

BOWDITCH (H.P.)

*With the Compliments of the Writer.*

THEODORE LYMAN.

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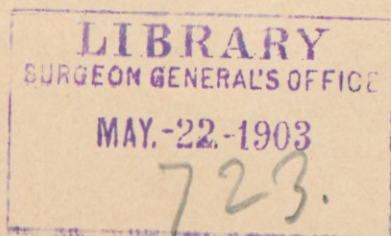
THEODORE LYMAN.

Resident Fellow Class II., Section 3, November, 1859. — Treasurer 1877-1883. —  
Secretary of Committee on the 100th Anniversary of the  
Founding of the Academy.

THEODORE LYMAN was born in Waltham, Mass., on the 23d of August, 1833, and died at Nahant, Mass., on the 9th of September, 1897. He was of the seventh generation in descent from Richard Lyman, the ancestor of the family, who came to this country in 1631 in the same ship with John Eliot, and the third successive bearer of the name Theodore Lyman.

The first Theodore Lyman, the grandfather of our late associate, came from old York, Maine, to Boston, and, as a successful merchant in this city, laid the foundation of the family fortunes.

His son, the second Theodore Lyman, studied in Europe in his early life, and, returning, served in the State Legislature from 1820 to 1825. He was Mayor of Boston in 1834-35, and while in this office defended William Lloyd Garrison from personal violence at the hands of a mob of respectable rioters to whom the fearless course of the abolitionist leader had given grave offence. Mayor Lyman secured the foundation of the Massachusetts State Reform School at Westboro, now appropriately known as the Lyman School, in grateful recognition of his endowment of the institution with a fund amounting to \$72,500. He was a generous friend to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and to the Boston Farm School, an institution over which his son presided for several years. He was the author of works upon "The Political State of Italy" and "The Diplomacy of the United States," of small volumes entitled "Rambles in Italy" and "A few Weeks in Paris during the Residence of the Allied Sovereigns in that City," and of a Fourth of July Oration delivered in 1820.



The subject of the present sketch inherited his distinguished father's physique, as well as his intellectual traits and his strong sense of civic duties. He secured his early education from private instructors, spending two years in Europe from 1847 to 1849. While in Paris he suffered from a severe attack of typhoid fever, and also from weakness of the eyes. Returning home in 1849, he entered Harvard College in the Class of 1855, having among his classmates Alexander Agassiz and Phillips Brooks. During his college course we find evidences of his literary activity in the pages of the Harvard Magazine, a periodical founded by the classes of 1855 and 1856, but destined to be short-lived.

As if anticipating a career which was ten years later to engross his whole life and thought, his contributions were frequently upon military subjects, on which, as his classmate F. B. Sanborn says, "he joked with a substratum of excellent sense." His literary reputation as a student will, however, always rest securely on the song in which, as Chorister of the Hasty Pudding Club, he described the mystical origin of that ancient fraternity.

After graduation he studied for three years under the guidance of Prof. Louis Agassiz, and in 1858 received the degree of S. B. *summa cum laude*. The impressions produced upon him at this period of his life are recorded in an article entitled "Recollections of Agassiz," published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1874. The direction given to his studies by his great master was maintained during his whole life, and in recognition of the high value of his biological work his Alma Mater bestowed upon him in 1891 the honorary degree of LL. D.

Theodore Lyman's first public service was rendered in 1859-60 as a Trustee of the Reform School, which had been founded by the State at the instance and with the help of his father, for the instruction, employment, and reformation of juvenile offenders unfit to be at large, but not for boys who had become hardened by a prolonged vicious course, who were bad themselves and fitted to make others bad. By degrees however this purpose had been lost sight of, and vicious youths up to sixteen years of age had been committed to the School. The natural consequences ensued. \$50,000 worth of property was destroyed by the burning of newly erected buildings by a boy who thus attempted to secure an alternate sentence, i. e. a short sentence to a penal institution, instead of being kept under guardianship at the School during minority. A return to the original plan of the founders of the School was secured through the strenuous exertions of Theodore Lyman, who, though the youngest member of the board, evidently prevailed in their counsels through the

same effective courage and energy which marked his later career, and did not quit the work until the Legislature had fixed the age limit at fourteen years, and had done away with the alternate sentence, placing all the boys in the School's custody during minority. It was not until 1884, when the Massachusetts Reformatory was established at Concord, that the age limit at Westboro was fixed at fifteen years, and provision was made for the transfer to Concord of boys who should prove to be unfit subjects for the Reform School, which was now by act of Legislature called "The Lyman School for Boys." A few years after its removal to a neighboring farm in the town of Westboro, Theodore Lyman came to the School for the dedication of the chapel, and, as he watched the boys at their work and play, he expressed his satisfaction at the success of the trustees in having at last made it very nearly the kind of school that his father had wished and hoped that it might become.

