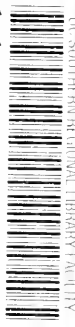


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John Fiske



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# John Fiske

By

Franklin H. Head





JOHN FISKE



# JOHN FISKE

READ AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ALL-SOULS'  
CHURCH

REV. JENKIN LLOYD JONES, PASTOR  
CHICAGO, JUNE 1, 1902

By

FRANKLIN H. HEAD



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## JOHN FISKE

I first met Dr. John Fiske in 1888. He had been giving a course of lectures in St. Louis, and stopped in Chicago for a day, sending me a note of introduction from a mutual friend in St. Louis. I called upon him at the Palmer House, took him home to dinner, and thus commenced an acquaintance and a friendship which was only terminated by his untimely death. For ten or eleven years after this visit he came annually to Chicago, remaining for four or five weeks at my house, while lecturing here and in the neighboring towns. He never seemed to take a trunk when on his travels, but would arrive at the house in a cab loaded inside and outside with big grip-sacks and dress-suit cases, eight or ten in number, and mostly full of music books and books of reference to use at his leisure hours in his historical work. When not lecturing or other-

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wise engaged, he usually wrote for several hours each day; and many chapters of all his historical works, except the first and the last volumes, were written at my house. To his friends he was most lovable; was genial, companionable, childlike in simplicity, and profoundly wise. To his friends life will be forever shadowed by his loss. They will miss

“The sound of a voice  
Tender and sweet and low  
That made the earth rejoice  
A year ago.”

For many years before meeting Dr. Fiske, I had read with eager interest his writings in elucidation of the then New Philosophy of evolution, the universal reign of law. Through him, as was the case with thousands of others, I was first introduced to the studies of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Wallace, and the other great leaders of modern thought, among whom he won an honored place. When I met him he had just published his first historical book, “The Critical Period of American History.” I had known him only as an evolutionist, and

said to him: "In your last book, are you not getting out of your proper field?" "O, no," he replied, "I am just getting into it." He then proceeded to explain that several years before he had planned to write a history of the several separate English colonies in America, from the time of the settlement of each to the close of the Revolutionary War, when for the first time they were organized as a nation; that when commencing this work he had at the same time become interested in the New Philosophy, and soon realized that thenceforward no history could be written except from the standpoint of an evolutionist; that he had read what had been published on the subject, and then visited England, made the acquaintance of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Wallace, and spent a year going over with them the scope of the new science, its victories achieved, and the new worlds it must conquer in the fullness of time. Then returning home, he wrote, published, and lectured for several years as to the new science, and thus fitted himself for a

writer of history, who must formulate the laws by which nations develop; must show how national characteristics are formed, partly from inheritance and partly from the influence of environment. As to the American colonies, he must show how their inherited tendencies, in a new land without traditions and with abundant room for expansion, had developed a distinct nationality, conserving most that was good in their ancestral peoples, to whom their indebtedness was vast, but better adapted for their environment than aught that had existed before.

Dr. Fiske was graduated from Harvard when twenty-one years of age. When twenty-seven years of age he was appointed University Lecturer on Philosophy. For several years thereafter he had charge of the monthly review of scientific progress in the *Atlantic Monthly*; was appointed in 1870 Assistant Librarian at Harvard, and while thus engaged wrote an article on the work of librarians, which is now the guide for the best trained librarians in their duties. To 1874, when

thirty-four years of age, he wrote and lectured in the principal cities of the country on the New Philosophy, and the work of Herbert Spencer, its greatest expositor; and in 1874 he published his "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," which contained the substance of his various lectures, which was widely read, and which is as yet the most lucid and popular exposition of the theories of evolution.

