UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_158662

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

BRIAND

MAN OF PEACE

BY VALENTINE THOMSON

NEW YORK: COVICI-FRIEDE
PUBLISHERS: MDCCCCXXX

Copyright, 1930, *by* COVICI, FRIEDE INC.

TYPOGRAPHY BY S. A. JACOBS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE STRATFORD PRESS, INC. NEW YORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

Introduction *Page xi*

Chapter I *Page 3*

BRIAND, THE PEASANT
- A Week-End
- The Orator

Chapter II *Page 16*

BRIAND'S YOUTH IN BRITTANY
- Seafaring Ambitions
- Education and Philosophy
- Jules Verne's Hero
- Awakening to Socialism

Chapter III *Page 28*

A LAW STUDENT IN PARIS
- Hydropathes
- Montparnasse
- Montmartre
- Victor Hugo

Chapter IV *Page 40*

NEWSPAPERMAN
- Editor
- Printer
- Copyboy
- First Law Cases

Chapter V *Page 53*

THE SOCIALIST

Strike Leader
Legal Revolutionist
Fame

Chapter VI *Page 63*

POLITICAL DÉBUT IN PARIS

Encounter with Anarchism
Political Writer
Rents an Apartment in Paris

Chapter VII *Page 76*

THE DREYFUS AFFAIR

Friendship with Jaures
Origin of the Dreyfus Affair

Chapter VIII *Page 86*

MORE POLITICS

Socialism in the Government
Famous Revolutionary Speech

Chapter IX *Page 96*

THE *ADVOCAT*

In Parliament
First Address
Cluze

PART II

Chapter X *Page 117*

IN PARLIAMENT

Separation of Church and State

Chapter XI *Page 128*

IN THE CABINET

Introduces Clemenceau
Honors Old Professor
Sarah Bernhardt

Chapter XII *Page 140*

THE PREMIER

Political Pacifier

Chapter XIII *Page 147*

STRIKE BREAKER

Chapter XIV *Page 155*

THE ELOQUENCE OF BRIAND

Chapter XV *Page 165*

COUNTRY HOME

Chapter XVI *Page 173*

BRIAND AND POINCARÉ

Chapter XVII *Page 181*

THE AGONY OF PEACE

Rumblings of War
Death of Jaures
European Conflagration

Chapter XVIII *Page 190*

1914

Battle of the Marne
Departure for Bordeaux

Chapter XIX *Page 202*

PREMIER IN WAR TIME

United Front
Verdun

Chapter XX *Page 213*

THE ORIENTAL FRONT

Saloniki
Dramatic Meeting at Calais

Chapter XXI *Page 222*

IN THE DAYS OF VERDUN

Visit to Italy
U. S. to Join Allies

Chapter XXII *Page 230*

PEACE?

PART III

Chapter XXIII *Page 239*

BRIAND AND CLEMENCEAU

The Spirit of War
The Spirit of Peace

Chapter XXIV *Page 249*

THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR

Clemenceau Defeated for Presidency
Disarmament Conference in Washington
Cannes

Chapter XXV *Page 262*

GENEVA

Chapter XXVI *Page 270*
LOCARNO

Chapter XXVII *Page 281*
THE SPIRIT OF LOCARNO

Chapter XXVIII *Page 292*
FRENCH AND GERMAN RELATIONS

Chapter XXIX *Page 300*
THE KELLOGG-BRIAND PACT

Chapter XXX *Page 308*
THE MAN OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE
Intimacies
Relaxation
Methods of Work

Chapter XXXI *Page 318*
THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Chapter XXXII *Page 327*
THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Index of Names *Page 337*

TO MY FATHER

GASTON THOMSON

INTRODUCTION

This book does not pretend to be a biography of Aristide Briand, the man who has been twelve times Premier of France, a champion of peace, and who is now a prime factor in the reconstruction of Europe.

My wish is only to let others know Briand as I do and to show how the events of his life, constantly animated by a desire for peace, led inevitably to his present efforts for a United Europe.

To know a person does not mean that one can recount his actions year by year. You hear a man speak; you receive an impression of him. You see the value of certain of his actions; you see how he bears up under deception and injustice; how he reacts to fame. You see him in moments of relaxation, when he is not in the official character he has created for himself.

To dig out a life from books and documents no doubt will give an interesting and instructive recital of facts, but it cannot give a living picture. Form and movement cannot be separated. A portrait is never exactly like a person, any more than a butterfly impaled on a pin is a butterfly. The only portrait worthy of attempt is perhaps a series of snapshots. As cinematic views they could almost rebuild a life.

