

[The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY.*

BY S. G. W. BENJAMIN,
LATE U. S. MINISTER TO PRUSSIA.

This handsome volume upon a timely and important subject merits special attention because the facts and observations it presents to our consideration are from the pen of one who is himself profoundly versed in his topic, and equipped with unusual fitness for the task he has undertaken. For seventeen years Mr. Schuyler creditably served his country abroad both in a consular and a diplomatic capacity. If, therefore, we cannot always accept his conclusions, we find them worthy of respect, and can conscientiously recommend his book to our congressmen, who annually have the subject of our foreign relations brought to their attention, and not infrequently approach it with far less fitness than the author of this work.

Large talents and a wide experience with home politics do not necessarily enable one to grapple intelligently with the questions of our foreign relations as represented by our public servants abroad. A politician is often the reverse of a statesman. It is owing chiefly to this fact that the most glaring errors in our foreign service are due, as well as the systematic efforts on the part of some of our congressmen and a portion of our press to depreciate the importance of the service or to hamper a system already laboring at a disadvantage when brought in contact with the well-organized service and astute functionaries of other nations. It would doubtless prove productive of great improvement, to our diplomatic service at least, if the Secretary of State were selected from among those who have already served their apprenticeship abroad as well as at home, with profit to their country. That this has been so rarely the case is an evidence of the faint conception of diplomatic duties and exigencies possessed by most of our public men. The Federal administration would have avoided many blunders and saved the nation considerable mortification and loss of influence if the head of the Foreign office had always known as much about diplomacy as about the problem how to carry a state in his pocket. The counsels of such a Secretary would likewise carry more weight with the executive on one side and the legislative branch on the other.

Mr. Schuyler's work is based on a course of lectures given at the Universities of Cornell and Johns Hopkins. It is in two parts; the first an analysis and compendium of our foreign service system, and the second a *résumé* of some of the chief transactions in the history of United States diplomacy. The former division includes three chapters devoted respectively to a consideration of the "Department of State," "our consular system" and "diplomatic officials." He shows with reasonable clearness the distinction between the character of the consular and the diplomatic service, a distinction that is slightly nebulous in the minds of some who should be better informed. At many of our legations it is common for the two offices to be combined for the sake of economy. The author cites the not infrequent practice of England in favor of such an arrangement. While we agree with Mr. Schuyler's lucid exposition of the reasons why a consul may not act in a diplomatic capacity, although a minister can act also as consul, we cannot, with him, approve of appointing our ministers' consuls as well, even if England follows that practice, because an English minister, acting also as consul, is always furnished with a salaried vice-consul, who relieves him of his consular duties; whereas a United States minister and consul-general is never aided by a consul. The vice-consul allowed by our Government in such a case is an unsalaried officer, who is never expected to act except in the absence of the consul-general. At many courts the influence of

*AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND THE FURTHERANCE OF COMMERCE. By EUGENE SCHUYLER, PH.D., LL.D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890.

our ministers is lowered by the fact that they also serve as consuls, while the duties of the double office, if properly done, are more than sufficient to occupy the most efficient officer. It appears that Congress is at last beginning to perceive the errors of such a system, and proposes to make a change.

The duties of the two services are well and tersely described by Mr. Schuyler. If there is a fault in his analysis of this part of the subject, it is in the stress laid on the duty of our diplomatic officers to entertain. It is proper they should do so when possible, both for the sake of furthering the objects of the legation and for promoting their own personal popularity; but circumstances may often arise when a minister can avoid hospitality by a skillful adaptation to his environment; what Mr. Schuyler says, however, in regard to the niggardly appropriations made for the support of the State Department, from the Secretary of State down to the lowest consul, is not only entirely true, but might have been expressed with even greater energy. Either we should not undertake to have a foreign service, or it should not be so crippled that its efficiency is reduced to the point of bringing discredit on the flag and inviting affronts which, as they are rarely noticed by our meek Secretaries at Washington, tend still further to bring contempt upon our service. It should be more frankly admitted by our citizens that what may do well enough at home, where an official is living among the people, as one of the people, will never do when he is brought in direct official contact with foreigners in foreign lands. To undertake to enforce our peculiar views and customs at a foreign court may show grit, or self esteem, or what not, but it does not show a nice sense of propriety, a true view of the relations of the things nor a genius for diplomacy. As to whether we ought not to dispense with a diplomatic service, as some claim, is too absurd to discuss; for until all the Powers come to a mutual agreement to abolish such methods of arranging national questions, we must submit to employ the same methods as they.

The observations are very just in which the author opposes the appointment of naturalized citizens to offices abroad, especially to the countries from which they originally came. What could be more absurd than to send one of Swedish parentage as well as nativity to represent the United States at the court of Sweden? What could be more impolitic or uncourteous than appointing such naturalized citizen to a court from which he once fled as a political refugee? And yet our astute statesmen at Washington are constantly guilty of such extraordinary eccentricities.

The second part of Mr. Schuyler's volume is entitled "American Diplomatic Efforts to Protect Commerce and Navigation." It is essentially historical, and is a valuable contribution to the history of the United States. The most important division of this part of the book is that relating to the Navigation of Rivers. It has especial value at this time, because of the recent opening of the Congo; it will be remembered that the United States has thus far not come out first in the diplomatic discussions growing out of this question. Mr. Schuyler's recent experience as Minister to Roumania also enables him to speak with intelligence concerning the numerous transactions that have taken place between the Powers to regulate the navigation of the Danube. While this episode is both interesting and valuable, it must be admitted that it has only a remote relation to American diplomacy, which is the special topic of this work.

Mr. Schuyler has presented us with a valuable contribution to the literature of American diplomacy. He writes in a temperate style, although himself a martyr to our peculiar methods, and his account of our consular and diplomatic system in its present state will convey to many a fresh supply of much-needed information, thus making this volume important as a work of reference. His opinions are expressed with dignity, if with occasional dryness, and so far as they go will prove suggestive if not always convincing. It would be well for our law-makers to give careful attention to some of the points he makes, for

they are advanced by an expert in a profession concerning whose qualifications and requirements most of them are mere babes and sucklings.