To the time when he was forty years of age he gave his time and efforts largely to the exposition of the New Philosophy, and to the study of the method of the amalgamation of its principles with historical work, after which he felt himself able to commence, what had been the hope of his life, the writing of American History from the standpoint of an evolutionist. His two volumes on the Discovery of America, a magnificent prose epic, than which there are few greater narratives in our language, and the two volumes of the History of the Revolutionary War, marked the limits of the field he had sought to cover. Within this period he aimed to write the history of each

of the colonies. At the time of his death this plan was completed, except the last work of the series, *New England and New France*; and when I saw him in April, 1901, he told me that two months' work would complete these volumes. This last work of his original plan did not receive his finishing touches, but was sufficiently far along so that it will be published during the coming year. After completing this book he planned to spend a few months in England, where he wished to have a last visit with Herbert Spencer; on his return he expected to begin a new history of the nation from the close of the Revolutionary War to the election of McKinley. He told me something of his plan for this work—a plan so broad, so philosophical, and in certain lines so new, as to indicate that his death before the doing of it was a national calamity.

The stories of the precocious boyhood of Fiske rival those told of Macaulay or John Stuart Mill. At seven years of age he was reading Cæsar's Commentaries; at nine he had read all the great English authors; at

thirteen all the principal Latin ones; before entering Harvard at seventeen he had mastered Greek, Latin, German, and the Romance languages, was familiar with the best literature of these several tongues, and had a considerable knowledge of Hebrew and Sanscrit. He had a marvellous facility in acquiring languages, and during his college course he mastered half a dozen more of the modern tongues; was a brilliant scholar in the requirements of the college curriculum, and had read widely in science, philosophy, and history. His memory was equally phenomenal; he never seemed to forget anything he had ever heard or read, and all this vast accumulation of facts and fancies seemed to be arranged and classified and subject to instantaneous call. One evening at my house something was said about Sam Weller, and the conversation drifted to the Pickwick Papers. Mr. Fiske began to repeat, verbatim, long extracts therefrom. He gave the whole of the trial of Bardell vs. Pickwick—the examination of Sam Weller and of Mr. Winkle; the speech of Sergeant Buzfuz. Then

Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer, Miss Sally Brass, Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness, and others of the characters in the Dickens stories were brought in, and Dr. Fiske would repeat pages and pages relative to these fascinating people. He said that he was delighted with these stories as they were first printed, and did not recall ever reading them since, but he repeated, verbatim, passages pages long which he had read thirty or forty years before.

Mr. Fiske had the faculty of rapid reading ascribed to Macaulay; he seemed to absorb a full page at a glance as an ordinary reader would a line. I recollect an instance in point. Soon after the death of Dr. David Swing I had supervised the publication of two volumes of his unpublished essays. Dr. Fiske and Swing were warm friends, and many were the delightful Sunday afternoons they had passed together at my house. One day after dinner, Fiske asked for the two volumes and turned over leaf after leaf in each until he had gone through the two volumes—four hundred pages in an hour. He spoke of how he had enjoyed



the reading, and how the various papers reflected the broad scholarship and sound philosophy of the great teacher. But a short time before I had read the contents of the volumes three times with great care, once in manuscript, and twice in revising the proof-sheets. It did not seem to me possible that he could know much about the essays, and I began to ask questions, with the result that I saw that not a point in the two volumes had escaped him; he was actually more familiar than I with every subject discussed in the books.

With all his vast accumulation in every department of human knowledge, he had the faculty of clear statement, to which clear thinking is a prerequisite. Darwin, after reading the *Cosmic Philosophy*, wrote to Dr. Fiske: "I never in my life read so lucid an expositor—and therefore thinker—as you are"; and Herbert Spencer said substantially the same thing. It was this gift of a brilliant mind, formulating its thoughts in transparent language of absolute precision, which especially fitted him for making understood by a

wide general public the facts and formulas of evolution, which before that time had been scarcely understood outside the ranks of specialists.

The first publication of Dr. Fiske's, so far as I have been able to learn, was an article in the *National Quarterly Review*, published when he was nineteen years old, and in his Sophomore year at Harvard, entitled "Fallacies in Buckle's History of Civilization." The article is a marvel of learning, clearness of statement, and eloquence for a man of any age. He does full justice to the work which was an epoch-making treatise. He says of it that in breadth of views, in the candor with which they are stated, in wealth of erudition, and the honesty with which he applies his facts, in the love of liberty which pervades his work, and the eloquence which invests all parts with an undying charm, he has few equals in any age. In Fiske's review he takes up and discusses the four great laws which Buckle, in his three volumes, lays down as the basis for his history of civilization.