I have known Briand for many years. He is famous for his amusing anecdotes and his original views on people. He is never bitter, though he has met and conquered many adversities. He is very fond of telling stories of his childhood and youth—of the humble people to whom he has remained constantly devoted. I have heard him speak about friends whom he knows only too well. In all of his stories there is always evidence of good humor and often the trace of a startling new idea or an ambitious dream.

People who have met him in official life say that he often looks bored; and I am afraid it is true. One realizes that in the transformation that comes over his expression when he laughs. He is another man. Briand enjoys laughing. I have heard him speak in the most skeptical manner of political situations considered exceedingly grave, and I have observed how he believes with mystic devotion in a few ideas to which he has devoted his life. Because of his active imagination and his love for the people whose defender he had been for so many years, he suffered more keenly than others during the war because of the massacres that were going on.

When one looks back over Briand's life, one finds that ever since his early youth all his activities have been directed to the idea of peace, under different forms.

He started as a defender of labor in Saint Nazaire. In those days strikes were occurring throughout France, resulting in a series of frequently fatal riots. Briand felt that the pacification of Labor could only be brought about by its practical and solid organization, by having responsible men as a permanent staff. To this idea he devoted the first years of his life.

That caused certain people to consider Briand a dangerous revolutionist because he appeared as a leader of the Labor Party. In reality, his aim was to bring a pacific evolution of ideas within the law, to ameliorate the situation of the workers.

When he went into political life his whole activity was devoted to that same idea: to unite political parties, prevent those divisions into the numerous groups that too often paralyze French politics, and bring about a common national effort even among people who did not believe to the same degree in Republicanism. He often deplored the fact that differences in opinion so often retarded work that would be of benefit to the whole country. This effort for peace in the ranks of the parties was called "Briand's Policy of Appeasement."

But it was after the terrible crisis of the war that this really amazing man reached his real political climax. Stepping over the narrow national point of view, it was with full knowledge of all of Europe's

problems that he tried to insure the future security of France from an international point of view. This, today, is still his work. And this is so well felt in France that whatever the opinion of the last Cabinets, Briand has been left in the Foreign Office as if maintained there by public opinion and French pacific will.

And now we must come to a portrait of the man.

Briand is essentially a man of solitude. His greatest pleasure is to escape from his official life and pass a few hours alone in the country.

He is not over-tall; his appearance could not be called striking. He looks like a man of the people. His shoulders stoop slightly and contribute to the general impression of lassitude and fatigue. He occasionally emphasizes a word by a gesture of his refined and sensitive hands. His face is deeply furrowed, the expression of his mouth ironic and skeptical. But his eyes belie all this.

It is said that sea folk retain in their eyes the reflection of the sea. Briand says that he has never looked at a ship without the desire to sail. His youth was spent on the water and he often seems to forget where he is and appears to be looking into some far horizon.

It is in his eyes that one sees the real Briand, the man who always gives himself entirely to an idea. . . . The idea may change; Briand has often been

called fickle by his adversaries. It is not true. Though one idea may appear to him of more importance at the moment than another, he remains unchanged. When you meet his eyes you feel the really acute intellectuality of the man. He seems always to be living in the domain of ideas.

If we are to describe his appearance more fully we must admit that he is not a dandy! The changes of fashion do not seem to touch him. He has kept his long, thick, drooping mustaches. His hair often hangs on both sides of his face. This has made him an easy subject for the caricaturist. The shape of his collars is not in the mode nor are his neckties in the newest fashion. He seems to be above such contingencies. He is an enemy of all sham, hates any attempt at dressing up, either in ideas or clothes, and laughs at those, who like himself have come from the people, but who ape the elegance of snobs.

"They have lost their originality and they look like nothing at all," he says of them. In his unpretentious simplicity lies his refinement.

As an orator he hates rhetoric. Even in his speeches he uses only the simplest words. Before the most important diplomatic circles of the world, he is never grandiloquent.

Briand is always an improviser. He is always perfectly sure of his subject, knows all aspects of the

question he is discussing, and never uses an outline or a note.

Briand's knowledge is his foundation, like the keel of a ship that is sunk deep into the water, and it maintains his equilibrium even when his eloquence carries him aloft like the winds that fill the sails of one of his own Breton boats.

V. T.

En collaborant à la préparation de l'acte contre la guerre, nous avons été fiers, nous Français, de nous trouver étroitement et fraternellement associés avec la libre jeunesse américaine pour la réalisation d'une œuvre commune au profit de l'humanité.

