

A Natural Friendship

With Americans of Past and Present Days, by J. J. Jusserand. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.

THE French Ambassador to the United States has much enriched and enlarged our sympathies by this book, which reviews the French way of understanding us. He begins with an account of the feelings that brought over the French to help us in 1780 and that seem like forebears of American love of France to-day. As ancestors should, they place us in a fine tradition—that of free devotion to an idea. Americans were fighting for liberty and democracy and the French who came here impelled to give aid by their passion for what Rochambeau called, "that natural liberty which God has conferred on man," did not wish either England's loss or their own gain—they refused Canada as a separate settlement; they wished whole-heartedly American independence. And their idealism seems re-born in many Americans who are now serving in France. For them, too, the fate of a nation not their own seems to involve democracy and freedom.

They had a pleasant literary habit, the young French officers who came over so gayly and so readily with Rochambeau, or earlier as volunteers. They sent home such diaries and journals and sketches that we can still have the experience of their adventure. They are very precise about their sensations and set down details of the crowded ships and of the condition of Yorktown after the siege that remind us how much a dislike for sentimentalizing makes for sympathy with the eighteenth century. Enthusiasm for ideas and, with that, no shirking of actual physical fact, but rather a relish of it, stripped and simple—the combination was theirs and is ours.

The wish for social reconstruction and the consciousness of a new fellowship holds together all their journalism, which is amusingly full too of our manners and customs—our "shake-hand" and our toasts and our tea-drinking and the beauty of our women. The moral consequences of the war they kept aware of in the midst of a destruction and death that could not have seemed small to them. The young Marquis de Saint-Simon, who later in life professed pacificism, wrote of his American campaign: "In itself, war did not interest me, but its object interested me keenly, and I willingly took part in its labors."

They had generous sympathies always, these young *civilisés*, who came over to what they felt to be a crude and undeveloped country. They could put off their fine taste in trappings and enjoy the courage of their unequipped allies. The Baron de Clozen, a young Aide of Rochambeau, has described the surrender at Yorktown. "Passing between the two armies, the English showed much disdain for the Americans, who so far as dress and appearances went represented the seamy side, many of those poor boys being garbed in linen *habits-vestes*, torn, soiled, a number among them almost shoeless. What does it matter? the man of sense will think."

But the Americans on their side seem also to have tried to meet their strange allies half way and to put off prejudice. "It is difficult to imagine," Abbé Robin declared at the time, "the idea Americans entertained about the French before the war." They considered them "as a kind of light, brittle, queer-shapen mechanisms only busy frizzling their hair and painting their faces, without faith or morals." It went hard with Washington at first to welcome the French, he having read *The Spectator* all his youth. But the Americans showed they could be changed by experience.

They sounded often the same note of amiable surprise and pleasure we have grown used to now-a-days. William Channing wrote to Ezra Stiles, President of Yale University: "The French are a fine body of men, and appear to be well officered. Neither the officers nor men are the effeminate beings we were heretofore taught to believe them. They are as large and likely men as can be produced by any nation."

One feels throughout M. Jusserand's book his pride in the free and sensitive French intelligence, with its fine indifference to the easily classified and its taste for appreciating the special. This intelligence, he points out, made quick response to Lincoln and to the principles of democracy at stake in our Civil War. And it is this intelligence which still believes there is a strong and essential solidarity be-

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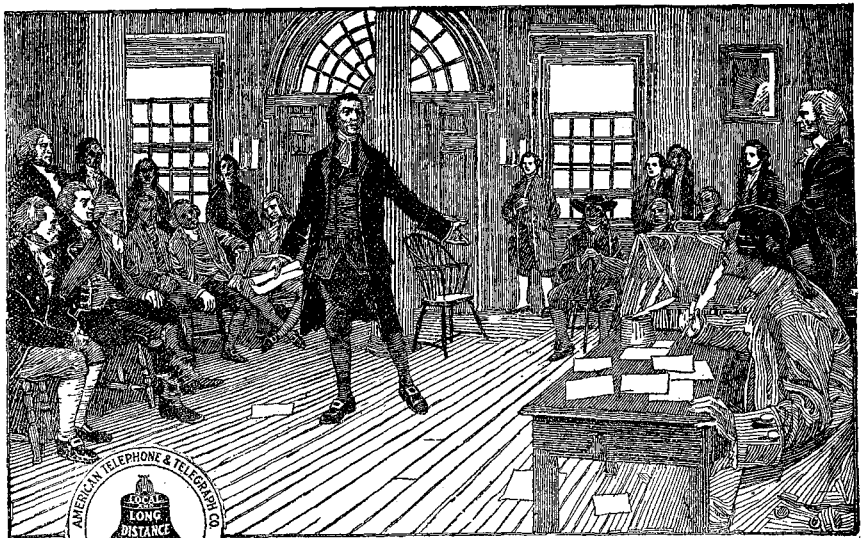
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Patrick Henry Addressing the First Continental Congress, Philadelphia, 1774

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tween us and France, that each republic has much to gain from the other, nothing to lose, anywhere in the world. The French sense of our solidarity has been expressed often this past year, by the variously distinguished Frenchmen who have come over to be visible and audible as their countrymen were one hundred and thirty-five years ago.

