Powerful Henri Deterding
Who Rivals Standard Oil

THE MOST POWERFUL
IN THE WORLD: The Life of
Henri Deterding. By
P. W. WILSON

The sensation-mongers
Europe have amused them
themselves with speculation
over two men of my kind.
Both of these celebrities
have been multi-millionaires,
and have achieved the ethical
criticism that Macchiaveli shared.
MPH: Mephistopheles. On both our
behalf, the man's India
grateful Britain conferred
honors of knighthood.

Sir Basil Zaharoff, the Li-
time, supplied civilization
armaments, has been
privilege of Sir Henri Deter-
dutchman, to promote the
least possible flow of petrol
He started as a boy in a bar
a dollar a week. He proceed
the Indies and, at the age of 20,
look back upon oil
that he has managed from
India to Poland.

In these pages, the care
reproduced, and in preparing
narrative, Mr. Roberts has
amined a good deal of sourc
torial. But he realizes the
public is apt to be impatient
arithmetical. Indeed, the
moral of our narrative is oft
these days to be found in
the scraps of paper. Sordid
items like mergers, concern
price fixing and other
tricks to filthy lucre are too
therefore, in the imprecise
style that is more popular
more precision. The book
an economic treatise. It
apocryphy of power in a fla
energy that is wide as the
which
thieves are frankly with the
for instance, in Spain—wrote
an evangelist among the
torians. Following the trad
of half a century, he treats
petroleum as an ethical paradox.
To produce this questionable
commodity is presumption of
guilt. To consume what has
been produced is innocence. An
oil magnate who instigates
serpentine pipelines into a garden
of Eden like Mesopotamia must be
Satan. But Adam, who drives his
into the Lincoln Highway
twenty miles to the gallon, is
allowed to make a perfect get
away, without receiving so much
as a ticket for his moral obliquity.
The villain of the piece used
to be the elder Rockefeller.
But Deterding, though an upstart,
soon showed up the wizard of
Cleveland as a mere tyro in
oilogical altruism. At some
conference, the young fellow said
something or other about oil
somewhere and, according to
Mr. Roberts, the world-wide supren
acy of Rockefeller—if he ever de
sired such supremacy—was at an
end.

The truth about Deterding is,
according to Mr. Roberts, less
majesté. No Englishman is al
lowed to have his ears insulted
by such veneration. Over news
papers and books, we are told,
it is spread subtle but im
penetrable censorship, due to fi
nancial influences and the fear
of liability under a strict enforc
ment of laws penalizing libel.
The appearance of this volume
is evidence, therefore, that, under

Mr. Roberts holds that Franklin
D. Roosevelt is "the most skilful
doctor by whom the ailing capitalis
system of the free world
America has been attended." Even so, that
system is condemned in these pages. Oil,

Sir Henri Deterding.
Wide World Photo.

vision. We read:
The men who work to pro
duce wealth can and must
lack control of production
and distribution of wealth;
the will be bound to be
laid down in the hands
of a man, who, as
Deterding, able to be
ble the different
of his
resentment of its engag
Deterding has been useful
servant of destiny. But
despite all.
He married a White Ru
and has violently opposed
Rohrabacher regime. But
not save oil wells, either in
or recently in Mexico. Late
superman married a German
and became pro-Nazi. But

It is a pertinent question, but
we wonder whether Mr. Roberts
has answered it. What is the
problem to be solved?
Communities are national and
live within frontiers. Oil is geo
logical and distributed without
reference to such communities. It
is most convenient to develop oil
it be better for nationalist govern
ments to enter the arena with
armaments backing commerce?
Which costs most—a world war
between Shell and Standard or a
world war of democracies and dic
torians over the oil reserves of
Rumania?

Mr. Roberts gives an account
of what the intrusion of oil
meant to diplomacy at the Genos
Conference, and his comments
hardly suggest that nationalism,
as a sparkplug, is conducive to
the smooth working of the many
machine. Also, Mr. Roberts does not
appear to be wholly delighted
with British participation in
Persian petroleum, which, again,
was governmental.

There is no difficulty in the
State following the advice of Mr.
Roberts and expropriating oil
wells. Russia did it. Mexico is
following the example of
Moscowl nor Mexico, up
the present, has been
conspicuous in providing
in service. Moscow, for its
fact, is the great
in motor vehicles, motor
boats, oil burners and Dies
engines. For the United States,
as Mr. Roberts recognizes, the
serious question is not who owns
the oil wells but whether, in the
future, there will be oil wells to
be owned. Over that question
there may be quite as much gov
mental anxiety as even Mr.
Roberts would recommend, and
not alone at Washington.

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