Theodore Lyman was married on November 28, 1856, to Elizabeth Russell, eldest daughter of George R. Russell, and a few years later went abroad for two years. It was during this period that his daughter Cora was born, in 1862. Returning home in 1863, he at once entered the military service of his country, then in the throes of civil war. He secured a commission as volunteer aid of the Governor of Massachusetts with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and was assigned to special duty at the headquarters of General Meade, with whom he had become very well acquainted before the war, and who was then in command of the Army of the Potomac. In this capacity he served till the end of the Civil War, taking part in the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor, in the movements around Petersburg and in the final surrender at Appomattox Court House, where he was one of the few officers privileged to ride through the Confederate lines after the surrender. During all this period he showed an active and intelligent interest in his new work by making almost daily sketches showing the positions of the different corps of the Army of the Potomac. Mr. John C. Ropes, President of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, writes that he "was so much impressed with the value of these cartographic statements of the movements of the Army of the Potomac, from the autumn of 1863 down to and including the 9th of April, 1865, when Lee surrendered," that he had them all copied for the use of the Society. The same high authority in military matters speaks also of having seen extracts from a diary kept by Theodore Lyman during this period, "which are as humorous and as entertaining as any pictures of the camp

and march can possibly be." It is greatly to be hoped that this diary may in due time be edited and published, as it cannot fail to be a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the civil war. Few actors in this great drama had better opportunities of watching the succession of important historical events, or minds better qualified for observing, recording, and commenting upon them. Nor did his interest in military matters cease with the war, for, as a member of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts he had ample opportunity to discuss with his companions in arms the great events in which they had all taken part. On June 11, 1877, he read a "Review of the Reports of Colonel Haven and General Weld on the conduct of General McClellan at Alexandria, in August, 1862, and on the case of Fitz John Porter."

Lyman maintained a close and unbroken friendship with General Meade until the death of the latter, in 1872. He then wrote an obituary notice of his old commander, which was published in Volume IX. of the Proceedings of this Academy.

During the twenty years following the close of the civil war Theodore Lyman's life was one of abounding activity, though before the end of this period the dread disease which was to make the closing years of his life a continual martyrdom had already marked him for its own.

To his Alma Mater he rendered important services as Overseer from 1868 to 1880, and from 1881 to 1888. Here his influence was always thrown in favor of liberty in the choice of studies and in attendance upon religious services. He was also one of the original Trustees and Treasurer of the Zoölogical Museum, a member and Secretary of the Museum Faculty, and Assistant in Zoölogy. The value of his services to the Museum in these various capacities was gratefully acknowledged by the Director, Alexander Agassiz, who, in his Annual Report for 1896-97 thus speaks of Lyman's scientific work: "His zoölogical work began with short papers on ornithological subjects; he subsequently became interested in corals, and finally devoted himself specially to Ophiurans. The first Illustrated Catalogue of the Museum was from his pen, and this important monograph on Ophiurans was followed by numerous papers on the same subject, treating of new species of the group. He wrote the Report on the Ophiurans of the 'Hassler' Expedition, of the 'Challenger,' and of the 'Blake,' which include by far the larger number of species of Ophiurans dredged by those deep-sea exploring expeditions."

On the establishment of the Commission of Inland Fisheries in 1866, Theodore Lyman became its first Chairman, and gave the State devoted

service for seventeen years without compensation. The story of his disinterested labor in this field is told in the Commissioners' Annual Reports, many of which are from his own pen, and are characterized by a brightness of style which pleasantly relieves the gravity of an official document.

In 1884, as President of the American Fish Cultural Association, at the thirteenth annual meeting held in Washington on May 13, he delivered an address which is printed in the 19th Annual Report of the Commissioners of Inland Fisheries of Massachusetts. Here he sketches in the most charming manner the history of the fish industries of New England from the time when the inhabitants were wont to "dunge their grounds with codd." He shows that fifty years after the settlement of the country a diminution in the number of fish in the New England rivers had already been noted, and describes the various laws enacted for their protection, culminating in 1864-65 in modern fish culture under the auspices of several State governments, and finally in the appointment in 1871 of the United States Fish Commission under the leadership of Professor Spencer F. Baird.

The various fishery commissions of the country have, to use Theodore Lyman's own words, "accumulated a vast amount of accurate information concerning the numbers and variety of our fishes, their food, manner of breeding, condition of life, migration, and stages of growth." Pisciculture has become a State and national industry, while many private fish preserves have been established in various parts of the country. Several species of Salmonidæ are raised regularly for the market, and it is highly probable that nearly all the shad now taken in our Atlantic streams have originated in State or national hatching establishments. These results, though important, merely serve to indicate what great additions to the wealth of the country may be effected when water culture is "practised as universally and methodically as is agriculture." When Americans shall have learned to cultivate the water thus methodically, and shall desire to honor the men who in their day and generation have labored to re-establish the fisheries of the country, no name will stand higher on the list than that of Theodore Lyman.

