

to keep his linguistic reserves in the background, lest they should aggravate the natural tendency of the holders of the citadel to repel scalars. English is the Excalibur of the literary center of the United States, and of him who can wield it effectively no questions will be asked, either as to how he acquired the knack, or as to his other languages. This fact does not imply a disrespect for scholarship, but indicates, rather, an overmastering interest in the vital necessities of the situation.

By his comparison of the smaller towns of the country with the literary center, to the disadvantage of the latter, as regards the ease with which the literary aspirant may obtain in them recognition for his abilities, the gentleman apprehended a great truth, but stated only part of it. The more notable part relates to the fact that in the matter of literature proper it is just as easy to gain attention in the literary center by remaining in the remotest hamlet as by fetching manuscript in person to the great mart. Inexperienced writers sometimes adopt the latter course, with the expectation that a spell may be worked by personal blandishments, or that editors and publishers will supply them with full specifications for articles and stories which, for that reason, must inevitably prove to be «available.» Manuscripts are indeed «ordered» in a literary center, but on the same business principles that prevail when a stovepipe of peculiar shape is sought from a tinsmith: the first care is to apply to an artisan who has learned his trade.

When the gentleman further shows that he cherishes the old illusions with regard to the uses of a literary center, it is easy to understand why he should have failed in the competition. An intelligent person who, after scraping acquaintance with the literary markets of New York, deliberately concludes that they are run by rings, on lines of favoritism, and that the avenues of inquiry and experimentation are difficult to a stranger, has a facet in his mind through which

neither the facts of experience nor the products of the imagination will appear in quite the proper perspective. There is no market for the literary products of a warped judgment, especially in a literary center, which is, first of all, an emporium run on a strictly commercial basis.

It is the commercial aspect which renders such a thing as a «literary ring» a practical impossibility, unless we assume that the highest attainable talent might, by accident, be found in a «ring»; but the term is always used to imply that inferior talent is being sustained at the expense of genius. No literary enterprise could long survive such a policy, except it were used as a vehicle for exploiting vanity and unlimited money. In the fair field and no favor of a literary center the stranger with a brilliant manuscript arouses more joy than ninety and nine well-known writers with productions of average excellence. Scarcely a periodical comes from the presses of the metropolis that does not contain names unknown to the reading public. The publisher who should fail to provide easy access to his editorial and counting rooms for such as they, would be as foolish commercially as the owner of a water-supply who should take the trouble to divert the rivulets of his watershed away from his reservoir. In no field of human effort is the competition so free and democratic as in the literary center of the United States. Superior talent, practically applied, will have little trouble in making room for itself; but at the bottom, where the minor work is done, as in every other profession, even the waiting-lists are overcrowded. And as for the courtesy of the anterooms, while the editors of some newspapers find it absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of their work, if not to their physical welfare, to be difficult of access, it may be doubted if in any other profession the inquiring friend and stranger has so much time and attention lavished upon him as in the editorial rooms of New York; for courtesy, as an aid to the search for the casual gem, is also one of the uses of a literary center.



OPEN LETTERS

Fights between Ironclads.

I AM asked to give a chronological list of the engagements that have taken place between ironclads, and to assign to the fight of the *Huascar* and the Chilean vessels, described in the present number of *THE CENTURY*, its significance in the record of naval warfare of this sort. Following is a list of the engagements. Of course it is not a complete list, for ironclads have taken part in various battles where the part they played was insignificant.

Iron-clad floating batteries were used in the Crimean war; but they were simply water forts which were used against land forts. The beginning of modern ocean war-

fare—that is, of ocean warfare in which steam and armor, the ram, the torpedo, and the high-power gun are the prime factors—dates from our civil war. The first and the most important of all engagements between modern vessels was the epoch-making fight of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads, in March, 1862. Ironclads took part in many other actions in the civil war, notably off Charleston and Fort Fisher. The *Atlanta* and the *Albemarle* were Confederate iron-clad rams of note. The former was taken in an engagement with two monitors. The latter was sunk by Cushing's torpedo-boat. At Mobile Bay monitors took part in the attack on the iron-clad ram *Tennessee*.

Next in importance to the fight between the *Merrimac*

mac and the *Monitor* comes Tegetthoff's great victory off Lissa, where, for the first time, squadrons of ironclads fought each other, the Austrians using the ram with effect against their Italian foes. This was in 1866, and for the next thirteen years ironclads did very little. Then, in 1879, took place the famous fight of the *Huascar*, so well described in the present number of THE CENTURY. In 1882 there followed the English bombardment of Alexandria. In 1891, during the Chilean civil war, there occurred some very instructive actions between torpedo-boats and ironclads. A couple of years later there was a somewhat similar, but rather burlesque, civil war in Brazil; and in 1894 and 1895 occurred the fighting between the Japanese and Chinese—the most considerable fighting of the kind that had taken place since that off Lissa.

