comte; while by theologians it was regarded as the embodiment of atheistico-materialistic ideas, inasmuch as it did not recognize, as a sufficient Source and Sustainer of all things, the anthropomorphic God of Christian theology. Further than

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this, it was under the condemnation of the idealistic thinkers, to whom the positive revelations of science as to the reality of the cosmic universe were of less significance than the results of unverified ontological speculation.

Fiske set out with the very definite purpose, not only of presenting in clear light the fundamental points in Spencer's philosophy, but also of showing Spencer's independence of, and opposition to, Comte; his emphatic repudiation of all atheistic-materialistic ideas; and how in opposition to theologians and idealists he had presented the cosmic universe as an ever-developing, unified reality governed by immutable law, the knowable manifestation of an Infinite Power transcending, in the nature of His existence, the comprehension of the human mind. This portion of his task accomplished, Fiske went on to consider, in certain corollaries, what must be the influence of this Evolutionary philosophy upon the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the future.

It should not be overlooked here that in his exposition of the evolution of humanity, Fiske made an important contribution to the general Evolution doctrine, by pointing out the significance of the part played by infancy in the progress from brute to man. He was the first to call attention to infancy as a prime factor in bridging the great gulf which, on a superficial view, seemed to divide humanity irrevocably from the brute world; and Spencer, as

An Important Contribution

we have seen, gave a ready acknowledgment of the importance of the contribution.¹

His corollaries were four in number and they carried the Evolutionary argument into the higher realms of human thinking. They may be stated thus: —

- I. Theism; or the nature of Deity.
- II. Matter and spirit; or materialism *vs.* spiritualism.
- III. Religion as affected by the doctrine of Evolution. †
- IV. The philosophic implications of the doctrine of Evolution.

The reverent spirit in which Fiske entered upon this phase of the discussion is indicated by the following passage from the Prophet Isaiah which prefaced this portion of his work: —

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Only a brief exposition can here be given of the Evolutionary argument as developed in these corollaries. It has had great weight in shaping subsequent thought; and it underlies in one form or another pretty much all current philosophic thinking.

We will consider these corollaries in their order, and first: —

¹ Cf. *ante*, vol. I, p. 471; also *Cosmic Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 360.

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Theism; or the nature of Deity. Fiske regarded the problem of theism as the central or fundamental one in philosophy, inasmuch as the conclusions reached regarding the Ultimate Cause of all phenomena must vitally affect the conclusions regarding all other problems.

Now, the doctrine of Evolution, as presented by Spencer and accepted by Fiske, distinctly affirmed the existence of Deity — of an Infinite Power of which the cosmic universe, with its multiform phenomena ever in a process of transformation in conformity to immutable law, is a positive manifestation. The doctrine further affirmed that, owing to the subjective, conditioned nature of the human mind, it was limited in knowledge to its experience with cosmic phenomena, and could never rise to a knowledge of what transcends phenomena — in other words, to a positive knowledge of the Infinite Power from which all things proceed.

Fiske found this conception of Deity vigorously opposed by an anthropomorphic conception which affirmed a knowable, personal God who was endowed with human characteristics; and who, in creating and sustaining the cosmic universe, worked after man's ways of willing and doing things. The question before him for exposition, therefore, was not as to the existence of an Infinite Power, the Source and Sustainer of all things, for the existence of this Power was granted. But it became an inquiry which took this alternative form: Is this

The Nature of Deity

Infinite Power a limited, personal God possessed of a quasi-human consciousness, from whose quasi-human volitions have originated the laws of the cosmic universe, and to whose quasi-human contrivances are due the manifold harmonies observed in the universe? Or, Is this Infinite Power a Being, transcending in the nature of His existence the comprehension of the human mind, and of whom the phenomena of the cosmic universe constitute a knowable revelation?

Fiske discussed the issue at much length under the titles of "Anthropomorphic Theism" and "Cosmic Theism." The discussion was carried on in fine philosophic temper and is marked by several passages of rare beauty of literary form: indeed, in his presentation of the higher truths involved in his theme, his style of setting forth the truth becomes truly grand.

After a wide survey of the bases of anthropomorphic theism on the one hand, and an analysis of the positive truths derived from cosmic phenomena in behalf of cosmic theism on the other hand, he reached a conclusion in favor of the latter, a conclusion he formulated in the following terms:

"There exists a Power, to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, of which all phenomena, as presented in consciousness, are manifestations, but which we can know only through these manifestations."

Thus, from a wide survey of our knowledge of cosmic phenomena, Fiske came to the conclusion

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that the theistic implications of the doctrine of Evolution yielded far higher and purer conceptions of Deity than obtains in any other philosophic or religious system of thought. As between anthropomorphic theism and cosmic theism, he stated the issue in the following form:—

“Theologically phrased, the question is whether the creature is to be taken as a measure of the Creator. Scientifically phrased, the question is whether the highest form of Being as yet suggested to one petty race of creatures by its ephemeral experience of what is going on in one tiny corner of the universe, is necessarily to be taken as the equivalent of that absolutely highest form of Being in which all the possibilities of existence are alike comprehended.”

Matter and spirit. Fiske approached the consideration of these twin subjects by passing in review the arguments of the materialist thinkers who maintain that psychical phenomena are but products of antecedent physical phenomena. From this inquiry he reached the following as the conclusions of science:—

“The most that psychology, working with the aid of physiology, has thus far achieved, has been to show that within the limits of our experience, there is *invariable concomitance* between psychical phenomena and the phenomena of nervous action; and this, as we have seen, is but the elaborate analytic statement of a plain truth, which is asserted alike by philosophers of every school, and by the

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common-sense of every human being, — namely, that from birth until death there is no manifestation of Mind except in association with Body. But beyond this it is quite clear that objective psychology can never go. . . . The latest results of scientific inquiry, whether in the region of objective psychology or in that of molecular physics, leave the gulf between mind and matter quite as wide as it was judged to be in the time of Descartes. It still remains as true as then, that between that of which the differential attribute is Thought and that of which the differential attribute is Extension, there can be nothing like identity or similarity.”

How, then, from the viewpoint of Evolution is the great gulf between physical and psychical phenomena, between matter and mind, to be bridged so as to yield a unified cosmic universe?

Spencer's discussion of this vital point has been vigorously attacked, and it must be admitted that regarding it he has left himself in doubt. It is true that in many places in his writings he strongly emphasizes the distinction and incompatibility between the two orders of phenomena; yet, in the last edition of his “First Principles,” published in 1900, in Section 71, on the “Transformation of Forces,” he reviews the whole question and closes the discussion thus: —

“Though the facts oblige us to say that physical and psychical actions are correlated, and in a certain indirect way quantitatively correlated so as to suggest transformation, yet how the material

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affects the mental and how the mental affects the material are mysteries which it is impossible to fathom. But they are not profounder mysteries than the transformation of the physical forces into one another. They are not more completely beyond our comprehension than the natures of mind and matter. They have simply the same insolubility as all other ultimate questions. We can learn nothing more than that here is one of the uniformities in the order of phenomena."

In 1876 Professor Harald Höffding, of Copenhagen, called Spencer's attention to certain inconsistencies in his treatment of the metamorphosis which holds between the physical and mental forces in his "First Principles" and in his "Psychology." Spencer acknowledged the inconsistencies, and then attempted an elaborate explanation of how the metamorphosis might take place — an explanation which Professor Höffding admits he did not find "quite clear."¹

Fiske's procedure on coming to this vital point was quite different. He saw very clearly the antithetical natures of the two orders of phenomena and their harmonious parallelism or union in the human organism, and that this union did not involve any interchange of their intrinsic properties: that the psychical phenomena, while concomitant with physical phenomena, and in many respects conditioned by the latter, always remained entirely dis-

¹ David Duncan, LL.D., *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, p. 178.

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tinct from the latter. He also found that science had no explanation for this harmonious interplay between these two antithetical orders of phenomena; at best it could only suggest the possibility that in some unknown way psychical phenomena might be potential in physical phenomena.

Fiske, however, was not content to leave the question in this nebulous state. Here was a vast volume of psychical phenomena with its culmination in the human mind, without any kinship, without any causative principle back of it in the cosmic universe. He felt that there must be some rational explanation of this apparent disharmony in the phenomena of the cosmic universe. Accordingly, he resolutely pushed his thought to the outermost verge of admissible speculation, in an inquiry into the nature of that inscrutable existence of which the universe of phenomena is the multi-form expression, and found that its intimate essence might conceivably be identifiable with the intimate essence of what we know as mind; thus giving to psychical phenomena a causal basis in the cosmic universe coextensive with physical phenomena, as well as an order of development through conscious feeling, with its culmination in rational mind; which give to its phenomena a qualitative character widely different from, as well as far superior to, physical phenomena.

And so, from his consideration of matter and spirit as manifested in physical and psychical

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phenomena, Fiske was led to the conclusion that upon no imaginable hypothesis of Evolution could mind be regarded as a product of matter, and that the existence of psychical energy distinct from physical energy implies as its antecedent source something quasi-psychical in the constitution of things; in other words, that there exists :—

“A form of Being which can neither be assimilated to humanity, nor to any lower type of existence. We have no alternative, therefore, but to regard it as higher than humanity ‘even as the heavens are higher than the earth.’ The time is surely coming when the slowness of men in accepting such a conclusion will be marvelled at, and when the very inadequacy of human language to express Divinity will be regarded as a reason for deeper faith and more solemn adoration.”

In the years to come, we are to see Fiske interpreting the highest phases of psychical phenomena in the light of the doctrine of Evolution based upon the conception of an Infinite quasi-psychical Power from whom all things proceed.

Religion as affected by the doctrine of Evolution. In his exposition of “Cosmic Philosophy based on the Doctrine of Evolution,” Fiske could not let pass the consideration of its effect upon religion: that is, upon man’s religious faith and conduct. Naturally this question arose: Does the enlargement of the conception of Deity, as implied in cosmic theism, involve any lowering of character in the

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elements of religious faith; or any radical alteration of the fundamental principles of ethical conduct in which religion viewed practically consists? In other words, what concerns us to know is, whether the substitution of scientific for theologic symbols involves any lowering of values in the grand equation between religious beliefs and ethical conduct.

Fiske asserts that no such change is involved in the substitution: that cosmic theism implies higher religious and ethical ideals than were given by theology. And he maintained, in a chapter entitled "Religion as Adjustment," that although the Evolutionist might and does throw overboard much of the semi-barbaric mythology in which Christianity has been symbolized, he nevertheless holds firmly to the religious and ethical elements for which Christianity is chiefly valued even by those who retain all its mythological features.

As against the allegation that cosmic theism with its Unknowable Deity gave no tangible basis for religious faith he says: —

"At this stage of our exposition, it is enough to suggest the fallaciousness of such argumentation, without characterizing it in detail. It is enough to remind the reader that Deity is unknowable just in so far as it is not manifested to consciousness through the phenomenal world, — knowable just in so far as it is thus manifested; unknowable in so far as infinite and absolute, — knowable in the order of its phenomenal manifestations; knowable, in a symbolic way, as the Power which is disclosed

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in every throb of the mighty rhythmic life of the universe; knowable as the eternal source of a moral law which is implicated with each action of our lives, and in obedience to which lies our only guaranty of the happiness which is incorruptible, and which neither inevitable misfortune, nor unmerited obloquy can take away. Thus, though we may not by searching find out God, though we may not compass infinitude or attain to absolute knowledge, we may at least know all that it concerns us to know as intelligent and responsible beings. They who seek to know more than this, to transcend the conditions under which alone is knowledge possible, are, in Goethe's profound language, as wise as little children who, when they have looked into a mirror, turn it around to see what is behind it."

As to the ethical bearings of the new doctrine, Fiske was no less emphatic in claiming for it the highest ideals of righteous conduct. He says: —

"The seeking after righteousness is characteristic of the modern follower of science quite as much as it was characteristic of the mediæval saint; save that while the latter symbolized his yearning as a desire to become like his highest concrete conception of human excellence, ideally embodied in Christ, the former no longer employs any such anthropomorphic symbol, but formulates his feeling in scientific phrase as the persistent desire to live rightly or in entire conformity to the requirements of nature—as Goethe expresses it: —

"*Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren, resolut zu leben.*"

In the doctrine of Evolution, therefore, Fiske found the theistic and ethical elements characteristic of all

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religions not only blended, but also given a rational origin, and a vastly more rational interpretation than obtains in any particular religious system.

The philosophic implications of the Doctrine of Evolution. And now, having given an outline sketch of a system of Cosmic Philosophy based on the affirmation of the existence of an Infinite Power transcending the comprehension of the human mind as the Source and Sustainer of all things, and of whom the cosmic universe is an ever-developing manifestation, Fiske, in closing, turned to the consideration of what must be the critical attitude of this order of philosophic thinking upon past and present religious beliefs and social institutions. In other words, whether the critical temper of this evolutionary form of philosophic thinking tends towards the subversion, or towards the conservation and further development of that complex aggregate of beliefs and ordinances which make up civilization: the social order amid which we live.

In entering upon this phase of the discussion, he drew attention to the philosophic contrasts that naturally flow from what he termed the "statical" and the "dynamical" habits of thinking. A statical view of things he defined as one which is adjusted solely or chiefly to relations existing in the immediate environment of the thinker. He says:—

"The fundamental doctrine of the philosophy which is determined by this statical habit of interpreting phenomena is the Doctrine of Creation.

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The world is supposed to have been suddenly brought into existence at some assignable epoch, since which time it has remained substantially unaltered. Existing races of sentient creatures are held to have been created by a miraculous fiat in accordance with sundry types which, as representing unchangeable ideas in the Divine Mind, can never be altered by physical circumstances. The social institutions also, amid which the particular statical theory originates are either referred back to the foundation of the world, as is the case in early and barbaric mythologies; or else, as is the case with modern uneducated Christians, they are supposed to have been introduced by miracle at a definite era of history. In similar wise the existing order of things is legitimately to endure until abruptly terminated by the direct intervention of an extra-cosmic Power endowed with the anthropomorphic attributes of cherishing intentions and of acting out its good pleasure. . . . Likewise the social institutions and the religious beliefs now existing by express divine sanction, must remain essentially unaltered under penalty of divine wrath as manifested in the infliction upon society of the evils of atheism and anarchy. Hence, as the Doctrine of Creation is itself held to be one of these divinely sanctioned religious beliefs, the scientific tendency to supersede this doctrine by the conception of God as manifested not in spasmodic acts of miracle, but in the orderly evolution of things, is stigmatized as an atheistical tendency, and the upholders of the new view are naturally enough accredited with a desire to subvert the foundations of religion and of good conduct."

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In opposition to this statical or fixed way of viewing things, an order of thought inherited from a primitive period of culture, Fiske placed what he termed a higher, a dynamical viewpoint, one furnished by looking at the cosmic universe as a unity, with all its multiform phenomena ever in a process of development, in a definite and irreversible order of sequence, and all, the manifestation of an Infinite Power transcending the comprehension of the human mind.

That this dynamical or evolutionary way of viewing things should not have been acquired, save by two or three prescient minds, previous to the last century, was not surprising to Fiske, inasmuch as not until the middle period of the last century was scientific knowledge of the interrelatedness of cosmic forces sufficiently developed to yield a conception of the existence of a persistent energy which held the phenomena of the whole universe in subjection to immutable law. With the establishment of the conservation of energy, however, as an ultimate cosmic truth, — with its necessary corollary, that all existing phenomena are the direct products of preceding phenomena, — a new era was opened in human thinking. It became evident that the whole statical theory of special creations, with their permanence of character, — especially as applied to human history, — was invalidated, and must inevitably be swept away by advancing knowledge of cosmic phenomena; which, with every advance,

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confirmed with ever-increasing emphasis the truth of the dynamical or evolutionary theory of things. Thus, to Fiske's mind, this evolutionary theory of the origin of things, in its universality and its immutability as revealed by science, appeared as a process whereby the existence of Deity was ever being unveiled to the human mind.

The acceptance of this evolutionary view of things, Fiske believed would in the future, with the spread of scientific knowledge, become common among men, leading to higher ideals of ethical conduct on the one hand, and to purer and nobler conceptions of Deity on the other hand. Thus would there always be a place for religion: for the inculcation of the ethical principles in conduct which make for the fulness of life here and now, and for the direction of men's thoughts reverently to that form of existence which, in the nature of things, must transcend cosmic existence — of which cosmic existence is but an adumbration.

This evolutionary way of viewing things, moreover, tended to the utmost catholicity of thought, to the evident tolerance of opposing opinions on the subject of politics, religion, science, or philosophy. According to the doctrine of Evolution every theory regarding fundamental questions of thought or conduct was the result of antecedent causes, was the outgrowth of preëxisting conditions, and was to be set aside or superseded only by the substitution of something better: that is, something

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better adapted to the conditions. Hence, believing that all institutions and orders of thought stood each for some phase of psychical development, some truth in the evolution of civilized humanity, Fiske would not have Cosmic Philosophy assume an iconoclastic attitude towards any established institution or order of thought; rather, that its attitude should be one of rational toleration, accompanied by well-directed efforts clearly to set forth the conceptions of ultimate truths embodied in this philosophy, — truths having a direct bearing upon the well-being of mankind, — leaving these truths to make their way in the minds and in the conduct of men. Thus, in Fiske's mind Cosmic Philosophy was emphatically divorced from all forms of atheism on the one hand, and from all forms of Jacobinism or anarchy on the other hand.

Animated with this broad spirit of toleration, Fiske took much pains, in closing, to set forth the attitude of Cosmic Philosophy towards the Christian religion. In the two fundamental theorems underlying both Christianity and Cosmic Philosophy, — their theistic and their ethical theorems, — he found much in common. In their ethical codes, particularly, he found the ethical principles enjoined by each for the conduct or fulness of life identical in character, although expressed by different verbal symbols; while in their theistic affirmations, the difference between them consisted mainly in their presentation of the character of

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Deity: Christianity presenting Deity as of a limited, knowable, anthropomorphic character — a character born of ancient mythology; while Cosmic Philosophy presented Deity as a form of Being transcending the comprehension of the human mind, and knowable only through the manifestations of its existence in cosmic phenomena. Regarding this difference between the two in their theistic theorems, Cosmic Philosophy could affirm that as science extended the boundaries of positive knowledge of the cosmic universe and man's place in it, *pari passu* was the conception of Deity presented by Christianity ever in a process of purification, whereby its anthropomorphic character was being sloughed off, and whereby the conception itself was being transformed into the recognition of a form of Being transcending all materiality.

Thus, with the progress of scientific knowledge, Fiske believed, would the theistic theorems of the two orders of thought be brought into complete harmony, through the recognition by each as ultimate truth the existence of a form of Being not measurable by human standards; and to which all cosmic phenomena, including man with his rational mind, are relative. In this union science will ever have its vocation in describing phenomena in their inter-relatedness, their coexistences, their sequences; while religion will ever have its place in interpreting these phenomena in their order, their unity, their persistence, as relative to, and as adumbrations of,

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the unknown Reality or Infinite Power which transcends them all.

Fiske closed his work with the following tolerant and reverent line of thought: —

“The iconoclast, who has the welfare of mankind nearest his heart, will probably blame us as too conservative, — as lacking in robust and wholesome aggressiveness. And he will perhaps find fault with us for respecting prejudices which he thinks ought to be shocked. Our reply must be that it is not by wounding prejudices that the cause of truth is most efficiently served. Men do not give up their false or inadequate beliefs by hearing them scoffed at or harshly criticised: they give them up only when they have been taught truths with which the false or inadequate beliefs are incompatible. The object of the scientific philosopher, therefore, will be to organize science and extend the boundaries of knowledge. . . . It is not for us, creatures of a day that we are, and seeing but a little way into a limited portion of nature, to say dictatorially, before patient examination, that we will not have this or that doctrine as part of our philosophic creed. We must feel our way as best we can, gather with unremitting toil what facts lie within our reach, and gratefully accept such conclusions as can honestly and by due process of inference and verification be obtained for our guidance. We are not the autocrats, but the servants and interpreters of Nature; and we must interpret her as she is, — not as we would like her to be. That harmony which we hope eventually to see established between our knowledge and our aspirations, is not to be realized by the timidity which

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shrinks from logically following out either of two apparently conflicting lines of thought — as in the question of matter and spirit — but by the fearlessness which pushes each to its inevitable conclusion. Only when this is recognized will the long and mistaken warfare between Science and Religion be exchanged for an intelligent and enduring alliance. Only then will the two knights of the fable finally throw down their weapons, on discovering that the causes for which they have so long been waging battle are in reality one and the same eternal cause, — the cause of truth, of goodness and of beauty; ‘the glory of God and the relief of man’s estate.’”

CHAPTER XXI

EFFECT OF THE DISCUSSION UPON THE MIND OF FISKE — LEADS TO GREAT COMPOSURE OF THOUGHT IN VIEWING HUMAN LIFE IN ITS SOCIOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS — HOW THE “COSMIC PHILOSOPHY” WAS RECEIVED — HOSTILE CRITICISMS — LETTERS FROM SPENCER AND DARWIN

1874

THE rounding-out of the doctrine of Evolution into a philosophic system with its transcendental implications had a very salutary effect upon the mind of Fiske. By this philosophic generalization the phenomena of the whole cosmic universe were brought into order and unity as a manifestation of an Infinite Unknowable Power which was working out, through a universal dynamic principle underlying all objective and subjective phenomena, a mighty teleological purpose, a purpose more ennobling than anything born of dogmatic theology or idealistic philosophy. This conclusion brought Fiske great composure of mind as he looked out upon the ever-seething phenomena of human life in its sociological, its political, and its religious aspects.

In sociology, viewed in its broad relations, he saw the persistence of a fundamental ethical principle — “the continuous weakening of selfishness and the strengthening of sympathy”: in other

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words, the "gradual supplanting of egoism by altruism." Politically he saw the ethical principle in sociology slowly but surely making itself manifest in the steady growth of remedial legislation, of equity jurisprudence, and in international comity. In religion, amidst all the animosities of antagonistic beliefs, the bigotry and strife of creeds, he saw a steady growth of toleration, if not progress towards ultimate coöperation in the promulgation of religious truth — this religious liberalism arising from two factors, a higher conception of the Infinite Power, the Source and Sustainer of all things, flowing from the revelations of science; a clearer conception of the brotherhood of man, attested as it was by the economical results of ethical relations.

Fiske contemplated with great hopefulness the effect of the Evolutionary Philosophy upon the Christian religion — the religion which he regarded as the highest organized expression yet given of the religious nature of man. This religion, while "sicklied o'er" in his mind with much of man's anthropomorphic mythology, embodied in its two fundamental doctrines, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, two great interrelated cosmic truths — the existence of righteousness as an active principle in the Infinite Power or Reality back of the cosmos, and its correlative manifestation in the altruistic consciousness of man. He conceded that on these two fundamental theorems a form of existence transcending present known existence might be as-

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serted rationally as a matter of religious faith, as a correlative to present existence.

It was Fiske's conclusion from his survey of modern religious thought that the Christian religion was steadily undergoing a purification through scientific criticism whereby it would ultimately be stripped of its anthropomorphic and much of its ecclesiastical accretions, and brought down to the simple yet comprehensive formula of its Founder: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self." Compliance with this injunction he regarded as an essential condition for the enjoyment of the fulness of life. At the same time he found an authority for it higher than that of the "Law and the Prophets," an authority far exceeding that of Christ; he found it a command writ in all the objective phenomena of the cosmic universe, with its spirit persistently welling up in the ever-widening consciousness of man.

At this period Fiske's mind was full of these great themes, and he talked freely concerning them. As I recall our many conversations regarding the effect of the doctrine of Evolution on current methods of scientific and religious thinking, there comes back to me the remembrance of his serenely optimistic belief, that as the new doctrine spread, atheism and materialism would be wholly discredited, while Christianity would inevitably

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be metamorphosed into a more rational form of religious faith. With this remembrance there comes also the distinct recollection of a remarkably impressive close that he gave to a Sunday discourse delivered, I think, before the Free Religious Association, in Boston. He had been speaking — mainly *extempore* — on Evolution with its philosophic implications, and he closed substantially as follows: —

“If the foregoing presentation of the doctrine of Evolution be accepted, atheism and materialism are forever discredited; while certain dogmas of the Christian religion, such as a personal triune God, special miraculous creations, the fall of man, and his redemption through Christ, a materialistic Heaven and Hell, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, fall away, and become to the philosophic thinker outgrown symbols of thought, marking man’s religious progress, through his ever-advancing knowledge of cosmic phenomena, from a grossly anthropomorphic conception of a personal Creator working after man’s ways, to the conception of the Evolutionary Theist, who, in the presence of the profound cosmic mystery that surrounds him, acknowledges an Infinite and Eternal Power as the Source and Sustainer of it all; and who, however much he may stumble in his saying of it, reverently affirms that the everlasting Source of all cosmic phenomena can be none other than an Infinite Power that makes for righteousness; that finite man cannot by searching find out this Infinite Power, yet should he put his trust in Him, holding fast to the belief that this Infinite Power will not leave him to be confounded at the end.”

Evolution and Religion

The reception given to Fiske's "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy" marks the seething condition of the philosophico-religious mind on the great problems of existence forty years ago. A philosophy which presented the cosmic universe as a multiform complex of phenomena, inconceivable in its vastness, and ever in a process of orderly development into higher forms of phenomenal manifestation in conformity to immutable law; a philosophy which presented conscious man, with his civilizations, as an evolutionary outcome of this ceaseless cosmic activity; a philosophy which affirmed that this vast cosmic universe must have had an antecedent Cause transcending itself, a Cause which must ever, in the nature of its existence, be beyond the comprehension of the conditioned cosmic mind of man; a philosophy which further affirmed that this Ultimate Cause could be known only as it is revealed in the ever-developing phenomena of the cosmic universe, was so radically opposed to the metaphysico-theologic and to the atheistico-materialistic methods of philosophizing, that its favorable consideration could not be expected from critics belonging to either the metaphysical or the atheistical orders of thought.

By the metaphysico-theologic critics, the work was summarily condemned *in toto*. The doctrine of Evolution was alleged by them to be only a fresh form of scientific infidelity, only another attempt to substitute, for the ultimate truths assured by Divine

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revelation, some vague speculations regarding the cosmic universe — including man, his origin and destiny — derived from man's cosmic experience. The irrational and virulent character of this criticism was to be expected. Christian thinkers, who, through all their intellectual development, had accepted the metaphysical dogmas as the embodiment of all ultimate truth, could not look upon the new doctrine with any favor. In fact, they could only regard the work as a direct attack upon the very foundations of revealed truth; and the more conclusively its general propositions were sustained, the more emphatically should the whole work be condemned.

It should also be noted that the years between 1870 and 1880 comprised the period of an intensely active discussion over the origin of man with his rational mind which flowed from the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" as well as from a number of palæontological discoveries which attested the great antiquity of primitive man with positive simian characteristics. These discoveries were very impartially set forth by Sir Charles Lyell in his great work on the "Antiquity of Man," and by Darwin in his still more important work on the "Descent of Man" from an animal ancestry. To these works should be added the results of the researches of a group of scientific sociologists — Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Edward B. Tylor, John F. McLennan, Sir John Lubbock, Lewis H. Morgan,

Hostile Criticism

and others — into the origins of civilized society, researches by which it was conclusively shown that the occupations, the customs, the institutions of civilized life had all been developed through experience out of the life or habits of primitive man. In this discussion the theologians had no positive scientific verifications whatsoever in support of their dogmatic affirmations of man's special creation and his fall. Consequently, as against a philosophic system which gave to man a verified evolutionary origin through an ascent from an animal ancestry, they could only oppose an appeal to ignorance and prejudice by claiming a divinely revealed knowledge of his special creation and his fall, and by ridiculous presentations of his descent from a monkey.

It is not worth while now to give much attention to such criticism. It has already been largely outgrown. Two examples of it will suffice. The first is from "The New Englander," one of the leading organs of theologico-philosophic thought in America. In a strongly condemnatory review of Fiske's "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," we find the following contemptuous characterization of it, which was evidently intended as a bit of superior sarcasm, but which is in reality an attempted burlesque of some of the profoundest truths of the cosmic universe: —

"In the continuous redistribution of matter and motion there has at last been evolved, by integration of the homogeneous, the American apostle of the

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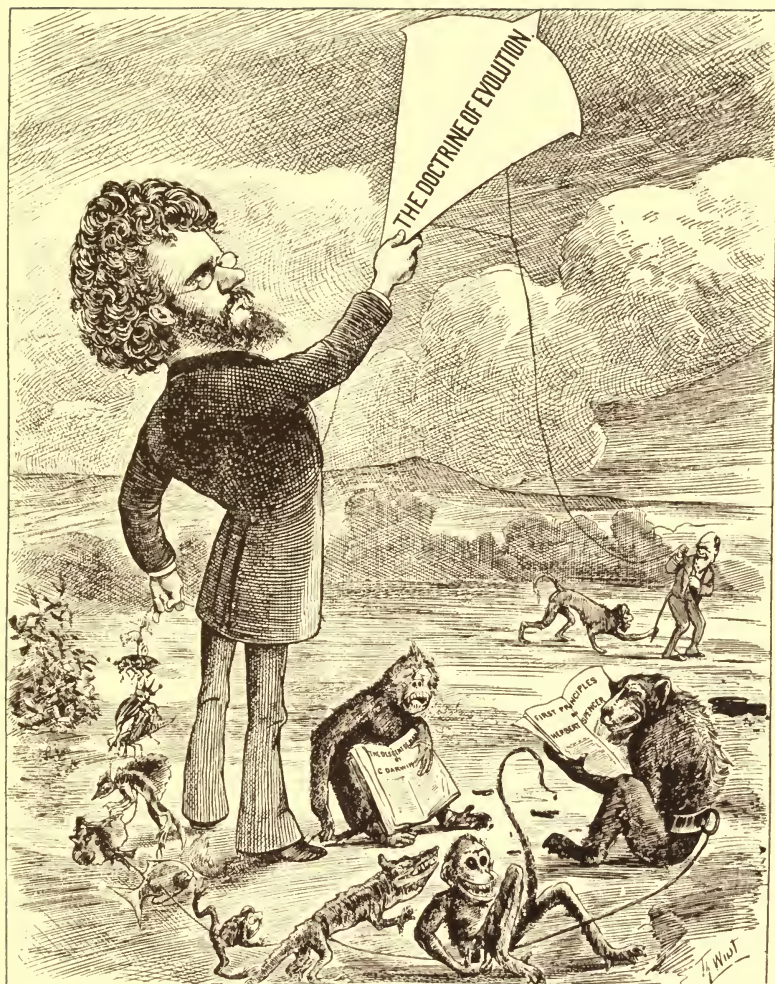
truth hitherto hidden from the eyes of men. A series of states of consciousness (plus a something), resident in Cambridge, has worked over a certain amount of sunshine, and has communicated it to other possibly existing series of states of consciousness in the shape of a book entitled 'Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy.'"

The second example is from "The Congregationalist," the organ of the American Congregationalists. Under the title of "Great is Dynamis, and John Fiske is its Prophet," this journal gave a sneering sort of summary of some of the points in Fiske's work. The general tone of the article is indicated by the closing paragraph: —

"It is to be regretted that Mr. Fiske cannot eliminate from his writings the anthropomorphism of abuse and sneers and contempt for theologians and penny-a-liners and all others who do not worship 'this Wondrous Dynamis.' His criticism of Dr. Büchner is not wholly inapplicable to himself — 'a writer whose pages are too often deformed with brutalities of expression for which no atonement is made in the shape of original or valuable thought.'"

Rarely has a philosophic work been issued so free from disparaging epithets applied to opponents as is Fiske's "Cosmic Philosophy."

The next example is a graphic illustration of the prevailing theologic thought of the time regarding the doctrine of Evolution. The "New York Daily Graphic," in its issue of September 12, 1874, pub-



"PROFESSOR JOHN FISKE FLIES THE EVOLUTION KITE IN AMERICA"
(Cartoon in the *New York Daily Graphic*, September 12, 1874)

Hostile Criticism

lished a full-page cartoon of which the illustration opposite the preceding page is a photographic reproduction.¹

There has been a marked advance in the appreciation of the intellectual, moral, and religious truths involved in the doctrine of Evolution since the time, some forty years ago, when such a cartoon as this, wherein Spencer and Darwin are depicted as still enveloped in their simian ancestry, could be regarded by intelligent people as a clever burlesque of a manifest absurdity.

But from independent critics in the United States and Great Britain, critics accustomed to philosophic thinking, the work received much considerate attention as an important setting-forth of the philosophic implications arising from the recent truths of science, with their bearing upon the religious faith, and also upon the political and social well-being of mankind; and the work has had a wide influence in shaping subsequent thought upon philosophic, religious, and social questions.

Among the many personal encomiums Fiske received for the work, two were indeed memorable

¹ Fiske was greatly impressed by this cartoon, and he had it framed and gave it a conspicuous place in his library. It remains with his library still. To his friends, who objected to its vulgarity in so degrading Spencer and Darwin, Fiske's ready response was: "Yes, but remember it is a faithful presentation of the attitude of the religious mind generally towards the doctrine of Evolution in 1874-1875. I like to keep this design before me as a sort of theological barometer — objections to it show how rapidly the religious mind is moving towards the great truths of Cosmic Evolution."

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and should be given a place here: one was from Herbert Spencer, and the other was from Charles Darwin. Spencer wrote as follows:—

38 QUEEN'S GARDENS,
BAYSWATER, W. LONDON,
11 December, 1874.

My dear Fiske:—

Enclosed I send the only two reviews¹ of your work which have appeared — or which I have yet seen. On the whole, they are I think very favorable; containing, indeed, along with their applause, not more in the way of fault-finding than every critic feels bound to utter. I will send you further notices from time to time as I meet with them.

As yet, I have myself read but parts of the first volume. I am so continually hindered by multitudinous distractions and my small reading power proves so inadequate for getting up the matter bearing on my immediate work, that I have an increasing difficulty in getting any knowledge of the books I receive; even when they concern me very nearly, critically or otherwise.

What I have read, however, which has been chiefly in the new parts, has pleased me greatly. I am very glad you have so fully and clearly contrasted a system which constitutes an organon, with a system which constitutes a cosmology. The distinction, deep as it is, is one which those who are prepossessed by the philosophy of Comte seem to

¹ Reviews in the *London Daily News* and in the *London Examiner*; the latter written by James Sully, the eminent psychologist.

Frederick Pollock, author of a *Life of Spinoza* and a writer on philosophic subjects, gave a very appreciative review of the work in the *Fortnightly Review*.

Letter from Spencer

have great difficulty in recognizing. Lewes, for example, failed entirely to perceive it, at the time we had a polemic on the matter. Hence, I rejoice that you have brought out the contrast so distinctly.

I suppose I shall find matter of much interest to me in the sociological division. But comments on this must stand over till some future letter.

The progress of things is amazingly rapid. The public mind is everywhere being ploughed up by all kinds of disturbing forces and prepared for the reception of rational ideas. Indeed, the process of sowing needs to be pushed on actively, lest a crop of weeds should take possession of the soil left vacant after the rooting-up of superstitions.

I shall be glad to hear from you: learning how you are after settling down to your work again and what reception your book meets with in the United States.

Very sincerely yours,
HERBERT SPENCER.

This letter, while exceedingly friendly in character and highly appreciative of Fiske's work, shows Spencer's adroit avoidance of committing himself directly to the spiritual and religious implications of Fiske's Evolutionary argument. We have previously had occasion to note a similar avoidance on this point,¹ and we shall have occasion to note another later on.

But Darwin's tribute was without any reservation whatever; and it was given in such a simple, modest way as to reflect its entire sincerity. Fiske

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 388.

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found Darwin's judgment of his work alone enough to cheer his mind against all adverse criticism. It was as follows: —

DOWN, *December 8, 1874.*

My dear Sir: —

You must allow me to thank you for the very great interest with which I have at last slowly read the whole of your work. I have long wished to know something about the views of the many great men whose doctrines you give. With the exception of special points, I did not even understand H. Spencer's general doctrine, for his style is too hard work for me. I never in my life read so lucid an expositor (and therefore thinker) as you are; and I think that I understand nearly the whole — perhaps less clearly about Cosmic Theism and Causation than other parts. It is hopeless to attempt out of so much to specify what has interested me most, and probably you would not care to hear. I wish some chemist would attempt to ascertain the result of the cooling of heated gases of the proper kinds in relation to your hypothesis of the origin of living matter. It pleased me to find that here and there I had arrived from my own crude thoughts at some of the same conclusions with you; though I could seldom or never have given my reasons for such conclusions. I find that my mind is so fixed by the inductive method that I cannot appreciate deductive reasoning: I must begin with a good body of facts and not from a principle (in which I always suspect some fallacy) and then as much deduction as you please.

This may be very narrow-minded; but the result is that such parts of H. Spencer as I have read with

Letter from Darwin

care impress my mind with the idea of his inexhaustible wealth of suggestion, but never convince me; and so I find it with some others. I believe the cause to lie in the frequency with which I have found first-formed theories to be erroneous.

I thank you for the honourable mention which you make of my works. Parts of the "Descent of Man" must have appeared laughably weak to you; nevertheless, I have sent you a new edition just published.

Thanking you for the profound interest, and profit, with which I have read your work,

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours very faithfully,

CH. DARWIN.

JOHN FISKE, ESQ^r,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U.S.A.

CHAPTER XXII

GROWING REPUTATION — RESUMES WORK IN HARVARD LIBRARY — RECONSTRUCTION OF LIBRARY BUILDING — PRACTICAL PROBLEMS — CATALOGUE OF SUMNER'S LIBRARY — HIGHLY COMPLIMENTED — OUT OF PLACE IN THE LIBRARY — AMERICAN HISTORY A SUBJECT FOR EXPOSITION — CONSULTS FRIENDS — RESIGNS FROM HARVARD LIBRARY

1874-1879

RETURNING to our narrative of the life of Fiske after his return from Europe in June, 1874, we find that the publication of his "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy" greatly heightened his reputation in the United States as a philosophic thinker, while in England it gave him a recognized position, not only as an expositor of, but also as a contributor to, the doctrine of Evolution. In fact, he was very generally credited not only with having completely cleared the doctrine of all affiliations with the Positive Philosophy of Comte; but also with having set forth its ethical and religious implications, something which Spencer had not yet done. This at least can be said: that in America, while Spencer was substantially credited with the authorship of the theory of Evolution, Fiske was credited with having given an interpretation to the theory more in consonance with the religious convictions of the Christian world than Spencer had done — more than Spencer, by the gen-

Growing Reputation

eral attitude of his thought, seemed inclined to admit. From this time on, therefore, we are to see Fiske credited as being the chief representative in America of the Evolution doctrine. In the years to come we shall see him, as occasions arise, drawing out from the armory of his "Cosmic Philosophy" several philosophic arguments with which to do effective battle for an "Unseen World" transcending this world of physical phenomena; for a "Destiny of Man" transcending his finite existence; for an "Idea of God" transcending the affirmations of Christian theology, and for "The Everlasting Reality of Religion" as a Divine truth writ in the very consciousness of man himself, and not derived from the religious experience of any particular race or people.

After his return from Europe, however, Fiske found himself obliged to give the subject of philosophy a place of secondary importance in his practical life. His position in the Harvard Library was no sinecure. He was in full charge, and on his return the subject classification and cataloguing of books and pamphlets was resumed, the supervision of which, together with the oversight of the regular routine work of the library, left him but very little time for philosophic thinking or for literary work of any kind. This fact is clearly apparent. He was never idle. The nature of his mind involved its constant activity on some theme or other — practical or speculative. He was in the library nearly

John Fiske

seven years, some of the best years of his life for literary production, — and yet he produced during this period only about a dozen magazine articles and lectures; and these were written mostly during his vacations.

With all his scholarly tendencies and tastes, there was an element in his intellectual make-up which enabled him to focus his mind upon problems of practical life with great effectiveness, and the library presented a succession of such problems. One instance of this nature in his library experience is particularly worthy of note. In 1876 the college was reconstructing its library building, — Gore Hall, — and it was of vital importance that the library should be kept in efficient working order while the reconstruction was going on. How this could be done was a problem of a very serious nature. Fiske's statement of the problem and his solution of it are given in a letter to his mother under date of June 2, 1876: —

“Our new Library transept is rising from the ground. By July 1st our old east transept is to be torn down to make way for the new huge transept. Said east transept contains forty thousand volumes which of course must be moved. There is no room for anything in the body of the building. Some twenty thousand volumes can be accommodated in a room in Boylston Hall; the other twenty thousand must be stored, deuce knows how, in our present building. But now! these forty thousand volumes in the transept are among our most valuable books,



CORE HALL

Reconstruction of Library

which it won't do to risk in Boylston Hall, which is 'Joby Cooke's' chemical building, and by no means fireproof. Therefore twenty thousand other volumes less valuable must go to Boylston Hall, and these more valuable volumes must take their places. So at least sixty thousand volumes have got to be shifted in four weeks. Again, this confusion is to last for more than a year, until our huge new transept is ready for occupancy. The public want their books, and we don't want to have a third of the Library useless. But the catalogues indicate the places where the books stand to-day, and to remark it would be a fearful job. It would take a third of my cataloguing force, and *they* could n't do it in less than six months. And all this labor would be unprofitably spent, because when the building is finished there will be a general change of plans, and then re-marking will have to be done in earnest. Therefore, the problem is no less than this: to shift sixty thousand volumes in four weeks without impairing the efficiency of the existing numbers, which are to send one to the new place of the book just as readily as to the old place; to keep the whole Library available to the public all the while; and carry only poor books away to Boylston Hall, while keeping the valuable ones in the Library building. And all this must be done without altering a single shelf-mark on the catalogue, or calling off *any* of my assistants who are cataloguing.

"What do you say to that for a practical problem? It has worried me for a good while vaguely, and for a week definitely; and to-day, I have solved the whole thing *triumphantly!* It can be done, and

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is to be done. All these books are to be shifted by July 1st without closing the Library, or interfering with the taking-out of books for one day, and without hampering the cataloguers in any way. And besides this, two hundred thousand pamphlets are to be moved with like placidity. I feel very grand at this issue of things. By the time I had got the plan three fourths unfolded, President Eliot said, 'Mr. Fiske, I have no more to say; go on, if you please, and carry out the work entirely at your own discretion.' I have plenary power to hire my workmen, and order everything; and am only too willing to be held responsible for a thing I have thought out so completely. Is n't it splendid? I think even outsiders, who don't begin to know what library-work is in all its countless details, will appreciate and admire the entire absence of annoyance which will characterize this revolution in the Library. I think the professors all look forward with *dread* to what they think must be a frightful muddle. I am in hopes that not one of 'em will be made to feel there is any muddle at all."

And a few days later, June 19, he writes: —

"The book-moving goes on with beautiful quiet and regularity. It begins to seem so simple that any jackass might have done it. We have carried about nineteen thousand five hundred volumes over to Boylston Hall, and filled all the shelf-room there, and have moved some fifteen thousand within the Library itself, besides shifting the entire stock of nearly two hundred thousand pamphlets. There has been no disturbance beyond the sound of the carpenters' hammers. Books have been taken

Catalogue of Sumner Collection

from, and returned to, the migratory divisions without perplexity. By July 1st, I think we shall be in equilibrium for the coming year."

The shifting of the books was done in less than a month. It was completed June 30, 1876.

Another incident connected with his library experience and outside his routine labors is worth noting. The Honorable Charles Sumner, at his death in 1874, left the library a collection of about 3750 books, among which were many rare and valuable ones in various languages, together with an exceedingly valuable collection of autographs. A catalogue of this collection was greatly desired, and Fiske, with two of his assistants, undertook the task. It was one which involved much laborious research on Fiske's part, and the result is another illustration of the facility with which he could bring his wide knowledge into practical service. The bibliographic knowledge shown in this catalogue is so extensive that I sought the opinion of Mr. Charles K. Bolton, the accomplished Librarian of the Boston Athenæum, as to its character. Mr. Bolton reports thus: —

"Mr. Fiske's catalogue of the Sumner Collection of books, in the Harvard Library, is a test of learning that few librarians are called to meet. It shows his familiarity with early calligraphy, with the art and history of printing, with binding and illustration. It covers also the difficulties involved in cataloguing and annotating rare books, and indirectly

John Fiske

proves that Mr. Fiske loved the text as well as the dress. The bibliographical notes, by their discrimination, variety, and detail, show both erudition and clarity of mind such as we now associate with German scholarship."

In a letter of Fiske to his mother describing his library duties, I find a paragraph of a personal nature which shows his deep filial affection for her, in that he wishes her to share in any honors that came to him. It is also of interest because of the glimpse it gives us of two distinguished mathematicians.

He writes: —

"Mousing in the galleries the other day to find some book, I stumbled on old Ben Peirce, in company with Dr. Sylvester, the greatest mathematician in the world, who has just been enticed over from London to the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore. Old Ben looked beaming, and said: "I want to make you acquainted with Mr. J. F., our Assistant Librarian — one of our greatest philosophical thinkers. He has a gift of straightening things out, and without any special study of astronomy, has done more for the nebular hypothesis than either you or I could have done.' I generally take such things with equanimity, but this time my cheeks felt a little warm; and such an unexpected remark from an old veteran in science, who does n't usually say much, and on whom I used to look with profound reverence, was rather overwhelming. We had a pleasant little chat. Sylvester is a stout Englishman of about sixty, with rosy cheeks, and long grey hair. The man whose 'Theory of In-

Out of Place in the Library

variants' is the greatest step taken in mathematics since Lagrange's 'Calculus of Variations,' and who, according to Herbert Spencer, deserves to rank just below Newton and Leibnitz as a mathematician — it seems odd to have him here in the flesh in Cambridge, and boarding at Miss Upham's! I am sorry to say that his achievements are all Greek to me, and I must take them on trust. I know precious little of post-Newtonian mathematics. If good old Ben had only had some gift of straightening things out (when I was in college) I might have known more."

But no one at this time appears to have regarded Fiske's position in the Harvard Library as his proper place, or as his destined field of work at the college. He did not himself so regard it; and in a letter to his mother of July, 1877, he writes that he hears "it is intended to put me into the History Department next summer when the term expires of the two young instructors who were appointed for a year on Adams's [Professor Henry Adams] resignation." And further, on the resignation of Dr. John Langdon Sibley, the nominal Librarian in the summer of 1877, Fiske saw the propriety of the appointment of Justin Winsor, the most eminent librarian in the country, to the position, although the appointment of Mr. Winsor superseded Fiske in the management of the library.

From the viewpoint of the rightful fitness of things, notwithstanding Fiske's varied and valuable services in the library when we consider his

John Fiske

exceptional endowments for philosophic thinking and for fine literary production, he was sadly out of place as a mere custodian of books in the service of others. Fiske never regarded the library as his proper place. He accepted the position there, and continued cheerfully in it for the time being, hoping that faithful service in this important but not wholly congenial field would bring him more favoring fortune in the way of an advancement to a full professorship at the college.

Fiske had many influential friends who wished to see him installed in the chair of History and who were active to this end. But neither Fiske himself nor his friends fully realized the strength of the opposition, in the government of the college, to his occupancy of any position of instruction whatever, an opposition which sprang from a strong dislike of his philosophical and religious views.

Thus, cheerfully accepting the order of work that fell to his hand, and patiently biding his time when the opposition to his advancement at the college should be allayed, Fiske's years of service in the Harvard Library slipped away, until, in the summer of 1878, he was brought to a distinct realization of the fact that his modest salary as Assistant Librarian was no adequate income for his support; and that his advancement to a professor's chair at the college was still a matter of much uncertainty; and that he was sadly misapplying the most productive years of his life.

Turns to American History

It was while reflecting upon these conditions, in the summer of 1878, that a proposition came to him to give a course of six lectures upon American history, the following spring, in the Old South Church in Boston, in aid of the project of saving this old church building, with its rich historic associations, from the ruthless hands of commercial philistinism. He accepted the call with great readiness, for it fell in with a cherished line of thought that was slumbering in his own mind.

In the preface to his subsequent work, "The American Revolution," he wrote thus:—

"In the course of my work as Assistant Librarian of Harvard University in 1872 and the next few years, I had occasion to overhaul what was called the 'American Room,' and to superintend, or revise, the cataloguing of some twenty thousand volumes and pamphlets relating to America. In the course of this work my attention was called more and more to sundry problems and speculations connected with the transplantation of European communities to American soil, their development under new conditions, and the effect of all this upon the general progress of civilization. The study of aboriginal America itself had already presented to me many other interesting problems in connection with primitive culture."

This cataloguing experience gave rise to much serious thought as to American history being a fruitful field for the illustration on a broad scale of the doctrine of Evolution in its application to

John Fiske

human history. This call for a course of lectures on American history at the Old South Church fell in, therefore, with a line of thought which for some time had been mulling in his mind.

During the summer and autumn of 1878, Fiske utilized his vacation and spare time in preparing his lectures. As he progressed in his work, he found himself profoundly interested in his subject, so much so that the conviction steadily deepened in his mind, that in the presentation and interpretation of American history he could find a broad field for permanent and fruitful work of a congenial nature, where he could utilize, in the interpretation of a great historic movement, his wide philosophic and historic knowledge.

I find that Fiske consulted Professors Gurney and Norton, and also Francis Parkman, the eminent historian, and that they thought well of the project and hoped he might find a way to undertake it. Parkman wrote him: —

“As to the ‘Short History of the American People,’ I strongly advise you to go into it. If you are able to give it the necessary time and attention, I am sure they will be well invested in all senses. I believe that you could do the work better than anybody else.”

He also took counsel with some of his friends in New York, all of whom favored his project, if he could see his way clear to get his undertaking well launched. As he rounded to their completion his

Resigns from Harvard Library

forth-coming lectures at the Old South Church, his faith in his subject and his confidence in his method of treating his subject were such that he decided to make the venture. Accordingly, in February, 1879, he resigned his position of Assistant Librarian in the Harvard Library.

Fiske's resignation of his position in the Harvard Library and his entering upon the task of giving a history of the discovery of America and its colonization by Europeans, with an account of the political and social development of some of these colonies into the national political organization of the United States, opens an entirely new chapter in his intellectual and domestic life. Before entering upon the consideration of these new phases of his life, however, it is well to turn back for a brief review of his domestic life during his years of service in the Harvard Library subsequent to his return from Europe, that is, from July, 1874, to February, 1879; for as we have already seen, Fiske was so essentially a domestic man in all his tastes and feelings that it is impossible to get a just view of his life as a whole, during any period, without seeing how his domestic tastes, his love of nature, music, and art were blended in his intellectual make-up and permeated all his activities. In this review we shall also be able to take note of his literary productions during this period.

CHAPTER XXIII

DEATH OF FISKE'S GRANDMOTHER — DOMESTIC LIFE — DEATH OF MRS. MARTHA BROOKS — NEW HOME, 22 BERKELEY STREET, CAMBRIDGE — MUSICAL PRACTICE — VISIT OF PROFESSOR AND MRS. HUXLEY — PETERSHAM IN WINTER — MR. AND MRS. STOUGHTON AT ST. PETERSBURG — DEATH OF TWO FRIENDS — TWO NOTABLE ESSAYS

1874-1879

BEFORE entering on this review, however, we have to note the first serious bereavement in Fiske's life, the death of his grandmother, Mrs. Mary Fisk Lewis, who died shortly after his return from Europe, in July, 1874. That Fiske was deeply attached to his grandmother the foregoing pages abundantly show. During the later years of her life she spent several weeks of each year in his family; and her visits, by reason of deep affections, her cheerfulness, and her overflowing kindness of heart, were occasions of joy to the whole household. Fiske felt her death most keenly. He had come in his imagination to regard her as somewhat transcending mere sense personality; in short, as being a sort of beneficent fairy who had presided over his early years, and had left his mind free to expand in a natural, healthy way. Certainly, in her death, he felt that the last family tie which connected

Domestic and Social Life

him with Middletown, the home of his boyhood and youth, was broken.

Coming now to the review referred to, this can best be made by taking the main incidents of his domestic and social life as revealed in his letters, and grouping them around his home; for to his home all his activities were related as to a common centre.

We have seen that his return from Europe in June, 1874, was to his home, No. 4 Berkeley Street, Cambridge. It was a commodious house owned by his brother-in-law, James W. Brooks; and the household consisted of the Fiske family with Mrs. Martha A. Brooks, Mrs. Fiske's mother; James Brooks, and Miss Martha Brooks, Mrs. Fiske's brother and sister. It was, indeed, a happy family, with the interests of all the adults largely centred around the Fiske children. The summers of the whole household were spent at the Brooks homestead at Petersham.

The glimpses we get in the letters of the family life, both in Cambridge and in Petersham, are delightful. The family appears to have been pervaded by the sweet, benign influence of Mrs. Martha Brooks, the mother and grandmother of the whole family except Fiske himself. She was a woman of rare personal qualities, and her thought was always for the interests of others. Fiske's affection for her was hardly second to his affection for his own mother and grandmother. James and Martha Brooks, too,

John Fiske

were important factors in that they gave themselves largely to ministering to the interests of the Fiske children.

James Brooks, particularly, was unceasing in his considerate helpfulness. When Fiske's European trip was proposed in 1873, he at once came forward and assumed oversight of the family during Fiske's absence. And the same thoughtfulness was continued after Fiske's return. With the children "Uncle James" came to be regarded as a sort of godfather to whom they could safely appeal in their perplexities. And it appears that they were never beyond the reach of his sympathy. Being a broad-minded man with high ideals of social service, and being also a firm believer in Fiske's philosophic and religious views, James Brooks felt it a pleasure throughout his life to aid in the development and promulgation of Fiske's ideas. In the family life of the years to come, and particularly at Petersham, we are to see his continued devotion.

As an illustration of the fine feeling which pervaded this family life, and also as a further revelation of the considerate kindness, the deep poetic sensibility, and the profound reverential feeling which were constituent elements in Fiske's nature, I take the following extracts from a letter of Fiske to his lifelong friend, Mrs. William Wilcox, of Middletown, in which, under date of November 25, 1875, he gives an account of the illness of



JAMES W. BROOKS

Death of Mrs. Brooks

Mrs. Martha Brooks, her death, which occurred October 20, 1875, and what followed. He writes: —

“Mother Brooks had not been well since February, but we had not been really alarmed about her. In July she seemed better. The day before she went to Petersham, her last day in this house, in passing her door I heard her say to Sister Martha, ‘How I should like a bit of fine steak!’ The maids having left, *I turned chef*, went down cellar, chopped my wood, built a good coal fire, went to market, selected a prime steak and some mealy potatoes, baked the latter and broiled the former, toasted some brown bread, made tea, and served them to Mother Brooks, who said she never enjoyed a luncheon more in her life. I think I enjoyed *getting* it even more than partaking of it.

“At Petersham we had our usual fun with croquet and music, walking in the woods, and driving over the hills, not thinking Grandma very ill, though I used to take her from her bed and carry her down to her lounge under the trees and carry her back again. Early in September she grew rapidly worse, and the noise of the children disturbed her very much, especially as we had nine at the house — my five, John Brooks’s two, and two others of a musical friend of ours. So we devised a plan for keeping the children away. Our house in Petersham is kept by a farmer with his wife and daughter; and they have a farmhouse on a lofty hill — a grand and romantic spot — about two miles from the village. Here Mr. Howe (our farmer) would sleep nights and come jogging up to the village in the morning with milk, ears of luscious green corn and other vege-

John Fiske

tables for dinner. To this lonely place, amid its sublime hills, we decided to go with the babies to spend our days, so as to leave the house in the village quiet. The first day there we were hilarious, for we thought there was some hope of grandma's recovery, and we thought we were doing something to help her; and the sweetness of the century-old farmhouse, and the glory of the landscape, and the brisk mountain air, and the rich scent of the roasting corn, and the sight of our little curly-heads playing under the apple trees — all this made us feel very happy. As we learned that Grandma enjoyed the quiet we returned there day after day; and finally, when things grew worse, I decided to stay there nights with Maud, Harold, and Clarence. Mr. Howe used to get breakfast, though one morning Maud did it, and *one* morning I did, coming out very strong on corn-fritters. Mr. Howe's daughter used to come down and get our dinners. If I were to live a thousand years I should never forget the strange, dreamy life we led, my children and I, in that wild place for ten days. The driving the cows to pasture, the sunrise, purple and gold, over the magnificent hills, the bleak spires of the village on the horizon, the tall, frowning pines on the hillside with the music of their boughs, the soft cloud-shadows on distant blue mountains, the delicious air, the sad thoughts that contrasted with the merry laughter of the little curly-pates — all this sank deep into my heart and made me meditate more than ever on the dread mystery and solemnity of it all."

Mrs. Brooks regained her strength somewhat, and the Fiske family returned to Cambridge. On

Death of Mrs. Brooks

October 15 she had a relapse and on the 20th she died. Fiske writes: —

“October 22d I went up to Petersham in the morning, and the funeral was in the afternoon. We had no ghastly accompaniments of undertaker and hearse, but we carried her ourselves to the church, — and of the six men who carried her, I was the only one she had not once carried in her arms. At the church, her brother Edmund Willson (the same who married Abby and me) made the prayer, and I improvised on the organ. There was nothing else. We carried her to the grave, the whole village following on foot, and we laid her there, in a spot so lovely that the thought that I shall by and by lie there myself is of itself enough to lend a pleasant seeming to death. None outside the family had anything to do with these last services to our dear, good, kind mother.”

As the children grew, and as the requirements of Fiske's literary and social life broadened, the house at No. 4 Berkeley Street became less and less adapted to his comfort and his needs. It also failed to give James Brooks the conveniences he needed. Then, too, in view of Fiske's future prospects at Harvard College, Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton wished to see him well established in a home of his own, with full provision for his family, and with the necessary conveniences for intellectual work. And such a home they wished to provide for him. Much time was consumed in weighing the matter, and in examining various Cambridge properties. No house

John Fiske

was found, however, suited to his particular needs, and finally his mother decided to have a house built for him — one especially designed to meet his requirements. Accordingly, in May, 1877, the lot of land, No. 22 Berkeley Street, was purchased; and under date of May 24, 1877, we have a letter to his mother of twelve letter-sheet pages in which he sets forth for the architect the distinctive features of the house he desires. These features may be summarized thus: A capacious library and study opening into a music-room at one end; a large family dining-room with conservatory, kitchen, and store-room connections; a spacious hall and stairway, with lavatory and clothes-room connections; a cosy reception-room — a large reception-room or parlor; conveniently arranged sleeping-rooms for the family household, with suitable provisions for guests; a nursery and sewing-room; and also a store-room and a play-room for the boys. With these specific features he asked for several fireplaces and an abundance of closet-room.

Fiske's general lay-out for his house was substantially carried out under his general oversight; and in its design and construction we have another instance of the facility with which he could bring his philosophic mind to grapple with the affairs of everyday life. It took nearly a year to get the house into condition for occupancy, and it was much over a year before it was completely furnished. When the furnishing was complete, Fiske wrote his



22 BERKELEY STREET

New Home in Cambridge

mother, under date of September 18, 1878, giving her a graphic description of all the rooms, with the furniture, pictures, and ornaments in each. He even included a plan and descriptive sketch of the basement store-closet with its huge refrigerator — a sort of cold-storage plant which he had designed himself, in order to get food supplies for his good-sized family in quantities. His furniture appears to have been made up largely of heirlooms from the Brooks and Fiske family homesteads.

The letter in which these particulars are given is, indeed, a delightful letter, one in which are revealed not only Fiske's keen appreciations of nature, literature, music, and art, but also, how these appreciations were blended with his domestic tastes and requirements. I regret that limited space restricts me to but a single extract from this deeply interesting letter.

It appears in an addendum to the main letter, and it reveals Fiske's keen appreciation of, and sympathy with, boyhood nature. He writes: —

“I should have said, in my description of the house, that the three boys have the room over the guest chamber for a ‘raise-the-devil-room.’ They raise the d —— l there a good deal, and it saves the rest of the ‘hipe.’ The furniture consists of a large kitchen table and five or six kitchen chairs, together with several tons of rubbish — pails, nails, hooks, tenpins, bits of wood, marbles, mosses, bats, paint-brushes, pots of flour-paste, pebbles — deuce

John Fiske

knows what not. A museum, too, with sixty or eighty kinds of moths and butterflies; a fine assortment of birds' eggs, wasps' nests, birds' skulls, postage-stamps, coins, one Indian stone spear-head, etc., etc. The walls are rapidly getting covered with pictures cut out of newspapers and colored toy-books, etc. It is a jolly room."

Of Fiske's happy domestic life the letters bear abundant witness. His children were his unflinching delight, and the individuality of each one is clearly set forth. He takes careful note of their varied mental development, and he tries to keep in touch with them in their tastes as he sees their minds unfold. He particularly interests himself in their musical tastes and in their love of nature.

It was during this period that his fourth son, Herbert Huxley Fiske, was born (August 20, 1877). That this son should be christened with the names of two of Fiske's dearest friends was quite a matter of course.

Fiske's musical practice during these years was fairly continuous. We have previously seen that in his periods of intellectual strain he found a great measure of relief and relaxation in music. Usually he took what he called a sort of "musical siesta" after luncheon or dinner. I give some extracts from the letters of 1875: —

"As for me, I am trying a *whole* sonata in three movements (Op. 14, No. 2), one of the loveliest of Beethoven's earlier works, and I think I can master

Musical Practice

it. Hitherto I have never tried anything but the slow movements of the sonatas.

“I have mastered the difficult E Major nocturne of Chopin, that I murdered for you, and can now make it sing. I shall have another hard one to play for you in F major, when you get home — a superb one: and I am just beginning a splendid movement from one of Schubert’s sonatas. I find I can tackle things now that I could n’t look at a year ago. My work last winter on Beethoven and Chopin has limbered my fingers and improved my fingering.”

It does not appear that during this period Fiske did anything to speak of in the way of musical composition. His Mass, upon which we saw him so earnestly engaged during his philosophic period, does not appear to have received any attention. In fact, this Mass was never finished: it remained one of the tasks he was always hoping for a fitting opportunity to complete.

Musical evenings with his friends Professor John K. Paine and the eminent singer and teacher, George L. Osgood, were frequent, and they were occasions of rare enjoyment. Sometimes these musical evenings were made “social occasions” for gathering in his closest friends. Outside his home he appears to have found his chief musical enjoyment in the Symphony Concerts in Boston. And here is a fine bit of musical criticism I find in one of his letters: —

“I have heard Von Bülow again and don’t like him so well as Rubinstein or Miss Mehlig. They

John Fiske

say he never strikes a false note; but I heard him strike two in the third movement of Beethoven Op. 31, No. 3. But they all do that — his execution is wonderful.”

Professor Paine has left us his judgment of Fiske’s musical gifts and attainments derived from their long and close intimacy; and the opinion of this most competent of critics is in place here: —

“He [Fiske] was not allowed to take music lessons in his boyhood, yet in spite of this, he taught himself as a young man to play the piano and to sing. Certainly it was a remarkable proof of his genuine talent, that he was able to acquire sufficient skill to play from memory certain sonatas of Beethoven, nocturnes of Chopin, and piano-pieces of Schubert, etc. He played with true expression and conception. He also gained a knowledge of Harmony and Counterpoint by reading text-books. He had a sonorous bass voice of wide compass; and it was a pleasure to hear him sing songs of Schubert and Franz, for he sang them with feeling and enthusiasm. He showed a deep appreciation of the music of Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and all the great masters, but did not care much for recent ‘Programme’ music. In brief, music was his great passion. Next to his love for his family was his love for music and nothing gave him more happiness. In speaking of a future life he always associated it with music.”

But it was the summer home in the Brooks homestead at Petersham to which Fiske and the whole family looked forward with the keenest zest



JOHN KNOWLES PAINE

Visit of the Huxleys

all the rest of the year. And every year seemed to bring fresh delights with the increasing years of his children. The letters of this period overflow with charming descriptions of rides, walks, and saunterings with his children in this enchanting region. He dearly loved to botanize with them.

It was at Petersham that he and Mrs. Fiske and James Brooks entertained Professor and Mrs. Huxley during their memorable visit to the United States in the summer of 1876. Huxley had heard so much about the beauties of Petersham from Fiske that as soon as he had decided upon his American trip, he wrote Fiske of his proposed visit and of his determination to observe Fiske in his Petersham "fastness." The letter in which Huxley advises Fiske of his proposed visit is so characteristic — is so redolent of Huxley's abounding geniality — that I give it entire: —

4 MARLBOROUGH PLACE,
LONDON, N.W., *April 23, 1876.*

My dear Fiske:—

I have a great mind to tell you that the reason why I did not answer your letter of the 1st of January, '75, was that there was a Mister stuck before my proper name — which is a liberty I don't permit my friends. Unfortunately any such statement would be a lie — pressure of things always to be done, and a confounded habit of correspondential procrastination is at the bottom of it. But as you confess your own sins, I forgive you on condition of the abolition of the "Mr." hereafter.

John Fiske

After a world of deliberation and balancing of possibilities and impossibilities, I have made up my mind that the impossible shall be, and my wife and I embark for the States at the end of July, or beginning of August, returning the last of September. The wife is terribly torn between me and the children, but I mean to bring her.

Many thanks for your most kind offer of hospitality. Of course we shall look you up somehow; but at present all my plans are *in nubibus*, and I must wait until I get quietly stowed away in Edinburgh, whither I betake myself next week, to determine what I shall do. *Nothing* we should like better than to have a quiet day or two with you in your country fastness.

The book of Essays has arrived.¹ You have made a deal more of the "Unseen Universe"² than I could. If I had had time I should have had some fun out of it as gross materialism. I know the writers and there is not a grain of speculative power in either.

My eyes have been wide open for your friend Professor Gurney, but he has as yet not been visible above the horizon, and I fear I may be away before he arrives.

My wife sends her kindest regards. The elder girls and the two boys are away in the country, but I gave Madge your message and she was greatly set up thereby. Her voice is growing grandly.

Ever yours very sincerely,

T. H. HUXLEY.

¹ Fiske's *Unseen World and Other Essays*, then recently published.

² A reference to the *Unseen Universe*, a work by Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait. It was this work that called out Fiske's essay on the *Unseen World*. See *supra*, p. 101.

Visit of the Huxleys

Fiske wrote expressing his delight, not only that Huxley was coming, but also that Mrs. Huxley was coming with him, and he cordially invited them to visit himself and his family at their summer home in Petersham. To this letter Huxley replied: —

EDINBURGH, *June 27, 1876.*

My dear Fiske: —

Your letter reached me this evening and I sit down to reply just before midnight. Count it unto me for righteousness.

We shall arrive just about the time you are leaving for Petersham, and the greatest pleasure you could give us would be to have us for a few days at that sylvan Dilkooshah, as soon as I have done exploring Marsh's fossils at New Haven, which task will, I suppose, take up more or less of the first week of the seven which I have to dispose of.

You know what manner of people we are, and I hope you have reported faithfully of us to Mrs. Fiske as folk who love peace and quietness; and that when we are left to ourselves we live in the plainest of plain ways. We must find our way to Agassiz's at Newport some time before the Association meets. Then we go to Buffalo, and take our time at Niagara. Then South as far as Nashville, and back by way of Baltimore and Philadelphia. But my great desire is to go my own way quietly and keep out of all sorts of fuss.

I am hard worked here, and shall be right glad when the 27th of July arrives, and we are steaming Westward.

Ever yours very sincerely,

T. H. HUXLEY.

John Fiske

The Huxleys reached New York early in August, and Huxley himself went at once to New Haven, where, under date of August 9, he wrote Fiske as follows: —

My dear Fiske: —

I have just been reading your last letter, which reached me just as I was in the midst of preparations for leaving England, and I do perceive that having failed to obey orders I shall come in for excommunications sundry and strong. But I thought it was of no use to write to you, until I could say something definite about my movements, and there has been no possibility of saying that something till this afternoon.

I have left my wife with the Appletons at New York. I believe they are all going gallivanting to Saratoga, while I am here as Marsh's guest, deep in birds with teeth, and reptiles without 'em, to say nothing of other palæontological wonders which to a confirmed Evolutionist are worth all the journey across the Atlantic.

