

## A ROUND-UP OF BOOKS OF THE WAR.\*

If students of history smile at the coloring given the facts in the war of 1812, where the retreat after Lundy's Lane is converted into a victory, and the sacking of York, the Canadian capital, is omitted in order to leave the British without reason for the reprisals at Washington, they will frown at the exposure of national weaknesses which make up most of the histories of the war with Spain. There is no place in the intelligent world of to-day for the sentiment "My country, right or wrong," and there should be no place for the sensation-mongering with which an unscrupulous press is now contaminating our books. Of the many volumes relating to the war which have come from the pens of our soldiers and sailors, there is little complaint to be made; they are for the most part sober, dignified, intelligent,

\* **"THE MAINE": An Account of her Destruction in Havana Harbor.** By Charles D. Sigsbee. New York: The Century Co.  
**THE SINKING OF THE "MERRIMAC."** By Richmond Pearson Hobson. New York: The Century Co.

**THE SANTIAGO CAMPAIGN.** By Joseph Wheeler. Boston: Lamson, Wolfe & Co.

**THE GATLING GUN DETACHMENT AT SANTIAGO.** By John H. Parker. Kansas City: The Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company.

**IN CUBA WITH SHAFTER.** By John D. Miley. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

**THE FIGHT FOR SANTIAGO.** By Stephen Bonsal. New York: The Doubleday & McClure Co.

**THE CUHAN AND PORTO RICAN CAMPAIGNS.** By Richard Harding Davis. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

**OUR NAVY IN THE WAR WITH SPAIN.** By John R. Spears. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

**WITH SAMPOON THROUGH THE WAR.** By W. A. M. Goode. New York: The Doubleday & McClure Co.

**CAMPAIGNING IN CUBA.** By George Kennan. New York: The Century Co.

**THE STORY OF THE ROUGH RIDERS.** By Edward Marshall. New York: The G. W. Dillingham Co.

**CANNON AND CAMERA.** By John C. Hemment. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

**THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.** By Eye-Witnesses. Chicago: Herbert S. Stone & Co.

**THE STORY OF THE PHILIPPINES.** By Murat Halstead. Chicago: The Dominion Company.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN.** By Marion Wilcox. New York: The Frederick A. Stokes Co.

**THE WAR WITH SPAIN.** By Charles Morris. Philadelphia: The J. B. Lippincott Co.

**FIGHTING FOR HUMANITY; or, Camp and Quarter-Deck.** By Oliver O. Howard. New York: F. Tennyson Neely.

impartial, and painstaking. Of others prepared by civilians, whether in or out of the field, most of those hewed out by the swords of fighting journalists add new terrors — of slander, untruth, partiality, suppression of vital facts, and vituperation — to what, in General Sherman's profoundly truthful phrase, was already Hell. It is hardly needful to repeat here the fact, patent to everyone who glances at any of these volumes, that they are the raw material of history rather than history itself, the protoplasm from which time and patient study shall eventually bring something organic. So far, there appears to be hardly a suspicion of sources of information outside of our own country which must be consulted to insure accuracy of statement; and the prevailing assumption that there can be no other side to a controversy in which the United States is a party, is the final proof that these volumes are largely tentative and ephemeral.

If there is any general fault in the books written by the various officers of our army and navy, it is that they are too long. Captain Sigsbee's account of the destruction of the "Maine," for example, could have been kept in half the space. There is in this work, too, an assumption of Spanish guilt which is not justified by the facts which have so far come to light, however strongly it may be inferred; and there is a notable lack of information from that side, though it was at hand and available. But the story of the sinking of the great battleship has much merit as a bit of literary work. This is quite as true of Lieutenant Hobson's personal narrative of the sinking of the "Merrimac," in spite of his lack of reserve in describing the actual submergence of the vessel. But he dwells too long upon the minor matters of his imprisonment, making an anti-climax in spite of the thrilling scenes attending his return to his own flag. Had there been judicious suppression in the account of his detention by Spain, the book would be nearly perfect; even as it is, it deserves wide circulation. If other naval officers can write half as well as these two, it is a pity that they are so ill-represented in our literature.

