ECHOES FROM THE EASTERN STRUGGLE.*

Two grievances gleam wearily through the pages of the volume entitled 'Following the Sun-Flag,' by Mr. John Fox, Jr. These are that the author was not permitted to see anything of the actual fighting in the earlier land battles of the Russo-Japanese war, leaving Liao-Yang just as the heavy fighting was beginning; and that the Mikado's officers did not tell him the truth, according to any occidental notions of what it is that constitutes verity. Deprived of opportunity for accomplishing the purposes which took him to the East, denied all chance of informing the world of the actual struggle which he went to see, he has been compelled to content himself with describing, in his own vivid and picturesque manner, the details of his five months' tedious waiting in Tokio and as many weeks with his fellow-correspondents from America, England, France, and Italy, on the trail of the Japanese armies in Manchuria. He has made the work interesting by the sketchy, breezy manner in which it is written, although it is imbued with that fine race prejudice against men of darker skin which is the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon in general and of the Southern-born American in particular. Of the spirit of the Japanese people in their heroic struggle, Mr. Fox has much to say.

'The women let their hair go undressed once a month, that they may contribute the price of the dressing — five sen. A gentleman discovered that every servant in his household, from butler down, was contributing a certain amount of his wages each month, and in consequence offered to raise wages just the amount each servant was giving away. The answer was, "Sir, we cannot allow that; it is an honor for us to give, and it would be you who would be doing our duty for us to Japan."'

'A Japanese lady apologized profusely for being late to dinner. She had been to the station to see her son off for the front, where there were already three of her sons. Said another straightway, "How fortunate to be able to give four sons to Japan!"'

'Hundreds and thousands of families are denying themselves one meal a day that they may give more to their country. And one rich merchant, who has already given 100,000 yen, has himself cut off one meal, and declares that he will if necessary live on one the rest of his life for the sake of Japan.'

Describing a pretty little girl in one of the houses where he lodged, Mr. Fox says:

'Among the thousands of applications, many of them written in blood, which the war office has received from men who are anxious to go to the front, is one from just such a girl. In her letter she said that she was the last of an old Samurai

* FOLLOWING THE SUN-FLAG: A Vain Pursuit through Manchuria. By John Fox, Jr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

PORT ARTHUR. A Monster Heroism. By Richard Barry. Illustrated. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co.

THE YELLOW WAR. By 'O.' Illustrated. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co.

family. Her father was killed in the war with China; her only brother died during the Boxer troubles. She begged to be allowed to take her place in the ranks which had always belonged to her family. She could shoot, she said, and ride; and it would be a lasting disgrace if her family name should be missing from the rolls, where it has had an honored place for centuries, now that her country and her Emperor are in such sore need.'

Mr. Richard Barry was more fortunate than Mr. Fox. Representing a number of periodicals in England and America, from the pages of which the materials for his book on Port Arthur have been taken, Mr. Barry saw all the later fighting before Port Arthur, and was a witness to its surrender. The heroism of both Russians and Japanese is freely attested, although it is in the latter that he finds the larger share, since he was their guest and within their lines. This book is that of an eye-witness profoundly and sympathetically impressed, still young enough to have every impression deep and clear, and old enough to set it down justly and vividly. He, like Mr. Fox, has the skill of seizing upon illustrative episodes, of which we take a few examples.

'The Russians made a sortie into the plain, parading for several hundred yards in front of the Two Dragons. That was before the lines were as closely drawn as they are now, and the Japanese looked with amusement on the show-off. At the head marched two bands, brassing a brilliant march. Then came the colors flashing in the sun. The officers were dashingly decorated, and the troops wore colored caps. It was a rare treat for the Japanese, for they had never seen anything like that in their own army. Like a boy bewildered at the gay plumage of a bird he might not otherwise catch, the simple and curious Japanese let the foe vaingloriously march back into the town.'

Of the commander of the Mikado's forces during the siege, much is said by Mr. Barry.

'We expected to meet a man of iron, — for Nogi is the general whose eldest son, a lieutenant in the Second Army, was killed at Nanshan; who has under his command a second son, a lieutenant; and who wrote home after the first disaster, "Hold the funeral rites until Hoten and I return, when you can bury three at once."'

'The General received us in his garden. He was at a small table, under a willow, working with a magnifying glass over a map. He wore an undress blue uniform with the three stars and three stripes of a full general on the sleeve, — no other decoration, though once before I had seen him wearing the first-class order of the Rising Sun. His parchment-krinkled face, brown like chocolate with a summer's torrid suns, beamed kindly on us. His smile and manner were fatherly. It was impossible to think that any complicated problem troubled his mind. A resemblance in facial contour to General Sherman arrested us, ... with beard gray, shaded back to brown where it met the skin, so that he seemed a monotone in sepia, with eyes small and wide apart, perfect teeth, tiny, regular nose, and a beautiful dome of a head flaring out from the temples in tender and eloquent curves. He stands five feet ten, unusually tall for a Japanese, showing the loose power of a master in his joints and in that mighty jowl shaded by the gray-brown beard.'

The following passage tells of a successful attack upon one of the forts, and is a sample of pages of similar writing.

'At half-past four in the afternoon, Tereda orders the final charge. Three cheers go up — *Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!* With bayonets fixed, the squads deploying as before, the khaki-covered spots begin to move. In advance the men crawl hand over hand, helped by blessed waraji (straw sandals). Twenty feet from the parapet they pause and fling something that leaps through the air like balls from catcher to second base. These hand-grenades of gun-cotton explode on and in the parapet. The brilliant bursts play off the fast setting evening, as the khaki-covered ones go in, Tereda pausing and peering with his glass. The entire battalion tumbles over the parapet. Then the reserves begin climbing from the base.