Aristide Briand

PART I

"The real rôle of a leader is very different from your conception of it; it is a work of organization which means pacification."

ARISTIDE BRIAND

Cluzes, 1903

CHAPTER I

Briand, the Peasant

A Week-End—The Orator

TWENTY years ago, on the road which leads east from Paris through the flat, poplar-bordered plains of Champagne, Aristide Briand, the Vice-President of the Cabinet and Minister of Justice of France, stood in the defeated attitude of the pioneer motorist beside a stalled automobile. He was on his way to spend a week-end with my father.

Nothing reveals character more clearly than reactions to a disastrous motoring expedition. Certainly our unfortunate automobile trip made me aware of a Briand very different from the Briand I had previously known—the skeptical, tired man, oppressed by the atmosphere of official receptions and irritated by the formality and red tape of parliamentary procedure.

The Briand I caught my first glimpse of that day was not Briand, the statesman; it was rather the man, free of all official cares and political preoccupations. On that day, he was like a schoolboy who had left his text books behind in the classroom and could relax in full freedom among his friends. At the mere sugges-

tion of a holiday from Paris and all his obligations, his face lit up and his enthusiasm was immediately evident. The thought that he could be once more in the woods, fields and countryside that he loves so much seemed to rejuvenate him.

Before starting on our motor trip, Briand gave some parting instructions to his secretary, turned his back on his work and never referred to it during our holiday. As soon as he was in the car, he relaxed, burst gayly into speech, prepared to enjoy everything and to profit light-heartedly by his escape from official cares.

Before we started, he imposed the condition that there would be no talks about politics—even casual remarks about Parliament were sufficient to set him gesticulating in such a manner as to indicate that we were guilty of violating our pact. Nevertheless, he himself made jocular allusions to a few politicians. These men, whom he apparently takes so seriously in Paris, became the butt of his mocking irony, once he was away from them. There was one very imposing statesman who considered himself a pillar of the Republic and who thought that a smile or a pleasant word would almost bring about a national disaster. Of him Briand spoke indulgently:

"If he were less impressive, he would be less amusing."

Mischievously, he made fun of his enemies who

awaited his downfall with ill-concealed impatience. He laughed and dismissed them with a shrug of his shoulders. He was fully aware of the treachery of some of his so-called friends, on whose votes he depended for his majority. But he refused to become bitter.

"After all," he said, "they are just poor devils," and he concluded with a smile, "a politician who thinks of avenging himself on his adversaries and keeps an accurate account of his grudges, imposes a frightful task on himself—a futile and brain-wearying exercise in bookkeeping."

A fishing expedition was to be the chief attraction of the trip. Briand confessed to a passion for that sport. Our estate on the banks of the Seine afforded him a splendid opportunity to indulge his weakness. At that season the river swarmed with fish. My father referred to a carp-filled pond on our grounds, and Briand began to boast boyishly of his strategic successes in angling for the wary carp. Laughingly, he compared them with other poor fish and included many politicians who were caught by the bait he had prepared for them. My father remarked that he was breaking his own ruling that politics were not to be discussed.

Our car was making good progress and we were expecting to arrive in a few minutes. Suddenly, at a turn of the road, the motor emitted a strange noise, began to sputter and, after a final spasm, came to a complete

halt. The driver jumped from his seat and bent inquisitively over the uncovered motor. We got out of the car, dismayed by the delay, and made the customary, fruitless suggestions to the chauffeur. They did not help. But Briand, philosophical as usual, made the comment that his training in political life accustomed him to delays. Governments, too, are capricious and often get stranded.

We had managed to pull up beside a large gate leading to the courtyard of an old farm. A woman, holding a child in her arms and trailed by other children, peeped out at us curiously. There was every indication that she would be able to observe us for a long time. The thin shadows of the poplars grew longer minute by minute. It was now dinner time, and our house was still six miles off.

Presently a farmer came out of the courtyard to see what was going on. He recognized my father, who was then Minister of Marine and was well known and popular in that region. The farmer greeted him with the cordiality and warmth typical of French country folk. He looked contemptuously at the magnificent but motionless machine and then made us a proposition.

"I have a horse," he said, a little diffidently, "I can hitch it to my carriage . . . and drive you. . . ."

Briand jumped at the proposal. The prospect of

such an unexpected ride in a country vehicle charmed him.

"With a horse," said he, immediately placing himself on the farmer's side, "you are always sure of reaching your destination."

Completely at ease in these new surroundings, Briand followed his new friend about the courtyard, talking to him about working conditions, the value of the land and old and new methods of farm cultivation.

