be true or not is now a manner of so little consequence that it would not repay the trouble of a strict historical investigation.

The year 1727 was drawing to its close, when on a dark stormy night the howling and barking of the numerous dogs in the streets of New Orleans were observed to be fiercer than usual, and some of that class of individuals who pretend to know everything, declared that by the vivid flashes of the lightning, they had seen swiftly and stealthily gliding toward the residence of the *unknown* a body of men who wore the scowling appearance of malefactors and ministers of blood. There afterwards came also a report that a piratical-looking Turkish vessel had been hovering a few days previous in the bay of Barataria. Be it as it may, on the next morning the house of the stranger was deserted. There were no traces of mortal struggle to be seen; but in the garden the earth had been dug, and *there* was the unmistakable indication of a recent grave.

Soon, however, all doubts were removed by the finding of an inscription in Arabic characters, engraved on a marble tablet, which was subsequently sent to France. It ran thus: "The justice of heaven is satisfied, and the date-tree shall grow on the traitor's tomb. The sublime Emperor of the faithful, the supporter of the faith, the omnipotent master and Sultan of the world, has redeemed his vow. God is great, and Mohammed is his prophet. Allah!" Some time after this event, a foreign-looking tree was seen to peep out of the spot where a corpse must have been deposited in that stormy night, when the rage of the elements yielded to the pitiless fury of man, and it thus explained in some degree this part of the inscription, "the date-tree shall grow on the traitor's grave."

Who was he, or what had he done, who had provoked such relentless and far-seeking revenge? Ask Nemesis,—or,

at that hour when evil spirits are allowed to roam over the earth and magical invocations are made, go and interrogate the tree of the dead.

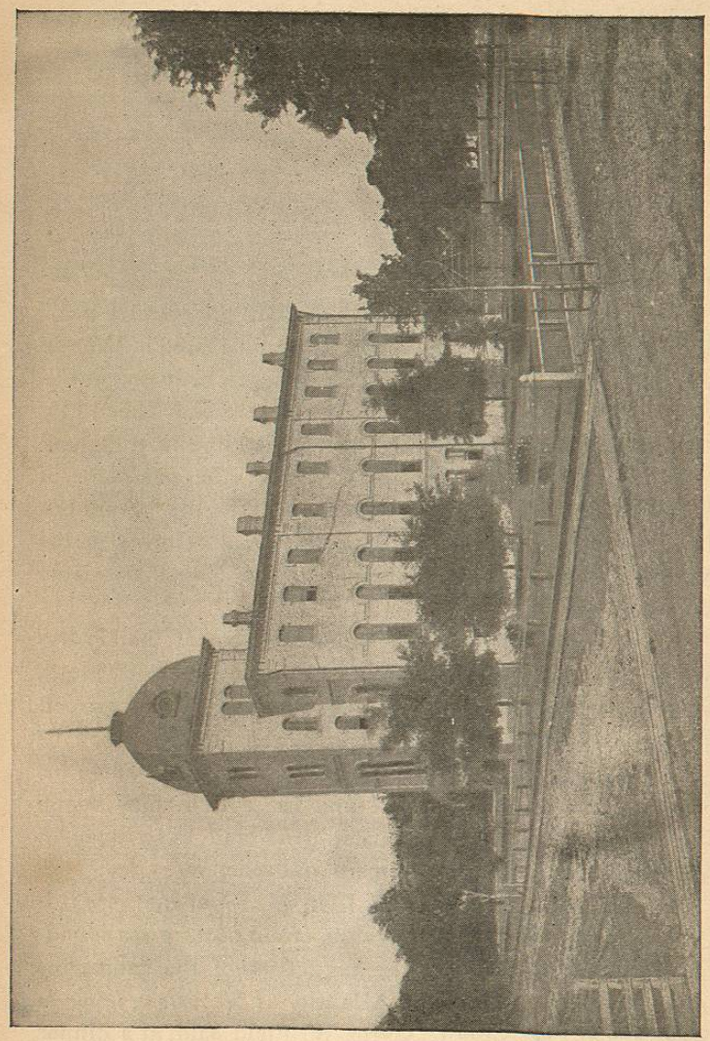
MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY.