Of these laws he says the first is, that social changes conform to fixed laws. This is true, but not new. Many writers have given vague glimpses of its coming. Voltaire almost formulated it, and Auguste Comte established it by absolute proof.

The second law defined the relative value of intelligence and morality in the progress of civilization. Fiske shows as to this, that as formulated by Buckle, it is in conflict with the first law; is contradictory in its different parts, and is throughout confused and vague, showing that Buckle had not a clear idea of what he sought to prove.

The third law was, that permanent scepticism was the greatest of factors in progress. This is partly true and partly untrue. When scepticism means a condition of doubt until proof be established of the truth of a theory it is true, but when proof is made, doubt is a drawback, and the law is untrue.

The fourth law defined the difference in results between the deductive and inductive methods of reasoning, and was illustrated

with marvelous skill from the histories of England, Scotland, and Spain. The reviewer pointed out certain errors, but as a whole said that the discussion showed a depth of thought and an extent in learning unsurpassed in historic literature. Fiske's review as the work of a boy of nineteen seems to me unparalleled in learning, clearness of statement, and maturity of judgment—a worthy review of a great work.

For several years after his graduation Dr. Fiske published much of his work in the *Atlantic Monthly*, outside his Cosmic Philosophy and purely scientific papers. His first publication in this periodical was a review of Edward L. Youmans's class-book of chemistry. He was then twenty-two years old and a student at the Harvard Law School. The article is most remarkable for so young a man. It embodies the most important qualities of his maturer years. Its style is at once striking and simple; it shows vast reading in all fields of research, and surveys the subject from a lofty and comprehensive standpoint. It is

almost unstinted in its praise of the volume, but indignant at one point, in which he claims Dr. Youmans is unscientific; his use of the ever vague and unsatisfactory term *ether*. The book of Youmans was when issued the most in accord with modern science of anything before then published. It banished the words *caloric*, *phlogiston*, or fire as elements—forms of matter—and placed them instead with sound and light as modes of motion. It illustrated the motion of all forms of matter in its ultimate atoms as its normal state, and argued that the balance determined the existence of matter, and that what could not be weighed was not matter. Fiske's wide reading and study is illustrated when in referring to this point he quotes in its support from Goethe's mystic poem of Faust. He says: "The wondrous phenomena of light, heat, and electricity are now seen to be due to the rythmetrical vibration of atoms. There is thus no such thing as rest; from the planet to the ultimate particle all things are endlessly moving, and the mystic song of the Earth Spirit in Faust

is recognized as the sublimest truth of science.  
The spirit says:

““ In the current of life, in the tempest of motion,  
In the fervour of act—in the fire—in the storm,  
Hither and thither,  
Over and under,  
Wend I and wander.  
Birth and the grave  
Limitless ocean,  
Where the restless wave  
Undulates ever,  
Under and over  
Their ceaseless strife,  
Heaving and weaving  
The changes of life,  
At the whirring loom of Time unawed  
I work the living mantle of God.’”

(Translated by J. Auster.)

John Fiske was married when twenty-two years of age to Miss Abby Brooks, of Petersham, Massachusetts. The marriage was a happy one. His home life was always most satisfying and beautiful. Her brother, James Brooks, a business man of Boston, had a beautiful home in Petersham which had been in the

family for some generations. Dr. Fiske and his family were from the time of his marriage frequent visitors to this family home. I once, on the invitation of Mr. James Brooks, accompanied Professor and Mrs. Fiske to spend Sunday at this home. While there, driving with Dr. Fiske, he became in a reminiscent mood, and asked if he had ever told me the story of his marriage, which he then proceeded to do. He said that just after his graduation and while a student at the Harvard Law School, he was one evening a guest at a reception in Cambridge where he met Miss Abby Brooks. He was greatly attracted, and had as many chats with her during the evening as circumstances allowed, and on his return to his room that night told his chum that he had seen the woman whom he intended to marry. He noted, however, that sundry other young men beside himself had seemed attracted by Miss Brooks; and finding that she had returned to Petersham, decided that it would be wise to follow up his acquaintance lest she forget, lest she forget. He accordingly, not having any ready money

