From a Daguerreotype

Engd by L. S. Punderson

Yours truly

M. F. Maury

Lt U. S. N.

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF A GREAT AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC STUDENT OF THE WORLD'S SEAS.

MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE DIRECTING COMMITTEE.

MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY was born in Virginia in 1806, and joined the U.S. Navy at the age of 19; as a midshipman his first voyage was to the coasts of Europe and the Mediterranean in the frigate "BRANDYWINE", the principal object of the voyage being to convey General Lafayette to France; and the next four years were spent in circumnavigating the globe in the sloop-of-war "VINCENNES", which voyage was followed by a further three years service in the Pacific; after this period he produced, as a result of his studies, a treatise on Navigation which for many years was the official text-book used in the United States Navy.

In 1839 MAURY unfortunately had an accident which resulted in permanent lameness, unfitting him for further active service afloat; this enforced leisure, however, enabled him to re-commence writing, and among many other productions, his series of articles on the subject of naval reform specially attracted much attention.

MAURY was one of those who fully realized that the oceans, seas, and rivers of the world, the winds and currents, tidal waves and temperatures moved in orderly procession in obedience to certain definite laws; and that, in consequence, there must be natural paths suitable for sea travel, similarly to those on land; and that if these could be defined, travel by sea would not only be shortened eventually, but that its safety would be largely increased.

In 1842, Lieutenant MAURY was placed in charge of the Depot of Charts and Instruments at Washington from which the Naval Observa-

tory and Naval Hydrographic Office of the U. S. A. eventually developed; this appointment gave him the opportunity and scope for the practical achievement of his indefatigable work of the collection and investigation of observations on the winds and currents of the oceans from seamen of all nations; from the thousands of these observations thus obtained he studied, classified and charted the necessary data for his "Wind and Current Charts" and "Sailing Directions" which gave the mariner information as to the best sea routes; this enabled the owners of the sailing vessels of those days to realize the immense importance of studying this new science and, as a direct result, ocean navigation was largely revolutionised.

It further showed the necessity for combined action on the part of maritime nations in regard to the study of ocean meteorology, and in the year 1853, at the instigation of Lieutenant MAURY, an international Conference was held at Brussels to which 16 nations sent representatives; this Conference was held "for devising a uniform system of Meteorological Observations at Sea, and of concurring in a general plan of observation on the Winds and Currents of the Ocean with a view to the improvement of navigation, and to the acquirement of a more correct knowledge of the laws which govern those elements", and it produced most beneficial results in improvements to navigation as well as in the study of Ocean Meteorology.

In 1855 MAURY was promoted to the Rank of Commander, although he is invariably referred to by his earlier title of Lieutenant by the United States Government Departments.

The ambitions of MAURY were many and most varied in character; one of which was the construction of a canal at Panama; his investigations were utilised in the preparation of the first bathymetrical map of the North Atlantic Ocean, giving contours up to 4000 fathoms, which map was published in 1854; he was also largely instrumental in carrying out great improvements in obtaining deep-sea soundings which were specially required in connection with the laying of the first Atlantic cable.

His oceanographical and meteorological work received recognition in all parts of all civilised world, and it is believed that he was honoured as no other American has ever been, receiving decorations from Emperors, Kings and Presidents and degrees and memberships from most of the universities and scientific societies of the world.

"The Physical Geography of the Sea", the best known perhaps of his works, was published in London in 1855, afterwards being translated into the principal European languages.

On the outbreak of the American Civil War, in 1860, MAURY resigned his post in the Federal Naval Service and served as a Commodore in the Confederate Navy, although he was principally employed abroad on the affairs of the Confederate States.

When it was known that MAURY had given up his connection in the Federal Service, both French and Russian Governments invited him to continue his labours in either country, but these offers were declined from a high sense of duty to his own State; such offers, made by Governments of countries of the greatest importance in the scientific world of that day, clearly indicate the extraordinary position that MAURY filled in connection with his special work.

At the termination of the War in 1865 MAURY, being on the Confederate side, found himself an exile in England, and in anticipation of a large emigration from the Southern States of the United States of America to Mexico he was appointed Imperial Commissioner of Emigration by the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico; the plans in this connection did not materalize however, and the scheme for colonization was abandoned in 1866.

MAURY then settled in England for a time, during which period he was entertained at a public banquet and was presented with a testimonial raised by public subscription, and among other honours, he received the degree of LL. D. of Cambridge University in 1868; he was offered the Directorship of the Imperial Observatory at Paris, but a general amnesty enabled him once again to return to his own State, and in 1868 he was appointed to the Chair of Physics at the Virginia Military Institute which he occupied until his death at Lexington, Virginia, in February 1873; he was temporarily buried there, but he had specially desired that his body should be interred at Richmond, and conveyed through the beautiful Goshen Pass at the time when "the laurel burst its buds", and this was accordingly carried out in the following June, his body being finally laid to rest among his own dead in Hollywood Cemetery at Richmond.

A simple granite column with an anchor at its base, and carrying a bronze tablet with the inscription "MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY, the Pathfinder of the Sea" has been erected recently (June 1923) in the Goshen Pass.

At the meeting of the British Association in 1876, the Hydrographer of the Navy, President of the Section of Geography, remarked as follows: — "We are indebted in our generation to the genius and untiring energy of MAURY, aided originally by the liberal support of his Government, for placing before us, in the two-fold interests of

science and commerce, an abundant store of observed facts in this field; accompanied too by those broad generalisations, which, written with a ready pen and the fervour of an enthusiast gifted with a poetic temperament, have charmed so many readers, and in their practical bearings have undoubtedly advanced navigation in practice....MAURY, so far as I am aware, was the first to record his dissent from the generally received views of surface currents being due to the impulse of the winds, and assigned to differences of specific gravity, combined with the earth's rotation on its axis, the movement of the Gulf Stream and other well defined ocean currents".

The benefits which MAURY conferred upon mankind cannot be adequately measured by their pecuniary value, although these are very great, but their influence undoubtedly will continue to exist for even a longer period than the monument above mentioned.

MAURY was passionately devoted to the study of natural phenomena, and, at the same time, was one of those who was ever anxious to impart to others the knowledge which he himself possessed; his labours were concerned directly with oceanography, navigation and meteorology, but indirectly affected hydrography also, and in view of the international character of all his researches and works, this "Review" appears to be a fitting place for this brief record of a great man.

The picture of MAURY facing page 155 is a reproduction from an engraving based on a daguerreotype.

The material for the above was extracted from a variety of sources, the principal of which were the "New York Times Book Review and Magazine" July 15th 1923, the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" and the "Nautical Magazine" for the year 1873".