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VIVE LA FRANCE.

By E. Alexander Powell, McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, Toronto, Publishers, 253 Pages, Illustrated. R. Uglow & Co., City

So far there are only two or three war books that stand out pre-eminently above the great mass of books already written. These include Powell's "Fighting in Flanders" and Palmer's "My Year of the Great War." Singularly enough, both authors are Americans and both are pro-Allies from the drop of the hat. And now Powell has given us a second volume, "Vive La France," no less absorbing and instructive than his first remarkable story.

To France, whose courage, serenity and sacrifice in a conflict which she did nothing to provoke have won her the sympathy, respect and admiration of the world. Such is the eloquent dedication of the new book, and the ringing words will find an echo everywhere in the world—except where the German foot is planted.

Few war correspondents in this campaign have been accorded greater opportunities or privileges than Mr. Powell. He has been enabled to get close to great events, and with picture and pen he has faithfully and realistically described them. The photos reproduced with such profusion in this book are quite the best yet seen. They have been taken "close up," and they show us things as they are. That is also the keynote of Powell's book, and the secret of its wonderful magnetism. He has been on the spot, and, without bombast or boasting, he recounts his experience in simple and unaffected language. The tragedy, the pathos, the drama—the undying story—above all the more appealing when told in Powell's clear-cut sentences. Here is no striving for rhetoric, or fine writing. Here is the work of a magnificent reporter. Occasionally he rises to heights of eloquence here and there, as when he pays tribute to the wonderful spirit of the people of France.

Robert Herrick, in his "World's Decision," was, like some other American writers, very bitter in his criticism of the British army. Not so Powell. He pays it and its work a splendid meed of tribute. He makes it plain that the British have done marvels in creating an army. "The machine that the British have knocked together, though still a trifle wobbly and sometimes creaky, in its joints, is, I am convinced, eventually going to succeed." The author pays high tribute to the valor and value of the ordinary British soldier. To quote:

"He has now found out to his cost, and to his great disgust, that his opponent has no intention of being hampered by the rules laid down by the late Marquis of Queensberry, having missed no opportunity to gouge, or kick or hit below the belt. But the British soldier has now become familiar with his opponent's tactics, and one of these days when he is good and ready he is going to give that opponent the surprise of his life by landing on him with both feet, spikes on his shoes and brass knuckles on his fingers."

No less warm a tribute is paid the Canadians. Their place in the Battle of Ypres is described with simplicity and clearness, but is none the less thrilling. Listen:

"It was against the British, remember, that the Germans first used their poison-gas. The first engagement of importance in which gas played a part was the second battle of Ypres, lasting from April 22nd until May 13th, which will probably take rank in history as one of the greatest battles of all time. In it the Germans, owing to the surprise and confusion created by this introduction of poison-gas, came within a hair's breadth of breaking through the Allied line, and would certainly have done so had it not been for the gallantry and self-sacrifice of the Canadian Division, which, at the cost of appalling losses, won imperishable fame. . . . For days the fate of the army hung in the balance, for there seemed no end to the German reserves, who were wiped out by whole divisions only to be replaced by more, but against the stone wall of the Canadian resistance the men in the spiked helmets threw themselves in vain."

Powell graphically describes the fighting in Champagne, where the French made such an important advance last September. Some new facts are brought out. For instance, we are told that nearly three thousand guns had been concentrated on a front of only fifteen miles. There were cannon everywhere. Behind each of the French guns were stacked two thousand shells. The artillery fired almost as fast as the infantry. Going over the battleground shortly afterwards, the author tells exactly what he saw: "The thing of which the Champagne battlefield most reminded me was a garbage-heap. It looked and smelled as though all the garbage cans in Europe and America had been emptied upon it. . . . The destruction wrought by the French artillery fire is almost beyond imagination. . . . The captured German trenches presented the most horrible sight that I have ever seen or ever expect to see. This is not rhetoric; this is fact. . . . Lying with white, drawn faces on the dripping stretchers were men whose bodies had been ripped open like the carcasses that hang in front of 'butcher's' shops; men who had been blinded and will spend the rest of their days groping in darkness; men smashed out of all resemblance to anything human, yet still alive; and other men who, with no wound upon them, raved and laughed and cackled in insane mirth at the frightful humour of the things that they had seen."