in hand, borrowed five dollars from the woman with whom he boarded, and started for Peter-sham. On reaching there he again realized the importance of time in his campaign, as he found other young men of that neighborhood who were fully aware of the attractiveness of Miss Abby. At the end of two days he realized that the treasury was substantially empty, and feeling it unsafe to leave the campaign but begun, he wrote to his landlady for an additional loan of ten dollars, which she kindly forwarded him. He plied his suit with great diligence until the ten dollars was nearly exhausted. By this time he had learned that Miss Abby would, within a very short time, start for a visit to friends in Ohio and Chicago, to be absent for nearly a year. Matters had progressed so well that he was enabled to arrange for a correspondence during her absence. He then settled his hotel bill and secured a ticket for as far toward Boston as his money would buy, and walked the last sixty miles without anything to eat but some apples which he lifted from orchards whose



owners kept no dog. He said that he could not remember whether in this sixty-mile tramp his feet touched the ground or not. During the year a lively correspondence was kept up, and he said that he had never written anything on the subject of evolution or philosophy on which he had expended greater care than on these letters. He said that during this correspondence and later he had discussed somewhat with his hoped-for fiancée the teachings of the New Philosophy. When its theories were at first promulgated, its votaries were often assailed as enemies of religion, as agnostics or atheists; and Fiske, not knowing whether Miss Brooks had heard such statements regarding him, decided that it was his duty to define to her his position, that she might not be shocked on learning it later. He thereupon wrote her fully, and was delighted, on getting her reply, to find that she was not only in full accord with him as far as he had gone, but was in some points still farther advanced; that her letter, as he said, swept some cobwebs out of certain neglected

and dusty corners of his own brain. Shortly after her return he was able to arrange with her to accept the position of the light of his life.

During Dr. Fiske's summers at Petersham he was visited by many famous and interesting people who have in many ways recorded their delights at his good comradeship. Huxley, on one of his visits to America, spent, with his wife, a week at Petersham—a week full of conversation, witty, frolicsome, and wise, with drives to points whence could be viewed Monadnock and Wachusett, with picnics and camping-outs in the pine forests. Huxley wrote Fiske from England that nowhere in America had he felt so thoroughly at home and in sympathy with his surroundings as at Petersham—a week made up wholly of red-letter days.

There is but little room for pure originality in the work of an historian. The most of the facts and incidents, the personality of the leading characters, the dates of the principal events, are common property. But from Dr.

Fiske's standpoint bare facts or a vast aggregation of isolated facts were almost worthless in themselves; their value was developed, when in the hand of a master these facts were classified—their relation to each other shown; and when by the grouping in proper sequence of these isolated facts would be built up a systematic whole, illustrating some great epoch in a nation's life. To many writers of history all facts are of equal value. From Dr. Fiske's broad horizon little incidents, which other writers magnify, disappear, but facts of real moment, even almost insignificant at first view, are clothed with new value as parts of some movement, some development greater than themselves. He grasped facts in their relations. His usefulness as an historian was primarily in his power to present to the average man the revelation of the continuity and necessary sequence of the events in the national life; of the significance of the crises which attended various stages of development, and that when viewed from a sufficiently broad and lofty standpoint, each crisis was inevi-

table, had its use, and taught its lesson. For a mastery of his subject without dullness, for lucidity, charm, and enthusiasm in his grouping of events and bringing them in true relation before his readers, we have never known his equal. Especially is this true of his work in abstruse philosophical or historical subjects, which he has made luminous and transparent by his intellectual clarity.

In his work as a writer on Evolution, he was in great part simply an expositor—a teacher of what had been put in form by Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, and Wallace; but his own contribution to the New Philosophy was important, and was repeatedly recognized as of great value by his masters. This contribution was the important part in the development of the race borne by the lengthened period of infancy in the human child. There came a time in the evolution of man from a lower type of animal life when his intellect had placed him in advance of all other types, and where cunning and the ability to use rude weapons became of more value than simple

