

tion which we now have in mind would seldom occur to them spontaneously. Their instinctive, impulsive love of system would prevent them from feeling its force until they had carefully considered it. There is something alluring in that phrase, to which the whole disputing company assented—*Il n'y a qu'une vérité*. Truth is single; it must remain forever immutable, unqualified. Their system of the eternities is based on this axiom. To question it would be preposterous—until you stop to think.

And meanwhile, let truth be single as you please, and let each one of us, with all the candor in the world, set himself the task of learning it; and you shall always find human beings at odds. The more alike they are in fundamental character, the more sharp their dissensions must be, and the more intolerant they must be of each other. Let them love system and love fact, as the French do. Let them be beset by the temptation to admit fact only in forms which may harmonize with system. Let them grow to maturity each amid the intensely strong traditions of his class and kind. Let each, as well, be conditioned by the accidental fact of the temper, the disposition, with which he chances to have come into the world. And the world he must live in must be, from beginning to end, a world of insoluble discord.

And yet, you would never understand the temper of the French if you stopped here. The excess, the fineness, the limitations of their strongest virtues, involve them in constant unrest, passionately resentful of their own images in the likeness of their com-

patriots. At the same time, there are some very deep impulses in which they remain deeply at one. This tendency you can feel in some of the phases of their character at which we have already glanced. The very fact of their school-boy demonstrations reveals their eager response to the appeal of a common sentiment. And when such a sentiment proves to be broadly, deeply, lastingly human, it springs to life with wonderful strength and tenderness.

How full of tender feeling the French are must be evident to anyone who comes to know them in their family lives. A constant phase of this tenderness—this impulsively deep human sympathy, at its purest and most true in the presence of poignant experience inevitable in the course of nature,—must be familiar to anyone who has ever travelled in France. Nowhere else does everyone, of every rank, respond with such instant, whole-souled, consoling sympathy to the presence of death. We are sometimes apt to think garish the conventional poms of a French funeral. We should rather linger in thought on the reverence with which the French bare and bow their heads throughout the streets while the sad procession passes. The impulse may be momentary, the act of sympathy forgotten almost before it is done. But the fact of it remains deeply, beautifully significant. When, for a little while, the French can find themselves at one, in response to some great human emotion, you can be sure that they are at one with beautifully sincere intensity. That is one reason why you grow to love them so well.

THE TENSES

By Jessie Wallace Hughan

ONE cried, "*I have*," while shadows of her fears
 Bedimmed the present joy with coming ill;
 "*I shall have*," laughed another, but the years
 Rolled o'er her hope, and left her waiting still.
 "*I have had*," said the third, "and am content;
 My joy is past and I have held the whole;
 Nor time, nor change, nor disillusionment
 Can tear my perfect treasure from my soul."

OFF THE TRACK

By Charles Buxton Going

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. T. DUNN



Along one edge of the Prado of Sandoval, the administration buildings of the Dos Bocas Development Commission blinked at the sun-glare from behind double barriers—an outer screen of gray-green eucalyptus-trees and an inner one of white columns and light semicircular arches. Clifford stood gazing out of one of the sashless windows, which gaped from the thick cement walls behind these slim defences against the heat. The double row of palms across the Prado was streaming in the trade-wind; beyond was a long, purple glimpse of the sea. But the abstracted look in his eyes suggested that his mind was elsewhere, and his fingers kept, mechanically, a place in the pages of his note-book. For the third time during the ten minutes he had been waiting he opened it and frowned at the tabulated figures.

A clipping fluttered out and he stooped to pick it up again, reading the short paragraph through with an obvious satisfaction which was not lessened by the fact that he already knew it, word for word:

The *Review* learns, at the moment of going to press, that Mr. Westerton Clifford, C. E., has resigned the position of division engineer to the W. & N. R. R., to accept an appointment with the Dos Bocas Improvement. His extensive experience and distinguished success in handling earthwork on a large scale will make him invaluable to the colossal enterprise with which he has associated his future. The commission and Mr. Clifford are alike to be congratulated on an arrangement which assures profit and prestige to both parties.

He turned, replacing the clipping and pocketing his note-book, as another man entered the room—dressed in white, like himself, and with the same semi-military air, but showing several shades more of bronze in his face.

“Good-morning, Mr. Stanwood,” said Clifford, holding out his hand.

“Oh—good-morning, Mr. Clifford. I

couldn't distinguish your face, at first, with the light behind you there. Is the chief inside, do you know?”

“Yes; Brownson's been with him for the last fifteen minutes. I'm waiting my turn.”

“Is that so? I got a wire this morning that he wanted to see me, just in time to catch No. 2. Smith's close behind me. All the division engineers seem to be foregathered at headquarters. What's up?”

“I'm not sure. There's a report the old man's ordered a state-room on to-morrow's boat, and that he's going up on account of some mix-up at the capital. Probably wants to get reports and leave instructions all around.”

“Oh! Likely enough. Well—I wish I had the job of going North for mine!”

Clifford smiled with the indulgent superiority of the novice.

“Oh, that's all right, old man,” Stanwood continued good-naturedly; “it's very lovely, at first, and all that”—he waved his hand comprehensively at the view out of the window; “we've all been through that stage. Wait till you've been here a year. It isn't the chigoes in the bush, and stegomyia breeding in your bath sponge, and fleas all over the shop; that's easy enough to get used to. It is the fifty per cent. discount in the efficiency of everything, machine or human, that breaks your heart and makes you sigh for God's country.”

“Ah,” exclaimed Clifford, “that's where our chance lies. Why” (pulling out the note-book again), “look at these figures I've been compiling: Cost of excavation, Maximilian Cut, for the past six months. They're frightful. Why I——”

He broke off at the sound of voices and the opening of the door of the inner office. The chief engineer, following Brownson out, stood in the doorway, his heavy shoulders seeming almost to touch the jambs, and the forward thrust of his head emphasizing the uncomfortable peculiarity of the direct gaze he fixed upon the other men. His voice,