This offensive in Champagne cost the French very close to 110,000 men. The German casualties were about 140,000, of whom 21,000 were prisoners. In addition the Germans lost 121 guns. Despite this appalling cost in human lives, the distance gained by the French was so small that it cannot be seen on the ordinary map.

Mr. Powell also discusses the French appreciation of the British army, and especially of the fleet. He again proves the ruthlessness of Germans in shelling and bombing Red Cross locations, and points out instances of the treachery of German soldiers when they are surrendering, whereby they frequently succeed in injuring or killing those who are taking them prisoners.

Harken to this touching paragraph in a chapter entitled "The Red Badge of Mercy"—a paragraph that comes closely home to us all.

"On a cot beside the door was stretched a young Canadian. His face looked as though a giant in spiked shoes had stepped upon it. 'Look,' said the surgeon, and lifted the woolen blanket. The man's body was like a field which had been gone over with a disk harrow. His feet, his legs, his abdomen, his chest, his arms, his face, were furrowed with gaping angry wounds. 'He was shot through the hand,' explained the surgeon. 'He made his way back to the dressing station in the reserve trenches, but just as he reached it a shell exploded at his feet. I patted him on the shoulder and told him that I too knew the land of the great forests and the rolling prairies, and that before long he was going back to it. And, though he could not speak, he turned that poor, torn face of his and smiled at me. He must have been suffering the torments of the damned, but he smiled at me. I tell you—he smiled at me!'"

"Vive La France?" Yes. But also "Vive La Canada," as long as she can produce sons like that.

THE BEASTS OF TARZAN

By Edgar Rice Burroughs, McClelland Goodchild & Stewart, Toronto, Publishers 337 Pages, Illustrated. Price, \$1.30. R. Uglow & Co., City

Burroughs is an author afflicted with a wonderful imagination—an imagination to which he allows full play. His "Tarzan of the Apes" and "The Return of Tarzan" have been reviewed on this page. The present book is merely a continuation of the exploits of the ape-man Tarzan, but by no means is the interest of the story sustained. One or two books were quite enough to exhaust such a subject; a third volume produces a feeling of nausea. One can read a certain amount of such improbable, impossible fiction, but after that it becomes tiresome. The wildest of crazy dreams is tame compared with this jungle story, where the wild cat and the ape become the companion and champion of Tarzan. Their exploits, individual and collective, are about the most improbable that could well be imagined. Probably, however, many readers will find the volume interesting. The villain is a deep-dyed and defiant, the hero is a marvellous combination of man and ape to whom nothing seems impossible; the fair lady is saved as by a miracle, and all ends happily.

THE WORLD DECISION.

By Robert Herrick, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York. 253 Pages, Price, \$1.25 R. Uglow & Co., City

Another of the many war books, and one compiled by a thinker, a man who sifts and analyzes and compares, rather than by a descriptive writer. It shows the work of the man of reflection, and therefore is deserving of attention. Mr. Herrick spent the greater part of 1915, in France and Italy. It is this book he describes and interprets the great events of which he was an eyewitness. From a literary standpoint, the book is remarkably well written, but with many of its statements and conclusions the average English speaking person will take conclusions. It is altogether too much pro-France and too anti-British. While he has perhaps faithfully analyzed the underlying causes of Italy's movements, he has been altogether too fulsome in his praise of France and altogether too severe in his censure of Britain. Herrick has misread the spirit that animated the British Empire; in fact, he has floundered here almost as badly as Germany did. He better understands Germany and her ambitions, as witness this sentence: "She has taught her children to go sing-