The fight in which the *Huascar* was conquered may properly be called a famous sea-fight. The *Huascar* was built in 1865, less than five years after the first ironclads that ever fought—the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*—were built, and from twenty-five to thirty years before the great battle-ships which alone are now habitually called «modern» by experts, were constructed. She was built before some of the ships engaged in Tegetthoff's sea-fight off Lissa in 1866, and she was less formidable and less modern than they were. Her two chief opponents, the Chilean ironclads, were built in 1874. They were diminutive vessels, judged by the modern standards, and were probably inferior to such an ironclad as the *New Ironsides*, which served in the United States navy during the last year of the civil war, and fought at Fort Fisher. Compared with the *Merrimac* (although not with the *New Ironsides*), the *Huascar* might be called «modern»; but compared with the *Iowa*, she is very antiquated indeed. The gap between the first ironclads and the *Huascar* was much less than the gap between her and the giant battle-ships which form the fighting-line in the navies of to-day. She had a career so dramatic that it will always be kept in mind by men who prize instances of naval heroism such as was shown both by her Peruvian commander and her Chilean foes; but this is its chief interest. Her fights have an importance, just as all fights between ironclads have an importance, for the student of the newly formed and partly tried armored fleets of to-day; but it is only as the engagements during the later civil war in Chile, and the war between China and Japan, and the bombardment of Alexandria, possess an importance. All of these fights, by the way, including those in which the *Huascar* took part, are described at length in Mr. Wilson's admirable book on «Ironclads in Action»; and excellent reports concerning the *Huascar's* fights, and concerning the British bombardment of Alexandria, respectively, have been published by Lieutenant Mason and Captain Goodrich of the United States navy.

None of these fights was in any way as important as the fights in which ironclads took part during the American civil war, or as the sea-fight between the Austrians and Italians off Lissa. The encounter between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, both genuine ironclads, marked a revolution in naval warfare as complete as the revolution which separated the era of row-galleys and hand-to-hand fighting from the era of sailing-ships which relied mainly on their artillery. Of less importance,

but still of great importance, was the fight off Lissa, inasmuch as it was the first in which squadrons of ironclads took part against each other, and the weaker fleet won, Tegetthoff with his own flag-ship, an ironclad, sinking one of the heaviest Italian ironclads.

The *Huascar*, like all the early armored ships, was clad in iron; but modern armored vessels are sheathed in steel. Sometimes the armor is backed with wood, whether fire-proof or not; sometimes it is not backed.

As yet the great modern navies are in the experimental stage, just as the sailing navies of the seventeenth century were in the experimental stage. When De Ruyter and Tromp fought Blake and Monk, the fleets on both sides consisted of all kinds of vessels, all of which took part in the *mêlée*. Custom had not crystallized the distinction between line-of-battle ships and frigates; indeed, there were no hard-and-fast lines between the different classes of ships. Nowadays, also, it is difficult to draw exact lines of demarcation among the multitudinous classes of ships; for every great nation has experimented with exceptional types of craft, and every great nation is apt to build along its own particular lines, even in the ship classes which are common to nearly all nations. Certain clearly recognized types, however, have appeared. All ships the vitals of which are defended by armor are called armored ships. But this definition has only a rough value; for if the armor is very light, it serves no purpose whatever against moderately powerful modern guns. A protected ship is one which has inside the outer works a steel deck covering its vital parts, but which has no outside armor. Virtually all modern vessels of any size are either armored or protected.

The heavy armored ship, the analogue of the old-style ship of the line, is called a battle-ship. Vessels of this class are usually from eight to fifteen thousand tons in size. They are very heavily armored, and carry huge guns of from ten to sixteen inches' caliber in their main batteries, while they have secondary batteries of numerous smaller guns, usually rapid-fire, of varying caliber. The armored cruiser represents another type, smaller than the battle-ship, with lighter armor and a lighter main battery, although her secondary battery may be even more formidable. The protected cruiser is usually much smaller, although in exceptional instances vessels of this type, like the English cruisers *Powerful* and *Terrible*, are as large as the largest battle-ships. These vessels usually have some armor in the shape of turrets, barbettes, sponsons, or gun-shields. A commerce-destroyer is simply a large cruiser of great speed and coal endurance, but comparatively light armament, built primarily to run away rather than to fight, the purpose being to make war on an enemy's commerce, and to run from his battle-ships and fighting cruisers. The battle-ship is the mainstay of the navy; it is the ship which must gain control of the seas by helping to destroy the adversary's fleet; it is the only ship which can be put against his powerful ships or powerful fortresses. The heavy cruiser is handier and more seaworthy. It may fight in the line, but is more apt to be used against ships of its own class. Its cheapness and mobility, as compared with the battle-ship, are supposed to make amends for its inferiority in fighting power.