1806-1873.

MATTHEW FONTAINE MAURY, the "Pathfinder of the Sea," was born in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, reared in Tennessee, and entered the Navy in 1825, rising to be lieutenant in 1837. In 1839 he met with an accident which lamed him for life, and he thenceforward spent his time in study and investigation of naval subjects. Under the pen-name of "Harry Bluff," he wrote some essays for the "Southern Literary Messenger," which produced great reforms in the Navy and led to the establishment of the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

In 1842 he was appointed superintendent of the Hydrographical Office, and in 1844, of the National Observatory, at Washington, the latter position including the former. The observations of winds, currents, and storms, which he caused to be made during nine years, are embodied in his "Wind and Current Charts;" and the system thus begun was adopted by all European countries and has proven of immense benefit both to commere and science.

To him and to Lieutenant John M. Brooke, afterwards Com. Brooke, C. S. N., belongs the credit of deep-sea soundings; and to him we owe the suggestion of the submarine telegraphic cable across the Atlantic. (*See below, letter to Secretary of the Navy.*) Cyrus W. Field said, at a dinner given in 1858 to celebrate the first cable message across the



Florida State Agricultural College (Main Building), Lake City, Fla.

Atlantic,—"Maury furnished the brains, England gave the money, and I did the work."

His "Physical Geography of the Sea" has been translated into all the languages of Europe, and caused Humboldt to say that Maury had founded a new science. His researches and scientific labors gained him honors and medals from all scientific societies. His "Navigation" and "Geographies" are in popular use in our schools. His style is irresistibly attractive, being clear, strong, elegant, and indicative of truth in the man behind it.

He entered the Confederate service in 1861, and was employed at first at Richmond and later as naval agent in Europe. When Lee surrendered, he was in the West Indies on his way to put in use against Federal vessels in Southern ports a method of arranging torpedo mines which he had invented.

He then went to Mexico (1865) and took a position in the Cabinet of the Emperor Maximilian; but the revolution there (1866) terminated his relations with that government. After two years in England, he returned to Virginia and in 1868 became professor of Physics in the Virginia Military Institute. At this time the University of Cambridge conferred upon him the degree of LL. D., and the Emperor of the French invited him to Paris as superintendent of the Imperial Observatory.

His life has been written in a most engaging style by his daughter, Mrs. Diana Fontaine Maury Corbin.

WORKS.

Navigation.
Scraps from the Lucky Bay, by Harry Bluff.
Rebuilding Southern Commerce.
Wind and Current Charts.
Sailing Directions.
Physical Geography of the Sea.
Series of Geographies.
Physical Survey of Virginia.
Resources of West Virginia (with Wm. M. Fontaine).
Lanes for Steamers Crossing the Atlantic.
Amazon and Atlantic Slopes.
Magnetism and the Circulation of the Atmosphere.

THE GULF STREAM.

(*From Sailing Directions.*)

It is not necessary to associate with oceanic currents the idea that they must of necessity, as on land, run from a higher to a lower level. So far from this being the case, some currents of the sea actually run up-hill, while others run on a level. The Gulf Stream is of the first class. In a paper read before the National Institute in 1844, I showed why the bottom of the Gulf Stream ought, theoretically, to be an inclined plane, running *upwards*. If the Gulf Stream be 200 fathoms deep in the Florida Pass, and but 100 fathoms off Hatteras, it is evident that the bottom would be lifted 100 fathoms within that distance; and therefore, while the bottom of the Gulf Stream runs up-hill, the top preserves the water-level, or nearly so; for its banks are of sea-water, and being in the ocean, are themselves on a water-level. .

. . . . . .

