

A FORGOTTEN FRIEND OF FRANCE

BY PIERRE VEBER

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THE saying may be true that Frenchmen are not ungrateful, but it is, none the less, a Paris failing to forget. James Gordon Bennett has been dead scarcely two years, and it already seems as if half a century had elapsed since this man, who was one of the kings of Paris in his day, was last among us. Let me recall to my short-memoried countrymen what this great American did for us before and during the war.

In 1875 Bennett founded the European edition of the New York *Herald*. He hoped thus to forge a permanent link between the two continents; but, above all, he desired to foster friendship and understanding between two nations who had rather lost sight of each other. Bennett loved France ardently, and understood his fellow citizens. He feared the effects of the great Germanic invasion which was sweeping across his country, with all the prestige of Prussia's recent victory behind it. Without public aid or private encouragement, he created the first agency of pro-French propaganda — one that has been invaluable to our cause. He established this journal, not as a business enterprise, but as an institution. In editing, news-service, typography, and paper, it was to be a work of art. It became a model for other newspapers, which were soon forced to copy this young contemporary, who overturned old traditions and served the public with a daily *de luxe*.

Success far exceeding the hopes of the founder crowned this enterprise. Bennett said: 'If the *Herald* prints an

edition of more than 12,000, I shall be satisfied.' Before the war, it printed 25,000, which is a unique achievement for a journal printed in a foreign language. Bennett made it a point of honor not to derive any personal profit from his venture. He devoted all that the paper earned to improving it. That explains his Sunday supplements. For five sous, the reader received an art supplement, an illustrated fashion supplement, a humorous supplement, and so on. It was thus he familiarized the French with Foxy Grandpa, Buster Brown, Little Nemo, and other children's heroes of his native land.

Everything about the paper was first-class. Its humblest staff-writers were stylists. In those days, an author had established himself when his articles had appeared in *La Vie Parisienne*, *Figaro*, and the *Herald*.

As soon as a new invention was in the market, Bennett hastened to adopt it. The *Herald* was the pioneer Paris paper to use linotypes. He was an active promoter of wireless telegraphy, in spite of the fact that he had large investments in submarine cables.

He conceived the idea of cultivating a taste for sports in France, and presented a multitude of 'Gordon Bennett cups.' They were thus designated against his will. He wished them called 'Herald cups.' However, the French authorities insisted that his name christen his own work. He thus rendered an immense service to the cause of sport at Paris. He gave a cycle cup, a cup for free balloons, an auto cup, an

aviation cup — I cannot recount them all. There is hardly a sport which our American friend did not encourage: foot-racing, coaching, motor-boat-racing — and again we might continue indefinitely. In the end, people expected him to provide a cup as a matter of course.

And what could we do to repay him? Bestow decorations upon him? He refused them. Bestow honors upon him? He was indifferent to them.

His bounty was as discreet as it was generous. He gave to any good cause, subject always to the condition that his name should not be mentioned. He had a charity office, which was never closed and was a marvel of secret organization. This was most convenient for the ungrateful. Bennett was certainly one of the most preyed-upon men of his century; but he never complained, and an expression of gratitude merely embarrassed him.

But this great American first proved the full strength of his love of France when the war broke out. He never doubted for a moment our victory. I recall his saying to me in August, 1914, with almost intimidating violence: 'Never shall the Germans enter Paris!' Against all advice, he insisted on continuing publication of the *Herald* at Paris. In midwinter, he defied the uncertainties of sea-travel and enemy submarines to go personally to New York, to procure the money he needed. It was no trifling matter to support a newspaper in Paris during those first months of torment. Everything was lacking: paper, labor, transportation, and even editors. The English members of his staff, with perhaps excessive prudence, returned to their country.

The 'Old Commodore,' defying the feebleness of his seventy years, breasted all these difficulties. Nothing shook his resolution, neither threats nor

danger. A Gotha bomb exploded a few metres from his residence. It did not disturb him in the least. He kept calmly on with the campaign that he had conducted from the beginning of hostilities, to strengthen the confidence of the French in Paris, and to arouse the sympathy and secure the aid of his fellow countrymen in New York.