As said before, all these types of vessels grade into

one another. What are called second-class battle-ships in one navy may be called armored cruisers in another. Thus, in Mr. Laird Clowes's admirable little «Naval Pocket Book» we find all but one of the modern Spanish armor-clads classed as armored cruisers; yet they are really heavier vessels, both as regards tonnage, armor, and armament, than are the *Texas* and the *Maine*,¹ which we call second-class battle-ships, although Mr. Clowes counts the *Maine* also as a cruiser. Among the new ships building for the German navy there seems to be literally no difference between the battle-ships and the armored cruisers, so called, except that the latter are a little smaller, their armor a little thinner, and their guns somewhat fewer.

Theodore Roosevelt.

Translations from Bacchylides.

THE poems of Bacchylides, so unexpectedly restored, come to us at a suggestive time when, reviewing Tennyson's life-work, we celebrate the golden wedding of lofty thought and perfect art. It was long since pointed out that Bacchylides does not soar, like Pindar; he is not freighted with rugged intellect, like Browning; but his thought is noble, and his art has won instant recognition for its Sophoclean grace.

One of the new poems (No. XIX) is ostensibly a laudation of Athens. The first few lines are in reality the poet's own self-appraisal. Dante knew in advance his own fame, nor was he unmindful of «the beautiful style that hath done honor to me.» So Bacchylides, commissioned, like Keats, to partake of and to swell the

«Endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink,»

proudly speaks of the poet's «manifold path» of song, paved with lofty thought, and bordered with the flowers of the Graces.

«Pathway of song never-ending,
Divinely its melodies blending,
Ever its dower fresh sending—
This is the path his feet may go
On whom the Muses their gifts bestow.

«Then, too, by the Graces deified—
The Graces, wreath-winning and violet-eyed,
In all fair tasks with the Nine allied—
May he with honor encircle his lays,
And win from the Graces the wreath and
praise.

«Brooding thought of the Cean isle,
Poet's care men praised erstwhile,
Weave me now a web of song
Resplendent, fit for Athens strong,
Where love and loveliness belong.

«High is the path that thou must tread;
Beauty to thy words must wed;
Preëminent is this gift to thee
Apportioned by Calliope.»

This claim to many-sidedness can be made good for Bacchylides from the old fragments and the new poems. In addition to noble ethical sentiments, we find the most

¹ This article was written a few days before the recent catastrophe to the *Maine* in the harbor of Havana.—
EDITOR.

vidid dramatic narration. Besides the praises of the athlete, not discordant with the plastic art of a Myron, there is pathos well-nigh equal to that of Simonides. Thus, out of unknown lips breaks a lament for a child, a fragment of two lines, in a meter that may be reproduced in English:

«Ah, woe for our child, for our child!
Baffling outcry, grief has appeared to us; speechlessness
be its mate.»

Of games and athletes he has much to say—the winning race-horse of many contests, the Olympic victor, even the young girl in the favorite game of cottabus: «As often as with bended arm, while the young beau look on, she flings the wine, her white forearm outstretching.»

No less honor accrued to the Greek athlete's home than nowadays encircles as with a halo some musty judge or lawyer, happy father of a brilliant quarterback. Bacchylides, indeed, never tires of praising Ceos, his island home, one of those bright stepping-stones between Asiatic and European Hellas.

The following short poem is a serenade sung by the Cean folk before the doorway of Lachon, victor in the foot-race, on his return from Olympia:

«Our Lachon's lot from Zeus most high
Is glorious fame for foot-race, run
Near where Alpheus floweth by.

And there, ere this, with hair wreath-bound,
Olympic youths sang songs around,
How Ceos, with her vineyards crowned,
The boxing and the foot-race won.

«Thee, now, song-queen Urania's hymn
Ennobles, O thou wind-fleet one,
Of Aristomenes the son,
Thy praise as victor homeward bringing,
And here before thy lintel singing
How thou, thy way through stade-race winging,
Won praise for thy Ceos that time cannot dim.»

Among the old fragments is one Alcæus-like in tone. Unlike the more complicated meters of the new poems, its meter may be fairly approximated in English. Over his wine a man builds castles in the air, and rises from one fancy to another—first love, then success in battle, then a kingly sovereignty, the Greek tyranny, in a gleaming palace whither converge, as over beaten highways, many vessels dipping to their gunwales under the wealth of their lading.

The fragment begins abruptly in the middle of the stanza:

«. . . a charm imperious
Leaps from the cups, and with Aphrodite fires his
Bosom: hope goes pulsing through and through the
breast,

«Commingled with gifts of the wine-god Dionysus,
Raising the fancies to high and higher achievement.
Now he is sacking some city's walls embattled;
Now in thought he 's lord alone o'er peoples all;

«Now palaces shimmer with iv'ry light and golden;
Laden with wheat, o'er the glittering waters glide now
Ships that are bringing from Nile-land vast enrichment.
Drinking ever, thus and thus his heart doth muse.»

Francis G. Allinson.