I have also, on a former occasion, pointed out the fact, that, inasmuch as the Gulf Stream is a bed of warm water, lying between banks of cold water—that as warm water is lighter than cold—therefore, the surface of the Gulf Stream ought, theoretically, to be in the shape of a double inclined plane, like the roof a house, down which we may expect to find a shallow surface or roof current, running from the middle towards either edge of the stream.

The fact that this roof-current does exist has been fully established . . . . . by officers of the navy. Thus, in lowering a boat to try a current, they found that the boat would invariably be drifted towards one side or other of the stream, while the vessel herself was drifted along in the direction of it. . .

This feature of the Gulf Stream throws a gleam of light upon the *locus* of the Gulf weed, by proving that its place

of growth cannot be on this side (west) of that stream. No Gulf weed is ever found west of the axis of the Gulf Stream; and, if we admit the top of the stream to be higher in the middle than at the edges, it would be difficult to imagine how the Gulf weed should cross it, or get from one side of it to the other.

The inference, therefore, would be, that as all the Gulf weed which is seen about this stream is on its eastern declivity, the *locus* of the weed must be somewhere within or near the borders of the stream, and to the east of the middle. And this idea is strengthened by the report of Captain Scott, a most intelligent ship-master, who informs me that he has seen the Gulf weed growing on the Bahama Banks.

DEEP-SEA SOUNDINGS.

(*From a Letter to the Secretary of the Navy, 1854, given in Mrs. Corbin's Life of Maury.**)

The U. S. brig "Dolphin," lieutenant commanding O. H. Berryman, was employed last summer upon special services connected with this office. . . . He was directed also to carry along a line of deep-sea soundings from the shores of Newfoundland to those of Ireland. The result is highly interesting upon the question of a submarine telegraph across the Atlantic, and I therefore beg leave to make it the subject of a special report.

This line of deep-sea sounding seems to be DECISIVE of the question as to the practicability of a submarine telegraph between the two continents *in so far as the bottom of the deep sea is concerned.* From Newfoundland to Ireland the distance between the nearest points is about 1600 miles, and the bottom of the sea between the two places is a plateau which seems to have been placed there especially for

*By permission of Mrs. Corbin.

the purpose of holding the wires of the submarine telegraph, and of keeping them out of harm's way. It is neither too deep nor too shallow; yet it is so deep that the wires but once landed will remain forever beyond the reach of the anchors of vessels, icebergs, and drifts of any kind, and so shallow, that they may be readily lodged upon the bottom.

. . . . . .

A wire laid across from either of the above-named places on this side to the north of the Grand Banks, will rest on that beautiful plateau to which I have alluded, and where the waters of the sea appear to be as quiet and as completely at rest as it is at the bottom of a mill-pond. It is proper that the reasons should be stated for the inference that there are no perceptible currents and no abrading agents at work at the bottom of the sea upon this telegraphic plateau. I derive this inference from the study of a physical fact, which I little deemed, when I sought it, had any such bearings.

Lieutenant Berryman brought up, with "Brooke's deep-sea sounding apparatus," specimens of the bottom from this plateau. I sent them to Professor Bailey, at West Point, for examination under his microscope. This he kindly undertook, and that eminent microscopist was quite as much surprised to find, as I was to learn, that all these specimens of deep-sea soundings are filled with microscopic shells. To use his own words, "not a particle of sand or gravel exists in them." These little shells therefore suggest the fact that there are no currents at the bottom of the sea whence they come; that Brooke's lead found them where they were deposited in their burial-place. . . .

Had there been currents at the bottom, they would have swept and abraded and mingled up with these microscopic remains the *débris* of the bottom of the sea, such as ooze,

sand, gravel, and other matter; but not a particle of sand or gravel was found among them. Hence the inference that these depths of the sea are not disturbed by either waves or currents. Consequently, a telegraphic wire once laid there would remain as completely beyond the reach of accident as it would be if buried in air-tight cases.

HEROIC DEATH OF LIEUTENANT HERNDON.