physical strength. He was, for example, far less powerful than the gorilla—his possible ancestor. The human child became much weaker and more helpless at birth than the offspring of any members of the purely animal kingdom. In the case of animals, while the maternal instinct is necessarily developed to some extent, the paternal instinct is as a rule not developed at all. Yet where the newly born offspring within a few days is in a large measure able to care for itself, this instinct is but rudimentary as compared with the human race, where great care and kindness for a long period are indispensable to the preservation of the species. This care for the first time calls for the aid of both parents, the mother no less than the child must be cared for, and thus for a long period the parents and the new-born child are necessary to each other, and thus gradually the segregation leading to the family was evolved—the lifelong relations of father and mother, of husband and wife; and with this came love, the human faculty which is divine, and which is the corner-stone and

indispensable element in even the rudest form of civilization. This theory—the contribution of Dr. Fiske to the new philosophy—is of great value, as it is almost the only humanizing element in the doctrine of evolution. Elsewhere the doctrine of selection and of the survival of the fittest is constant and merciless; in all forms of lower life, the tooth and claw—pure physical prowess—are the mighty factors through all the ages. Everywhere the strong devour the weak. The pages of this history are written in blood. Without this prolongation of infancy, the man might have become formidable among animals through sheer force of sharp-wittedness. But without this mighty factor he might never have comprehended the meaning of such terms as self-sacrifice or altruistic devotion. The phenomena of social life would have been omitted from the history of the world, and with them the phenomena of ethics, of religion, and of human love.

Upon the first publication of the theory of evolution, showing the vast age of the world

and illustrating the methods of change through uncounted ages to its present state, it created great disturbance among the theologians of all schools, who denounced the new doctrines as blasphemous and calculated to destroy the very foundations of religious belief. Vast numbers of people felt that if the world was really more than six thousand years old, and had been uncounted millions of years in its building instead of six days, if the old beliefs upon these points must pass away, all the other teachings of the Bible must go also, and they felt the slipping away of all belief in spiritual things. For a long time this large class of people could not realize that there could be but one truth—that it was utterly impossible there should be a conflict between scientific and religious truths, and that with fuller intelligence this seeming conflict would be exchanged for an enduring and mutually beneficial alliance.

To bring about this alliance no writer has done more than Dr. Fiske. He was essentially a man of a most reverent nature and

imagination. His writings in the interpretation of the New Philosophy took on with passing years a note of higher spirituality. His three small volumes, "The Descent of Man," "The Idea of God," and "Through Nature to God," have had a wide circulation, and no stronger argument has ever been made upon the greatest of all questions—the question of a life beyond life—than is set forth in these small volumes. The human soul is the highest creative effort of the Supreme Power which governs all worlds; and as chemistry has demonstrated that no form of matter ever perishes, but may undergo great changes, can it be supposed that the result of the sublimest of all creative efforts is the only thing which does perish? This statement from analogy is ingenious, but not conclusive. Dr. Fiske concedes that we have absolutely no evidence of a future life. No soul has ever returned across the border with tidings of a paradise. But a presumption is raised from the fact that every nation, even the lowest tribes, has a belief in a future state, and the universality of



this belief, which seems inborn, cannot be disregarded. Again Dr. Fiske argues that it is impossible for us ever to have any evidence of a life apart from some form of matter, and that we should not look for or expect such evidence; that the fact that no such proof was forthcoming does not at all militate against the existence of a future life. All our experiences are in connection with material things, and the human mind cannot apprehend anything outside the range of possible experiences. If the soul survives the body, then, and then alone, can it recognize spiritual things.

There was much genial banter in this field between Dr. Fiske and his long-time friend Huxley. Huxley was known and called himself an agnostic. His belief, as stated by himself in a few words, was that it is practically beyond the power of science to adduce any evidence in support of the soul's survival of the body, since the whole question lies outside the bound of our terrestrial experiences. Despite this, Fiske used to quote with delight

and full approval the words of Mr. MacMillan about his friend, "That there was so much real Christianity in Huxley that if it were parceled out among all the inhabitants of the British Isles, there would be enough to save the souls of all, with plenty to spare for the adjoining peoples." He also used to quote with emphatic indorsement Huxley's saying that whatever mistakes he had made, he had never bent the knee to those unutterable humbugs, Benjamin Disraeli and Louis Napoleon. It seemed to me, however, that Dr. Fiske had a sort of sneaking bohemian admiration for the two men who had fooled so many people for so long a time. Fiske used to tell of Huxley's first visit to his home, which occurred at once after his landing in America. He had heard from his American friends of various eatable luxuries not to be found among the effête peoples of the Old World, and was evidently watching for their appearance. At dinner a plate of what our housewives call hot raised biscuits was passed. Huxley took one, looked it over carefully, and then asked, "Is this a

buckwheat cake?" Mr. Fiske's comment on this being that even a great mind was helpless before a proposition involving two unknown quantities.