One way or another I shall not have done here till this day week. Then we go to Agassiz's at Newport for two or three days, and for a day take a look at Boston. Anyhow, I do not see why we should not make our way to Petersham on the 20th, if that will suit you. The American Association meets at Buffalo on the 23d, and as I have promised to go there, I must, in decency, show myself by the 24th or thereabouts.

Petersham is, I am sorry to say, ignored on all the maps I can get at; but there is such a network of railways somewhere about the spot that I assume

Visit of the Huxleys

there is no difficulty in getting thence to Buffalo. But you are by no means to come to Boston to escort us. We shall find our way to you beautifully.

Let me have a reply here, written in a placable spirit, just to say if we may come on the 20th. And with all good wishes to Mrs. Fiske and yourself believe me,

Ever yours very sincerely,

T. H. HUXLEY.

The examination of Professor Marsh's palæontological collection was a notable event in Huxley's life, and one of the direct outcomes of it was a complete change of view in regard to the genealogy of the horse, and the admission that here for the first time was gathered the indubitable evidence which demonstrated the direct line of descent of an existing animal. Huxley's letters show how deeply he was impressed by his study of this collection; indeed, so deeply was he impressed that he recast a great part of a lecture on Evolution which he had prepared for delivery in New York.

Professor and Mrs. Huxley found their way to Petersham August 21, 1876, and they had a cordial welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Fiske, James Brooks, Miss Martha Brooks, and the Fiske children. Fiske's joy was unconfined. It was a great pleasure to him to take his guests, both lovers of nature, over some of the Petersham places which had come to stand in his mind as types of nature's supreme beauties and have their approval of his æsthetic judgment. It

John Fiske

was a still greater pleasure to resume with his dear friends, in his own home in America, and with his children, the musical diversions and social amenities he had so greatly enjoyed in their charming home with their children in London. And then, in the midst of these delightful surroundings, occasion was found for the exchange of views between Huxley and Fiske regarding some of the ultimate questions of Evolution which had so often engaged their thought in Huxley's cosy library.

Of course, Huxley had much to tell of the work of their Evolutionary friends in England since Fiske's visit of three years before; how rapidly the doctrine of Evolution was spreading among the leaders in science; how it was coming to be recognized as a universal cosmic principle underlying all classes of phenomena; and how the doctrine had been greatly strengthened by Professor Marsh's wonderful palæontological collection at New Haven.

Huxley's abounding humor could not be entirely suppressed by the consideration of even these great themes; for, as appears in the Petersham guest-book, he left a sketch of what he called a true history of Adam and Eve as suggested by the palæontologic remains in Professor Marsh's wonderful collection. This sketch is reproduced on the opposite page.

The two evenings of the visit were given to free social intercourse between the guests, the Fiske and Brooks families, and a few invited friends. Among the latter was one of Longfellow's daughters and



Pen's
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The true history of
Adam & Eve
(from specimens
in New Haven
Marsh's Collection)

SKETCH BY HUXLEY IN THE PETERSHAM GUEST-BOOK, AUGUST, 1876

Visit of the Huxleys

also one of Hawthorne's, together with Professor John K. Paine, the eminent musical composer, and Christopher Cranch, the poet. There was much music and a great amount of jollity on these occasions. Huxley was in fine spirits and by his exuberant nature, his keen observations, and his genial wit, he captured all hearts. He said that when Fiske was in London he had so much to say about the beauties of Petersham that he — Huxley — was inclined to set Fiske down as a romancer. But now that he had himself seen Petersham, he must confess that its charms had not been fully told him.

Huxley appeared as the really great man with the engaging personality so graphically set forth by Fiske in his letters from London three years before.

This visit of the Huxleys to Petersham was, indeed, a memorable one; and Fiske in a letter, a few days after to his mother, sums it up in one brief sentence: "The Huxleys staid from Monday noon, August 21st, to Wednesday noon, August 23d, and we had a glorious time, and everybody great and small fell in love with 'em both."

And this should be said, that this memorable visit was greatly enhanced to all who shared in its pleasures by the ever-thoughtful consideration of James Brooks, who knew so well how to present the glories of Petersham at their best, and whose estimate of Huxley, both as a scientist and a philosophic thinker, was from this visit greatly heightened.

John Fiske

The further extension of the American visit of the Huxleys kept them almost constantly on the move. It embraced a trip to Niagara and to Buffalo, where the American Association for the Advancement of Science was holding its annual meeting, and where they met the leading scientists of America; thence to Nashville, Tennessee, where they visited Huxley's sister — the beloved sister of his boyhood, whom he had not seen for many years; thence to Baltimore, where Huxley delivered the address accompanying the opening of Johns Hopkins University; thence to New York, where he delivered three lectures on Evolution, in which he presented the fresh light thrown upon the new doctrine by Professor Marsh's palæontological collection at New Haven. Everywhere he was received with conspicuous honor. In the face of his great learning, his honesty of purpose, and his inspiring personality, theological bigotry was silent. With his engagements all fulfilled, on September 23, 1876, he and Mrs. Huxley sailed from New York for Liverpool, leaving behind them in the minds of their friends nothing but the pleasantest memories.

Shortly after their return home, Huxley wrote Fiske, telling him that, aside from the visit with Professor Marsh and with his sister, their visit to Petersham was the most delightful of their American experiences, and that in this opinion Mrs. Huxley fully agreed.

Petersham in Winter

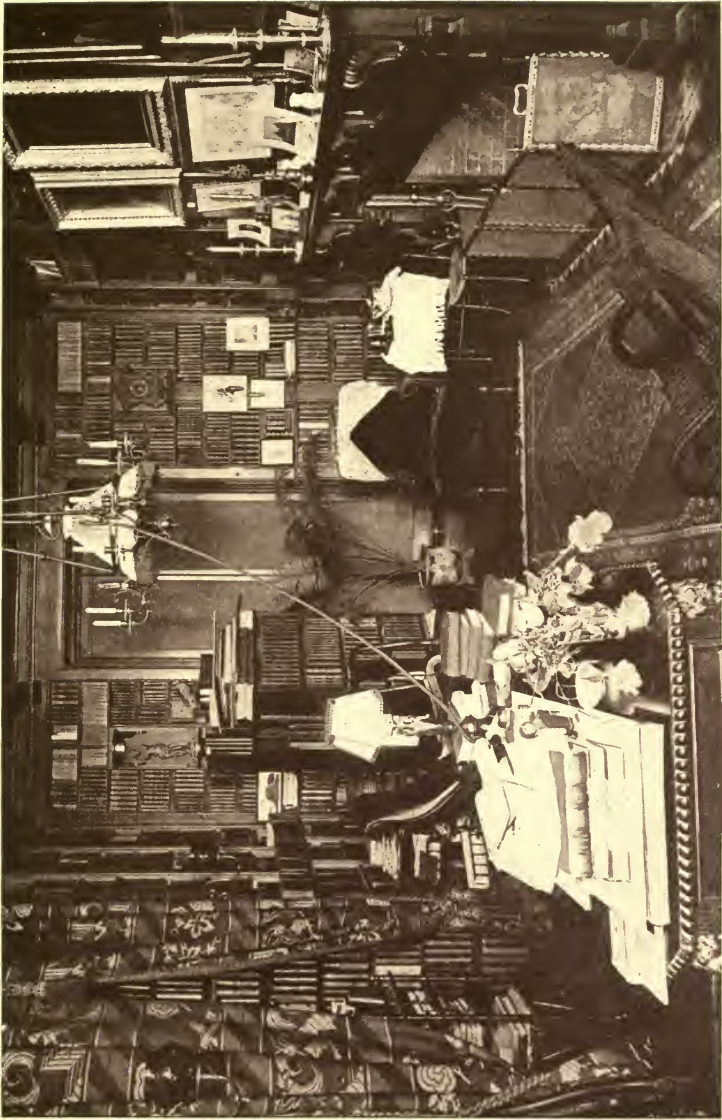
Petersham had charms for Fiske at all seasons of the year; so much so that at times, when mentally weary, he would make an excursion up there for a day or two, out of season, just for mental relaxation. And he has given such a graphic sketch of one of his mid-winter excursions and his entertainment by his good neighbor, Mr. Mudge, — a sketch which shows such a keen appreciation of Nature in her sterner aspects, and also so redolent of his physical enjoyment of plain country life, that it well deserves a place here. Under date of January 21, 1878, he writes his mother thus: —

“And what do you suppose I was up to last Saturday! Got up after a stiff week’s work feeling very tired and nervous. For the first time I had a *cruel* sense of what nerves are. While dressing, I said to Abby, ‘By Jove! I’ll go up to Petersham, and breathe in new boyhood and new zest.’ Off I went, and found it 22° below zero, and snow over the tops of the fences. Went to good Mr. Mudge’s — and such sausages, and squash pies, and cider! Went to the old village church, Sunday morning, and everybody was so surprised and so glad to see me. In the afternoon it being 18° below zero, with a brisk breeze, I muffled up a yard deep in shawls and furs, and took a magnificent sleigh-ride with Mr. Mudge among the pine woods, *right over stone walls*, across lots, wherever we liked. O what happiness! Then went down to Mrs. Spooner’s (where you sat and held the horse last summer, while I went in and made a call after our Tom Swamp ride), and had such a dear good countrified time. Then home

John Fiske

to bed fearfully sleepy at 8 o'clock, in a room where my breath froze into icicles on my mustache, with a hot soapstone at my feet. Up at 7 in the morning, after a sweet sleep, to a delicious breakfast of pork steak and apple-sauce. Then over to Athol with Mr. Mudge — a hot soapstone in the sleigh and lots of robes over us; mercury 12° below zero — and *such* a lovely ride over that beautiful road. Got back to the Library soon after Monday noon — had an experience I shall never forget!"

In January, 1878, Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton sailed for Europe, Mr. Stoughton to enter upon his duties as Minister of the United States to Russia. They remained in Russia until May, 1879, when Mr. Stoughton was compelled to resign his position on account of ill health. He died, as we shall see, not long after. While Fiske's letters to his mother were continued during her residence at the Imperial Court at St. Petersburg, nothing of special import is revealed in them beyond the record of his library experiences, his limited literary work, and his happy domestic life! Mrs. Stoughton's letters do not appear to have called out from him any noteworthy expressions of opinion regarding Russian or European affairs. One act of his mother's while in St. Petersburg pleased him greatly. Being very skilful with her brush, she made for him a fine copy of the portrait of John Locke, the eminent English philosopher, — to whom as we have seen Fiske was distantly related, — which is one of the notable



THE LIBRARY AT 22 BERKELEY STREET

Poem by C. P. Cranch

treasures in The Hermitage, the famous Art Gallery at St. Petersburg. This copy of the portrait has a conspicuous place in the Fiske library at Cambridge.

And now we come to an incident in the social life of Fiske which has left an interesting memorial behind it. Among his neighbors in Cambridge was Christopher Pearse Cranch: preacher, painter, and poet. Cranch was a man of fine culture, and was one of the small circle of Transcendentalists who made so much stir in the intellectual life of New England between 1830 and 1850. His many engaging qualities brought him into close personal relations with the most eminent literary and artistic persons of his time: particularly with Emerson, Story the sculptor, James Russell Lowell, and George William Curtis.

One day in February, 1879, Cranch called upon Fiske at his house, 22 Berkeley Street, Cambridge. Fiske was not at home; and, while waiting in the library for Mrs. Fiske to come down, Cranch's poetic feelings were deeply stirred by the embodiments of human thought with which he was surrounded. Two days after, he brought to Fiske the thoughts which came to him while in Fiske's library, expressed in the following lines: —

In my friend's library I sit alone,
Hemmed in by books. The dead and living there,
Shrined in a thousand volumes rich and rare,
Tower in long rows, with names to me unknown.
A dim half-curtained light o'er all is thrown.

John Fiske

A shadowed Dante looks with stony stare
Out from his dusky niche. The very air
Seems hushed before some intellectual throne.
What ranks of grand philosophers, what choice
And gay romancers, what historians sage,
What wits, what poets, on those crowded shelves!
All dumb forever, till the mind gives voice
To each dead letter of each senseless page,
And adds a soul they own not of themselves.

A miracle — that man should learn to fill
These little vessels with his boundless soul;
Should through these arbitrary signs control
The world, and scatter broadcast at his will
His unseen thought, in endless transcript still
Fast multiplied o'er lands from pole to pole
By magic art; and, as the ages roll,
Still fresh as streamlets from the Muses' hill.
Yet in these alcoves tranced, the lords of thought
Stand bound as by enchantment — signs or words
Have none to break the silence. None but they
Their mute proud lips unlock, who here have brought
The key. Them as their masters they obey.
For them they talk and sing like uncaged birds.

During this period Fiske lost two personal friends who were very dear to him — Professor John R. Dennett, of Harvard, who died in December, 1874; and Chauncey Wright, who died in September, 1875. Disagreeing with these acute critics and thinkers as he did on many points, Fiske was at one with them in their high literary and philosophical ideals. His tribute to the latter, in his volume, "Darwinism and Other Essays," is a masterpiece of philosophic criticism and character appreciation. His intellectual companionship with these two

(Facsimile)

In a library. I.

In my friend's library I sit alone
Stemmed in by books. The dead and living there
Shrouded in a thousand volumes red and rose
Tower in long rows, with names to me unknown
A dim half. Curtained light over all is thrown
A shadowed Dante looks with story stare

Out from his dusky niche The very air
Seems hushed before some intellectual throne.

What ranks of grand philosophers - what choice

And gay romances - what historians sage -
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Stand bound as by enchantment; signs or words

Have none, to break the trance. None but they

Their mute proud lips unlock, who have been brought
The key. Nam as their Masters they obey

For them they talk and sing, like uncaged birds.

Feb 4. & 6. 1879.
C. P. Cranch.

Literary Work

brilliant thinkers had a strong stimulating effect upon his own mind.

The record of Fiske's literary productions during this period is a very brief one. When considered in relation to his powers of intellectual production, it yields conclusive evidence that he was sadly out of place in the Harvard Library. During this period of four and a half years, he produced nine essays and four lectures, which, while of a very high order of thought, are yet somewhat circumscribed in their range; and, with two or three exceptions, they appear as an overflow from his previous philosophic and historic studies. The principal exception is his essay on "The Unseen World." Here he advances his philosophic and religious thought to the consideration of what may lie in the phenomenal Cosmos beyond the apprehension of the finite mind — beyond the reach of science.

The following is a list of these essays, with their times and places of publication: —

"Mythology" and "Positivism"; two articles or essays prepared for Johnson's Cyclopædia.

"The Unseen World"; an essay published in the "Atlantic Monthly" in February and March, 1876; subsequently published in a volume under the same title, with other essays.

"A Librarian's Work"; an account of the routine work in the Harvard Library, an essay published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for October, 1876.

"The Triumph of Darwinism"; an essay pub-

John Fiske

lished in the "North American Review" for January, 1877.

"The Races of the Danube";¹ an essay published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for April, 1877.

"A Crumb for the Modern Symposium"; an essay published in the "North American Review" for January, 1878.

"Chauncey Wright: a Personal Tribute"; published in the "Radical Review" for February, 1878.

"What is Inspiration?" A contribution to a symposium in the "North American Review" for September, 1878.

The last six essays were subsequently published in a volume under the title of "Darwinism and Other Essays."

The four lectures referred to were on "The Early Aryans: their Myths and their Folk-Lore"; and they were prepared for, and were delivered at, the Peabody Institute, Baltimore, Maryland, in February, 1877. The substance of these lectures was subsequently utilized by Fiske in various essays; e.g., "Who are the Aryans?" "What we Learn from Old Aryan Words," "Koshchei the Deathless," etc. His work on "Primitive Aryan Culture," concerning which he wrote Spencer, — a work which was near his heart, — he never was able to complete.

Let us note, in passing, that in the invitation for his lectures at the Peabody Institute, it was cour-

¹ Fiske writes his mother in January, 1877, that "this essay was written because of your desire to get some clear notions on the subject."

Two Notable Essays

teously intimated to him that it would be well to avoid the subject of Evolution.

Two of the foregoing essays, "What is Inspiration?" and "The Unseen World," are deserving of special consideration here. The former was a contribution to a symposium in the "North American Review," where, in the definition and exposition of the doctrine of Inspiration, Fiske was associated with the Reverend F. H. Hedge, a Unitarian; the Reverend E. A. Washburn, a Congregationalist; the Reverend Chauncey Giles, a Swedenborgian; the Reverend J. P. Newman, an Episcopalian; and the Most Reverend J. Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. This symposium may be said to have consisted of two broad divisions — a theological division, wherein the five clerical disputants each presented his views from his particular theological viewpoint; and a philosophic division, wherein Fiske alone presented views from the viewpoint of philosophic rationalism. This discussion, in which one of the fundamental tenets of Christian theology was involved, can be heartily commended to the earnest seeker of truth, by reason of its complete freedom from sectarian bitterness and intolerance. Fiske's contribution has all the characteristics of his reverent thought, as well as all the marks of his simple, lucid style. As the whole discussion centred around the dogma of the special Divine inspiration of the Bible, the last paragraph in Fiske's contribution reveals his own thought on this point: —

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“A sad incumbrance [a belief in the special Inspiration of the Bible] it certainly is, to any one who truly loves and reveres the Bible. To make a fetich of the best of books does not, after all, seem to be the most reverent way of treating it. Take away the discredited hypothesis of infallibility, and the errors of statement and crudities of doctrine at once become of no consequence and cease to occupy the attention. It no longer seems worth while to write puerile essays to show that the Elohist was versed in all the conclusions of modern geology, or that the books of Kings and Chronicles tell the same story. The spiritual import of this wonderful collection of writings becomes its most prominent aspect; and, freed from the exigencies of a crude philosophy and an inane criticism, the Bible becomes once more the book of mankind.”

I have referred to the essay, “The Unseen World,” as showing a clear development of Fiske’s thought beyond the limits of mere experiential knowledge — beyond the realm of science. This essay is, indeed, a remarkable one, and it has never received the attention it deserves. I know of no other article or essay in which the ultimate questions of science and religion, and their philosophic interrelatedness, are more distinctly set forth than in this. It marks the culminating period in the development of Fiske’s philosophic thought; and hence, hereafter, we are to see him placing an ever-increasing emphasis upon the spiritual aspects of human life.

The Unseen World

This essay was called forth by the publication of "The Unseen Universe," a work which was the joint production of two eminent physicists, Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait — a work which, as we have seen, Huxley characterized as "gross materialism"; and in which an attempt was made to establish, in the light of the nebular hypothesis and the Helmholtz and Thomson vortex-atom theory of matter, the doctrine or theory of man's spiritual immortality as an outcome from pure physical materialism. Fiske reviewed in a masterly way the whole argument; and, while admitting that man's physical existence was wholly conditioned by his physical environment, he contended that his psychical experience or life was not so conditioned. While emphatically denying the proposition that a spiritual existence could in any way be a product of physical phenomena, he advanced the idea that man's immortal spiritual existence might be an unknown evolution of his cosmic psychical experience, freed from its physical environment.

He then propounded this question, Can there not be within the cosmos a spiritual world or a spiritual form of existence transcending the physical phenomena of the cosmos as we know the latter? He answered this question with the distinct affirmations of science, that while man's knowledge of cosmic phenomena gives no evidence of the existence of psychical or spiritual existence independent

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of physical phenomena, man's knowledge of cosmic phenomena is so very limited that it can be no measure of the possibilities within the cosmos, much less of the resources of the Infinite Unknowable Power which created and sustains it.

Such being the affirmations of science, Fiske then propounded this further question, Does the failure to establish within the limits of our cosmic experience a form of spiritual life, transcending our physical cosmic existence, raise the slightest presumption against the validity of such a form of spiritual existence? His answer was most emphatic that it does not; that in a case of such transcendent importance "the entire absence of testimony does not raise a negative presumption except in cases where testimony is accessible" — in short, that the burden of proof lies on the negative side. With these affirmations he then enforces his argument for man's spiritual immortality with great skill, by presenting the cosmic universe as a vast theatre wherein is displayed a mighty teleological purpose, and one which has a profound meaning for the ever-expanding mind of man. He closes this most significant essay with the following inspiring expression of his own reverent feeling and his sublime faith: —

"There could be no better illustration of how we are hemmed in (in this cosmic existence) than the very inadequacy of the words with which we try to discuss this subject. Such words have all gained their meanings from human experience, and hence

The Unseen World

of necessity carry anthropomorphic implications. But we cannot help this. We must think with the symbols with which experience has furnished us; and when we so think, there does seem to be little that is even intellectually satisfying in the awful picture which science shows us, of giant worlds concentrating out of nebulous vapour, developing with prodigious waste of energy into theatres of all that is grand and sacred in spiritual endeavour, clashing and exploding again into dead vapour-balls, only to renew the same toilful process without end — a senseless bubble-play of Titan forces, with life, love, and aspiration brought forth only to be extinguished. The human mind, however 'scientific' its training, must often recoil from the conclusion that this is all; and there are moments when one passionately feels that this cannot be all. On warm June mornings, in green country lanes, with sweet pine odours wafted in the breeze which sighs through the branches, and cloud-shadows flitting over far-off blue mountains, while little birds sing their love-songs and golden-haired children weave garlands of wild roses;¹ or when in the solemn twilight we listen to wondrous harmonies of Beethoven and Chopin that stir the heart like voices from an unseen world; at such

¹ In a letter from Fiske to his mother of June 19, 1876, he makes reference to this wonderfully beautiful passage in a way which identifies it with a personal experience with two of his children in Petersham on an anniversary of his mother's birthday; and this reference is accompanied by an expression of filial affection akin to the occasion. He writes: —

“To-morrow will be your birthday, and the anniversary of the heavenly Sunday morning with Harold and Ethel in Sunset Lane, Petersham, to which I allude on page 56 of *The Unseen World*. In the language of little Ethel may the 'woad' never be 'wutty' for you from this time.”

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times one feels that the profoundest answer which science can give to our questioning is but a superficial answer after all. At these moments, when the world seems fullest of beauty, one feels most strongly that it is but the harbinger of something else — that the ceaseless play of phenomena is no mere sport of Titans, but an orderly scene, with its reason for existing in

“One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

With this declaration of the foundations of his religious faith, we now pass to an entirely new chapter in the life of Fiske. Henceforth we are to see him engaged in presenting and interpreting the facts of American history. While engaged in this great work, we shall see him, as special occasions arise, turning from his particular work in hand to set forth, in essays remarkable for their clearness, beauty, and force, his more mature conceptions of nature, man, and God, as the philosophy of Evolution ripened in his mind.

CHAPTER XXIV

BEGINS HISTORIC WORK—LECTURES AT OLD SOUTH CHURCH — ARRANGES TO REPEAT LECTURES IN LONDON — GREETINGS ON REACHING LONDON — GREAT SUCCESS WITH HIS LECTURES — SOCIAL COURTESIES — MEMORABLE EXCURSIONS AND CONVERSATIONS — PLANS WITH HUXLEY COURSE OF LECTURES FOR ROYAL INSTITUTION — GIVES A PUNCH PARTY — ELECTED OVERSEER AT HARVARD COLLEGE

1879

THE entrance of Fiske upon his career as an American historian was marked by a brilliant literary and oratorical success. His course of six lectures on "America's Place in History" was opened at the Old South Church in Boston on the 10th of March, 1879, where he was met by as fine an audience as was ever assembled in Boston, an audience which entirely filled the church, and which greeted him with an unmistakable expression of appreciative good-will. The title of the lecture was "The Era of Maritime Discovery," and it covered sketches of the voyages of the Northmen; of the attempts to reach India by sea; of Henry the Navigator; and of the voyages of Columbus, Da Gama, Vespucci, Magellan, and Cook. The theme, the place, and the audience were inspiring.

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Fiske was himself in fine form. He was in perfect health, and at the full maturity of his powers. In his personal appearance and bearing he was the personification of a rare combination of physical and intellectual power, with an entire absence of egoistic self-consciousness. Feeling a deep interest in the occasion I took a seat where I could observe critically both the speaker and the audience. After rising, Fiske paused a moment to survey his audience; and when he had attention at full focus he said, in clear tones, and in a simple, conversational way: "The voyage of Columbus was in many respects the most important event in human history since the birth of Christ." He then paused a bit. The momentary effect upon the audience — the attempt to grasp its significance — was clearly perceptible. Observe the immense connotative suggestiveness of this simple sentence. Brief, sententious as it was, it threw a momentary searchlight over the whole period of Christian history, and was a clear intimation that a master mind had come to give a philosophic interpretation to the events which had flowed from the memorable voyage of Columbus from the port of Palos on the 3d of August, 1492.

This bold challenge, as it were, to much historic opinion at once drew every eye intently to the speaker. Then, as the story of the Northmen, with their visits to Greenland and Massachusetts, and their failure to make any impression upon the

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European mind of their time by their adventures, was briefly sketched, followed by a luminous survey of European civilization from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, with the contests with the Saracens, the crusades, and the spirit of romantic adventure as shown in attempts to reach India by sea — all culminating in the voyages of Columbus and his followers, it was clearly apparent, from the eager, interested faces of the audience, that Fiske's hearers were yielding themselves without reserve to the wonderful story, the story of a great historic movement embellished with such historic and philosophical side-lights as gave to the movement itself a clear meaning and purpose in the development of humanity. In fact, it was clearly perceived in this first lecture that American history was to be presented, not as an unrelated historic incident, but rather as a legitimate development out of antecedent history, with immense significance to the future development of man's social and political institutions.

Fiske's bearing throughout the lecture was a model of effective simplicity. There was not the slightest indication of conscious oratorical effort. He simply read from his manuscript with distinct enunciation and with perfect ease, and with such modulations of voice as the theme or flow of thought required. Thus anything like a monotonous tone was avoided. He made no gestures of any kind whatever; in short, his delivery was that of simple, unaffected reading, so free from all self-

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consciousness that his hearers took in the full significance of his thought without the slightest consideration of his manner of expressing it — the highest effect of eloquence.

When the lecture was over, he received such expressions of approval from his audience as to remove all doubts as to his ability to interest the American people in the subject of their own history. Writing the next day to his mother with reference to the lecture he says:—

“The audience was the very cream of Boston, the enthusiasm prodigious, the success complete. Everybody says I went miles ahead of anything I had ever done before. The people were enthusiastic to a great degree.”

The second lecture was given March 17, 1879; and, as Fiske gave his mother the same day a graphic account of the circumstances attending its delivery, together with a frank statement of his feelings during its delivery, the following extract from his letter is of psychologic as well as of general interest:—

“My second lecture to-day was on the ‘Spanish and French Explorers and Colonists in America’: the Huguenot colony in Florida, and its horrible destruction by the Spaniards in 1565; Samuel de Champlain and the discovery of the great lakes and the founding of Canada; La Salle and his heroic adventures and the founding of Louisiana and the discovery of the Great West — a splendid and glowing theme.

Marked Success

“This was the worst of nasty March days — pelting snow, slush up to your knees, dark as Egypt — a day when ordinarily nothing would have tempted me to leave the house. But the Old South Church was *packed full* of the very best of Boston, in spite of the weather. I felt every pulse quickened by this fact, and they say I was so eloquent as to seem almost like a new man. The applause was great. I felt the sense of having the people drinking in every word and tone with hushed breath and keen relish. Half unconsciously I deepened and intensified my voice and began to lose myself in the theme, with which I was greatly fascinated myself. I had a sort of sense that I was fascinating the people and it was delicious beyond expression. They who first engaged me to give this course of lectures are emphatic in their delight. One old white-haired gentleman came up and warmly grasped my hand, and said he must thank me for ‘an enchanted hour which he should never forget.’

“This thing takes the people, you see: they understand and feel it all, as they can’t when I lecture on abstract things. The fame of it is going about briskly; and I believe I shall get full houses all over the country. The Centennial has started it, and I have started in at the right time.”

The subsequent lectures were: “The struggle between France and England”; “The Thirteen English Colonies”; “Causes of the American Revolution”; “The Manifest Destiny of the English Race.”

Public interest in these lectures deepened to the very end. The last one particularly, in the summing-

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up of the whole argument and in the presentation of the Anglo-American ideas of local self-government combined with federation, as destined to be dominant factors in the future development of the political organizations of the world, was not only a masterpiece of historic generalization; it was also a logical application of the doctrine of Evolution to the developing interests of humanity. Never before had America's place in universal history been presented from such a comprehensive viewpoint, or with such a wealth of historic knowledge combined with philosophic insight. In very truth, these lectures not only gave a new valuation to American history; they were also a delightful prelude to what was yet to come through Fiske's detailed presentation of the leading features of this great historic movement of the nations to the western world.

The success of the lectures in Boston was so complete that applications for their delivery in other places were numerous; but, as the lecture season in America was fairly over, while the season for lecturing in London was just on, Fiske was strongly advised to repeat the lectures at once in London if suitable arrangements for their delivery there could be made. An urgent adviser of the London project was Mrs. Mary Hemenway, whose foresight and liberal public spirit had saved the Old South Church from commercial vandalism and had made it a notable centre for instruction in American history and in good citizenship. Mrs. Hemenway had taken an

To Repeat Lectures in London

active part in procuring the lectures, and she was so greatly pleased with the outcome that she wanted the course delivered throughout the country. To this end, feeling confident that the lectures would be warmly received in England, she urged their delivery there as a substantial aid in stimulating a widespread demand for their delivery in the United States; and she was ready to contribute liberally to the venture.

Accordingly, Fiske wrote to his friends Huxley, Moncure Conway, and James Sime, giving them a synopsis of the course and an account of its great success in Boston, and telling them that if a suitable place for the delivery of the course could be had in London, with the probability of a good audience during the coming month of June, he would come over and give the lectures there. He asked them to take counsel together and, if they were in agreement that the scheme was practicable and wise, simply to cable him "Come."

There was no delay. These friends at once took counsel, and they were agreed that a good audience could be secured; whereupon Huxley said that one of the theatres or lecture halls of University College could be had for the lectures. This settled the matter, and Fiske therefore had not long to wait beyond the arrival of his letters in London before he received a cablegram, "Come," signed by his three friends.

Fiske hastily made preparations for a two

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months' absence, and on the 24th of May, 1879, he set sail for Liverpool in the Cunard steamer Samaria.

Fiske was eleven days at sea — the Samaria was then regarded as a good boat — and during this time he wrote a letter of eight letter-sheet pages to Mrs. Fiske, which is such a revealer of his innermost human nature, his abounding enjoyment of physical existence, his keen appreciation of the sublime beauties of the sea, his comradery in adapting himself agreeably to all sorts and conditions of people, and above all his intense affection for his wife and his children, that I wish there was space for the whole letter. But in view of what is directly before us in the way of his epistolary productions, space can be given to but a few extracts.

The haste with which he had prepared himself for his trip had taxed his strength to the utmost, so that when he found himself aboard ship he gave up the first three or four days principally to sleeping. From this period he came forth wholly refreshed, and we have the following graphic account of his sensible experiences: —

“Tell you what, when Hezzy goes in for sleep he can do it up brown! Dr. Means thinks I must have a mighty clear conscience!!! Consequence is I feel exactly like a youthful hart or roe a-scamperin' over the hills where spices grow, only I hope those hills don't smell like this Araby-blest of a ship. If it was n't for the bilge-water and the machine-oil and

Keen Enjoyment of the Sea

the cooking of the fish, perhaps a ship's odors would n't be so wondrously composite. The 'saloon' or mess-room, bress de Lor', is, however, tolerably sweet, having large windows each side so we can eat in comfort."

And here is a relishing description of a dish for a Sunday dinner: —

"These old Englishmen know how to set a liberal table. The Cap'n is a mighty jolly old bird — face as red as a biled lobster and as fat as Mr. Weller *senior*. To-day he offered us an old English dish, *not aristocratic* now-a-days, but suthin' like Boston pork-and-beans — a good Sunday dish. To-wit: 'Corned leg of pork and pease pudding'! It did n't sound particularly inviting, but when it came on table the sight of it would have whetted the appetite of even the sourest dyspeptic. It looked like a superb Deerfoot ham of colossal proportions, in the midst of a *purée* of something awfully savory and good. In short, it was a giant ham just pickled, or corned a little, without any smoking; covered with crumbs and delightfully singed; and the bed it reposed in was made of dried peas cooked in such manner as much to resemble a mess of baked beans, only far more delicate. The whole thing was crisped over most beautifully; and, garnished with a few herbs it looked like a very poem of a Sunday dish — as indeed it was. You can't imagine how delicious it was; or, rather, I hope you *can* imagine it after the above pellucid description."

And then he could be companionable in various ways: —

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“The first day (Saturday) at dinner, Hezzy took occasion to make a neat little speech *à propos* of the Queen’s birthday and to propose her health — which seemed to please the officers considerably — (the captain, doctor, and three other officers were at the table) and the doctor ordered up an excellent bottle of port and passed it around. At an early stage in the voyage Hezekiah, being known as the author of ‘Myths and Mythmakers,’ was called on for a fairy-tale and he had to give forth the ‘Invincible Pounder,’ the ‘Useless Waggoner,’ the ‘Soldier and the Warlock,’ and Lord knows how much other stuff, including ‘Old Misery and her Pear-tree.’”

Of his keen enjoyment of the sea he writes: —

“Yesterday no overcoat at all was needed. To-day it has been somewhat colder: — 58° this afternoon with gorgeous sunshine and sea of azure sprinkled with diamonds. I don’t see how people can call the sea monotonous, I could sit and watch its changing moods forever and be happy, — and it is always changing, always full of life and joy. Even when the black black waves toss up their snowy crests with savage laugh, I feel something within me that responds to the demon in them, and all my veins tingle as the blood flows faster. O, I love the sea!”

But supreme over all his shipboard experiences — in fact, permeating them all as a delightful flavor — are his remembrances of his wife and his children. And he gives expression to his feelings thus: —

Welcomed to England Again

“Six years ago to-day — Sunday, June 1, 1873 — I went to Spy Pond with Tick (Maud) and Barl (Harold) and Lacry (Clarence); and we went out in a boat, but it was too windy to row comfortably and so we adjourned to the grove to swing. Ask them all if they “*Merember it.*” Bless their dear little hearts! Papa is awfully homesick to see them already. Don’t you be slow in sending me the “pickerwows,” — of yourself and of each of the little ones; that is to say three of every one of you; and send them awful quick — just as soon as possible. Hezzy can’t stand it without ’em.”

And on Tuesday, June 3, 1879, he closes his letter thus: —

“The lovely coast of ould Ireland is before us in all its soft beauty, with cloud-shadows on its purple hills and velvet green fields — all in the glory of a perfect summer day. O, how beautiful!

“VOTRE BELZY.”

Fiske reached Liverpool at ten o’clock the evening of June 4, 1879, and he went directly to the Adelphi Hotel, where he found letters from Huxley and Sime, in which they gave him a cordial welcome to England again, and also advised him of the arrangements that had been made for the delivery of his lectures in London. He was perfectly satisfied with the arrangements, and his state of mind and his movements are given in a letter he wrote Mrs. Fiske the next morning: —

“Am perfectly MAD with joy at setting foot again on the shores of old England: it seems like Para-

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dise. Was just sitting down to a delicious supper of broiled kidneys, crisp bacon, hot toast and bitter beer about 11 P.M. last evening, when in walked Henry Holt."

The unexpected meeting between the two friends was a most cordial one, and although Fiske had already planned his trip up to London via Chester and Oxford, he gladly put his own plan aside to join Holt and his friend, William Henry Fuller, on a side-excursion they had planned to Coventry, Kenilworth, Warwick, and Stratford-on-Avon. From Fiske's account of this excursion, written at Oxford, June 6, 1879, the following extracts are taken: —

"After dinner at 8 P.M. (Coventry, June 5th, 1879) we started on the most ravishingly beautiful walk on the globe — we started afoot for Kenilworth, sending our bags by a deliciously green rustic with his old wheelbarrow — it is a five-mile road, and sublimity would be no name for it. The road is as smooth as a floor, under giant elms and sycamores overarching the whole way, with mediæval houses loaded with ivy every now and then. But that does n't tell the road to you, and you'll have to wait till you and I do it together. In this ravishingly soft air I believe even you could walk five miles. It was a scene worthy of Eden. At 10 — twilight, you know — we turned in among the quaint mediæval streets of Kenilworth, and after some groping found our deliciously green rustic at the *King's Arms* with all our luggage safe and sound.

Kenilworth and Stratford

“Got up this morning at 8 and found it raining, which disconcerted my two boys, who were inclined to quit all and go to London. However, I got 'em to go out and see Kenilworth Castle;¹ and then I tugged 'em on to Stratford and we did the whole thing and dined at the *Red Horse*. I was glad to see the dear old town again, and at the church I found the organist — a warm friend of my old fellow-traveller in Italy — John Adkins — and I gave him a syllabus of my lectures with my card and compliments to Mr. Adkins. The organist was very pleasant, and said Mr. Adkins had a fine estate in the neighborhood and would show me real old English hospitality if I would look in. Perhaps I may, on my way to visit Derbyshire which I'm bound to see.”

Fiske's engagements necessitated his being in London the next day, Saturday, June 7. Accordingly, after dining with his friends Holt and Fuller at the Red Horse Inn, Stratford, he was obliged to leave them to jog their leisurely way up to London, while he pushed on to Oxford for the night in order to catch an early morning train.

From this time on, Fiske has given in his letters to Mrs. Fiske such a detailed account of his experiences during this memorable visit to London, that anything interrupting their genial flow would be of the nature of impertinent supererogation. He

¹ As a great lover of Scott, the ruins of Kenilworth Castle had a deep interest for Fiske. He got several photographs of the ruins, and the absence of any expression of sentimental feeling in his letter is accounted for by his haste.

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is left, therefore, to tell his story in his own way, with a note here and there in the way of explanation.

As these letters, in connection with the letters giving an account of his previous visit, will doubtless receive much attention, not only as revelations of the many-sidedness of Fiske's intellectual make-up, but also as valuable contributions to the biographical literature of the time through the glimpses they give of a number of eminent personages, one point should be borne in mind in the reading of them — they were written without thought of publication, and that fact gives them their charm. We have frequently had occasion to observe how completely his whole intellectual life was permeated with his domestic affections. In these letters this trait in his character comes out in a little more emphatic way than we have had occasion to observe it before: particularly in his descriptions of his own performances and their effect upon his audience. In the very graphic descriptions he gives of his own feelings and of the honors bestowed upon him, it should be considered that in his own mind these honors and tributes were not wholly his, were things to be shared with his family, — particularly with his wife and mother, — and hence we have throughout the letters that tone of generous self-revealing frankness which is so delightful, and which is the farthest possible remove from selfish egoism.

Second Visit to London

On reaching London, Fiske sent postal cards every few days, in which he announced his arrival and gave his general movements. June 23d he took up, in a sort of diaristic form, the story of his visit from the time of his leaving Oxford.

9 BEDFORD PLACE, BLOOMSBURY,
LONDON, *June 23, 1879.*

I was so tired when I got to Oxford that I slept over the first train, and did n't start till 12.25, but we reached London (63 miles) at 1.50. At Westbourne Park there is a junction with the "underground," so I changed cars and whizzed through the bowels of the earth to Marlborough Road, left my bag at the station and walked with strange emotions through the well known streets leading to Marlborough Place. As I approached the gate a hansom stopped at it, and out got Mrs. Huxley and Madge! They looked with surprise at the sudden apparition, and then there was a very warm greeting: told 'em I could n't wait and so had come straight from the cars, which seemed to gratify 'em. Went in and had a delightful lunch with them and Jessie's husband, but was too happy to eat. I could only sit and look at them, and did n't care to say much either. They were both amused and pleased at my beatific state of mind, and Madge gave me a great shake of the hand, and said she could n't tell how glad she was to see me; and added "O, I am going to be married, you know!" She showed me a bushel of drawings, etchings, water-colors &c. — you know she draws and paints beautifully — and we had a lovely two hours. The others were not at home.

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Took a cab, got my bag, and went to Bowles's. Came on to rain pitchforks, and I must get lodgings before night so as to make a good toilet for Sunday. Cudgelled my brains a spell, but could n't seem to make any part of London seem like home so much as Bloomsbury: — happy thought, — get my old rooms at 67 Great Russell Street. Hezzy is a real cat, you know, when it comes to the garret-question. Alas! vicissitudes do occur even in conservative London. My pretty landlady and her silly "Alfred" had vanished, clean gone, busted, bankrupted, and moved "down into the country somewhere." In their place was a horrid old beldame who said I could have the rooms by July 1st, but not before. I looked across at the majestic British Museum, heaved a sigh and came around the corner to 1 Bedford Place, where I had roomed in May, 1874. All full, but could warmly recommend No. 9. Ancient maiden lady, very kindly, rather proud, and fond of literary people; knows Ralston, and several opera singers! Her papa, an old doctor, deaf as an adder; tries now and then to make a little conversation, but gives it up; pats me on the back and nods approvingly, to show that he thinks I'm fair-to-middlin'. Dogmatic semi-gentlemanly gent, with long auburn beard, and *terremenjuously* fat wife covered with furbelows, who laughs all the time, misplaces her *h*'s, knows Ruskin, and says stupid things, invariably getting condign punishment in the shape of a sarcastic comment from the dogmatic semi-gentlemanly gent. Homely and very gentle old maid, dark complexioned and wears awfully unbecoming blue ribbons, extremely refined in manners, plays Mozart's and Beethoven's sonatas

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all day long — and plays 'em very well indeed, on a diabolical old piano.

Such, my dear, are the inhabitants of this abode of faded gentility. *Terms*: For one front room up three flights with boots, candles, attendance, and breakfasts twenty nine shillings a week = \$6.96 or say one dollar a day! All right: I liked the room and the terms and the inmates, as far as described, and concluded the bargain and by seven P.M. was installed, trunk, bag, and all. Felt very faint and tired; walked to the *Horse-Shoe*, and got a steak and some lentils. This tavern now professes to concoct "American drinks" and I enclose the printed list, which I think will amuse you: it shows how J. Bull exaggerates an American-ism when he once gets hold of it.¹ Feeling now revived I cabbied it five miles to Sime's, and did n't I get a good hearty Scotch reception! They could n't shake my hands enough. Sime's brother was there with his wife, so there were a jolly party of us. At 10 o'clock we had supper — veal-and-ham pie, "garden sass" of some kind, cheese and biscuits, Scotch ale and old sherry; and pipes afterwards. Staid till 12.30 and was almost too happy to live.

Next day (Sunday) went to Conway's at Hammersmith — a pretty villa surrounded by a beautiful garden — to two o'clock dinner. A young painter was there named Bloomer — a Californian. I like his work. Also Mr. and Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, and Miss *Sara Hennell*. Miss Hennell is an old lady about seventy, of most angelic beauty and loveliness: she has the face of a saint: her hair is snow-white and soft as silk: she is a perfect "vision

¹ I regret that this list has disappeared.

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of loveliness"; her features are purely Greek and exquisite in every outline; eyes deep violet blue with long lashes, — O, is n't she a beauty! Mrs. Rose is a handsome old lady too. Miss Hennell knew my books well and professed herself delighted to see me.¹ At six I took the underground to Huxley's and found the good old fellow himself and all the babies. Babies! Good Lord! Nettie and Rachel are as tall as Seringapatam, and Leonard is as tall as I am! *The celebrated painter Alma-Tadema and his wife were there. We had a glorious time, and a good "tall tea"; but Hezzy was too happy to eat. Hezzy played piano to the crowd. At ten Huxley took me into his study, and we had a cozy smoke and talk till 12, when I hansomed home — about three miles and a half.

Monday: June 9: Huxley gave me a letter to the principal draughtsman of the Geological Survey, requesting him to get my map for my lectures mounted with all possible speed; and so Monday morning I visited the Royal Concern in Jermyn St. and they took the matter in hand (and had it ready in time). Lunched on a small steak and cucumber-salad at the *Vienna Beer Hall*. Called at Trübner's shop, but he had gone to Worthing. Took the underground at Blackfriars, and flew to Bayswater and picked up Sime and we cabbied to Conway's where we found a lot of pretty girls and Baron Ernst de Bunsen, son of Bunsen's Egypt, you know. An immensely learned and amiable old fellow, like his papa. He found out that I knew some-

¹ Miss Hennell was the author of a work significant of the time, entitled *Present Religion*. Fiske made a notable extract from this work in summing up his argument in his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* (vol. II, p. 503).

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thing about the Assyrian language and held me so that I had n't time to talk to any of the pretty girls, which Sime had 'em all to himself, which I envied him and mused upon the unequal way in which Providence distributes its good things.

Entr'act. [Two o'clock to-day, June 23: out for a little walk: went behind Great Russell St. and looked at old Bloomsbury clock, which I used to hear in bed years ago and wonder if I ever *should* get back to my dear ones. Recollected that the ale at the *Pied Bull* used to seem superior to anything else in London; wondered if it would seem as delicious now, and stepped in. It *was* just as good; but there was nothing fit to eat but a pork-pie, so I strolled on past where the Cock-a-doodle-doo used to wake me mornings here in the very heart of London. Dear old roosters, they're all dead and gone! — been “served” with sausage and bread-sauce, no doubt. Kept on to the *Horse-Shoe* and ate a small steak smothered with lentils and now return refreshed to my egotisti-graphical essay.]

To continue, Monday, June 9. Sime and I staid to dinner at Conway's and at 9 o'clock went to Macmillan's in Covent Garden. He used to live over his shop when he was young, and now has large parlours there, where he gives receptions in the “Season.” It is more convenient than to have people go out to his “Castle” at Upper Tooting. It was truly a *stupendous* affair. I went quite uninvited, knowing that I would be welcome. There were at least 400 people there I should think. What did the bonny old boy do but *throw his arms about my neck* and hug me like a grizzly bear (!!!) and then step off a bit and hold me at arms-length, and

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scan me from head to foot, and then exclaim with a broad grin, "And was't na a naughta bay, 't wad coom awver all the way to Englund, and *wadna* wrait me a *lun* ta tell me that a was coomin?"

I began to apologize on account of the suddenness, etc.; but the old fellow hit me an awful thump between my shoulder-blades and said, "De'il take it, mon: I shall have ta forgie ye, for ye're sach a gude bay." Then he introduced me to a lot of celebrities; Dr. Crichton-Browne, Dr. Lauder-Brunton, Maudesley, Charlton-Bastian, Edmund About, and a lot of others. They had all read "Cosmic Philosophy" and all flocked around me and said the prettiest things you could ever imagine! I said aside to Sime that I was surprised to find all these people knowing me so well. "My dear boy," said Sime, "your 'Cosmic Philosophy' at once gave you a place in England among the greatest thinkers and writers of the age, and you must expect to be treated accordingly while you are here." Dr. Lauder-Brunton said he felt that he owed more to me than to any other man living, and said a lot of other pretty things, and enlarged upon my "beautiful style," etc. "Yes," said Dr. Fothergill, "he is as great a poet as philosopher," — and forthwith he recited a whole page from memory *verbatim* from "Cosmic Philosophy" to prove his point — which showed that at any rate, he must have been sincere. By Jove, how they did pile it on!

About this time Macmillan came up and said: "Fiske, here's *Glaadstane* a-askin' ta be antradooced ta ye," and so I turned around and had a very pleasant chat with Gladstone, chiefly about Russia. I told him I was Mrs. Stoughton's son, and he

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recollected my mother very well and told me how charming she was, and was surprised that she had such an elephant of a boy — though he did n't use just that expression. Well, we had a high old P.M.

Tuesday, 10th June, 1879. Loafed about Covent Garden and lunched at *Evans's* — celebrated by Thackeray — on a chop and ale. Walked through Mayfair till tired and took cab to Queen's Gardens, Bayswater, but Spencer was out of town. Had been wondering every day where "Fiske" was and why he did n't turn up! Had tried to keep a room in the house for me, but I did n't come and somebody else did and finally Miss Sheckel let it. Sat down and had a pleasant chat with the Misses Sheckel, told 'em I would come Saturday to lunch at 1, and strolled off through Kensington Gardens. The day was perfect, — sunny and clear, with a cool, fresh breeze. Giant elms and beeches, velvet grass, herds of sheep, nurses with baby-carriages, the beautiful Serpentine River gleaming between the trees, hawthorns pink and white, in full blossom, yellow laburnums, purple wisteria, mountains of rhododendrons — as soft and exquisite a scene of beauty as ever fell upon human eye. O how I wished I had you, and Maudie, and Barl, and Lacry, and Waffie, and Offel and 'ittle 'erbert 'uxley!

Dined at *Vienna Beer Hall* and cabbied to Alfred Place; wound up the stone stairs and through the dusky passage, opened the door, and there in his dingy den, buried up among tons of books and papers was my good old Ralston! Another happy meeting and furious handshaking: pipes were lighted and our tongues ran hard till midnight.

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Wednesday, June 11, 1879. Anniversary of the day when I first met you, my angel, on the verandah at Miss Upham's,¹ and instantly made up my mind to marry you if you would consent. *First* lecture at University College. The room or theatre had been granted at once on Huxley's request. Too late for Royal Institution. Sir Frederick Pollock, Vice President of the Royal Institution, said he was mighty sorry he had not known of my lectures earlier, he would then have had them there. Huxley then decided for the University College, as the next best place to the Royal Institution. Huxley says we will try to make some plan for the Royal Institution next year and this will open the door to all the other lecture places in Great Britain. We are hatching a plan in which YOU are included; and if you come you can't imagine what a lovely greeting you'll get.

There are two "theatres" at the London University College. Huxley chose the smaller one, seating about 400, for he said that would be a large audience for London any way. J. Bull is not such a lecture-going animal as the Yankee. Huxley did n't think I would get a room full no matter *how* good the lectures might be. Conway was sanguine enough to predict at least 200. All agreed that to *fill* the room, at such short notice, would be enough of a success to produce *famous* results, — much more than one could reasonably expect.

Well, my dear, you may believe I was nervous beyond my wont. I felt sick all Wednesday forenoon, and all unstrung with anxiety. I feared there would n't be 50 people. If there had been a small

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 244.

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audience I should have been disheartened, and should have made a poor appearance. At 10 A.M. the sky grew black and all London was dark: a gloomier day I never saw. At 11 down came the rain in torrents, pouring like an *American* rain of the most determined kind. The streets ran in rivulets: you needed an India-rubber overcoat and overshoes; I never saw it rain so hard before in London; and at 2.30, when I got to the lecture room, it was still pouring in bucketfuls, and I was so unhappy I could hardly keep from tears. Two young American girls were in the room — not another soul till 2.50. O dear, thought I, what if I should have *no* audience but these two young girls!

All at once came a rattle of hansom cabs and in poured the people! Within five minutes in came two hundred; and did n't my heart beat with gladness! Then entered Huxley, and the two hundred applauded! Then Sime, and Conway, and Ralston, and Baron Bunsen, and so on till by 3.05 the room was *full* — a good four hundred, I should say: hardly any space left. My spirits rose to the boiling-point. When I got up I was greeted with loud applause, and I forgot there ever was any such animal as John Fiske, and went to work with a gusto. I must have outdone myself entirely; I was interrupted every few minutes with applause, at remarks which we should n't notice in America; but which seemed to hit them here most forcibly. When I got through they applauded so long, I had to get up and make a bow; and then they went at it again, till I had to get up again and say that I was very much pleased and gratified by their kind sympathy;

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and then I had a third long round of applause with cheers and "Bravos."

Up came Huxley and squeezed my hand and said, "My dear Fiske, you have gone beyond anything you could have expected: do you know you have had the very cream of London to hear you!" Sime came up and said, "My dear boy, I can't tell you how delighted I am: you have entranced us all." Baron Bunsen said, "I am happy to have de honour of hear so beautiful discourse: accept my most warm congratulashon'. You do please dese London people most extremely." Ralston said, "Fiske, I wish you could *bite* some of our public speakers and infect them with some of your eloquence!" Henry Holt was there and he *said*, "Fact is, John, you have conquered your audience this time. I am glad I was here; these things don't come to a man often." Henry Stevens, the anti-quarian, said, "I say, young man, you can give these lectures in every town in England and Scotland, — did you know it?"

Well, my dear, I felt quite jubilant, naturally enough — and so to keep the blessed anniversary of the day when first we two did meet, I sent you my brief telegram, "Glorious," which I thought you would understand in the main, and immediately transmit to my mother and my fairy godmother.¹ Then we — that is, Holt and I — went to *Kettner's* for a grand skylark of a dinner. I led the way through the quaint dingy streets. When we got there I observed "Thérèse Kettner" over the door, and — sure enough — good old Kettner, most genial and learned of cooks, is dead, and it is now his

¹ Mrs. Hemenway.

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widow who keeps up the place. As for the "Book of the Table," all of the learning and most of the fun was really Kettner's own, but he did not write the English. Dallas — the author of the "Gay Science," which you will probably find in the left-hand or street side of my bay-window alcove — wrote the book from Kettner's dictation and clothed Kettner's thoughts in his own English. But all the thought was Kettner's own.

We had a delicious dinner: — Mulligatawny soup, soles *au vin blanc*, *fillet aux truffles*, *petits pois*, a dainty vol-au-vent, pigeons, a wonderful *salade de legumes*, *omelette sucrée*, *fromage de Brie* and *café*; with some chablis and champagne, winding up with cigars — quite an especial treat, you know, for this grand occasion. How was this for the eighteenth anniversary, my dear?

Friday, June 13, 1879. Second lecture: fine day, and room *packed*; at least 80 or a 100 standing up in the aisles; huge applause. Huxley told me he thought I was making a really "tremendous hit" (those were his words, — "tremendous hit"), and that a great deal would come of it hereafter. "For my own part, my dear Fiske," he added, "I will frankly say that I have never before been so enchanted in all my life. Henceforth I shall tell all my friends that there is no subject so interesting as the early history of America." Those were Huxley's words. After the lecture I dined at the Arts Club with Sime, and we had a most delightful evening.

Saturday, June 14, 1879. Called at Spencer's, expecting to find him at lunch. But he had reached home the night before, and had got off for the day, without getting my message from Miss Scheckel.

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I then went off to Hennessy's — the painter — and he invited me most cordially to come and make him a visit at his *château* in Normandy — near Honfleur — and the temptation is great. I don't quite know yet whether I shall do it or not. Then I went to Simpson's *Divan* to dine: and there was my same old head-waiter to call out in nasal tones "Saddle o' mutton 15"; and the same old gray-headed servant wheeled up the little table with the saddle o' mutton on it and asked me if I was very hungry to-night. I said yes, awfully faint and ravenously hungry. "Well, sir, God bless ye, we'll feed ye accordingly" — and so he dealed me out two "*terremenjuous*" slices of the richest mutton with summer cabbage ("‘Aha,’ said Mr. Jobling, ‘you are there, are you? Thank you, Guppy, I really don't know but what I *will* take summer cabbage.’"¹) I got a heap of enjoyment out of that dinner and I don't think that even Delmonico could have produced the peer of that Southdown mutton!

Sunday, June 15, 1879. Dined: no, I must begin still earlier. I intended spending the morning writing to you, and mother and Mrs. Hemenway; but just as I got about ready to work Herbert Spencer called, and that broke up my whole A.M. Spencer was extremely jolly and friendly, and we had a most delightful and inspiring talk of more than two hours. Then I had to go to dine at two o'clock with Henry Stevens the eccentric antiquary. He says I am to be invited to dine with the "citizens of Noviomagas" at the *Star and Garter* inn at Richmond early in July and shall be expected

¹ See Dickens's *Bleak House*, chap. xx.

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to make a big speech on account of my lectures now. O Lord! but I send you one of their droll programmes. Perhaps I may go and "sass" the Lord High as I did before, you know. Had a most jolly dinner with Stevens, who is very learned, and by no means a fool: and then we went to the Zoological Gardens together.

"Tall tea" at the 'orrid 'uxleys. Mr. and Mrs. Lecky were there. I sat next Mrs. Lecky at table: she is delightful. Lord Arthur Russell was there with his wife. I soon made friends with Lady Russell, who is a sweet and lovely lady, and we had a jolly chat. Lord Arthur said I must come to the Cosmopolitan club and see all the "folks.") Yes, my dear, the brother of the Duke of Bedford said "folks." Did n't I always tell you that "folks" was the best of English? In the course of conversation it turned out that Macmillan had forgotten to send Lord Arthur a copy of "Cosmic Philosophy"; but Lord Arthur said he should feel it a great honour to receive a copy even now, with my autograph if not too late. So I sent him a copy the next day and enclose you his reply. At 10 P.M. the Huxley affair terminated, and Lord and Lady Arthur Russell took me homeward in a four-wheeled cab. Reaching their home Lady Russell got out and went in, saying that she hoped I would come and see her that we "might prolong this delightful talk." Lord Arthur continued with me to the Cosmopolitan Club. As we entered arm in arm, a most elegant and beautiful old gentleman got up, with the loveliest smile, and took me by the hand. I did n't know him, but of course responded amiably, — as why should n't I, for I was perfectly *bewitched* with

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his grace of manner, surpassing anything I had ever before seen in this world. In all my life I had never seen any human being so completely clothed with *gracefulness* as this superb old gentleman. Before it had time to come to words, Lord Houghton rushed up, saying, "My dear Mr. Fiske, we are all delighted to see you again." Ditto Tom Hughes, and Lord Enfield, — and somebody else got hold of the delightful old gentleman and he went away. The delightful old gentleman was Earl Granville. I was afterwards introduced to him. Lord Enfield gave me a written request to come to the club while in London. Went home awfully homesick for my wife and little ones.

Monday, June 16, 1879. Went to Spencer's, as of old, to lunch, and walked with him through Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. Dined at *Kettner's* with Holt and came home to bed at 9 o'clock. By this time Holt's friend Fuller had gone to Paris, and Holt being reduced to me, for comradeship, came up and took a room in this very house.

Tuesday, June 17, 1879. Called at Macmillan's shop and proposed to him my new book of essays ("Darwinism and Other Essays"). He said if I would bring him the essays the next day he would look them over and let me know. Got on top of an omnibus with Holt, and traversed miles and miles of streets even to the Seven Sisters Road, near Finsbury Park. Returning lunched at the *Angel* at Islington, and "trammed" via City Road to Ludgate Hill, where we were most cordially greeted by Trübner. Mrs. Trübner's father, M. Octave Delepierre, is fatally ill, — will not live more than two or three months — but Mrs. Trübner had told her

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husband that I must any way come to dinner informally; and so we arranged for the next Tuesday — Holt to come also. Dined alone at *Kettner's*, and went out to Sime's, and had a most happy evening.

Wednesday, June 18, 1879. Carried my essays to Macmillan and found he had already decided to publish the book. He has not yet fully reimbursed himself on the "Cosmic Philosophy," but expects to, for he says my fame is growing all the time and he thinks people will be more "up to" the "Cos. Phil." ten years hence than now. *Third* lecture today. It was as successful as the others. Spencer was there, and congratulated me warmly.

After lecture went down by cars to Orpington in Kent and found Darwin's carriage awaiting me at the station.¹ Drove four miles through exquisite

¹ In his daily record Fiske appears to have omitted to mention the fact that soon after his arrival in London he sought an interview with Darwin, who responded with the following cordial invitation to visit him at his home at Down.

DOWN, June 10, 1879.

My dear Mr. Fiske: —

Would it suit you best to come here on the 18th either to luncheon, or to dinner, returning after breakfast next morning — for we are not likely to be in London for some time? Pray do whichever suits your arrangements best. If you come for luncheon you must leave Charing Cross by the 11.25 train; if for dinner by the 4.12 train. If we can (but our house will be very full on most days for the next month) we will send to Orpington Station to meet you; but if we cannot send a carriage you must take a bus — distance four miles.

I hope what I propose will be convenient to you and that we may have the pleasure of seeing you here.

I remain Yours faithfully,
CH. DARWIN.

I have not been very well of late and am up to but small exertion of any kind. An artist, Mr. Richard, is coming here on the evening of the 18th, as he is making a portrait, but he is a pleasant man and I do not think you will dislike meeting him.

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English lanes (the air heavily scented with blossoms) to Darwin's house. Jolly place with lots of garden. George and Horace were there, and Mrs. Litchfield, and two or three Wedgwoods. The old man was as lovely as lovely could be. Nice dinner and smoke on verandah, and Miss Carrie Wedgwood played considerable Bach, Scarlatti, Schumann, and Schubert on the grand piano. Afterwards grandpa and Hezzy got into a very abstruse discussion, and when the clock said ten, up came Mrs. Darwin and pointed with warning finger to the clock, and so grandpa said he must obey orders and trotted off to bed. I staid up till eleven and smoked another cigar with the boys. Breakfast at eight next morning. At ten Darwin was to sit for his portrait in his red Doctor-of-Laws gown, for the University of Cambridge. He put the gown on after breakfast, to the great glee of the little grandchildren, and the merriment of all, as he stepped up on a chair to get a full view of himself in the mirror.

At 9.30 George Darwin drove me to the station and went up to London with me, as he was to be made an F.R.S. that evening for some mathematical discoveries. Met Holt and Spencer at the Athenæum Club at eleven, and we went out by train to Richmond. Perfect summer day, bright sunlight, broken with flitting clouds, delightful cool breeze. I know where Adam and Eve lived before the Fall. It was on the Thames about a mile and three quarters above Richmond. Of course it was; for no other spot on earth smiles with such delicious and entrancing beauty. We strolled up as far as Twickenham on one bank, and then were *ferried* across in a *fairy*-boat (pardon the pun: every-

A Delightful Excursion

thing was *fairy* that day), and walked back on the other side. O, I thought, if I DON'T bring you here some day!!! Being hungry we stopped at the *Castle* inn for lunch, and sat down at a cool table in an *oriel window overhanging the beautiful river*. Excellent chops, salad of cresses, cheese, and ale. Spencer insisted on paying the score and would n't let us: so we silently vowed REVENGE!!! Walked up to the Park, and an itinerant photographer wanted to "take" us in a group. You can believe I should have liked to bring home such a souvenir; but Spencer gave signs of not wishing to be bored by itinerant business-chaps, and I did n't venture to propose a sitting. We roamed till seven P.M. through the lovely Park, (Richmond Park) now and then lounging under great beeches and oaks, telling stories, making jokes, philosophizing &c. All day long we listened to Spencer's rich bass voice and his rich brogue, with his heavy trill of the *r* quite equal to a Frenchman's, while he poured out infinite store of wit and wisdom, and amazed us with his stupendous knowledge and his wonderful keenness. He felt perfectly well and was in high spirits; I was in my highest feather. Holt carries a pedometer, and so we know that we walked 19 miles that heavenly day. As we came down a beautiful hill about 7 P.M. approaching some quaint houses under overarching elms and cedars of Lebanon, I asked what was this lovely place? "O, now," said Spencer, quite unconsciously, "now we're just in *Petersham!*" It came over me oddly, and somehow made the chokes come, and for several minutes I could think of nothing but my darlings.

Fancy such a day, my dear; try to fancy such

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a day! — such a long, long, sunny, happy, sweet, delightful day. From the vision of red-gowned, white-haired Darwin, with his capering grandchildren in the morning, down to the vision of Spencer, Holt, and myself among the grand cedars at Petersham, in the evening, it seemed a full *month*, — so much life had I lived on that day of ecstatic bliss! Holt said he would cross the Atlantic at any time, and feel far more than repaid for the time and expense, for *one* such day as this. But the vague shadow on his face told that he had no dear sympathising one to tell the story to.

Spencer had paid for our spree at the inn and we were bent on fell *revenge*. When we parted at 8.30 in Trafalgar Square, Holt invited Spencer to dine with us at any time or place he might like. Spencer said he did n't care much for dinners just now, and would rather have another day in the country. So we left it in that way, internally resolving to do well by him when the time should come. At 9 Holt and I took a chop at the *Horse-Shoe*, and then I swallow-tailed and went to a grand reception at University College and was very much lionized there.

Friday, June 20, 1879. Fourth lecture: audience increasing and more enthusiastic than ever. Spencer said after the lecture, that he was surprised at the tremendous grasp I had on the whole field of history; and the art with which I used such a wealth of materials. Said I had given him new ideas of Sociology, and that if I would stick to history I could go beyond anything ever yet done. Said still more: in fact he was quite as enthusiastic as Mrs. Hemenway. I never saw Spencer warm up so. I said I did n't really dream when writing about American

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history that there could be anything so new about it. "Well," said Spencer, "it *is* new anyway: you are opening a new world of reflections to me, and I shall come to the rest of the lectures *to be taught!*"

Went then to a garden-party at Conway's, and saw a lot of folks — among 'em Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. Got back to dinner at eight o'clock at the *Reform Club*, with Henry James. Turgenieff was the hero of the occasion, and he is splendid, — not unlike Longfellow in appearance. James Bryce, the great historian, was also there, and my ever-delightful old Ralston. Magnificent dinner, and brilliant chinwag. Ralston walked home with me at midnight.

Saturday, June 21, 1879. Spent most of the day at the printers' — my same good old printers Clay and Taylor. Whizzed through the bowels of the earth to South Kensington, and climbed about 1,000,000 stone stairs, and burst in on Huxley who was buried in his new work on *Crayfish* — and a charming book I think it will be, from what he read me. He said he was tired out with writing, wiped his pen and began joking and laughing. Took me home in a cab to dinner — Jessie was there and is just twice as lovely, now she is married. She is my old pet is Jessie, and we did have a good evening and lots of music.

Sunday, June 21, 1879. Out to Macmillan's "castle" at Upper Tooting, with Holt to early dinner. Delicious summer day. About a dozen people, good dinner, and very much piano by Hezzy. Miss Pignatel, of my previous visit — is over at Boulogne and not very well. Did I tell you that Mrs. Macmillan and Miss Pignatel are pure

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Italians? The name is Pignatelli. They never talked anything but Italian till they were twelve years old or more. They came from Leghorn. They talk English without any accent. Mrs. Macmillan is very charming, as I have told you before — I gave her my “Unseen World.”

Got back to “town” at 10 and wound up at the Cosmopolitan Club with Earl Granville, his brother Mr. Leveson-Gower, Tom Hughes, Lord Kimberley, Lord Barrington, Mallock the author of “New Republic,” Lord Arthur Russell, and Count Teff, a most agreeable Dutchman. Lord Kimberley is at present the head of University College, and of course was the one who at Huxley’s request gave me the room to lecture in.

Monday, June 23, 1879. Wrote to you *on this letter* most of the day, and dined at *Kettner’s* with Holt.

Tuesday, June 24, 1879. Called at Macmillan’s and printers’ and loafed about town. Dined with Holt at Trübner’s. Warm welcome from Mrs. Trübner. I always told you that no one could get up a dinner like Trübner, and that a sip of his wine gave one a new conception of the heights to which civilization can attain. Found it just so this time,— and so did Holt. Mrs. Trübner sat through the dinner and then went to look after her papa: her papa, you know, Octave Delepierre, is the author of the famous book on “Historical Difficulties,” *à propos* of which I wrote my essay in October, 1868, when *your mother* said one day at the dinner-table at Oxford Street, “Why, John, if you keep on working this way you’ll get rich, only you can’t keep on so.” [N.B. We had a boiled Indian pud-

End of Lecture Course

ding that day; it was in the halcyon days of Mary and Maria, about the time when Maudie “*storned*” the base imputation.]

Wednesday, June 25, 1879. Fifth lecture and everything good as usual. Nothing new. Dined with Holt at *Vienna Beer Hall*.

Thursday, June 26, 1879. All day on new book of essays and went to printers'. Devil calls daily now. Called at Huxley's and had an hour's pleasant chat with Jessie. Dined at Frederick Macmillan's with Holt and had a pleasant evening.

Friday, June 27, 1879. A great day! At 11 A.M. strolled through Great Russell Street, — looked at No. 67, of course, — saw a notice in the window, — called, and *found my same old suite of rooms vacant and ready for me!!!* Horrid beldame became at once, in my softened vision, a most amiable and unctuous female. In short, I engaged the rooms at once and am to move in there Wednesday, July 2d!!! Same old rooms, as where Spencer used to come to see me, and where Hezzy used to write “tezzletelts” to you — my heart jumped with gladness!