The world should know something of what this courageous attitude cost Bennett — a good share of his fortune.

The New York *Herald* carried some of the most profitable advertising in the world. It even claimed to have made a record in this field. But American business was at that time largely in the hands of Germans and pro-Germans. Bennett's attitude soon caused his newspaper to be boycotted. Advertising fell off. It was hoped thus to silence this ardent champion of France.

A newspaper with the circulation of the *Herald* could not carry on without advertising. Within a few weeks its income began to shrink perceptibly. Only a resolute man would have held firm. Bennett stuck to his guns. It meant, if not ruin, at least enormous losses; but the Commodore never swerved from his course, any more than if he had been at the helm of his yacht in the midst of a tempest. At his voice, the doubtful rallied and the faint-hearted took courage.

Finally, his idea began to make headway. *Nous voilà, Lafayette!* Gordon Bennett anticipated the spirit, if not the words, of that famous exclamation. Unable to give his blood, he gave his heart, his prestige, and his fortune. His dream of a close alliance between France and America was finally achieved. His labor of nearly half a century was crowned. Once more — and for the last time — the great sportsman won.

GARDENS OF KASHMIR

BY MAJOR A. W. HOWLETT

From *The Manchester Guardian*, September 1
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GARDENS! Gardens! Who knows what a garden is till he has seen the gardens of Kashmir? The peasants, the boatmen on the lake, the townsmen who come out from Srinagar of a Sunday to picnic, — though why on a Sunday I know not, — tell you they were made by Akbár. True it is they were made by the Moguls (those wonderful princes who seemed to live three hundred years before their time), or, in one case at least, by their grand viziers, but Akbár was not solely responsible. However, he seems to hold in Kashmir the place in popular fancy that Alfred and Queen Elizabeth do in England, and everything that is historically noteworthy is accredited to him.

In any case, to have made these gardens is a thing to be proud of. There are six or seven of them about in Kashmir, and I have seen two of them. The one I have in mind, no doubt the best known, is the Shalimár, and at present my house-boat lies moored in the old canal which leads up to its water-gate. How many a regal procession of boats with silken curtains and golden canopies, with slaves and musicians and all the resplendent trappings of the Court, passed down here three hundred years ago! But now all that is past. To-night, as I write, the canal is all a-chatter with the throaty bubbling of hundreds of frogs; tall rushes lie under the willow trees in dense beds; the surface is clogged with weeds, amid which, by day, the golden yellow water-lily shines; and there is no human sound save the subdued chatter of my servants smoking

their hubble-bubbles in the 'cook-boat' moored just behind my own.

Yes, they were a wondrous race, this conquering dynasty from the Central Asian steppes; but, like others before them, they were not proof against the enervating influence of India, and they ended up as imbecile puppets, the toys of the harem, and idle favorites. But what is strangest, as we survey their story, is the fact that these conquerors, preëminent men of affairs that they were, were yet able to take the most intense pleasure in the beauties of nature, and where these were lacking, as they are in so many parts of India, they did their best, with considerable success, to create substitutes. It is strange, because the average inhabitant of India cares not a jot for the finest scenery on earth. Take him to the Himalayas, and he is less moved by the grandest scenery in the world than by the inadequacy of the local bazaar. His interest in life for centuries has been religious musing and the multiplication and propitiation of abounding divinities. But the Moguls loved trees and water and shade, flowers and landscapes and waterfalls, and took as great pleasure in their parks as an English country gentleman. What artists at their bidding erected these wonderlands of floral and arboreal beauty, we hardly know. The name of a Frenchman has come down as one of them. It was they who, to put it in modern style, 'discovered' Kashmir. Their Court was at Delhi, and it must have meant several weeks of journeying, through the sultry plains of the