

THE LITERARY DIGEST

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AMERICA FROM THE FRENCH VIEW

THE MAJORITY OF THE FRENCH NATION are misled in their conception of Franco-American relations because they do not know American history. Such is the first impression suggested to some by the study of Franco-American relations in the book of André Tardieu, entitled in French "Devant l'Obstacle" and in the English translation "France and America." As Ernest Dimnet reminds us in the *London Saturday Review*, few people were more in the limelight during the years 1917-1920 than Mr. Tardieu, because he was constantly at Clemenceau's elbow. Since then, he has not often been mentioned, but now it would seem that he is to return to international notice because of his endeavor to help toward a better understanding between the Americans and the French. Analyzing Mr. Tardieu's book, Ernest Dimnet finds that one oversight of the French is that:

"They go on repeating the words 'American friendship' without realizing that America as a nation does not want friendships, and separates herself from her political associates the moment she can do so, as unceremoniously as she did in 1919, when she signed a separate peace with Germany. Few French students know or remember that less than twenty years after Lafayette left the American shores, America was at war with the country to which she virtually owed her freedom. And those few Frenchmen are apt to denounce ingratitude where they ought only to look for fundamental historic differences. These differences Mr. Tardieu explains and frequently justifies by the constantly recurring fact that the American sees things from the economic, not from the sentimental or the political angle. Hence in his turn his incapacity to comprehend French problems, which fifteen centuries of entirely inevitable racial feuds have made chiefly political, and his irritating preachments on the adoption of impossible American nostrums."

Another impression which Mr. Tardieu has preserved from his personal dealings with Americans, says Ernest Dimnet, is that individual French and American people invariably collaborate with success because America is something widely different from the Americans, and we read:

"'Devant l'Obstacle' teems with instances of this fact and with the certainty one always finds in Americans that, in spite of transient misunderstandings, France is nearer to the real American than any other country. The quaint epitaph of a young Chevalier de Saint Sauveur, in the churchyard of King's Chapel, in Boston, has said this for a century and a half."

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