Went out to Spencer's and lunched with him and we went together to my *last* lecture. Room jammed: every seat full, extra benches full, people crowding up on the platform where I stood, all the aisles packed full of people standing, people perched up on the ledges of the windows, and a crowd at each door extending several yards out into the entry ways!!! I never had such a sensation of “filling a house” before, though I had numerically larger audiences at Baltimore. Now here is one of the unforeseen ways in which you make a “hit” when you talk

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to a somewhat foreign audience. I wrote about Africa quietly and philosophically, foretelling what must happen there, as any one can, of course, foresee. I told it simply, and my Boston audience did not single it out for special notice, as why should they? But I was now addressing a British audience, and these are the days when *England is in mourning* for husbands, brothers, sons, slain in horrid warfare with the Zulus, and all England is as tender about Africa as we were fifteen years ago about the South. When I began to speak of the future of the English race in Africa, I became aware of an immense *silence*, a kind of *breathlessness*, all over the room — although it had been extremely quiet before. After three or four more sentences, I heard some deep breathings and murmurs, and “hushes.” All at once, when I came to round the parallel of the English career in America and Africa, there came up one stupendous SHOUT, — not a common demonstration of approval, but a deafening SHOUT of exultation. Don't you wish you had been there, darling? — it would have been the proudest moment of your life!

At the end of the lecture they fairly *howled* applause. Gentlemen stood up on the benches and waved their hats; ladies stood up on the benches and fluttered their handkerchiefs; and they kept it up until I had to make a pretty little speech. Then they clamoured again, and one old white-haired man made a speech of thanks; and then another gentleman got up and seconded the other with another pretty little speech, winding up by proposing three cheers for me; and they gave three rousing cheers so that I had to bow and smile and thank

A Day in the Country

'em once more. Then about a hundred or more came up to shake hands and say pleasant things. Spencer kept his bright eyes fastened on me all through the lecture and after all was over he said: "Well, my boy, you have *earned* your success: it was the most glorious lecture I ever listened to in my life." Ditto or similarly Ralston and Sime. The 'orrid 'Uxley was not there that day — too busy.

Loafed around after the lecture with Sime and dined at *Kettner's* with Sime and Holt.

Saturday, June 28, 1879. Took *revenge* on Spencer by treating him to "a day in the country" at *our* expense; that is, Holt's and mine. Day of ineffable happiness. Went to Windsor Castle, ascended the round tower and had a wonderful view; walked over to Eton College and saw a fine cricket-match, lots of pretty girls and happy students; strolled through some "English lanes"; listened to the carol of the lark and the delicious notes of a great chorus of nightingales; drank in all the sweetness of an English summer day; went back to Windsor, ravenous, and made a mighty lunch at the *White Hart*, — royal cold mutton, cold ham, salad of endives and lettuce, pigeon pie, superb bread and butter, new Stilton cheese, and miraculous beer. Even the abstemious Spencer drank a quart of ale, — a thing which he said he had hardly ever done before. Took a carriage and drove through the Park to Virginia Water, and walked the rest of the way. Spencer fairly boiled over with "animal spirits"; he is a different man from what he was five years ago. Fascinating is no name for it; he was absolutely a magician this day with sparkling wit and his wonderful flashes of wisdom.

John Fiske

I only wish I could remember it all. We walked sixteen miles by Holt's pedometer. O, what a wonderful day!!

Sunday, June 29, 1879. Dined with Holt at Conway's and had a pleasant afternoon. Cosmopolitan in the evening and had another jolly chat with Tom Hughes, Dr. Hamilton and Count Teff. Earl Granville came in about 11.30 and immediately "fastened on to" Hezzy and said no end of pleasant things. Said he thought I was doing a *great work* by giving these lectures here and was only sorry that I had n't an audience of five thousand instead of five hundred. Hoped I would come again and give some more lectures.

And here I bring Fiske's epistolary diary to a close and will summarize his record of the rest of his visit.

Monday, May 30, was the day of Miss Madge Huxley's wedding to the Hon. John Collier, and Fiske was an honored guest both at the church service and at the wedding breakfast which followed. He gave Mrs. Fiske quite a detailed account of both functions, but as these details would lead us somewhat aside from our legitimate story it is sufficient to say that it was a delightful occasion, that the bride "was extremely happy and vivacious," that "Huxley looked perfectly splendid," and among the many speeches that were made at the breakfast "his was by far the funniest and best."

His lectures over, Fiske found that in revising his forthcoming volume of essays, "Darwinism and Other Essays," he had work in hand that would

Social Courtesies

detain him some two or three weeks longer in London. Accordingly, on July 2, he settled himself in his old lodgings at 67 Great Russell Street, in as complacent a state of mind as he could enjoy in any place away from his home in Cambridge. But he was not destined to any isolation while in London. His "Cosmic Philosophy" and the great interest in his lectures had made him widely known in the scientifico-literary set in London, while his social reputation had been greatly heightened by his modest, engaging personality. In addition, therefore, to his social intimacies at the homes of his friends Huxley, Spencer, Sime, Conway, Macmillan, and Trübner, together with the cordiality with which he was received at the Cosmopolitan Club, Fiske also received many dinner invitations which he was obliged to forego. He did, however, accept an invitation from Sir Joseph and Lady Hooker, to meet Sir John Lubbock, whose works on "Primitive Man," and on "Plant and Insect Life" were very familiar to him; and also an invitation from a young author, Mr. S. G. C. Middlemore, where he met "several young chaps, some of whom," he says, "will perhaps be better known ten years hence." He particularly enjoyed this dinner, and he speaks of it thus: "Middlemore I like extremely. I was the grey-haired patriarch of the occasion; and I begin to realize that another generation is coming along."

But notwithstanding the many courtesies that

John Fiske

were bestowed upon him during this visit, Fiske greatly missed the fine intellectual companionship of his friend Professor William K. Clifford, to whom, as we have seen, he became warmly attached during his previous visit. Professor Clifford, although quite a young man, had won recognition as one of the keenest intellects of his time; and his too early death had left the cause of rational, independent thinking bereft of a valiant champion. Fiske, back in his old quarters, could but recall his dear friend, and wish him back, that they might, with hospitable surroundings, discuss the theory of "a universe of mind stuff" which his friend had bequeathed as a contribution to current philosophic thinking.

Soon after he was settled in his old quarters he had the great pleasure of welcoming there his dear Cambridge friends, Professor and Mrs. John K. Paine, who had just arrived in London. He took great pleasure in introducing these good friends to his London friends as representative Americans. He became their guide and companion to the London and the Thames country he had come to know so well and to love so much. The Paines being direct from Cambridge brought him not only personal information regarding his family, but also the information that at the Harvard Commencement in June he had been elected a member of the Board of Overseers of the college — an honor which was wholly unexpected, and which was particularly gratifying to him.

Elected Overseer of Harvard

The further things worthy of particular note during this visit are: a dinner at the Arts Club with Spencer, Huxley, and Sime; an excursion to Epping Forest with Mr. and Mrs. Sime and their daughter Georgiana; a day with Holt, Haven Putnam, and Sime at Weybridge, Chertsey, and Hampton; a social gathering of a few friends at his rooms in Great Russell Street; his final visit at the Huxleys, and with Spencer.

On Friday, July 4, after an excursion to Richmond with some American friends he got back to London early in the evening for a dinner with Spencer, Huxley, and Sime. Of this occasion he writes:—

“An evening of unrivalled glory and bliss. A philosophic discussion of richness and profoundness worth a whole year of ordinary study;—mainly on the proper method of treating questions of causation in history. I never learned so much in one evening before. I have since heard from Huxley and Spencer that they two would look back on this as one of the happiest evenings of their lives.”

Brief as is the record of this evening's talk the deep feeling expressed as existing at once rouses the imagination, and any one familiar with the general line of thought of Spencer, Huxley, and Fiske can, in a way, perhaps, conceive what was the general tenor of the discussion. It is safe to say that from the respective viewpoints of the Evolutionary phil-

John Fiske

osopher, the acute and broadminded scientist, and the philosophic historian, causation in history must have been considered as something far nobler and higher than blind, sportive chance, or than the result of anthropomorphic, lawless will.

Fiske's enjoyment of nature — and especially of nature blended with human life — was so keen, and he gives expression to his feelings in such graphic language, that I do not like to pass all his records of his country rambles during these remaining days of his visit: and so I give the record of the day — July 5 — spent with his dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sime and their daughter Georgiana (aged eleven), wandering in Epping Forest: —

“Delicious day of fitful showers, and wondrous atmospheric effects. Groves of stupendous beeches, 1000 years old, gnarled and contorted beyond Doré's wildest conceptions, leaves so thick that we could sit on a stump and hear the rain pattering overhead as on a shed-roof and still not feel a drop wetting us — a weird and fairy-like scene. We ate sandwiches and boiled eggs, and took a drop of 'mountain-dew' from Sime's flask and were happy, though *all* sighed for my dear one and said it would be *quite* heaven if she were with us. We must have walked eight or ten miles, and saw many grand views. At one time we were caught in a pelting shower, and had to run into a quaint old inn — some two centuries old — where a lot of rustics were wrangling and the indignant landlord kicked one of 'em out, — a jolly scene for Dickens, if he had been there. Went to another jolly old country inn

Country Rambles

(one of the few that did n't get drowned in Noah's little six weeks' drizzle, and still survives: the ale there, I doubt not, is the same that Adam drank) and had a tolerably poor dinner there. Got home wearied and happy."

And one more of his "wonderful and happy days," Friday, July 11, — a day with his friends Sime, Holt, and Haven Putnam, of New York. He writes thus: —

"Gorgeous sunny day with fresh breeze, thermometer about 70°. No showers. Sime came and breakfasted with me on mutton chops at my rooms at 8.30. Cab to Waterloo Station over Waterloo Bridge, and fine view of the giant city quite clear of fog. Rendezvoused at station with Holt and Haven Putnam. Went to Weybridge and walked to top of St. George's Hill. O, if you had only been there! View of indescribable beauty: foreground of yellow pines, like North Carolina pines, amid which we stood, on a carpet of needles through which sprouted the ferns, as in Petersham. Larches the like of which you never saw, cedars of Lebanon, araucaria, gnarled beeches, elms, oaks, banks of wild rhododendrons loaded with blossoms, great trees of holly, white flowering alders, a wilderness of ivy all growing wild and tangled just as in an American forest! Before us miles and miles of exquisite undulating country, waving fields of grain, acres of velvet green pasturage with quiet crowds of sheep and deer, lovely hedgerows sprinkled in with scarlet poppies; — on the horizon blue hills with flitting cloud-shadows, the lordly turrets of Windsor Castle about 12 miles distant, rising

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above all surroundings and as conspicuous as Wachuset from Petersham, farm houses with red-tiled roofs nestled among the trees; little silvery brooklets winding here and there; arched causeways with distant train sending out long sinuous trail of white smoke; village of Weybridge with Gothic spire; chimes of noontide bells stealing through the soft air, while the branches over our heads were vocal with nightingales and thrushes, and ever and anon lazy cock-crows answered each other in the distance; O what a scene!

“After we had feasted awhile on this loveliness, we walked down the hill by a narrow path, having to push aside the rhododendrons to force our way through, got back to the rail-road and proceeded 5 miles to Chertsey, — a quaint old town which no one knows how old it is, for it was here when the Romans invaded Britain about half a century before Christ! Here it was that the burglary was committed in ‘*Oliver Twist*’¹ (I believe), and I pointed out to my companions a window which I thought would answer for the one where Monks and the Jew looked in on Oliver asleep. We walked quite through the town to the banks of the Thames to a very quaint inn — which we were all ravenous. We made a capital lunch of cold corn-beef, bread and butter and homebrewed ale — and mighty fine ale it was, too. Then we got a large row-boat and a waterman to row us, and we were rowed about 15 miles down the Thames to Hampton, which we reached at 5.30 P.M. I had never seen this part of the Thames before, and it is quite different from the section about Richmond; but if you ask me

¹ See Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, chapters XXII and XXXIV.

Plans for Future Lectures

which part is the more beautiful, I give it up! We were all almost too happy to speak. At Hampton we took train back to London."

In the evening Fiske went to the Huxleys' for a farewell visit, as Mrs. Huxley was to leave town the next day for several weeks. After a cordial welcome Huxley took Fiske into his study for the consideration of a plan for future lectures in England.

It was Huxley's opinion that the present course of lectures had been such an unqualified success, that there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting for Fiske an invitation to deliver the following year a course of three or four lectures before the Royal Institution—an invitation that would open for him invitations for their repetition in as many places in England as he could accept, and all on a *paying* basis. Huxley felt so much interest in the matter that he suggested that Fiske take for his subject the "Genesis of American Political Ideas," treated according to the law of Evolution and traced back to the early Aryans; and he said, further, that if Fiske could send him, in the course of the next few months, a full syllabus for the proposed lectures, with the number of engagements he could accept, he would undertake to put the whole scheme through.

After arranging these details, the two friends fell into the consideration of some of the profound ultimate questions with which each in the course of

John Fiske

his investigations frequently found himself face to face. In language full of the deepest reverence Fiske expresses himself thus:—

“Then Huxley and I got into a solemn talk about God and the soul, and he unburdened himself to me of some of his innermost thoughts, — poor creatures both of us, trying to compass thoughts too great for the human mind.¹ At last about 12.30 I took my leave. And how many months of *ordinary* life does such a day as this represent, my dear?”

Fiske had received so many social courtesies during this London visit that he desired in some simple way to make what might be termed a social rejoinder. Soon after getting settled in his old quarters he bethought himself in this wise: “Why not bring this visit to a close by having a social gathering of my English and American friends who have done so much to make this visit both a professional success and a delightful personal experience — and why not have this gathering here in my present quarters?” As he reflected upon the matter the eminent fitness of such a parting courtesy grew in his mind; and he took counsel with his friend Trübner, the prince of social entertainers. Trübner at once fell in with the idea, and suggested

¹ The tenor of this conversation can be readily imagined by any one acquainted with the thought of Huxley and of Fiske on these subjects at this time. Huxley's thought was expressed in his letter to Charles Kingsley in September, 1860 (*Huxley's Life and Letters*, vol. I, p. 233), and in his discussion with Frederic Harrison in the *Nineteenth Century* for 1877. Fiske's thought was expressed in his essay on *The Unseen World*, already alluded to.

Gives a Punch Party

as an appropriate "function" a "Social Punch Party" in Fiske's rooms in Great Russell Street — at the same time offering his services in aid of the project. Trübner's suggestion was accepted by Fiske, and accordingly he sent out invitations for the evening of July 14 to the following persons: —

Ten Englishmen: Lord Arthur Russell, M.P.; Thomas Hughes, M.P.; Thomas Huxley; James Bryce; Herbert Spencer; W. R. S. Ralston; James Sime; Nicholas Trübner; Frederick Macmillan; W. Fraser Rae.

Eight Americans: John K. Paine; Henry Adams; J. W. White; Moncure D. Conway; Henry James; Henry Holt; Haven Putnam; Willard Brown.

All accepted excepting James Bryce, Frederick Macmillan, J. W. White, and Henry James. Owing to urgent Parliamentary duties, sprung upon them that evening, both Lord Arthur Russell and Mr. Tom Hughes were unable to come, and Mr. Spencer entirely forgot the engagement. The next day Fiske gave Mrs. Fiske a brief and hastily written account of the affair: —

"'Terremenjuous' spree last evening! The punch (which Hezzy carefully concocted out of lemons, oranges, pineapples, strawberries, rum, brandy, claret, and apollinaris water) was unanimously pronounced an unparalleled work of art, and they all drank it just as though they liked it. The connoisseur Trübner was here before any one else, as I had dined with him; and he saw me put in the finishing touches; and when he tasted it, he said he had

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never tasted a more delicious punch. I had a mountain of ice in a big bowl and it was cooling unto the palate. Bro. Paine, who staid with me all night, says he does n't feel the slightest trace of headache this morning, though he drank freely; and if *he's* all right, I 'spect they all are. I know I am.

"We had a truly *glorious* time, and kept it up till one o'clock. Thanks to Trübner, I had some very good cigars to offer 'em which I don't know how to buy in London myself. All sympathized with Hezzy's scheme for next year's lectures. Huxley was the great wit of the evening.

"Bro. Paine and I are now waiting for breakfast."

Just as Fiske was closing the above letter he received the following note from Spencer: —

Tuesday.

Dear Fiske: —

Last night at a quarter to eleven, just as I was leaving the Club to come home, I exclaimed to myself — "Good Heavens! I ought to have gone to Fiske's!"

I had duly made all my arrangements for joining you, and then, after dinner, forgot all about it. Pray forgive me.

I shall look for you to-morrow at one, and I shall be at liberty till three, when I have an engagement.

Truly yours,

HERBERT SPENCER.

One incident more: Fiske's farewell visit with Spencer. We have just seen from Spencer's note that Fiske was under engagement for luncheon with him the next day, July 16. This engagement

Farewell Visit with Spencer

Fiske was prompt in fulfilling, as he desired some counsel with Spencer regarding the course of lectures he had planned with Huxley to deliver in London the next year. Fiske gave Spencer a general idea of the scheme of the lectures as it had become roughly shaped in his mind — the analysis of Anglo-American political ideas into their fundamental bases or elements; and then to show, on the one hand, that these bases are evolutionary products developed out of primitive Aryan civilization; while on the other hand, their further development among the nations of the earth must be a powerful influence making for universal peace.

Spencer responded warmly to the whole project, and felicitated Fiske upon his entrance into the historic field with such broad philosophic views. He cautioned Fiske, however, against being misled by some of the current theories regarding primitive culture, and particularly primitive Aryan culture and its evolutionary development; and he enjoined upon him the broadest comparative study possible of primitive man as his starting-point. His closing words to Fiske were: "Go ahead, my dear fellow! You have the right conception of history, and you possess a remarkable power in the art of putting things!"

In referring to this interview many years after, Fiske said: —

"I was amazed at the profound knowledge Spencer had of history — not knowledge of the

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pedantic sort, but knowledge derived from much reflection upon the underlying causes in history. While I have met many men who greatly surpassed him in a knowledge of historic details, I never found his equal in the power of historic generalization. His acquaintance with the fundamental facts of history was, indeed, remarkable; but what was more remarkable, was his keen insight into the meaning of these facts, and the manner in which they were related and interrelated in his mind."

And now the noteworthy incidents of this memorable London visit were at an end. The two remaining days were given to making parting calls and to finishing the proofs of his forthcoming volume of essays. Saturday, July 19, 1879, saw him well aboard the Cunard steamer Gallia, steaming westward from Liverpool, with his thoughts centred about the inmates of his Cambridge home whose affectionate greeting he was soon to experience. His homeward voyage was uneventful. During its continuance, however, he had reason for much gratulation in that the favorable judgment of his historic lectures given by his Boston audience had been fully confirmed by one of the most critical of London audiences; while his historic undertaking itself had received the heartiest commendation from some of the most distinguished leaders in the literary, scientific, and philosophic thought of the time.

CHAPTER XXV

FIRST LECTURE PROGRAMME — PERSONAL APPEARANCE — LECTURE CAMPAIGN IN MAINE — SYLLABUS FOR LECTURES AT ROYAL INSTITUTION — LECTURES DURING SEASON OF 1879-1880 — INVITATION FROM ROYAL INSTITUTION — PREPARES HIS LECTURES — SAILS WITH MRS. FISKE FOR ENGLAND — LETTER TO REV. E. B. WILLSON GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THIS REMARKABLE JOURNEY — RETURNED HOME JULY 27, 1880

1879-1880

UPON his return from London in July, 1879, Fiske entered upon an entirely new line of thought, and upon a wholly new order of work from that in which he had heretofore been engaged. His London experience had confirmed him in the opinion that American history, in its relation to universal history, presented a rich field for exploration in the light of the doctrine of Evolution. It also gave emphatic confirmation of the fact that his manner of presenting this great chapter in human history would make the subject one of deep interest to the general public.

His signal triumph in London had been reflected at home, and this favoring fortune in connection with his great success in Boston, had created a widespread interest in his lectures. Hence on his return he found applications for their repetition, in whole

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or in part, in many cities and towns throughout the country; as well as applications from the leading magazines for popular historical articles.

Fiske, therefore, found two lines of work ready for his hand: the planning and arranging of a lecture programme for the ensuing autumn and winter, and the preparation of quite a full syllabus of his proposed lectures for the Royal Institution the following spring.

His friend George P. Lathrop, a young man of considerable literary reputation at this period, has given a graphic sketch of Fiske's personal appearance at this time which is in place here: —

“His figure is a familiar one on the Cambridge streets as that of a tall, large-framed man, with thick beard and dark auburn, curling hair, a pale face, and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, which, added to his preoccupied air, gives him the stamp of a professedly studious person. His step is long, deliberate, and firm, seeming to indicate sureness and regularity of progress in physical matters, as his facial expression does in matters intellectual. The heavy walking-stick which he carries and strikes solidly upon the ground in front of him at every pace, contributes still further to the systematic manner of his advance. Altogether, he presents a very forcible and characteristic appearance.”

Soon after Fiske's return he went with his family to Petersham, and during the next few weeks we have glimpses of him enjoying with his children his delightful surroundings and pegging away at his

Personal Appearance

tasks. He undertook the management of his lecture engagements himself, and soon found it no easy matter to adjust his practical convenience to many of the conditions which surrounded some of the most desirable of such engagements. By dint of much planning and correspondence, he managed to work out a programme which, during the season, yielded him seventy-five engagements and a vast amount of personal experience. His first practical experience in his new order of work — his first campaign with his historical lectures — was in the State of Maine. His engagements were for course lectures in Lewiston, Portland, and Brunswick, three neighboring towns; his programme calling for a lecture every week-day evening for over a fortnight, beginning October 21, 1879. Portland being the principal town in the State, Fiske very naturally regarded it as the most promising place for both appreciative and financial returns; while from Brunswick, being a small college town, — the seat of Bowdoin College, — he counted mainly on appreciation, with perhaps an audience of from fifty to sixty persons. Lewiston, being a manufacturing town, was a wholly unknown quantity; and the only light he had upon the situation was the information that a short time previous “a blear-eyed scare-crow gave a lecture on ‘How to Shoot your Grandfather’s Ghost,’ and had an audience of eight hundred.” The prospect here he did not regard as flattering!

John Fiske

His programme for this campaign called for the delivery of the opening lecture at Lewiston. Judge what must have been his momentary feelings when he found himself facing an audience of but eighteen people. The situation — the great contrast between the deep interest taken in his lectures in Boston, in London, and elsewhere, and the apparent apathy here — was enough to daunt any heart not sustained by an implicit faith in the intelligence of the people and their readiness to appreciate what is fine in thought when it is simply and clearly put before them. Fiske, however, was nothing daunted. If he felt the contrast between his previous audiences and the one now before him, he did not show it. Writing the next morning he says: "I gave my lecture at Lewiston last evening with as much *gusto* as if I had a big audience; was bound I would n't flinch anyway. My little audience of eighteen were greatly pleased; and woefully disgusted at the prospect of the course being given up."

The first thought was that the course in Lewiston must be given up; but the few who heard the opening lecture were so greatly interested that they vigorously bestirred themselves and soon had promise of better results. Fiske was induced to give his second lecture, when he was greeted by an audience of two hundred and fifty; and to this enlarged audience he not only gave the remainder of the course, but also a repetition of the first lecture.

At little Brunswick his success was all he could

Lectures in Maine

expect. He had a very appreciative and enthusiastic audience of seventy-five, and he was very hospitably entertained by two of the college professors. Portland, where he had expended much, and where he confidently expected the largest interest and the greatest returns, proved disappointing — his audience, notwithstanding the enthusiasm of those who heard him and the cordial commendations of the press, not much exceeding seventy-five.

Brief as was this first lecture campaign, it yielded rich experience, in that Fiske saw that the measure of his success with his lectures was largely dependent upon his getting the nature of his subject clearly before the people. One incident is worthy of special note. It was while struggling with the various adverse conditions in which we have seen him engaged that he utilized his spare time in preparing the syllabus for his lectures on "American Political Ideas," to be delivered at the Royal Institution in London the ensuing spring. This syllabus was finished while he was facing the untoward conditions at Lewiston. The table of contents in his published volume, "American Political Ideas," is substantially a reprint of this syllabus, which was prepared before any portion of the lectures had been written. We have in this incident a striking example of the orderly way in which he had his wide historic knowledge arranged in his mind: that it was so arranged as to be at ready command, thereby enabling him to sketch out without references —

John Fiske

directly out of hand, as it were — a series of lectures, of such profound significance as his discourse on “American Political Ideas” proved to be.

Fiske’s next appearance was on November 12, 1879, in Brooklyn, New York. Here he gave a course of four lectures. He had found that in some places, while arrangements could not be made for his full course, they could be made for one, two, or four lectures; and he had adapted his material to meet these varying conditions. In Brooklyn he was greeted by a fine and enthusiastic audience. Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton were present. This was the first time they had heard him lecture on historical subjects, and they “were astonished and delighted” at his style and bearing, and also by his reception.

In arranging for this course he was greatly aided by the generous assistance of four of his classmates, — Benjamin Thompson Frothingham, William Augustus White, Frederick Cromwell, and Francis Alexander Marden, of whom he speaks in a letter to Mrs. Fiske thus: —

“Don’t you love my dear old Ben and Gus and Fred? — three of the dearest boys that ever were! And did n’t you think that Marden’s letter was hearty and lovely? These college friendships, after all, are just the next best things to family ties. I remember, on my own class-day, when Ben Frothingham gave his lovely oration, Mother said, ‘Can it be that these boys have come to love each other so much?’ But now — I don’t speak of Ben,

Lectures in Brooklyn

who is so dear and so good that one need n't be his classmate to love him — but I speak of Marden who was simply my classmate and fellow O.K. — don't you see how warmly he responds? These are some of the sweet things in this world, these college brotherhoods. We don't see or hear of each other for years, but the moment a little favor is desired you have only to suggest it, and it's 'Come, my dear old fellow, and we'll do what we can for you.' ”

The Brooklyn course was in every way a marked success.

In December, Fiske was back again in Boston where he gave two repetitions of his course of six lectures — one a public course in Hawthorne Hall, and the other before a club of ladies. Both courses were given to deeply interested audiences.

Here we may interrupt the narrative of his first lecture campaign to make two or three extracts from his Christmas (1879) letter to his mother, in which is reflected somewhat his fine feeling, his happy domestic life, and his growing reputation:—

CAMBRIDGE, *December 25, 1879.*

Merry Christmas, darling Mother,
and Many Happy New Years!!!

Just a midnight minute to say your magnificent Xmas present is received, and not all the resources of the most copious language of the dominant race of the world, would begin to suffice to express our gratitude or our sense of your kindness. . . .

Herbert Huxley has developed into the most

John Fiske

frightful and horrible maker of mischief that ever was known, quite putting into the shade the whilom renown of Lacry, as *princeps scamporum*. He has discovered perpetual motion, and exemplifies it from minute to minute, and woe to the "thing" — whatever it may happen to be — that gets within reach of his all-grasping and all-smashing fingerlets. Such a restless, such a despotic, such a ruthlessly bland and amiable angelic imp, I never before saw. . . .

An elegant work is now being published in London — "Portraits of the 100 Greatest Men in History" — classified in eight volumes — one volume of Poets, one of Philosophers, and so on. The introduction to the whole work is written by an American, R. W. Emerson. The special introductions to the several volumes are by Matthew Arnold, Froude, Dean Stanley, Taine, Helmholtz, Max Müller, and Renan, Alexander Bain (I believe), which makes seven volumes. I have just been invited, in a lovely letter from London, to write the introduction to the eighth volume, and have accepted. So you see your boy is in very good company.

My volume has the portraits and lives of Columbus, Magellan, Arkwright, Watt, Stephenson, Gutenberg, etc., — the great discoverers and inventors, — representatives of the industrial life of modern society, just the part that, in my present mood, I would have been glad to choose. . . .

This is a world in which people have an odd way of turning up. At my last lecture in Lowell, I met a man (of about sixty, I should say) named *Bement*, who said he knew my father, and you, and John

Lectures in Philadelphia

Bound, very well; and was present at your wedding with my father, and remembered Grandpa Fisk very well as the "jolliest of old fellows," and thought my father the handsomest, and most brilliant man he had ever met. Is n't it sort of odd — to meet this man in Lowell?

The year 1880 opened for Fiske with some thirty lecture engagements in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington, Buffalo, and Ohio. The fulfilling of his engagements was marked by alternate success and failure in getting satisfactory audiences. In New York and in New Jersey he had good and responsive audiences, but in Philadelphia and Washington, where he had counted on a generous reception by reason of the prominent persons interested in his lectures, he was sadly disappointed. In Philadelphia, particularly, partly from the many expressions of interest in his undertaking that he had received from prominent citizens, and partly from the general interest in matters pertaining to American history flowing from the Centennial Exposition of four years previous, he had looked forward with much confidence to good audiences. And yet, although he gave the lectures with his usual charm of manner, and while his hearers were as enthusiastic as were his hearers in Boston, London, and Brooklyn, he had meagre audiences. This fact becoming known, a few public-spirited citizens, not wishing the stigma of non-appreciation of such lectures to rest upon the citizens of

John Fiske

Philadelphia as a whole, made up a purse for Fiske, and sent it to him with an expression of their appreciation of the important work he was doing in arousing an interest in the significance of American history, and of their personal regard.

It was in Fiske's nature, as we have already seen, to extract some good from even rather forbidding conditions, and there was an incident connected with his experiences in Philadelphia at this time which made a strong impression upon his mind — an incident he often referred to in after years. At the close of his second lecture he attended a reception, where he met a notable historic personage of whom he writes: —

“I met General Robert Patterson (the Grouchy of Bull-Run), aged eighty-eight, the youngest man in the crowd. He was on Scott's staff at Lundy's Lane, in 1814, and was an intimate friend of Hull, Bainbridge, Stewart, Lawrence, and Decatur! You can imagine what a good talk we had. He took me to my hotel in his carriage — a most wonderfully charming old fellow!”

Alternately with his Philadelphia lectures he gave a course of four lectures at Chickering Hall, New York, and here he found ample compensation in large and enthusiastic audiences for his disappointment in Philadelphia. His success was as marked as it had been in Boston and in London. Indeed, it was so marked, that before the course was concluded he received a letter signed by twenty-

Lectures in Washington

one ladies prominent in the intellectual and social life of New York, asking for a repetition of the lectures in a morning course at Chickering Hall, a request he complied with a little later, when he was met with another series of large and highly enthusiastic audiences.

The fame of Fiske's lectures in London had reached official Washington, and a letter was sent to Fiske, under date of January 30, 1880, signed by President Hayes, the chief members of his Cabinet, Chief Justice Waite, Senators Hoar and Dawes of Massachusetts, General W. T. Sherman, George Bancroft, the historian, Simon Newcomb, the eminent astronomer, and other distinguished persons, asking for a repetition of the lectures in Washington, at his early convenience.

President Hayes, in signing this document, said that it gave him much pleasure to be at the head of such an invitation; that he had heard much of Mr. Fiske's success with these lectures in London; and he expressed a desire, if Mr. Fiske came to Washington, to have an interview with him.

In accepting this invitation Fiske appointed the evenings of February 13, 14, 18, and 21 for the lectures, and they were given in the Congregational Church. He had a very distinguished audience comprising members of the Cabinet with their families, members of the Supreme Court, attachés of the foreign legations, some Senators, and a few Congressmen. Simon Newcomb presided, and in his intro-

John Fiske

ductory remarks he said that, during a recent visit to England, he found among the scientific thinkers there that Fiske was regarded as the deepest thinker America had yet produced.

Fiske's Washington audiences, though not large, were of fine quality, and as usual with such audiences he roused them to great enthusiasm.

Financially the Washington lectures were not a success, but through them Fiske's reputation as the interpreter of American history was widely extended and he made many friends. While in Washington, he received many social courtesies, and his accounts of an evening *en famille* with Carl Schurz, then Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinet of President Hayes, and of his reception by President Hayes, are of interest.

As Secretary Schurz had taken a leading part in getting up the invitation for the lectures, Fiske called upon him immediately upon his arrival in Washington, to get the particulars of the arrangements, and what followed is best given in Fiske's own words:—

“Got here to breakfast, Wednesday morning, and saw Schurz, who is lovely and very jolly, and who invited me to his house *sans* dress-suit in the evening. Went around at 8 P.M. and found Schurz and two fine daughters—about twenty-two and eighteen, I should say—and a profoundly meditative old German chap who beamed on us all the evening and vouchsafed three ‘Ja’s’ as his contribution to the conversation, except that he once asked what ‘snicker’ meant. Carl and I soon got on to

An Evening with Carl Schurz

music; he made me play. I was in my most *cantabile* mood, *very* happy and ready to play all night. Schurz has a *magnificent* Steinway grand, every tone of which entranced me. I played *my best*. Then Schurz extemporized. He has a wonderful gift for improvising. He played one very delightful nocturne, making it up as he went, but could n't play it over again. Most such things are trash: but Schurz's playing is not trash. Then he played a sonata of Chopin's with great fire and expression. His *touch* is beyond measure delightful. Staid till 1.30 A.M. and the girls sat up. Truly we had a magnificent time."

During the evening Secretary Schurz told Fiske that the President would like to see him, and advised him as to the best hour for calling. Of his interview with the President Fiske writes: —

"Friday morning I called on President Hayes at the White House. He received me very warmly and said he felt very proud of my going over to England to speak to John Bull about America, and of my reception there. When I thought it time to go, the President urged me to stay as long as I could; and he treated me with very marked deference. He kept me more than an hour, till all the Cabinet came in for a Cabinet-meeting. The President then introduced me to all the members I did n't know, and we had a jolly talk for fifteen minutes before 'biz,' when I left."

The untoward financial result of his visit to Washington, while not wholly unexpected, yet, fol-

John Fiske

lowing so closely upon his experience in Philadelphia, — this strong manifestation of consideration and appreciation on the one hand, unsupported by adequate financial returns on the other hand, — raised, for the moment, a questioning in Fiske's mind as to the outcome of his historical undertaking, which had expression in one of his Washington letters. The feeling was but temporary, however; for, as he saw his subject ever broadening in its scope and character, he also saw that wherever he could get an audience, he evoked such an interest and enthusiasm in his subject as to be conclusive evidence that he had only to bide his time for getting American history, and his method of dealing with it as but one phase of universal history, clearly before the American people, to reap a satisfactory reward.

Immediately after finishing his Washington course, Fiske returned to New York to fulfil his engagement with the ladies of New York for a morning course at Chickering Hall; and also an engagement for an afternoon course with a private school. While these two day courses were going on he gave an evening course of three lectures at Plainfield, New Jersey.

While giving these lectures in New York, and vicinity, he made his home with his mother, Mrs. Stoughton; and I find in a note from Mrs. Stoughton to Mrs. Fiske the following passage which is of interest:—

Invited to Lecture Abroad

“John sat at home much of the day to-day, and said it was good to get off his boots and frock-coat and sit at ease and read. This afternoon he went with me to a Monday ‘at home’ at John C. Hamilton’s, son of Alexander Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton is eighty-two years old, and remembers, when he was a lad, his father said to him one day, — his mother being away, I think, — ‘My son, you will sleep with me to-night.’ And then, when he got into bed, his father clasped him close to his heart, and, kissing him over and over, said, ‘My boy, we will say the Lord’s Prayer together.’

“That was the last he knew of his father alive. The next morning he went out at daybreak to meet Burr, and was killed, as you know. Think what he must have felt when he prayed with that child, knowing it was probably the last night, for he meant to fire in the air, and he knew Burr meant to have his life, and he was a sure shot.”

These three engagements fulfilled, Fiske had a three days’ respite, and he returned to Cambridge. Here he found a letter from Huxley, enclosing an invitation from the Royal Institution of London for his three projected lectures on “American Political Ideas,” to begin May 18 following; and also a letter from his good friend, Dr. Muir, of Edinburgh, asking for four of his American historical lectures before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute.

With pleasing anticipations of another visit to London and to Edinburgh he set out on March 2, 1880, to fulfil his remaining lecture engagements

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for the season, the first at Buffalo, New York. Here he was to give a course of three lectures, and he was most cordially received by large and enthusiastic audiences — the largest he had yet had at any of his lectures, and the most remunerative as well.

Of the other lectures of this trip but little is to be said. At Cincinnati all arrangements had been made by Fiske's friend, Judge J. B. Stallo, well known to philosophic thinkers by his essays on the "General Principles of the Philosophy of Nature" and on the "Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics." Judge Stallo was to have entertained Fiske during his stay in Cincinnati, and to this visit with such a profound thinker as Judge Stallo, Fiske looked forward with the pleasantest anticipation. Just before his arrival, however, Judge Stallo met with a severe domestic affliction which took him from his home, and although he turned over Fiske's interests into other and willing hands, his own deep personal interest and his cordial, influential support could not be made good. While Fiske had fair audiences in Cincinnati, with much enthusiasm expressed, he greatly missed his longed-for converse with Judge Stallo.

At Cleveland and at Dayton, his lectures were disappointing. At Cleveland his audience was only thirty-five; yet, small as it was in numbers, Fiske took it by storm and paved the way for future successes when his fame should be firmly established.

Lectures in Ohio Cities

After a little over a fortnight of lecturing at Buffalo, and in Ohio, he set his face homeward, cheered by the conviction that soon in London and Edinburgh he would be received with distinguished consideration, the while actively shaping in his mind his lectures for the Royal Institution in London.

Thus his first real lecture season in America came to a close. The result led him to the conviction that there was no want of interest in his subject as he presented it, but that his ultimate success depended upon his getting his purpose and his method of treating American history more distinctly before the American people. To this end, in his judgment and in that of his friends, the development of an interest in American history in England, through the avenues that were open to him there, would be productive of a strong reflective influence in his favor in America.

Fiske reached his home in Cambridge the middle of March and immediately set about preparing for his third visit to England. It was decided that Mrs. Fiske was to accompany him, and his letters of this period overflow with expressions of delight that she was to share in his forthcoming experiences and honors. He engaged their passage to Liverpool by the Cunard steamer *Atlas*, sailing May 1, thus giving him six weeks for the necessary preparations for a three months' absence, and for the writing of his three proposed lectures. It was, indeed, a busy

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six weeks, and no better evidence could be given of the orderly way in which he held his historic knowledge at command and his methodical way of working, than the record he has left of the composition of these lectures. Beginning March 30, 1880, his thirty-eighth birthday, he spent twenty-three days in the preparation of them, the last four days of which were spent in Huxley's library in London.

It has been very generally conceded that these lectures embody one of the most lucid and powerful peace arguments that has ever been made, in that they so clearly predicate universal industrial peace as the politico-sociological result to which the forces of modern civilization are irresistibly tending. This argument is supported by such a wealth of historic knowledge and enforced by such a sound philosophy that it has produced a profound impression during the past thirty years upon the public mind of all English-speaking peoples. Then, again, the style of the lectures is one of their marked characteristics. English literature has no finer example of a great, ennobling theme presented in a thoroughly adequate style. There are many passages which deserve a place among the finest examples of English prose.

I have already considered these points in an Introduction to a recent edition of the lectures. Here we are interested only in their generation, and in the rich personal experiences which attended their first delivery in London.



MRS. FISKE IN 1880

Royal Institution Lectures

As Mrs. Fiske was to accompany him, it was one of his chief desires that during their stay in London she should have the pleasure of meeting Darwin. Accordingly, in the midst of his preparations he sent to Darwin the following letter: —

CAMBRIDGE, *April 20*, 1880.

My dear Mr. Darwin: —

I am about to sail for England to give some lectures at the Royal Institution, and shall be in London from May 16th until June 1st. I am going to bring my wife with me this time, for after fifteen years with the children I think she should have a vacation. While we are in London, I hope to get a chance to look at you again for a moment and shake hands.

After finishing in London, I go to Edinburgh to give some lectures at the Philosophical Institution and shall be coming home again early in July.

I hope you are still well and prospering in your great work. I am unable to follow you in detail quite so closely as I used to, for year by year I find myself studying more and more nothing but history. But Huxley told me last year that he thought I could do more for the "Doctrine of Evolution" in history than in any other line. To say that all my studies to-day owe their life to you, would be to utter a superfluous compliment; for now it goes without saying that the discovery of "Natural Selection" has put the whole future thought of mankind on a new basis. When I see you I shall feel a youthful pleasure in telling you what I would like to do, if I can.

I shall stay at Professor Huxley's while in London

John Fiske

(4 Marlborough Place, Abbey Road, N.W.), and any word from you will reach me there.

Ever, my dear Mr. Darwin,

Most sincerely yours,

JOHN FISKE.

Of this visit with Mrs. Fiske to London, Edinburgh, and Paris, in connection with these lectures, Fiske has given quite a detailed account in his letters to his mother, his children, and to the Reverend E. B. Willson, an uncle of Mrs. Fiske — the clergyman who married them and for whom Fiske always held an affectionate regard. As the letter to Mr. Willson was written during the homeward passage, and as it is a narrative of their experiences in a consecutive form, I take this letter as an enclosing sort of matrix, and weave into it, here and there, details from his other letters in order to save repetitions, and also for the purpose of presenting a full record of this memorable journey in Fiske's own words: —

ATLANTIC OCEAN,
735 MILES FROM NEW YORK,
July 24, 1880.

My dear Uncle: —

Your very welcome letter of May 24th, which we received in Edinburgh, is before me. The 14th of June, while Abby and I were going on top of a coach through the Trossachs, we made a plan to send you a huge letter (such as I call "one of my old peelers") and give you a more or less detailed account of all the goings-on since the May-day when

Visits Europe with Mrs. Fiske

we steamed down Boston Harbour without your *Benedicite*. We did n't get a chance to write any long letters, though, — and not many short ones, — until we got on to the steamer last Saturday, since which I have had to contend with my natural slothfulness of disposition.

Having floored the latter enemy, I now seize the thread of events at May-day, and would observe, by way of prelude, that as the hawser was cast, and the crank began to turn, nothing was quite so vivid in my mind as surprise at actually having got Abby with me on such a *wedding journey*, with all the babies left behind.

I managed the thing with some astuteness, by having company come to the house toward the last minute, and so kept things in such a general rush that Abby did n't have a moment free to stop and reflect on what she was about till she was really off. None of the babies cried, though I saw Harold's mouth twitch. They knew enough to understand the danger of an explosion at such a critical moment, and their six little noddles were tolerably level.

The Atlas is a mean, contracted, uncomfortable old tub, with the concentrated perfumes of twenty years of service; and although we did n't have a single day rough enough to put racks on the table we did n't get into Liverpool till the morning of the 13th. Abby did n't suffer much from seasickness, but she is n't in any danger of becoming a mermaid from choice!

Glad as we were to set foot in Liverpool, we did n't stay there a bit, but drove straight to the station and started for Chester. Reached the

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Grosvenor Hotel, Chester, about noon, had a delicious lunch, and then walked all around the walls — one of the loveliest walks I know of — and admired the river Dee and Grosvenor Bridge and the thin veil of haze over the sunlit landscape. Then we took a little rest at the hotel, and started out to see the Rows, walking down through Bridge and Watergate Streets to “God’s Providence House,” and went to the Cathedral and heard vespers there. Abby *enthuses* over the *same* things that I do, and thought the day about the happiest day of her life up to date.

The next morning we transferred ourselves to Rowsley, and put up at the *Peacock*, which, after a pretty extensive experience, I call the pearl of all English country inns. We did Haddon Hall that afternoon and Chatsworth next morning, and Abby was so charmed with the *Peacock* that she bought of the old landlady the tea-pot in which we had tea and brought it away as a memento.

N.B. It was rather a *pretty* tea-pot.

By Saturday evening (May 16) we had got to London and to Huxley’s, where the welcome was warm, and we immediately began to feel as if we had always lived there. The next evening — Sunday — the Huxleys had a reception for us — one of their “*tall-teas.*” But I am not going to particularize all of our three weeks in London chronologically. A digest must suffice. To wit: as regards these “receptions,” we had three while at the Huxleys’; and Abby thus met Herbert Spencer, Browning, Frederic Harrison, Frederick Pollock, John Green, the historian, Leslie Stephen, Sir Fitz James Stephen, Lecky, Romanes, Mark Pattison,

Warmly Welcomed in London

Dr. Burdon Sanderson, Alma-Tadema, Lieutenant-General Strachey, my dear friend Ralston, Clifford's widow, beside several lords and ladies and others whom I can't think of.

The Huxleys had also a dinner-party just before we left, at which were present Herbert Spencer, Lord and Lady Arthur Russell, Sir James and Lady Stephen, Leslie Stephen and wife, Matthew Arnold, and others. We also went to a musical party at Alma-Tadema's, at which the piano was mellifluously clawed by Charles Hallé and by Wagner's friend Richter. We went to a garden-party at Sir Joseph Hooker's at Kew Gardens; and in this way Abby saw many noted people. We took tea with Mrs. Tyndall, but did n't see Tyndall. We had a lunch at the countess of Airlie's, where we met Robert Lowe; and we went to a soirée of the Royal Society.

By a curious chance I lunched (without Abby) in company with "dynamite Hartmann," the cheerful youth who tried to blow up the Czar, near Moscow, the fellow that the French Government would n't surrender. He makes no secret of his wickedness, but glories in it, and means to try it on again if he ever gets a chance! I felt an odd smell of brimstone clinging about me for the next two days!

N.B. The above Hartmann is in outward mien and appearance the *mildest* of milk-and-water philanthropists.

Then Darwin sent me a lovely letter inviting me to come down to his house in Kent to dine and pass the night, and to bring Abby, so the 21st of May we went down there and had a delightful visit. Darwin treated Abby so sweetly, giving her beau-

John Fiske

tiful flowers from his garden, which I have carefully pressed; she nearly shed tears when we came away.¹

As for Spencer he seemed to take a great fancy to Abby, though he seldom pays much attention to ladies anyway, and invited us to come and take lunch with him at his lodgings. So we went and had lunch in his private parlour and David Masson made the fourth one at the table, and we had most uproarious fun. After our return from Scotland, toward the end of June, Spencer invited us again to lunch and so we did it over again.

Spencer is in better health than he has known for years and is one of the jolliest companions I have ever taken a glass of beer with. Abby was very much charmed with him, and they got on together beautifully. I never met a man in my life who

¹ Darwin wrote Fiske as follows: —

DOWN, May 14, 1880.

My dear Mr. Fiske: —

I suppose that you have reached London. I did not write before because we have had a succession of visitors and I absolutely require a day or two of rest after any one has been here. Some persons now in the house leave to-morrow evening, and others are coming on Tuesday morning.

If you and Mrs. Fiske happen to be disengaged on Friday evening (21st), would you come down to dinner and to sleep? There is a good train which leaves Charing Cross at 4.12 P.M.

On Monday, the 24th, we leave home for a fortnight for me to rest.

If it would be more convenient to you to come here after June 8th or thereabouts, it would suit us equally well and we should be very glad to see you and Mrs. Fiske then.

In haste to catch the post,

Yours sincerely,

CH. DARWIN.

Very many thanks for all the kind expressions in your note.

Royal Institution Lectures

for brilliant conversation could be compared with him: and then, his voice is so rich and musical you could never get tired of hearing it.

We also dined at Conway's and at my friends the Macmillans', and the Trübners'. At the Macmillans' we also had a fine musical evening. As for the Simes — my most intimate friends of all — we went to Richmond together, rowed up the Thames past Twickenham to Teddington, and drove to Bushy Park while the horse-chestnuts were in full glory; and we did chin-wag together even until Sime accompanied us to Euston Square Station and saw us start for Liverpool.

We also saw pretty much all the "sights" of London, from Westminster Abbey, down to Mrs. Jarley's Wax-Works. We went once to the opera, to hear Lohengrin, and once to the theatre to see Henry Irving; and we did one stylish drive at 3 P.M. in Hyde Park; and Abby got into the House of Commons and heard Gladstone and others blow off steam. As for me, more through ignorance than malice-aforethought, I got in on the floor of the House instead of the strangers' gallery, and passed for some time as a new member (it being a new House), until finally my non-identity becoming apparent, I was respectfully shown to the gallery.

The lectures at the Royal Institution went off with great success. There was a grand audience — lords and ladies, Members of Parliament and savants; very swell in quality. Huxley says they are the very best lectures he has ever heard at the Royal Institution. He says he had no fears about my "filling the bill" when he had me invited there, but I have utterly gone beyond his expectations.

John Fiske

Spencer thinks the last lecture simply "wonderful." The audience was very enthusiastic, continually stopping me with applause. James Russell Lowell, our Ambassador, was there at the last one and much pleased. Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderly (cousin to Lord Derby) was there and wild with delight. She blew my trumpet to Gladstone that day at dinner. Next evening we went to a party at her house, where Abby was introduced to Gladstone, Tom Hughes, Matthew Arnold, and others. Lady Stanley kept introducing right and left with as much enthusiasm as if she had been Mrs. Hemenway, of whom she slightly reminded me. Gladstone remembered me from last year and came up to me, so that I introduced Abby. Lady Henniker had me to lunch Tuesday before lecture; her whole family were warm over the lectures. Lord Granville's brother, Mr. Leveson-Gower, was at the last lecture and I saw him vigorously clapping his hands.

The foregoing made altogether a tolerably industrious three weeks' time in London. Mighty little grass grew under our feet in spite of the propitious showers.

On the 3d of June we left the Huxleys in London, and went to Ipswich and put up at *The Great White Horse* of Pickwickian renown, a place where I had stopped before and lost my way to boot, though without any such romantic consequences as ensued in the case of my immortal predecessor. Our object in going to Ipswich was to visit the home of my Fiske ancestors at Laxfield. I knew the name of the manor, and thought there might still be a potato-patch on the old spot and bearing the old

Visits Home of Ancestors

name, though if Abby had n't insisted on my going, I should probably have been too lazy to go. It turned out to be the most romantic experience we had in our whole journey and marked out Friday, June 4th, as a red-letter day in our calendar.

We started from Ipswich by train at 7 A.M. for Framlingham, about twenty-five miles distant. There we got a young man with a dog-cart, which I call rather an awkward vehicle for a heavy fellow like me, and he drove us eight miles to Laxfield. Framlingham is a small market town with a college and ruined castle. Two or three Fiskes live there now. My own direct ancestors came over from Framlingham to Wenham, Massachusetts; but the headquarters of the family from at least 1400 to about 1640 was Stadhaugh Manor at Laxfield. Laxfield is a village about the size of Petersham. Arriving near the village, after a beautiful drive through delicious rural scenery, we began to inquire for Stadhaugh, but nobody seemed to know it, and I began to think it possible that the place might have vanished. But in England things don't vanish easily. By and by we stopped and asked at a wheelwright's shop. The man said he paid quit-rent for a bit of land held from Stadhaugh Manor, and paid it to a Mr. Aldrich. We drove to Mr. Aldrich's house, a very quaint old place, and himself a quaint old man of eighty. He remembered that there used to be Fiskes at Stadhaugh. In 1718 the place was owned by a John Smith, who left it to the town, and the town leased it to a Mr. Read. By Smith's will the rents were to be applied to keeping up a charity-school for twenty boys. The house, with 112 acres of land surrounding, have been

John Fiske

leased and occupied by six generations of Reads — at present by Thomas Read, Esqr. We drove to the house, about half-a-mile from the village; and it is a fine, comfortable house, though not grand; but incomparably the finest place in the neighbourhood. As we drove up, Mr. Read came out to meet us — a most stalwart, ruddy, and cordial country squire, full of laugh.

He was greatly interested in our errand, took us into the dining-room (a fine old room with low ceiling, and huge beams across it, a book-case, a piano, sideboard, and tall Dutch clock), sat us down before the fire, and gave us some port wine and cake, and began to talk over antiquities. *This is the very identical house where my ancestors lived;* the house which the Reverend John Fiske, of Cotton Mather's "Magnalia," left in 1637 to come to Cambridge, thence to Salem (where I believe he taught the first grammar school), thence to Chelmsford. He was n't my direct ancestor; but his grandfather Robert (in Elizabeth's time) was, and must have lived in this very house, for the house goes back to that time. It was a good deal altered in 1602, being then a very old house.

Mr. Read was extremely courteous, and after about an hour's talk we started for the parsonage, Mr. Read going with us. The vicar has a bright boy of eleven who collects birds' eggs, like Clarence. Old Mr. Aldrich told me that I would find the Fiske graves in the pavement of the church. So we all went to the church — an immensely old place, one of the oldest churches I have seen, and unaffected by "restorations." I think it must date from the ante-Norman times, though the vicar

Visits Home of Ancestors

did n't know. The stone floor was covered with matting and carpets which the sexton lifted and swept under till we had taken up seven or eight bucketfuls of dust; but nary a Fiske. The search was not exhaustive, however. There were spots from which it was difficult to raise the carpeting; and besides, our time was limited. Moreover, as I knew the family history down to the departure from England, at least as well as gravestones could tell it, I did n't look for the graves for information, but only for sentiment, and so did not press the matter. Mr. Aldrich said he had seen the graves, and I presume we should have found them if we had hunted long enough.

I saw the grave of John Smith, of Stadhaugh (died 1718), in the church: the inscription was in Latin, and he was described as "Armiger." I also saw the grave of John Borrett, of Stadhaugh Manor, and his wife Mary (died 1691 and 1699). Now I *know* that Stadhaugh was owned by Nicholas Fiske in the time of Charles II (1660-1685), from a grant in the "Heraldic Journal" referring to the crest on the Fiske coat-of-arms. I now know all but one point — how did Stadhaugh Manor pass from Fiske to Borrett and to Smith?

There are no Fiskes now in Laxfield; and my impression is that pretty nearly the whole lot cleared out and went to Massachusetts. There were many such cases of wholesale migration. The vicar's boy knew all about the burning of John Noyes in 1557 by order of Bloody Mary and told me of the exact spot. John Noyes was brother-in-law to Nicholas Fiske, of Dennington, a lovely village four miles from Laxfield, through which we passed on our

John Fiske

dog-cart drive. This Nicholas Fiske (mentioned in Foxe's "Book of Martyrs") was son of Robert and Sybil.

Well, what was this for a romantic day? In the morning I did n't know that the old Fiske place had survived. Now I know beyond peradventure that it does survive and that in the very room where my forefathers ate I actually drank a glass of wine — and a lovely room it was too! And to have had Abby with me to see it all!!! I have had some photographs of the house made to bring home.

We got back to the *Great White Horse*, Ipswich, about 4 P.M. and our room, for aught I know, may have been the very one in which Mr. Pickwick met the middle-aged lady in yellow curl-papers. While waiting for our dinner I read to Abby the Ipswich part of "Pickwick Papers" and we enjoyed it hugely!

From Ipswich we went to Cambridge, Ely, Lincoln, and York — all places which I knew well already, and was glad to see again with Abby. I have never seen a grander cathedral than York, though I have seen the finest ones on the Continent. Then we got to Edinburgh, where I gave four historical lectures at the Philosophical Institute. The audience was very large — something like 800 — and very enthusiastic, and the whole affair went off splendidly. In the intervals between lectures the first week we devoted ourselves to seeing Edinburgh, to dining and lunching with W. W. Hunter (who wrote the *Annals of Rural Bengal*, and a dozen other books) and David Masson, and my good friend Dr. Muir, as well as to miscellaneous fun. Among other things — Abby having been dressed



YORK MINSTER

Lectures in Edinburgh

in long skirts for a luncheon — we drove with Mr. and Mrs. Hunter around Arthur's Seat, and it being proposed we should make the ascent, we ascended, which as we got to a very steep place near the top, Abby holding up her train, and I pushing her along and using mine umbrella as a third leg unto myself; lo! the sky darkened, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the floods came down; whereat the undersigned raising aloft the umbrella to protect his better $\frac{1}{2}$, did thereby deprive himself of the third leg needful for propelling his weighty earthly tabernacle up the steep declivity, and thus we did remain to constitute an impressive tableau for about five or eight minutes, until aid did arrive from the summit of the mount in the person of Hunter with another umbrella. Which we did n't see anything after we got to the top, and so descended and explored Craig-Miller Castle.

And the next week we took two Highland trips between lectures. The first trip was the one "they all take" — to wit: the Trossachs, Loch Katrine, and Loch Lomond, and Abby thought she never knew what scenery was before. The second, however, outdid it: it was a big excursion to be made in two days, but as I knew what the Pass of Glencoe was I was bound Abby should see it to make up for not being able to go to Switzerland. And this is the way we did it. We started on Wednesday morning early from Edinburgh, took the train four hours to Tyndrum and were thence taken ten miles by dog-cart to Inveroran. As I doubt if you have ever seen the road, I will make bold to say it is one of the most sublime on the earth: if you have seen

John Fiske

it you will agree with me. Huge mountains rise from 2000 to 3000 feet each side of the road, almost perpendicularly, covered with heather. Not a tree, not a house, not a sign of life. Inveroran is a charming place consisting of a lake, a grove of Scotch firs, and a pretty inn, where we did eat. And the undersigned not liking the jerk of the dog-cart we then did take a wagonette for the next twenty-six miles which took us through the Pass of Glencoe, to Ballachulish on Lake Leven. It was 9 P.M. when we reached the inn at Ballachulish, and at 10 we saw the sun set over the beautiful lake. The drive through Glencoe filled us with a feeling of awe which we were long in getting over.

The mountains are little more than three thousand to thirty-five hundred feet high; but they rise sheer from the road so that you see their full height, and their tops overhang you against the sky. There is no vegetation on them and the enormous rocks are piled above each other with a grandeur that is absolutely terrific. At the bottom of the glen is the little oasis where the Macdonalds were massacred.

The next morning we got up at five and took steamer down Loch Linnhe, by the land of Ossian, through most magnificent scenery twenty-six miles to Oban. We breakfasted at Oban, and got on top of a stage and did the road by Dunstaffnage Castle and Ben Cruachan, through the Pass of Brander, and past Loch Awe to Dalmally, whence we took train five hours to Edinburgh.

Total, four hours train, thirty-six miles of private carriage, twenty-six of steamboat, twenty-six of stage-coach, and five hours train — that is my idea

In France

of a good deep draught at the cup of pleasure, and Abby, this time at any rate, quite agreed with me. I had seen every bit of the road before and hope I shall see it again. Then too, the Lord was on our side and gave us such superb weather as one does n't often see in Scotland.

June 19 we departed from Auld Reekie, and went 400 miles at one dash to Oxford, where we spent a delightful Sunday and dined at the rooms of a friend. Next day we did Stratford-on-Avon and went on to London where we put up in lodgings for a few days to give Abby a taste of my old-fashioned kind of life there. I had been asked to repeat my three Royal Institution lectures at South Place Institute (Conway's place), and did so the evenings of June 22d, 24th, and 25th, spending the intervening time in mousing about London with Abby. The 29th we went to the Isle of Wight, and used up the 30th in driving by the Undercliff Road from Ventnor to Carisbrooke Castle and Cowes. That night we crossed from Southampton to Havre, and thence next day to Honfleur, and drove five miles of charming wooded road to the Chateau of Pennedepie. My old friend Hennessy the painter has lived there for some years and I now carried out an old project of visiting him.

We staid a day and a half there and wished we could stay forever. It was more like Petersham than anything else I have ever seen in Europe, although with the lovely hills and the walks in the pine woods there is also to be seen at Pennedepie the deep-blue sea. Indeed, the great watering-place, Trouville, is but five miles distant and we included that in an afternoon drive.

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Then we pegged along to Rouen and spent half-a-day there viewing the Cathedral and went on to Paris and staid there eleven days. Our very best, number one, jolly day in Paris, was spent, not in Paris, but in Versailles. To my mind there is nothing in Europe more interesting than the Palace of Versailles — it is so crammed with history. Westminster Abbey is nothing to it, in point of quantity, at any rate.

As for Paris, we wished it would smell a little sweeter. (I tell Abby I don't know what she would say if she were once to get a good square whiff of Naples, but Paris is enough for a warm day.) On the whole, we don't belong to the sect of good Americans who go to Paris when they die. I never did like Paris much, and Abby does n't like it. She likes some dresses, and a love-of-a-bonnet or two, though. We do bow down to the superiority of French millinery — and cooking, too, to some extent, though Abby could n't for her life get a decent cup of tea with cream, or a glass of real lemonade even, in this headquarters of *y^e gourmets*.

It had been suggested that I should give two or three lectures in Paris, and Taine and Renan were interested in the scheme; but it was out of the question to scare up an audience in July, and the scheme stands postponed. I have had a letter from Émile de Laveleye, the author of "Primitive Property," who lives at Liège, and it is proposed that the next time I come over I shall give some lectures at Liège. I have been invited to lecture at the London Institution, at the Birmingham Midland Institute, and again at Edinburgh. All this might be done next spring, but I have got tired of

Returns to America

being away from home so much and don't think I shall cross again for eighteen months or two years.

From Paris we crossed via Calais-Dover to London on Wednesday, July 14th, and had just time to drop the parting tear with our friends, and get off to Liverpool for the Gallia.

Doxology: The Gallia stopped six hours at Queenstown, and we went ashore and took a lovely drive of ten miles or so on a jaunting car, just to give Abby a taste of "ould Ireland."

And all together, it was a very good notion of a three months' skylark.

Deo volente we shall reach Cambridge, and the babies, Tuesday, the 27th, and go to Petersham Saturday, the 31st, to remain till about the 8th of September. Abby and I hold that all Europe has no more attractive place than Petersham. They may have better places over there, but if they have they keep them out of sight.

And so I have given you quite an "old peeler" of a letter, though I can't decorate the envelope with a British stamp — and am, with very much love to you all, in which Abby joins, affectionately yours,

JOHN FISKE.

The Gallia reached New York July 26, 1880, and thus Fiske's second lecture excursion to England, with Mrs. Fiske, is shown by his own record to have been a veritable "wedding journey," and one of rare experiences.

CHAPTER XXVI

DOMESTIC LIFE IN PETERSHAM — CONTROVERSY WITH DR. WILLIAM JAMES — ESSAYS — LECTURING EXPERIENCES — VISITS ST. LOUIS, MILWAUKEE, INDIANAPOLIS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY — RECEIVED WITH GREAT INTEREST — SPECIAL HISTORICAL LECTURES AT OLD SOUTH CHURCH — PREPARES THREE ARTICLES ON GREAT BRITAIN FOR CYCLOPÆDIA OF POLITICAL SCIENCE — SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE DAWNING IN HIS MIND — AGREES TO PREPARE A SHORT HISTORY FOR HARPER AND BROTHERS

1880-1881

ON the return of Mr. and Mrs. Fiske from England they joined their children in Petersham, and there the family remained until the middle of September. From the letters we get glimpses of an idyllic country life amidst the pleasantest surroundings: of picnic excursions galore, one of which has special mention in a letter to Mrs. Stoughton: —

“On Monday (September 6th), being the sixteenth anniversary of our wedding day, we had a picnic at Tom Howe’s farm — Abby, our six babies, and six friends. We built a fire and the boys roasted corn and broiled slices of pork on the end of a stick; and we had sandwiches, and baked beans, and potato salad and coffee: and there was a sort of wedding-cake. We had a jolly time and staid till dark.”

Domestic Life in Petersham

Of Fiske's musical diversions we get this glimpse: —

“We have a fine piano and a young lady who is able and willing to play difficult accompaniments by the hour and I am singing a lot of most beautiful songs of Schubert.”

Fiske's marked success in England, which had been widely noticed by the American press, greatly increased the demand for his lectures in the home market. His repertoire now consisted of nine lectures, out of which could be chosen a single lecture, or a course of three, four, or six lectures, and he was able to adjust his “discourse” so as to meet the great variety of local conditions. On his return, therefore, he found many applications for his lectures awaiting him. By the opening of the lecture season, in November, Fiske had secured engagements for nearly his whole available time till the close of the season in the following April, 1881. His lecture engagements extended over a wide range of territory, within the bounds, one might say, of Boston, New York, Baltimore, St. Louis, and Milwaukee, the fulfilling of which involved almost incessant travelling.

Before entering on his lecturing campaign — in fact, while he was arranging his campaign — Fiske wrote two magazine articles, “Sociology and Hero-Worship” for the “Atlantic Monthly,” and “The Causes of Persecution” for the “North American

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Review," and also a brief article on "Heroes of Industry."

The first of these articles is worthy of serious consideration by every one who wishes to see the application of the doctrine of Evolution to social development clearly presented, and who also wishes to get light upon Fiske's historical method. In the "Atlantic Monthly" for October, 1880, William James, of Harvard, the well-known psychologist, published an article entitled "Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment." In this article James rambled quite discursively over much philosophic, historic, and scientific ground, with no little incisiveness and brilliancy of phrase. The main point of the article was an attack upon the doctrine of Evolution in its application to individual and social life, and this attack bristled with sharp thrusts at "Mr. Herbert Spencer and his disciples." James stated his thesis thus:—

"Our problem is, What are the causes that make communities change from generation to generation — that make the England of Queen Anne so different from the England of Elizabeth, the Harvard College of to-day so different from that of thirty years ago? I shall reply to this problem. The difference is due to the accumulated influences of individuals, of their examples, their initiations and their decisions . . . The mutations of societies then from generation to generation are in the main due directly or indirectly to the acts or the example of individuals whose genius was so adapted to the

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receptivities of the moment, or whose accidental position of authority was so critical that they became ferments, initiators of movement, setters of precedent or fashion, centres of corruption, or destroyers of other persons, whose gifts, had they had free play, would have led society in another direction."

James admitted there was some kind of evolution at work in human society, for he says: —

"Thus social evolution is a resultant of the interaction of two wholly distinct factors: the individual, deriving his peculiar gifts from the play of physiological and infra-social forces, but bearing all the power of initiative and origination in his hands; and second the social environment, with its power of adopting or rejecting both him and his gifts. Both factors are essential to change. The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual. The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community."

Good Spencerian, Darwinian, Fiske Evolutionary doctrine, this, *as far as it goes*. But it gives no hint of the play of the physiographic forces in the environment, or any distinct recognition of the social institutions by which organized society is held together — institutions which in their development conserve and generate an intellectual and social atmosphere without which, from the viewpoint of social science, your "Great Man" could not exist.

Fiske read James's article with mingled feelings of regret and surprise: regret that a psychologic

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thinker like James, who made so much in his teaching of the play of environing conditions, physiological, physical, and social, in his interpretation of psychical phenomena, could so far forget his indebtedness to Spencer for blazing the way to a rational method of psychologic study as to charge Spencer with "impudence" in his argument, and to characterize his theory of social progress as an "obsolete anachronism." And he was greatly surprised to observe that with all his sociologic and historic study, James had failed to note that Evolutionary ideas, of which Spencer was the greatest living exponent, were permeating as with new life *all* modern thought; and that, while bitterly condemning Spencer *in toto*, he was in many respects following closely in Spencer's footsteps himself.

Regarding some of the points in James's article as directed against himself, he being a disciple of Spencer's, Fiske felt that he was challenged for a reply. And he lost no time in making it: one in which there is an entire absence of a desire to make brilliant points; rather one which consists of a lucid presentation of the facts involved with the logical overwhelming conclusion to which they lead.

In the first place, Fiske is at pains to show the points wherein James and the Spencerian Evolutionists are agreed, and then turns with perfect fairness to the charge which James brings against the Spencerians of neglecting the function of great

Reply to William James

men in their theories of social evolution. He shows conclusively, from Spencer's writings and his own, that there has not been any such neglect — indeed, the evidence leads to quite the contrary conclusion. He sums up his argument at this point with this keen, incisive statement: —

“If Mr. Herbert Spencer and his disciples maintain any such astonishing proposition as this [the denial of the function of great men in social evolution] it must be difficult to acquit them of the charge of over-hasty theorizing to say the least: if they do not hold any such view, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion that somebody has been guilty of over-hasty assertion.”