(*From Maury's Report, in Mrs. Corbin's Life of Maury.**)

U. S. NATIONAL OBSERVATORY,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 19th, 1857.*

SIR,—On the 12th day of September last, at sea, the U. S. mail steamship "Central America," with the California mails, many of the passengers and crew, and a large amount of treasure on board, foundered in a gale [off Cape Hatteras]. The law requires the vessels of this line to be commanded by officers of the Navy, and Commander William Lewis Herndon had this one. He went down with his ship, leaving a glowing example of devotion to duty, Christian conduct, and true heroism. . . . .

The "Central America," at the time of her loss, was bound from Aspinwall, viâ Havana, to New York. She had on board, as nearly as has been ascertained, about two millions in gold, and 474 passengers, besides a crew, all told, of 101 souls—total, 575.

She touched at Havana on the 7th September last, and put to sea again at nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th. The ship was apparently in good order, the time seemed propitious, and all hands were in fine health and spirits, for the prospects of a safe and speedy passage home were very cheering. The breeze was from the trade winds quarter at N. E.; but at midnight on the 9th it freshened to a gale,

*By permission of Mrs. Corbin.

which continued to increase till the forenoon of Friday, September 11th, when it blew with great violence. . .

Up to this time the ship behaved admirably; nothing had occurred worthy of note, or in any way calculated to excite suspicions of her prowess, until the forenoon of that day, when it was discovered that she had sprung a leak. The sea was running high: . . . the leak was so large that by 1 P. M. the water had risen high enough to extinguish the fires on one side and stop the engine. . . . Crew and passengers worked manfully, pumping and baling all Friday afternoon and night, and when day dawned upon them the violence of the storm was still increasing. . . . The flag was hoisted union down, that every vessel as she hove in sight might know they were in distress and wanted help. . . . . .

Finally, about noon of Saturday the 12th, the gale began to abate and the sky to brighten. . . . At about 2 P. M. the brig "Marine," Captain Burt, of Boston, bound from the West Indies to New York, heard minute-guns, and saw the steamer's signals of distress. She ran down to the sinking ship, and though very much crippled herself by the gale, promised to lay by. . . . The steamer's boats were ordered to be lowered—the "Marine" had none that could live in such a sea. . . . All the women and children were first sent to the brig, and every one arrived there in safety. Each boat made two loads to the brig, carrying in all 100 persons.

By this time night was setting in. The brig had drifted to leeward several miles away from the steamer; and was so crippled that she could not beat up to her again.

Black's (the boatswain) boat alone returned the second time. Her gallant crew had been buffeting with the storm

for two days and nights without rest, and with little or no food. The boat itself had been badly stove while alongside with the last load of passengers. She was so much knocked to pieces as to be really unserviceable, nor could she have held another person. Still those brave seamen, inspired by the conduct and true to the trust imposed in them by their Captain, did not hesitate to leave the brig again, and pull back through the dark for miles, across an angry sea, that they might join him in his sinking ship, and take their chances with the rest. . . . . .

As one of the last boats was about to leave the ship, her commander gave his watch to a passenger with the request that it might be delivered to his wife. He wished to charge him with a message for her also, but his utterance was choked. "Tell her ———." Unable to proceed, he bent down his head and buried his face in his hands for a moment as if in prayer, for he was a devout man and a Christian.

In that moment, brief as it was, he endured the great agony; but it was over now. . . . He had resolved to go down with his ship. Calm and collected, he rose up from that mighty struggle with renewed vigour, and went with encouraging looks about the duties of the ship as before. . . .

After the boat which bore Mr. Payne—to whom Herndon had entrusted his watch—had shoved off, the Captain went to his state-room and put on his uniform; . . . . then walking out, he took his stand on the wheel-house, holding on to the iron railing with his left hand. A rocket was sent off, the ship fetched her last lurch, and as she went down he uncovered. . . .