"Believe me, that man knows a lot," said the farmer to my father a few minutes later, pointing to Briand.

Our carriage soon appeared. It was a heavy, lumbering woodcart, perched on four high wheels. The horse was strong and willing, apparently filled with a stodgy determination to haul us to our destination. The farmer had already taken his place in the driver's seat. Had introductions been in order, the peasant would have known the name of Aristide Briand as well as his own. But it is certain that he had no idea of the identity of the man to whom he had been speaking so familiarly.

The farmer could not be expected to know, under the circumstances, that this stranger was himself a product of the laboring class who had devoted his time, his talent and his eloquence during his early years to the organization of unions among workers. Briand had been equally interested in the peasant and factory worker, for whom he had demanded, at the great So-

cialistic Congress at Marseilles, in September, 1892, that two practical reforms should be inserted in the Labor program.

He first prohibited the seizure of farm implements, grain and cattle in lieu of payment of any kind of debt. (This measure, of course, afforded the peasant a means of livelihood and permitted him to continue with his work, while it did not interrupt production.)

The second placed at the disposal of poor land-tillers all common fields upon which cattle might graze, and proposed to plant fruit trees along the roads. The care of these trees, as well as their product, was to be for the poor people of each village.

These measures were characteristic of Briand's desire for an immediate and practical benefit for the peasant workers. Naturally, the peasants all over the country were aware of Briand's responsibility for these reforms. Our friend, the farmer, who was a leader in village politics, was a great admirer of Briand's on this account. But it never occurred to him that in his rickety wagon—

And so when Briand was about to take his place in the carriage, the farmer stopped him abruptly.

"Please!" he said reproachfully, "Permit the Minister (my father) and the ladies to get in first." Probably he mistook Briand for some minor secretary attached to my father's office. We were on the verge of bursting

into laughter, when Briand, delighted at being unrecognized, took it all very seriously and humbly suggested:

"Perhaps I could climb up beside you?"

"Yes, come on up," answered the peasant condescendingly.

A few minutes later the carriage was jouncing along, and Briand, with his eternal cigarette drooping from the corner of his mouth, was sitting beside the driver, his feet covered with straw.

We had all stopped talking, the better to hear the conversation in front of us. To the great amusement of Briand, the farmer was haranguing him with a very superior air. He expounded one theory after another, without any regard for their sequence. Briand listened intently, interrupting now and then with a question.

To us in the back seat, it was an excellent comedy, and we could hardly stifle our laughter. But to Briand it was not a matter of fun. He was not playing a part. He was satisfying his desire to learn from this typical peasant something about his local problems. Here was evidence of Briand's gift for adapting himself to his surroundings and his marvelous faculty for drawing people out. These qualifications have served him through a long and notable career. Briand likes nothing better than to talk with the average man.

As he said to us a little later, "These men are the

true judges. Their opinions are based on common sense, and their remarks spring from a close understanding of their problems. It is they who often show you clearly which is the right course to take."

It must be understood that Briand is essentially of the people. Even his voice, while being extraordinarily rich, has the lilt and tang of popular intonation. His speech has the flavor and spice of the people of France. The refinements of diplomatic language have not robbed his conversation of its native spiciness. There are certain words which he drawls, peasant fashion.

Pointing to the brown soil from which the harvest had just been cut, he asked the farmer at his side, "Did you have a good crop this year?"

The farmer nodded. "This section of Champagne doesn't produce grapes, you know. We are rich only in trees and hay. We have terrible floods, you know. They wash everything out."

"Well," answered Briand, always the optimist, "that's good for the land, isn't it?" And with an unaffected desire to talk a little about his own country, Brittany, where he was born, he continued, "At home . . ."

"Where do you come from?"

"Oh, far from here," answered Briand, with a vague wave of his hand to the west.

"Got lots of corn?" asked the peasant.

"Well, it all depends—you know, the weather . . . heat . . . rain." Briand started to give details of the harvest in Brittany. He spoke of the hardships of the peasants all over the country. He seemed to know how hard it was to make a little money. He stressed the importance of disposing of chickens and ducks at the right moment.

For the time, he had suddenly become a man of the soil; nothing was left of the political leader. He sat there at the farmer's side on the coachman's seat, asking questions, wagging his head sympathetically at each complaint about country life, and partaking of its problems with an understanding that seemed phenomenal to us.

"I know . . . I know . . . it's not easy . . . life is not easy . . ." we heard him muttering.

And the farmer answered, not with the restraint and deference he ordinarily would have accorded a stranger, but with the intimacy of a man rubbing elbows with his equal.