Having thus turned James's polemic batteries, which were aimed at “Mr. Spencer and his disciples,” back upon James himself, Fiske proceeds to the discussion of the real question involved — that of sociology as a science and how its development is affected by great men, a discussion wherein the views of James, reflecting Carlyle's doctrine of hero-worship, seem sadly out of place. Defining sociology as the science of social phenomena, he pointed out that the truths with which sociology is primarily concerned are general truths relating to the structure of man's various social organizations, and the functions of their various parts; truths revealed by a comparative and analytical study of the actions of great masses of men when considered on a scale where all matters of individual idiosyn-

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crasy are averaged, and, for the purposes of the enquiry, are eliminated.

As a pertinent illustration of this fact Fiske cites the representative assembly common to all governments making any pretence to a consideration of the interests of their people. This assembly is a direct outgrowth from the primary meeting of individual citizens, and has been developed through social changes among the people themselves. This is a fact established by a wide historic induction; and its implications, when once fully unfolded, go farther toward explaining the differences between Greek and Roman political history on the one hand, and English political history on the other, than do the biographies of all the Greek and Roman and English statesmen from Lycurgus and Servius Tullius, to Gladstone.

Then, too, this scientific study of social phenomena, as illustrated by the investigations of Maine, Stubbs, Coulanges, Maurer, Tylor, and others, is not only bringing new interpretations to history, but also juster valuations of the services of "Great Men." Carlyle's method of dealing with history, making it a mere series of prose epics, has many merits, but it is nevertheless inadequate. It does not at all *explain* the course of events; it leaves them a jumble. History is something more than biography, else we are thrown back upon "special causes" and have nothing stable wherewith to interpret the past or to predicate the future. And it

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is here that sociology comes in as a science, and affirms the relativity of all social phenomena to

“One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

Fiske closes his article with three very pertinent illustrations of the effect of the scientific study of social phenomena in the interpretation of history, and also in the valuation of great men, which are overwhelming in their support of his contention. He says:—

“As an example I may refer to the way in which the life of Cæsar has been treated respectively by Froude and by Mommsen. To both these writers Cæsar is the greatest hero that has ever lived and both do their best to illustrate his career. Both, too, have done their work well. But Mr. Froude has profited very little by the modern scientific study of social phenomena, and his method is in the main the method of Carlyle. Mommsen, on the other hand, is saturated in every fibre with ‘science,’ with ‘sociology,’ with the ‘comparative method,’ with the ‘study of institutions.’ As a result of this difference, we find that Mr. Froude quite fails to do justice to the very greatest part of all Cæsar’s work, namely, the reconstructive measures of the last years of his life, which Mommsen has so admirably characterized in his profound chapter on the ‘Old Republic and the New Monarchy.’ Or, if a still more striking proof be needed that the scientific study of the evolution of society is not incompatible with the highest possible estimate of the value of individual initiative, I

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may cite the illustrious example of Mr. Freeman. Of all the historians now living Mr. Freeman is the most thoroughly filled with the scientific spirit, and he has done more than any other to raise the study of history on to a higher level than it has ever before occupied. His writings in great part read like an elaborate commentary on the doctrine of Evolution — a commentary the more valuable in one sense, in that Mr. Freeman owns no especial allegiance to Mr. Spencer, or to any general evolutionary philosophy. Yet this great historian, whose opinions are determined everywhere by the sociological study of institutions, turns out to be at the same time as ardent a hero-worshipper as Carlyle himself, and vastly more intelligent.”

To sum up in a word Fiske’s conception of the “Great Man,” it was that of servant, — servant in the service of humanity; and the really great servants of humanity stood in his mind, to use his own words, “as the Memnon Colossi of the human race. No matter in what century or among what people their feet may be placed, around their brows the music of morning and of evening is forever playing.”

James and Fiske were the best of friends, and James was prompt in acknowledging the force of Fiske’s criticism, as appears by the following note: —

CAMBRIDGE, *December 19, 1880.*

My dear Fiske:—

I have received your spanking, and I should n’t mind having some more from the same rod. I kiss the rod that chastises me! It is pleasant to find one

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who so perfectly endorses all I have to say about the facts and laws of sociology; and reading your last pages has made me more than ever regret that you are not teaching history in college.

As for the Spencer question, perhaps I laid it too strong on the individual's share in my polemic passage, as he on the "Conditions" in his polemic passage.

Always yours faithfully,

WM. JAMES.

In the second article referred to as written at this time — "The Causes of Persecution" — Fiske showed how this terrible infliction on the human race was the outcome of expanding social ideas in conflict with established social conditions, a conflict which enabled egoistic great men, when uncurbed by adequate social forces, to resort to the most dire persecutions for opinion's sake. He pointed out also how, with the growth of more rational views of social well-being, — the outcome of increasing tolerance, — society is steadily sloughing off the conditions which made it possible for great men, as persecutors or as arbiters of public opinion, to exist.

His article on the "Heroes of Industry," written at this time, was prepared as an introduction to the eighth volume of the work entitled "The Hundred Greatest Men." This volume comprised biographies of inventors and discoverers, and Fiske's introductory article illustrates some of the points made in his reply to James.

Fiske's lecture experiences during his season of

John Fiske

1880-81, so far as success with his audiences was concerned, were much more satisfactory than during the previous season. His new course on "American Political Ideas" was received with greater favor, if that were possible, than his course on American history. Never before had the peace movement been given such a comprehensive and philosophic basis as was given to it in this presentation of American political ideas. What is more, these lectures are to-day the best interpretation we have of the underlying principles of our Federal Union.

During this season's campaign, he had some personal experiences which are of interest, not only as reflections of his own individuality, but as typical illustrations of the social and intellectual culture of the American people.

The season was opened in Boston with his three lectures on "American Political Ideas," and the lectures were received with as deep an interest and with as marked an enthusiasm as had been bestowed upon them in London.

Here is a glimpse of his experiences, in January, 1881, among the Quakers at Haverford College, near Philadelphia. Fiske gave here his six lectures on "America's Place in History," and the last lecture in his course on "American Political Ideas," alternating their delivery with two shorter courses in Baltimore, and in Plainfield, New Jersey. He writes: —

Lecturing Experiences

“I have got a most enthusiastic audience here of students with prof.s and prof.s’ wives; and several people who heard my lectures last winter in Philadelphia, and who come out here to hear me now. It is the same old story; the lectures are voted a success of the first water. President Chase is a true scholar, and a man of broad views and great heart — an ideal college president. His wife and children are also very interesting. They are all Quakers and say ‘thee and thou’ and their family life is a new experience for Beelzie. It is awfully countrified here, quite like Petersham. We walk to the lectures under pine trees, and pick our way among the snowdrifts. Quite an Acadia. . . . The last lecture, ‘Manifest Destiny,’ was a tremendous success (as everywhere) and especially pleased the Quakers, who believe in peace, you know. They say Hezzy is a boss Quaker himself! I said good-bye regretfully to the Chases, who are lovely people.”

In his extensive railway travelling Fiske occasionally met with incidents of much personal interest. Whenever he met with an experience that was in any way an attestation to the value of his work in the world of thought, he took great pleasure in passing it on to his wife or to his mother, as he so truly regarded them as joint sharers in whatever of appreciation or honor might come to him. Immediately after the close of his Haverford lectures he started for St. Louis; and on his way, via the Pennsylvania Railroad, he fell in with some “chance acquaintances” who relieved the monotony of the journey, and also paved the way for a lecture

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engagement at Indianapolis; which, as we shall see, proved an event of great interest and pleasure to himself and to the good people of Indianapolis. The delightfully simple and frank way in which Fiske tells Mrs. Fiske of his experiences with these "chance acquaintances" needs no comment. In his account of his trip to St. Louis, under date of February 2, 1881, he wrote her thus: —

"Saturday after lunch I went into a little smoking-room and found a very bright-looking young man of thirty there, who lighted my pipe. We got talking on railroad travel and its recent improvements, and he proved to be one of the principal mechanical engineers of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the inventor of the best kind of car wheel. His name is Barr. From car-wheel making we got on to contraction and expansion, molecular motion, vortex-atoms, the nebular hypothesis, matter and spirit, etc., and I took great pleasure in the keenness and precision with which the young man talked and the extent of his scientific knowledge.

"After a while he said, 'These materialists are getting some heavy blows lately, and soon will learn that they have n't exhausted the sphere of knowledge. These matters have been beautifully treated in a little book called "The Unseen World," by John Fiske — ever *see* it? Tell you what, sir, that man's by all odds the greatest thinker of our day — sees farther than Spencer himself in *many* points. In my opinion nothing has *ever been done* that equals the argument in the "Unseen World." I'd give a heap to see that man!!!'"

Lecturing Experiences

“Here I thought it best to interfere at once and not sit and let him go on in that vein. I explained that the individual here alluded to was identical with the ‘gent here present.’ Whereat he got up in great excitement and seized my hand, and told me that words could n’t begin to tell the good I had done him with my writings, and he considered this one of the greatest days of his life!

“This young man lives in Altoona, in the Alleghanies. At Harrisburgh, we were joined by another Altoona man named Duffield, an orthodox minister, enormously fond of all sorts of literature and especially of folk-lore. He recognized me, and said he had met me in Central Park, with Henry Holt, as we were returning from Bob Weeks’s. I remember the time. It was in February, 1877, the last time I ever saw dear Bob. We entered into a ‘terremenjuous’ triangular chin-wag till 10 P.M., when we reached Altoona, and my two friends got out.

“Next morning, as I was taking my after-breakfast smoke, a young man (of twenty-five or so) came up and introduced himself as F. C. Eaton, of Indianapolis, a graduate of Williams. Mr. Duffield had told him I was on my way to St. Louis to give some lectures, and he wanted to know if I could n’t put in two or three at Indianapolis. I told him I could give three lectures there and named my terms. He thought there was no doubt it could be arranged and is to let me know next week.”

As we shall see, Fiske gave his three lectures on “American Political Ideas” in Indianapolis during the following April.

John Fiske

At St. Louis his engagement was for three lectures on "American Political Ideas" under the auspices of Washington University. He was most cordially received by Dr. Eliot, the President of the University, and by Professor Snow, the Professor of History. The latter was an undergraduate at Harvard with Fiske, but in the class of '65. Fiske also received many social courtesies from President Eliot, the University Club, Judge Gantt, Colonel Hitchcock, formerly of General Sherman's staff — "a capital fellow, native of Alabama, but very Northern in feeling and highly cultivated"; and several others. In short, the St. Louis people took him warmly to their hearts, and he established personal friendships that in years to come were enduring.

His lectures were received in the most flattering manner, with unstinted applause, and with expressions of personal appreciation that were most gratifying. President Eliot said to him, "You are throwing a new light on the whole of American history, and you are a benefactor to your countrymen." On the strength of his great success President Eliot made a definite engagement with him for a course of five lectures under the auspices of the university the next winter. In one of his letters to Mrs. Fiske, from St. Louis, telling of his great success, Fiske remarks parenthetically: "By the way, my dear, these Royal Institution lectures ('American Political Ideas') are the ones to give

Lectures in St. Louis

whenever the audience is cultivated enough — they are grander than the historical series.”

A little incident occurred during this St. Louis visit, worth relating as showing the wide range and accuracy of Fiske’s knowledge. Judge Gantt, who was a well-informed man of some sixty-five years, had taken a great fancy to Fiske and he seemed to take a delight in probing Fiske’s knowledge. One day he sought to feaze Fiske with a historico-legal question or puzzle, and here is Fiske’s account of the incident: —

“Judge Gantt thought he would stick me and so propounded to me the barbarous law-Latin puzzle propounded by Sir Thomas More to a learned jurist at Amsterdam, ‘whether a plough taken *in withernam* can be replevied?’ Did n’t stick Hezekiah — *not much*. I gave him a minute account of the ancient process of distraining and impounding and of the action of replevin, — considerably to my own amusement and his astonishment.”

Fiske left St. Louis greatly cheered by the hearty Western appreciation that had been shown towards his work, as well as by the warm personal friendships he had established. Henceforth we are to see St. Louis stand forth in his regard as one of his intellectual homes. From St. Louis he went to Milwaukee. He spent a month in Wisconsin giving lectures in Milwaukee, Madison, Appleton, and Waukesha. In these places he was received with the same enthusiastic appreciation given to him

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elsewhere. He writes: "Wisconsin has certainly waked up to Hezzy! They're lively folks out here; want to hear all the new notions. At Madison I had the Governor and several members of the Legislature present, and they were profuse in their expressions of delight." He encountered some snow blockades which interfered with a few of his engagements. He took the interruptions philosophically, however, contenting himself with an expletive now and then, such as this: "The snow in Madison lies in *mountains*. Great Scott, what a sight!"

While in Wisconsin Fiske made his headquarters in Milwaukee; and of course he at once resumed personal relations with his dear friends Professor Peckham and his family, and the Reverend Mr. Dudley, of whom the reader has doubtless retained pleasant recollections, from the account which was given in previous pages of Fiske's first visit to Milwaukee with his philosophical lectures in 1872. He had a tender regard for these dear friends who sought by many delicate attentions to make his sojourn among them agreeable to his æsthetic tastes. He was entertained by the Peckhams during the whole period, and here is just a glimpse he gives Mrs. Fiske of his pleasant home-like surroundings:—

"It is a divinely beautiful Sabbath morning, quiet as Petersham, snow three feet deep and bright sun. George [Professor Peckham] is reading my

In Milwaukee Again

Pollock's 'Spinoza,' now and then exclaiming with delight or reading a sentence aloud; his little dear of a wife is looking over the newspaper, and his white-haired mother is dozing in a big rocking-chair before the fire. So I will grasp the occasion to write a line to my dear home circle, *eleven hundred miles away*.

"George is going to give a 'tremenjuous' breakfast-party for me here next Sunday morning, at 10 o'clock; so you can imagine Hezzy in great feather and in good company."

He had many "chin-wags" with his ever-delightful old Middletown friend and adviser Dudley, to whom, with his intimates, he gave the sobriquet of "Black John" by reason of Dudley's swarthy complexion, — hence remarks like these: —

"Friday, 11th. Lunched with Black John, and chin-wagged till 4 P.M.

"Saturday, 12th. Stormy. Lunched and chin-wagged all day with Black John and his wife, and played on their Steinway piano. Dear old Black John — how I do love him! He's awful good."

We can easily imagine the nature of their "chin-wags": their Middletown reminiscences; Fiske's youthful inquiries and their profound significance; and the great development of thought the intervening years had brought to both. The Misses Hathaway were by no means overlooked. In a letter to Mrs. Fiske he gives an account of an evening in their hospitable home, which is, one may well say, self-revealing on both sides. He writes: —

John Fiske

“Saturday, 12th. At 8 P.M. went to the Hathaway’s, with Peckham, and found the three girls, their brother Andrew, and their Uncle John. Carried my Schubert songs and sang nearly all of them to Mary’s accompaniment on the Steinway grand. Hezzy was in his very best voice. Then we all went up to the uncle’s den at the top of the ‘hipe.’ He is a jolly old bird, fat, black-eyed, handsome and good-natured. His room is half the attic, with low eight foot ceiling; a compound of bedroom and study, with lots of books, rugs, and easy-chairs, and a side-board to boot. It is just awfully cosy. Here in this delightful nest, with a bright fire, a glass of ‘something hot,’ a rich cigar, the beaming old uncle, the ever philosophic George, the three charming sisters, and the wind howling outside for a background to enhance the brightness of it all, Hezzy for the time being, dropped the gnawing homesickness which he generally carries around in his thorax just next his heart. It was midnight when we reached home. I wish you had been there, — you would enjoy the Hathaways; and the den was just the kind to make Maudie flap her wings.”

As I turn over these Milwaukee letters of February, 1881, I am struck by the following coincidence which could not possibly be owing to any premeditation: I find a note from Mr. Howells, then editor of the “Atlantic Monthly,” asking Fiske for a paper, critical and reminiscent, on George Eliot; and close beside this note I find a letter of Fiske, which contains this injunction to Mrs. Fiske: —

In Milwaukee Again

“Read the ‘Undiscovered Country’ at once. It is by far the best thing Howells has yet done. It is simply magnificent. It made the tears come.”

While in Milwaukee, Fiske had the good news that his dear friend Huxley had received from the English Government a sinecure appointment — Inspector of Salmon Fisheries — which doubled his income without increasing his work. This greatly delighted Fiske, inasmuch as he well knew how this honor would ease Huxley’s declining years. He also received a letter at this time from his dear Scotch friend, James Sime, of London, who, in the following extract, not only gave expression to his deep personal regard, but also voiced the grief of England at the departure of one of the most striking and influential personalities of the Victorian era. Sime writes under date of February 7, 1881: —

“As I write we are all mourning the loss of our great old hero Carlyle. I do not think any of us knew how much we loved him until now. He said many wild things about your country, as indeed he did about most subjects: yet how much we all owe to him! It seems somehow as if life must be less ideal now that his grand picturesque figure is gone. With all his extravagances he had some of the very qualities which we appear to need most in these materialistic times. Spencer’s influence is anything but materialistic but we want so much more glow and fervour than a writer of his stamp can give us. If only the mighty poet for whom the whole creation is groaning would come! Nature

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seems to find it very hard to give birth to those radiant spirits who, without exactly adding to our knowledge give a new meaning and glory to the world, and bring us nearer to the very heart of things.

“I am so pleased to think that you are resolved to visit the old country again as soon as you can. Next time I hope nothing will prevent us from having some happy days together in the country, or, still better perhaps, on the continent. What say you to our planning a trip from Coblenz to Treves, such as Mrs. Fiske and you thought of? It would be all the more delightful if she were of the party. We should have quite a world of happy memories.”

Thus, greeted by enthusiastic audiences, and cheered by warm personal friendships, — some extending over the greater portion of his life, — and all in the midst of Wisconsin’s terrific snows, there came to Fiske this sympathetic note from Sime as a sweet message from his friends beyond the sea, and at the same time a delicate attestation to his own place in the world of thought. His state of mind is reflected in this passage in one of his Milwaukee letters: “Hezzy is well, bright, and clear all the time nowadays, things look so bright to him.”

While in Milwaukee Fiske received an urgent request from Mrs. Mary Hemenway, for two lectures to be given in the Old South Church in Boston: one in support of the proposition to make this historic building a centre for the teaching of

The Old South Church

American history, and the principles of good citizenship; and the other upon Samuel Adams as a type of eminent citizenship. He was glad to comply with this request as a patriotic duty; and getting a postponement of his lecture engagements at Indianapolis for a month, he went directly from Milwaukee to his home in Cambridge, where he arrived March 13, and at once set about the preparation of the two lectures, to be delivered April 4 and April 6.

In the first lecture he gave a summary of the principal events in New England history, and particularly an account of the notable incidents which identified the Old South building with the War of Independence. He had a fine audience, and in a letter to his mother he gave quite a graphic account of the occasion: —

“I gave my new lecture on the Old South Church to-day, on the site of the pulpit where Sam Adams and Warren once roused the people to resist the encroachments of George III. There were 400 or more present. I wound up with a grand appeal to save the building and convert it into a place for teaching American history. Every one says it is the most eloquent thing I ever did. Mrs. Hemenway is overjoyed. I know myself that I never held an audience so breathless with interest before. I got excited myself, and Abby says she never before saw me so animated in manner. My audience was the cream of Boston. More than all, I believe I have started a fresh impulse toward saving the

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building; and if so, it will be well. O, this has been a sweet and happy day! Harold and Ralph were there, and took it all in with enthusiasm. How funny it seems to have children old enough to do so!"

The Samuel Adams lecture, which came two days later, was also one of great interest, and gave Fiske a fine opportunity to show his appreciation of the function of great men in the development of social and political well-being, and also an opportunity to display his power of individual characterization — the first opportunity he had had to treat a really great historic personality by itself. He first sketched the social and political life of New England, based on its town meetings and its representative assemblies, as forming the general social conditions into which Samuel Adams was born; and which furnished him, in the maturity of his powers, with the instrumentalities for doing his great work for, and with, his countrymen. And thus by the play of outward and inward forces Samuel Adams became the type of New England citizen-statesmanship at the opening of the Revolutionary period. Then by way of complementary contrast, Fiske briefly sketched the social and political development of Virginia, and pointed out how this development tended to the production of leaders in thought and action, so that Washington became as distinctly and legitimately the type of Virginia citizen-statesmanship as Samuel Adams was of that of New England.

Having thus sketched a general background for

Lecture on Samuel Adams

his portrait, he presents his hero, not only as the first of citizens, but also as the statesman around whom the civil history of the Revolutionary period centres, as its military history centres around Washington.

Thus, cheered by a patriotic duty well performed, and by a short visit with his family, Fiske promptly set his face westward to fulfil his two remaining lecture engagements of the season — the one at Indianapolis and the other at Cornell University, Ithaca.

There is a free, autobiographic frankness of expression in the letters immediately following, the aim being throughout to present Fiske as he was, especially to give due prominence to his robust enjoyment of life, his profound sympathy with his fellows, and his great pleasure in service, in giving joy to others.

He knew Dickens by heart and Dickens's characters were his constant companions. Hence he looked out upon life as abounding in charity and humor, and he was ever ready "to lend a hand." Then, too, these letters were written under circumstances where he had only to reveal himself, — his impressions, his feelings, his thoughts, — and it will be noted that his revelations all relate to worthy things.

His trip to Indianapolis was by way of New York and thence over the Pennsylvania Railroad. Of his journey under date of April 15, he writes thus: —

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“I had a most delightful ride hither from Philadelphia over the mountains. The day was wonderfully beautiful — all the loveliness of spring. I read Lecky all day with intense delight and the car was so well lighted that I was able to read comfortably till 10 P.M. By the time I got here I had nearly finished the first volume. Eaton met me at the Station and brought me here — the New Denison Hotel. It is one of the most comfortable hotels I have ever stopped at; clean beds, pleasant rooms, good food. I have made a great hit with the lectures, the last of which I give to-night. Wednesday afternoon half a dozen young ladies assembled at Mrs. Eaton’s, and Hezzy sang a lot of songs and some of the ladies sang, and then we adjourned to the church, and Hezzy played on the organ. After the lecture the Literary Club gave me a grand reception. Yesterday Mrs. Eaton gathered 38 ladies in her parlour, and Hezzy read ’em his paper on a Common Origin of Languages, and then answered about 500 questions about everything, and told ’em about George Eliot, and sang ‘Wohin,’ and ‘Am Meer,’ and ‘Bid me to live,’ in which Mrs. Vinton, Judge Stallo’s daughter, accompanied me. This afternoon the Vintons take me to drive and to tea. After the lecture to-night there is to be a great pow-wow here at the hotel, including a supper and speeches and songs. I was asked to make a speech, but resolutely refused. Then I was asked to sing some songs, which I said *que oui*, and am to sing, possibly, a bouquet consisting of

“1. Wohin.

“2. Am Meer.

“3. Auf dem Wasser zu Singen.

Lectures in Indianapolis

“They are bound to have me here next winter they say. Indianapolis is a very pretty city — a sort of immense New England village with wide, shady streets; but not to be compared with Milwaukee for beauty.”

After the evening’s “pow-wow” he writes as follows: —

“Grand shindy came off this evening. Supper of 300 people. Speeches, stories, and fun. Toasts were given me. When called up, I waived speech and gave ‘Rauschen’ with a good accompanist on a grand piano. Never before did Hezzy’s voice ring out so loud and clear. It was all utterly bran-new to these Indianopolitans! By Jove — the applause was *uproarious*, absolutely deafening, and prolonged till *encore* was a necessity. Then I sang ‘Auf dem Wasser zu Singen’; and I never sang so before in my life. It went off beautifully. So did Hezzy’s lecture to-night. Everything is working well. I think I have conquered Indiana. The whole Legislature heard me sing to-night; and I held a levee afterward, shaking hands with ’em all. And now every town in Indiana wants to ‘have the honor’ of entertaining me with a lecture course next winter. My two songs were worth two lectures to me. If all else fails, I’ll go a-singing with Thomas’s Orchestra!!”

Fiske spent another day in the friendly atmosphere of Indianapolis, and then set out for Ithaca by way of Buffalo. From Ithaca, under date of April 20, 1881, he resumes the record of his experiences. Writing to Mrs. Fiske he says: —

John Fiske

“Well, my dear, what do you suppose Hezzy did the next morning after he sang songs to 300 people? Lindley Vinton came with his two prancing nags in a light buggy and we scampered, you may believe. Drove away out into the woods, where it was so beautiful that we got down, hitched our team, and went into the woods and lay an hour on the dry leaves looking up into the sky. I enclose some of the leaves. Then we went to the Bates House and had a festive dinner of wild ducks, etc. Then Hezzy packed and went over to Mrs. Eaton’s, and sang a lot of songs in which Miss Helen Wright accompanied me. Then took tea and left at once to get the 7.30 train for Buffalo (got a horrible breakfast next morning at Cleveland), and reached Buffalo at 1.15, reading Lecky all the A.M. with great delight! Henry Richmond was there to meet me with carriage, and took me bag and baggage up to his ‘hipe,’ and regaled me with some fried oysters, broiled spring chicken, delicious French rolls, and heavenly beer. Two nice young Harvard graduates were there. Then Richmond took me a long, beautiful drive in an open buggy — it was chilly. At 7 we had dinner, to which came Fred Wheeler and five others, so that we sat eight at table. Great tall chairs like those in the ‘Old Curiosity Shop’; rich tapestries hanging over the doors; rare paintings on the walls, and portfolios, prints, giant red volumes, etc., scattered about in confusion; low ceiling of solid oak; orchestration discoursing sweet music; — jolly place, my dear! We had a clear soup, fresh shad, porter-house steak and potato croquettes, wild duck, lobster salad, Charlotte russe, ice-cream and coffee; with

At Cornell University

claret and champagne. Broke up at 10.30, and went around to Wheeler's house for an hour — then came back and bunked in. Had a truly magnificent time, and the boys all treated me as if they were glad to see me.

“Got off Monday morning on the 8.20 train, read Lecky all day, and reached Ithaca at 5.20 P.M. I was immediately brought up here to Sage College, which is the building especially devoted to the young women; and so here is Hezzy, in a great building full of ‘sweet-girl-undergraduates.’ None but *ministers*, I am told, are allowed this privilege; so I suppose I am a minister. I have a lovely pair of rooms — parlour and bed-room — on the second floor. There is a great commons hall downstairs, where I take meals with the 60 or 80 ‘sweet girl undergraduates,’ though here two male instructors do likewise, besides the husband of the matron.

“As a rule the girls are not extremely pretty, and their general style is more or less annex! Does n't Hezzy put up in all sorts of places? There's a monstrous parlour with a good Steinway concert-grand, and this morning I struck out an outline of a ‘Dona Nobis’ for my Mass, which seems good, and if I really adopt it and fill it out, that will finish the Mass, you know. — These girls are mighty well-mannered. There's very little *discipline*, but there's never been an atom of trouble or scandal of any sort, though you see the girls strolling about the yard with the young men, to and from lectures, etc. They do get married, though; it is a common thing for engagements to take place here, resulting in marriage soon after graduation. They say the boys work a great deal harder for having the girls

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to hear and see what they do. Every one, without exception, approves of the system unreservedly, which I found to be the case also at Madison.

“A great deal has been said of the beauty of this place but no description can begin to come up to the reality. In the first place, there is Cayuga Lake, forty miles long and averaging four miles in width: that goes winding away among the hills, almost as lovely as a Scotch lake. At the head of the lake, on a flat plain, stands the village of Ithaca, about twice as large as Athol, with wide shady streets, and many handsome houses. There are several millionaires living in the village! From the village up to the college-yard the ascent is quite as steep as the ascent to Tom Howe’s farm — steeper in fact, for a road straight up would be impossible. The road winds up turning corners as sharp as those which scared you, as we approached Loch Lomond. As I sit here, I see village and lake 400 feet below. Beyond them rise the opposite hills, with mountains in the distance, where snow still lies. Great gorges, two and three hundred feet in depth cut through the yard, and are crossed by elegant stone bridges. At the bottom of these gorges are roaring streams and waterfalls. One of these falls, which is over 150 feet high is worth a journey to see. The gorges are thickly covered with pine-trees.

“The college-buildings are very large and elegant, and are not crowded together. The houses of many of the professors stand about the edges of the yard. Before my window, on the edge of the steep descent, stand five or six, all many gabled and picturesque. It is simply a wonderfully beautiful place. There

At Cornell University

are not many large trees about the yard but they are not needed. Here and there are clumps of huge pines. They say it is terribly cold here in winter, which I readily believe.

“My lectures are in a large hall down in the village, and we go down in an omnibus with brakes. The hall, which seats about 1000 people, was packed full the first night, and the lecture was voted a success as usual. To-night I give the second lecture.

“The food at the feminine commons is very good: something like what we get at Mrs. Moore’s in Petersham — and a great plenty of it. Most of the girls look fresh and rosy and healthy. It is profoundly quiet, but now and then I hear ’em laughing as they go along the hall. Lots of feminine head-gear and worsted shawls and sich hang around by the foot of the stairs, and altogether the whole sense of being installed here for ten days is sort of odd.

“O, my dear, I am awfully homesick! I am reading and studying as hard as I can to keep down my feelings. I do think it is wicked that I have to be away from home so much. It is all as wrong as it can be. I have finished Lecky and am now reading Gardiner’s ‘Thirty Years’ War.’”

From Cornell, Ithaca, under date of April 28, 1881, he writes: —

“They tell me that there have never been any lectures here, since the University was founded, so successful as mine. The hall is packed every time and there are many standing up. I seem to have won the heart of everybody and can count on Cornell in future as often as I have anything to give.

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To-night by general request I gave 'Common Origin of Languages' here in the lecture-room of Sage College. The room was packed. At least 300 people toiled up the fearful hill from the village to hear me. After getting through my manuscript the spirit moved me to make some *extempore* remarks, which I interspersed with some puns and odd stories, and it was a great success every way. To-morrow evening I give 'Manifest Destiny' and wind up Saturday at 9 A.M. I then 'quit these diggin's,' shall take sleeping-car at Utica and reach Boston about 9 A.M. Sunday, May 1st."

Thus Fiske's third lecture season came to its close, and he was only too glad to get an easement from his peripatetic work. But he could not remain idle. His experience in presenting some of the general aspects of American history to popular audiences, the universal favor with which his lectures had been received, the widely expressed opinion of eminent critics that he was giving not only a fresh interpretation, but also a new philosophic validation to American history, were definite evidences that he had undertaken a greatly needed work, and that his broad, philosophic method of treating his subject — presenting American history as a chapter in the social evolution of mankind — would be readily appreciated by his countrymen.

While engaged with his lectures, his mind was much engaged with thoughts of a concise history of the American people, from the discovery of the continent by Columbus, down to the close of the

Plans New American History

Civil War in 1865; this history to be comprised in three volumes. He took as a typical model John Richard Green's "Short History of the English People."

While brooding on this subject during the spring of 1881, he received a letter from Messrs. Harper & Brothers, publishers, in which they asked if he was open to negotiations for a work on American history. The letters show that after a few days' rest with his family, Fiske was in conference with the Messrs. Harper in New York, and that he was not long in coming to an agreement with them for the publication of such a history as he had in mind.

Having now a very definite literary task before him, Fiske set about its execution in the same careful, deliberate way we have had occasion to note as customary with him when undertaking any important literary work. In the first place, he laid out a tentative plan for the proposed work, showing within the prescribed limits its main features in their logical order. This plan is an interesting document, not only as an exhibition of Fiske's orderly way of working, but also as showing what constituted the main features of American history as this history had at this time shaped itself in his mind. One who reads it cannot fail to be impressed by the arrangement of the main features in a series of topical chapters presenting a logical flow of events from the beginning to the very end. As we run through

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the scheme and observe the steady evolution of social and political conditions that constitute, as it were, its framework; and then consider that this scheme is cast as a scenic background for the portrayal of the services of great men as their lives come and go — as they function in the flow of the events in which their lives are cast — we recognize one of the principal factors in Fiske's lucid style, his careful attention to the logical arrangement of the subject-matter of his thought.

Henceforth, however much he may be called aside for special work, Fiske's main line of thought is to be given to the presentation of American history, as indicated in this first tentative plan. The subject, however, is to expand greatly under his hand. We are to see him in the next few years substantially completing a history as here sketched out, and then putting the work aside as inadequate, as having been undertaken under too circumscribed conditions — three volumes — which necessitated too condensed a treatment of many essential points. In short, we are to see him come to the point of regarding what he had done on the foregoing plan as but a skeleton framework for the history he wanted to write. We are then to see him begin the work all over again with a much broader purpose: the presentation of American history from the philosophic viewpoint, from its relation to pre-Columbian history, from its relation to antecedent and contemporaneous European history, and also

Laylor's Cyclopædia

as involving within itself the development of certain social and political principles of vast significance to the future well-being of civilized society. All this will appear as our narrative unfolds.

The ensuing summer was spent by Fiske alternately in Cambridge and Petersham. He had a literary task in hand which kept him busy the whole summer — the preparation of three articles for Laylor's "Cyclopædia of Political Science": one on Great Britain, one on the House of Commons, and one on the House of Lords. It is interesting to note, *à propos* of his controversy with William James, that his article on Great Britain consists of a succinct account of the origins of the people of the United Kingdom, and the historic evolution of their government, their institutions, their industries, and their commerce. It is essentially a brief history of the English people, and in no sense a biography of great men. In truth, the article may be characterized as presenting the environing physical and social conditions which have made the development of the great men of the English race possible.

As he was finishing these articles for Laylor's "Cyclopædia," Fiske received an invitation from an association of Unitarian ministers to give a paper on some philosophic subject agreeable to himself at a meeting of the association at Princeton, Massachusetts, on October 4 following. He gladly accepted the invitation and prepared a paper, to

John Fiske

which he gave the title "The True Lesson of Protestantism." It was a paper replete with a knowledge of modern philosophic and religious thought, and in its fair-mindedness, it appealed to the advanced thinkers of the Unitarian faith no less than to all serious-minded persons who were observant of the steady, unmistakable disintegration going on in all the orthodox religious creeds.

Briefly stated, the thesis was this: since the day when Martin Luther posted his audacious heresies on the church door at Wittenberg, a great change has come over men's minds, the full significance of which is even yet but rarely comprehended. The immediate effect of Luther's revolt was the formation of a great number of little churches, each with its creed as clean-cut and as thoroughly dried as the creed of the great Church from which they had separated. At the present day it is not the formation of new sects, but the decomposition of the old ones that is the conspicuous phenomenon inviting attention. The latter half of the nineteenth century will be known to the future historian as especially the era of the decomposition of orthodoxies. People, as a rule, do not now pass over from one church into another, but they remain in their own churches while modifying their theological opinions, and in this way the orthodoxy of every church is gradually but surely losing its consistency.

In view of this decomposition, which is going on before our eyes, it is not strange if we are sometimes

The Lesson of Protestantism

led to ask, What is to be the final outcome of this disintegrating movement? Will the present decomposition of religious beliefs be succeeded by a period of reconstruction in which the teaching of some church shall be accepted as authoritative in all matters pertaining to religious belief; or will the decomposition go on until, through the developments of science, the last vestige of religious faith shall have vanished, and all educated men shall have become atheistic materialists? Fiske repudiates any such implications as being involved in the rational thought of the time, and says: —

“It is my object on this occasion to show that no such alternative really confronts us; that the very propounding of such a question involves grave philosophical and historical errors; that neither materialism on the one hand, nor any species of ecclesiastical orthodoxy on the other hand, is likely to become prevalent in the future; and that the maintenance of an essentially religious attitude of mind is compatible with absolute freedom of speculation on all subjects, whether scientific or metaphysical.”

He then goes on to show with much fulness of illustration, how the deeper scientifico-philosophic thought of the time is leading away from materialism and to ever-increasing problems of a transcendental nature, so that the time may come when men shall be as profoundly interested in questions of a transcendental or ontological character as were

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Aquinas and the other great mediæval thinkers; only that the conceptions of the Infinite Eternal Power, the Source and Sustainer of all things, by the thinkers of the future, will not be hedged in by the personalities with which the mediæval thinkers invested their conceptions of a Divine Creator.

The true lesson of Protestantism Fiske finds to be this: —

“Religious belief is something which in no way concerns society, but which concerns only the individual. In all other relations the individual is more or less responsible to society; but for his religious belief and his religious life, these are matters which lie wholly between himself and his God.”

He closes with the following fine thought: —

“When this lesson shall have been duly comprehended and taken to heart, I make no doubt that religious speculation will continue to go on; but such words as ‘infidelity’ and ‘heresy,’ the present currency of which serves only to show how the remnants of primitive barbaric thought still cling to us and hamper our progress — such words will have become obsolete and perhaps unintelligible save to the philosophic student of history. . . . To feel that the last word has been said on any subject is not a desideratum with the true philosopher, who knows full well that the truth he announces to-day will open half-a-dozen questions where it settles one, and will presently be variously qualified, and at last absorbed in some deeper and wider truth. When all this shall have been realized, and shall have been made part and parcel of the daily mental

Yorktown Anniversary

habit of men, then our human treatment of religion will no longer be what it has too often been in the past — a wretched squabble, fit only for the demons of Malebolge, — but it will have come to be like the sweet discourse of saints in Dante's 'Paradiso.' ”

The 19th of October, 1881, being the centennial anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Mrs. Hemenway desired to have this historic event commemorated by some appropriate exercises in the Old South Church. Accordingly she asked Fiske to deliver an address on the occasion. He was glad to comply with the request. He had the story of the remarkable campaign which brought the War of Independence to a close so well in hand, that in a few days he produced a very lucid and interesting account of the combined movements of Greene in the Carolinas, of Lafayette in Virginia, of Washington's wonderful march from the Hudson, with the operations of the French fleet under Count de Grasse, all culminating in such a complete investment of Cornwallis at Yorktown that he had no possible alternative but an unconditional surrender.

CHAPTER XXVII

DEATH OF EDWIN W. STOUGHTON — THE STOUGHTON HOME IN NEW YORK — GENERAL SHERIDAN AND HIS HISTORIC FLAG — SPENCER'S VISIT TO AMERICA — THE SPENCER DINNER IN NEW YORK

1882

THE year 1882 opened with a sad bereavement to Fiske's mother, in the death of her husband, the Honorable Edwin W. Stoughton, which occurred on the 7th of January. Mr. Stoughton was a lineal descendant of the brother of William Stoughton, who was Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, the first Chief Justice of that Province under the last royal charter, and who presided at the famous witchcraft trials at Salem. He had passed a life of great activity at the bar, and by his abilities and force of character he had achieved a foremost position among the eminent lawyers of the country. In the memorable controversy which arose as to the choice of President in the Presidential election of 1876, whether Hayes or Tilden, and in the establishment of the Electoral Commission to which the issue was confided, Mr. Stoughton took an active part in behalf of the Republicans, and was of counsel to argue the claim of Hayes before the Commission.

Death of Mr. Stoughton

For his services in behalf of the Republican Party in this memorable contest, President Hayes appointed him, in the autumn of 1877, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia. The climate of Russia did not agree with him, and after less than two years he returned, with his health seriously impaired. Several months before his death a movement had been started among his professional brethren in favor of his appointment as Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Had he lived and his health permitted, he undoubtedly would have received an appointment to this high office.

The Stoughton home at 93 Fifth Avenue, New York City, was also the home of Fiske and his family when in New York, and it was a most hospitable one. Here one was sure to meet those eminent in the various walks of life, for Mrs. Stoughton had developed social entertaining into a fine art. Among the many visitors to this hospitable home of whom we get glimpses through Fiske's eyes, no single individuality stands out with greater distinctness than that of Captain John Ericsson, of Monitor fame. Mr. Stoughton was counsel for Captain Ericsson during the greater part of his inventive career, and particularly during the Monitor period, and the intimacy between counsel and client was of the closest kind, the Captain being a welcome guest in the Stoughton home whenever he felt like dropping in.

John Fiske

When the Builders of Iron Ships and Marine Engines presented Captain Ericsson with a gold model of the Monitor as a tribute to his inventive genius, he asked Mrs. Stoughton to take charge of the gift for him; and for a long time it was one of the attractions in her home — an attraction that appealed to Fiske with ever-increasing significance. Here he had a concrete symbol of the dominance of mind over matter, consisting simply in a new adjustment of materials and forces, an invention which impelled an immediate reconstruction of the naval architecture of the world.

Fiske found Captain Ericsson a wonderfully interesting man, not only on account of his great inventive powers, but also by reason of the play of his mind in conversation, as he grappled with the various problems arising from the applications of the broadening truths of science to man's social well-being.

As I turn over the Stoughton papers which have been placed in my hands I find among them many mementos of the fine social life characteristic of the Stoughton home, and among these I find certain facts relating to a social entertainment given by Mr. and Mrs. Stoughton in the early spring of 1873, which, from an incident that flowed from it, is of much historic interest. The entertainment was given in behalf of some event connected with our Civil War, — for in the decorations, the opening and the close of the war were symbolized: the one

Gold Model of the Monitor

by the presence of the flag borne by the Star of the West, the vessel sent by President Buchanan in January, 1861, to relieve the garrison at Fort Sumter, and which was fired upon by the rebel batteries; and the other by a floral arrangement representing the words "Five Forks," where the success of the Union forces under General Sheridan led to the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox. The design was a most significant one, and upon General Sheridan, who was one of the guests, it made a strong impression, so great that he said to Mrs. Stoughton: "To fully complete your design you should have the flag which is the complement to the flag of the Star of the West!"

"And what may that be?" she asked.

"The flag my troops carried in the final charge on Lee's forces at Five Forks and which compelled Lee's surrender."

"That would be a fitting complement, indeed!" said Mrs. Stoughton.

General Sheridan responded: "I have the flag still in my possession and it will give me great pleasure to present it to you, Mrs. Stoughton."

Shortly after Mrs. Stoughton received the flag from General Sheridan, accompanied by the following letter, which gives the flag, historically, a priceless value.¹

¹ The original letter of General Sheridan is in the possession of William K. Bixby, Esq., of St. Louis.

John Fiske

CHICAGO, *March 23, 1873.*

My dear Mrs. Stoughton:—

When last in your house in New York, enjoying your hospitality, I saw the flag of the Star of the West draped with evergreens and under its "Union" the words, "Five Forks," written in beautiful flowers. I cannot express to you, Madame, the emotions, and many thoughts, crowding each other which this delicate representation of interesting national events created.

I thought, perhaps, that it would not be inappropriate to let you replace the flowers, which fade, by the battle-flag of "Five Forks," and then you could drape together the first and last flags fired upon in the great struggle for our national existence.

My proposition was most gratefully accepted, and I send you by express to-day the flag. It has always been very dear to me; but this only serves to increase the pleasure I have in giving it to you.

The flag was new when I left Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley, February 27, 1864, and from that date commenced its active service. It took the place of its old and faded comrade of Opequan, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek. At Waynesboro the remnant of General Early's Army of the Shenandoah surrendered to it. At the crossing of the James River by my command on the 25th of March, 1865, it was lowered to Mr. Lincoln as he passed through the bridge over which we were crossing. When General Grant passed through the gate to Mr. McLean's house to receive the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox Court House,

General Sheridan's Flag

it was lowered to him: it has never been lowered, in salute or otherwise, to any one else.

At Five Forks, when it was necessary that we should win, I took it from the color-bearer and it led the troops to victory. The bullet hole in the white was received there. At Jetersville it stood in front of Lee's army to oppose its further progress until the arrival of the Army of the Potomac. At Sailor's Creek, Ewell and his corps surrendered to it.

On the morning of the 9th of April, 1865, it stood opposite the white flag which the Army of Northern Virginia raised in token of surrender; and while I was advancing to meet the envoys representing the enemies' flag, it was fired upon by a brigade of South Carolina troops receiving the last shot from the Army of Northern Virginia.¹

I am, dear Madame,

Very respectfully,

Your ob'd't. Servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN,

Lt. General.

After the death of her husband Mrs. Stoughton had no desire to live in New York. In her loneliness, its social attractions were in no way comparable to the joy of living in close relations with her children and her grandchildren. Accordingly, she disposed of her Fifth Avenue residence, and purchased a vacant lot in Cambridge, near the Fiske

¹ At the death of Mrs. Stoughton this flag descended to Mrs. Fiske. As she thought so priceless an historic object rightfully belonged to the family of General Sheridan, she returned it to Mrs. Sheridan.

John Fiske

home; and while plans for a suitable home for herself were being worked out she took a journey to Europe.

Fiske's labors for the year 1882 were of a somewhat different character from those of previous years. In the first place, his mother's bereavement, her removal to Cambridge, and the condition of her affairs generally brought a fresh weight of care upon him. Then, too, his history, now well in hand, needed his closest attention in order to bring it to completion in conformity to his agreement with his publishers. Lecturing was, therefore, greatly curtailed.

Of magazine articles he published in the "Atlantic Monthly" two of a scientifico-evolutionary character relating to the arrival of man in Europe, articles which for some time had been lying in his desk; and also a memorial tribute to Charles Darwin, who died April 19, 1882. To "Harper's Magazine" he contributed four articles on subjects taken from his history. But the events of the year of greatest significance in the life of Fiske, as well as to the cause of Evolution, were the death of Darwin and the visit to America of Herbert Spencer.

Most of Fiske's days, therefore, were spent with his family, and while we have delightful glimpses of him in his home at Cambridge, and at Petersham engaged in his literary work, at play with his children, and enjoying his musical diversions, these

Tribute to Darwin

glimpses are very similar in character to what we have seen in previous years and they do not call for any particular mention. I, therefore, pass them by, and will ask the attention of the reader to these points: Fiske's fine discriminating tribute to Darwin, and Herbert Spencer's visit to America and Fiske's identification therewith.

Fiske's appreciation of Darwin was charged with a feeling of personal affection, which had expression in such fine literary form that the opening and closing paragraphs of his article are in place here: —

“To-day, while all that was mortal of Charles Darwin is borne to its last resting-place in Westminster Abbey, by the side of Sir Isaac Newton, it seems a fitting occasion to utter a few words of tribute to the memory of the beautiful life that has just passed away from us. Though Mr. Darwin had more than completed his threescore and ten years, and though his life had been rich in achievement and crowned with success such as is but seldom vouchsafed to man, yet the news of his death has none the less impressed us with a sense of sudden and premature bereavement. For on the one hand the time would never have come when those of us who had learned the inestimable worth of such a teacher and friend could have felt ready to part with him; and on the other hand Mr. Darwin was one whom the gods, for love of him, had endowed with perpetual youth, so that his death could never seem otherwise than premature. As Mr. Galton has well said, the period of physical

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youth — say from the fifteenth to the twenty-second year — is, with most men the only available period for acquiring intellectual habits and amassing the stores of knowledge that are to form their equipment for the work of a life-time; but in the case of men of the highest order this period is simply a period of seven years, neither more nor less valuable than any other seven years. There is, now and then, a mind — perhaps one in four or five millions — which in early youth thinks the thoughts of mature manhood, and which in old age retains the flexibility, the receptiveness, the keen appetite for new impressions, that are characteristic of the fresh season of youth. Such a mind as this was Mr. Darwin's. To the last he was eager for new facts and suggestions, to the last he held his judgments in readiness for revision; and to this unflinching freshness of spirit was joined a sagacity which, naturally great, had been refined and strengthened by half a century most fruitful in experiences, till it had come to be almost super-human.

“When we remember how Alexander von Humboldt began at the age of seventy-five to write his ‘Kosmos,’ and how he lived to turn off in his ninetieth year the fifth bulky volume of that prodigiously learned book, — when we remember this, and consider the great scientific value of the monographs which Mr. Darwin has lately been publishing almost every year, we must feel that it is in a measure right to speak of his death as premature.

“It is fitting that in the great Abbey, where rest the ashes of England's noblest heroes, the place of

Tribute to Darwin

the discoverer of natural selection should be near that of Sir Isaac Newton. Since the publication of the immortal 'Principia' no single scientific book has so widened the mental horizon of mankind as the 'Origin of Species.' Mr. Darwin, like Newton, was a very young man when his great discovery suggested itself to him. Like Newton, he waited many years before publishing it to the world. Like Newton, he lived to see it become part and parcel of the mental equipment of all men of science. The theological objection urged against the Newtonian theory by Leibnitz, that it substituted natural causes for the immediate action of the Deity, was also urged against the Darwinian theory by Agassiz; and the same objection will doubtless continue to be urged against scientific explanations of natural phenomena so long as there are men who fail to comprehend the profoundly theistic and religious truth that the action of natural causes is in itself the immediate action of the Deity. It is interesting, however, to see that, as theologians are no longer frightened by the doctrine of gravitation, so they are beginning to outgrow their dread of the doctrine of natural selection. On the Sunday following Mr. Darwin's death, Canon Liddon, at St. Paul's Cathedral, and Canons Barry and Prothero, at Westminster Abbey, agreed in referring to the Darwinian theory as 'not necessarily hostile to the fundamental truths of religion.' The effect of Mr. Darwin's work has been, however, to remodel the theological conceptions of the origin and destiny of man which were current in former times. In this respect it has wrought a revolution as great as that which Copernicus in-

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augurated and Newton completed, and of very much the same kind. Again has man been rudely unseated from his imaginary throne in the centre of the universe, but only that he may learn to see in the universe, and in human life, a richer and deeper meaning than he had before suspected. Truly, he who unfolds to us the way in which God works through the world of phenomena may well be called the best of religious teachers. In the study of the organic world, no less than in the study of the starry heavens, is it true that 'day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.' "

As Fiske penned these closing lines, so full of deep religious feeling, it can be readily imagined that there flashed through his mind the recollection of his own bitter experiences in championing Darwin's views. And what an instance it is of the mutability of opinion in matters theological: the bitter condemnation of Darwin in 1860-62, because, as a man of science, he had found that the truths of nature ran counter to the dogmas of theology; and twenty years after, the placing of his remains, with theological acquiescence and with conspicuous honor, among the immortals of the English race.

We pass now to the visit of Herbert Spencer to America in this year 1882. For some years the thought of visiting America had been floating in Spencer's mind, and the idea was eagerly encouraged by Dr. Youmans, who was always on the look-

Spencer's Visit to America

out for whatever would tend to direct public attention to Spencer and the cardinal points in his philosophy. Then, too, Spencer had strong reasons of his own for making personal observations of the political and social forces at work in the United States, for he was at this time in the midst of the sociological section of his great philosophical undertaking. A personal glance, therefore, at society in the "Great Republic" was a great desideratum. As in all important matters, he made preparations for the visit well beforehand. We find that early in September, 1881, he had definitely planned to make the visit in the autumn of the ensuing year, and that he then informed Dr. Youmans of his purpose. In January, 1882, he advised Fiske of his intended visit.

Fiske replied, telling Spencer that his own visit to England was postponed for a year, and expressing his great pleasure at knowing that within a few months Spencer would take a trip to America. Fiske gave him a cordial invitation to visit him at his home in Cambridge.

Spencer arrived in New York August 21, 1882. He was accompanied by his lifelong friend, Edward Lott. Mr. Lott came not only as a companion, but also as a "buffer" or protector to guard Spencer, in his unstable health, against undue excitement or exertion arising from the public interest that would undoubtedly be called forth by the visit. The "reporters" were awaiting them on

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their arrival, all desirous of an interview. By the dexterous management of Dr. Youmans, however, this ordeal was eluded, and the two travellers were soon quietly resting at the Windsor Hotel. The "reporters" were not long in finding the travellers' retreat, but they were skilfully kept at bay by Mr. Lott, who pleaded Spencer's enfeebled condition as a bar to the desired "interview." The failure to get at Spencer did not prevent, however, the concoction of several ingenious "interviews" on the part of the ready-witted reporters, some of whom, in professing to express the opinions of Spencer on men and things, were widely amiss of the truth. The travellers remained but two days in New York, and then went to the Kaaterskill Hotel, in the Catskills on the Hudson, a hotel selected by Dr. Youmans as a choice resting-place after the fatigue of the sea voyage. Here they remained in undisturbed quiet, as "Mr. Edward Lott and friend," for five days, during which time Spencer was for the first time made acquainted, among other things, with a portion of a virgin forest. He says:—

"I was shown how erroneous was my preconception. In common, I dare say, with the preconceptions of most others, mine had been based on experiences of woods at home; and I had failed to imagine an important trait of which we see nothing in England — the cumbering of the ground on every side with decaying, moss-covered trunks of

Spencer's Visit to America

past generations of trees, lying prone, or leaning one upon another at various angles, and in all stages of decay."

From the Catskills the travellers went to Saratoga, where they spent two uninterested days, and from thence they journeyed on to Montreal. But Canada, as seen about Montreal, brought no pleasant thoughts to either of them. After a brief description of the city and its environs, Spencer says:¹

"To many travellers these would, I dare say, have given more pleasure than they gave to me; for I failed to exclude the thought of certain antecedents not in harmony with a feeling of admiration. For a generation or more Canadians have been coming to England for capital to make their great lines of railway; and have put before English investors statements of costs and profits so favorable, that they have obtained the required sums. These statements have proved far more wide of the truth than such statements usually prove — so wide of it that the undertakings have been extremely disastrous to investors: impoverishing great numbers and ruining not a few (my poor friend Lott becoming, eventually, one of these last, and dying prematurely in consequence). But while, to open up these communications which have been so immensely beneficial to their commerce and industries, the Canadians have, by exaggerated representations, got from the mother-country resources which they were unable to furnish them-

¹ *Autobiography*, vol. II, p. 463.

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selves, they have yet been able to build imposing cities full of magnificent mansions, and at Montreal an hotel far exceeding in grandeur anything the mother-country could, at that time, show."

Spencer has been charged in philosophical matters with unduly basing his conclusions upon *a-priori* considerations. I apprehend that the citizens of Montreal feel that they are entitled to a more appreciative social valuation from an English philosopher than is given in this distinctly *a-priori* verdict.

From Montreal the travellers set out for Niagara Falls by way of Kingston, Toronto, and Buffalo. One observation of Spencer's during this journey shows his freedom from national bias in his judgment of his own countrymen. Their boat stopped some little time at Kingston, and the travellers rambled about the town, and found, to their astonishment and shame, that this town of only ten or twelve thousand people had the telephone in use all over the place; while at that time it was scarcely in use in London, and was unknown in the great provincial English towns. Commenting on this state of things Spencer says:¹—

"I have sometimes puzzled myself over the anomaly that while in some ways, the English are extremely enterprising, they are, in other ways, extremely unenterprising. While there exist a select few among us who are full of ideas, the great

¹ *Autobiography*, vol. II, p. 465.

Spencer's Visit to America

masses of our people appear to be without ideas. Or, to state the case otherwise, it seems as if the English nature (I say English, because I do not assert it of either Scotch or Irish) exhibits a wider range than any other nation between its heights of intelligence and its depths of stupidity."

Spencer found the Falls much what he expected — they neither came short of his expectations, nor much exceeded them. The effect of a closer acquaintance with them was to deepen the impression of grandeur. The travellers had intended to go as far west as Chicago, but on reaching Cleveland, they decided that they had had enough of Western travel, and to return to New York by way of Pittsburgh, Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and close their visit with an excursion to New Haven, Newport, and Boston. On reaching Baltimore they were met by Dr. Youmans, all intent that on the eve of his departure Spencer should be the guest of a public dinner at Delmonico's, which should be an expression of the feeling of an influential portion of the American public towards Spencer and his great work. Spencer was reluctant to allow himself to be set up as a target for post-prandial eulogies, and pleaded his physical infirmities as unable to withstand the ordeal. But Dr. Youmans's persistence prevailed, and with Spencer's assent, he immediately returned to New York and preparations for the dinner went on apace.

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On reaching New York a few days later, Spencer suggested that, inasmuch as many opinions had been attributed to him since his arrival which were wholly untrue, it might be well to give the press a formal interview, and thus make sure of having his views correctly stated. Dr. Youmans readily agreed, and between the two an "authorized interview" was prepared and distributed to the press. This "interview," while consisting mainly of adverse criticism of American political life, was yet so imbued with a just appreciation of the really important features of the social and political life that were being worked out here, and the inherent difficulties attending their development, that these criticisms were seen to be those of a friend anxious for American welfare, rather than those of an enemy hostile to our institutions. Accordingly, the "interview" was well received and greatly heightened the interest in the forthcoming public dinner.

On Saturday, October 28, 1882, Spencer and Mr. Lott arrived in Boston and attended a dinner of the Saturday Club at which Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes presided. This was a select dining-club, no less famous in America than was the X Club¹ in England. In speaking of the occasion Spencer says:—

"The 'Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table' proved himself a very genial head of the dinner-table. It

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 469.

Spencer's Personality

was pleasant to meet, in company with others less known, one whose writings had given me so much pleasure, and some copies of whose best known book I had given to friends as a book to be read and re-read." ¹

The next forenoon the travellers made their way to Fiske's home, 22 Berkeley Street, Cambridge, and remained to luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Fiske and their six children, a luncheon strictly *en famille*. As Spencer here comes *in propria persona* directly within the circle of interests it has been a purpose in the foregoing pages to weave around Fiske and his family home, it is eminently fitting that we endeavor to get before us, as vividly as possible, a picture or a conception of his remarkable personality.

Spencer was now sixty-two years old. He was five feet ten inches in height, but his long limbs and his slender figure gave him an appearance of greater height. His weight was about one hundred and fifty pounds. He wore side whiskers, thus leaving the features of his face fully exposed. He was quite bald, with light locks of gray hair flowing over his ears and mingling with his side whiskers. His physiognomy was a noticeable one, by reason of its massive, overarching brow, its somewhat prominent, slightly aquiline, nose, its pronounced upper lip, its well-shaped mouth indicating both firmness and tenderness, and its positive

¹ *Autobiography*, vol. II, p. 477.

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chin. And these features were so related to a pair of keen, deep-seated, penetrating blue eyes that the whole countenance could be made to glow with deep interest or benignant kindness; could be made expressive of profound meditation or indignant scorn — yea, could oftentimes give vent to uncontrolled, petulant feeling, according as the soul behind the face was stirred to action by its environing conditions. His voice was rich and harmonious in its tones, and was modulated in strict accord with his feelings. His conversational powers, when in the mood for conversation, were of the rarest order. He had an easy flow of language, and had his wide and varied knowledge at such ready command that he was able to illumine all subjects in which he felt an interest with much lucid thought and pertinent illustration. He was easy and graceful in his movements, although his bearing and manner clearly indicated his physical invalidism. As, in 1873, Fiske described his appearance as that “of a strong man tired,” so now, in 1882, his tired appearance was somewhat accentuated.

It was a great pleasure to Spencer, after his many weeks' travelling, to find himself in such a quiet, scholarly home as this of Fiske's. In the library, seated in a comfortable easy-chair before an open wood fire and surrounded by books on books, he seemed for a time to forget his physical ailments and his discomforting journeys in the



HAROLD



CLARENCE



RALPH



HERBERT

THE FOUR SONS OF JOHN FISKE

Visited by Spencer

presence of so much quiet restfulness. He was also delighted to see Fiske's whole family together, especially his six children; and after taking in the whole family surroundings he remarked most graciously, but with just a tinge of personal loss: "Well, Fiske, you certainly have a happy home here. I can now understand your homesickness when away from it."

Fiske had in his library a cuckoo clock, which promptly opened its little door and in musical tones announced the hour and half-hour as the time glided by. Spencer's attention was early attracted to this faithful little monitor. At last he said: "Does n't it disturb you, Fiske, to have so many books and things all about you, and this little monitor to remind you of the passing time? Why, I could n't work at all under such conditions!"

Fiske assured him that these surroundings had quite the contrary effect upon himself; that his thought never flowed quite so freely when away from them; and at times they were a positive inspiration to him.¹

¹ In the *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, by David Duncan (vol. II, p. 117), I find, in a letter of Spencer to F. Howard Collins, the following reference to the necessity of his relieving his mind from all possible distractions: "I am desirous in all cases to exclude superfluities from my environment. Multiplication of books, and magazines, and papers which I do not need continually annoys me. As you may perhaps remember, I shut out the presence of books by curtains, that I may be free from the sense of complexity which they yield."

John Fiske

Of course, there was much talk regarding mutual friends in England, the recent death of Darwin and the significant opinions regarding his life-work that had been expressed in influential quarters, and also regarding the increasing attention that was being paid to the subject of sociology now that Spencer had brought the subject under fresh consideration, by treating it as an important branch of science and as one of the structural divisions of his doctrine of Evolution.

Two or three points came out in the conversation, as reported to me by Fiske shortly after, which are of interest as reflecting Spencer's thought while in America. He frankly admitted that his visit had greatly broadened his comprehension of the political and social problems that were being worked out here. In the first place, he had had no adequate conception of the physical environment which so largely conditions the sociological development of the people. Then, statistics of immigration had given him no realizing sense of the sociological problems that were rising here through the mixing of races in various stages of social and political culture. While the people of London presented various phases of social aggregation, from the most degraded to the most highly cultured, the great mass were members of the English race with their racial characteristics. In New York, on the other hand, Spencer found a great, imperial city, made up of various nationalities or races,

Spencer's Observations

some of which in their new urban aggregation retained many of the social ideas and customs to which they were born. In fact, he found, on one side in New York, a great German city, and on another a great Italian city; and scattered here and there, were sections made up of lesser nationalities; while he had not failed to observe that the shop signs throughout the city bore witness to the fact that the distributions of food and industrial commodities was by no means in the hands of people of the English race. These observations could not fail to start trains of thought in regard to the effect of this mixing of races under a democratic form of government upon the future of the American people, and, through them, upon the people of the world at large. He saw that the immediate effect of this mixing of races, in various stages of social and political culture, under a democratic political organization, was the lowering of the standard of intelligence, of virtue, in the electorate. As to this fact there could be no question. Political bossism and civic corruption were too apparent.

Fiske then pointed out that, while the immediate effect of this great foreign immigration was political and social deterioration, it had a healthy evolutionary tendency in two directions: it tended to an ever-increasing differentiation in the interests and the employments of the people, coupled with an ever-increasing development of integrating power on the part of the Government, both State

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and Federal. This increase of integrating power was particularly noticeable in the provisions for public education, sanitation, and transportation; and for the protection of the public from unjust demands of capitalistic combinations and labor organizations, as well as the protection of the natural resources of the country from individual or capitalistic exploitation.

Spencer was quick to see the point, that while this great tide of foreign immigration had a natural tendency, if left to itself, to weaken the intellectual and moral stamina of the people who founded the Republic and who had thus far sustained it, this deteriorating influence was met by a much stronger counteracting force, that of social and political integration, whereby the interests of the people as a whole were made paramount to the interests of individuals, classes, or sections. Hence, the ever-increasing provisions for public education, sanitation, and the public welfare generally. He also saw that this was an order of social and political development somewhat at variance with his preconceived ideas of what the order of such development should be. He saw, in fact, that in placing himself, as he had done in England, in strong opposition to provisions for public education, sanitation, etc., he had logically put himself out of sympathy with the great integrating social and political forces at work in America.

Fiske suggested that the structural difference in

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the social and political organizations of the two peoples called for different methods of integration while in the process of social and political evolution. For instance, in England the fundamental social and political idea in practice is, that government is for the people, by privileged classes, and primarily for the benefit of the privileged classes. Hence all governmental acts affecting public interests are more or less tainted with special benefits to the privileged classes — at best, they tend to develop a spirit of dependence, rather than of independence, among the people. In the United States, on the other hand, the fundamental idea of government is, that it is of the people, by the people, and for the people. Hence the public interest is put forward as the integrating, controlling interest; and consequently questions affecting the welfare of the people as a whole become questions of legitimate practical importance.

Spencer admitted the justice of the distinction, between the conditions obtaining in England and in the United States, and he said that his visit had given him a fresh light on some of the problems attending the social and political development of the future. He enjoined Fiske to keep an observant eye upon the development of these integrating forces, particularly in American industrial and political life. He believed that the great increase of wealth, so manifest on every side, and coming upon a generation so unprepared for its

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use, would make its baleful influence felt through political corruption, in its efforts to obtain special privileges. To guard against the insidious advance of special privileges in the rapidly developing life here, seemed to him the imperative duty of the American citizen.¹

At the luncheon, Spencer quite forgot the philosopher and did his best to make himself one with the children. He could be most interesting when he passed out of the "homogeneity" of his own thoughts and feelings into the "heterogeneity" of the thoughts and feelings of others. On this occasion he pleasantly sought the various interests of the children, and then made their interests his own and deftly enforced his points of view by pertinent, happy anecdotes. He was in an inquiring mood and he created no little merriment among the young people by asking, quite unphilosophically, when a plate of raised biscuits was passed to him: "Fiske, do tell me, are these *buckwheat cakes*?"

After a most agreeable hour at the luncheon-table, Spencer said he had the impression that music had been much cultivated in this pleasant home, and if so, he would like a taste of it, that he might take away with him a remembrance of the

¹ As stated in the text, Fiske gave me, shortly after Spencer's visit, the substance of their conversation. In after years, as we met frequently and had occasion to discuss the steady advance of the demand for special privileges in nearly all the departments of our industrial life, the remembrance of Spencer's remarks came back to us, and I have found no difficulty in recalling them for insertion here.

Spencer in the Fiske Home

Fiske family home as a whole. Accordingly, Miss Maud, who for some seventeen years has occasionally appeared in these pages, cheerfully complied with his request, and sang two songs from the beloved Schubert, "Frühlingslaube" and "Du Bist die Ruh," with such grace and expression as to give Spencer unfeigned delight.

Mr. Lott had known, ever since they set out on their journey, how much Spencer had looked forward to this meeting with Fiske and his family. He therefore remained a quiet observer, aiding in the conversation when necessary.

But Fiske could not let his friends depart from Boston without their having a glimpse at Harvard College and at some of the suburbs of Boston. Accordingly, he arranged for the next day a visit to Harvard and to the suburbs of Brookline and Jamaica Plain, on the condition that there should be no calls on officers or professors or any introductions. In their visit to Harvard, Fiske took his friends to the house on the corner of Kirkland and Oxford streets, and pointed out the room where in 1860, as a Sophomore, he first became acquainted with Spencer's thought by reading "Social Statics." He also showed them the University Building with its faculty room, where in 1861 he was threatened with expulsion from college if caught disseminating Evolutionary ideas among students. He then took them to the little Holden Chapel, where eight years afterwards he was called to expound, under auspices

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of the college, the fundamental principles of the Evolutionary philosophy to undergraduates and to all who would choose to hear. Gore Hall, the Library, was also visited, and here Fiske was able to show his friends where he had spent the best six years of his life in the service of the College as its librarian, the custodian of its literary treasures. It is to be presumed that they visited the Agassiz Museum, although there is no mention of a visit there.

After the inspection of the principal buildings of the college, Fiske took his friends to drive in the suburbs of Brookline and Jamaica Plain. Spencer was in exceedingly good spirits during the whole excursion; and at parting he was very gracious, and with much feeling he said: "Fiske, it has been a great pleasure to me to see you in your home and in your surroundings. These two days have been the pleasantest days I have had in America."

Both knew they were to meet again at the farewell dinner to Spencer in New York, and so they bade each other good-bye for a few days.

During this visit to Boston, Spencer and his friend made an excursion to Concord, a reference to which is not out of place here. In his "Autobiography," Spencer makes record of this Concord excursion thus:—

"Our chief purpose was, of course, to visit Emerson's house; and here a pleasant hour was spent in company with his widow, son, and daughter. We

Spencer and Emerson

were then taken to the cemetery. Not many months had passed since Emerson's death, and the grave-heap was undistinguished by any monument. 'Sleepy Hollow' is so beautiful and poetical a spot as to make one almost wish to die in Concord for the purpose of being buried there."