Major-General James Wheeler has limited himself to a bare — almost bald — statement of fact, and to a reproduction of official reports from his own papers and those of his superiors and subordinates. His book on "The Santiago Campaign" is interesting in spite of this, and will increase in value with the years. Lieutenant John H. Parker was not only in command of "The Gatlings at Santiago," but it was due to him that there were any Gatlings there. What he has to say of machine-guns in the battle-line, and of their effect when opposed to artillery, is of real importance. Had all our officers been possessed of a title of Lieutenant Parker's zeal and intelligence there would have been fewer mistakes.

Lieutenant-Colonel Miley served as *aide-de camp* to the general commanding the expedition against Santiago, from the beginning to the end of the war. His book, "In Cuba with Shafter," has therefore

all the intimacy of a personal narrative and much of the importance of an official document. Rather with this and the foregoing books than with those of the professional journalists and compilers is to be ranked Mr. Stephen Bonsal's account of "The Fight for Santiago." All of these show General Shafter to be a patient, hard-working, thoughtful man, who, till he succumbed to illness which deserves pity rather than abuse, was doing the best he possibly could do under extreme disadvantages which were by no means of his making.

It is well to remind the public here that the losses by sickness and mismanagement before Santiago were due chiefly to the deliberate inattention of Congress, for many years, to the needs of both army and navy. That preparation for war in the face of war is not only the least efficient but the most expensive preparation, has assuredly been clearly demonstrated; but so great is the inertia of our people, that the new Congress will probably be found quite as incompetent to give us the skill and practice so sadly needed as these which have now left their shameful record behind. The evils of the spoils system, in which Congressmen from both houses played an unenviable part, the unwillingness of the Administration to accept war as a probability or to stand out against an apportionment of military offices among mere politicians when there were trained soldiers kept in idleness, the favoritism in the navy which has led to such unnecessary wrangling and dispute,—these are matters for the dispassionate hand of time to set down without fear and without malice. The thousands of ruined lives resulting from the expeditions in Cuba and Porto Rico were offered up on an altar of national ignorance and indifference erected long before the outbreak of hostilities—an altar which has not yet been thrown down.

In the face of these facts, and in the face of the books which have already been mentioned, it is impossible to acquit Mr. Richard Harding Davis and Mr. John R. Spears of malice. In "The Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns," the former is fairly scurrilous in his attacks upon General Shafter, while he exalts General Miles to a point which forces him to omit all mention of the illness which fell upon the soldiers in Porto Rico, though every whit as severe and extensive as that in Cuba; while Mr. Spears, in "Our Navy in the War with Spain," makes a similar attack upon Commodore Schley, at the same time apotheosizing Admiral Sampson. Both journalists suppress and distort the facts to suit their ends, and both have written books which are to be classed as fiction rather than sober history.

It may be well to add here that the insinuations of cowardice which are made against Shafter and Schley respectively are unsupported by any facts. In respect of Admiral Schley and Admiral Sampson, it must be remembered that both had served their country faithfully and without reproach up to the opening of the war with Spain, when Sampson was placed in command of one who was his senior and had been his superior officer during the War of the

Rebellion. There both officers behaved as American sailors have always behaved, though Sampson had the ill luck to lose the ship on which he was executive officer, the monitor "Petapasco," in Charleston harbor, a fact which may be looked for in vain in Mr. Spears's "History of Our Navy." Since the war, Sampson has presided over the destinies of the Naval Academy at Annapolis with dignity and decorum, has aided materially in bringing our ordnance to the point of efficiency shown in this war when in charge of the Ordnance Department, and, as Mr. Spears reminds us, has written an admirable paper on "The Naval Defence of Our Coast." Nothing is said of Schley's remarkable record, but it might have been told that he has landed blue-jackets in Central America, in Corea, and in the Cho-Sen Islands; has cleared up the difficulties with Chile; has rescued the Greeley expedition to the North Pole,—in short, has been in active and continuous service, doing deeds rather than writing essays or conducting experiments. It is not, then, the records of the two men which gave Sampson the position of commanding officer which availed him so little, as Mr. Spears disingenuously suggests.