An appeal was made lately throughout the northwestern states for the French orphans of the war, on the ground that they alone can inherit and hand on French civilization. And this appeal gained larger contributions than an earlier one in the name of a more personal pity. It was general in France in 1780, the sense that the world's future was in the making over here. Is it perhaps general in the United States, the fear that much that is finest in democracy would be destroyed with France?

EDITH BORIE.

Doroshevitch

The Way of the Cross, by V. Doroshevitch. With an introduction by Stephen Graham. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$1.25 net.

DOROSHEVITCH went out as a journalist from Moscow in the summer of 1915 to meet the tide of refugees sweeping into Russia from Poland and the western provinces. But this book is no journalist's report. It seems rather to have written itself. The images of the fugitives stamped themselves on Doroshevitch's vision, and when he put pen to paper they engraved themselves in words. I doubt whether Doroshevitch even tried to give his impression. His own analysis of the situation in his conclusion is quite detached from the rest; here the journalist has summed up the report he had intended to make.

Doroshevitch is a realist, but his is not the realism of "total recall" which so often fails to give coherent effect. A unified impression is above all what "The Way of the Cross" achieves. One feels the homeless Russians as one body. He says that the refugees come in a river, an endless broadening stream, which grows in size and power till it is a torrent destructive to the channel villages through which it pours, careless of the individuals it sweeps in its currents. The stream is ceaseless and merciless. Any one who steps out of the ranks is lost forever. "My husband's lost, he's lost!" drones a woman. He got left behind in the crowd at a relief point. "A whole day went by, he didn't come. And the next day he didn't come. We've never seen him since. And it's five days now." The peasants do not know where they are or where they are going. "It's like being in a desert—it's dark all around. We can see nothing. It's a desert."

There is always the lack of food. A whole province chants together as it marches. "Me give—me give—me give—me give." And there is not time to cook properly what food they have—half-raw food, then dysentery, "Father, haven't you any stomach drops? The pain's like a knife." Some of the refugees have been rich, and behind their carts are tied instead of spare wheels Viennese chairs. Some start with a whole herd of cattle and many horses. But the animals die and their half-eaten carcasses are left by the dogs beside the road. And then finally comes the awful despair of having to sell the last horse. "I have a horse, and so all the same I remain a man! A human being! But without a horse, what sort of human being should I be?"

Not only the beasts die. Along the roadsides spring up the gleaming white crosses, more each night. The journeyers do not dare stop to bury their dead in the daytime lest they be left behind in the procession. All day they carry the corpses and at night they dig their holes, near the road where people pass so that the dead can be sung and prayed for by the next day's stream of marchers. Doroshevitch likens the new-hewn crosses shining in the forests of Mogilef to the Georgian orders for self-sacrifice and bravery that proud soldiers wear on their uniforms. "They are white, like little Georgian crosses pinned to the much-suffering road."

"The Way of the Cross" tells an extraordinary tale and tells it in an extraordinary manner. Made up of short sentences, short paragraphs of a phrase, interspersed with dashes and exclamation points, the writing has a staccato quality which might be tiresome in any less breathless narrative than this. The sentences and paragraphs move with an almost incredible speed. We have nothing like this writing in English. Doroshevitch, at least as we have him in translation, achieves the effect of not having tried for effect. If he repeats a phrase it is because the incident which the phrase described appeared to him twice and, as the book wrote itself, was set down twice. By these repetitions he gives not only the motion of the river but the monotony and dreariness of it. And the horror, yet without an atom of morbid interest in the horrible for its own sake. And the sadness:

They bury them:

—the best they can,

and go on farther, leaving behind them the sort of graves one only sees in dreams.

On some graves "God's blessing."

Ikons of the Mother of God.

They are ikons:

—of "She who intercedes"

And pitifully she looks out, the Woman of Suffering.

From graves, upon the river of human affliction streaming past.

Stephen Graham calls Doroshevitch a "real Russian and a Christian" and speaks of his "Christian mysticism." One may perhaps doubt whether Mr. Graham does not over-emphasize the mysticism he sees in these imaginative metaphors. It does not seem any more just to stress the religion of Doroshevitch than to see the real point of the book in an occasional ironic exclamation like "Oh, that Russian lack of system!" He sums up in his conclusion the three points that saved Russia from utter calamity—the work of the charitable organizations, the gentle autumn, and above all sobriety, and he deplores Petrograd's preoccupation with politics; yet what really counts is not Doroshevitch's radicalism or his mysticism, but his ability to record in a form that is both document and literature, Russia's "grievous Way of the Cross."

KATHARINE SERGEANT ANGELL.

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