But why this special interest in Emerson on the part of Spencer, leading to a special pilgrimage to Emerson's house and grave? There is no record of Spencer's paying a similar mark of respect to any other thinker. What can be the meaning of this act when it is well known that Emerson was not a reader of Spencer?¹ The answer is, that Spencer was a penetrating reader of Emerson, and found, in his pithy, oracular phrases, which the religious mind of half a century ago regarded as the quintessence of mystic infidelity, deep insights, both poetic and philosophic, into the pro-

¹ I have a bit of testimony on this point. In 1860, when Spencer published a prospectus of his proposed philosophical undertaking, we had, in the "Old-Corner Bookstore" of Ticknor & Fields, a number of copies for distribution. We have seen that it was from this prospectus that Fiske got his first knowledge of Spencer's undertaking. (See vol. I, p. 138.) I had become interested in Spencer through reading his essays in the *Westminster Review* and his *Social Statics*. Emerson was a frequent visitor to the store, and one day I saw him attentively reading Spencer's prospectus. When he had finished I asked him if he could tell me anything about Spencer. His reply was: "I cannot, but I hear much about him. I have not read him at all, and from what I hear I am not impressed with his philosophy. Mr. Alger or Mr. Silsbee can tell you about him." I referred to the very remarkable list of subscribers to Spencer's undertaking and Emerson said: "Yes, he is undoubtedly a man of great intellectual power, and if he completes the work here outlined it will be a great achievement."

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found mysteries of the cosmos. He also saw that Emerson's idea of God was purified from the Calvinistic anthropomorphism of the time. Let us look at a little evidence on these points. Away back in 1833 we find Emerson reading with critical insight the speculations of Lamarck, the precursor of Darwin, in regard to the origin and distribution of the organic life of the globe; and in a lecture, delivered in December, 1833, on "The Relation of Man to the Globe," he speaks of this relationship and man's development under it, thus: —

"The most surprising, I may say the most sublime, (fact, is) that man is no upstart in creation, but has been prophesied in nature for a thousand ages before he appeared; that from times incalculably remote, there has been a progressive preparation for him, an effort to produce him; the meaner creatures containing the elements of his structure and pointing to it from every side. . . . His limbs are only a more exquisite organization — say rather the finish — of the rudimental forms that have been already sweeping the sea and creeping in the mud: the brother of his hand is even now cleaving the Arctic Sea in the fin of the whale, and innumerable ages since was pawing the marsh in the flipper of the saurian." ¹

And again, in the essay on "Fate," we have a similar passage: —

"The book of Nature is the book of Fate. She turns the gigantic pages — leaf after leaf — never

¹ James Elliot Cabot, *Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. I, p. 20.

Emerson and Evolution

returning one. One leaf she lays down, a floor of granite; then a thousand ages and a bed of slate; a thousand ages, and a measure of coal; a thousand ages, and a layer of marl and mud: vegetable forms appear; her first misshapen animals. Zoöphite, trilobium, fish; then saurians, — rude forms in which she has only blocked her future statue, concealing under these unwieldy monsters the fine type of her coming king. The face of the planet cools and dries, the races meliorate and man is born. But when a race has lived its term, it comes no more again.”¹

These extracts — and many more of similar import might be given — clearly show that years before Spencer and Darwin had laid the scientific foundations for the doctrine of Evolution, Emerson had come, by pure insight, into a conception of Divine action regarding the cosmos which related man to the organic world as its crowning evolutionary product; and this, at a time when religious orthodoxy was scoffing at science and affirming the fall of man as an ultimate Divine truth, transcending all the positive evidences of nature in regard to man’s origin and development.

In regard to Emerson’s conception of the Deity, his writings speak for him from beginning to end. His conception may be said to have been a conversion of Spencer’s affirmation of an “Infinite Eternal Energy from which all things proceed” into a positive, uncognizable Spirit stripped of all an-

¹ Emerson’s *Conduct of Life* (Riverside Edition), p. 20.

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thropomorphic connotations. Hence it was a conception that defies analysis. In a far deeper sense than did Spinoza, he saw God, and the goodness of God, in everything. In his own words: "The world is a temple whose walls are covered with the emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity." "Ineffable is the union of man and God in the soul." "If a man have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions, will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will."

Then, too, his insights into man's social evolution of the future were no less remarkable than his insights into man's origin and development, and they were permeated with the highest optimism, and were given forth before Spencer had begun his profound sociological observations. In evidence let us take an extract from his essay on "Culture," written between 1850 and 1860:—

"The fossil strata show us that Nature began with rudimental forms and rose to the more complex as fast as the earth was fit for their dwelling-place, and that the lower perish as the higher appear. Very few of our race can be said to be yet finished men. We still carry sticking to us some remains of the preceding inferior quadruped organizations. We call these millions men; but they are not yet men. Half-engaged in the soil, pawing to get free, man needs all the music that can be brought to disengage him. If Love, red love with tears and

Emerson and Evolution

joy; if Want with his scourge; if War with his cannonade; if Christianity with its charity; if Trade with its money; if Art with its portfolios; if Science with her telegraphs through the deeps of space and time can set his dull nerves throbbing, and by loud taps on the tough chrysalis can break its walls and let the new creature emerge erect and free, — make way and sing pæan! The age of the quadruped is to go out, and the age of the brain, and the heart is to come in. The time will come when the evil forms we have known can no more be organized. Man's culture can spare nothing, he wants all the material. He is to convert all impediments into instruments, all enemies into power. The formidable mischief will only make the more useful slave. And if one shall read the future of the race hinted in the organic effort of Nature to mount and meliorate, and the corresponding impulse to the Better in the human being, we shall dare affirm that there is nothing he will not overcome and convert, until at last culture shall absorb chaos and gehenna. He will convert the Furies into Muses, and the hells into benefits."

Thus we see that Spencer, with his frigid intellectual nature, was by sympathy drawn to Emerson as the intuitive poet of the oncoming doctrine of Evolution, and hence his visit to Concord was quite in the natural order of things. This being the case, the setting-forth of their intellectual kinship in the promulgation of Evolutionary views in the past is of rightful place here, inasmuch as in the portion of our narrative which follows, we are to

John Fiske

see the poetic, religious insight of Emerson blended with the profound philosophic generalizations of Spencer, as Fiske, in language of great force and beauty, sets forth that ethical conduct has its genesis in the cosmic nature of man, and that its development has been *pari passu* with the purification of men's conceptions of the Infinite Being, the Source and Sustainer of the cosmic universe, and that the recognition of these truths is among the first principles of the doctrine of Evolution.

While Spencer was visiting New England the preparations for the farewell dinner in his honor in New York were going on apace. Dr. Youmans had a keen appreciation of the weight of public opinion when massed on any important question, and he determined, therefore, that the proposed honor to Spencer should at the same time be an occasion for a fresh setting-forth of the doctrine of Evolution in its relation to all the higher interests of humanity. The dinner was served at Delmonico's on the evening of November 9, 1882. About two hundred persons, representative of the best interests and thought of the country, were present in person or by letter. The Honorable William M. Evarts, formerly Secretary of State, and at that time America's leading statesman, presided. In the course of his remarks introducing Spencer, Evarts said:—

“We are glad to see you, for we recognize in the breadth of your knowledge, such knowledge as is

Farewell Dinner to Spencer

useful to your race, a greater comprehension than any living man has presented to our generation. We are glad to see you because in our judgment you have brought to the analysis and distribution of this vast knowledge a more penetrating intelligence and a more thorough insight than any living man has brought even to the minor topics of his special knowledge. In theology, in psychology, in natural science, in the knowledge of individual man and his exposition, and in the knowledge of the world, in the proper sense of society which makes up the world, the world worth knowing, the world worth speaking of, the world worth planning for, the world worth working for — we acknowledge your labors as surpassing those of any of our kind."

Spencer, who was in bad form physically, responded, as was his wont, with criticism — good-natured criticism — of our American "Gospel of Work," and made an earnest plea for more consideration of the "Gospel of Relaxation" and a higher ideal of life than he had seen about him.

Spencer was followed by Professor W. G. Sumner, of Yale University, who spoke warmly of Spencer's great services in bringing the new science of sociology into recognition as an important department of Science. Next the Honorable Carl Schurz responded to the toast, "The Progress of Science tends to International Harmony." Then came Professor O. C. Marsh, of Yale University, Acting President of the National Academy of Sciences, who responded to the toast, "Evolution —

John Fiske

once an Hypothesis, now the Established Doctrine of the scientific world." After Professor Marsh, Fiske was called to respond to the toast, "The Doctrine of Evolution and Religion." Following him came Henry Ward Beecher, who spoke for the liberal orthodox clergy, and who testified to the trouble Spencer had given to the ministers, who found they could not get along with Calvin and Spencer both. He closed his stirring address with the following reverent tribute to Spencer: —

"May He who holds the storm in His hand be gracious to you, sir; may your voyage across the sea be prosperous and speedy; may you find on the other side all those conditions of health and of comfort which shall enable you to complete the great work, greater than any other man in this age has ever attempted; may you live to hear from this continent and that other an unbroken testimony to the service which you have done to humanity; and thus, if you are not outwardly crowned, you wear an invisible crown in your heart that will carry comfort to death — and I will greet you beyond."

There were other tributes ready for expression, particularly one by Youmans, while cordial letters had been received from Andrew D. White, President of Cornell University, and from Oliver Wendell Holmes, and others. But at the close of Beecher's address, it was felt that the fitting words had been spoken, and as Spencer appeared fatigued, on the motion of Evarts, the company rose and ex-

Farewell Dinner to Spencer

tended to him a heartfelt *bon voyage*, thus bringing to a close an evening forever memorable in the lives of those present, as well as forming an occasion of much significance in the appraisal of the doctrine of Evolution.

All of the addresses were of a high order, and it will be noted that the doctrine of Evolution and Spencer's labors were approached from various viewpoints. To Fiske was allotted the task of setting forth the philosophic relation of the doctrine of Evolution to religion, to the very highest interests of the human mind. His address was so compact and clean-cut in thought, so lucid in statement, and so fine in literary form, that it greatly impressed his hearers, and gave a special satisfaction to Spencer. At its conclusion, Spencer, who sat near Fiske, partly rose from his chair and said, taking his hand: "Fiske, should you develop to the fullest the ideas you have expressed here this evening, I should regard it as a fitting supplement to my life-work." This was not the expression of a passing feeling on the part of Spencer. He wrote Fiske shortly after getting home, expressing his mature conviction regarding the address: —

38 QUEEN'S GARDENS,
BAYSWATER, London, W.
November 24, 1882.

My dear Fiske: —

I regretted very much that I did not return to the Windsor in time to see you the day before sailing, but there were so many imperative matters to

John Fiske

be settled that I found it impossible to get back in time. Had it not been that Youmans gave me the impression that I should again see you before starting, I should, notwithstanding my state of fatigue, have written you a letter on the Saturday morning.

I wanted to say how successful and how important I thought was your presentation of the dual aspect, theological and ethical, of the Evolution doctrine. It is above all things needful that the people should be impressed with the truth that the philosophy offered to them does not necessitate a divorce from their inherited conceptions concerning religion and morality, but merely a purification and exaltation of them. It was a great point to enunciate this view on an occasion ensuring wide distribution through the press; and if Youmans effects, as he hopes through the medium of a pamphlet reporting the proceedings, a still wider distribution, much will be gained for the cause. Thank you for the aid thus given.

Very truly yours,

HERBERT SPENCER.

As this Spencer-dinner address of Fiske's expresses in a brief and lucid form the relation of the doctrine of Evolution to religion and ethics, and as the views expressed therein had the emphatic endorsement of Spencer, it can be said that it marks a definite stage in the development of the Evolution doctrine — a stage when the two leading protagonists of the doctrine were ready to grapple with all the religious and ethical questions involved in

Address at Spencer Dinner

it. Viewed in this light this address may well be considered as a key-note to the religious and ethical implications of the doctrine as held by Spencer and by Fiske. In the religious essays of Fiske, those we have already considered and those which are to follow, it will be noted that the rational philosophy of this Spencer-dinner address pervades them all, while it permeates his "Cosmic Philosophy" as a deep refrain.¹

¹ The address is published in full in the volume of Fiske's essays, *Excursions of an Evolutionist*, p. 294.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FOURTH VISIT TO LONDON — AT HIS OLD QUARTERS
67 GREAT RUSSELL STREET — COURTESIES BY
SIME, HUXLEY, AND SPENCER — SEVERE ILLNESS
AT TRÜBNER'S — SAILS FOR HOME — RESUMES
WORK ON HIS HISTORY — HARVARD COLLEGE AND
THE DEGREE OF LL.D. AND GOVERNOR BUTLER

1883-1884

MRS. STOUGHTON returned from Europe in November, 1882, and was welcomed to the Fiske family home while her own house was being built a short distance away on Brattle Street, Cambridge — a very commodious house which she planned with special reference to its becoming later "the homestead of the Fiske family." But the building of the new home and the settlement of Mrs. Stoughton's affairs brought many perplexities which found their way to Fiske's study, seriously interfering with his literary work, — his history of the American people, to the prosecution of which all other interests were subordinate. The plan that seemed practicable under the conditions was expatriation to London, for a season, provided he could find in the British Museum the necessary books of reference on American history. To settle this point he wrote to his friend Henry Stevens, of London, the eminent antiquarian scholar, inquiring as to the Americana resources of the Brit-



90 BRATTLE STREET

Letter from Henry Stevens

ish Museum. He received in reply the following characteristic and very satisfactory letter from Mr. Stevens: —

4 TRAFALGAR SQUARE, W.C.,
LONDON, *January IX, 1883.*

JOHN FISKE, ESQR.,
XXII *Berkeley St., Cambridge, in N.E.*

My dear Sir: —

I think you will find the Library of the British Museum a little better place for study on early American history, as well as *late*, than even Harvard College Library and the Boston Public Ditto thrown in, though it may be hard to convince any Massachusetts man of this fact, until he has seen something outside the hub and its surroundings.

The Museum library *does* contain the *New York Nation* about which you inquire as to materials for modern history, and, moreover, possesses part of the "Youth's Companion," "Niles's Register," and Puffer Hopkins, on "International Copyright." But what is still better, the Trustees will at once purchase any book illustrating the history of the American people that you, from your experience, will point out to them as a desideratum. Do pray come over and do your work here, where roast beef, American cheese, and strong beer may be had and taken *ad libitum*.

The Museum is rich in American local history and genealogy. It has not much about the Mississippi Valley prior to Father Marquette's voyage, but possesses almost everything since. Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon, when he was hard up, is pretty well sifted in the early Congress papers and in the French memoirs — all of

John Fiske

which may be found in the B.M.; and as to Maryland, you will probably find a fuller bibliography, from L. Baltimore to Scharfe, than you will find in any other one library.

You will also in the Museum find material concerning Mathew Lyon from the time he landed at Newbury Port, from the North of Ireland, and was sold to Mr. Leffinquile afterwards, of Vermont, for a yolke of bulls, until the famous contest on the floor of Congress wherein he broke his wooden sword with Master Griswold; and every other important subject illustrative of the rise and progress of the American People, not omitting the remarkable case of Timothy Dexter, the author of "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones."

The Tree of Knowledge grows now in the Centre of the Reading Room of the British Museum in a huge pot. You have only to shake it and down the ripe fruit drops. There is still room in London, probably at your old quarters, for another American.

So pray take an affectionate leave of your large family, pack up your ideas, leave your sins behind, and embark for Bloomsbury, with your American gold-pen, and your Yankee energy. Forget that there is not an international copyright and picca-roon right and left until you have boiled down and simmered the great subject.

All this in answer to your racy and offhand notes of the 28th December to be answered instanter. Dine with us at Noviomagus 21st February. Enclosed find a late programme.

Yours truly,
HENRY STEVENS,
G.M.B.

Fourth Visit to London

This letter of Mr. Stevens was sufficiently assuring, and accordingly Fiske arranged for at least a six months' absence and engaged his passage on the Cunard steamer *Bothnia*, sailing from New York to Liverpool January 31, 1883. He then advised his friends Spencer, Huxley, Sime, and Ralston of his sailing.

He had a rough passage over and he found the *Bothnia* to be a great pitcher and roller, so much so that they were "either on one side or on one beam-end all the way over." Just before reaching Queenstown he wrote Mrs. Fiske, giving the following racy account of the voyage:—

"The coast of ould Ireland is freninst me, but it is all wrapped in mist, and the rolling is so bad as to forbid anything like extensive letter-writing. If there ever was an old tub that could beat this *Bothnia*, for rolling, I should like to see it. The portmanteaus have kept up a wild demon-dance in the state-room, and the number of tumblers I have seen smashed would do credit to the Jo Bunkerest Paddy girl that you ever saw. Coffee and beer have been liberally poured on the table cloth; fried eggs have hopped around like mature chickens, with their heads cut off; and those have had cause to be truly thankful who, by dint of quick wit and extreme agility, have succeeded in keeping their 'wittles' from landing in their laps."

On his way from Liverpool to London, he stopped overnight at Lichfield to see the cathedral; and he writes:—

John Fiske

“It is a grand Cathedral, not equal to York, but unlike any other, and especially beautiful in its three tapering spires. Its length is gigantic, and the effect inside is *not* broken by the organ interposing between nave and choir.”

Fiske reached London Sunday, February 10, and was met by Sime, who took him home until suitable quarters near the British Museum could be found for a permanent abode and the prosecution of his work. Above all places in London he desired his old rooms at 67 Great Russell Street, but on inquiry he learned that these rooms would not be vacant for a week or more. Feeling that no other rooms in London would seem like home to him, he engaged them, and meantime he took rooms at 7 South Crescent, Tottenham Court Road. Having arranged his settlement, he began to look up his other friends, although he was far from feeling well — his rough voyage having greatly shaken him up.

He was cordially welcomed by Henry Stevens, by Ralston, by the Huxleys, by Trübner, by the younger Macmillans, — the senior Macmillan having gone to Mentone to look after John Green, the historian, who was very ill, — and he found a very courteous recognition at Kettner’s famous dining-rooms. But his experiences should be told by himself. Writing Mrs. Fiske under date of Tuesday, February 20, he says: —

“I had a dreadful time last week because every-

Cordially Welcomed

thing reminded me of you, and for the first time London seemed a great lonely place and as if I *must* take the first steamer back to America.

“After writing you Friday, I went up to Kettner’s, and little Mademoiselle, behind the desk, bowed recognition as if but a week had elapsed since I had dined there. Do you remember the burly, smooth-faced, bustling head-waiter who used to say, ‘Thank you sir!’ with so much energy? He showed me to a seat, inquired very politely as to how I had been, and hoped I left ‘Madame’ quite well. I wished ‘*Madame*’ was there so much that it half spoiled my delicious dinner. On coming out I met Fred Macmillan and his wife, who had also dined at Kettner’s. I went home with them and staid till 11, and there I met a queer old Dickens character named Bain, a well-known bookseller, and a very learned old chap. Fred Macmillan is a really good fellow and his wife is very nice, and while with them I had been quite jolly. But all this did n’t prevent my breaking down when I got to my rooms. I went to bed and fell asleep from mere exhaustion in bemoaning my *loneliness*.

“Saturday morning, I got up feeling weak and mean, and at noon I went by omnibus to Bayswater, but found that Spencer had gone down to Derbyshire to spend a week with Mr. Lott. He is not feeling very well. Miss Scheckel brought me a glass of Sherry and a biscuit, and I sat two hours chatting with her. She seemed to cherish an affectionate remembrance of you, and sent her love to you. I told her I felt low-spirited and out-of-sorts; and she said Spencer’s doctor was a great man-of-science and very reasonable in his charges, that

John Fiske

Spencer thought there was nobody like him, and that I had better consult him. She gave me his address — 'Dr. Bruce, 42 Kensington Gardens Square, Bayswater, W.'

"After leaving Miss Scheckel I returned, via New Bond Street, and being near the Royal Institution I thought I would look in and see if I should find Tyndall. Sent up my card and was presently shown up to the top of the hipe, to the famous rooms once occupied by 'ngSir ngHumphry ngDavy.'¹ Had a most cordial greeting from Tyndall and his wife. It was about 5 P.M. and presently Mrs. Tyndall's father, Lord Claude Hamilton, came in and the tea-tray was brought and we had a good cup of tea with some very thin slices of bread and butter. Lord Claude is a great, bluff, honest, hearty fellow. He has an enormous admiration for Spencer, and he appeared to take an immediate fancy to 'Hezekiah.' Mrs. Tyndall was lovely and Tyndall himself was perfectly delightful. We had a fine talk. Mrs. Tyndall said she should think it would be more than I could bear to be separated from my family — *such* a family as she had seen portraits of at the Huxley's. There was a real tenderness toward me on the part of all three which went deep into my heart. Tyndall said he thought the History would be well received in England and

¹ Fiske often quoted with great glee the opening sentences of one of Professor Josiah P. Cooke's chemical lectures delivered during Fiske's undergraduate days. The Professor had a nasal twang in his utterance which was very pronounced when he attempted to emphasize a phrase. The quotation was as follows: "In a room lined with blue litmus paper sat a philosopher. Who was that philosopher? SIR HUMPHRY DAVY!" The name thus stressed Fiske endeavored to represent on paper as "ngSir ngHumphry ngDavy."

Cordially Welcomed

Lord Claude said it was just what they needed above everything; they were shamefully ignorant about America, and eager for an interesting history of it. Tyndall said there were a great many rare books and documents on America, right there in the Royal Institution and I might come there as much as I liked, and have a room all to myself to study and write in! They all three said my speech at the Spencer dinner was *magnifique!*

“Well, my dear, after a delightful hour-and-a-half I left them and went to Kettner’s where I had a delicious dinner, but I did n’t enjoy it! Somehow I seemed to miss you terribly at Kettner’s. Came to my rooms, lighted pipe and read in Abel’s ‘Linguistic Essays’ — a charming book that Trübner gave me on Friday. Felt a little chilly, and went to bed, desperately lonesome, about eleven o’clock. When I waked at 9 Sunday morning, it was a black fog. I felt empty and weak, but not hungry; feet a little cold; no assignable cause for all this fuss. Concluded to resign myself, and call Dr. Bruce. The doctor came at eleven o’clock; fine, hearty fellow with long side whiskers — a very pleasant fellow. Knew all about me and treated me very courteously. First made me tell how I feel naturally, when I am well, then how I had felt for two or three months past, all about leaving home, the voyage, etc.; asked especially after my appetite for the past month; felt of both pulses; in short, he gave me such an overhauling as I never had before. Then he began some general conversation, while I suppose he turned things over in his mind. Said he thought my history would have a great sale in England, and he was glad to know that I was the

John Fiske

chap that was writing it. Said he had read my speech at the Spencer dinner again and again, and thought it was wonderful, and if I could write a book like that, I might do something toward leading this age out of its materialism; that I spoke like a man who had gone through and through the thought of this age, and was beginning to utter the ideas which the next generation would realize better than this. Said he had also had this feeling when he read my Princeton address on the 'True Lesson of Protestantism,' which many in England praised, but few (he thought) really understood.

"Well, was n't it nice, my dear, to find such a sympathizer? After a while, he said I was a strong, active fellow, without a flaw physically as far as he could see; heart and lungs seemed in splendid condition; said he was glad I was made so strong to do the work I was born to do. Said I had done well to take advice, for I was just where a good square chill might come in with savage effect.

"Yesterday (Monday) Dr. Bruce came at ten, looked me over more or less and said I might get up and have — sole for breakfast; and might have — broiled chicken for dinner, might smoke a pipe if I liked, but no cigars; and must n't go out of doors. So I sat all day before the fire and read Abel's 'Essays' and finished them; and Sime came in at four P.M. and staid till six, and we had a pleasant chat. I began to feel keen, sharp pangs of hunger, and when my little broiled chicken came up I ate *every scrap* of it. This, with a slice of toast and cup of tea, constituted my repast. I then smoked a pipe and thought of home more peacefully than I had done; and at nine P.M. went to bed

Consults Spencer's Doctor

and slept soundly till nine this morning, — just twelve hours! To-morrow he says I may go out, rain or shine, and may go to dine with the 'Citizens of Noviomagus,' only I must choose the simpler dishes and keep to red or white wine. He will call on Thursday, by which time he thinks I can resume beer and take care of myself generally. He says I did wisely to call for aid, for I might have fussed and bothered for six weeks and got discouraged about my work and then have had to call a doctor after all; whereas now I am reasonably sure of being in glorious condition by the end of this week. His medicine has wrought a profound effect I can see. The mulligrubs have all blown away and I begin to think only of the History and of success sure to come, and of earning the right to keep my dear home, and *stay in it*.

"Dr. Bruce says if I will get up at nine, write from ten till five (but not without a solid breakfast, and *some* lunch), walk never less than three and generally five miles, dine *heartily* at seven, write or study two hours in the evening if I like, *never* or VERY rarely eat a *late* bite, go to bed at twelve; — if I'll do this he'll warrant I'll write my twenty-five weeks with a blithe heart, and feel better at the end than if I had n't worked at all. That is not the programme he would cut out for a weak man; but he thinks it right for me, and you see it allows me nearly nine hours a day for work. I think *all* the doctor's ideas very good.

"Well, my dear, have n't I made a regular bore of myself with all this rigmarole! But I thought *you* would like to know what the doctor has to say.

John Fiske

I could n't help thinking how *you* would like to talk with him, he is such a jolly fellow, and so extremely elegant, and courteous.

"Friday I am to dine with the Tyndalls. Spencer is expected back on Thursday, and I may meet him at the Tyndalls'. I shall move into 67 Great Russell Street Saturday afternoon, and spend Sunday arranging things. All my friends know how busy I am to be, and they all promise to let me alone."

In a letter two days later, February 22, we have a glimpse of him at his work: —

"I have been *studying* these two days back, on local self government in Illinois, where the Virginian and New England systems came into collision, and the New England system proved the stronger. I have also, at last, got a flood of light through John Rope's suggestion about the Scotch-Irish element in the South. It is n't quite as he conceives it, but it is better still. I shall set forth the historic meaning of the whiskey rebellion in Pennsylvania in a new light. Ideas are coming to me thick and fast."

And he has begun his London peregrinations: —

"I started out at four o'clock for my walk, and I have been on my legs just two hours and twenty minutes, so that I can't have done less than five or six miles, though I have walked slowly, pondering my book, but keeping my eyes open. From Tottenham Court Road I kept down High Holborn to Chancery Lane, and down that till 'Cursitor Street' caught my eye, and I struck into that until

Walks about London

I found 'Took's Court' and went through it. You remember in 'Bleak House,' Mr. Snagsby's house was in 'Cook's court, Cursitor Street.' Then I explored Church Passage till I found a place vile enough for the graveyard in Tom-all-alones; but I am sure it is not the place. I shall find that some day, as also the Sol's Arms. Then I turned up Carey Street and wound through a labyrinth of passages into New Square, thence into Lincoln's Inn Fields, thence Southwestward through a still more tangled labyrinth into Blackmoor Street, thence into Drury Lane, coming out into the civilized world at St. Mary-le-Strand, — rather tired and mighty hungry. So I call my first walk a success. Such creatures as I have seen! And some very, very ancient houses, as funny as any in Chester. One can easily walk five miles in London without going very far; and one is a goose to stick to the thoroughfares. The side alleys and courts are the picturesquest of all."

The next day he took a five-mile walk and dined with the Tyndalls. He says: —

"Had a charming dinner with Tyndall and his wife in their upstairs den. After dinner we went downstairs and heard Walter Pollock's lecture on Sir Francis Drake, and it was pretty good. After the lecture the Pollock family and Sir John Mowbray came upstairs and we had some bisquit and mulled claret. I had a long talk with Sir Frederick Pollock."

Before going to the Tyndalls' Fiske received the following note from Spencer: —

John Fiske

BAYSWATER, *February 23, 1883.*

My dear Fiske: —

Welcome to England! I shall be glad to see you on Saturday at one.

Please apologize on my behalf to the Tyndalls for not joining them with you to-night. I have not dined out once since my return from America; and at present dare not do so.

Would you like to be invited to the Athenæum Club, or to the Saville Club, or to both? The Saville would suit you very well in the respect of having a good and not expensive table d'hôte. It has also a magnificent smoking room which you would appreciate; and its present position in Piccadilly is a very pleasant one. But the Athenæum would also be desirable for you as bringing you into contact with friends.

Ever yours,

HERBERT SPENCER.

On Saturday, February 24, Fiske called on Spencer and took luncheon with him. Spencer received him most cordially, and they had a "wonderful talk and walked about four miles together." He adds: "The weather is lovely, the buds are starting, the birds are singing, and the grass is ever so green." He found that Spencer was also to begin work the next week in earnest; that since his return from America he had done but little. On returning from Spencer's he gathered his traps together and took possession of his old rooms at 67 Great Russell Street; and three days after he writes Mrs. Fiske: —

In his Old Quarters

February 27, 1883.

My darling Wife: —

At length Hezzy is himself again. I think I have really been very much upset, but now I am *wooden*. I am all arranged in apple-pie order in my dear old rooms. The rooms have been newly papered, Brussels-carpeted and curtained. There is a new iron bedstead, with new hair mattress and canopy over the head. All the chairs have been newly covered with olive green plush, and olive green is the prevailing color all over. The pictures, too, are in good taste — all engravings. The rooms are now really elegant, and with my books and things about, you can't tell how cheerful it looks. I shall not be ashamed to receive a call here from Gladstone himself!

The quiet here is *profound*, except the vague rumble of the streets which does n't annoy me. When I ring in "mornin' air," my cannel coal fire is made to burn brightly, my little round table is covered with a clean white cloth, and a gigantic mutton chop is served, with a loaf of bread and a pot of blazing hot tea. When I get through, I ring, and the maid, Alice, comes with the morning paper and "Mrs. Coldrey's compliments, sir, and 'opes you are quite well to-day." Then Hezzy smokes and looks over the paper for a few minutes while the little table is cleared, and then goes to work. My dear, I wish you would come over and take breakfast with me!

I have drawn a diagram of the rooms with the furniture so that you can, with your recollections of the rooms, picture Hezzy to yourself quite completely. I don't think it would be possible

John Fiske

in all London to find anything more cosy and cheerful.

Mrs. Coldrey is not a widow. Her 'usband has business in the City. A newspaper writer and wife are over me; and a bachelor London merchant is under me, on the ground floor. They might as well be 100 miles away, for all I ever hear or see of them. This was a fine house a century ago. The walls are tremendously thick, and very little sound passes from floor to floor. I can vaguely hear the piano overhead, but it is a distant sound that I hardly notice. I am absolutely undisturbed. If I want a bite of lunch, it is only to touch the bell and Alice brings cheese and biscuit and a tankard of splendid ale fresh from the tavern around the corner; — I do not need to stir. Nothing could be more perfect.

The London gas is so poor that I have bought a lamp for \$3.86 — a very powerful triplex burner. Have bought a special pair of scissors for it! First thing after breakfast, I take it out into the octagon, spread a thick piece of paper on a chair, fill the lamp on it, trim the three wicks *accurately*, wipe chimney and globe quite clean, rub it dry with a piece of old flannel, bring it back and stand it on the centre-table, burn up the paper, onto which drops of oil have fallen, and carefully put away the piece of flannel in the octagon corner-cupboard. It is no trouble, and I *won't entrust* it to Alice. Is n't this *correct housekeeping*?

I have got a pedometer, and shall henceforth know *just* how much I walk every day and shall enter it in my diary.

After all, though these are not the rooms in

In his Old Quarters

which I finished "Cosmic Philosophy," the associations with them are almost as strong. I occupied these rooms when I first came to the house in October, 1873. It was here that Spencer first came to see me. I moved upstairs in November. Then in 1879 I occupied *these* rooms again, and it was here that I received brother and sister Paine. It was here that I had my famous punch party and brother Paine slept in the octagon which then had a small bed in it. Who knows but in future the guide-books *may* point out this old house as the place where Hezzykiah did so much work?

Only I wish I had you here, my dear!!! If I had known how great the strain was going to be, I don't think I should have had the courage to face it. It is dreadful to be so homesick! But this deep quiet is going to make the book grow with great speed.

The lady overhead is now playing divinely. It sounds very distant, but O, so sweet!

Yesterday I tried a new dodge — for dinner. Went to the famous Angel at Islington. Found it splendid and shall go there again. It will be a fairly good walk — say three miles to the Angel, and I can get home on top of a 'bus for 4 cents.

By the way, I think the top of a 'bus even beats a hansom cab for jolly; you can sit so high, and see so much; and it costs about a penny, where cab costs a shilling.

O, London is a delightful place! But I wish I had you and the little ones here!

To his mother, under date of March 2, 1883, Fiske writes: —

John Fiske

“I have been too much absorbed in the treasures of the British Museum to make a great show of pages this week but I am going to work Sunday, and next week I expect to report a great pile. I should have been a fool not to have come over here. What do you think? I can actually go in to the shelves and mouse for what I want!!! Splendid, is n't it? The one thing I feared, was the red tape. It used to bother me in 1873. Now Richard Garnett, son of the great philologist, is director of the reading room and generally all-powerful in the library. He has always liked me because I was one of the first to see the value of his father's very abstruse researches, and praised him enthusiastically in the 'North American Review' as long ago as 1869. I don't know whether this had anything to do with it, but as soon as I had walked in and shaken hands with Garnett, and told him what I had come to England for, the bars were all thrown down at once. No red tape for me. If I want to find anything, there are ninety thousand volumes on American history just across the street entirely at my disposal!

“Garnett showed me the sheets of some of the new printed catalogue of the whole Museum Library!! They are going to print it all, and it will fill about six hundred royal octavo volumes!! How is that for a big library?

“O, this is the capital of the world! You can have no idea of the endless treasures of Americana across the way. My coming over here was the wisest thing I could possibly have done.

“I just now met Lecky, on Great Russell Street, and we talked twenty minutes, standing in the

The British Museum

street, about the Scotch-Irish element in the population of the Alleghany region. I told Lecky I had got some bones to pick with him, and he said some evening we will fight it out over a pipe.

"I have had some absolutely horrible turns of homesickness this week, though my rooms are really delightful, and I have every comfort that heart could wish, and everybody treats me with the greatest cordiality — almost tenderness; and I am highly excited over my work. But if there ever was a chap that *loved* his home, *it's me*.

"Have n't I been concentrated on my work this week? Profound, almost awful quiet, all day long. Not a human being except landlady, maid, and officials, did I speak to from Monday morning till yesterday — Thursday — afternoon, when I ran in before dinner to chat fifteen minutes with Ralston. I felt as if I must scream for somebody to speak to. To-night Sime is coming — will be here soon — we shall dine at Kettner's, and come back to smoke before the fire. Gradually I shall get used to the silence, and I see already that the amount I can do in a day is prodigious.

"The Huxleys have a dinner-party for me on the 14th of March. In her invitation Mrs. Huxley asked me if I was 'glooming into the Manuscripts of the British Museum to good purpose?'"

On March 9, he writes: —

"It is Friday, and I had n't exchanged words with a soul all this week — except Alice — when Spencer came and made me a lovely call. He has had me admitted to the Athenæum Club and hopes

John Fiske

I will dine there with him often. He says I am shutting myself up too closely. Last Saturday afternoon I heard a divine concert at St. James's Hall. Just think, Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata by Miss Krebs and Joachim; also songs of Handel and Mendelssohn by Santley. Santley's voice has not the wondrous ring it had in his prime, but O, the pathos and sweetness of it! It made me shed hot tears. He is a singer straight from Heaven.

"Whenever the American letters come, Mrs. Coldrey sends them up by Alice, with 'The Missus's compliments, sir, and 'opes Mrs. Fiske and the childrens are quite well.' I have a delightful home here, and it is a pity you can't all have some memories of it to carry along through life with me."

But this was written on the verge of a much more serious collapse than he had yet experienced. A little later he writes:—

"Sunday, March 11, I waked up finding that I had an *awful chill* which I could n't account for, except that the weather was excessively raw and my bedroom felt damp. I had n't hitherto thought it worth while to keep a fire in my bedroom, which I see was an error. Spencer says because I lived and flourished here *one* winter in defiance of all precautions, I must n't think I can do so always; and it is just as well to know that when England makes up its mind to chill you, you have got to look out. I don't need any more lessons, for I have got the creed at my tongue's end. The way that chill seized me and knocked all the strength out of me began to scare me towards evening. But I walked down to the Criterion, got a little dinner,

Severe Illness at Trübner's

felt dreadfully weak and wretched, with my feet like icicles, and longed for a kind word, and would have given \$1000 never to have left home. Where should I go for a word of bright cheer? A little chat with Trübner, I thought would do me good, and I beckoned a cab. It began to snow and a north-west gale blew hard. Cabby could hardly hear me, and I found my voice going. A three-mile drive brought me to Upper Hamilton Terrace, quaking and teeth chattering, and legs frozen to the knees. Paid cabby, went in, and went to the dining-room, where Trübner was dozing in his easy-chair before the fire. He jumped up and said, 'O, my friend, it gladdens my heart to see you!' I tried to speak, but could only faintly whisper, and felt everything whizzing about my ears. 'O, my friend,' said he, 'what voice is this I hear? Good God, you are ill! Your face is very pale.' He led me to a big chair by the fire, went out, and in a minute came back with a huge pair of German felt boots that came halfway up to my knees, kneeled down and unlaced and took off my shoes and put on these warm things, and did n't they feel good? Then he went out again and presently came back with Mrs. Trübner and Lina and Jacobina (or 'Binnchin' as they call her) the sister. You remember them all, no doubt. Lina came up and kissed me. Mrs. Trübner said, 'Why, my dear Mr. Fiske, how is it that you have come to be so ill? We shall not let you go home to-night.'"

How the Trübners kept him and tenderly nursed him for four days, and got him in condition for the dinner at Huxley's, where he was the guest of

John Fiske

honor, is delightfully and gratefully told. He closes his account thus: —

“Trübner is a noble fellow, a great scholar, a generous publisher, a charming host, and his honest German heart is as full of tenderness as a human heart can be! I believe they saved me from a dangerous illness; and if I were to live a thousand years I could never forget their kindness. I shall always carry it with me as a sweet memory. It was almost worth while to be sick, to find out what dear friends I had got there.”

In getting back to his quarters in Great Russell Street Fiske felt fully recovered, and plunged into his work with better spirit and great energy tempered by a sense of moderation in his application — he took more relaxation. Sime was a frequent visitor, was very sympathetic, and quite enthusiastic over Fiske's “significant grasp of facts.” The letters contain extracts from his growing manuscript that Mrs. Fiske might see the style in which he was doing his work. At the Huxley dinner he met a fine company; and Spencer gave him a dinner at the Athenæum Club where he met Hirst and the Honorable George Broderick, Warden of Merton College, Oxford. He spent an evening with James Martineau — “a dear old man” — and also dined and spent an evening with William Sime, a brother of James Sime, where they had much music. He found William Sime possessed of a fine knowledge of French literature, and that he had a great rever-

Billingsgate Fish Market

ence for Voltaire. He writes: "William Sime opened up to me new lights about Voltaire."

And in the afternoon of "Good Friday," his friend Ralston came in, "blue with the cold," ready for a trip down to Billingsgate Fish Market for dinner. Here is Fiske's account of his experience: —

"Put on my big ulster, and we walked down Holborn and Newgate Street into the old City, and through its noble quaint streets to Billingsgate Fish Market. The Three Tuns Tavern is in the market, on the edge, just overhanging the Thames below London Bridge — a forest of masts just outside the windows. At 4 P.M. daily they have a fish table d'hôte dinner. Ralston said the last time he had been there was about twenty years ago. Geerusalem, what a place! but lovely, for a blazing sun lit up the river, and, when in out of the wind, it was warm. The head-waiter had just come out of Dickens. The diners were mostly queer coves, and doubtless thought *us* queer coves. The head-waiter stood at the end of the table, and when all were seated rapped loudly on the table with his knife-handle, and then *said grace!* And this was the dinner: —

1. Boiled salmon with anchovy sauce.
2. Boiled cod with oyster sauce.
3. Fried cod with piquante sauce.
4. Fried eels.
5. Whitebait with brown bread.
6. Roast beef, with potatoes and greens.
7. Cheese.

Beer, Coffee, and Cigar.

John Fiske

“The bill was $3/2 = 76$ cents for each of us. I enjoyed it! The fish was fresh, delicious, and superbly cooked. We walked home again, making about seven miles for the day’s walk. I got back to work again about 7 o’clock and wrote till 12.45, making eight of the best pages of the book so far. I don’t dawdle or waste a minute of time here.”

The letters show that for a fortnight after his illness at the Trübners’, by sheer force of will, by steady work on his history, and various diversions, he managed to keep his homesick feelings under. But as his birthday came around (March 30), bringing him letters from home in which he seemed to hear the voices of all his family, — his mother, his wife, his children, — the effect was overpowering, and he could not endure the thought of a much longer isolation from them. Writing Mrs. Fiske, March 31, he says: —

“I really think I had better come home soon. I am making good progress, but no better than I could make at home. I go on nicely, for a few days, and then I get to thinking of my home, and it completely upsets me for a day or two. The fact is the day has gone by when I could do such a thing as I once did — be absent from my family for ten months. Being away from *you* amounts in itself to a *serious illness*. The agonies I have suffered since I landed in England are such as no words can ever describe, and it goes far to offset the good effects of my seclusion. Nay, rather, let me come

Depressed by Homesickness

home and work as in the old days. I fear that this awful homesickness will break down my strength.

“More than all, I am *cured* of Europe. I shall never come over again except with you or some of the children for a short summer glorification. Never! I am disenchanting. I crave nothing but my home, my wife, and my children. London is splendid, and I find myself famous here, and I shall have got great good from coming over. My book is making fine progress, and everybody is tenderly kind to me, and Sime is the sweetest fellow that ever lived, but I cannot be happy without my dear ones.”

Fiske struggled bravely against his depression. The quiet attractiveness of his rooms, so favorable for composition, began to pall upon him the moment he released his mind from his work, for he had none of his family to share his pleasant surroundings with him. His unselfish nature was in revolt against the conditions which gave him pleasures he could not share with his dear ones; and then, in his intellectual work hitherto, he had had Mrs. Fiske at hand, with her appreciative sympathy with what was best in his writings, to cheer him on; while now, even in his pleasant surroundings, he was isolated from all that was dearest to his heart — the very attractiveness of his London home only intensified his loneliness in it. From the extracts from his manuscript copy of his history which he sends Mrs. Fiske as examples

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of his style, it is readily seen how much he craved her appreciative sympathy.

In his moments of depression the thought occurred to him to have Mrs. Fiske come over to London for a while — that her presence and her sympathy for a few weeks would serve to break his long exile, and thus prove the best prescription for his diseased mind. Accordingly, we have in his letters to Mrs. Fiske early in April earnest pleadings for her to come to him, and picturing how their days might be spent — he at his work and she aiding him by her presence and her ready sympathy, and cheering him in his hours of relaxation; in short, he pictured how, with her, his London life would be perfect, while his history would grow apace. But it could not be. It was impossible for Mrs. Fiske to leave her family for the many weeks necessary to make her visit to London of benefit to him, and she cabled him to this effect.

Fiske was disappointed; but he struggled on, his days alternating between those of depression and those of determination to carry his project through. But his work suffered, not so much in quality as in quantity — there were days he could do no work. His friends were most considerate for him. The Huxleys, the Trübners, the Macmillans, and the Simes were unremitting in their kind courtesies. Spencer invited him to dinner to meet the Japanese Minister and a few friends, and afterwards took him down to Brighton for a few days.

Returns to America

But the weight on his mind could not be lifted. He consulted his friend, Dr. Lauder Brunton, and asked him if he could minister to a mind diseased. Dr. Brunton advised him to send for his wife. He again consulted Dr. Bruce, and Dr. Bruce advised his returning home as the only sure remedy in his case. This advice was conclusive, and accordingly he took passage on the Cunard steamer *Servia* which sailed from Liverpool April 21, and he arrived in New York April 29, 1883, thus bringing to a close his last visit to England, a visit which was undertaken with anticipations of much pleasure, and with expectations of great profit to his work.

The visit, however, was not a failure. Notwithstanding his great personal discomforts, he did a good body of solid work. Among the rich treasures in the British Museum he found much of great value to him relating to the discovery of America, and particularly relating to English politics and English thought regarding America during the period of world-activity from 1753 to the establishment of constitutional government under Washington in 1789. At this time Fiske was writing the story of the revolt of the colonies and of the Revolutionary War.

Fiske's return to his home brought his cure. With his family about him the pressure on his heart — his real ailment and one no medication could reach — was relieved, and he soon settled down to steady work at his task. In the Harvard

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Library and in the Boston Public Library he found the necessary books of reference, although not so convenient for his use as were those in the British Museum. His working hours were carefully guarded by Mrs. Fiske, and thus, for the remainder of the year, his days in Cambridge and Petersham, with but few interruptions, sped along with great serenity and with steady accretions to his history.

Among the incidents of this period, perhaps the most notable, and the one that most deeply stirred his feelings, was his action as a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University in opposition to conferring the degree of LL.D. upon General Benjamin F. Butler, then Governor of Massachusetts. It had been customary to confer this degree upon the Governors of the Commonwealth, although the university was under no obligation to do so; in fact, the conferring of the degree was simply an act of courtesy on the part of the university. Massachusetts had been fortunate in a line of Governors who had nobly served the Commonwealth and who were worthy of the honors of her chief university. Consequently the propriety of the customary bestowal of this high honor upon the chief magistrate of the Commonwealth had not heretofore been questioned. But Governor Butler, by his personal character and by his derisive floutings of some of the cherished opinions of the New England mind, in short, by his gross vulgarity, and

Harvard and Governor Butler

contempt for Harvard's ideals of citizenship, had roused a strong opposition to bestowing upon him the university's highest honor. This opposition was met by the somewhat plausible but weak argument that the bestowal of the honor was not upon the man, — the incumbent of the office, — but upon the office itself.

On his return from England Fiske found that the discussion of the propriety of conferring this degree was rife in the various departments of Harvard University and also under general discussion by the Boston press. The President and Fellows of the university had unanimously voted to confer the degree, and although none thought the act consistent with the character or the services of the Governor, it was generally regarded as politically unwise to withhold from him the customary honor. Even those most urgent for conferring it were emphatic in condemning the unprincipled character of the Governor. Fiske, as we have seen, was one of the Overseers of the university, and the vote of the President and Fellows proposing the conferring of the degree had to be confirmed by the Board of Overseers in order to become operative. Fiske promptly took a decided stand against debasing Harvard's honors by a bestowal of her chief honor upon one who for thirty years had lost no opportunity of publicly testifying his contempt for the university and all its belongings; and who, by the testimony of his neighbors, had been pro-

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nounced untruthful, tricky, and dishonest, both professionally and politically. He ridiculed the idea of Harvard, with its motto of "Veritas," finding in the life of such a man anything worthy of honor; and pointed out the absurdity of attempting to make a distinction between the office and its incumbent in order to save the credit of the university in its act.

He found ready sympathy among his fellow members of the Board of Overseers, particularly the Reverend James Freeman Clarke, who, when the matter came before the Board for final action, made a vigorous plea for moral consistency in their action. The recommendation to confer the degree was defeated by the decisive vote of eleven to fifteen.

As Fiske was now at home, and as his mother was living with him while her house near by was being built, there are no self-revealing letters from him giving the details of his life during this period such as we have had in previous years. His papers and memoranda give glimpses of him as steadily at work on his history, as taking pleasure in reading certain passages of it to Mrs. Fiske and his mother, and as taking great pleasure in diversions with his children. Among his papers I find a letter from his friend James Sime, written in July of this year, — 1883, — which so clearly reflects the fine friendship between the two men, as well as somewhat of their

Letter from James Sime

personal characteristics, that I make place for the following extract. Sime writes:—

“Your happiness in getting home was, I am sure, as deep as the Atlantic. Your visit to England will now seem like a dream, but not a bad dream, I hope; for after all, you had some happy hours. To me you brought, as usual, much joy of the kind that can only be feebly expressed in words. All the same, however, both my wife and myself were very anxious about you from the first day of your visit until nearly the last; and while regretting to lose you, we knew that it was best for you to get back to those who would give you new life and energy. How thoroughly miserable you seemed to be at times! as if all the lights of the world had been suddenly quenched! But that is all passed now, and when you come again your mood will always be as bright and as elastic as it often was even when you were ill and homesick; for of course your *wife* will be with you, and I do not think you could despond in *her* presence however much you might try!

“Looking back on the times we had together, I think I enjoy most the recollection of that perfect day at Rochester, and of your last long evening here, when we talked of Goethe, Heine, Omar Khayyám, and I know not what besides. The Rochester day was a gem of purest ray — one of those days in which one’s nature and the world seem to be in absolute harmony, and when one feels sure that the last word does not belong to the pessimists. I could not help thinking of the strange influences which had brought you and me together there — united in idea and affection although trained in such diverse circumstances — near us

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the monuments of a far-off age in which even America has its roots, and all around, the earth so gracious and so young, as if the crowd of bishops and warriors had never been! I wonder whether six centuries hence, our descendants will find a touch of romance in *us*? I cannot doubt that they will; for there must be deep poetry in all this stirring of mighty forces, that are going to bring forth a new world.

“So you are making good progress with your History? I congratulate you, for I feel confident that it is to be a great book. The more I think of America, and know about her, the more I believe in her. She is one of the supreme sources of hope for mankind and it is a satisfaction to know that in you, she is to have a worthy historian.”

Now that Fiske had a very complete envisagement of American history, he was whenever practicable ready to lend a helping hand in bringing the significant features of this history home to the people. And Mrs. Hemenway, whose efforts to make the Old South Church in Boston a centre for the propagation of a knowledge of American history as well as for the dissemination of the principles of good citizenship have already been noted, was ever active in her beneficent work. During the school vacation for the summer of this year she provided a course of lectures in the historic old church on topics in American history of interest to young people. Fiske was very glad to coöperate in this good work, and accordingly, on the after-

Lectures to Young People

noon of September 12, 1883, he gave to a large and interested audience, mostly of young people, a simple, lucid story of our Revolutionary struggle — its causes, its main incidents, its results. He made the story interesting by keeping in the narration the causes more prominent than the incidents, so that the latter were seen to flow naturally from the former. For instance, he briefly sketched, in the first place, the nature of the political differences which had arisen between the mother country and the colonies, and pointed out why the estrangement was stronger in the New England colonies, on the one hand, and in Virginia and the Southern colonies, on the other hand, than it was in the middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He then called attention to the geographical situation of the colonies from the military or strategic viewpoint — the New England colonies being separated from the others by the Hudson River, thereby leaving the confederacy open to attack from the seaboard at New York and from Canada by Lake Champlain — attacks which if united and successful would sever the New England colonies from the confederacy, thus enabling the British forces to subjugate the colonies in detail. Having made these points clear, he showed that the English Cabinet adopted as its plan of military operations three lines of converging forces: the first consisting of a strong force, under General Burgoyne, to descend through Lake Champlain and

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Lake George; the second, a smaller force, under Colonel St. Leger, to come by way of Lake Ontario, Oswego, and the Mohawk Valley, these two forces to come together in the vicinity of Albany, where they were to be joined by a strong force from New York, under Lord Howe, which was to move up the Hudson River. By these combined movements it was expected that the colonial confederacy would be effectively dismembered. Success depended upon these three lines of operations being conducted under a complete understanding by the three commanders of the general plan of the campaign. Owing, however, to the stupid neglect of Lord George Germain, the British Cabinet officer having charge of the colonies, the definite instructions prepared for Lord Howe in New York defining the important part he was to play in the general movement were never sent. So General Burgoyne and Colonel St. Leger, deprived of his assistance, were left to their respective fates: the former surrendered his army at Saratoga, while the latter was completely routed at Fort Stanwix and fled for his life.

These signal victories in the year 1777, completely upsetting the British plan for dismembering the colonies, in connection with Washington's brilliant campaigns in New Jersey, Fiske showed, formed the turning-point in the Revolutionary struggle. The British ministry were signally defeated in their main efforts to subdue the colonists,

On the Revolutionary War

and France now came to their open assistance with her army and her fleet. What followed during the next five years was succinctly and graphically told: the great public privations and distresses, Arnold's treason, the efforts of the British generals to win back the Southern colonies, the brilliant campaign of General Greene in Georgia and the Carolinas, ending with the cooping-up of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, the descent of Washington with his army from the Hudson, the cooperation of the French fleet, the surrender of Cornwallis, the close of the war, and the treaty of independence and peace between England and the United States in the autumn of 1782.

Fiske was so familiar with his subject that he had but little occasion to refer to his notes. The lecture therefore partook of the nature of an *extempore* talk on a subject in which he took a deep interest. He was also interested in his audience, and he spoke with great ease and fluency. I took a seat where I could observe the audience. It was, indeed, an inspiring sight — so many bright young faces animated by "a desire to know," and as the theme was unfolded it was pleasant to see their growing interest. When the story of Arnold was told, his base treason, in contrast with his previous brilliant services, and the effect of the treason upon Washington, the interest of the audience was profound. Every eye was riveted on the speaker, and in the rapt attention it could be seen that feel-

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ings of pity were mingled with feelings of indignant patriotism at such dastardly conduct.

Another incident of the lecture I recall. The story of the investment and surrender of Cornwallis was followed with close attention. When Fiske told, in a highly pleased and animated way, how the news of the surrender, flying northward, reached Philadelphia on a dark morning in the fourth week of October, 1781, and was announced to the citizens by an old German night-watchman in his broken English — “Basht dree o’glock und Gornvallis ish dakendt” — the deep feeling of the audience found relief in an impromptu round of applause, which showed the keen, sympathetic interest with which the whole story had been followed.

This lecture was so successful, it showed so clearly that the Revolutionary struggle had, when properly presented, so many points of a deep and general interest which bore directly upon the elements of good citizenship, that Mrs. Hemenway desired to have a succinct history of the American Revolutionary War in its various relations and aspects given in a course of popular lectures at the Old South Church. This course was not only to set forth, with much fulness of detail, the historic events of the great struggle, but also to bring into clear light the many types of personal character — of citizens — that were developed during the struggle.

Old South Lectures

As Fiske, in his "History of the American People" which he had in hand, had already treated the Revolutionary period in much the way Mrs. Hemmeway desired, it was not a difficult task for him to prepare from his manuscript copy a course of twelve lectures for delivery at the Old South Church. And this he did. Beginning on Saturday, November 17, 1883, he gave twelve weekly lectures (omitting Christmas week) under the following titles: —

- I. The First Misunderstandings. 1761-67.
- II. War Clouds Gathering. 1767-74.
- III. Coming on of the Storm. 1774-75.
- IV. Independence declared. 1775-76.
- V. The Times that tried Men's Souls. 1776.
- VI. Struggle for the Centre. 1777.
- VII. Beginning of the End. 1778.
- VIII. Spreading of the War. 1778-80.
- IX. The Final Struggle. 1779-81.
- X. Independence achieved. 1781-83.
- XI. The League of Friendship. 1781-87.
- XII. Order out of Chaos. 1787-89.

These lectures were given at noon, and they were attended by large and enthusiastic audiences. So great was the interest taken in them that before the course was finished Fiske was asked by the Governor, the Honorable George D. Robinson; by the Superintendent of Schools, Edwin P. Seaver; by the Secretary of the State Board of Education, J. W. Dickinson; by Francis Parkman, the emi-

John Fiske

ment historian; by the Reverend Edward Everett Hale, and other prominent citizens, to repeat the course at an hour more convenient to the general public. Fiske was greatly pleased to comply with this request, and he repeated the lectures in an evening course, also at the Old South Church, beginning February 1, 1884.

In the lectures of the latter half of this course he made some changes, by leaving out of consideration the seven years' League of Friendship under the Continental Congress and confining himself strictly to the war period with greater fulness of detail. He felt that in the original course he did not do full justice to the closing years of the great struggle, while a calm review of his presentation of the important events that occurred during the League of Friendship, out of which grew the Constitution of the United States, led him to the decision to give to these events a fuller treatment in another and a particular course of lectures. How these lectures were received was well expressed by the "Boston Advertiser," then the leading critical journal in Boston, in passing upon them the following judgment: —

"The delivery of these lectures has been a literary event of the first magnitude. It is not easy to explain the secret of the orator's wonderful charm. The fervid manner and varied grace of gesture of Everett, and the tragic air and pathetic tones of Choate, together with the devices of rhetoric which

Lectures in St. Louis

both employed, might explain theirs, as did the audacity and edge of Phillips's speech account in a good measure for his. Mr. Fiske makes no gestures, and indulges in no high-flown rhetoric; but his manner is extremely easy and graceful, and his dramatic method of presentation brings us face to face with persons and events as if we had seen and known them. The character of George Washington has never before been so impressively depicted in so few words. Part of the effect, no doubt, is due to the surpassing beauty of his language."

Before finishing his lectures in Boston, Fiske was asked to repeat the course in St. Louis during the spring term, under the auspices of Washington University. He was glad to comply with this request, and so from the last of March till the early part of May of this year he was in St. Louis. And his lectures evoked as great an interest as they did in Boston. He had large audiences and the interest deepened to the very close. General Sherman was an attentive listener, and he commended very highly Fiske's lucid presentation of the military operations of the war on both sides.

The impression given by the lectures in St. Louis was well summed up by the leading journal, the "St. Louis Globe-Democrat," in the following paragraph:—

"For picturesqueness, and dramatic power, the description of the Boston Tea-Party, the battle in the ravine at Oriskany, the awful fight between

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the Serapis and Bon Homme Richard and the splendid march of Washington upon Cornwallis have never been surpassed in historical literature. The character drawing was no less remarkable. Almost side by side, in the same lecture, the jovial, irascible, learned, and energetic German tactician Steuben, and the strangely majestic figure of the great Mohawk preacher and war-chief, Brant, are so vividly portrayed as to haunt one's memory forever. Mr. Fiske's command of the English language is unrivalled. The success of the lectures has been simply astonishing."

Before passing from Fiske's activities of the winter of 1883-84, mention should be made of his publication of "Excursions of an Evolutionist," a duodecimo volume in which he brought together his various essays, etc., printed during the previous three or four years. In it was included his speech at the Spencer dinner. This volume bore the following felicitous dedication to an old friend whose name has several times appeared in previous pages:

TO REV. JOHN LANGDON DUDLEY

Dear and Honoured Friend: —

Quarter of a century has passed since I used to listen with delight to your preaching and come to you for sympathy and counsel in my studies. In these later days while we meet too seldom, my memory of that wise and cordial sympathy grows ever brighter and sweeter; and to-day, in writing upon my title-page the words of the great German seer,¹ my

¹ Willst du ins Unendliche schreiten
Geh nur im Endlichen nach allen Seiten.

Goethe.

Excursions of an Evolutionist

thoughts naturally revert to you. For I know of no one who understands more thoroughly or feels more keenly how it is that if we would fain learn something of the Infinite, we must not sit idly repeating the formulas of other men and other days, but must gird up our loins anew, and diligently explore on every side that finite realm through which still shines the glory of an ever-present God for those that have eyes to see and ears to hear. Pray accept this little book from one who is

Ever gratefully yours,

JOHN FISKE.

Mr. Dudley acknowledged the compliment by the following grateful note: —

WASHINGTON, D.C., *December 12, 1883.*

My good Friend: —

Your admirable book reached me after several stages, — being forwarded from Milwaukee.

But you have crowned me with laurel: you have set me up with honor. If from all the gods in the kingdom of letters I might have chosen one to braid a chaplet for me you would have been named first, and only. So you must know that when I read your generous tribute it touched me tenderly. For five and twenty years I have watched your career with interest and rejoiced in its triumph from stage to stage, until at last you have scored your name among the constellated few that shall have light for the pathseekers of to-morrow.

Dear friend, if from my advance bloom any pollen may have fallen upon the blossoms in the garden of your spring-time, who shall deny that the glory of the harvest comes more from the soil than the seed.

In the abiding youth of the *Avida veteris flammae* I shall continue yours,

J. L. DUDLEY.

John Fiske

This volume was very cordially received by Fiske's growing audience of readers; and the wide catholicity of his thought, the absence of all appeals to prejudice, the disposition to find some good in all phases of human development, combined with his ready command of his encyclopædic knowledge and his wonderful power of lucid exposition, commended him to an ever-increasing constituency of rational minds.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE TWO CONCORD ADDRESSES — “THE DESTINY OF MAN” — “THE IDEA OF GOD”

1884-1885

WE now come to two interruptions in Fiske's historical work resulting in the production of two religious addresses which have had a marked influence upon the religious thought of the time: his two addresses before the Concord School of Philosophy at the two sessions of the School in 1884 and 1885.

The Concord School of Philosophy had its beginning in 1879, at Concord, Massachusetts, as a sort of gathering-place where those who felt disturbed over the apparent materialistic tendency of the current scientific thought could meet, and, by free converse on the deeper questions of the theologico-idealistic philosophy, emphasize the importance of keeping the mind fixed on the Divine personality of God, on the direct relationship between God and man through man's conscious powers, as the necessary conditions for sound philosophic thinking regarding the principles of right conduct in human life itself.

The Directors and the active workers in the School were: A. Bronson Alcott, Transcendentalist; Dr. Hiram A. Jones, Platonist; Dr. William T.

John Fiske

Harris, Hegelian; Frank B. Sanborn, literary and social critic.

The real founder of the School was Mr. Alcott, in whose mind the possibility of such a school, where men interested in the problems of the transcendental philosophy could meet in freest converse, had for years floated as a sort of Platonic dream. Emerson encouraged the founding of the school, and appeared at its first two sessions. He took no active part, however, in its conduct. His health was failing. An examination of the papers presented during the first five sessions of the School, 1879-83, shows that the prevailing order of philosophic thought was decidedly metaphysical in character, with the implication that only by this order of philosophizing could the truths regarding God, nature, man — the ultimates of all philosophy — be ascertained: Along with these presentations of metaphysico-philosophic doctrine, there was much dwelling upon the contributions thereto by Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel.

For the session of the School in 1884 the Faculty chose, as one of the leading subjects for discussion, "Man's Immortality"; and in a laudable desire to give the discussion a wide range, Fiske was asked to give a paper on the general subject. I gather that he was expected to speak as a materialist.

Fiske accepted the invitation with much pleasure, as the occasion would enable him to set forth, under conditions of special significance, his views as an



THE BROOKS HOUSE, PETERSHAM



VIEW FROM REAR PIAZZA OF THE BROOKS HOUSE

Concord School of Philosophy

Evolutionist on this vital question of religious belief.

Fiske's address was written in Petersham amid the pleasantest surroundings and at intervals while he was deeply engaged in his historical work. It was delivered at Concord on the evening of July 31, 1884, and in the very simple chapel which had been specially built upon the estate of Mr. Alcott for the purposes of the School. All the surroundings were in keeping with great simplicity of life and high thinking on great themes. A larger audience than usual was gathered, drawn doubtless by a desire to hear what the leading Evolutionist in America had to say on one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. It was, therefore, an audience of an unusually select character.

The address was characterized by all the marks of Fiske's careful, orderly preparation. He took the question of man's immortality entirely out of the realm of metaphysico-theological speculation, and brought it under consideration in the light of man's evolutionary origin and his ever-developing, intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature as revealed by positive science. He opened with a brief reference to the conception of the cosmic universe as held by theologico-philosophic thinkers previous to the Copernican era, when, as set forth in the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, — "that wonderful book wherein all the knowledge and speculation, all the sorrows and yearnings of the far-off Middle

John Fiske

Ages are enshrined in the glory of imperishable verse, — the earth, the fair home of man, was placed in the centre of a universe wherein all things were ordained for his sole behoof: the sun to give him light and warmth, the stars in their courses to preside over his strangely checkered destinies, the winds to blow, the floods to rise, or the fiend of pestilence to stalk abroad over the land — all for the blessing, or the warning, or the chiding of the chief among God's creatures, man."

Upon such a cosmological theory as this — the whole universe ministering to the present and future well-being of man as its ultimate goal — was founded an imposing theological system crowned with man's immortality, an eternal life to be spent in the joys of Heaven or in the torments of Hell according as individual life here on earth had been spent well or ill.

Naturally the impinging of the Copernican astronomy upon such a body of established theologico-cosmological doctrine as this could not but be revolutionary in the extreme. Commenting upon what took place Fiske says: —

"In our day it is hard to realize the startling effect of the discovery that man does not dwell at the centre of things, but is the denizen of an obscure and tiny speck of cosmical matter quite invisible amid the innumerable throng of blazing suns that make up our galaxy. To the contemporaries of Copernicus, the new theory seemed to strike

Address on Immortality

at the very foundations of Christian theology. In a universe where so much had been made without discernible reference to man, what became of that elaborate scheme of salvation which seemed to rest upon the assumption that the career of Humanity was the sole object of God's creative forethought and fostering care? When we bear this in mind, we see how natural and inevitable it was that the Church should persecute such men as Galileo and Bruno."

But while the establishment of the truth of the Copernican astronomy by Kepler and Newton completely discredited the theologico-cosmological scheme which preceded it, this astronomical scheme gave no explanation of the cosmic universe itself, or of man's place in it. It simply affirmed the existence of a vast universe of stellar phenomena in which the earth had a very subordinate place, a universe held in order and unity by some Divine Power. Consequently man was dethroned from his position of primacy in the universe, and relegated to a very conditioned form of existence on the surface of the earth. Theology, grappling with this astronomical truth, which it was forced to accept, gradually shifted its ground as to ultimate truth regarding man and his place in the universe. It finally centred its affirmations around man's special creation as an inhabitant of the earth, and his endowment with consciousness and immortal life, as part of the acts of the Divine Creator in the

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creation of the universe by fiat, some six thousand years ago.

This theologico-cosmological scheme was supported with much affirmation of its being ultimate Divine truth, down to the middle period of the nineteenth century. Then the geological researches of Lyell and his followers, the palæontologic researches of a number of men, the biological researches of Darwin and his followers, the sociological researches of Spencer and his followers, together with the discoveries in the chemical and physical sciences relating to the properties of matter and energy, completely swept away the foundations of this amended scheme. It left in its place the conception of a universe of phenomena immeasurable in its vastness, its variety, its duration; a universe of order and unity ever in a process of development into more complex and higher forms of phenomenal existences in conformity to immutable law; a universe in which man appears as an inter-related crowning product of organic life, the whole an attestation to the existence, as the source and Sustainer of it all, of an Infinite Eternal Power, transcending, in the nature of its existence, the comprehension of the human mind.

Coming now to the direct question of man's immortality, Fiske frankly admitted that science could not as yet either affirm its truth or assert its denial, with any positive evidence whatsoever. This being the case it becomes us reverently to study the na-

Man's Place in Nature

ture of man's present existence and the conditions under which it is given to see whether his present life, so developmental in character, is legitimately terminal in itself; or whether its very terminal cosmic conditions do not imply a conscious existence in another form of life beyond as its necessary fulfilment.

He then proceeded to bring under review man's place in nature as established by biological science. Accepting the truth of man's genesis, through his evolution from lower forms of animal life, he could not but note the psychical aspects of this evolution, wherein is shown man's ever-increasing mastery over nature's materials and forces, ever bringing them more and more into his service through the development of his psychical powers. From this fact he found the conclusion irresistible that man is the highest manifestation of the Divine Creator's power, the culmination of His handiwork as thus far manifested, and that further cosmic development or revelation of the Divine Creator lies in the perfection of humanity in its moral and spiritual aspects.

Believing this to be the truth regarding man's place in nature, a place of far greater significance for his moral and spiritual well-being than had been assigned him in any scheme of things born of ancient mythology, Fiske turned, in contemplating man's destiny, to these revelations of science regarding the conditions under which his present cos-

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mic existence is given, as pointing unmistakably to some far-off Divine result of which his ever-developing cosmic experiences are adumbrations.

And among these revelations of science he found a group of facts relating to the origin and development of man's psychical powers of special significance, attesting that the enhancement by all the forces of nature of man's moral and spiritual well-being here on earth, over and beyond his physical well-being, was a distinct tendency in the nature of things.