'Silence. All is over. What has happened? Five, ten minutes pass, then the firing recommences, but now the object is changed; all the Japanese shrapnel is playing over the road leading to the Chair fort, and all the Russian fire is directed against Namicoyama. The Russians are retreating, throwing away their rifles as they run. Over Namicoyama floats the white flag with the red sun in the centre.'

Mr. Barry went forward to the limit of the trenches, within a few score yards of the enemy's outworks, where he saw grewsome sights. It is small wonder, with the breastworks constructed in no small part of their own slain, the interval between thronged with corpses, that Mr. Frederic Villiers, present in seventeen campaigns, should have expressed himself thus, as reported by Mr. Barry:

'Scientific warfare! Let me tell you the facts about science. Archibald Forbes predicted twenty years ago that the time would come when armies would no longer be able to take their wounded from the field of battle. That day has come. We are living in it. Wounded have existed — how, God alone knows! — on that field out there, without help, for twelve days, while shell and bullets rained above them, and if a comrade had dared to come to their assistance his would have been a useless suicide. The searchlight, the enginery of scientific trenches, machine guns, rifles point-blank at 200 yards with a range of 2,000 — these things have helped to make warfare more terrible now than ever before in history.'

The book entitled 'The Yellow War,' for which the initial 'O' is responsible as author, is of another sort, though dealing with similar material. It is, as the brief 'Foreword' avers, the work of one intimate with the war for a year, and an eye-witness of most that is described. It is concerned with fighting on sea as well as on land, and is more discriminating in its choice of incidents and of language than either of the foregoing books. There is much idealization rather than a precise report, and the result is an impression even more veritable than the others have been able to convey, notwithstanding a certain sense of the fiction that

is truer than mere fact. An example of the quality of this book may be found in the following graphic passage, which purports to give the details of the fighting on the Russian flagship of the Pacific squadron in its last naval engagement, but which can be held as equally descriptive of the more recent fighting in the Corean Straits.

'The great ship quivered — then quivered again. For a moment the flag-lieutenant thought that a torpedo had struck her. His nervous system remembered that first torpedo under Golden Hill. It was only the twelve-inch guns. But they made the conning-tower rock. The Japanese had manœuvred, and were now standing in on the starboard beam. The Russian Admiral changed his course. Great projectiles were ricochetting overhead, and raising geysers of salt spray all round them. But for the present the flagship could answer shot for shot, and one of the hostile battleships — the *Shikishima* it looked like — had drawn out of the fighting line.

'The Admiral clenched the handrail. His face was still pale, but the fighting light was in his eyes. For a moment his gaze turned from the *Mikasa*, with her black hull flashing yellow up and down its lean length. The mist was up again in the south-west, and the sea was rapidly getting up.

'"'Make the fleet signal, 'Close up — follow me.'"' Then he turned to the officer at the navigating tube: "For the promontory!"

'At the same moment there was a deafening report, and the vessel swung so that every one in the conning-tower was thrown against the walls.

'"What was that — mined?"

'The dread of mine and torpedo was by this time firmly ingrained in every Russian sailor, and as the flag-lieutenant sprang down the ladder the horrible nightmare of the *Petropavlovsk* leaped up before his mental vision. It was nothing. A deck officer, who seemed as unconcerned as if he were at manœuvres, came hurrying forward. He reported that a large shell had hit the after 12-inch turret, glanced, and in bursting wrecked the top above.

'The vessel staggered from two terrific blows forward. The flag-lieutenant stumbled ahead, drawing his hands mechanically to his ears, while the torn fragments of iron and splinter soughed past him. Biting, stinging smoke blinded him, while the force of the concussion flattened him against a ventilator. The first sight he saw was the mangled frame of his comrade. The top of the poor wretch's head was gone; a half-burned cigarette was still between the clenched teeth. He threw his glance upwards, — the forward smoke-stack was rent from top to bottom, and the flame and smoke were licking round its base. The 12-inch guns in the forward battery solemnly fired, and the ear-splitting discharge brought the youth to his senses. He made for the ladder. Great God! the conning-tower and forward bridge were but torn, smoking, and twisted wreck. A man jumped to the deck. His face was as black as an Ethiopian's, his uniform and beard torn and discolored to a filthy yellow; his left arm severed at the biceps, was dangling by a sinew.

'"All are killed, the Admiral, — all!" the figure gasped, as it reeled and sank fainting to the deck.

'Then the port guns fired. The flag-lieutenant realized that the ship was not steering — she was veering round. He dashed to the after-bridge, past the quick-firer crews lying prostrate, amid the wreckage and the corpses. He found the commander superintending the shipping of the after steering-gear, and reported the paralyzing intelligence. For a moment the commander looked at him blankly. He was bleeding from a skin wound in the neck, and such of his uniform not stained yellow was scarlet with blood.

'"Good!" he ejaculated; "she is steering again. Full steam ahead! Make a fleet signal. Make the signal, 'The Admiral transfers the command.'"'

The sympathies of the writers of these three books, setting forth the rigors of war with a Verestchagin-like fidelity, adequately represent the feelings of the English-speaking world, English and Americans being quoted with impartiality. All rejoice at Russia's downfall, as a menace to the more peaceful nations of the earth well removed. But what of the religions of Christ and Buddha, apostles both of peace and life? Little of their spirit and influence is to be found in the hideous scenes and incidents set forth in works like these.

WALLACE RICE.