In politics Theodore Lyman was distinguished for independence and an earnest advocacy of civil service reform, a cause which, as founder and Vice President of the Massachusetts Reform Club, he sought in every way to promote. He was elected to Congress from the Ninth District in 1882, and, though handicapped by increasing infirmities, nobly represented the State "as long as patriotism was more prized in his district

than partisanship."\* His independent course in politics was naturally distasteful to many political leaders, and, at the time of the "Mugwump" defection from the Republican party, called down upon him some severe animadversions from Senator Hoar. On this occasion he, with exquisite humor and with generous consideration for his antagonist, compared himself to a fellow who boasted to his neighbors that he had "just been cuffed by the King."

In November, 1869, he was elected a Resident Member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and in December, 1880, he read before the Society a memoir of his father-in-law, George R. Russell.

He was also a Trustee of the Peabody Educational Fund.

Theodore Lyman did so much work of a high order in so many different directions that it is difficult to decide in what calling he was most fitted to excel. That he possessed a decided aptitude for the duties of a soldier is the opinion of those best qualified to judge, and it is not at all improbable that when, in the fulness of time, his diary shall be given to the public, his place among the military writers of the world will be definitely assured.

His high character and his firm conviction that "public office is a public trust" well fitted him for the career of a statesman, and there is little doubt that he would have distinguished himself in public life had circumstances favored the adoption of such a career.

His scientific papers are examples of conscientious observation, and are valuable contributions to the field of knowledge in which he labored.

Perhaps the trait of character which most impressed itself upon all who came in contact with Theodore Lyman was the cheerfulness and gayety of his disposition. This gayety was far removed from frivolity, and was compatible with a stern expression of indignation whenever circumstances called it forth. In this spirit were compiled the "Papers relating to the Garrison Mob," † in which the son indignantly repels the criticisms of Wendell Phillips upon the conduct of the father on that memorable occasion.

Another remarkable trait in Theodore Lyman's character was the alertness of his mind, which, combined with the gayety of his nature, made his companionship both socially and intellectually so charming. Even in his serious writings, e. g. in his Reports as Fish Commissioner, his exuberant vitality and his cheerful humor found expression, but it was, of

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\* "H. L.," Transcript, Sept. 15, 1897.

† Cambridge, Welch, Bigelow, & Co., 1870.



course, in his personal intercourse with his companions that this charm was most distinctly felt. It was this which led to his being for many years, by common consent, chairman of his Class dinners, as the Class Secretary E. H. Abbot tells us in a most appropriate and affectionate notice of him prepared for distribution to the members of the Class of 1855.

The members of the Thursday Evening Club, over which he presided for many years, will long remember the way in which the meetings were enlivened by his ready wit, and the happy manner in which he introduced the successive speakers.

Upon this life, so filled with everything that could make life enjoyable, early fell the shadow of a mortal disease, so gradual in its approach that few of his friends were aware that the first warning came sixteen years before his death. During this period he was, in the words of his friend and classmate, E. H. Abbot, "day by day parting with the power to act, until at last he was forced to stand still and watch the stream of life flow by; a soul imprisoned in a body which was gradually losing all power of movement, and which at last became absolutely helpless and dependent for every service upon external aid. To him of all men these years of prolonged and growing uselessness must have seemed a living death. And yet they who know most about him know that those years were really the noblest of his life. His brave spirit in this growing isolation, which at last withdrew him from the sight of almost all except his own family, surmounted all barriers. He never permitted himself to lose his active interest in the events of other lives. He cheered on the doers of good all over the world by messages which came from his chamber with all their old-time gayety and brightness. When his hand could no longer hold the pen, he spoke through his tender amanuensis words full of the same high courage and cheerful humor which had been his charm in earlier life."

In concluding this brief notice of Theodore Lyman, it may perhaps be permitted to supplement the above tender and truthful description of his last years with a few words employed by the writer of this sketch to introduce a resolution of the Thursday Evening Club replying to an affectionate message from its former President on the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation:—

"I remember, Mr. President, when a young man, looking around among the men of my generation and considering whose lot in life seemed to me, on the whole, the most enviable. I came to the conclusion that Theodore Lyman was, of all my acquaintances, the man for whom the future seemed to hold out the brightest promise.

“In vigorous health, with a personality physical, mental, and moral which endeared him to all who came in contact with him, happily married, with instincts and powers which led him to the highest callings, to the service of his country in the field and in legislative halls, with tastes for the study of the natural sciences and abundant means to gratify them, there seemed to be nothing lacking to make his life an ideally happy one.

“Then, when the shadow of a slow insidious disease fell upon him, it seemed for a time as if his life were but to afford another illustration of the old Greek saying that no man is to be judged happy before his death. But when I saw how bravely he met the advances of his enemy, and with what courageous cheerfulness he interested himself in the pursuits of his friends and in the active life around him in which he could no longer share, I could not help feeling that a happiness was reserved for him higher than any of which the Greek philosopher had dreamed, or I, as a young man, had formed a conception, — the happiness of knowing that by the force of his example he had helped to raise those who came under its influence to a higher and nobler life.”

HENRY P. BOWDITCH.