These facts Fiske presented in the order of their development. In the first place, accepting the animal ancestry of man as established truth, man's distinct differentiation from his animal progenitors may be said to have had its beginning when in the struggle for existence the utilization of the psychical powers had become of greater service than the physical powers, yielding ever more and more the element of self-consciousness, thus opening an entirely new chapter in the organic life of the world. Indeed, in the far-off ages of the past, as now so clearly revealed by palæontologic science, we are enabled to conceive primitive man as he emerged from his animal condition, giving evidence, by his nascent powers of cognition, by his incipient language, and his crude arts, that a higher form than that of mere physical or animal existence, was making its way, was being developed in this universe of things.

Development of Humanity

Fiske then pointed out that this progress in psychical development has been continuous, and he gave himself to tracing out the ever-increasing predominance of psychical life manifested in the development of humanity. He particularly emphasized the lengthening of infancy¹ and its giving rise to feelings and actions on the part of parents not purely self-regarding, leading to the development of the family with its altruistic feelings, the unit of human society. He then pointed out how, following this advance in the development of primitive man, there came the beginnings of social life and the origin of social organizations and of moral conduct: manifestations of the actions of psychical forces which in their development are slowly ridding man of his egoistic animal nature and replacing it with a nature dominated by psychical forces having a spiritual and moral content. A point of profound significance in this connection is the physiological fact that, *pari passu* with the development of man's spiritual and moral nature, there has gone on a corresponding development of his cerebral organization.

Here Fiske found a mass of scientific evidence, the truth of which could not be gainsaid, which was clear indication that the life of civilized man, as shown by his origin and his progressive development towards spiritual and ethical ideals, was the highest manifestation of the Divine Creator's

¹ His original contribution to the doctrine of Evolution.

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power and purpose in this universe of things. Further, it was in evidence that this conscious psychological life of man had had a course of development parallel with, and in strict conformity to, the development of the physical universe which formed its environment, a universe which is ever in a process of transformation into more and more complex forms of phenomenal manifestation without any loss or destruction of material, or energy, whatever.

Then came the vital question, — vital to science, vital to religion — Does the psychological life of man end with death? Does this marvellous form of conscious existence, the crowning manifestation of Divine power in this developing universe of phenomena, where nothing is ever lost or destroyed, cease to exist? Is it a mere chance occurrence in cosmic phenomena, ephemeral in its nature and without definite meaning or purpose in the cosmic universe?

Fiske could not so believe. In his mind the ascent of man from an animal ancestry, emerging from his brute inheritance, and the development in its stead of religious feelings and altruistic conduct born of spiritual, moral, and intellectual ideals, was a truth of such sublime grandeur and significance, as to be without a parallel in the whole universe of things. Yet, he admitted that it is not likely that we shall ever succeed in making the immortality of the soul a matter of scientific dem-

Science and Immortality

onstrations, for we lack the requisite data: it must ever remain an affair of religion, rather than of science. At the same time he asserted with much emphasis: —

“The materialistic assumption that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption that is known to the history of philosophy. No evidence for it can be alleged beyond the familiar fact that during the present life we know Soul only in its association with Body, and therefore cannot discover disembodied soul without dying ourselves. This fact must always prevent us from obtaining direct evidence for the belief in the soul’s survival. But a negative presumption is not created by the absence of proof in cases where, in the nature of things, proof is inaccessible. With his illegitimate hypothesis of annihilation, the materialist transgresses the bounds of experience quite as widely as the poet who sings of the New Jerusalem with its river of life and its streets of gold. Scientifically speaking, there is not a particle of evidence for either view.”¹

¹ This positive statement in regard to our ignorance of man’s spiritual existence after death will be more seriously questioned now than at the time when Fiske wrote. The many able investigators engaged in probing scientifically the mysteries of psychical phenomena, attacking the problem at both ends, — the beginnings of consciousness and the continuance of conscious existence after death, — are bringing forth a mass of evidence which goes to show that in their investigations they are more or less in the presence of a form of existence which transcends mere physical existence; the nature of which and the conditions under which it is given are not verifiable in terms of man’s experiential knowledge. Indeed, it can be said that science, religion, and philosophy are now facing the problem of a form of existence transcending this material cosmic existence, more

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Fiske closed his address with the following emphatic confession of faith: —

“For my own part I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God’s work. Such a belief, relating to regions quite inaccessible to experience, cannot of course be clothed in terms of definite and tangible meaning. For the experience which alone can give us such terms we must await that solemn day which is to overtake us all. The belief can be most quickly defined as the refusal to believe that this world is all. The materialist holds that when you have described the whole universe of phenomena of which we can become cognizant under the conditions of the present life, then the whole story is told. It seems to me, on the contrary, that the whole story is not thus told. I feel the omnipresence of mystery in such wise as to make it far easier for me to adopt the view of Euripides, that what we call death may be but the dawning of true knowledge and of true life. The greatest philosopher of modern times, the master and teacher of all who shall study the process of Evolution for many a day to come, holds that the conscious soul is not the product of a colloca-

directly and more intelligently than at any previous period in the history of human thinking. In fact, each of these orders of thought confesses its impotence to explain the simplest cosmic phenomena; while the scientific investigation of psychical phenomena is daily bringing to light evidence that these phenomena are by no means wholly subject to physical conditions: in truth, that man’s progress in civilization, is taking decidedly the character of bringing the materials and forces of nature in subjection to his ever-developing psychical powers.

A Confession of Faith

tion of material particles, but is in the deepest sense a divine effluence. According to Mr. Spencer, the divine energy which is manifested throughout the knowable universe is the same energy that wells up in us as consciousness. Speaking for myself, I can see no insuperable difficulty in the notion that at some period in the evolution of Humanity this divine spark may have acquired sufficient concentration and steadiness to survive the wreck of material forms and endure forever. Such a crowning wonder seems to me no more than the fit climax to a creative work that has been ineffably beautiful and marvellous in all its myriad stages.

“Only on some such view can the reasonableness of the universe, which still remains far above our finite power of comprehension, maintain its ground. There are some minds inaccessible to the class of considerations here alleged, and perhaps there always will be. But on such grounds, if on no other, the faith in immortality is likely to be shared by all who look upon the genesis of the highest spiritual qualities in man as the goal of nature’s creative work. This view has survived the Copernican revolution in science, and it has survived the Darwinian revolution. Nay, if the foregoing exposition be sound, it is Darwinism which has placed Humanity upon a higher pinnacle than ever. The future is lighted for us with the radiant colors of hope. Strife and sorrow shall disappear. Peace and love shall reign supreme. The dream of poets, the lesson of priest and prophet, the inspiration of the great musician, is confirmed in the light of modern knowledge; and as we gird ourselves up for the work of life we may

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look forward to the time when in the truest sense the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, king of kings and lord of lords."

Fiske was nearly two hours in delivering the address, yet so lucid was the flow of thought owing to the logical arrangement of the wide and varied knowledge embodied in the argument, so rational and inspiring was the thought of man's immortality as the fitting complement, the culmination to his progressive moral and spiritual evolution here on earth, and so attractive was the style in which the whole argument was presented, rising at times to passages of supreme eloquence, that these features, combined as they were with an easy, unaffected delivery, held the audience in rapt attention from the beginning to the end.

The address was soon published in a dainty volume and with the following dedication: —

To
MY CHILDREN
MAUD, HAROLD, CLARENCE, RALPH
ETHEL, AND HERBERT
THIS ESSAY
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

The publication of the address attracted wide attention, not only by reason of the circumstances which called it forth, but also and more particularly by reason of its treatment of the question of man's immortality in the light of recent discoveries in

The Destiny of Man

biological science regarding his animal ancestry and the evolution of his civilization. The little book was cordially welcomed by the advocates of liberal thought, on the one hand, while it was emphatically condemned by the strenuous upholders of Christian theology, on the other. Upon the minds of people who desired to know what the testimony of science is as to the ultimate destiny of man, and to what extent the question of a future existence must be a matter of faith or belief, the little book made a deep impression.

And Fiske had the great satisfaction of learning, through private letters from persons in various walks of life, that his essay had been the means of bringing rest and comfort to minds sorely perplexed with the problems of existence as presented by Christian theology. Some of these letters are before me, and they are pathetic in their revelations of the mental distress which not unfrequently accompanies the acceptance of the Christian dogmas by minds finely organized spiritually. At the same time they attest the fact that a goodly portion of cultivated minds are ready to welcome the spiritual truths written in the phenomena of the cosmic universe when these truths are presented in all their grandeur, with fulness of knowledge, with beauty, and with power.

From Spencer Fiske received the following letter in regard to the little book, which is of interest as showing that Spencer was in doubt as to

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the immortality of man — a doubt he never overcame with a positive conviction. Biographical literature presents no parallel instance of a great mind going to its rest under circumstances of such profound sadness as accompanied the closing life of Spencer. Having himself rendered an inestimable service to humanity by pointing out man's place in the phenomena of the cosmic universe, he was yet unable to reach any positive conclusion as to the destiny of man; at the same time wishing some solution of the mystery might be found.

37 QUEEN'S GARDENS,
BAYSWATER, *October 24, 1884.*

My dear Fiske: —

I was glad to get your little volume serving to remind me of your still continued philosophical activity — showing that you have not wholly merged the philosopher in the historian.

My state of brain, though improved somewhat recently, has long debarred me from any appreciable amount of reading. Such little as I can do being by necessity limited to that bearing upon my immediate work. The only part of your little volume which I have looked at, is the closing part, and in this, so far as I gather its drift, you approach more nearly to a positive conclusion than I feel inclined to do. Have you ever looked into W. R. Greg's later essays? In one of these he, in a very interesting way, discusses the question of immortality; implying that in his own case, the desire for continued life wanes as age advances, and the desire becomes rather that for absolute rest.

Letter from Spencer

You see that I have been dreadfully bothered with controversies of late. Now, however, I have done. With an article which appears in the "Nineteenth Century" on the first of next month, I shall have done with the question of agnosticism and the Religion of Humanity, and I hope now, after a long desistance, to make some way with my permanent work. Partly from these distractions, and partly from my disturbed health (which has never yet reached its ordinary low level), I have lost an amount of time which is dreadful to look back upon.

With kind regards to Mrs. Fiske, believe me,
Ever yours sincerely,

HERBERT SPENCER.

The controversy to which Spencer refers in this letter was his memorable debate with Frederic Harrison in the "Nineteenth Century Review" for 1884 on the "Nature and Reality of Religion," in which the implications of Mr. Spencer's term "The Unknowable" and Comte's "Religion of Humanity" were very forcefully argued. It is apparent that this debate was of influence in shaping Fiske's thought in these two Concord addresses.

So wide and deep was the interest awakened by Fiske's address on "The Destiny of Man" that the Directors of the Concord School invited him to give at the session of the School the following summer, 1885, another address on some philosophic subject agreeable to himself. He gladly ac-

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cepted this second invitation, as affording a proper occasion for saying certain things he had for some time had in mind in regard to theism. He chose for the subject of his discourse, therefore, "The Idea of God as affected by Modern Knowledge," for the purpose of introducing the discussion of the question whether pantheism is the legitimate outcome of modern science. With this object in view it seemed to him that his purpose would be best attained by passing in review the various modifications the idea of God has undergone in the past, and pointing out the shape in which it is likely to survive the rapid growth of modern knowledge; and especially the establishment of the doctrine of Evolution, which is fast obliging us to revise our opinions on all subjects whatsoever. Fiske approached the discussion, as he tells us, with the following theistic belief: —

"We may hold that the world of phenomena is intelligible only when regarded as the multiform manifestation of an Omnipresent Energy that is in some way — albeit in a way quite above our finite comprehension — anthropomorphic or quasi-personal. There is a true objective reasonableness in the universe; its events have an orderly progression, and, so far as those events are brought sufficiently within our ken for us to generalize them exhaustively, their progression is toward a goal that is recognizable by human intelligence; 'the process of Evolution is itself the working out of a mighty Teleology of which our finite understandings

The Idea of God

can fathom but the scantiest rudiments'; it is indeed but imperfectly that we can describe the dramatic tendency in the succession of events, but we can see enough to assure us of the fundamental fact that there is such a tendency; and this tendency is the objective aspect of that which, when regarded on its subjective side, we call Purpose. Such a theory of things is Theism. It recognizes an Omnipresent Energy, which is none other than the living God."¹

The attentive reader of Fiske's religious addresses cannot fail to notice the characteristic manner of their openings — in each case the presentation of a significant thought derived from some department of knowledge opposite to the subject under discussion. In "The Destiny of Man," as we have seen, he opened his discourse with a graceful reference to the sorrows and yearnings of the far-off Middle Ages as enshrined in the imperishable verse of Dante. Now, having to speak on a still greater theme, the greatest that can engage the human mind, he turns for a text for his discourse to "Faust," Goethe's immortal poem. He finds — in the incident of Faust's walking with Margaret at eventide in the garden, and Margaret's enquiry of her lover if he believes in God, and Faust's perplexity, having delved in the deepest mines of philosophy, to make answer which shall be truthful and at the same time intelligible to the simple-minded girl that walks by his side — an incident

¹ Preface to *The Idea of God*, p. xi.

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suitable to his purpose, as depicted by one of the profoundest thinkers of modern times.

The opening paragraph, in which Fiske sets forth Faust's efforts to explain to Margaret his idea of God, and her difficulty in apprehending an idea so far beyond any concrete symbol of the Divine Creator with which she was acquainted — so far beyond what had been presented to her by the priest at the confessional or the altar — is not only a passage of rare literary eloquence, but is also one of the finest renderings of the thought of Goethe regarding Deity, as expressed by Faust, that we have in English.

Focussing attention by reference to this incident in Goethe's great poem, Fiske then pointed out that the difficulty with which Margaret was beset is the same difficulty which besets every mind when confronted with the thought of the great thinkers — the outcome of their endeavors to fathom the hidden life of the universe and interpret its meaning. He then goes on to say that most people content themselves through life with a set of concrete formulas or symbols concerning Deity, and vituperate as atheistic all conceptions which refuse to be compressed within the limits of their creed. For the great mass of mankind the idea of God is overlaid and obscured by symbolic rites and doctrines that have grown up in the long historic development of religion. All such rites and doctrines once had a positive meaning beautiful and

The Idea of God

inspiring, or forbidding and terrible; and such concrete symbols have in all ages been fought for as the essentials of religion, until decrees of councils, and articles of faith, have usurped in men's minds, in a great measure, the place of the living God.

Fiske then showed, with great clearness of statement, how inevitable it is in the nature of things that this should be so: that to the half-educated mind a theory of Divine action, in which God is depicted as a distinct person, and as entertaining human purposes and swayed by human passions, is not only intelligible, but is also impressive, and in some cases may be made inspiring. However mythical the form in which the theory is presented, it seems to uncritical minds profoundly real and substantial. Just in so far as it is crudely concrete, just in so far as its terms can be vividly realized, does such a theory seem rational and true. On the other hand, a theory of Divine action, which, disregarding as far as possible the aid of concrete symbols, attempts to include within its range the endlessly complex operations that are forever going on throughout the universe, is to the ordinary mind unintelligible. It awakens no emotion because it is not understood. For these reasons all attempts to study God as revealed in the workings of the visible universe, all attempts to characterize the divine activity in terms derived from such study, have met with persistent opposition and

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obloquy as attempts to fritter away the true idea of God, or at best to reduce it to a mere abstraction.

Fiske closes this very lucid summary of the perpetual conflict between man's mythically derived ideas of God and the idea of a Divine Creator derived from man's ever-advancing knowledge of the cosmic universe, which formed his introduction, with this exceptionally fine paragraph: —

“Thus through age after age has it fared with men's discoveries in science, and with their thoughts about God and the soul. It was so in the days of Galileo and Newton, and we have found it to be so in the days of Darwin and Spencer. The theologian exclaims, If planets are held in place by gravitation and tangential momentum, and if the highest forms of life have been developed by natural selection and direct adaptation, then the universe is swayed by blind forces and nothing is left for God to do: how impious and terrible the thought! Even so, echoes the favorite atheist, the Lametrie or Büchner of the day; the universe, it seems, has always got on without a God, and accordingly there is none: how noble and cheering the thought! And as thus age after age they wrangle, with their eyes turned away from the light, the world goes on to larger and larger knowledge in spite of them, and does not lose its faith, for all these darkeners of counsel may say. As in the roaring loom of Time the endless web of events is woven, each strand shall make more and more clearly visible the living garment of God.”

Turning now to his direct argument, he finds

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that at no time since men have dwelt upon the earth have their notions about the universe and the conditions which govern human life undergone such great changes as have taken place during the nineteenth century; that never before has knowledge increased so rapidly, or philosophic speculation been so active, or their results so widely diffused as during this period. In support of this affirmation he makes a concise summary of the great advances in knowledge regarding the cosmic universe and man's place in it which this century had witnessed, and he adds: —

“As the inevitable result of the thronging discoveries just enumerated, we find ourselves in the midst of a mighty revolution in human thought. Time-honored creeds are losing their hold upon men; ancient symbols are shorn of their value; everything is called in question. The controversies of the day are not like those of former times. It is no longer a question of hermeneutics, no longer a struggle between abstruse dogmas of rival churches. Religion itself is called upon to show why it should any longer claim our allegiance. There are those who deny the existence of God. There are those who would explain away the human soul as a mere group of fleeting phenomena attendant upon the collocation of sundry particles of matter. And there are many others who, without committing themselves to these positions of the atheist and the materialist, have nevertheless come to regard religion as practically ruled out from human affairs. No religious creed that man

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has ever devised can be made to harmonize in all its features with modern knowledge. All such creeds were constructed with reference to theories of the universe which are now utterly and hopelessly discredited. How, then, it is asked, amid the general wreck of old beliefs, can we hope that the religious attitude in which from time immemorial we have been wont to contemplate the universe can any longer be maintained? Is not the belief in God perhaps a dream of the childhood of our race, like the belief in elves and bogarts which once was no less universal? and is not modern science fast destroying the one as it has already destroyed the other?

“Such are the questions which we daily hear asked, sometimes with flippant eagerness, but oftener with anxious dread. In view of them it is well worth while to examine the idea of God, as it has been entertained by mankind from the earliest ages, and as it is affected by the knowledge of the universe which we have acquired in recent times. If we find in that idea, as conceived by untaught thinkers in the twilight of antiquity, an element that still survives the widest and deepest generalizations of modern times, we have the strongest possible reason for believing that the idea is permanent and answers to an Eternal Reality. It was to be expected that conceptions of Deity handed down from primitive men should undergo serious modification. If it can be shown that the essential element in these conceptions must survive the enormous additions to our knowledge which have distinguished the present age above all others since man became man, then we may believe that it will endure so

The Idea of God

long as man endures for it is not likely that it can ever be called upon to pass a severer ordeal."

With his purpose thus outlined and his method of approach thus indicated, Fiske's exposition took the form of an enquiry into the following subjects of knowledge with conclusions based thereon: —

- I. Sources of the Theistic Idea.
- II. Development of Monotheism.
- III. The Idea of God as immanent in the World.
- IV. The Idea of God as remote from the World.
- V. Conflict between the Two Ideas, commonly misunderstood as a Conflict between Religion and Science.
- VI. Anthropomorphic Conceptions of God.
- VII. The Argument from Design.
- VIII. Simile of the Watch replaced by Simile of the Flower.
- IX. The Craving for a Final Cause.
- X. Symbolic Conceptions.
- XI. The Eternal Source of Phenomena.
- XII. The Power that makes for Righteousness.

These subjects were treated with such a fulness of knowledge, such a finely tolerant spirit, and with such a profoundly reverent faith, that no abstract could do them justice. Space, therefore, can be found only for the closing paragraph of the discourse, in which is reflected, in language of unsurpassed beauty, Fiske's belief in Deity — a Power which transcends the comprehension of the human mind. Fiske's words are: —

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“As to the conception of Deity, in the shape impressed upon us by our modern knowledge, I believe I have now said enough to show that it is no empty formula or metaphysical abstraction which we would seek to substitute for the living God. The Infinite and Eternal Power that is manifested in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God. We may exhaust the resources of metaphysics in debating how far his nature may fitly be expressed in terms applicable to the psychical nature of man; such vain attempts will only serve to show how we are dealing with a theme that must ever transcend our finite powers of conception. But of some things we may feel sure. Humanity is not a mere local incident in an endless and aimless series of cosmical changes. The events of the universe are not the work of chance, neither are they the outcome of a blind necessity. Practically there is a purpose in the world whereof it is our highest duty to learn the lesson, however well or ill we may fare in rendering a scientific account of it. When from the dawn of life we see all things working together toward the evolution of the highest spiritual attributes of man, we know, however the words may stumble in which we try to say it, that God is in the deepest sense a moral Being. The everlasting source of phenomena is none other than the Infinite Power that makes for righteousness. Thou canst not by searching find Him out; yet put thy trust in Him and against thee the gates of hell shall not prevail; for there is neither wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Eternal.”

The address was given in the little chapel at

The Idea of God

Concord on the evening of July 29, 1885. A much larger audience than usual was gathered; and although, as on the previous occasion, Fiske was nearly two hours in the delivery, he held the rapt attention of his audience to the close. In the autumn the address was published in a dainty little volume as a companion to the previous address, "The Destiny of Man," with a preface, in which the relation of the two Concord addresses to the views presented in "Cosmic Philosophy," published ten years before, was set forth.

To this little volume he gave the following felicitous dedication: —

To
MY WIFE
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE SWEET SUNDAY MORNING
UNDER THE APPLE-TREE ON THE HILLSIDE
WHEN WE TWO SAT LOOKING DOWN INTO FAIRY WOODLAND PATHS
AND TALKED OF THE THINGS
SINCE WRITTEN IN THIS LITTLE BOOK
I NOW DEDICATE IT

*Ἄργυριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ἔπαρχει
μοι· ὃ δὲ ἔχω, τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι.¹*

There is a bit of personality connected with the writing of this little book and this dedication that is of interest. In July, 1885, the Fiske family were at the summer home in Petersham, and one brilliant Sunday morning Fiske said to Mrs. Fiske, with some insistence of manner, "Come, I wish you to go down with me to the apple tree. I have something in mind I want to talk over with you."

¹ Translation: "Silver and gold have I none; what I have I give to thee."

John Fiske

They went down to the apple tree and there they talked over the things since written in "The Idea of God." I have before me as I write Fiske's notes of this conversation, with the outlines of his argument substantially as it appears in the printed volume. He was fourteen days in writing out the address.

Reference has been made to Fiske's happy manner of opening his discourses with some pregnant, related thought. This was an artistic point of which he was ever mindful. In this instance I find that the first two days of his composition were given to shaping the first paragraph, wherein he focusses attention to his great theme by depicting, in language of unsurpassed eloquence, the interview between Faust and Margaret in the garden, as set forth by Goethe.

When published, the address received marked attention by the press. Save by the strictly orthodox religious journals, it was very generally welcomed as an important contribution to the religious discussion raised by the recent advancements of science and the promulgation of the doctrine of Evolution. Fiske received many letters from persons in various walks of life—and notably from clergymen—expressing gratitude for the great help the two Concord addresses had been in giving peace to minds sadly ill at ease over the great problems of existence in the light of modern knowledge.



The apple-trees mentioned in the dedication
to "The Idea of God" — planted under
this tree Sunday morning, July 12, 1885.

The Idea of God

It can be said that the two Concord addresses indicate the high-water mark in the exposition of the Evolutionary philosophy in its bearing upon man's religious faith and his moral conduct. They interrelate these two elements in the life of man with his destiny, and give him a physical genesis, a heritage in the very constitution of the universe, which must be conceived as a harmonious unity, else there is an uncontrolled diabolism as an active force at the very centre of things. The existence of diabolism is denied, and the affirmation is made that there exists an Infinite Eternal Power which makes for righteousness, of whom the cosmic universe is a revelation, but whose ultimate nature no searching can find out.

"But hold!" cries the Christian theologian; "what have you done with the vital elements of the Christian's creed: the divinely revealed Scriptures, the special creation of man, his fall and condemnation, his redemption through Christ, Christ's sacrificial atonement, a future Heaven and Hell? What you give us is rank infidelity!"

"Not so hot, my Christian friend," would Fiske reply, in his calm philosophic way. "The creedal points to which you attach so much importance are in no sense vital to the profoundly deep religious truth which they enshroud. It is true men have fought for centuries over these creedal points, but only to their own destruction. Advancing knowledge is making it more and more evident

John Fiske

that these creedal points are largely the accretions with which ignorance and superstition have invested the developing religious instinct of mankind. As a teacher of religion, I urge you calmly to consider these creedal points as belonging to the religious childhood of the race and as having been outgrown. In their place let me ask you to lift your mind to the contemplation of this universe, with man's place in it, as science is now revealing it, to our intelligence; for here I believe you will see as in a new light the destiny of man; and that, 'as in the roaring loom of Time the endless web of events is woven, each strand is making more and more clearly visible the living garment of God.' "

CHAPTER XXX

PUBLICATION OF LECTURES ON AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEAS—SCOPE OF FISKE'S HISTORY GREATLY ENLARGED—PUBLIC INTEREST IN HIS LECTURES GREAT HELP IN THEIR COMPOSITION—MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF CIVIL WAR—ASSISTANT EDITOR OF APPLETON'S CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIOGRAPHY

1885-1886

IN the spring of 1885 Fiske published in book form his three lectures on "American Political Ideas," which he had delivered before the Royal Institution of Great Britain in 1880, and subsequently in various parts of the United States. Wherever delivered these lectures were received with great interest and enthusiasm, and on their publication in book form they were received by the general public with no less appreciation. In their published form the lectures have had a wide circulation; and they have produced a deep impression on the public mind, inasmuch as here for the first time was shown the peaceful character of the fundamental political ideas upon which the government of the United States was founded, with their genesis in antecedent history, and their manifest destiny in the future political organizations of the world.

No work of Fiske's shows more clearly than this his wide and accurate knowledge, his deep philo-

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sophic insight, his clarity of mind, and his great generalizing power. Without any invocation of the philosophy of Evolution, as applied to human history, this philosophy is implied in the general argument from the beginning to the end, as is seen by the way in which political society is treated: its rude genesis with primitive man, its irregular development in the historic past, its progressive development in the present, and its undoubted, steady, progressive development in the future.

And now, after six years' experience in dealing with American history as a subject of public enlightenment to which his energies should be devoted as to a life-work, Fiske found that he must change the whole nature of his undertaking. He found that he had not only greatly underestimated the magnitude of the task when considered from the viewpoint of universal history, but that he had also greatly erred in his conception of the literary form in which his work should go before the public. We have seen that in 1881 he entered into an agreement with Messrs. Harper & Brothers for the preparation and publication of a "History of the American People from the Discovery of America to the Inauguration of President Garfield," the general style of the work to be after the manner of Green's "Short History of the English People," and to be comprised in two or three good-sized volumes.

He regarded this work as a sort of core to his whole undertaking; that here would be presented

Scope of his History

in their sequential_order the essential points in American history with but little comment, thus leaving the salient features of American history for fuller treatment by lectures and essays.

But now, having gone over the whole ground and having practically completed his "History of the American People," as planned, he was thoroughly dissatisfied with the result. The compression necessitated by the plan had so squeezed the vitality out of his work that what he intended as a history appeared to him as but little more than a group of statistics. It certainly did not present American history in its relations to antecedent history or to the world history of the present and the future, at all as he would have it presented. Accordingly he explained the situation to the Messrs. Harper, assuring them that under no conditions could he consent to the publication of such a history as he had prepared. The Messrs. Harper declined to entertain any proposition for a history other than was provided for in the existing agreement, and it was therefore amicably annulled. It was quite in the order of rational development that the dignity and importance of his task should become greatly enlarged in his mind, during the five or six years in which Fiske was meditating the broad, germinal ideas regarding political organizations as set forth in his lectures as "American Political Ideas," and finding at every step in his historical work so much that had never been satisfactorily presented.

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Freed from a publishing agreement which had greatly obstructed his literary productiveness for several years, Fiske's mind expanded broadly with his great theme. A new conception of a "History of the American People" began to take shape in his mind: one not limited to two or three volumes, but that would fill several volumes. In this work he would be enabled to give a philosophic as well as an historic presentation of the genesis of the people of the United States. He would also show their development, through a rich colonial experience, into a compact political organization or nation, the like of which the world had never before seen, of vast significance to the future well-being of humanity. This history would be, in fact, the embodiment of his life thought and labor.

Fiske's success, both as a public speaker and as an essayist, had given him two pulpits, as it were, — the lecture platform, and the literary journals, — and he had the command of both these great means of public enlightenment to such an extent that he received far more applications for lectures and essay articles than he could comply with after reserving the necessary amount of time for study and composition. The lecture platform, which was extended to schools, became the greater means for reaching the public mind, and steadily his parish broadened, until it could be said that it extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, and that it comprised the finest audiences in this great realm.

History of American People

Much misconception in regard to Fiske's historical work has arisen from the shallow criticism that, because he lectured so entertainingly on subjects which most people find dry and uninteresting, he sacrificed historic truth to popular applause. Nothing could be further from the truth. From what we have already seen and from what we shall further see as our narrative unfolds, it can be said that no one has approached the interpretation of American history with so wide and varied a knowledge bearing on the aspects of the subject, with a mind so free from political and religious prejudice, with so keen a philosophic insight into "the thoughts that move mankind," as are shown in the historical writings of Fiske taken as a whole. He had this great advantage — which he duly appreciated, although the involved travelling was very irksome to him — that through his lectures he could take the people into his confidence, as it were, as the main points of his history took shape in his mind.

Then, too, his subject, when duly considered, was one of supreme interest, was full of stirring incidents on land and sea, of heroic adventure into the great unknown of the world's surface, with much to teach in regard to the organization of political society and state-building when freed from the ancestral laws which conditioned European society. Withal it was a phase of human history in the development of which all the better

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elements of human nature were freely displayed by personalities of commanding virtue and power, on the one hand; while on the other hand, all the baser elements were displayed by characters which reflected the weakness, the brutality of man. In short, his subject was one possessing so many points of deep human interest that he could measure his success in its treatment by the degree of interest it awakened in the minds of his hearers. And there are instances where his first sketch of events or of characters did not awaken quite the interest on the part of his hearers that he anticipated, and of his critically going over his sketch to find its deficiency.

A case in point was his first sketch of Washington's masterly campaign in and about New York. Although this first sketch was full of stirring incidents, it fell short with his first audience. He then took his manuscript in hand, and found that by some little additions he could greatly improve the order and clarity of the narrative, and by emphasizing more strongly some of the personal incidents in the campaign, he would appeal to a deeper personal interest on the part of his hearers. His repetition of the lecture showed the wisdom of the changes.

Macaulay, in the exordium to his "History of England," says: "I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the Eng-

Sir Henry Irving

lish of the nineteenth century a true picture of the lives of their ancestors." Fiske was imbued with a still loftier purpose than that which animated Macaulay. It was not alone "a true picture of the lives of their ancestors" that he would give to his countrymen. It was all this and much more. He would have them acquainted with the genesis and development of the social and political institutions which had descended to them, and in the further development of which they were to bear an important part. Indeed, he would have them understand that American citizenship was by no means a condition of social or political passivity: rather that it was a form of sociologico-political organization which involved serious personal responsibilities and duties on the part of individuals. To this end we have seen him working for several years. With increased ardor and with a broader comprehension of purpose, we are to see him working in the years to come through bringing his work to the service of public education.

It was while engaged in carrying out the lecture programme for the season of 1884-85 that he had the remarkable experience so vividly portrayed in the following letter to Mrs. Fiske:—

NEW YORK, *April 1, 1885.*

My dear:—

I saw Irving in "Hamlet" the other night, and never before did I rise to the full understanding of the *stupendous* sublimity of Shakespeare's genius.

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I have been in a state of *awe* ever since and I shall carry it with me through life. The scene between Hamlet and his mother surpassed anything I ever saw on the stage.

Miss Terry as Ophelia was heavenly. Next night I saw "Much Ado." O, my dear, it was wicked for you not to have staid and seen that. Such perfection of acting was never seen before. Miss Terry as Beatrice would have set *you* wild. O, how great, how mighty, how ethereal, does Shakespeare become when he gets such interpreters! I could fancy that sweetest of souls and brightest of minds that ever lived on this ball looking down from heaven with a smile.

The friendship between Fiske and Sir Henry Irving was a very warm one, and it will not be thought out of place to introduce here the expression of grief Sir Henry felt when he learned of Fiske's death. Writing to Mrs. Fiske Sir Henry said:—

"To know him was a charm, and to talk with him an enlightenment. In all the twenty years of our friendship it was to me a pleasure to look forward to meeting him and a regret that we had to part.

"The news of his death, just at the time when we of England were looking forward to hear him at Winchester on the King Alfred Millenary, — a subject so close to his heart, — came with the shock of a bitter loss.

"He was a great philosopher and a great historian. The world was and is richer for his work, and he has left a blank never to be filled in the hearts of his friends."

The Critical Period

We have seen that in the winter of 1883-84 Fiske produced his course of lectures on "The American Revolution," which was received by many emphatic expressions of public approval. Encouraged by this success he prepared during 1884 another course of eight lectures on the period immediately following the Revolutionary War, the seven years from 1782 to 1789, during which the necessity of a constitutional Federal Government transcending the powers of the several States was slowly taking shape in the minds of the whole people. Fiske called this period "The Critical Period of American History," and his treatment of it bore the marks of a wide knowledge of all the facts involved as well as remarkable powers of lucid, fair-minded historic exposition. These lectures were first delivered at the Old South Church in Boston, and then at Washington University, St. Louis, during the winter and spring of 1885, and they were received with no less applause than had been given his previous lectures.

Fiske had now accomplished two substantial pieces of work, upon which he could count for reasonable returns wherever he could get good audiences, and he was so familiar with American history in general that he could speak *extempore*, if necessary, upon any important phase of this history. His reputation, too, had grown apace, until there had come a quite general recognition in the public mind that through his ministrations he was

John Fiske

awakening the American people to a higher conception than had hitherto prevailed of the nature and meaning of the political organization under which they live, and their duties as citizens in protecting and developing this organization.

Henry Ward Beecher heard one of these "Critical Period" lectures, and was so greatly impressed by Fiske's grasp of his subject, his lucid style, and the great charm of his easy delivery, that he came at once to Fiske to express his great satisfaction and to enquire how he managed his lectures. When Fiske told him that he managed his lectures himself, Beecher said: "That's all wrong. Such lectures as you are giving should be heard throughout the country, and you need a good manager to make engagements for you. Let me send you my manager, Major J. B. Pond, and you will find that what he does n't know about managing is n't worth knowing."

Major Pond came to see Fiske and he quickly took in the situation. He saw that while Fiske's lectures were well adapted to the larger cities and university towns where cultivated audiences could usually be found, to gain good-sized audiences in other places, another and more popular course of historical lectures was necessary: that is, necessary to secure such a return as Major Pond thought desirable and possible for a lecturer with Fiske's reputation. Fiske saw the point in Major Pond's suggestion and was soon ready with a scheme to

Campaigns of the Civil War

meet it. He felt that he possessed exceptional powers for the lucid description of military operations. In his lectures on the Revolutionary War he had found that his description of the military movements never failed to hold the deep interest of his audiences. During our Civil War, and when in college, he had taken, as we have seen, great interest in the battles, and particularly in the strategy displayed by the opposing forces. In his historical work he had gone over the Civil War period, briefly, but with sufficient thoroughness to make himself acquainted with the underlying strategical principles upon which the great campaigns were conducted. Then, too, in this phase of his work he had the cordial assistance of John Codman Ropes, a profound student of military history, whose criticisms of the military operations of our Civil War are among the fairest and best that have appeared. Accordingly, the preparation of a course of four or six lectures on the great campaigns of our Civil War took shape in Fiske's mind as fully meeting Major Pond's suggestion.

Major Pond was delighted with the idea. With a manager's instinct he saw the particular appropriateness of such a course of popular lectures at that time. The twenty years which had passed since the close of the war had removed much of the bitterness of feeling which accompanied it, so that the great events and the actions of the leaders on both sides might be considered with fairness; while

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the sufferings of General Grant, now nearing his end, had so aroused the sympathies of the whole nation in his behalf, that a fresh portrayal by Fiske of his great military achievements could not fail of a wide popular appreciation.

To begin with, a course of four lectures was planned to give a narrative of the military events which brought about the overthrow of the Southern Confederacy by turning its left flank and opening the Mississippi River, and it was intended that they should especially illustrate the early military career of General Grant. The titles of the several lectures were to be:—

- I. From Carthage to Shiloh.
- II. From New Orleans to Stone River.
- III. The Siege of Vicksburg.
- IV. Chattanooga.

They were to be illustrated with maps, diagrams, views of towns and fortresses, landscapes, and portraits, with the aid of the stereopticon, and each lecture to be so arranged as to be a distinct entertainment in itself.

Fiske had no difficulty in coming to an agreement with Major Pond for the management of the proposed course of Civil War lectures as well as of all his lectures.

Accordingly, Fiske entered upon the preparation of the course with great ardor, and the letters of the summer and autumn of 1885 from Petersham represent him as surrounded by the official reports

Campaigns of the Civil War

and by the works of various Northern and Southern writers on the Civil War struggle, endeavoring to extract, as far as possible from the conflicting testimony, the substantial truth in regard to the great movement covered by his programme. He found innumerable perplexities, owing to the great amount of conflicting details, in getting at clear conceptions of the vital points in the great battles so as to present them intelligently to popular audiences. It was evident that each battle represented two hostile military plans or purposes, and that to give an intelligent account of the conflict it was necessary to have a clear conception of the strategical elements which formed the basis of the battle-plans of the commanding generals on the respective sides, as well as of the topographical features of the region of country over which the conflict raged.

Fiske gave himself to the study of these two points with great thoroughness and perfect fairness of mind. Seizing the main features of each battle and dropping unessential details, he arranged these features in simple topographical diagrams in such orderly relations that the decisive tactical movements in the progress of the battle were brought clearly before the mind.

One or more diagrams accompanied each battle, and all were constructed by Fiske. He received many commendations from officers who participated in the battles both on the Union and the

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Confederate sides, for their simplicity and their graphic presentation of the vital points in these memorable contests. General Sherman particularly commended the tactical as well as the strategical knowledge embodied in them.

The lectures were produced at Tremont Temple, Boston, during November and December, 1885, and they were enthusiastically received by the public. The illustrations had been chosen with such good judgment that they added greatly to the interest of the narrative. They served at the same time to give a graphic presentation of the great difficulties encountered by General Grant and Admiral Farragut in opening the Mississippi and in turning the left flank of the Rebellion at Chattanooga.

Applications for the lectures came "fast and furious" from various sections of the country — even from as far west as Denver. There was no difficulty, therefore, in arranging a season's programme of lectures extending to the following May, the lectures to be given in selected cities east of Chicago and St. Louis, and to consist of the Civil War course, or selections from his other courses as might be desired. Everything seemed bright and prosperous, and Fiske entered upon his new phase of lecturing with great cheer. His first engagements were in the New England section and they extended over about eight weeks. They involved incessant travelling, sometimes two lectures a day, to which

Gives up Popular Lecturing

were added all the discomforts of second- and third-class hotels. Six weeks of this kind of living brought him to the realization of the fact that he was harnessed to an undertaking that not only took him from his home and subjected him to all manner of personal discomforts, but which also deprived him of social intercourse with kindred minds — an experience he greatly valued — as well as of all opportunities for productive work on the great historic themes which were gestating in his mind.

It was while his new lecture experiences were thus starting lines of thought which impinged upon the wisdom of his giving himself so completely to the lecture platform that he took a severe cold which deprived him of his voice and brought on an attack of pneumonia, upsetting all his engagements. During his weeks of convalescence he carefully reviewed his new lecture scheme in the light of his recent experience, and he came to the conclusion that the carrying-out of this scheme as arranged by Major Pond not only involved serious apprehensions as to his health, but also made it impossible for him to go on with his legitimate historical work. He decided, therefore, to give up the Pond plan of universal lecturing, and to return to his regular historical work with such lecture engagements as he could consistently make, having regard to the demands of his historical work. He added the Civil War lectures to his platform reper-

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toire for such places or occasions as demanded lectures primarily of an entertaining character.

During the following spring of 1886, on his annual visit to Washington University, St. Louis, he received a call for these lectures from the Grant Monument Association of St. Louis, which he accepted with great pleasure, as General Sherman was President of the Association and would preside at each lecture. The lectures roused much local discussion, and it was at their close that General Sherman complimented Fiske so highly upon his knowledge of military strategy and tactics, to which reference has been made.

Later in 1886, he became assistant editor of Appleton's "Cyclopædia of Biography." This position, however, did not entail persistent editorial labors away from home. Rather it called for suggestions in regard to the general character of the work, the naming of the fittest representatives of the great questions which were engaging the public mind and who could best set forth the facts of their lives, together with revising manuscripts, combined with efforts to secure eminent literary men to contribute special sketches to the work as well as to make contributions himself. In the responses to his applications for special articles, I find two that are of significance. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: —

"I should be very glad if I could oblige a gentleman for whom I have so high a regard as I have

Cyclopædia of Biography

for yourself. But *I have sold my standing grass* — that is I have promised, for a large consideration, all that I write to my present publishers. I have, therefore, no choice.”

John G. Whittier, in declining, expresses the following appreciation of Fiske’s writings: —

“I am glad of this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for the interest and pleasure with which I have read *all* thy published works.”

Fiske himself contributed the following twenty-four biographical articles to the “Cyclopædia”:—

Samuel, John, Abigail, John Quincy, and Charles Francis Adams, Benedict Arnold, Lord Chatham, Rufus Choate, Sir Henry Clinton, William Cobbett, Lord Cornwallis, the Fairfax Family, Benjamin Franklin, Horatio Gates, Nathanael Greene, Thomas Hutchinson, Andrew Jackson, Lafayette, Charles Lee, the Lee Family of Virginia, James Madison, Francis Marion, Daniel Morgan, James Otis.

During 1886 he contributed the following articles to the “Atlantic Monthly”: —

January, “The Surrender of Cornwallis and its Consequences.” March, “The United States after the Revolutionary War.” May, “The Weakness of Government under the Confederation.” July, “Failure of Credit after the Revolutionary War.” September, “The Paper Money Craze, 1786.” November, “Germs of National Sovereignty.”

Fiske gave but one new lecture this year — a description of the battle of Bunker Hill. This was given at the Old South Church in Boston, in August.

CHAPTER XXXI

HISTORIC REFLECTIONS — VARIOUS LECTURES — VISITS
ITS PACIFIC COAST — WONDERFUL RIDE ACROSS
THE PLAINS AND OVER THE MOUNTAINS — IM-
PRESSIONS OF OREGON — RIDE TO SAN FRAN-
CISCO — GENERAL JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON — IM-
PRESSIONS OF PACIFIC COAST VISIT :

1887

THE year 1887 reveals Fiske steadily at work on his history, imbued with the larger conception of his task which is now taking quite definite shape in his mind. Having spent several years on the project of a condensed history, he had made himself so familiar with the main features of his subject that he could present them independently, and out of their consecutive order. At the same time he could give them such an interrelated relativity that when all were completed each would readily fall into its sequential place as a part of the general whole.

This plan enabled him to appeal to the public first with the most interesting phases of his subject. Hence we have the lectures and magazine articles on the "Revolutionary War" and the "Critical Period" prior to the organization of the Federal Government, which brought the narrative down to the inauguration of Washington. This

The Beginnings of New England

much accomplished, he now turns back to bring forward the various features of the colonial period as well as of the period of the discovery of America, in their bearings upon the ultimate development of a great nation with a republican form of government, which secured to its citizens a greater degree of civil liberty than any nation had hitherto enjoyed. This required a wide excursion into universal history. Accordingly, we find that the year 1887 opened with Fiske's mind grappling with the disturbed, seething condition of the political society of Europe during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and noting how European society was affected by the discovery of America — of a new world — and how, in turn, the colonization and settlement of this new world reflected the social and political conditions and ideals of the European peoples. It was this great philosophico-historic conception of European society, from which American colonization drew its life-blood, as it were, that formed in no small measure the background to his thought as he entered upon the colonial phase of the historic development of the people of the United States.

The first instalment of his presentation of the colonial phase of his subject was embodied in a course of five lectures on "The Beginnings of New England," which he prepared during the winter of this year and which he gave at Washington University, St. Louis, during April and May. These

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lectures were opened with an historico-political presentation of the three methods of nation-making among civilized peoples: the Oriental method, of conquest without incorporation; the Roman method, of conquest with incorporation, but without representation; the English method, of incorporation with representation. Then followed a succinct account of the steady progress of the English method over the other two in modern Europe, and its acceptance as the basic idea of political organization in the settlement of New England — it may be said, of all the English colonies. This lecture on nation-making forms the opening chapter in the volume of Fiske's works entitled "The Beginnings of New England," and nowhere else in his writings do his powers of philosophic insight into the underlying forces which are impelling human society with its unmistakable progressive trend, appear to better advantage than in this essay. It may well be classed as one of the finest examples of historico-political generalization in English literature.

These lectures were received in St. Louis with as much interest and enthusiasm as had been bestowed upon his previous courses; and on their completion Fiske had every reason to think that a third instalment of his great work had been as satisfactorily done as were the first two sections, "The American Revolution" and "The Critical Period."

Visits the Pacific Coast

And now, at the close of his lectures in St. Louis, Fiske had an experience which overtopped in interest all other experiences of this period. As he has given so graphic an account of it in his own charming style, I shall allow him, in his own words, to set it forth in as much space as can here be given.

This experience was a trip across the plains and the mountains to the Pacific — a visit to Oregon and California. He left St. Louis May 26, 1887, for Portland, Oregon, where he had engagements for several lectures. From Portland, under date of June 3, he wrote Mrs. Fiske a letter of sixteen letter-sheet pages in his beautiful chirography, in which he sets forth the main incidents of his journey. This letter may well be called an epistolary classic by virtue of the vivid descriptions it gives of nature as displayed in the grandeur of plains and of mountains, as well as by the record it makes of the fine emotive feelings called forth in the presence of so much physical omnipotence. Then, too, the style is so simple and easy-flowing that his thought seems to have come from his pen with perfect unconsciousness as to form, and yet in perfect form — one of the highest qualities of good style. The whole sixteen pages contain but two or three erasures of single words, with two slight interlineations.

His route was from St. Louis by way of Omaha, Cheyenne, Green River, Pocatello, and The Dalles. He begins his letter with this confession: —

John Fiske

PORTLAND, OREGON, *June 3, 1887.*

My darling Wife: —

Here I am, with eyes and head almost tired out with looking, and trying to take in all the wonders of this wonderful country.

He then gives some particulars of his ride from St. Louis to Council Bluffs and Omaha. At Council Bluffs he found his sleeping-car, in which he was to live for the rest of the journey, awaiting him — “an extremely luxurious car with an awfully jolly colored porter in attendance.” He left Council Bluffs at 7.50 P.M. Friday, May 27, on a train of seventeen cars with two stout locomotives. He continues: —

“The car behind mine was filled with emigrants, mostly German and Scandinavian, — a very nice, cosy, well-behaved, respectable crowd they were. At stations I chatted with some of 'em from the rear platform. Before going to bed I could see by the dim light that we were getting into boundless solitudes and that we were steadily rising. Next morning I got an excellent breakfast at North Platte, more than 3700 feet above the sea. . . .

“What a day that Saturday was! Everlasting plains, with unbroken horizon, like the sea. Grassy plains, over which you ride for fifty miles without seeing a house, or a tree, or even a bush. Utter loneliness, save now and then a few horses or cows grazing. Sometimes a little undulation, but generally flat as a floor. Railroad track straight as a ruler mile after mile without a curve. After a couple of hundred miles this begins to work upon

A Wonderful Ride

one's mind powerfully. I began to have an awe-struck feeling, as if I was coming into contact with Infinity. I had taken Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' to read, and it is one of the most powerful stories I ever read, and on about as gigantic a scale as 'Les Misérables.' Somehow the story fitted the landscape, and both worked upon me at once.

"We dined at Sidney, and supped at Cheyenne, a pretty town of 8000 inhabitants. We had been rising almost imperceptibly through the forenoon and quite perceptibly through the afternoon and were now more than 6000 feet above the sea — an altitude below which we were not to go for the next 700 miles! But now at Cheyenne it was no longer a boundless moor. Great blue mountains were coming up in the horizon on all sides except east. During the next thirty miles we climbed rapidly and could look out through the grey twilight over distances far below, that seemed to have no end. On the other side the savage and treeless but still grassy mountain-side reared itself high against the sky. There was a rushing breeze. Large drops came pattering on the window-pane, far up the slope was a lonely house, and toward it was hastening a cart, with man and woman, drawn by two stalwart horses galloping through the undulating sea of grass. Anything so bleak and desolate I never saw and I never can forget that picture. So I went to bed that Saturday night, with my soul all stirred profoundly; but what I had seen was nothing to what Sunday had in store.

"At Green River, I had a delicious breakfast. At Granger the huge train divided, and my section of seven cars took the branch called the Ore-

John Fiske

gon Short Line to Pocatello. The town of Granger comprises three log houses, a railway station, and a rum-shop standing in the midst of a desert. And such a desert! I can't say what we may have come through during the night; but all that Sunday forenoon, from Green River to Cokeville, we were passing through 114 miles of frightful desert. Not a tree, not a blade of grass; mountains rearing their heads on every side, wild and savage mountains parched with thirst; stupendous rocks lying all over their sides in grim fantastic disorder as if hurled about in some crazy riot of Titans; out of the everlasting red sand sprouted everywhere luxuriantly a weird, unearthly little bush, about the size of Scotch heather and known as the 'sage-brush.' Sometimes I could see for an enormous distance down some glen, but everywhere the glaring sand and the uncanny, goblin-like sage-brush. A land of utter desolation, a land where no man could live! It struck me as being like the moon, yes, these terrible mountains, casting their sharp black shadows across the blazing sunshine are the very mountains I have seen through the telescope in the moon!

"As we entered Idaho the landscape began to change. We struck into the beautiful valley of Bear River, and passed through broad meadows, with long grass instead of the weird sage-brush. Stupendous vistas opened here and there between the mountains, showing far off snow-clad peaks like the Matterhorn. The nearer mountains were more like those of Scotland, soft and brown with rounded tops; and Great Scott! were so many mountains ever seen before in this world? The

A Wonderful Ride

beautiful meadow stretched one hundred and twenty-two miles, a broad open space between two parallel chains of mountains, and our track ran along the middle of the meadow, the height of which was about sixty-two hundred feet. Above this level rose the mountains some two thousand feet more, so that you see the effect was something like that we saw in our famous journey to Glencoe. But here was more than a hundred miles of it and the effect of this prolonging of the impression is wonderful. At the beginning of this interval we passed through a little Mormon village; then there was n't another house for more than a hundred miles: nothing but mountains. How mighty and how grotesque they sometimes looked! Do you remember in the Glencoe drive, how tremendous is the effect of the mountain behind, as it comes suddenly into view peering down upon you over the mountain in front, at which you have so long been straining your eyes? Many, many times that afternoon did I get this overwhelming effect. And then the strangeness of it all was greatly increased by the astonishing transparency of the air. The effect of this must be felt, it cannot be described. The width of the grassy meadow was probably fifteen or twenty miles, but nothing could persuade the eye that it was more than two or three. Those majestic mountains on the right are surely not more than a mile distant, says the eye; but we keep gliding along, *a-co-she-lunk-she-lunk, a-co-she-lunk-she-lunk, a-co-she-lunk-she-lunk*, gliding along, gliding swiftly along, and still we do not pass those mountains! Here for half an hour is a peak right opposite and there it stays and *won't* fall behind,

John Fiske

though we keep gliding on, *a-co-she-lunk-she-lunk, a-co-she-lunk-she-lunk*. In spite of all this the eye will not admit that the peak, which is really a dozen miles distant, is more than a mile off. The effect upon me was to give me a more wonderful sense of the Infinite than I had ever felt before. It seemed as if the meadow were a thousand miles long instead of a hundred and twenty-two, and as if I had lived ages in that one afternoon.

“Toward nightfall, as we approached Pocatello, a new sight was to be seen in the shape of long cliffs of lava, like palisades, two hundred or three hundred feet high, running along in front of the foot of the mountains, and lending a strange depth to the scene behind. I never knew anything so unearthly or so exciting as this whole day was. Pocatello is a mean village of some five hundred inhabitants, situated on an Indian reservation; and here for the first time I saw wild Indians. At the station I saw a noble savage, with his squaw and two small sons taking nourishment out of a swill-box! A few ‘braves’ came capering around on their small horses armed with bows and arrows, and scowled upon us. Anything in human shape so nasty, villainous, and vile must be seen, in order to be believed. You would n’t suppose such hideous and nauseous brutes could be.

“At Pocatello the mountains dwindled away, and the grassy meadow expanded into an enormous plain, densely covered with that weird sage-brush. Presently a streak of silver caught my eye. It was the Snake River which I do not remember having heard of before. It is bigger than the Connecticut. Presently my friend the porter came for me.

A Wonderful Ride

He knew my name to be Fiske, but in the excitement he made a slip of the tongue (what the late Richard Grant White would call a heterophemy): 'Come, Mr. *Stokes*' [!!!] cried the amiable Sambo, — 'Come and see the great falls of the Snake River!' I went out to the rear platform, and, oh, what a stupendous sight!!! Around on every side the illimitable plain of sage-brush growing vague in the gathering twilight. Down below, the gorge with perpendicular sides and filled with the mighty waters, raging and foaming like the rapids of Niagara at the Three Sisters, — a wild, seething waste of angry waters rushing with the violence of a hurricane. And Hezzy on the rear end of the train on the slender bridge far, far above, like a tiny thread in mid-air, looking awe-struck upon the vast, sombre plain and this awful, watery pandemonium beneath. I shall never forget it. It was the only thing that could have put a fitting climax upon this wonderful Sunday, in which I seemed to have lived for ages. I can never hear of Idaho again, or see it on the map, without a quickened pulse.

"On Monday we began to get back to earth again, but there was no falling off of the interest. We entered Oregon at daybreak, and had a full hour for breakfast at Huntington, where I sent a telegram to mother. I then blissfully smoked a cigar, standing in the sunshine and talking about the geology of these wonderful mountains with a scientific German chap who had seen the Ural Mountains and the Himalayas, and pretty much everything.

"The scenery now began to be Alpine in charac-

John Fiske

ter. We had got away from the Rocky Mountains, and into the coast ranges, which are higher while the valleys are deeper. Average elevation of track was about thirty-four hundred feet, instead of six thousand, while the mountain-tops ascended to ten thousand, and now and then to twelve thousand feet. All at once we got among trees again, and it seemed strange to see them. Superb pines and firs one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in height, glorious soft green vegetation everywhere, snow-capped peaks above, and on every hand cascades and brooks, and the sweet music of rushing waters. The track curved at every minute around the steep sides of the mountains. In going through the Blue Mountain Range we twice climbed to five thousand feet and then descended again to three thousand, and at last, toward sunset, to about twenty-two hundred. These descents brought out superb effects of huge amphitheatres with smiling valleys below in which nestled lovely villages of this new New England of the Pacific.

“Where is this going to help my History, do you ask? Why, when I describe the great exploring expedition of Lewis and Clarke, who in Jefferson’s time *discovered* this country and won it for the United States. Won’t I put some poetry into my account of it when I get to it? I will make it one of the features of my History. Nobody has begun to do justice to that wonderful expedition, and most people know nothing about it. The brave men who did this *on foot* deserve to be immortalized. I’ll give them their due. I *feel* it all now; and that alone would be worth the trip.

“On Tuesday morning I got up at four o’clock

Impressions of Oregon

in order to see the scenery of the Columbia River. At 4.30 we passed 'The Dalles' a town eighty-seven miles from Portland. 'The Dalles' is a word which is equivalent in meaning to 'Grand Rapids'; what language it belongs to I don't know.

"I have never read or heard much about the Columbia River. I knew it must have fine scenery, because it is a great river flowing between lofty mountains. I vaguely thought of it as perhaps something like the Hudson. But oh, my dear, this was the climax to the whole journey! The Hudson has often been compared to the Rhine. Compared with the Columbia River, the Hudson and the Rhine are simply

NOWHERE!!!!!!

Yes, simply nowhere. If you could multiply the Hudson by four, and make the Catskills pretty nearly as big as the Alps, you would begin to get something like the Columbia. But I have got where words fail me. I can only say that for stupendous grandeur combined with ravishing beauty, I have never seen anything even in Switzerland, that quite comes up to the Columbia River. No, never. That Tuesday morning was the climax of the most wonderful and soul-filling journey I ever took in my life. Just to think that it is only a week to-day since I wrote to you from Omaha. It seems as if I had lived a century since then and had entered into a new stage of existence."

And later he writes: —

"I am quite daft, having gone raving mad over the Oregon scenery. Why, it is the garden of the world! The City of Portland is *one huge bower of roses* — Jacqueminots, and mosmets and a hun-

John Fiske

dred other kinds, some as gigantic as rhododendrons. At first I thought — Well, Portland is lovely in June; but Great Scott! they say it is just like this the whole year round."

With Portland and its people Fiske was delighted. The town had many of the characteristics of a distinctly New England town enlarged and improved; while the people, in their intelligence and social comfort, reflected many of the fine qualities associated with the home-life of the typical New England "folks"; this home-life, however, being heightened by a broader outlook upon life and its duties than is common even with the better class of New England "folks."

Fiske was three weeks in Portland, during which time he gave twenty-two lectures — thirteen on "The American Revolution," five on "The Beginnings of New England," and four on "The Western Campaigns of the Civil War." He had large audiences and he writes of his experiences thus: —

"I am sort of like the circus, or the Italian opera, or the Greek play; folks are just making a business of coming to hear me during the Fiske season, so to speak. The audiences are as enthusiastic here as elsewhere."

And he adds: —

"I read my essay on 'The Meaning of Infancy' this morning to an audience of about one hundred school-teachers. On Sunday, the 19th, I am to

Ride to San Francisco

preach in the Unitarian Church! My text will be from Genesis, where 'Ye become as gods knowing the good and the evil': — I intend to make it work into my third little book."¹

June 21, Fiske left Portland for San Francisco, leaving behind him many warm friends who expressed a strong desire for another "Fiske" season at no distant day. He took with him, as a particularly sweet remembrance, the home of the Reverend T. L. Eliot with his accomplished daughters, where in the intervals between his lectures he had enjoyed several hours of rare intellectual converse, mingled with delightful music.

Fiske first planned to make the journey from Portland to San Francisco by boat, but on hearing of the remarkable views to be obtained of Mount Shasta and of the Great Cañon of the Sacramento from the trip by rail, he decided to take the latter route. It was a memorable ride, indeed! His descriptions of Mount Shasta with its great glaciers as the mighty locomotive of a hundred and forty tons wheezing and panting like a thing of life, tugged the train slowly around its three sides — a huge mountain bigger than Mont Blanc and almost as high; of the descent of the train into the great Doré-like abyss of the Cañon of the Sacramento, were no less vivid than his descriptions of the scenery between Omaha and Portland.

¹ This was the first delivery of his essay on "The Mystery of Evil," published in 1899 in his little volume, *Through Nature to God*.

John Fiske

He reached Oakland on Thursday, June 23, and, on taking the ferry-boat which plies across the beautiful bay to San Francisco, he writes: "I took my fill of sweet sea-breeze as we crossed to beautiful San Francisco, with which I fell in love at the first sight."

He went directly to the Palace Hotel, where he was soon met by his classmate, Auguste Comte, a relative of the great philosopher of that name. Fiske writes: —

"Immediately on my arrival, dear little Comte appeared, and our voices trembled a little as we shook hands after twenty-four years. Just the same quiet, modest, refined, manly, humorous little Frenchman as in college days — not changed a mite. Dear little Comte! After much chin-wag, as 5.30 o'clock came he took me to a dainty French restaurant, all mirror, lace-curtains, and spotless linen; for, 'I say, John, after two days of Pullman-car grub, you need a nice little snack to brace you up for your lecture!'"

Fiske was in San Francisco six days. He gave two lectures in Starr King's Church — "Nation-Making" and "Benedict Arnold"; and at Oakland he repeated the first lecture and preached his sermon on "The Mystery of Evil." He had large and responsive audiences in both places.

He met many friends and many courtesies were extended to him. Three of his classmates living in San Francisco — Edward G. Stetson, Dr. John D. Hall, Auguste Comte — gave him a dinner at

In San Francisco

the Union Club; he was taken to Palo Alto, to see the grounds of the new Leland Stanford University that was then rising; to the Golden Gate Park and to the Cliff House, whereof he writes, "O, such a dreamy, delicious afternoon on the hotel piazza, gazing on the Pacific Ocean." He was also taken to Chinatown, where for the first time he was brought into contact with the "heathen Chinees" in his own, his legitimate, forms of social aggregation. This visit to Chinatown made a great impression upon Fiske's mind, as we shall see later; here he says of his visit: "It was like one of the chapters in 'Pickwick,' too full of adventure to be briefly described."

Fiske had one experience in San Francisco of much historic interest which must be set forth in his own words. Among the dearest friends of Judge Gantt, Fiske's hospitable friend in St. Louis, was the rebel general Joseph E. Johnston, the Blücher of the first battle of Bull Run.¹ Judge Gantt had spoken so warmly of Fiske to General Johnston and of General Johnston to Fiske, that each was very desirous of meeting the other. Fiske was advised by Judge Gantt that General Johnston was stopping at the Palace Hotel, and accordingly Fiske set out to find him. Finding that the General was then taking his solitary dinner in the restaurant, Fiske asked to be shown to his table. Fiske then says:—

¹ See Fiske's account of his meeting with General Patterson, the Grouchy of the Battle of Bull Run, *ante*, p. 164.

John Fiske

“At that table I saw a most kingly old gentleman, with white hair and beard, almost enough like Gantt in bearing to be his brother, — a man worth all this journey to see, — and I knew him at once. I said, ‘General Johnston, I am so happy to have found you; my name is John Fiske.’ He rose exactly as Gantt rises before a lady, gave me a warm grasp of the hand, and said, ‘My dear Mr. Fiske, there is no man in this country that I have wanted to see so much as yourself.’ Well, I guess the ice was pretty well broken by this first hit; and so we had a nice chin-wag. Was there ever, my dear, anything equal to the elegance and grandeur of manner of these old Southerners? And such intelligence and vivacity. He is nearly eighty years old, but as sharp and hawk-eyed, as kindly and royal, as Gantt. O, how good it is to see such men. My thoughts went back to the day when I sat in the little house in Hanover Street in Middletown, that used to be Grandfather Fiske’s barn, and had been revamped into a house. It was July 21, 1861, — a day long to be remembered. I was reading out of Buckle’s second volume to Sallie Browning, about 3 P.M., when we heard the bells ringing joyfully. I threw down the book and rushed up street. Everybody was jubilant. Rebellion crushed! I came back to tell it to the two grandmas and poor sick Mr. Lewis. I was wild with pleasure, and ran back to Main Street and observed that the bells had stopped ringing. About the door of Henry Boardman’s drug-shop men were talking gloomily. What is this, all this? O, it is all false. We are badly defeated! Can this be true? Presently I met Judge Culver and he said, ‘Yes, just when we were carry-

General Joseph E. Johnston

ing all before us *Johnston* came up and we were defeated with the loss of 5000 men. The rebels will take Washington. It's all up with Uncle Sam.' My blood boiled. O, damnable Johnston! And now, after twenty-six years, I look lovingly upon that terrible man and chat with him and admire his fine, honest face!"

Fiske left San Francisco for the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove June 29. His impressions of San Francisco were favorable: —

"Not at all half-baked or 'Western' — solid in stone and marble and supremely clean. Delicious climate — noon heat about 60° all the year round — no snow or frost in winter, no mud in spring, no thunderstorms in summer. The air is full of the refreshing smell of cold salt water, while the glorious Italian sunshine keeps off all sense of chill. The iodine and ozone of the sea-breeze make it tonic and invigorating. I have never seen a climate so much to my taste as this."

As Fiske was now hurrying home, he had no opportunity of giving his impressions of the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove while the impressions were fresh in his mind. This is to be regretted, for, with his keen powers of observation combined with his remarkable powers of lucid description, we should have had appeals to the imagination through pen-pictures, of these sublime examples of nature's physical and organic phenomena which would have been of great service in bringing the more important features of these phenomena within the apprehen-

John Fiske

sion of the common mind. In a brief note written on his arrival at Salt Lake City he says: —

“This is only a line to say that the Yosemite Valley is beyond the power of human speech to describe, and Mariposa Grove is the most sublime temple of God upon this earth. What I have seen is almost too much for the mind to take in; it is simply staggering.”

He stopped at Salt Lake City from a sense of duty. As a historian dealing with the evolution of human society, he could not wisely let pass an opportunity to observe the Mormon in his home. After his drive about the town and while waiting for his train, he gave his impressions of the place to Mrs. Fiske in the following letter, which is of interest here, not because it gives any fresh information regarding the Mormon people, perhaps, but because his free and easy accounts of what he saw reveal that he was observing this “peculiar people” as a social abnormality or excrescence, thrown off by modern society in its process of progressive social evolution. He writes: —

SALT LAKE CITY, *July 6, 1887.*

My Dear:—

Since I wrote you this morning, I have had a lovely drive all the afternoon in an open buggy with a fool of a mare that squinted at everything we passed, and a most delicious Irish driver who hates Mormons like *pison* and had lots to tell me about every blasted house and fence and tree in town. I have visited the Tabernacle, which seats over

Salt Lake City

10,000 people, and has an organ almost as big as the one that used to be in the Boston Music Hall. Have seen the Temple, Brigham Young's houses, and all the sights. More than all, I have seen that the sage-brush desert is only a desert in outward appearance. The sage-brush soil is really very rich, and it is only for want of H_2O that nothing but sage-brush will grow on it. The valley in which this pretty city stands is a plain as flat as a floor, walled in on all sides by great mountains, some of which have snow on their summits all the year round. This valley looks almost as if you could walk around it in a day; in reality it is one hundred and fifty-two miles long by over a hundred in width — as big as Massachusetts! The effect of this transparent air upon the sense of sight is simply amazing. Yonder is the Great Salt Lake at the foot of the mountains, a beautiful deep bright-blue like the Mediterranean. Yet the lake is eighteen miles from the city. The mountains are mostly *very red*, except where the sage-brush covers them with a velvety sage-green, or where the snow glistens in the sunlight. The effect of all this coloring is superb, and amid it all, the valley floor is as green and smooth as an English lawn. The only elevation in the valley is a most convenient little hill about one hundred feet high near the city; my jolly Paddy drove me to the top, and I assure you it was a scene of fairy-like beauty.

Now when Brigham Young led the Mormons here forty years ago, and they emerged through a long deep mountain defile into this valley, it was a desert covered with sage-brush. Not a tree or a blade of grass in it! But it seemed so shut out

John Fiske

from the world, this valley in the mountains more than fifteen hundred miles beyond the Mississippi, that the Mormons decided to settle here and reclaim it. All of Brigham's notions of farming and building show him to have been a man of intelligence. He brought melted snow-water down from the mountains in sluices and irrigated the desert till he made it a garden. On each side of every street in the city, between the curbstones and the roadway, runs a little artificial brook of clear cold water, from two to three feet in width; and you see the same thing on all the country roads. Every garden, every lawn, every farmer's field, taps these sluices, turning the water on or off at pleasure; while in every direction you see wonderful lawn sprinklers throwing spray to great distances. The consequence is that *drought* is unknown here: the crops never fail, and what crops! I never saw such cornfields, potato-fields, barley, oats, wheat, bean-poles so heavy with beans, or apple and peach trees so full of fruit. And a whole acre of yellow mustard is a pretty sight, too! The sun is intensely hot here, and things grow with mad luxuriance. It was 98° in the shade this noon, but the valley is forty-two hundred feet above the sea, the air is mountain air and the nights are always cool. The streets of the town are all one hundred and twenty feet wide and lined with fine trees — poplars that grow as finely as in France, honey locusts, common locusts, ash, beech, and maple.