Mr. Goode, who was "With Sampson through the War" as correspondent of the Associated Press, is a little fairer than Mr. Spears and not quite so fond. His praise does not lack discrimination, but his partisanship is nevertheless complete. He suppresses, for example, all mention of the dispatch from Sampson ordering Schley to hold his fleet off Santiago; and, following Sampson again, he regards Schley's obedience to this order to be reprehensible. This is the more unpardonable, because Admiral Sampson has evidently supplied the writer with most of his material, including a chapter of his own. Mr. Goode, too, has his quarrel with Shafter, evidently by way of retribution for the General's criticism of the Navy. Yet the work shows painstaking, even to the extent of drawing upon the Spanish for information.

"Campaigning in Cuba," Mr. George Kennan's account of services performed in connection with the Red Cross Society, is a vivid picture of suffering and hardship, ameliorated in a considerable degree by the efforts of Mr. Kennan and his associates. The book, commendable in almost all respects, is injured by the persistency with which references to Siberian matters are dragged in, and far more by a determination to hold General Shafter responsible for all the calamities which fell under the writer's vision among the American soldiers. Both Colonel Miley and Lieutenant Parker disprove Mr. Kennan's statement that the lack of surgical attendance was due to the commanding general.

The vivid account of "The Rough Riders" from the pen of Mr. Edward Marshall, the newspaper correspondent who achieved the distinction of being severely wounded while joining in a charge, is well worth reading, filled as it is with dramatic pictures by an eye-witness of the exciting events in the ca-

reer of that famous regiment. As is perhaps inevitable in such a book, it lacks a sense of proportion. Without in the least reflecting upon the character of the work done by that excellent volunteer organization, there is here accorded a meed of praise which is surpassing in both quantity and quality. It is well to remember that not less than a thousand volunteer regiments, both North and South, were equally instant in performing their duty as they understood it during the Civil War. Let us not forget that we laughed at battles like Caney and San Juan when the Cubans and Spaniards were fighting two years or so ago, and that some notion of relative values must be preserved or Gettysburg and the Wilderness will take on the dimensions of skirmishes. Mr. Marshall, too, has something to urge against Shafter, which rests more upon his mere averment than upon any facts he chooses to relate.

The books remaining are of lesser moment, though having value as repositories of material. Mr. John C. Hemment is an expert photographer whose zeal carried him not only to Santiago but into the firing-line in search of subjects for his camera. To him are due many of the pictures that have given those at home so vivid a conception of the war, and it is in these pictures that the interest of his "Cannon and Camera" chiefly lies. Another abundantly illustrated book is "The Spanish-American War by Eye-Witnesses," compiled from original sources, chiefly the daily press. It is episodic, but of much interest, the materials being well chosen. Mr. Murat Halstead describes the battle of Manila in "The Story of the Philippines," styling himself "Historian of the Philippine Expedition." His voluminous work is encyclopædic in its scope, but with neither alphabetical arrangement nor index. It also is illustrated.

"A Short History of the War with Spain," the work of Mr. Marrion Wilcox, is an agreeable disappointment, being fair, comprehensive, succinct, and, considering the material at hand when it was put forth, accurate. "The War with Spain," by Mr. Charles Morris, is written down to the many, is filled with errors, and will be a real grief to those who welcomed his compendium of facts relating to our navy. General O. O. Howard, in "Fighting for Humanity," confines himself to the means taken for the christianization of American soldiers and sailors, and his book is of religious rather than warlike interest. It will supply some interesting paragraphs to the future historian.

Though the war itself was waged with the weapons of civilization, the controversies which have attended its close have the savor of those ill-smelling contrivances still in use, we believe, among the Chinese. It is to be hoped that unseemly partisanship in respect of such dissensions may give way to a spirit of reform, — turning our national energies to the prevention of future scandals rather than to the reanimation of issues which need nothing so much as decent burial.

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