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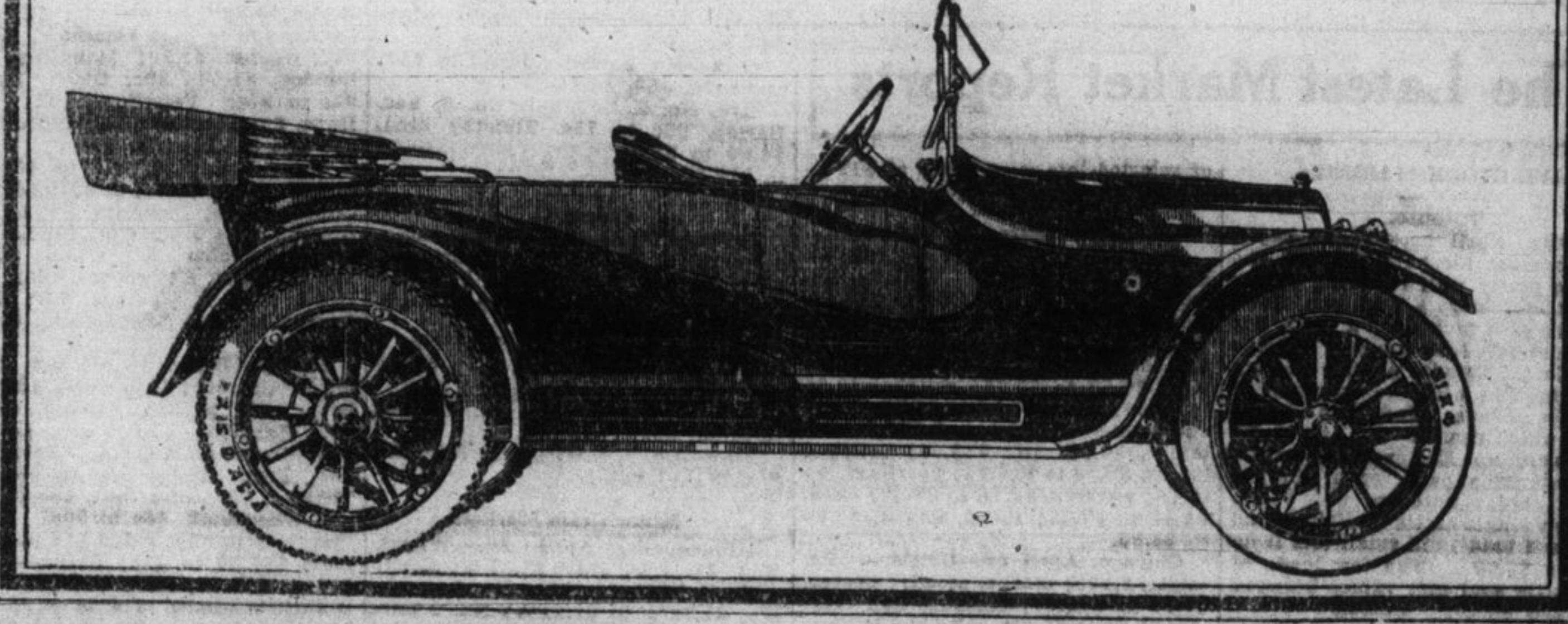
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ing into the jaws of death in order that the Fatherland may extend her markets and thus enrich her citizens at the expense of the citizens of other states, who are her inferiors in the sciences of slaughter. A queer religion, and all the more abhorrent when dressed out with the phrases of Christianity."

The author recognizes one elemental fact—that efficiency and discipline are essential to the preservation of any nation to-day. "If the world can learn the lesson which Germany is pointing in with ruin, slaughter and misery," he declares—"can discipline itself without becoming Teutonized—the sacrifice is not too great." A Frenchman with all his Latin temperament, could not write of France and her splendid achievements with more devotion than this American author. But while Germany is the barbarian, France the noble defender of liberty and England the laggard time-server, what, the author may well ask, is the position of the United States? He does not respect her neutrality, nor can he find a good word to say in behalf of Anglo-American friendship. He pins all his faith to the Latin spirit of France. How long the two temperaments could survive, side by side, he does not dare to predict. "But," he argues, "no ideal of diplomatic neutrality can prevent Americans who care for anything but their own selfish well-being from doing all in this power to make ours a Latin rather than a Teutonic world."

We feel that few people in the United States will read this volume with anything but a critical spirit. While Anglo-Saxons will give most of its conclusions wholehearted condemnation. Once more it is proved that the man of letters, no matter how erudite, is not always the safest counsellor, when the material and physical well-being of the country are at stake.



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