Dr. Fiske's optimism in spiritual things and his cheerful serenity in the presence of these sublimest of problems, which he had stated with great and penetrating power, have been of vast benefit to his age. Many clergymen, as well as hosts of his great audience, have borne testimony to his saving their belief in spiritual things, when all the supposed foundations seemed to be slipping away. He had the fine enthusiasm of the prophetic soul.

Dr. Fiske, at the time of his death, was unquestionably our first man of letters. Outside his work in his two special lines, he wrote numerous articles for the *Atlantic Monthly*, largely upon current events, all of which showed wide intelligence and research. A recent article, entitled "Forty Years of the Shakespeare-Bacon Folly," was a delightful demolition of that most idiotic tallacy. For Dr. Fiske to attack such a collection of noth-

ingness is something like taking a modern fifteen-inch gun with which to cannonade a grasshopper; but notwithstanding the fact that not a solitary human being entitled to be considered a Shakespearian scholar has ever attached a feather's weight to the Baconian nonsense, sundry people—poseurs—like to make themselves conspicuous by claims of seeing that which cannot be seen.

In summing up the literary work of Dr. Fiske, we may say that in his exposition of evolution he did more than any other man to popularize the New Philosophy, the working-out of which system, more than perhaps aught else, will make his century illustrious, and that his own contribution did more to humanize it and show its gentler and kindlier aspects than the work of any other writer.

That in history he had the grasp of thought and grace of manner of Parkman, and saw a broader horizon and possessed a philosophic and wider range of essential knowledge than even that gifted writer; that he pictured in style of noblest prose the struggle and devel-

opment of the nation before the people in a far clearer light than had been done by others; and that this cheerful optimist left every reader prouder of his country and its people, and more hopeful of the future than ever before. His exposition of history and of human life was cheerful and luminous in its perpetual serenity.

Outside his marvelous ability and rare scholarship, to those who knew him well, the personality of the man was the greatest factor of all. He was a man of abounding vitality and exhaustless good will toward all of his fellows and the whole of life. He partook with zest of all the good things of this world—poetry, music, the drama, and the society of his friends, to whom he was a perpetual delight. He was a master of the technique of music, a good pianist, and an interesting and appreciative singer. In his later years his corpulence had somewhat affected his voice, and I recollect that at a reception at my house when he had sung the "Two Grenadiers," "Sylvia," and other favorites, our old-time comrade,

James S. Norton, said to me as he was leaving the room: "I have greatly enjoyed the music. Fiske sings like a philosopher!"

Howells says of him: "One of the kindest hearts in the world looked out of his spectacled eyes. At Cambridge his social and intellectual environment was as congenial as a man of his temperament could have, and he felt to the uttermost the inexpressible comfort of it." He was a universal favorite among his neighbors, who relate various quaint stories showing his childlike simplicity, with its touch of the atmosphere of Bohemia. Mrs. Fiske had a brother, James Brooks, a prosperous business man of Boston, a bachelor, and very fond of Mrs. Fiske and the family, whom he would occasionally visit for a few days. As the story is told, one morning as Fiske was walking from his house to the Harvard Library he met a friend who said, presently: "Why, Fiske, you look bunged up. You don't look as if you had slept at all last night." Replied Fiske: "I did not sleep well at all. Jim Brooks kept

me awake more than three hours, walking up and down with the baby!" Fiske's baby, of course!

Another of the neighborhood stories was when Mrs. Fiske found, to her horror, that the children had learned the use of various profane words while playing in the streets. Said Mrs. Fiske: "John, it's perfectly dreadful how our children are learning to swear. Yesterday Maud said to me, 'Mamma, I think Cousin Mary is a fool and Cousin Kate a damned fool!' " "Well," said the Professor, after a moment's reflection, "don't you think, Abby, that the child made a very accurate distinction as to the relative intellectual faculties of the two girls?"