On the lawns you also see evergreens and all sorts of flowers. It is an extremely pretty town. Population, about thirty thousand, two-thirds Mormons, one-third "Gentile." Comparatively few Mormons

Salt Lake City

have more than one wife, and there is a strong party of them now opposed to polygamy, which people here seem to think is doomed soon to disappear. The United States Government is now indicting people and putting them in jail for having more than one wife. The leading Mormon newspaper had an article this morning advocating the abolition of polygamy.

In crossing the state of Nevada I saw nothing but sage-brush all day except at Humboldt, where I dined. There irrigation, lately begun, had already made a beautiful luxuriant oasis. Thermometer there yesterday noon was 118° in the shade, but no sultriness: less uncomfortable than 85° on a Cambridge dog-day.

I should have been a fool, indeed, if I had n't stopped at Salt Lake City!

HEZZY.

Fiske left Salt Lake City July 7, via the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, and arrived at Colorado Springs the evening of July 8. July 9, he drove to Manitou, Monument Park, and the Garden of the Gods, and reached Denver in the evening. The next day, Sunday, July 10, he spent in Denver, leaving there in the evening direct for home, and arrived in Boston the evening of July 13, thus bringing to a close a memorable experience. In one of his letters he speaks of this journey thus: "Altogether it has been the most memorable experience I have had since my first journey to Europe. *Nothing else that could have happened to me would have increased my power so much in working on the great History.*"

John Fiske

We have seen that Fiske, after working seven years on his "History of the American People" for Harper & Brothers, found that he could not do the subject justice within the publishing limits prescribed for that work and that he amicably secured an annulment of his publishing agreement with them.

But the literary material he had prepared was not without value, — indeed, he could not put his pen to any historical subject without greatly enriching it, — and as the Lea Brothers & Co., publishers, of Philadelphia, were engaged in preparing their great historic work, a "History of All Nations," a work to be comprised in twenty-four volumes and to be sold by subscription, Fiske found no difficulty in disposing of the materials he had prepared for the Harper work with some modifications and additions to them.

In this work of Lea Brothers, Fiske's contribution was to form an important section under the respective sub-titles of "The Colonization of the New World," "The Independence of the New World," "The Modern Development of the New World." The proper presentation of these subjects in the Lea work called for a broad, outline method of treatment for which the work produced by Fiske under the Harper agreement was in substantial accord.

This work of Lea Brothers was not published until 1905, four years after Fiske's death; and his

History of All Nations

contribution thereto, by virtue of its manner of preparation and its mode of publication, formed no part of his definitely planned historic scheme subsequently prepared for Houghton Mifflin Company, although it covers in outline some of the ground included in the later scheme.

CHAPTER XXXII

CONCEPTION OF NATIONALITY OF UNITED STATES
GREATLY ENLARGED — IMPORTANCE OF ABORIG-
INAL AMERICA — VARIOUS LECTURES AND AD-
DRESSES — PUBLICATION OF VOLUME ON CRIT-
ICAL PERIOD — PERPLEXITIES OVER HIS GREAT
TASK — RELIEVED BY HIS PUBLISHERS

1887-1888

FISKE returned from his trip to the Pacific Coast with a greatly enlarged conception of the United States as a nation, and its place in the international world. Hitherto his personal knowledge of its physical features and of its people had been confined to the section of country east of the Mississippi River. By this trip he was brought to a vivid realization that not one half of its territory or of its natural resources, and but little of its scenic beauty, had been revealed to him. The development in his own day of a high degree of social and political order — of States with republican constitutions — out of the rapid influx of emigrants into the new territory, of various races, nationalities, and languages, a commingling of peoples to such an extent as to bring the Oriental and the Occidental civilizations face to face, could not but give a fresh impulse to his desire fully to set forth the fundamental principles underlying this

Aboriginal America

marvellous evolution of a great nation with its accompanying political and social phenomena, as well as to trace out the genesis and development of these principles: "to set forth and illustrate some of the chief causes which have shifted the world's political centre of gravity from the Mediterranean and the Rhine to the Atlantic and the Pacific: from the men who spoke Latin to the men who speak English."

Then, too, he was impressed as never before with the importance to his theme of setting forth the results of ethnologic researches regarding aboriginal, prehistoric society in America, as a background to the presentation of the introduction of European civilization into America. In his early conceptions of a "History of the American People," it does not appear that any consideration was to be given to prehistoric society in America. After his return from this visit to the Pacific Coast, however, this subject becomes a prominent feature in the broader historic scheme that is shaping in his mind — a feature, which, as we shall see a little later, he presented in its full philosophico-historic significance.

It thus appears that the historic theme which was now taking quite definite shape in his mind was composed of three interrelated parts: (1) the sifting of the nations for the germs of a new order of political organization based upon the inalienable rights of man; (2) the planting of these germs

John Fiske

in the new world of America, and their political integration; (3) their fruitage in the Federal Government of the United States.

Immediately on his return Fiske took his family to the summer home at Petersham, where he was soon at work writing a new course of five lectures on "Scenes and Characters in American History," the several titles of which were: "The Revolution of 1689 in New England"; "Thomas Hutchinson, Last Royal Governor of Massachusetts"; "Charles Lee, the Soldier of Fortune"; "Andrew Jackson, Frontiersman and Soldier"; "Andrew Jackson and American Democracy Sixty Years Ago." Fiske's reputation was now so well established that applications for his lectures were more numerous than he could fill, and it took some careful planning to have his engagements centre about Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Chicago respectively. Private schools were beginning to see the great value of his lectures in stimulating young minds to an interest in American history, and Fiske particularly enjoyed ministering to such a demand. When it became known that his interest in music was hardly less than his interest in history, that his knowledge of the theory of music was in its thoroughness very rare, while he had a cultivated voice of exceptional range and power, the demands from the schools for lectures on both history and music became much greater than he could meet.

Limits of Artistic License

An incident occurred during this period which is of no little literary as well as musical interest. It appears that Fiske's classmate and friend, James Herbert Morse, had written a poem under the title of "Come, Silence, Thou Sweet Reasoner," the words of which Fiske had set to music for a chorus of men's voices. The words of the poem contained the following line: —

"The cricket tunes his slender throat."

Professor Paine objected to the line as a basis of musical expression, inasmuch as it was entomologically incorrect. This led to a lively discussion of the limits of artistic license in poetical and musical composition. Fiske maintained that the poet or musical composer was not wholly confined to the literal facts of nature in his composition. As the discussion broadened to the practice of Shakespeare in this respect, — did he adhere strictly to the truth of Nature? — Fiske claimed that he did not, and proposed that the question at issue be referred to his friend, the eminent Shakespearean scholar and fine literary critic, Horace Howard Furness. It was so referred by Fiske in a most humorous, characteristic letter, which unfortunately has not been preserved. When asked for it to use in this connection, Mr. Furness replied: "I find to my exceeding regret that I have preserved none of Dr. Fiske's letters to me. Had I at the time known the gift of God I would have preserved every scratch

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of his pen." His letter, however, brought forth the following illuminating reply: —

My dear Fiske, —

Will you ever forgive me for letting slip by the two weeks of your stay in New York without answering yours of 24th March? I fully grasped the heinousness of my conduct only this minute, and have turned as red as a lobster from head to foot, and from shame and mortification am screaming hard all the time I write. But I swear it was not intentional. You have asked me a devilish hard question, — nothing less than to furnish you with a citation which shall prove the divine William to have been zoölogically wrong, — when my motto is, that under all circumstances Shakespeare is *always* right. However, the cause for which you ask is so good that for its sake and for your own sweet sake I have been cudgelling my brain to recall a passage to serve your turn. Let me premise by saying that I reëcho every word you say about the weakness of any objection to the tunefulness of the cricket's throat — you might just as well urge that no throat is tuneful, only the vocal cords which are in the throat. The first thing that occurred to me is that Shakespeare talks of the cricket's singing, and singing implies a throat. You remember Iachimo's first words, when he creeps out of the chest in Imogen's bedchamber, are, "*The crickets sing* and man's o'erlabored sense repairs itself by rest," etc. If you need justification I think you have really sufficient here. Tennyson, too, will countenance you — in his "*Marianna in the South*" he says, "*At eve a dry cicada sung,*" etc. But if you will force me to recall a phrase in Shakespeare where

Letter from H. H. Furness

a literal, prosaic interpretation involves an error, why, then take Titania's command to her fairies, — and be darned to you. She tells them to

“take from the bees their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes.”

Now, we all know that, as Dr. Johnson remarked, a glow-worm's light is not in its eyes, but in its tail. But I'd like to examine the bumps of a man who would change the phrase to entomological correctness. — “Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,” says Herrick to Julia, and the glow-worm ought to jump at the chance. — When Hamlet's father says, “The glow-worm 'gins to pale his ineffectual fire,” Brother Paine would say, “'T ain't *fire* at all. There's no oxygen combustion about it!” Indeed, I think literature must be full of allusions to the song of the crickets, and if a song, then there must be a throat. — Lady Macbeth says, “I heard the owl scream and the crickets *cry*” — and Paine would substitute *fiddle*. Have I given you any help? If I have I'll praise Heaven. Let me know that this reaches you — and that you still hold me to be

Yours cordially,

HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

6th April, 1890.

I like “The cricket tunes his *tiny* throat” better than “slender.” My Anglo-Saxon instinct likes alliteration, but “slender” is pretty, it must be confessed.

Fiske had a keen appreciation of humor, as is seen in his great love of Dickens and in the occasional use in his serious writings of a humorous allusion or phrase to clinch his argument. While he

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was engaged in preparing for, and planning the details of, his coming season's lecture campaign, at a time when he says, "My noddle is just now stuffed pretty full of Andrew Jackson and his 999 quarrels," he received from the editor of the "New York World" a request for a telegram giving his opinion regarding Ignatius Donnelly's theories about Shakespeare and Bacon as set forth in Donnelly's work "The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon's Cypher in the so-called Shakespere Plays."

Fiske's reply expressed the subtile thought of the philosopher and the humorist.

It was as follows: —

PETERSHAM, *September 3, 1887.*

*To the Editor of The World,
New York.*

As regards Mr. Donnelly's theories about Shakespeare, I have only to say that if a man really likes to amuse himself with such stuff, I can see no objection. It keeps him busy, and is far less dangerous than if he were to meddle with questions about labour and capital.

Years later Fiske wrote an article entitled "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly," in which, with his ripe knowledge and his invincible logic, he completely swept away the pretensions of those who would find in the genius of Shakespeare only a corruptly minded Bacon.

During this year Fiske contributed the following articles to the "Atlantic Monthly": —

New Course of Lectures

February, "The Federal Constitution."

June, "Concluding Work of the Federal Convention."

November, "The Adoption of the Constitution."

December, "Paul Jones and Armed Neutrality."

The year 1888 was a memorable one to Fiske, inasmuch as its close brought a complete change in his conditions of working, with the assurance of financial support sufficient to enable him to work out his historic scheme as it had now shaped itself in his mind. We will follow the incidents of the year in their order.

The year opened with a very active lecture campaign arranged for the winter and spring in and about New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Chicago. His new course on "Scenes and Characters in American History" was given only in St. Louis, where the several lectures were received with the usual enthusiasm. In his naïve way he tells Mrs. Fiske that "the folks out here seem to like everything I do." In Philadelphia he gave his full course on "The American Revolution," to large and enthusiastic audiences; and calling to mind the reception he received in Philadelphia a few years before, he could not but mark the contrast. Playfully he writes, "The Filadelfy folks are now wild over my lectures." Fiske's frequent use of the word "folks" is notable. It is a good old English word that he greatly liked.

While thus engaged with his lectures, Fiske

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chanced to fall in with James Martineau's recently published work, "A Study of Religion." In this work the author, while disagreeing with Fiske on many points, had spoken very sympathetically of Fiske's two Concord addresses. Fiske had met Martineau in London, and esteemed him highly as one of the deepest philosophico-religious thinkers of England; and it was a great delight to him to find that their views on some of the great questions which were now under discussion coincided at many points. Accordingly Fiske wrote Martineau expressing the great pleasure with which he had read the latter's book. Martineau replied with the following letter which Fiske highly prized by reason of the fine liberal spirit it displays: —

35 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
April 2, 1888.

My dear Mr. Fiske: —

Your kindly and forbearing way of receiving my volumes, and their free, though sympathetic expressions of dissent from you gratifies me much. I do not venture to hope that you can accord to the book any large measure of approval. If it only helps a little, here and there, towards the *modus vivendi* of which you also are in quest between the scientific and religious theory of the world I shall be content and grateful. I am delighted to hear that, in that view, you are at work upon the lines of moral law and tendency.

It is good news — for others at all events and for me if I am still a lingerer here, — that you contemplate another visit to Europe, at no distant

Letter from James Martineau

date. If I check myself in forming plans for the future, it is not that the present alters with me much, but simply from the reckoning of A.D.

I remain, dear Mr. Fiske,

Yours very sincerely,

JAMES MARTINEAU.

The summer of 1888 was spent almost wholly in Cambridge, and in persistent work. His main task was the preparation of five new lectures for the ensuing season. He chose for his subjects, "Alexander Hamilton, his theory of government, and its influence upon American history"; "Thomas Jefferson, his political career, his theory of government, and its influence upon American history"; "James Madison, his services in framing the Federal Constitution, his Presidency, and his place in American history"; "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," an account of the origin of the Whig Party and the political complications which followed; "Daniel Webster and the sentiment of Union."

November 14, 1888, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts dedicated, with fitting ceremonies on Boston Common, a memorial to Crispus Attucks, Samuel Maverick, James Caldwell, Samuel Gray, and Patrick Carr, victims of the "Massacre" which took place in Boston March 5, 1770, when British soldiers, illegally quartered in Boston, fired upon unarmed citizens, and thus, by wholly illegal action, opened the conflict which resulted in the American Revolutionary War.

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Fiske delivered the address on the occasion, in which he sketched the illegal forcing by the British Government of British troops upon the people of Boston, the indignation of the people at this attack upon their liberties, and the incidents which led up to the firing of these troops upon an unarmed body of protesting citizens and the killing of the five persons named in the memorial. The address had all the characteristics of his free-flowing, lucid style, and it closed with this fine peroration: —

“The moral lessons of the story are such as ought never to be forgotten. Adams and Warren, and their patriot friends, were right in deciding that the fatal 5th of March should be solemnly commemorated each year by an oration to be delivered in the Old South Meeting-house, and this custom was kept up until the recognition of American independence in 1783, when the day for the oration was changed to the 4th of July. At the very first annual March meeting after the massacre, it was proposed to erect a monument to commemorate it. The form of the proposal shows that the character of the event was understood by town-people at that time as I have endeavoured to set it forth to-day. In dedicating this memorial on Boston Common after the lapse of more than a century, we are but performing an act of justice too long delayed. There let it stand for future generations to contemplate as a monument of the wickedness and folly of all attempts to employ brute force in compelling the obedience of the people to laws which they have had no voice in making.”

The Critical Period

The very favorable reception given to his lectures on "The Critical Period of American History," and to their publication in the "Atlantic Monthly," induced Fiske to take up the consideration of this critical period — the six years between 1783 and 1789 — and present it in book form as a distinct feature, a memorable chapter in American history. This he found he could do to signal advantage by presenting the political events of this period by themselves, apart from the war struggle which went before, and the domestic political struggles which came after. In addition, he found that he could so treat the subject that the volume would have a legitimate place in his contemplated history as the connecting link between his account of the overthrow of the colonial governments and the establishment of the Federal Government under Washington. Then, too, the publication in book form of an essay on the most memorable period in our national history would be, in a certain sense, an appeal to the public interest in behalf of the great historic scheme he had in mind: a test of his powers to present satisfactorily to the highest form of literary criticism a great historic undertaking.

Accordingly, during the latter half of the year 1887, and the first half of 1888, all his spare time was given to preparing his collected material for the press. In one of his letters he says: —

"I am having a busy and happy time. My little book is going to be a fine affair, that's clear, whether

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it is exactly what was intended or not. It is growing finer every day."

The book was published in the early autumn of 1888 — the centennial of the work of the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States. In this volume Fiske set out with the proposition that the period under review was the most critical period in the history of the American people. The main features of the work comprised a clear setting-forth of the political dangers, external and internal, that then confronted the new nation, an impartial presentation of the issues involved, accompanied by a rare exhibition of historic justice shown in the personal sketches given and the judgments passed upon the leaders in the Constitutional Convention. These were combined with a fine, discriminating analysis of the considerations which governed the several States in their acceptance of the Constitution, with a graphic presentation of the crowning of the work in the inauguration of Washington as President of a strong and united nation. These features were presented with such a full and accurate knowledge of the facts involved, with such a firm grasp of, and sympathy with, the fundamental principles of republicanism which were the impelling forces underlying the whole movement, and in such a free, lucid style, that the work could hardly fail to awaken the interest of the reader in the subject and carry a conviction of the truth of the main proposition.

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The book was received with great applause. The leading critical journals were unanimous in commending it. It was readily seen that Fiske had found an important period in our national life that had been sadly neglected; that with his keen historic insight he had seen the necessity of bringing a knowledge of this neglected period into the full light of day, in order rightly to understand the genesis and full significance of the Federal Government of the United States. It was further seen that in his deeply interesting narrative of this "storm and stress" period of our nation's birth, the personal characteristics of the leaders in this great movement — Washington, Franklin, Samuel and John Adams, Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, and their compeers — came out with a fresh interest as they were sympathetically yet impartially portrayed grappling with the great problems before them. The work was reviewed at length by the "Atlantic Monthly" and the "Nation," and their judgments are here given. The "Atlantic Monthly" summed up its criticism thus: —

"Mr. Fiske justifies his title to his work. By his masterly grouping of events, his projection of the period upon a large scale, and his comprehensive study of the movements which determined the course of affairs, he has set the whole subject in the clearest light, and by so doing has made a contribution to our literature of no mean order."

The judgment of the "Nation" was as follows: —

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“If the reader misses in the present treatise the comprehensive generalizations which gave such a fascination to the author’s work on ‘American Political Ideas,’ he will find his recompense in the solid facts of history pertaining to the formative period in our annals, and can here see those facts placed in a historical perspective which reveals at once their national grandeur, and their world-historical significance.”

Of personal commendations of the work from literary critics, from historic students, and from men in public life there were many. Two are here presented as representative of the general tone of the whole. The first is from John Morley (now Lord Morley), the prince of literary and historic critics. In the “Nineteenth Century” for August, 1889, Morley, in a signed article, reviewed the work at some length, in which, after setting forth the conditions that prevailed after the establishment of peace with Great Britain, he says:—

“The author of the present short volume starts from the proposition that the most trying time of all [for the new nation] was just beginning. [Quoting Fiske:] ‘It is not too much to say that the period of five years following the peace of 1783 was the most critical moment in all the history of the American people. The dangers from which we were saved in 1788 were even greater than the dangers from which we were saved in 1865.’ This proposition, Mr. Fiske makes abundantly good and he has turned it into a text for one of the most interesting chapters of history that has been written for many

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a day. . . . Mr. Fiske is a most competent guide! He is a trained thinker in more fields than one; he knows how to tell a story in a free, clear and lively style, and he has not the terrible defect of insisting on telling us everything, or telling us more than we want to know."

The second is from the Honorable John Jay, a grandson of John Jay, one of the American Commissioners who negotiated the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States in 1783, and himself an eminent publicist. Mr. Jay wrote Fiske as follows: —

NEW YORK, *November 30*, 1888.

Dear Mr. Fiske: —

I thank you for your new volume, "The Critical Period of American History," with its kind inscription. I have delayed acknowledging it until I could read it. I have read it with instruction, and *great* satisfaction; and with no little admiration for the rare and happy power with which you re-present with new face the familiar phases of our history and make clear and impressive the philosophic lessons that they teach.

The book I regard as of especial value, as enabling not simply our countrymen at large, but the most thoughtful of our students of American history, to appreciate more than ever the dangers that threatened our Union at the close of the war, and the formidable difficulties involved in the framing and adoption of the Constitution.

It is a matter that concerns not simply the record of the past, but the national policy of the

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future, that Americans should have the clear and compact idea which your narrative presents of the marvellous wisdom, patience, tact, and skill with which that task was accomplished.

Let me thank you also for your approval of my sketch of the Peace Negotiations, your view of which I regard as settling the question for future historians.

With sincere regard,
Always faithfully yours,

JOHN JAY.

JOHN FISKE, ESQR.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Notwithstanding this widespread interest in his undertaking and the high praise he was receiving on every hand for his work both as lecturer and as essayist, Fiske had moments of great perplexity. I saw him frequently at this period, and the difficulties under which he was laboring were subjects of much talk between us. The most perplexing difficulty was that in the working-out of his scheme he could not take hold of his subject in the proper manner; that is, by bringing forward its features in logical sequential order through laying first a proper foundation for the historic superstructure he desired to build. In what he had published he had treated of events which were developments out of conditions which had a genesis in a common, underlying ground. The more he studied his subject the more imperative became the need of laying the foundations of a satisfactory history of the Ameri-

Perplexity over his Task

can people in the world-events connected with the discovery of America and what this discovery signified to the European peoples of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. But to treat the discovery of America in the light of its world-significance, with reference to the past and the future, was a task requiring years of careful research, with a free mind.

As we have seen, Fiske's undertaking had developed into a demand upon himself which involved from five to six months' almost continuous lecturing, with the necessity of preparing each year a new course of from four to six lectures, with all the details of arranging the lecture engagements in addition. It is evident that conditions did not exist which would admit of his engaging in the research-study so essential to the scheme that had now become firmly fixed in his mind.

Naturally, this untoward condition in the development of his task made him somewhat discouraged, for without a presentation of the Discovery Epoch, with its full significance, his historic scheme would be without suitable foundations.

But ample and wholly unexpected relief was at hand.

Mr. Henry O. Houghton, the head of the publishing firm of Houghton, Mifflin & Company, was not only a broad-minded man of great business sagacity; he also took great pride in his publishing business and ever sought to make it a support to

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good literature. In the passing of the publishing firm of Ticknor & Fields, which, under the direction of the eminent publisher, James T. Fields, and by its ownership of the "Atlantic Monthly," had long held a prominent place in the publishing world, Mr. Houghton secured for his firm not only the ownership of the "Atlantic Monthly," but also the publishing agreements with leading authors held by Ticknor & Fields, thus placing Houghton, Mifflin & Company in the front rank of publishing houses in America.

Mr. Houghton was a good appraiser of literary values. He had observed Fiske's growing reputation as an interpreter of American history, and had noted particularly the very favorable manner in which his first distinctly historic work, "The Critical Period," had been received. Presuming that Fiske contemplated publishing something further on American history, he sought an interview to learn what, if anything, Fiske had in mind.

Fiske frankly outlined to Mr. Houghton his historic scheme in its five divisions: the Epoch of American Discovery; the Period of Colonization; the Revolutionary War; the Critical Period; the Establishment of the Federal Government of the United States and its development. He pointed out that he had the third and fourth divisions, and a part of the second, substantially completed. He also frankly stated the difficulties under which he was laboring, owing to his inability to go forward

Relieved by his Publishers

with the persistent research-study necessary for the proper treatment of the Discovery Epoch, which must form the foundation of the work, on account of his dependence financially upon his lectures.

Mr. Houghton, with his business insight, grasped the whole situation with great perspicacity. He was much impressed by the high character of the scheme, and also by the logical order and clearness with which Fiske had its several features related in his mind; and he could see what a valuable and fresh contribution to historic literature such a work would be. On the other hand, he saw very clearly that, as a publishing undertaking, it was one that would require a large investment of capital for its preparation, and that it would be several years before it would yield remunerative returns even if it met with a cordial public reception. He was, however, so favorably impressed by the scheme, and with Fiske's mastery of it, that he said he would seriously consider undertaking its publication.

Mr. Houghton saw Fiske shortly after, and made him a definite proposition to this effect: that he would advance the money necessary to enable Fiske to produce the foundational works required in the scheme, leaving the question of copyright on the whole scheme subject to future agreement: this proposed agreement to be terminable by either party, at any time, if found inequitable in its working. In short, it was a proposition whereby the two were to combine their forces, each trusting the

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other, until a definite literary property had been created as a basis for a copyright agreement. As it was desirable that the scheme should be kept before the public, Fiske was to have the privilege of lecturing three months in the year on his own account. The immediate effect of the acceptance by Fiske of the proposition would be, that he would be placed at ease for the preparation of the fundamental works of his scheme, which required some years of patient research-study.

Fiske did not hold the proposition long under consideration. He accepted it, with a due appreciation of Mr. Houghton's business sagacity in being willing to undertake on such liberal terms the promotion of a literary venture of such a personal character, and one requiring a large investment of capital.

The year 1888 closed with Fiske's giving his course of six lectures on "Scenes and Characters in American History" at the Old South Church in Boston; and with his coming to an agreement with his publishers, Houghton, Mifflin & Company, for the further prosecution and publication of his historic scheme.

CHAPTER XXXIII

NEW CONDITIONS AND THEIR EFFECT — ACTIVITIES OF A THREEFOLD NATURE — PUBLICATION OF “THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION” AND “THE BEGINNINGS OF NEW ENGLAND” — “CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES” — COMPOSITION OF “THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA” — ITS PUBLICATION AND RECEPTION

1889-1891

FISKE'S agreement with his publishers for the production and publication of his historic scheme went into effect January 1, 1889, and now was opened an entirely new chapter in his domestic and intellectual life. For several years he had been obliged to make all his activities subordinate to the demands of his lecture campaigns, in the preparation of new lectures each year as well as in the delivery of them. Now, his lectures were to be a subordinate feature in his life, thus giving his mind much greater freedom to grapple with his great theme. He did not, however, entirely relinquish his lecturing, for he had become so familiar with his general subject and had acquired such proficiency in *extempore* speaking that he was enabled, without any special preparation, to present to his audiences the more important features of his great subject, as well as sketches of the historic characters embodied in it,

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with much interest and impressiveness. Thus, aside from the annoyances of travelling and the interruption of his home life, his lecturing greatly widened his influence and brought him many diversions.

For some time there had been gestating in his mind the preparation of a small volume on "Civil Government in the United States," which might be useful as a textbook in schools, and at the same time be serviceable to the general reader interested in American history. As the project took shape in his mind, he found that he could treat it after the modern method of historic exposition: that is to say, by pointing out the origins of the fundamental features of our political organization, and indicating some of the processes through which they have acquired their present form, thus keeping before the mind of the student the important fact that government is perpetually undergoing modifications in adapting itself to new conditions, is ever in a process of evolution. Fiske's publishers were much interested in this work, foreseeing its value in general education, and they encouraged him to carry along its preparation as a side product of his general scheme.

Then, too, Fiske was so familiar with the events of the War of Independence that he had on several occasions given impromptu talks to schools, in which in the time of a single discourse he had broadly sketched, as an interesting story, the main

Volume on Civil Government

incidents of this memorable struggle. This informal talk was so well received by his youthful audiences that his publishers induced him to write it out for publication.

Now that he was relieved from the necessity of preparing a new course of lectures each season, he found himself ready to prepare for publication, without much labor, the two sections of his historic scheme already written and which had formed the basis of two of his courses of lectures — “The Beginnings of New England” and “The American Revolution.”

These, however, were but side issues. Above and beyond them all his study and his thought were concentrated during the ensuing three years upon the production of “The Discovery of America,” the work which was to be the foundational feature of his *magnum opus* — “The History of the American People.”

These three years, 1889-91, were therefore years of varied and ceaseless activities. But there are no self-revealing letters to his wife or to his mother, such as we have had in previous years. He was more at home. But his diaries are faithful records of his activities. Not a single day was passed without its record; and these records, when classified and brought into relativity with the high purposes which we know were animating him, as well as with the results produced, are the evidences of the workings of his mind engaged upon the task of

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interpreting to his countrymen the profound significance of their national history.

I shall not enter into the full details of this culminating period of Fiske's life as revealed in his diaries, as I wish to present as fully as possible the character of the literary results produced. It is well, however, in passing to note briefly the chief divisions of his activities, for in their grouping they reflect unmistakably his personality and his great purpose.

His activities may be grouped into three interrelated classes: his social life, his personal diversions, his literary work and lecturing.

In regard to the first, it is readily understood that with his wide circle of friends and his prominence as a philosophic thinker and historian, the social demands upon him should be very great. He dearly loved his friends, and no man enjoyed social intercourse more than he. In social converse he was not in the slightest degree disputatious or arrogant. He was a good listener. Indeed, he possessed his great knowledge with singular modesty. He could receive the fine thought of another and give it even a higher significance than was intended, in the expression of his appreciation. What he had to say on any subject was so replete with understanding that it was well worth listening to. Then, too, he had a keen appreciation of humor, and he seemed to have at command all the witty sayings of the race, ready to cap with delightful

Three Classes of Activities

appositeness any bit of human experience. Over all his fine social qualities was his great love for music. Hence it will be readily seen that the social demands upon him, especially on his lecture excursions, were very great. A popular lecturer, with great musical powers and a fine personality, was not likely to be socially neglected.

In regard to the second division of his activities — his personal diversions — there is a very full record, and they appear to have been governed by the demands of his social life on the one hand, and the requirements of his intellectual work on the other. He was President of the Boylston Club — a musical club — for seven years, and when at home he was a faithful attendant at its meetings. His main diversions centred around his home, or good-fellowship with his friends while lecturing. His home diversions consisted largely in attendance at musical entertainments with his wife or children, of picnicking with them when in Petersham, and of gatherings of his musical and literary friends around his own board. Now and then he records a day given to fiction reading, with occasionally a day spent simply in “loafing.” On his lecture excursions he received many social courtesies which were pleasant reliefs from the discomforts of much irregular travelling. Indeed, many of these occasions gave him great enjoyment, especially where music was made a feature of the entertainment, in which he was asked to take an active part.

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These diversions are very interesting when considered in relation to the overpowering purpose which we know was dominating his mind. Naturally, his children had a foremost place in his thought, for they had reached stages of development where reciprocity in thinking between himself and them had begun to manifest itself. In his fiction reading, Dickens comes in for the major portion, as might well be supposed. At the same time he drops a little into Bulwer and George Eliot. His association with Professor Paine on musical matters was a constant inspiration. This but emphasizes what we have seen all along: that music was an essential part of his being. His record of days spent in "loafing" will be appreciated by any one accustomed to severe mental labor, and who has had experience of days when the mind has no resilience, when it refuses to work, and the whole bodily system demands a change. These days were not frequent, however: they followed periods of excessive labor.

Most significant are the days recorded as "puttering with my plants." His writings show that he was sufficiently acquainted with the fundamental principles of botanical science to be an intelligent observer of nature's processes in the phenomena of the floral world. His plants, therefore, were a never-ceasing source of interest and suggestion to him. With even the tiniest of them, in their germination, their progressive development, their in-

His Personal Diversions

florescence, and their methods of propagation, he felt himself on the border-line between the known and the unknown, between science and the great mystery that surrounds us on every side — in the very presence of Infinity. Much that is finest in his religious thought had its inspiration in his conservatory.

Here I may properly give, perhaps, the result of a personal interview with him. I remember calling upon him on one occasion, and finding him in his conservatory with his microscope. His mind was full from his recent observations, and naturally the conversation turned to the deeper questions underlying botanical science, and his thought as then expressed was substantially as follows: —

“Often when weary with my studies, I find great rest by going into my conservatory and puttering with my plants. They are far from being inanimate substances to me. Indeed, when in their presence I equip my imagination with microscopic power and peer into their simple mechanism, which through root, and stem, and leaf, and flower, is using the same soil, and heat, and air, and light, to body forth into the world of phenomena a hundred different manifestations of life, I confess to a peculiar sense of nearness to the profound mystery of existence which surrounds us on every side. And when, in contemplation of this quiet orderly working of immaterial forces, moving without haste or resting to certain predestined ends, I ask, ‘whence this marvellous display of

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power and purpose?' I feel the answer welling up in the innermost parts of my own being, 'Account for yourself and you have accounted for all.' "

Under date of Sunday, February, 1890, he makes this record: "A day of delicious loaf in Conservatory."

Fiske's interest in all phases of plant life was, indeed, a profound one, and it was manifested in all his home surroundings. Here is an instance where he wished to have his library bay-window, within which he wrote, "glorified" by being curtained with some choice selections of foliage. In a letter to his daughter Maud at this period he gives the following directions: —

"Perhaps you can do something for me. Your mention of spring and garden and blossoms suggests it. Year after year goes by and I never can get any vines started because I am always away at planting-time. Now I want either Japanese ivy or Virginia creeper to grow all over my library bay-window as thick as ever it can (for the shears can always thin it if too luxuriant). I don't care so much about the front, and where the rosebush is, but all the side, and also the end window, *where mamma sits*, I want covered, embowered, festooned, draped, and glorified!!! —

"Japanese ivy is the thing if it will cling to the wooden wall, and I rather think it will because the wall is rough. But if that won't work, then Virginia creeper will do very well."



ETHEL FISKE
(MRS. OTIS D. FISKE)



MAUD FISKE
(MRS. GROVER FLINT)

His Lecturing

And here is an extract from his essay on "The Everlasting Reality of Religion":—

"I often think, when working over my plants, of what Linnæus once said of the unfolding of a blossom: 'I saw God in His glory passing near me, and bowed my head in worship.'" ¹

We come now to the last division of his activities during this period, his lecturing, his historic researches, his literary composition. While there is much that is of interest from a purely personal viewpoint in these activities, we must be content with noting only such as have a distinct bearing upon his great purpose, the setting-forth of the historic evolution of the political and social life of the people of the United States. The ten years of study and thought which he had given to the subject had but deepened his conviction that it was in its entirety one of the greatest of historic themes. Now that he was so placed, by his publishers, as to ways and means of working, that he could proceed with the unfolding of his scheme in its logical order, he was supremely happy, and he set about arranging his work so that its threefold character could be carried on harmoniously.

His lecturing was limited to the first five months of the year — January to May. While during this period its demands were supreme, he so arranged his engagements in and around Cambridge, New

¹ *Through Nature to God*, p. 177.

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York, Chicago, and St. Louis that these cities became centres of radiation to which he could speedily return for the intervening days between his lectures. As he always took with him on his visits to New York and Chicago and St. Louis a good quantity of literary material relating to the particular work he had in hand, he was enabled to utilize his spare time to good advantage. In New York he established very pleasant working quarters on Irving Place; while in Chicago he was so fortunate as to have, in Franklin H. Head, a genial friend, who opened to him his hospitable home, where he had the privacy essential to literary work, mingled with most agreeable social life.

During the three years he gave three hundred and eighteen lectures. The first year these were mainly repetitions of those relating to the English colonization of America, the American Revolution, and incidents and characters in American history which we have already noted. In 1890, the result of his fresh studies of the period of the discovery of America, and the Spanish conquests that followed, gave him new themes with which to meet his old audiences, and at the same time lay foundations for future discourses.

Here we have to note a lecture engagement of some related interest. We have seen that in 1872¹ when Fiske was delivering a course of philosophi-

¹ See *ante*, vol. I, p. 395.

Lectures at Lowell Institute

cal lectures at Harvard College, President Eliot interested himself to have Fiske invited to give a course of lectures before the Lowell Institute of Boston, and that the invitation was refused by reason of the fact that Fiske was not a believer in the special Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Now, however, opinion at the Institute had so far changed in regard to Fiske that the year 1890 opened with his giving a course of twelve lectures, under the auspices of the Institute, on "The Discovery, Conquest, and Colonization of America."

While this Lowell Institute course covered much ground that he had been over in his first course of historical lectures in 1879 on "America's Place in History," he introduced much new matter, particularly in regard to pre-Columbian America, the search for the Indies, and the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru.

The lectures were outline sketches of the great historic work that was soon to follow, and were received with great favor by large and critical audiences. Fiske was greatly encouraged, for he saw more clearly than before how through his lectures he could interest the public in the scope and character of his great undertaking as its various instalments came from his hand.

Despite all the discomforts and annoyances attending these periods of lecturing, there were some satisfactions attending them. Had he produced his historic work in the quiet retirement of his library,

John Fiske

we should have had unquestionably a fine, scholarly performance; but would it possibly have been wanting in those strong, humanistic characteristics which pervade all his historic writing, — the evidence that during the whole period of his historic composition he was in close touch with the common people, the evolution of whose political and social institutions it was his chief desire to make clear to them.

Then, too, he derived much pleasure and inspiration from being brought into direct contact with masses of his countrymen through the lecture platform. He was a true democrat of the Jefferson and Lincoln stamp, and thoroughly believed in the good sense of the people as a whole. With his literary skill he was enabled to invest his historic themes with such universal human interests as to awaken at once the confidence and good-will of his hearers; and being an effective public speaker he could sway with rare power the minds of his audiences. This implied the reciprocal action of both giving and receiving pleasure, and his letters are abundant evidence that he did enjoy speaking to responsive audiences. In his diary, where he mentions giving a new lecture or appearing before a new audience, he records the result thus: "The usual *éclat*."

But no social courtesies, no applause from his audiences, could take the place of his domestic enjoyments; and so, on his return from lecturing

Visits the Betts Academy

pilgrimages, we find frequent expressions like this: "O, my sweet home!"

Among the letters of this period I find one in which, under date of March 22, 1889, he gives to Mrs. Fiske an account of a lecture at Stamford, Connecticut, and of a visit to the Betts Academy, where, as we have seen, some two years of his educational life were spent. His visit to the academy brought back to him so vividly the days of his youth when, within its walls, he was an earnest seeker after knowledge, that his account of the visit is of special interest. He writes: —

"I dined up at Betts's School to-day, and had a delicious time. My heart was touched. Things generally change and are so disappointing. But there is the same old 'hipe,' same schoolroom, same everything, almost as I left it thirty-two years ago, in all the glory of having written and delivered an oration which everybody said was the beginning of a great career!

"I looked over the old marking-books and saw my record, which I have copied for you! and it was *rather* fine, no doubt. I went up to my old bedroom where I used to have my cosy little bookcase, and things; and went to prayers in the same old sitting room, and the past came over me so that the tears stood in my eyes.

"Willie Betts, the principal, is a charming fellow, always laughing and beaming with kindness — such a contrast to his father! When I was there he was a little Traddles. Now, you, my dear, are to see it all next week. You are to see the last thing

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still remaining unspoiled, that goes back to my boyhood, before I had ever seen George Roberts."

Coming now to Fiske's creative literary work for this period, we find it consisted, first, in preparing for publication in book form his lectures on "The Beginnings of New England," and also his lectures on "The American Revolution"; and secondly of the composition of two new works; the one, "Civil Government in the United States," in one volume; the other, "The Discovery of America," in two volumes. He also prepared a brief story of the Revolutionary War in a small volume for young people.

"The Beginnings of New England" was published in one volume in the spring of 1889, and contained as its opening chapter Fiske's fine lecture on "The Roman Idea and the English Idea of Nation-Making," one of the most suggestive philosophico-political essays of modern times, sufficient of itself to establish his reputation as a profound thinker on historic subjects. In 1891 he published his lectures on "The American Revolution," in two volumes; thus, with the volume on "The Critical Period of American History," published in 1888, and the volume on "The Beginnings of New England," published as above, completing three sections of his historic scheme.

How these last two works were received by the general public, we will not stop to consider in any detail. Suffice it to say that, although the critics

The Beginnings of New England

could not see the great historic purpose of which they formed a part, and that they were ultimately to form sections in a completely unified historic whole, they were not slow in recognizing the great merits of the works as valuable contributions to a right understanding of two important periods of American history. The wide and accurate knowledge displayed throughout the two works, the philosophic insight into the underlying causes impelling human action during the two periods, the keen appreciation of character as developed by the sequence of events, the judicial fairness exhibited in weighing evidence and passing judgment on disputed points, with the easy-flowing, lucid style conspicuous on every page, were convincing proofs that a historian of the first rank was now grappling with American history, and was giving to the established facts of this history a new setting and significance.

Here is a fitting place to present two letters from the eminent historian, Edward A. Freeman, whose historical writings Fiske regarded as of the highest character: —

SOMERLEAZE, WELLS, SOMERSET,
August 9, 1889.

JOHN FISKE, ESQR.,
My dear Sir: —

I suppose it is yourself that I have to thank for your two books on American History. The one on the "New England Settlement" I have read, the one on the "Critical Period" I am reading.

John Fiske

Let me tell you plainly that I have read very few things for a long time that have given me more intense pleasure than some parts of both. I have seldom, if ever, seen any part of English history, that part of it which happened on American soil, treated so thoroughly as part of the history of the one English people. It is so strangely hard to get people on either side of Ocean to take in the simple fact that Englishmen on both sides of Ocean are one people.

'T is only the other day I saw a British paper that fancies itself Liberal babbling about the circlet of the Cross — or some such humbug — joining all the members of the English race. So I suppose the people of Massachusetts and Virginia are no part of the English race, and the barbarics of India are. That is the kind of thing one has to fight against. To me, with my Greek, and specially my Sicilian work, the whole thing seems so obvious. I never think of Sicily without America, or of America without Sicily; and the twin colonies of Corinth: Syracuse, Korkyra. Why should not Middle and New England have been as Corinth and Syracuse?

If anything should bring you to Middle England, remember you will be welcome either here, or at Oxford, according to the time of year.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

In acknowledging this letter, Fiske sent Freeman a copy of his volume, "American Political Ideas." This brought from Freeman the following response: —

Letters from E. A. Freeman

16 ST. GILES, OXFORD,
November 10, 1889.

Dear Mr. Fiske: —

I have to thank you for your letter and also for your book "American Political Ideas." This I see does come straight from yourself. I have not been very long back, and I have barely looked at it; but I see you are on the right track, at least on the track which I am bound to look upon as the right one. Truly you preach exactly the same doctrine that I do, which is a recommendation at least to me.

I shall have a chance of saying a word or two again on that text (the unity of the English peoples) next Thursday, when I have a lecture on the *Cartularies of 1889*, in which I shall suggest that here in Middle England we have been talking too much about 1789 at Versailles, and not enough about 1789 at New York; and further, that 1689 at Boston should not be wholly forgotten.

Along with your book came what I certainly did not expect. My picture of the Landsgemeinde of Uri, quoted and commented on in a sermon at Hartford.

Believe me very truly yours,
EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

Finally, we come to the two works which were written and published during this period — the volume on "Civil Government," and the two volumes on "The Discovery of America." As we have quite full particulars of the composition of these two important works, it is of interest to observe Fiske's method of working.

John Fiske

It appears that during the summer of 1889 the volume on "Civil Government" was mulling in his mind. Preparatory to beginning composition upon it, he read with great care Bryce's "American Commonwealth," Howard's "Local Constitutional History of the United States," Roosevelt's "Winning of the West," "The State," by Woodrow Wilson, "Economic Interpretation of History," by Thorold Rogers, and Hannis Taylor's "Origin and Growth of the English Constitution," all very suggestive as well as directly helpful works for the purpose Fiske had in view.

On September 18, 1889, he tried to make a start at the composition of his contemplated book, "but could n't get up steam," with the resultant feeling that perhaps he had better turn his thought in some other direction. Finally, on October 11, he refocused his mind on the "Civil Government" project and vigorously set about its composition, writing on the first day four pages. There was now no longer any doubt or hesitancy in his mind, and his thought flowed with the utmost directness and clearness and with such freedom that he finished his task in forty-three days — on December 30, 1889. This, considering the nature of the subject and the wide and varied knowledge required for its mastery, was an almost incredible performance; yet it appears to have been easily performed at the rate of about five pages a day; showing that it was the product of a full, well-ordered mind. The bibliographic

Volume on Civil Government

notes scattered through the volume are abundant evidence of the thoroughness with which he had made himself master of the literature on the subject. The work itself was a confirmation of one of the suggestive observations of Sir Henry Sumner Maine: —

“Wherever the primitive condition of an Aryan race reveals itself either through historical records or through the survival of its ancient institutions, the organ, which in the elementary group corresponds to what we call the legislature, is everywhere discernible. It is the Village Council. . . . From this embryo have sprung all the most famous legislatures of the world.”

The volume was published in the autumn of 1890, with some “Suggestive Questions and Directions” after each chapter, prepared by Mr. F. A. Hill, Head Master of the Cambridge English High School, and given to facilitate the use of the work in schools.

The work was very cordially welcomed by the leading educators of the country as a most important aid in the study of the fundamental principles underlying our republican form of government.

With the composition of this work off his hands, Fiske opened the year 1890 with great elation of mind, inasmuch as he could now take up the preparation of what was to be the foundation of his historic scheme, and which had long lain near his heart, “The Discovery of America,” with its sig-

John Fiske

nificance to the civilization of the modern world. We have seen that in opening his historic lectures in 1879 he took for his theme "America's Place in History," and that his opening sentence was, "The voyage of Columbus was in many respects the most important event in human history since the birth of Christ." Ten years' study of the discovery of America and its relations to all subsequent history had but deepened his conviction of the truth of his statement in regard to the world-significance of the voyage of Columbus. Now that he could put in permanent literary form, as the basis of a great historic scheme, his conclusions regarding this immortal voyage and what flowed from it, with their verifications, he was supremely happy. He entered upon his task with as lofty a purpose as that which animated Gibbon and Macaulay in entering upon their immortal histories.

With fine historic insight, Fiske saw the task before him as one which involved the blending of two themes, very different in character, yet so closely related that the one is needful for an adequate comprehension of the other. He says truly in regard to the first: —

"In order to view in their true perspective the series of events comprised in the Discovery of America, one needs to form a mental picture of that strange world of savagery and barbarism to which civilized Europeans were for the first time introduced in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth

The Discovery of America

centuries in their voyages along the African coast, into the Indian and Pacific oceans, and across the Atlantic. Nothing that Europeans discovered during that stirring period was so remarkable as these antique phases of human society, the mere existence of which had scarcely been suspected, and the character of which it has been left for the present generation to begin to understand. Nowhere was this ancient society so full of instructive lessons as in aboriginal America, which had pursued its own course of development, cut off and isolated from the Old World for probably more than fifty thousand years. The imperishable interest of those episodes in the Discovery of America known as the conquests of Mexico and Peru, consists chiefly in the glimpses they afford us of this primitive world. It was not an uninhabited continent that the Spaniards found, and in order to comprehend the course of events it is necessary to know something about those social features that formed a large part of the burden of the letters of Columbus and Vespucci, and excited even more intense and general interest in Europe than the purely geographical questions suggested by the voyages of those great sailors. The descriptions of Ancient America, therefore, which form a kind of background to the present work, need no apology."

In regard to the second theme, the discovery of this unknown Western World, Fiske found something solemn and impressive in the fact of human life thus going on for countless ages in the eastern and western portions of our planet, each unknown to, and uninfluenced by, the other. In asserting

John Fiske

that the contact between the two worlds practically began in 1492, he did not mean to imply that occasional visitors may not have come and had not come from the old world to the new before that memorable year. On the contrary, he was inclined to believe that there may have been more of such occasional visits than we have been wont to suppose. For the most part, however, he found such visits shrouded in the mists of obscure narrative and fantastic conjecture, and without satisfactory proofs.

When he came, however, to the claims of the Northmen, based on their voyages in the tenth and eleventh centuries, he found quite a different state of things, in the dealing with which he was for the most part on firm historic ground. He says: —

“The colonization of Greenland by the Northmen in the tenth century is as well established as any event that occurred in the Middle Ages. For four hundred years the fortunes of the Greenland colony formed a part, albeit a very humble part of European history.”

So much being established, he reviewed the pre-Columbian voyages of the Northmen and presented their achievements with great fulness of knowledge and rare candor of mind. His conclusions were as follows: —

“Nothing had been accomplished by those voyages which could properly be called a contribution to geographical knowledge. To speak of them as constituting in any legitimate use of the phrase a

Pre-Columbian Voyages

Discovery of America, is simply absurd. Except for Greenland, which was supposed to be a part of the European world, America remained as much undiscovered after the eleventh century as before. In the midsummer of 1492, it needed to be discovered as much as if Leif Ericson or the whole race of Northmen had never existed.

“As these pre-Columbian voyages produced no effect in the Eastern hemisphere except to leave in Icelandic literature a scanty but interesting record, so in the Western hemisphere they seem to have produced no effect beyond cutting down a few trees and killing a few Indians. In the outlying world of Greenland, it is not improbable that the blood of the Eskimos may have received some slight Scandinavian infusion. But upon the aboriginal world of the red men, from Davis Strait to Cape Horn, it is not likely that any impression of any sort was ever made. It is in the highest degree probable that Leif Ericson and his friends made a few voyages to *what we now know to have been* the coast of America; but it is an abuse of language to say that they ‘discovered’ America. In no sense was any real contact established between the eastern and western halves of our planet until the great voyage of Columbus in 1492.”

With the discoveries of the Northmen disposed of, Fiske paused in his narrative to consider the condition of European society during the closing half of the fifteenth and the opening of the sixteenth century, when the spirit of Renaissance enquiry was impelling the human mind to seek in every direction for the truths relating to human existence.

John Fiske

At this period the configuration of the earth's surface, man's place of abode, only partially revealed in the very limited geographical knowledge of the time, was a practical question of supreme importance by reason of the serious interruption to the intercourse between Europe and Asia, owing to the ruthless depredations of the Ottomans upon the inter-continental commerce of the Mediterranean.

In a chapter entitled "Europe and Cathay," replete with well-digested learning, Fiske sketched in broad outlines the nature and extent of this European-Asiatic intercourse from classic times down to its serious interruption by the Ottoman power in the latter half of the fifteenth century. The chapter contains a fine appreciation of Marco Polo's account of his wonderful journey to Asia in the thirteenth century:—

"One of the most famous and important books of the Middle Ages. It contributed more new facts toward a knowledge of the earth's surface than any book that had ever been written. Its author was the first traveller to trace a route across the whole longitude of Asia, the first to describe China in its vastness with its immense cities, its manufactures and wealth, and to tell, whether from personal experience, or direct hearsay, of Thibet and Burmah, of Siam and Cochin China, of the Indian Archipelago with its islands of spices, of Java and Sumatra and the savages of Andaman."

The chapter closes with the following summing-up of the geographical problem then presented:—

Europe and Cathay

“Could there be such a thing as an ‘outside route’ to that land of promise? A more startling question has seldom been propounded; for it involved a radical departure from the grooves in which the human mind had been running ever since the days of Solomon. Two generations of men lived and died while this question was taking shape, and all that time Cathay and India and the islands of spices were objects of increasing desire, clothed by eager fancy with all manner of charms and riches. The more effectually the eastern Mediterranean was closed, the stronger grew the impulse to venture upon unknown paths in order to realize the vague but glorious hopes that began to cluster about those remote countries. Such an era of romantic enterprise as was thus ushered in, the world has never seen before or since. It was equally remarkable as an era of discipline in scientific thinking. In the maritime ventures of unparalleled boldness then undertaken the human mind was groping toward the era of enormous extensions of knowledge in space and time represented by the names of Newton and Darwin. It was learning the right way of putting its trust in the Unseen.”

Fiske gives an account of prehistoric America, and shows that its existence was wholly unknown to the peoples of Europe before the closing years of the fifteenth century. He then also tells of the long-continued intercourse between Europe and Asia over inland routes and the interruptions to this intercourse by the increasing depredations of the Ottoman power in the Mediterranean, accompanied

John Fiske

by speculations regarding a sea route from Europe to Asia. Then, discarding present knowledge of the sphericity of the earth and ideas derived from the modern map, he sought to put himself back into the latter half of the fifteenth century and the opening of the sixteenth, when European society was struggling with the problem of an outside or sea route to India and the islands of spices. This gave a proper vantage-ground from which to trace in the sequence of events the unfolding of the mighty drama which yielded a new world of far greater import to the well-being of mankind than was involved in the discovery of any new route to India.

Placing himself thus, he found widely prevalent speculative ideas regarding the rotundity of the earth derived from the ancient Greek and Latin writers, and the profound practical question, "How to outwit the wily Saracen in his depredations upon Christian Commerce in the Mediterranean." If the rotundity of the earth was a geographical truth, there must be, it was argued, a sea route to India either by skirting the Atlantic coast of Africa or plunging boldly westward across the Atlantic — perhaps by both.

Fiske makes it clear how completely ideas of a sea route to India possessed the minds of the bold navigators of Italy, Spain, and Portugal at this time, and how limited was their knowledge of the Atlantic, or "Sea of Darkness," as it was called. He also shows how ill-equipped these navigators were

A Sea Route to India

for the necessary voyages into the great unknown, with their small vessels, limited supplies of food, imperfect instruments of navigation, the prevalence of scurvy, and superstitious, mutinous crews.

First he directed attention to the eastern route, and sketched the voyages of the Portuguese along the African coast, from the time of Prince Henry's navigators in 1425, to the memorable voyage of Bartholomew Diaz, in 1486-87, by which, although unknown at the time, the southern point of Africa was turned and the way to the Indian Ocean was opened. On this voyage Diaz had for shipmate an enthusiastic Italian mariner, Bartholomew Columbus, the younger brother of Christopher Columbus. Fiske next gave attention to the proposed western route directly across the Atlantic, a route which had its embodiment in the life of Columbus, and the exploitation of which was undertaken under the auspices of Spain.

I need not dwell upon Fiske's treatment of the well-known story of the life of Columbus, his correspondence with the eminent astronomer and cosmographer, Toscanelli, of Florence, his bearing the burden of his great idea for years in spite of all obstacles, his several voyages, the honors and the insults he received, and at his death passing away without the slightest conception of the great service he had done mankind. Fiske's sketch of Columbus is a fine example of historic portraiture, presenting a man with a high-tempered soul animated with

John Fiske

a purpose that no obstacles could daunt; intrinsically honest, and imbued, in behalf of the Church, with the missionary spirit of the time; and at the same time reflecting the sordid environment that surrounded Columbus, and which could not appreciate the nature or the magnitude of his services to the Spanish Crown. After giving the narrative of the first voyage, Fiske well says: —

“Nobody had the faintest suspicion of what had been done. In the famous letter [from Columbus] to Santangel there is of course not a word about a New World. The grandeur of the achievement was quite beyond the ken of the generation that witnessed it. For we have since come to learn that in 1492 the contact between the eastern and western halves of our planet was first really begun, and the two streams of human life which had flowed on for countless ages apart were thenceforth to mingle together. The first voyage of Columbus is thus a unique event in the history of mankind. Nothing like it was ever done before, and nothing like it can ever be done again. No worlds are left for a future Columbus to conquer. The era of which this great Italian mariner was the most illustrious representative has closed forever.”

Columbus died without knowing what he had accomplished. Although bewildered by the strange coasts and the still stranger inhabitants he had found, he firmly believed that he had discovered a new route to the Indies. The fact that he had discovered a new world wholly unknown to the Euro-

Americus Vespuccius

pean mind was as little understood by the contemporaries of Columbus as by Columbus himself. One of the most interesting chapters in Fiske's work is the one entitled "Novus Mundus," wherein he brings out with great clearness the fact that the discovery of America, of a new world, was a growth of two centuries, the outcome of ever-widening knowledge of the earth's surface.

This chapter has also two other particularly noteworthy features: the vindication by Fiske of Americus Vespuccius, and the graphic account of the wonderful voyage of Magellan in circumnavigating the world — the greatest feat of navigation that has ever been performed, and nothing could be imagined that would surpass it except a journey to some other planet. Americus Vespuccius, Fiske found under severe condemnation in several quarters. So careful a writer as Emerson speaks of him thus: —

"Strange, . . . that broad America must wear the name of a thief. Amerigo Vespucci, the pickle-dealer at Seville, who went out, in 1499, a subaltern with Hojeda, and whose highest naval rank was boatswain's mate in an expedition that never sailed, managed in this lying world to supplant Columbus and baptize half the earth with his own dishonest name."¹

Fiske carefully reviewed all the evidence bearing upon Vespuccius, his character, his voyages, and his letters, and completely vindicated him as a man of

¹ *English Traits* (Riverside Edition), p. 148.

John Fiske

honor, as one of the most skilful navigators of the time, and as wholly free from any attempt to foist his name upon the newly discovered lands. In fact, Fiske made it clear that by placing one's self back in this stirring time of world-exploration and tracing the sequence of events, as they appeared to participators and contemporaries, it was evident that the naming of the newly discovered lands "America" was not the work of any one person, but was in itself a process of development.

In the chapters given to the conquests of Mexico and Peru, we have the story of these memorable episodes in the discovery of the new world impartially retold, by a skilful narrator deeply interested in the phases of human life developed by the earliest contact of peoples representing the highest civilizations of the two hemispheres, each hitherto ignorant of the other, and each marvellously affected by the other. It is not likely that the Spaniards, when they first set foot upon the soil of Mexico and Peru, had ever imagined anything stranger than the things they found there. It is evident, moreover, that the native inhabitants were greatly overawed by the appearance of the newcomers, with their ships, their animals, and their weapons of warfare. The three chapters in which the main features of these conquests are set forth are full of interest, and at the same time replete with evidences of much study into the problems of man's varying civilizations, with deep

Appreciation of Las Casas

thinking thereupon. One thing is particularly noticeable and adds to the historic value of these chapters: they are not written from the moral standard or viewpoint of to-day, but from that of the first half of the sixteenth century, when all Spanish explorers were imbued with the idea that above all other considerations they were missionaries of the Cross to the heathen, the bearers of the news of salvation — were in fact extending the dominion of the Church of Christ.

In a chapter given to Las Casas, Fiske turned a little aside from his general theme to do an act of historic justice to the noblest character that bore a prominent hand in this great epoch of discovery and advancing civilization. It is not necessary to recount the great services of Las Casas in opposition to slavery and in behalf of human liberty as well as in the promotion of ethical conduct among men. His life forms a part of the imperishable record of the time; and in no other chapter that Fiske has written do the qualities of his own mind, his tolerance and his appreciation of uprightness of character, show to better advantage than in this. Himself a scientific theist and a vigorous opponent of Catholic dogma and intolerance, his mind was so broad, and his insight so keen, that underneath all the ecclesiastical wrappings that enshrouded the mind of Las Casas, Fiske saw the noble soul within and sought to do it justice. The chapter closes with the following fine appreciation: —

John Fiske

“In contemplating such a life as that of Las Casas, all words of eulogy seem weak and frivolous. The historian can only bow in reverent awe before a figure which is in some respects the most beautiful and sublime in the annals of Christianity, since the Apostolic age. When now and then in the course of the centuries God’s providence brings such a life into this world, the memory of it must be cherished by mankind as one of its most precious and sacred possessions. For the thoughts, the words, the deeds of such a man there is no death. The sphere of their influence goes on widening for ever. They bud, they blossom, they bear fruit from age to age.”

Phillips Brooks, after reading this chapter on Las Casas expressed the following opinion: “The chapter on Las Casas in Fiske’s ‘Discovery of America’ is the finest piece of historical narrative in the English language.”

The sixteenth century opened upon this great epoch of maritime exploration, with Columbus and his followers and successors skirting among what we now know as the West Indies and along the eastern coast of Central and South America, endeavoring to reconcile their discoveries with their preconceived ideas of India, China, and Japan. With the voyage of Magellan and the conquests of Mexico and Peru, the vast continent of South America had, by 1540, been quite distinctly delimited, although it had not yet been detached in men’s minds from the continent of Asia, which was con-

Maritime Exploration

ceived as extending over vast regions to the west and the northwest. The maps constructed during this period are an interesting record of the steady growth of geographical knowledge, mingled with the quaint conceits of their makers. Indeed, the discovery of the continent of North America had yet to be made before the true import of the voyage of Columbus in 1492 could be perceived. This discovery of the North American continent, with its final delimitation from the continent of Asia, was the work of two centuries. It may be said to have begun with the expeditions of Ponce de Leon to Florida, in 1513-21, and to have ended with the expedition of Vitus Bering in 1728, the last an expedition which yielded a positive knowledge of the narrow strait which separates the two continents, and which bears the name of its discoverer. Thus was broken the last link connecting in men's minds the old world with the new.

Fiske devotes the closing chapter of his work to a survey of the discoveries during these two centuries, with France and England engaged in the work. He brings out with great clearness how during this period maritime supremacy and the lead in colonial enterprise had been transferred from Spain and Portugal to France and England. He truly says:—

“Our story impresses upon us quite forcibly the fact that the work of discovery has been a gradual and orderly development. Such must necessarily

John Fiske

be the case. The Discovery of America may be regarded in one sense as a unique event, but it must also be regarded as a long and multifarious process. The unique event was the Crossing of the Sea of Darkness in 1491. It established a true and permanent contact between the eastern and western halves of our planet, and brought together the two streams of human life that had flowed in separate channels ever since the Glacial period. No ingenuity of argument can take from Columbus the glory of an achievement which has, and can have no parallel in the whole career of mankind. It was a thing that *could* be done but once."

At the close of this period of external discovery France appears as the dominating power in North America by virtue of her interior possessions extending from the St. Lawrence through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. But this dominance was soon to pass into the hands of Great Britain, by the crowning victory of Wolfe at Quebec — the turning-point in modern history. Fiske closed his work with the following tribute to the colonizing and nation-making power of the English race, whose achievements in these directions are to be presented in the succeeding volumes of this history: —

"Wherever, in any of the regions open to colonization, this race has come into competition with other European races, it has either vanquished or absorbed them, always proving its superior capacity. Sometimes the contest has assumed the form of strife between a civilization based upon whole-

Dedication to E. A. Freeman

some private enterprise and a civilization based upon government patronage. Such was the form of the seventy years' conflict that came to a final decision upon the Heights of Abraham, and not the least interesting circumstance connected with the discovery of this broad continent is the fact that the struggle for the possession of it has revealed the superior vitality of institutions and methods that first came to maturity in England, and now seem destined to shape the future of the world."

Fiske was nearly two years writing "The Discovery of America." He finished his manuscript November 14, 1891, and we have the record of his researches and the steady progress of his composition from the beginning to the end. He made careful studies of original documents and authorities on all disputed points. There was very little remodelling of the text as it flowed from his pen. In fact, the printers were close on his heels all the way through, which is evidence that he started with a very definite plan in his mind.

The work was published in the spring of 1892, and its publication was a fitting commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the voyage of Columbus. It bore the following dedication to England's great historian: —

TO
EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN
A SCHOLAR WHO INHERITS THE GIFT OF MIDAS, AND
TURNS INTO GOLD WHATEVER SUBJECT HE
TOUCHES, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK, WITH
GRATITUDE FOR ALL THAT HE
HAS TAUGHT ME

John Fiske

And how was the work received? There can be no doubt on this point: it was received with great applause. The wide and accurate learning conspicuous on every page, the rational consideration given to disputed points in the narrative, and the judicial fairness with which judgment was rendered regarding them, above all, the fine historic insight and ripe scholarship displayed in uniting the discovery of America with the other world-movements of the time, could not but impress intelligent readers with the fact that a historic work of the first importance had been produced in America itself.

Among the many appreciations the work received, I find two which may be regarded as representative of the highest critical judgment bestowed upon it. The one is a lengthy review of the work in the "New York Sun," written by Mayo W. Hazeltine, a literary critic who possessed an exceptionally fine knowledge of Spanish literature, and who was especially well versed in the facts of Spanish-American history. The following extracts from Mr. Hazeltine's article give his judgment upon the general character and value of the work:—

"What will invest this book with a strange charm for the general reader is the fact that there is *not one* of its twelve chapters in which the author, though he evinces no proclivities to paradox, does not arrive at conclusions more or less divergent from the commonly received opinions, so that the

Value of the Work

work gains from its treatment something of the same fascination of novelty which the subject had for the contemporaries of Columbus. Where the statements and deductions made by preceding historians are reaffirmed, it is always plain that the evidence has been subjected to independent scrutiny, and often confirmatory testimony is added.

“When we bear in mind the scope of this narrative and the multitude of details which the author is led to touch, the accuracy exhibited is surprising, not to say amazing! We have scrutinized the book from the first page to the last, and with the deliberate purpose of detecting mistakes if we could — especially in references to the history of Spain with which we happen to be somewhat conversant, we supposed that a slip *might* be discernible. We have been unable to discover a single inadvertence, much less a distinct misstatement of facts. A dozen minor errors, had they been disclosed, would not have availed to efface or even cloud the general impression of exactitude. Homer sometimes nods, but in this instance, so far as we can see, there is no deduction to be made on the score of momentary negligence.

“We do not hesitate to pronounce this book — and we speak with a distinct recognition of our indebtedness to Bancroft and Prescott — the most valuable contribution to history that has been made by an American. It is a book of which the author’s countrymen may well be proud, whether they consider the range and variety of the topics discussed, or the patience, sagacity, and thoroughness with which each branch of enquiry is pursued, or the clearness and soundness of the judgments

John Fiske

ultimately reached. Viewed as it should be, with due heed to all that went before and after, the discovery of America is a theme which might well tax the attainments and the energies of a score of collaborators, each working in his special province. That the whole of its vast significance should have been brought out by *one man* with scientific accuracy and with artistic vividness seems to us a very great achievement."

The other appreciation mentioned is from Charles Eliot Norton, who, by his wide learning and his rare independence of thought, held a foremost place among the critical writers of the last half-century. Norton's appreciation was expressed in the following note:—

SHADY HILL, 6 April, 1892.

My dear Mr. Fiske:—

You have given me a great pleasure in sending me a copy of your volumes on "The Discovery of America," and I thank you for it. I should value any gift from you as a token of regard and remembrance, but I value this book also for its own sake. I am reading it with great interest, instruction, and admiration. It takes rank at once as the best book on the subject, and it seems likely to hold this place permanently. For breadth of view, for intelligent marshalling of the facts, and vivid presentation of them, for abundance of learning easily held in hand—for mastery, in fine, the book is without a rival in the field!

It reminds me pleasantly of the days, so long ago, when I sought your aid to make the "North

Letter from C. E. Norton

American" better than it had been; when I went to see you (at Miss Upham's) recovering from illness. How much you have done since then to justify my prognostications!

I heartily congratulate you, and remain, with renewed thanks,

Sincerely yours,

C. E. NORTON.

JOHN FISKE, ESQ^R.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CENTENNIAL OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER — VISIT TO ALASKA — CELEBRATION OF FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF DISCOVERY OF AMERICA — HONORS FROM UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND FROM HARVARD — SCHOOL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES — MESSAGE FROM TENNYSON

1892-1894

FISKE was now subjected to an interruption of three years, 1892-94, in the working-out of his historic scheme. This interruption was occasioned by the demands upon him arising from a previous engagement to write the life of his friend Dr. Edward L. Youmans, his co-worker in promoting the doctrine of Evolution, from the request of his publishers to prepare a "History of the United States for Schools," and from a greatly increased call for his historic lectures and for memorial addresses as well as critical tributes to some of his co-workers in the historic field.

Edward L. Youmans, whose great interest in the spread of scientific education and in the propagation of the doctrine of Evolution we have seen, died in January, 1887. He had expressed the wish that in case a record of his life should be prepared, it should be written by Fiske, and Fiske had agreed

Columbia River Centennial

to undertake the task provided the materials could all be gathered and arranged ready to his hand. The work of gathering the materials was done by Youmans's sister, Miss Eliza A. Youmans.

To this work Fiske gave a good portion of his spare time during the years 1892 and 1893. It was a task he carried about with him on his lecture campaigns, and his diaries reveal many a day intervening between lecture engagements given to setting forth the many and great services of his friend in behalf of public enlightenment on the great questions of man's social and political well-being and depicting the many fine characteristics which made up his rare, inspiring personality.

The centennial anniversary of the discovery and naming of the Columbia River would occur May 11, 1892, and it was proposed by the people of Oregon to hold on this anniversary, at Astoria, a celebration commemorative of the event. Fiske's "Discovery of America" marked him as preëminently the orator for the occasion. Accordingly, he received a cordial invitation to deliver "the spoken word." There was much in this invitation that appealed to him. He was familiar with the history of the discovery of the great river and the vast territory it drained, and its discovery stood out in his mind as the last of those great achievements, which, beginning with the voyage of Columbus in 1492, had, during three centuries of maritime adventure and internal exploration which followed, yielded

John Fiske

substantially an accurate geographical knowledge of the continent of North America. The occasion was, therefore, of great historic interest to him. And there were other interests beside. We have already seen how profoundly he had been impressed by the scenic beauties of the region of the Columbia, and that from his own observations he was cognizant of the fact that during the period of his own life the whole territory had been transformed, from a wilderness inhabited by savages, into a region filled with thriving cities and happy homesteads — into the seat of three imperial Commonwealths. He longed, therefore, to look into the faces of the pioneers, the men and women who in their own lives had wrought so much for humanity; he longed to take part in a celebration not only commemorative of a great historic event, but which was also illustrative of the signal social and political progress going on right about us in our own day.

