

THE LIVING AGE

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FRANCE AND CLEMENCEAU

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At the most critical turning point of the negotiations which have in view the preparation of peace, and while the representative of the victorious France struggles against chimerical and utilitarian conceptions tending to ruin us because of their Utopian qualities, it is of great importance that M. Clemenceau should appear to all our Allies as having all the country behind him. In truth there is not a single Frenchman, worthy of this title, who does not associate himself body and soul with the just claims of our Premier. I write this to dissipate certain appearances which might sustain—not hopes (that term is too strong) but illusions. In connection with that vital chapter of indemnities and reparations to which France has right, the glorious old man, furiously eager to obtain justice, has against him only a group of politicians without prestige; creatures of the moment,—for they are justly suspect,—and financiers having relations with the enemy. Our friends must not fall back again into that error, which was before the war that of many people, in regard to the unanimity of French sentiment. This sentiment is to be

considered one, whenever the profound interest of the country is menaced as it is to-day by devious schemes of narrow counsels, for this is the most serious moment of the armistice. It is the gravest hour of all history.

Certain politicians—their names are known and their deplorable actions have long since been unmasked. The evidence is clear, not only to our compatriots but also to our young children, that the predecessors of Clemenceau were, during three years of a merciless war, ignobly inferior to their task. Such a one lacked both honor and distinction, this other one perspicacity, another patriotism, another character. While the bitter clutch of circumstance required, to strengthen our institutions, a vigorous personality burning with patriotic fire, there appeared from an atmosphere of political treason and Germanophile intrigue, a line of dwarfs and manikins, among whom was to be found one thorough scoundrel, to-day banished. These pitiful folk were charged with the duty of leading a nation of heroes, who swiftly gave the world their measure by the first victory of the Marne. Had it not been for this first victory, the first signal of the

coming salvation, the German tide would have overflowed the whole world and submerged with its first waves loyal and generous England. This fact cannot be gainsaid. The war continued amid various vicissitudes, weakened by a spirit of treason, at once concrete and diffuse, which no one dared to take by the throat. The 22d of July, 1917, for the first time, Clemenceau took this treason by its throat. He was never to let go.

For several weeks now, the unhappy and deplorable predecessors of Clemenceau have strewn his path with Parliamentary obstructions. Unhappily, the President of the Chamber was not able in certain cases to put these obstructions to his own use, but the illustrious questioners of Clemenceau, in view of the discussions concerning the peace of the world, know this well, viz: that this conspiracy, easily broken to pieces, has only made the popularity of Clemenceau greater. I could also tell of the insults and threats, recently followed by a brutal result which just missed being fatal in effect, with which a number of journalists, whom he has been wrong not to imprison, have honored him. These folk, who pretend to speak in the name of the people, represent the dregs of France. They live in the shelter of threats and clamors. The compliments and scrapings with which they greet this or that representative of the Allies are but shows of an unworthy comedy tending to lessen and rob of its fruits a victory in which they did not believe, a victory contrary to their sole objective, which

is pillage and revolution. It would have been a happy task to break these venal pens, the majority of them in the pay of Caillaux, that is to say, of the enemy, and to imprison the objectors. It is never too late to do the right thing.

In regard to the pro-German financiers, whose names and addresses are known, it would be enough to gather them together (at least those who are at work in France) and to talk to them in a manner which would make them reflect upon their actions. The support which they are giving to-day to a so-called democratic Germany, which they would give to an imperial Germany, will soon become worthless.

There is no one more difficult to get at than a dispenser of banknotes when he does not hear the step of an execution patrol. After all, it is hardly the task of those who have made huge profits in the war to prevent their compatriots or their ruined Allies from finding the means of living. While the lesson is being given to political treason in the person of Joseph Caillaux, a lesson ought also to be given to financial treason, a striking, a high, and a just lesson, above all to that clique which directs the International Bank. Once these three groups of objectors have been put aside (and this could be done in forty-eight hours with no difficulty whatever), France in its entirety, I repeat, will be found with M. Clemenceau. The confidence of the nation stands at his side and this confidence will follow him, even as it did for the military victory, to the very end.

L'Action Française

THE BRITISH VIEW OF IRISH NATIONALISM

EVERYONE with a faculty for argumentation must have despaired sometimes when he found himself opposed in a discussion to a person on whom logic had no effect, for whom syllogisms did not exist, and in whose mind a rationally presented series of connecting links in argument inspired nothing but some new and fantastic irrelevance. The man with the rational mind in such circumstances recognizes at length that all his rationality is of no avail, that every point of learning and dialectic on which he prided himself might just as well not have been uttered, for he has all the time been following the futile occupation of punching a featherbed or kicking against a brick wall. Englishmen who read the reports of Irish debates in the House of Commons know something of that despair. We cannot go into the whole of the debate which took place in the House of Commons the other day, but let us, to illustrate our meaning, disentangle a few arguments from the mass. The Nationalists — and the same thing is true of what may be called the moderate Sinn Féiners, if there be such persons — base their claim for independence upon the rights of small nationalities, and upon what in the jargon of the day has come to be known as self-determination. Surely if these men had any glimmerings of statesmanship they would at once accept the offer that has been made to them over and over again that they may set up a Parliament in Ireland which will not control the Six Counties of Northeast Ulster where the population is predominantly Unionist and Protestant. Obviously, if the majority of the people in the South

and West of Ireland have a right to determine their own political destiny, the local majority of the Six Counties have an exactly similar right. That is the merest logic. If the Dublin Parliament should succeed, there can be no doubt whatever that within three or four years the excluded part of Ulster would be begging and praying to come in. If we were Ulstermen, we should always be rubbing in the fact that the unwillingness of Irishmen in the South and West to set up a Parliament where they have a really homogeneous population is the most alarming fact in the situation. Within the area which is undoubtedly of their own way of thinking the Nationalists could carry on quite happily without being balked and tormented by all those tiresome Protestant or Unionist objectors from Ulster. We feel sure that if we were Home Rulers we should actually say: 'We would rather be without miserable anti-Irish Irishmen like you Northeast Ulster people.' Directly the Nationalists began to talk in that strain, and especially if they began to make an obvious success of their affairs, Ulster Unionists and Protestants would begin to hesitate, to ask themselves questions, and to wonder if, after all, there was any need to hold out longer.

But the Nationalists seem to be by temperament or brain power quite incapable of appreciating this. History for them tells its stories in vain. Suppose that during the *risorgimento* of Italy, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Cavour had said: 'We will have all or nothing. There shall be no partition. If we cannot include in our new State some city where the population is