Dr. Fiske lectured at the State University of Missouri for many years. The president was a great admirer of Dr. Fiske, and one day, when talking with a student, said to him: "I suppose of course you are attending the lectures of Professor Fiske." "No," said the boy, "I don't think much of Fiske." Said the president: "You ought not to miss

one of his lectures. It is the opportunity of your life." Said the boy: "I don't admire Fiske. I think his writings are superficial." "What," said the president, "John Fiske superficial! You might as well say that he was emaciated!"

Dr. Fiske's robust figure encompassed a magnetic and jovial soul. His life was one of industrious and noble contentment. Each passing hour brought to him its delights. It might be said of him as was said of Darwin, that he was one whom the gods, for love of him, had endowed with perpetual youth, so that his death could never seem other than premature. His sudden death had in it an element of tragedy.

He had a pleasant home in Cambridge, which had been built for him by Mr. Stoughton, his mother's second husband. His mother, again a widow, lived in a large and beautiful home, built by Richardson, the great architect, and one of his most successful houses. Fiske's house was roomy and comfortable in all ways except in its library accom-



modations. He had a library of some ten thousand volumes, selected with reference to his literary work, which had greatly outgrown the room provided for it. The ceilings were high, the bookcases reached to the ceilings, and the shelves usually had a double row of books, one behind the other, making them inconvenient of access. For years he had been planning to build an addition to the library room, but could not study out a plan to add it to the house without spoiling the symmetry of the building. Something over a year ago Mrs. Stoughton proposed that Mr. Fiske should give up his house, and with his family come to live in her house, which had abundant room for all, and the plan was decided. Some changes were to be made in the house, among others Fiske was to have his ideal room for his library. In April, 1901, I spent an afternoon with Dr. Fiske, and one of the first things he proposed was a walk to his mother's house to see his new workroom. We visited it. The carpenters and other workmen were everywhere at work, but the

new library room was substantially finished—a beautiful room thirty by fifty feet, with a big fireplace in the middle of one side, and the entire wall space of the room, except the door and windows, covered with book-shelves. His delight was almost boyish as he talked of his enjoyment when domiciled in his new workshop with all his books in easy reach. Then he was full, too, of the idea of his proposed trip to England. The year was the one thousandth anniversary of the death of King Alfred, of mighty memory, and the English people proposed to have a great commemoration of the event at Winchester. Departing from their usual insularity, the committee in charge had invited Dr. Fiske, a foreigner, to give the principal address on the occasion. He felt it the greatest compliment of his life. Much of the time of my brief visit was taken up in his discussion of the delightful summer before him, dwelling for a time in his new library, and in July sailing for England for the Winchester celebration, and also for some courses of lectures at the Universities of Ox-

ford and Cambridge. The alteration at the new house consumed much more time than was anticipated, so it was not until the second of July that he began to move his books to the new room. Soon after this was completed he was to sail for England. On the fourth of July, prostrated by the murderous heat, he passed away.

To those so blessed as to be of the inner circle of his friends, his gifts of a rare and comprehensive scholarship, his versatility, his commanding power of clear, simple narrative, are not more kindly and lovingly held in remembrance than his never-failing geniality and heartiness of personal good will. Such friends will count their intimacy with him as one of life's most cherished and precious remembrances.

For his work as historian, as evolutionist, and as theologian in its best sense, he ever aimed to promote the highest ends. He was industrious and conscientious, and wrought "as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye." For him, therefore, there could be no fear in facing

the great unknown. With perfect serenity he could lie down to his long, his last, and dreamless sleep. His experiences had been an illustration, and his life-work a revelation, of the ultimate justice of the laws by which men and worlds are governed, and in these laws he could calmly trust.

Few men could more confidently repeat the lines of Whittier:

“ I know not where His islands lift  
    Their fronded palms in air,  
I only know I cannot drift  
    Beyond His love and care.  
And so, beside the silent sea  
    I wait the muffled oar.  
No harm from Him can come to me  
    On ocean or on shore.”



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