Just before the steamer went down, a row-boat was heard approaching. Herndon hailed her; it was the boatswain's boat, rowed by "hard hands and gentle hearts," returning

from on board the brig to report her disabled condition. If she came alongside she would be engulfed with the sinking ship. Herndon ordered her to keep off. She did so, and was saved. This, as far as I have been able to learn, was his last order. Forgetful of self, mindful of others, his life was beautiful to the last, and in his death he has added a new glory to the annals of the sea.

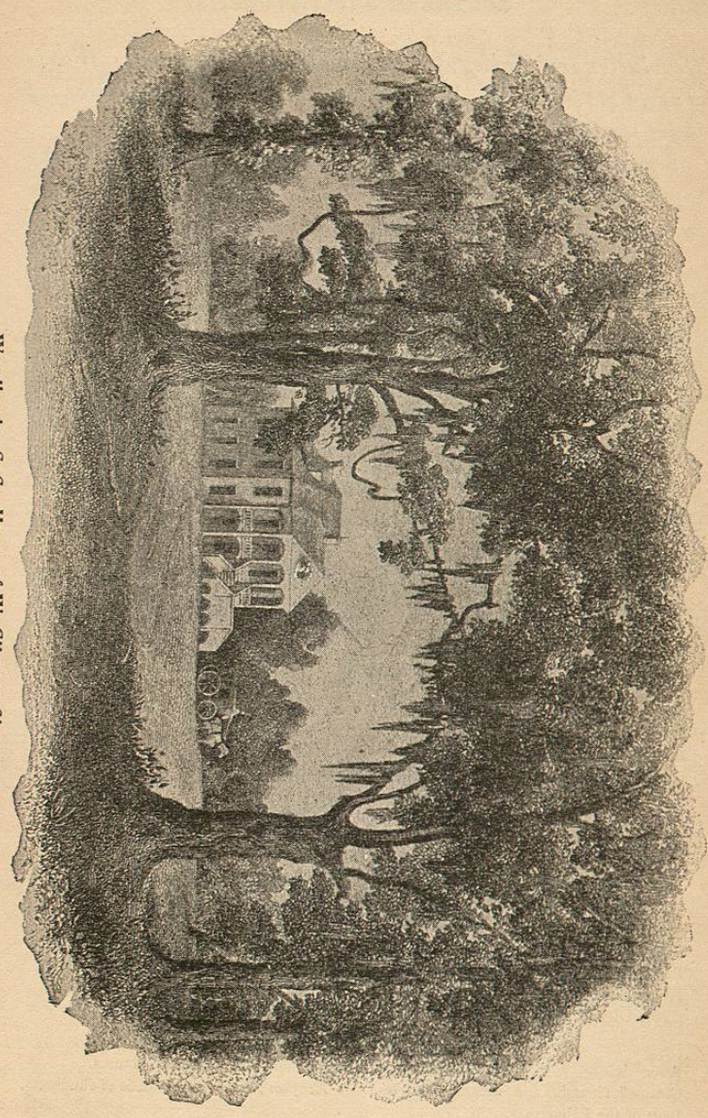
[A handsome monument to his memory stands in the Parade-ground of the Naval School at Annapolis.]

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS.

1806-1870.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS was born and reared in Charleston, South Carolina. His early education was limited; he was for a while clerk in a drug-store and then he studied law. But his decided taste for letters soon induced him to devote his entire time and attention to their cultivation. He wrote rapidly and voluminously, and produced poems, novels, dramas, histories, biographies, book-reviews, editorials,—in short, all kinds of writing. He was editor of various journals at different times, and did all he could to inspire and foster a literary taste in his generation. His style shows the effect of haste and overwork.

His novels dealing with Colonial and Revolutionary subjects are his best work. They give us graphic pictures of the struggles that our forefathers in the South had with the wild beasts, swamps, forests, and Indians in Colonial times, and with these and the British in the Revolutionary period. They should be read in connection with our early history, especially the following: *Yemassee, (1714, Colonial times); Partisan, Mellichampe, and Katharine Walton, (forming the*



Woodlands, S. C., Home of W. Gilmore Simms.