But could he arrange his lecture engagements so as to admit an acceptance of the Astoria invitation? This came as a practical question immediately his "Discovery of America" was off his hands. He found but little difficulty in arranging a series of engagements directly helpful to the end in view. First, he arranged a series of engagements which, beginning at Albany, ran consecutively westward through Buffalo, Toledo, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Omaha, to Denver. From thence he struck directly for the Pacific Coast and found the people

Celebration at Astoria

of San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Portland, Salem, Tacoma, Olympia, Seattle, and other towns, only too happy to have him with them again; and they gladly took all the lectures he could give.

Fiske set out on this trip February 15, 1892, and met with his usual successes in the Eastern cities. He reached San Francisco April 6, and was as delighted with the general aspect of nature on the Pacific Coast, and with the people, as during his previous visit of 1887. His lectures kept him pretty busy, yet he received many social courtesies, where he gave as well as received pleasure through his ever ready willingness to sing whenever he could have a good accompanist. In San Francisco he gave an afternoon talk on Schubert which he illustrated by singing several of Schubert's songs. He was made at home in the families of the Reverend Dr. Stebbins, of San Francisco, and the Reverend Dr. Eliot, of Portland, and for each of these clergymen he preached his religious sermon on the "Mystery of Evil."

The celebration at Astoria was a memorable event. Representatives of the three States of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho participated, and special honors were bestowed upon the Oregon pioneers of fifty years before. The exercises lasted three days. Fiske was received with conspicuous honor. As he rose to speak he saw before him many white heads whose active lives measured the period of transformation of this vast region of the Columbia from

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a wilderness to populous States representing the finest types of citizenship surrounded with all the amenities of modern civilization. His address was in his best style. He sketched in broad outlines the early explorations of the Spanish, Russian, and English navigators along the Pacific Coast of our continent, seeking safe harbors or passages to the Atlantic, down to the voyage of the American seaman, Captain Robert Gray, of Boston, who in 1792, in the good ship *Columbia*, appeared on this coast; and, braving the great turmoil of waters that had frightened away all other mariners, passed for the first time into what proved to be the mouth of a great river, a river which he named the *Columbia*, thus establishing the American title to the territory by external discovery.

Fiske then turned to the events which led to the discovery of the territory from the interior — the Louisiana Purchase from France by Jefferson in 1803, which carried the title of the United States to the territory lying between the Mississippi River and the crest of the Rocky Mountains; followed by the Lewis and Clarke exploring expedition, which, starting from St. Louis in 1806, struck the upper waters of the Snake River, which were traced to their junction with the *Columbia*, and then the *Columbia* was traced to its mouth — thus adding internal to external discovery in behalf of the United States.

But, as the title of this vast northwest territory

His Address at Astoria

was by the logic of events being settled in favor of the United States, there came the War of 1812 with Great Britain, which at its close left the title to all the territory west of the Rocky Mountains in dispute between the two governments. This complication was greatly aggravated by the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company, a powerful British corporation, which held a monopoly of the fur trade in all the region of the Northwest subject to Great Britain. The outcome was a temporary agreement for a joint occupation of the territory open to the citizens of both Governments. Under this agreement the immigration from the States greatly predominated; and, after the great immigration of 1843-46 title to the territory by occupation as well as by discovery had clearly passed to the United States. Accordingly, when, by the treaty of 1846 between the two Governments, the great territory was amicably divided, there was no difficulty in securing for the United States the region drained by the Columbia, which has yielded the goodly States of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, as well as the section which rounds out the contour of Montana.

The presentation of these points in their sequential order was a fine example of historic narration. The great migration into the territory of 1843 was graphically told; while the diplomatic negotiations between the United States and Great Britain, with reference to the boundary line between the Oregon

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territory and Canada, which were terminated by the treaty of 1846, were very lucidly set forth.

The address closed with this fine peroration:—

“Perhaps no one who has not visited this glorious country can adequately feel the significance of these beginnings of its history. When one has spent some little time in this climate unsurpassed in all America, and looked with loving eyes upon scenery rivalling that of Italy and Switzerland; when one has sufficiently admired the purple mountain ranges, the snow-clad peaks, the green and smiling valleys, the giant forests; when one has marvelled at the multifarious and boundless economic resources, and realizes how all this has been made a part of our common heritage as Americans, one feels that this latest chapter in the discovery and occupation of our continent is by no means the least important. All honor to the sagacious mariner who first sailed upon these waters a century ago! and all honor to the brave pioneers whose labors and sufferings crowned the work! Through long ages to come theirs shall be a sweet and shining memory.”

This visit to the Pacific coast roused a strong desire in Fiske's mind to visit Alaska and get a glimpse at our new territorial possessions as well as at the incipient social and political order there developing. He found that he could make the round trip of about three weeks from Tacoma to Juneau and Glacier Bay, thence back to Vancouver, where he could take the train home via the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Feeling the need of some

Trip to Alaska

absolute mental rest after a steady pull of five months' lecturing, he decided to make the excursion. He had a few more lectures to give in Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle, after his Astoria address. These were soon off his hands, and on May 26, 1892, he set sail from Tacoma on the steamer City of Topeka for Alaska.

As he had no means of sending letters during this trip he wrote none. His notes in his diaries are confined to brief mentions of the wonderful scenery and the forbidding aspects of much of the social life that he saw, and to some mishaps he encountered on his way through Canada. He brought back to Mrs. Fiske a large collection of photographs which he said must be his memorial of a region possessing great potentialities for future development.

He reached his home in Cambridge June 22, 1892, — as he records, with only one cent in his pocket, — after an absence of a little over four months, during which period he had lectured seventy-five times on historic themes, had given two addresses on the doctrine of Evolution, had given two Schubert entertainments illustrating the development of modern song, and had preached from six pulpits his philosophico-religious sermon, "The Mystery of Evil." As all his utterances were inspired by the highest ideals, and as in all instances his appearance called forth large and enthusiastic audiences followed by much public discussion by the press, it will be readily seen from this lecture campaign alone

John Fiske

that he was a great influence in setting forth to his countrymen the nature of Anglo-American civilization and its import to the well-being of mankind.

For the ensuing two and a half years Fiske's work was of a varied character. His lecturing took up the greater part of the time from November to May of each year, leaving but irregular intervals for literary composition. Then, too, the calls upon him for memorial addresses and for review articles were far beyond what he could respond to. During this period, however, there were some calls that he could not well refuse. On the four hundredth anniversary of the Discovery of America — October 21, 1892 — the City of Boston held an elaborate order of exercises commemorative of the event. Fiske was the orator of the occasion, and gave a very lucid account of the historic events which led to the voyage of Columbus, of the voyage itself, how Columbus died not knowing what he had discovered, and how the new world he had found came to be named America.

During this period he wrote two critical articles of very exceptional merit; one on Edward A. Freeman, the eminent English historian, and the other on Francis Parkman, the historian of the French domination in America. These two articles are among the best of Fiske's critical essays. Not only is fine appreciation meted out to these two eminent historians of his own day, but the reader is also led to see the principles which should govern in historic

Invited to Lecture in Oxford

narration, principles which are well illustrated in his own work, — indeed, in his judicious praise of Parkman, the attentive reader feels that similar praise can be bestowed upon his own work.

Among the many calls upon him during this period for special lectures, he received one from the Department of University Extension of the University of Oxford, which was indeed flattering in its nature. It was as follows: —

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION DELEGACY,
EXAMINATION SCHOOLS,
OXFORD, *March 20, 1894.*

Dear Sir: —

At the next summer meeting of University Extension students, which will be held in Oxford during next August, the chief series of lectures will be upon the history of the seventeenth century. Among other lectures, we are specially anxious to have a short course of three or four on the Pilgrim Fathers, and The Making of New England. The members of the University Extension Delegation desire me to convey to you a very cordial invitation to deliver this course, if it is possible for you to be in England during the first three weeks in August. They feel that there is no one in the world, whom our English students would so much like to hear on this subject as yourself. If you could possibly come it would be the greatest delight to them, and to us.

Your presence would also further that desire for the strengthening of the inter-national side of University life which has been gaining ground in recent years in Oxford and Cambridge. We are specially anxious that there should be more intimacy be-

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tween the American and English Universities, and your presence at our summer meeting, which is attended by a thousand students from all parts of the country, would carry with it a significance which would have a great effect. Should you happily be able to accede to the request of the Delegacy, they would desire to have you entirely free in point of subject, and would gladly consult your convenience as to the day and hour of the lecture. But, failing other preference on your part, the evenings of August 17th, 18th, and 20th (Friday, Saturday, and Monday) or, the mornings of August 13th, 14th, and 15th, would be the most suitable. The last named dates would fall within the period of the British Association meeting at Oxford, when a great number of scientific men will be in residence. It would be very pleasant if your visit were to coincide with theirs.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

MICHAEL E. SADLER.

DR. JOHN FISKE,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

It was with profound regret that Fiske was obliged to decline this invitation.

The year 1894 brought him signal collegiate honors. The University of Pennsylvania, at its Commencement, June 5, bestowed [upon him the degrees of M.A., LL.B., and Litt.D., while Harvard University, at its Commencement, June 27 following, conferred upon him the degrees of Litt.D. and LL.D. To be thus honored, and especially by his

Collegiate Honors

Alma Mater, was particularly gratifying to him. He was present at both Universities, when the honors were bestowed, and the marked expressions of approval, from the two bodies of alumni when the honors were announced, were quite overwhelming.

With all his multifarious activities connected with his social life, his lecturing, his essay writing, etc., during these two and a half years, Fiske had two pieces of solid literary work, ever ready to his hand, and demanding every available moment of his time: his "Life" of his friend Youmans, and a short school history of the United States.

His work on the former extended over the years 1892-93. He was somewhat delayed in finishing it owing to the desirability of having the approval of Herbert Spencer on certain points. The work was published early in 1894, with the following appropriate dedication:—

TO HERBERT SPENCER

My dear Spencer:—

It was thirty years ago this month that our personal acquaintance began in so far as the exchange of letters could make such a beginning. It was at the time of my first visit to Youmans, in this very street, and within a stone's throw from where I now sit writing; and as the last of this memorial volume goes hence to the press, recollections of days that can never come again crowd thickly upon me. Our friend expressed a wish that if his biography were to be written I should be the one to do it; no sign from him is needed to assure me that he would have been glad to have me dedicate it to you. Pray accept the book, my dear Spencer, with

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all its imperfections, in token of the long friendship we have shared with each other, and with him, who has gone from us; and believe me, as always,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN FISKE.

IRVING PLACE, NEW YORK,

February 12, 1894.

A natural outcome of Fiske's lectures, his magazine articles, and his published volumes was a widespread interest in American history. His way of looking at human history as a process of evolutionary development, the outcome of causes having their origin in the conditions of human life, combined with his great power of individual characterization and his simple, easy-flowing style of narration, made a great impression upon educators, and there came a persistent call upon his publishers for a short history of the United States written by him and adapted to pupils in the upper grades of the grammar schools.

Fiske gave the project of a school history much consideration on his lecture excursions during the year 1892. His railway travelling gave him frequent opportunities for what he called "framing his thought" for literary projects as well as for direct literary composition. His knowledge was so thoroughly organized in his mind and his memory was so tenacious of details that he could easily think out a literary proposition in all its elements before putting pen to paper. In the matter of composition, he was so accustomed to think without paper that

Short History for Schools

some of the finest passages in his writings were fully composed while he was being whirled physically over the country.

Illustrative of his habit of mental projection I remember once taking a train from Rochester to Buffalo, and finding him at one end of the car apparently dozing. Upon being gently touched, he roused quickly, and to my enquiry if he was resting, he said: "Oh, no, I was at work on an article for the 'Atlantic Monthly'!" Not observing any writing materials, I said: "But you don't seem to have made much progress!" "Oh, yes, I have!" he replied. Then he added: "I can compose my thought as well here as anywhere else; and when I reach Brother Head's, at Chicago, all I'll have to do will be to spin out my thought on paper."

The preparation of a history of the United States which should present in one small volume the story of the discovery of America, the colonization of North America, the Revolutionary War, and the establishment of our Federal Union, a story which should be written in a style to interest young people and at the same time be adapted for use as a textbook in schools, was certainly a literary task very different from anything Fiske had hitherto undertaken. It presented many serious difficulties. In the first place, there was the great difficulty of attempting to squeeze the narrative of four centuries of stirring events within the prescribed limits without making the story dull. Then, again, so

John Fiske

much compression would require the wisest selection of details and their proper grouping in order to bring out clearly in the narrative the true relations of cause and effect, so that young minds might experience the charm that is felt in seeing an event emerge naturally from its causes. Mature consideration of these difficulties, coupled with the fact that he was familiar with the whole story, led Fiske to the conclusion that they could be surmounted, provided the text could be supplemented by suggestions to teachers as to proper methods of arousing the interest of pupils in historic subjects. To do this adequately, however, would require a definite knowledge of school conditions which he did not possess.

This obstacle was overcome by his publishers' engaging Dr. Frank A. Hill, an educator of wide experience in practical teaching and in school administration, and whose educational ideas were in harmony with Fiske's, to assist in preparing the work for efficient use in the schools. Some time was taken in planning the distinctly educational features of the work. By January, 1893, the general plan was completed, and Fiske settled down to the composition of the work as his most serious literary task for the time being. This took much the greater part of his time not given to lecturing during the years 1893-94. He found it the most exacting literary task he had ever attempted. It was, however, a piece of literary and educational work well

Message from Tennyson

done; and it has had, and is still having, a great influence in public education.

In January of this year, Fiske received a message from Tennyson that was most gratifying to him. In Tennyson's poetry, Fiske found much that appealed to his highest aspirations. "In Memoriam," and "The Two Voices," particularly, with their sweetly solemn music, and their complete impregnation with the spiritual implications of the doctrine of Evolution, were ever in his mind, not only as masterpieces of literature, but also as harbingers of that awakening, through the revelations of science, to the immense spiritual realities of human life that the coming years would bring.

This message from Tennyson came in a very happy, personal way. Sir Henry Irving began an engagement in Boston at this time, and, as was his custom, he sent tickets to Fiske and his family for the opening night. On reaching the theatre, Fiske was met by Mr. Bram Stoker, Sir Henry's manager, a gentleman of fine literary and artistic culture, who said:—

"Fiske, I have a special message for you from Lord Tennyson. I was visiting him in 1892 at Farringford, Isle of Wight. Whilst we were talking after dinner I happened to mention something in your volume on 'American Political Ideas.' Tennyson then enquired in a very interested way: 'Do you know John Fiske?'

"I answered that you were an old and dear friend of mine. He then said: 'When you see John

John Fiske

Fiske, will you tell him, from me, that I thank him most *heartily* and truly for all the pleasure and profit his books have been to me?’

“I then said, ‘I shall write to him to-morrow, and tell him what you have said, and I know it will be a great delight to him.’

“He answered quickly: ‘No! Don’t write. Wait till you see him and then tell him direct from me, through you, how much I feel indebted to him.’”

Fiske was, of course, delighted, and immediately went after his wife and daughters who had gone forward into the theatre, and brought them back to have Mr. Stoker repeat the message. In the time between the giving of the message and its delivery, Lord Tennyson had died, so that it came to Fiske, as it were, from the grave.

CHAPTER XXXV

RESUMES WORK ON HISTORIC SCHEME — COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF SCHEME — PHILOSOPHIC UNITY UNDERLYING IT — SEQUENTIAL ORDER OF ITS PARTS — CIVIL WAR LECTURES — REFLECTIONS ON UNITED STATES HISTORY — FISKE'S TRIBUTE TO PARKMAN APPLIED TO HIMSELF

1895

WITH the school history off his hands, Fiske was enabled to return (with unencumbered mind) to his great historic undertaking. His lecturing continued, but for lecturing on historic subjects it was not necessary for him to prepare any new lectures; he was now so familiar with all the important events and characters in American history that he could speak *extempore* upon any subject in this history that might be desired. As has been noted already, he greatly enjoyed *extempore* speaking. There was a freedom about it that he greatly liked, and when he came before appreciative and responsive audiences he frequently let his discourse run beyond the customary lecture hour.

His working out of his school history, notwithstanding all the perplexities of adapting it to particular conditions, was of great service to him, in that he was compelled to traverse his whole historic scheme and bring its various features into their

John Fiske

sequential order, so that they might appear in their interrelatedness and at the same time as forming a related chapter in the world's civilization.

Inasmuch as he was not permitted to complete his great historic undertaking, — as, in fact, he left its culminating feature untouched, — it is worth while here to pause a little and from this school history as a sort of ground plan to gather up in their structural unity the several features of the greater undertaking upon which he was engaged, which was nothing less than presenting to his countrymen the drama of American civilization, of which the political organization of the United States was the crowning feature, as an evolutionary development from antecedent causes and of great significance to the future civilization of the world. With a comprehension of his purpose in its entirety we shall the better be enabled to appreciate the nature of his historic labors already recorded as well as of those still to be set forth.

His definitive purpose may be stated as an attempt to establish the unity or interrelated character pervading the following five lines of historic development during the last five centuries: —

I. That the expansion of European thought during the latter half of the fifteenth century in regard to the nature and extent of the earth's surface, coupled with the desire to bring the products of its various divisions within easy access for the needs of mankind, together with the desire for empire, led

Comprehensive Historic Scheme

in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries to maritime explorations which resulted in the discovery and delimitation of the better part of a new world, the world of America.

II. That the social and political disturbances in Europe during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries together with the desire for individual betterment, — for civil and religious liberty, caused the migration of great numbers of people to North America that they might begin life anew under entirely new conditions of livelihood, and with much readjustment of social, religious, and political relations.

III. That in the struggle for world-empire between Spain, France, England, and Holland, during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, England was the most successful, and became possessed, by colonization and by conquest, of much the more important part of North America, a vast territorial empire, the colonization of which went rapidly forward mainly by people of the English race; that when, in the middle period of the eighteenth century, England's colonial empire in America was fully established, she attempted, during a period of political regression, to subject her colonists to forms of colonial vassalage repugnant to their ideas of civil liberty as well as to the fundamental principles of English liberty and English law: whereupon thirteen of her colonies vigorously protested against her unjust and illegal acts.

IV. That in the latter half of the eighteenth century the people of thirteen of her American colonies, English by nature, revolted against her unjust encroachments upon their rights and liber-

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ties and succeeded in dispossessing her of all rights in the territory occupied by them, and in establishing an independent federated government of their own, "a government of the people, by the people, for the people" — the present federated constitutional government of the United States.

V. That this federated form of constitutional government was the direct outgrowth of English ideas of civil and religious liberty developed through centuries of violent struggles against political and religious oppression in England, ideas which, in the rich experiences of colonial life, had ripened to complete fruition; that during the century of its existence this federated form of constitutional government had acquired great accessions of territory until it reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific; that it had so far proved itself the most successful form of political organization yet devised for the well-being of human society; that people from all nations were flocking to it for citizenship, while at the same time it was exerting a powerful regenerative influence upon all forms of government throughout the world.

Here we have the evidence of a great purpose, one much broader than that of giving a faithful record of certain historic events of much interest in themselves, or of treating certain periods of American history as unrelated. We have, rather, the evidence of a purpose to present as a sequential narrative the causes which led to the discovery of America and the transplanting to it of the better elements of European civilization, where under en-

Breadth of View

tirely new conditions these elements had had a fresh development to the great betterment of mankind — the whole forming a distinctly related chapter in the history of the world's civilization.

Viewed in this light, Fiske's theme had a distinct connection with the great uprising of the European mind in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when, weary of its long bondage to priestly intolerance, ignorance, and superstition, it began to assert itself against political and religious tyranny in demands for nobler interpretations of human life, its duties and its meaning — all tending to the betterment of man's social and political condition here on earth, as "that to which the whole creation moves." His theme, therefore, was a branch of the great Renaissance movement, and what particularly distinguishes his treatment of it from that of other historians is the breadth of view in which the theme is conceived, a conception which, with rare historic insight, enabled him to trace both cause and effect in interpreting this great chapter in modern history.

So much for Fiske's general theme and its structural features as these stood related at this time — 1895 — in his mind. The opening of this year reveals him busy on the second and third divisions of his theme — the colonial period. As this period comprised the establishment under widely different conditions of fourteen separate colonies, which differed more or less in their forms of govern-

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ment and varied greatly in their industrial pursuits, he grouped them for clearness in presenting their interrelatedness and their respective features into four divisions: (1) the Southern colonies, Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia; (2) the New England colonies, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; (3) the Dutch and Quaker colonies, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey; (4) the French colony, New France or Canada.

The following six years, 1895 to 1901, — the close of his life, — were given by Fiske to completing his history of these colonies, and he lived to finish substantially this section of his task, thus completing the first four divisions of his great theme, thereby connecting, by the narrative of a rich colonial experience, which reflected much of contemporaneous European history, the historic sequence between the discovery of America and the inauguration of Washington as President of the United States, an event which signalled the entrance of a new nation with essentially a new form of government upon the stage of the world's international activities.

The following is the order in which the several volumes of Fiske's historical writings should be taken in order to get the sequential flow of the narrative: —

“The Discovery of America.”

“Old Virginia and her Neighbours.”

Order of Historical Writings

“The Beginnings of New England.”

“The Dutch and Quaker Colonies.”

“New France and New England.”

“The American Revolution.”

“The Critical Period of American History.”

During the period under review—1895 to 1901—the following three portions of the above works were published: “Old Virginia and her Neighbours,” in 1897, “The Dutch and Quaker Colonies,” in 1899, and “New France and New England,” in 1901.

With what thoroughness of research, candid weighing of evidence, and profound sympathy, the principles of democracy that were here slowly evolving were set forth, the volumes are themselves abundant evidence. Their merits have been so generally conceded, it is not necessary to consider them in detail.

Here should be mentioned the publication, in 1900, of a course of lectures which were quite incidental to Fiske's general historic scheme. We have seen that in 1886 he prepared a course of lectures, illustrated with the aid of the stereopticon, on the military campaign in the Mississippi Valley during the Civil War down to the battle of Chattanooga. These lectures were very popular, and were given in many cities from Lewiston, Maine, to Portland, Oregon. Now, in 1900, no longer desiring to use the material as lectures, he added a graphic account of the battle of Nashville, giving due honor

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to General Thomas, and published the whole in one volume under the title of "The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War." Nowhere in Fiske's writings do his remarkable powers of lucid description, combined with keenness of insight and orderly arrangement of subject-matter, appear to better advantage than in this work. In preparing his lectures he had the assistance of distinguished officers in the contending armies and his work has had the cordial approval of the best military critics.

The non-sequential order in which the historic volumes were published, and the long intervals between some of them, have given rise to the opinion that they did not present a continuous narrative during the period covered; that with all their charm of style they were detached essays on various periods of American history, more or less interrelated, it is true, but without a distinct historic continuity running through them.

This is a great mistake. We have already seen that from the beginning Fiske had a very definite plan for his undertaking considered as an interrelated whole; but, being enabled to prepare certain portions of his narrative out of their sequential order in his scheme, he was induced to publish them from time to time, knowing full well that, while they would answer to a temporary interest in themselves, they would fall into their proper places, their sequences, as he brought his undertaking to completion. And the reader, taking his historic

Order of Historical Writings

volumes in the above order, finds no loss of continuity in a narrative running back to the Renaissance period, and in which is reflected much of the finest thought of modern times in its process of development.

Indeed, the reader of these volumes has his interest first called to the existence of a vast continent or a new world, inhabited by races of men in various stages of barbarism and semi-civilization, a new world wholly unknown to the European world of the fifteenth century. He then has told him the story of the chance discovery of this new world and its exploration by the European peoples during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. He is made acquainted with the incidents connected with the transplanting to this great wilderness of the elements of European civilization and the rise of distinct colonies with strong European affiliations. He has traced out for him, with fine philosophic insight, the development of a high degree of social and political order based on the principles of personal liberty and local self-government — the outcome largely of these new conditions of colonial life. He has presented to him with great fulness of knowledge the external conditions which impelled these colonies to find protection against common dangers by combining their forces — in fact, how they grew together and formed a League of Friendship to which they yielded a stronger allegiance than to the European powers

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from which they sprang. He has set before him a graphic account of how, under this League of Friendship, the colonies rebelled against the unjust exactions of Great Britain, and through a great war achieved their political independence among the nations of the earth. He has pointed out to him with rare insight the inherent weakness of the League of Friendship as a means of defence against internal and external dangers and the various efforts to remedy these defects. In the last volume he finds such a vivid, impartial account of the immortal Constitutional Convention of 1787 that he is fairly enabled to see Washington, Franklin, Madison, Hamilton, James Wilson, and their associates at work welding with profound wisdom these distinctly separate colonies into a powerful national unity. Finally, as the reader comes to the last pages of this volume wherein is a brief but impressive account of the inauguration of Washington as the first President of the United States, he sees that this event is the direct outcome of antecedent causes, and that Fiske is the historian who has most distinctly set it forth in its full historic development and in its profound significance to the political well-being of mankind.

As the reader closes the concluding volume of this series with Washington taking the oath of office as President of the new Republic, he experiences a profound regret that he is not to have, in the interpretation of the political career of the new

Scheme never Completed

nation during the first century of its existence, the guiding hand of the historian who has, with such fulness of knowledge, such freedom from bias, such keen, philosophic insight into "the thoughts that move mankind," given us the story of its political genesis. This is a regret that all students of historic science fully share, for in this branch of science Fiske is a recognized master; and it was well known that to this portion of his theme he had given particular attention, inasmuch as the United States illustrates, more instructively than any other political experience or unit, the interplay of the two primal factors in nation-making — militancy and industrialism. Broadly speaking, in national life political parties arise directly or indirectly out of the conflict between these two antagonistic factors: the former ever tending to the integration of the social forces into a more coherent, centralized political organization, curbing individual freedom and local self-government; the latter, ever tending to the differentiation of the social forces, thereby securing expansion of the political organization accompanied by greater personal freedom and increased local self-government. Fiske accepted as one of the facts of historic science, as well as one of the truths of Evolution, that ~~with advancing civilization the militant type of political organization was declining; and that all the provisions for social well-being born of militancy were giving way before a type of political~~

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~~organization based on industrialism~~; that militancy had done its work in bringing human society into conditions where industrialism could prevail, and that further social progress must come through making the industrial type of political organization evermore paramount in the structure of national life. The inauguration of Washington was the emphatic announcement to the political world that a new nation had come with its militant forces in complete subjection to its industrial forces in its political organization.

Fiske during his later years gave much thought to the history of the United States during the first century of its existence, considered in the light of its evolutionary development. He saw here, underneath the strife of political parties, and even the issues of the great Civil War, the persistent struggle between the two types of antagonistic political forces — militant and industrial — which were duly recognized in the form of government established for this union; and it was his purpose, in succeeding volumes, so to set forth the order of events that they could be clearly seen in their relation to, as well as the outcome of, the struggle for mastery between these two types of antagonistic forces. To this end he was making, at the time of his death, a careful study of the decisions of the United States Supreme Court, wherein he found much light thrown upon the development of nationality, on the one hand, through emphasis of

Tribute to Parkman

the militant power of the Constitution; and on the other hand, to the curbing of executive power through emphasis of the industrial rights and liberties of the people guaranteed by this same political charter.

I cannot better close this account of Fiske's historical labors than by applying to him as a historian the very words he applied to his compeer, Francis Parkman. In his tribute to Parkman he said: —

“Nowhere can we find a description of despotic government more careful and thoughtful, or more graphic and lifelike, than Parkman has given us in his volume on ‘The Old Régime in Canada.’ Seldom, too, will one find a book fuller of political wisdom. The author never preaches like Carlyle, nor does he hurl huge generalizations at our heads like Buckle; he simply describes a state of society that has been. But I hardly need say that his description is not — like the Dryasdust descriptions we are sometimes asked to accept as history — a mere mass of pigments flung at random upon a canvas. It is a picture painted with consummate art; and in this instance the art consists in so handling the relations of cause and effect as to make them speak for themselves. These pages are alive with political philosophy, and teem with object lessons of extraordinary value. It would be hard to point to any book where History more fully discharges her high function of gathering friendly lessons of caution from the errors of the past.

“Great in his natural powers and great in the

John Fiske

use he made of them, Parkman was no less great in his occasion and in his theme. Of all American historians he is the most deeply and peculiarly American, yet he is at the same time the broadest and most cosmopolitan. The book which depicts at once the social life of the Stone Age, and the victory of the English political ideal over the ideal which France inherited from imperial Rome, is a book for all mankind, and for all time. The more adequately men's historic perspective gets adjusted, the greater it will seem. Strong in its individuality, and like to nothing else, it clearly belongs, I think, among the world's few masterpieces of the highest rank, along with the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Gibbon."

Fiske's theme was a far greater one than that which engaged the life labors of Parkman, important as that theme was. As we have seen, Fiske's theme was nothing less than tracing the antecedents of this great American Republic back to the period of the Renaissance, in whose genesis was reflected the persistent struggle between the militant and industrial forces of civilized society during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; together with setting forth the conditions of its birth, and what it stands for politically by virtue of its national existence of over a century. Certainly this is one of the greatest of historic themes; and in view of his conception of it and his labors to set his conception forth, the appraisal of Fiske as a historian is yet to be made.

CHAPTER XXXVI

INCIDENTAL LITERARY WORK: "A CENTURY OF SCIENCE AND OTHER ESSAYS" — "ESSAYS, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY" — "THE STORY OF A NEW ENGLAND TOWN" — PHILOSOPHICO-RELIGIOUS ESSAYS — EMERSON, FISKE, SPENCER, DARWIN

1895-1900

BUSY as Fiske was during these six years, 1895 to 1900, with his general historic lectures and with completing the colonial period of his history, he had many calls upon him for special articles and memorial addresses. Then, too, his active mind was ever seeing, in the evolving world about him, subjects calling for the expression of his thought. Some of these calls he took pleasure in responding to, and so we have a number of very delightful essays on a variety of subjects overflowing with his wide and varied knowledge, his tolerant spirit, his fine appreciation of sterling character combined with intellectual power, and his keen, penetrating insight into all forms of literary shams. These productions have been gathered into three volumes and published under the titles of "A Century of Science and Other Essays," in one volume, and "Essays Historical and Literary," in two volumes.

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While all these products of his pen are full of pregnant thoughts, the overflow of a richly laden mind, some of them are of particular interest and value. The two on "Evolution; Its Scope and Purport," and "Its Relation to the Present Age," are specially noteworthy as showing how this philosophic conception of the phenomenal universe is entering into all forms of scientific investigation, and how it is affecting present philosophic and religious thought. The one on "Old and New Ways of treating History" is replete with a thorough knowledge of the great histories of the world and their "points of view," and is full of wise suggestions as to the study of history. The three essays on Parkman, Tyndall, and Huxley are admirable tributes to men who have enriched human knowledge greatly in three directions — men whom he knew intimately, and with whose works he was familiar; while the seven essays on American statesmen from Hamilton to Webster are so full of the political history of the United States for the first half-century of its existence, and of general political philosophy, that they are clear indications of the impartial, philosophic, yet interesting manner in which United States history as a whole was to be treated in the volumes to be given to this portion of his great theme.

Then, too, in the "Century of Science" volume, there are three essays which well illustrate how overwhelming Fiske could be in his criticism of

Incidental Literary Work

literary shams, or of "Eccentric Literature." These essays bear the following titles and they have had a wide reading: "Guessing at Half and Multiplying by Two"; "Forty Years of Bacon-Shakespeare Folly"; "Some Cranks and their Crotchets."

One memorable historic address of this period is not included in these volumes, "The Story of a New England Town" — an address delivered by Fiske at Middletown, Connecticut, October 19, 1900, on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the town. This address was the last of his historic productions, and was published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for December, 1900, and subsequently in 1911 in the second edition of his volume on "American Political Ideas."

This address, while given mainly to matters of local interest, contains some touches of a personal nature reminiscent of Fiske's boyhood experiences in the old town. It was an occasion of much significance to him. The conspicuous honors bestowed upon him on this festal occasion brought distinctly before him the conditions under which he had left the town forty years before and the feelings of profound sadness that were then surging through his mind.

What eventful intellectual experiences had been his since then! And what a change in the public mind on religious matters had taken place in the old town that would admit the honors bestowed upon him on such an occasion as this!

John Fiske

Fiske, as we have seen, was a firm believer in the purifying, ennobling effect that science was having, and was destined still more to have, upon the religious faith of mankind. He was greatly strengthened in this belief by the many cordial expressions of approval of his philosophico-religious writings which came to him from people in all parts of the country when on his lecture tours. Indeed, when on his lecture trips he was cast over Sunday in a town blessed with a liberal church, the occasion seldom passed without his being asked to occupy the pulpit. These applications became so numerous and so urgent that he was induced to prepare three addresses adapted to pulpit utterances, their titles being "The Mystery of Evil," "The Cosmic Roots of Love and Self-Sacrifice," "The Everlasting Reality of Religion." All were intended as illustrations of the higher phases of the Evolutionary doctrine.

The first was designed to supply some considerations which he was obliged to omit in his Concord address on "The Idea of God." The second is, with a few slight changes, his Phi Beta Kappa Oration delivered at Harvard University in June, 1895. This was intended, in the first place, as a reply to Huxley's famous Romanes lecture on "Evolution and Ethics," given at the University of Oxford in 1893. In this lecture Huxley maintained that the ethical progress of society is opposed to the cosmic process of evolution. The

Through Nature to God

third was intended to show that that inward conviction, the craving for a Final Cause, the theistic assumption which is the basis of the religious idea, is one of the master facts of the universe, and as much entitled to respect as any fact in physical nature can possibly be.

These addresses were repeated many times, and never did they fail to bring forth expressions of deeply aroused thought. On one occasion, after the delivery of the one on "The Everlasting Reality of Religion," an elderly lady came to him, with much emotion, and said, "All my life I have been an ardent Presbyterian, but I thank God you were 'evolved.'"

These addresses were published in 1899 in a volume by themselves. Fiske was perplexed for a fitting title. Finally he struck out "Through Nature to God," saying, "That is a title which expresses my religious faith and at the same time fitly caps the titles to my two Concord addresses."

The volume has had a wide circulation, and it has brought great religious hope and comfort to many minds. I have before me many letters from persons wholly unknown to Fiske, in which are expressed feelings of profound gratitude for the great help the volume has been to them in enabling them to see that the doctrine of Evolution calls for a higher conception of God, a nobler conception of man and his place in the cosmic universe, than is presented by current theologies. The number of

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clergymen of various denominations who personally expressed to him their substantial agreement with him in his interpretation of Evolution was so great that at times he was inclined to think he must be preaching an old-fashioned doctrine. Then we have, at the close of this period, another memorable religious address. Harvard University has an endowed lectureship known as the "Ingersoll Lectureship." The provisions of this endowment require that under the auspices of the University there shall be delivered each year a lecture on the "Immortality of Man." Fiske was invited to deliver this lecture for the year 1900. He took great pleasure in complying, and on the evening of December 19, 1900, he gave in Sanders Theatre — the public hall of the University — an address under the title of "Life Everlasting."

This was, indeed, a memorable address. Fiske brought before his hearers various views of immortality held by peoples in the early stages of civilization, and pointed out how they had given way before advancing knowledge. He also presented the views of some modern scientists denying the possibility of the continuance of life after death, and he brought into clear light the grounds for the wide prevalence of rational doubt on the subject owing to the unverifiable assumptions of dogmatic theology. After giving the scientist the fullest warrant for his conclusions owing to the absence of experiential knowledge, he went straight

Life Everlasting

to the central point in the modern issue over immortality, in declaring that the absence of verifiable evidence of the continuance of conscious life after death was no presumption against its truth so long as our knowledge of phenomena is limited by the conditions of this terrestrial life; conditions which disqualify the mind for making negative assertions as to the existence of conscious mind under other conditions.

He then passed to the consideration of the distinctive differences between materialism and consciousness, and affirmed that there could be no such thing as the transformation of the one into the other; that they were entirely disparate in their natures; that conscious life forms no part of the closed circle of physical phenomena, but stands entirely outside of it, concentric with the segment which belongs to the nervous system.

His conclusions were that the implications of the doctrine of Evolution, confirmed by the revelations of science, did not at all favor the materialistic doctrine that death ends all; rather that the cosmic process indicated that the production and perfection of the higher spiritual attributes of humanity was a dramatic tendency in human life which was aimed at at the beginning, and which had been persistently followed through all the stages of human development. This involved the eternal reality of the human soul; and it was his belief that a further, deeper study of Evolution

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would supply a basis for a natural theology more comprehensive, more profound, and more hopeful for man than has yet been conceived.

This address was Fiske's last public utterance on philosophic or religious subjects. It was altogether fitting that it should have been made under the auspices of his *alma mater*.

Among my visits to Fiske at this period one stands out in my memory with much distinctness by reason of the subject of our conversation. I found him deeply immersed in Emerson, he having just been reading Cabot's "Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson." He began by saying that he liked to dip into Emerson now and then because he found him so impregnated with the evolutionary idea; that his insights, fragmentary and illogical though many of them were, oftentimes gave much food for thought, — in fact, were very tonic to the thinking mind. In reading Cabot's "Memoir" of Emerson he was struck by the fact that at the beginning of his literary career, in his essay on "Nature," published in 1836, Emerson gave unmistakable evidence of an evolutionary tendency in his line of thought. Fiske pointed out how completely the whole essay was saturated with the evolutionary idea of life — "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations"; and also how this idea was distinctly adumbrated in the invocatory lines: —

Emerson's Evolutionary Ideas

“A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.”

On my expressing much interest in the evidences of an evolutionary tendency in Emerson's line of thought, Fiske brought out several instances in Emerson's works, and particularly in his lecture on "The Relation of Man to the Globe" and in the introduction to his essay on "Poetry and Imagination," where the doctrine of Evolution is distinctly implied, not only as the divine method of creation, but also as a key to the right understanding of the phenomena of the cosmic universe, including organic life with conscious man as its crowning feature.¹ Then, too, he dwelt upon the fact that Emerson was well acquainted with the nascent evolutionary thought of the first half of

¹ In the latter, Emerson's insight into the process of Evolution was so emphatic as to be in place here:—

“The electric word pronounced by John Hunter a hundred years ago, *arrested and progressive development*, indicating the way upward from the invisible protoplasm to the highest organisms gave the poetic key to natural science, of which the theories of Geoffroy St. Hilaire, of Oken, of Goethe, of Agassiz, Owen and Darwin in Zoölogy and botany, are the fruits,—a hint whose power is not yet exhausted, showing unity and perfect order in physics. . . . Natural objects, if individually described and out of connection, are not yet known, since they are really parts of a symmetrical universe like the words of a sentence; and if their true order is found, the poet can read their divine significance orderly as in a Bible. Each animal or vegetable form remembers the next inferior and predicts the next higher.”

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the last century, particularly with the thought of Goethe and Lamarck in regard to the development of organic life; as well as with the geological researches of Lyell and his followers, with the import of these researches upon the doctrine of special divine creations. Fiske found much evidence that Emerson dipped penetratingly into the physical and chemical sciences of his early time; and he accounted in a measure for the vague unrelated character of Emerson's evolutionary ideas by the fact that until Spencer and Darwin came in 1860, with their verifying evidences, positive science could not give any distinct affirmation to the evolutionary theory.

Fiske dwelt upon the fact that the really productive portion of Emerson's life came at the opening of a period of readjustment in human thinking on all ultimate questions, a period when science was steadily freeing the human mind from its bondage to the idea of personal fiatistic creations in the origin of things, and was pointing the way to a nobler conception of the *vera causa* of the cosmic universe with man's place in it than had hitherto prevailed; and he credited Emerson with marvellous insights, not only into this evolutionary process of creation which science was revealing, but also into the bearing of this order of creation upon all the various phases of cosmic phenomena, including the life of man.

I suggested that one phase of the opposition to

Emerson's Evolutionary Ideas

Emerson was owing to the fact that his idea of God was much too impersonal, much too abstract to satisfy the demand of the time for a personal God, for a Divine Creator distinctly knowable through human experience.

Fiske readily assented, and then went on to say that Emerson's first step in his departure from his Unitarian brethren consisted in his denial of the orthodox conception of God as a personality in terms of the human mind. He held that Deity represented an order of Being so far transcending everything in human experience that the human mind could not possibly form any adequate conception of the reality. In proof of this fact Fiske read from Cabot's "Memoir" of Emerson the following passage taken from Emerson's diary in 1838, the year of the famous Divinity School address, which, by its denial of a personal God so startled the whole Unitarian denomination from its condition of religious complacency: —

"March, 1838. What shall I answer to these friendly youths who ask of me an account of theism and think the views I have expressed of the impersonality of God desolating and ghastly? I say that I cannot find, when I explore my own consciousness, any truth in saying that God is a person, but the reverse. I feel that there is some profanation in saying he is personal. To represent him as an individual is to shut him out of my consciousness. He is then but a great man, such as the crowd worship. The natural motions of the soul are so

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much better than the voluntary ones that you will never do yourself justice in dispute. The thought is not then taken hold of 'by the right handle'; does not show itself proportioned and in its true bearings. It bears extorted, hoarse, and half witness. I have been led, yesterday, into a rambling exculpatory talk on theism. I say that here we feel at once that we have no language; that words are only auxiliary and not adequate, are suggestions and not copies of our cogitation. I deny personality to God, because it is too little, not too much — Life, personal life, is faint and cold to the energy of God." ¹

I then asked if this was not the idea of God implied in Spencer's "Unknowable," and precisely the idea of God that Fiske had himself endeavored to set forth in all his writings?

"Certainly," was Fiske's reply; and he also stated that because science cannot in any way positively affirm the characteristics of a personal God in terms of human understanding, it is regarded by many religious people as wholly atheistic and materialistic in character.

I then enquired how Fiske accounted for the fact that Emerson, with his idea of Deity and his evolutionary insight, was so insensible to the doctrine of Evolution when it was brought forward with such supporting evidence in 1860 by Spencer and Darwin? I remarked that the concluding chapter in Darwin's "Origin of Species" alone ought to have

¹ Cabot's *Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. I, p. 341.

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brought joy to Emerson's heart: yet it does not appear that he ever read it.

In reply, Fiske said that Emerson's mind, with all its fine ennobling characteristics, was in many respects individual and illogical, and we must take it as we find it. In no sense was Emerson a persistent student of cosmic phenomena in any scientific way. For the truth of a proposition he relied upon his impression regarding it, upon how he happened to feel, rather than upon a rational consideration of the facts upon which the proposition was based. This is shown in one of his most emphatic utterances. In his essay on "Inspiration" he says: "I believe that nothing great and lasting can be done except by inspiration, by leaning on the secret augury." Now, in the promulgation of the doctrine of Evolution by Spencer and Darwin there was no assertion of "inspiration," no leaning upon a "secret augury," but a direct appeal to human reason with a proposition based upon a mass of well-verified facts. For some reason that appeal did not strike Emerson favorably.

Fiske further said, it might be alleged, in explanation of Emerson's silence regarding the doctrine of Evolution with an idea of Deity so closely resembling his own, that Emerson's years of intellectual productivity had passed—he was nearly sixty years old. Cabot tells us that his decline began about this time. Certainly it is remarkable that during the twenty years between 1860 and 1880, a period when

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the whole scientific world was adjusting itself to the doctrine of Evolution as the rational process of cosmic creation, bringing vital changes in philosophic, religious, and practical thinking; and when Spencer and Darwin were being widely hailed as the harbingers of a new era in the development of humanity, not a word of recognition of their signal services came from Emerson, he, who, with true poetic insight, had seen their coming from afar.

In Chapter XXVII we have seen that Spencer had an evident appreciation of the evolutionary as well as the theistic insights of Emerson. In view of this fact the foregoing conversation is given as evidence that while Emerson never gave any indication that the doctrine of Evolution with its theistic basis as propounded by Spencer had ever been considered by him, Fiske's line of philosophico-religious thought set forth in these pages, consists of a happy blending of the poetic philosophico-religious insights of Emerson with the profound scientific cosmic truths established by Spencer and by Darwin.

In closing this philosophico-religious portion of Fiske's life, mention should be made of a subject to which he had given much thought, and regarding which he was awaiting a fitting occasion to express himself. The subject was the economic value in social well-being of spiritual, ethical, and æsthetic ideas. As an illustration he referred to the immense economic value that had come from

Economic Values

the Christmas Idea: the large capital invested, and the great number of people employed in producing and distributing articles whose main purpose is to enable people, on one day in the year to give expressions of affectionate regard and remembrance one to another. This Christmas Idea arises from a universal spiritual and ethical feeling which is entirely distinct from the practical, economic questions of daily life. Again, he dwelt upon the fact that while the producing and consuming powers of a nation or a people of the articles necessary for physical existence could be approximately determined, it was utterly impossible to put a limit upon the powers of production and consumption of the human mind along the lines of man's spiritual, ethical, and æsthetic interests. Indeed, every embodiment of spiritual and ethical truth in material form but demanded others, so that when war shall cease and the nations shall give themselves over to the arts of peace, the cultivating of, and the ministering to, the needs of man's spiritual nature, over and above the needs of his physical nature, will be seen to be an economic factor of the first importance in the political and social well-being of humanity.

CHAPTER XXXVII

LECTURES AT LOWELL INSTITUTE — PREPARING
NEW HOME ON BRATTLE STREET — TO TAKE
PART IN THE KING ALFRED CELEBRATION AT
WINCHESTER, ENGLAND — OUTLINE OF PRO-
POSED ADDRESS — TRIP TO GLOUCESTER FOR
FRESH SEA AIR — DEATH AT GLOUCESTER —
BURIAL AT PETERSHAM

1901

THE remainder of our narrative can be briefly told. It is the record of the closing days of a rich, eventful life which had rendered conspicuous service in the development of human thought on the profoundest themes which can engage the human mind, and which was contemplating many years of continued service in setting forth the significance of the doctrine of Evolution in the interpretation of man's social and political institutions, as well as his highest religious and philosophic ideals — a life which in its ripe maturity was brought to a sudden and untimely close.

The year 1901 opened with Fiske engaged in completing the missing link in the continuity of the first portion of his historic scheme, the section relating to the colonization of New France, or Canada under the domination of France, and its transfer to Great Britain, and the colonial history of New

New France and New England

England between 1689 and 1765, as affected largely by her proximity to her troublesome French neighbor. This task he substantially completed during the winter of 1900-01, thus consecutively rounding out his scheme down to the inauguration of Washington as President of the United States in 1789.

The substance of this portion of his history, to which he gave the title "New France and New England," he utilized in a course of twelve evening lectures before the Lowell Institute in Boston during February and March of this year.

The manner in which these lectures were received was an attestation to the great hold Fiske had acquired upon the public mind, not only as a historian, but also as an interpreter of the underlying principles which impel to human organizations both socially and politically. The mere announcement of the lectures at once brought a demand for course tickets far exceeding the seating capacity of the Institute's large hall. An afternoon repetition of the course was then announced which met with a response equally emphatic.

It was particularly gratifying to Fiske to be met with such responsive audiences in his own home, as it were. It was the best of evidence that religious prejudices had been largely outgrown, and that he had gained in no small measure the ear of the American public for the history of the great nation he now proposed to give — a nation whose genesis

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in the unfolding of the modern world he had endeavored clearly and philosophically to set forth.

With the completion of his Lowell Institute lectures in March, 1901, Fiske's lecturing for the season came to a close. During the remainder of the spring his chief occupation was preparing for the press his lectures on "New France and New England," and in superintending the remodelling of his mother's house at 90 Brattle Street, Cambridge, that it might possess certain features necessary as the future home of himself and his family, together with suitable conveniences for the declining years of his mother. We have seen that Mrs. Stoughton, in building her house in 1883, had distinctly in mind the idea of its ultimately becoming the Fiske homestead; and now that advanced years had brought the necessity of relief from domestic cares and responsibilities — brought in fact the need of much consideration for herself on the part of others — she became very desirous that her long-contemplated project of having her home become the Fiske homestead should be carried into effect. This involved many changes, not only to give Mrs. Stoughton her needed conveniences, but also to provide Fiske with three features essential to the proper working of his mind in the prosecution of his literary work. These features were: library space, sufficient for his large collection of books, and so retired as to answer for a work-room; a good-sized conservatory to hold



THE LIBRARY AT 90 BRATTLE STREET

Preparing a New Home

his choice collection of plants; and a music-room, wherein, by himself, or with his family, or with his friends, he could find diversions in the world's great music.

The remodelling of Mrs. Stoughton's house was begun in the winter of this year and was continued during the spring, and Fiske watched the progress of the work on the "new hipe," as he called it, with great interest; and as the spacious library and the attractive music-room came into being in conformity to his desires, his mind ran out in pleasant contemplation of the utilization of the former, not only for its legitimate purpose as a library, but also as a choice gathering-place for the free discussion with his friends and neighbors of the vital questions in philosophy, history, science, and social well-being which were daily coming forward for consideration; and also to the utilization of the latter for the interpretation, by Professor Paine, himself, and others, of the masterpieces of the great musical composers.

The demands of his lecturing had made it impossible in the past for him to utilize his home for social intercourse in these two ways save to rather a limited extent. Now that his lecturing was to be greatly diminished, and his home facilities greatly enlarged, he looked forward, in addition to increased social enjoyments, to many years of fruitful literary work, not only in the completion of his "History of the American People," but also in

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being able to bring out the work which had long lain near his heart—a history of the first five centuries of the Christian era.

While thus engaged during the spring of 1901 in preparing for the press his volume on "New France and New England" and in seeing his new home come into being, Fiske realized that the most important part of his historic task was yet before him. With the story of the genesis of the new nation of the United States fully told, and its political organization as a republic under a constitutional form of government clearly set forth, he realized that he had now to present the historic development of this new nationality, with its complex and untried internal features and its very complicated external or international relations, into one of the most powerful political organizations of the earth: and all this during the first century of its existence. The spring of this year, therefore, was given to much pondering over the main events of the first century of the United States history in the endeavor to trace out in their causes the working of certain underlying evolutionary principles common to all forms of civilized society.

What particularly interested Fiske as he contemplated the task before him was not alone the fact that he had to give an account of the working of a form of political organization now established for the government of the United States which had been described by the eminent French critic

Planning Details of his Work

Tocqueville as based on "a wholly novel theory," and which might "be considered as a great discovery in modern political science." Rather, he was impressed by the fact that while this new form of government possessed many unique features, it was in its genesis a distinct product of Evolution; and that in its two most striking characteristics, — its provisions for local self-government and for the exercise of the power of the people as a whole, as a nation, — it was the embodiment in a political organization of the two fundamental principles of the doctrine of Evolution itself: differentiation and integration. Differentiation was recognized in the widest possible provisions for individual liberty and local self-government, while integration, or the combination of the power of the people as a whole, was recognized in provisions for federated action in all matters pertaining to national well-being.

These two series of provisions for differentiation, or for protecting individual liberty, on the one hand, and for integration or concentrating the power of the people as a whole, on the other hand, were distinctly set forth in a written Constitution which had been accepted by the people of the thirteen United States as expressive of their sovereignty and the manner of its exercise; and thus for the first time in history was instituted a well-rounded government of the people, by the people, for the people.

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I saw him frequently during this period and found him planning his remaining volumes in the light of the Evolutionary philosophy, which he applied to all history. Not that this philosophy assumed that there were certain definitely established laws for the social and political development of all peoples to which their history had to conform. Rather, it was a philosophy derived from a wide study of man's social and political institutions, which had established the fact that all governments, all forms of political organizations were growths, were developments, out of racial characteristics, social needs, and envioning conditions, and were always changing; and that the progress of every nation was owing to the manner or degree in which its political organization secured national protection to all its citizens combined with provisions for the utmost personal liberty in their thought, their speech, and their industrial activities.

Fiske's conversation relative to the work he had in hand was profoundly interesting. He had the chief events of United States history so clearly in mind and so distinctly related that they seemed the incidents in a well-rounded tale; and his remarks were embellished with such pregnant observations regarding the actors in these events as to show not only his freedom from bias, but also his capacity of putting himself in the actors' places and giving a rational interpretation to their activities.

Hamilton and Jefferson

Two topics particularly he was fond of dwelling upon which I distinctly recall. These were: the personalities of Hamilton and Jefferson, and the opposing political principles they represented; also Chief Justice Marshall and his great services in interpreting the Constitution. Fiske was a great admirer of Jefferson. He regarded him as the deepest thinker and the most far-seeing statesman among those who had a part in the formation and establishment of our Government. In his mind Jefferson stood as the representative of the liberties of the people, of local self-government against unduly centralized power. But this admiration for Jefferson did not blind Fiske in the least to the great abilities of Hamilton as a constructive statesman, as shown in his efforts to secure, under the exigency of the times, a strong government and yet one republican in character.

Fiske pointed out how inevitable it was that in the formation of our Federal Government these two strong men should be at odds; and he dwelt upon the significance of the fact that the party divisions in the subsequent political history of the United States had turned primarily upon the political principles enunciated by Hamilton and Jefferson. What was more remarkable still was the fact that the Democratic Party which claims Jefferson as its founder has not been slow to advocate a strong centralized government when in matters of national concern it became politically expedient

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to champion the supremacy of the Federal Government over local or sectional interests.

Fiske had the highest appreciation of Chief Justice Marshall and his services in construing and interpreting the Constitution of the United States during the period 1801 to 1835. In Marshall's decisions he saw individual liberty and local interests so wisely adjusted to social well-being and to national interests that they clearly presented a new form of political organization in its process of development or evolution. Here he saw the political theories of the monarchist and the republican, of Hamilton and of Jefferson, brought up for judicial determination through legal issues growing out of experiences in the daily lives of the people. And in these decisions he found the vital points in the political theories of Hamilton and of Jefferson duly weighed, and so adjudicated under the Constitution that they have become blended as vital factors in the ever-developing political life of the American people. In other words, Marshall in his interpretation of our Constitution gave a stability and flexibility to our Government which admit the steady growth and development of the people in all that pertains to their social and political well-being.

In Fiske's mind the services of Chief Justice Marshall in construing and interpreting the Constitution during the formative period of our national life, though different in character, were not

King Alfred Celebration

inferior in value, to those of Washington, in giving birth to the nation itself.

Thus it is seen that Fiske was richly prepared to enter upon his task of giving a history of the first century of the United States, not only with a mind strongly imbued with a philosophy based on the existence of certain underlying forces which are impelling human society in its various forms of social and political organization to some end or purpose; but also with a mind richly stocked with a knowledge of the experiences of the race in its endeavors, on the one hand, to establish forms of government based upon political power integrated in the hands of a privileged few; and, on the other hand, forms of government based upon individual rights and liberties of the people, but without any adequate, well-defined, integrating sovereign power over the people as a whole.

He was planning his history of the first century of the United States to be comprised in eight volumes.

While engaged in planning the details of the remaining portion of his history, he received from the committee having charge of the millennial celebration in honor of King Alfred, to be held at Winchester, England, in September, 1901, an urgent invitation to be present on the occasion as a representative of the Western world and to deliver an address. His lectures before the Royal Institution of Great Britain in 1880, on "American Political

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Ideas viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History," especially the one on "The Manifest Destiny of the English Race," had made him so well known to the historic scholars of Great Britain that he was unanimously chosen as the historian best qualified to speak for the Western world on an occasion of such historic importance.

He accepted the invitation as one of conspicuous honor; and, desiring on such an occasion directly to identify America with Alfred's England, he gave as a title for his proposed address, "The Beginnings of Federalism in New England, as related to the Expansion of Alfred's World."

During the spring of 1901 Fiske meditated much upon this Winchester celebration, its historic significance, and upon his line of thought as the representative of America on so memorable an occasion. As he meditated the character of his theme steadily broadened in his mind, until it became not simply a setting-forth of the political principle of federation as developed by a few English people in New England and as related to the expansion of Alfred's world: it assumed the character of a presentation of some verifications in English history since King Alfred of the doctrine of Evolution as a scheme of things ever at work in the development of human society. At the same time the celebration seemed a fitting occasion for the presentation of some historic generalizations regarding the English people, their political ideas, and their

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place in the modern world, generalizations of the utmost significance to the future political organizations of the world.

I was to accompany him, with members of his family, on this visit to England, and on the evening of June 23, 1901, I dined with him for the purpose of completing plans for the trip. In the course of the evening the conversation turned to the address he was to deliver at Winchester, and he appeared well satisfied with the order of thought as he had worked it out in his mind, according to his usual custom, before putting pen to paper. He outlined to me quite fully his general line of argument. This was so lucid in character, was so in harmony with his general line of evolutionary thought, and flowed so logically from his evolutionary premises, that I have had no difficulty in holding its main points distinctly in mind. Imperfect as may be my recollection of his argument, it is the only record we have of what he was prepared to say on this memorable occasion. As an aid, therefore, to glimpsing the profound line of thought which was engaging Fiske's mind at the very close, I will endeavor to give the substance of his proposed Winchester address without attempting to give the language in which his thought was to be expressed.

In the first place, as an introduction he proposed to make a concise statement of the nature and functions of differentiation and integration as factors in social and political development, and then

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to consider the main landmarks in English history, particularly since the reign of King Alfred, as illustrative, by their sequential order, of the inter-related play of these two factors in the social and political life of the English people, thus giving to their history a meaning and purpose.

In the order of his line of thought attention was to be directed to the deplorable condition of the English people during the middle period of the ninth century, when, torn by internecine warfare between the various tribes or Teutonic nations that then inhabited England, no effective opposition could be made to the incursions of the piratical Danes who ravaged their coasts and plundered their towns. Social and political differentiation and disintegration reigned supreme. At this juncture — the last quarter of the ninth century — Alfred appears as King of the West Saxons, one of the English tribes or nations, and by his skill as a warrior, his wisdom as a civil ruler, his promotion of literature, religion, education, and the arts, he set in train, during his thirty years' reign, the social and political forces which, during the half-century that followed, culminated in the political integration of all the people of England into a common nationality, under a single sovereign or king. Thus, by the middle of the tenth century, the Kingdom of England was distinctly formed; and Alfred's contribution to this integration of the Teutonic people inhabiting England into a distinctly English na-

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tionality, with a common language, a common religion, a common literature, and a common law, will never pass from the grateful remembrance of the English people.

In this early stage of the political integration of the English people, Fiske proposed to emphasize the persistence with which the ideas of civil liberty common to their Teutonic ancestors in Germany had survived four centuries of transplantation to England, and now appeared, in the political organizations of Alfred and his immediate successors, more distinctly defined than under any previous political arrangement.

Fiske next proposed to point out that, with the establishment of the English monarchy in the middle period of the tenth century, the evolutionary forces at work in the social and political life of the English people began to take on a new character, that of an internal struggle between the sovereign rulers, who arrogated to themselves certain prescriptive rights or privileges in the political organism or state, on the one hand, and the great body of the English people, who were persistent in asserting their inalienable rights, as freemen, on the other hand. At the beginning of this struggle the sovereign rulers had the upper hand, but during the seven centuries that followed a constant differentiation went forward in the social and political lives of the English people, a differentiation which was marked by a steady disintegration of the power

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of the sovereign rulers, and by a steady increase and integration of power into the hands of the common people, until in the closing period of the seventeenth century the power of the people became supreme; and by the acceptance of the crown by William and Mary in 1689, with its famous Bill of Rights, political sovereignty passed completely into the hands of the English people — England became a Republic in all except the name.

While Fiske proposed to set forth the main historic events connected with this social and political evolution of the English people from the tenth to the seventeenth century — particularly the Norman conquest, the wresting of Magna Charta from King John, Mountfort's Parliament, the struggles with the headstrong Tudors and the perfidious Stuarts, the Cromwellian insurrection, and the Great Revolution of 1688 — as having a clearly defined sequential relation to one another; and as evidencing that the evolutionary process going on in the social and political development of the English people in their own home was steadily in favor of their civil and religious liberty under a constitutional government; he also proposed to emphasize the important historic fact that during the latter stages of this development the English people were brought to take a conspicuous part in two external, world-wide movements which have affected profoundly all their subsequent history — the Reformation and the Discovery of America —

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two mighty impelling forces which awakened their enterprising minds to interests outside their island home, interests which prompted to political expansion and led to schemes of colonization and conquest which during the eighteenth century made the English people the dominant political power in the world.

This expansion of the English people, which began in the seventeenth century, Fiske proposed to consider as the opening of a new era in their political development and one of much greater significance than any portion of their past history. In fact, he regarded their island history down to the Great Revolution of 1689, whereby the sovereignty of the people under a constitutional form of government was firmly established, as but a process of integration into a compact nationality; as but a preparation for the prominent part the English people were to play in the future political development of the world.

To this end he proposed succinctly to trace out the stages of colonization and conquest by which during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries the political power of the English people has been expanded over the globe, until now they greatly exceed in numbers the population of any other European nationality and hold points of vantage in the five continents, as well as possession of the world's political and commercial gateways. For the purposes of his argument he pro-

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posed to leave out of consideration the severance of political relationship between England and her American colonies, and to regard the people of the United States as still English in character and as forming an important part of the great body of English people located throughout the world, engaged in working out the problem of man's industrial, moral, and spiritual well-being through political organizations based upon international peace and the widest recognition of man's civil and religious liberty.

Thus he proposed to present the differentiation, the expansion of the English people throughout the world, with their language, their literature, their arts and sciences, their forms of political organization, as constituting a dominating influence in world affairs at the present time — an influence which makes steadily for civil and religious liberty, and for the promotion of international peace.

Having reached this point in his exposition, he was led to enquire as to the possibility of conditions arising which would obstruct the continued expansion of the English people and check their peaceful influence upon world affairs. Here he found two world-questions which, at the opening of the twentieth century, were engaging the attention of the students of politico-economic history, and which were of particular import to the English people and their place in the modern world. The one was the awakening of China, in which is involved

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the balance of political power in Asia; the other was the rise of militant Germany, in which is involved the balance of political power in Europe. England has vital interests to maintain in both Europe and Asia, and it is not at all improbable that in the near future she may be forced into a war in defence of her interests in one or both continents. If with a strong naval power the conflict would extend to all her colonies; in fact, it would extend throughout the world, and the people of the *United States could not remain disinterested spectators* in such a conflict. Their political sympathies and their politico-economic interests would all be on the side of England, as the champion of personal liberty and of the utmost freedom in international intercourse.

It was Fiske's firm belief that the early years of the twentieth century would see all the English peoples of the world moving for a much stronger political integration than had hitherto existed, not only for their own protection against militant aggression, but also as a powerful move in furtherance of international comity, of universal peace among the nations. And he found in the scheme of government worked out by the English people of the United States a form of political federation which was suggestive, at least, of how a much broader political integration or federation of all the English people might be brought about.

Therefore, on this occasion of a millennial com-

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memoration to King Alfred, and speaking for the Western world, it was Fiske's purpose to show that the English people whose representative Alfred was, and whose nationality he did so much to establish a thousand years ago, had not only since had an eventful history in their own English home, but that they had also expanded broadly to other lands, where under new conditions they had politically organized themselves in conformity to their own principles of constitutional liberty, and had become the founders of mighty Commonwealths devoted to the cultivation of the peaceful arts, Commonwealths which only awaited the development of a practicable form of political integration to become the dominant political power in the world in behalf of civil liberty and international peace.

It was, indeed, a noble theme, and my very imperfect outline sketch can at best but serve to suggest what the written address would have been when enriched with his ripe knowledge and clothed in his incomparable style. Imperfect, therefore, as is the record of what he was prepared to say at Winchester, what is here given may perhaps serve to show that, down to the very last, he saw with sublime faith the forces of Evolution as the manifestations of a Divine Power ever at work in the elevation of human society; and, as twenty years before in his lectures before the Royal Institution, London, his mind was still filled with pictures of a

Federation of English Peoples

future "world covered with cheerful homesteads, and blessed with a Sabbath of perpetual peace."¹

The evening I spent with him he seemed in his usual health, and he was much gratified at having received notice from President Hadley, of Yale College, that in October following, Yale proposed to honor him with the degree of LL.D. There was, however, a tone of sadness in his reference to the great changes he expected to meet with in his forthcoming visit to London. His dearest friends, Huxley, Darwin, Lewes, Tyndall, Sime, Lord Arthur Russell, Macmillan, all were gone. Only Spencer remained, and in a very enfeebled condition. At

¹ While this expression of Fiske's thought, in 1901, in regard to the political future of the English race, is passing through the press (April, 1917), there is sitting in London an "Imperial War Conference," called for the consideration of a plan of readjustment of the political relations between the component parts of the British Empire: a readjustment or federation, "based on a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth, and India a part of the same, with an adequate voice in foreign policy and foreign relations upon all important matters of common Imperial concern": a conference called for a more complete integration of the British Empire. That such an integration or federation of the English peoples, now dispersed over the five continents must immediately follow the close of the present war is a self-evident proposition. It will be the direct outgrowth of the federative principle established by the people of the United States, and it is impossible to exaggerate its significance to the future of the world's political organizations. By such political action on the part of the English peoples, by far the larger portion of the industries of the world will take on permanently a peaceful character. Fiske saw this point clearly, and with rare prescience he forecast that the federated integration of the English peoples would be the stepping-stone to the peaceful federation of the world; and this was to have been the gist of his message to the English people at Winchester in 1901.

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best he could but picture his London visit as one of delightful memories.

He complained of feeling tired. The rearrangement of his mother's house to meet his needs had called for his constant supervision, and this had been quite a tax upon his physical strength. During the previous few weeks, particularly, he had been deeply engrossed in preparing his large library and his many art and literary treasures for transfer to the new home he had prepared for them with much thoughtful care. We can well understand the flood of memories that came over him, as, for a new placement, he handled tenderly, as was his wont, these treasures, many of which were identified with the deepest experiences of his life. This handling of his literary treasures was his last work.

All was ready for the final transfer from the Berkeley Street home to the Brattle Street home, when, during the last week of June, there came a succession of exceptionally hot, muggy days that were very enervating to people with the most robust constitutions. Fiske was fairly prostrated by this depressing atmospheric condition. The early days of July brought no relief, and his physician advised his getting out to sea — a trip to Bar Harbor. This not being practicable, on the afternoon of July 3 a trip by boat to Gloucester was arranged. He was accompanied by his son, Herbert Fiske. His son-in-law, Grover Flint, followed immediately on hearing of his illness.

Death and Burial

The two hours' sail to Gloucester brought no relief. He was taken to the Hawthorne Inn, East Gloucester, where he could get the fresh sea-breeze from the broad Atlantic. During the evening he seemed to be failing, losing grasp of himself. At midnight he passed into a state of coma, and a little later semi-consciousness returned, and he seemed to see a mighty, irresistible wave rolling towards him, when summoning all his energies he distinctly pronounced the name of his wife, and of each of his children, and his spirit peacefully passed to the Great Unknown.

On the 7th of July, 1901, with a simple service, his body was laid at rest in the churchyard at Petersham — the Petersham he loved so well.

THE END

MEMORIAL TO JOHN FISKE

THERE has been placed over the grave of John Fiske a memorial symbolizing the evolution of the spiritual idea in man.

It consists of a huge mass of rough granite, symbolizing the universe of inorganic phenomena. Out of this mass emerges a sphere, the symbol of motion, of life in its development through all organic forms from plant to conscious mind in man. This mind, with its languages, its arts, its sciences, its philosophies, is still further symbolized by a quadrate torchlight, which, held in a human hand, — a symbol of conscious power, — becomes a divine illumination to man in his pathway to the realm of the Great Unknown.



THE JOHN FISKE MONUMENT, PETERSHAM

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