"It is hard . . . *we* know . . ."

That picture of Briand, perched on the high seat of that country carriage, his shoulders slouched forward, his voice coming back to us with its slight, peasant-like intonation, his complete identification with his

companion, remains an indelible memory. I was to meet him many times afterwards and become more familiar with his eagerness for information, his insatiable desire for gleaning opinions from the man in the street and his tremendous facility in becoming part of his milieu.

At the end of this drive, Briand had learned a great deal about the cultivation of poplars, the marketing of lumber and the protection needed by the village of Champagne against the annual inundations.

At last we arrived at our home. The peasant pulled in the reins and stopped the horse. Once more he thought it wise to give his new friend the benefit of a little lesson in manners.

"Hurry up—jump down and help the ladies out," he commanded Briand sharply.

"You're right," Briand answered with perfect seriousness, "one must first be nice to the ladies."

Briand was enchanted with his encounter and followed us into the house in a very gay mood. By this time he had certainly forgotten all the harassing cares and aggravations of political life. He remarked especially how much more he enjoyed the pleasant trip through the country incognito than he would an official reception. He was too familiar with halls gaudily decorated with flags and streamers to face them with anything less than horror. The mere thought of facing



Fishing at Mery-sur-Seine.

the local functionaries at some small depot, when they were all dressed up in awkward uniforms, pressed into service for an annual occasion, made Briand squirm. He imitated the pompous dignitaries and their stilted addresses, using all their resounding and empty phrases. He hated all that; he hated the noisy bands which always burst out with the wrong tunes on little or no provocation. But, above all, he hated the false atmosphere created to impress him, but which only succeeded in destroying the character and charm of the particular place.

For a long time, Briand spoke of his solitary trips, when he walked from town to town to spread socialistic propaganda. Going from village to village, very much as tradesmen do, with packs on their backs, Briand carried his gospel of socialism into every nook and corner of France. He enjoyed those youthful trips, especially for the unexpected adventures which occurred daily. At wayside inns, seated around tables with country folk, eating and living with them, Briand received an education that no university could offer. He attributes to that mode of traveling a great part of his knowledge of the aspirations and needs of the masses.

"One learns more in fifteen days of touring in that way than in ten years of Parliament," said Briand with conviction. "I'm only sorry that these people whom I

met haven't more to do with politics. They would shatter many a cabinet with their common sense."

Briand spent the end of his first day with us by trudging quite alone along the river bank. We left him in solitude. Meditatively he walked back and forth on the path near the river's edge, stopping occasionally to observe a tree.

That evening another aspect of Briand was to be revealed to us. There was to be a meeting of the villagers to discuss a question of local interest. A delegation was sent to ask Briand to honor them with his attendance. Always ready to oblige, he accepted and promised to make a speech.

When the meeting came to order, one of the notables of the village announced that M. Briand, Vice-President of the Cabinet and First Justice of France, would speak. A smothered cry of dismay was heard in the audience when Briand arose. It came from our farmer-coachman, who had recognized his companion of the afternoon.

"How could I have guessed that was Briand?" he cried. "He seemed to be such an agreeable man—"

Naturally all the villagers added to his discomfiture by laughing at him and chiding him. But when he approached Briand, hat in hand, to make his awkward apologies, Briand comforted him by remarking that he was much too fond of his own people, the peasants,

not to feel highly flattered at being taken for what he was. He terminated the interview by saying to the farmer:

"If ever you get a ten-day jail sentence, old man, you just come to me. I have the power to make it thirty."

CHAPTER II

Briand's Youth in Brittany

Seafaring Ambitions—Education and Philosophy—Jules Verne's Hero—Awakening to Socialism

THE following day, Briand appeared at dawn, completely happy at the prospect of an early morning on the water. He wore a shabby and most antiquated costume. His boots were enormous and shapeless, and his strange little round hat showed traces of a long comradeship.

He was immediately at ease in one of our old, flat-bottomed boats. Some skill and experience are required to steer these sturdy craft among the roots, stones and currents. Where the Seine passes through our old park, its eddies and cascades make it almost unnavigable.

Briand spent the morning pulling in the nets and lines which had been concealed the day before among the weeds. A few hours on the water were sufficient to awaken in Briand far-off memories of hours passed on the Loire and youthful trips to sea.

"Thomson," he said to my father, "as Minister of Marine, wouldn't it interest you to know that I might

have been in your department—perhaps even an able bodied seaman? As a child I never wanted anything so desperately as to be a sailor. Ah, how I loved that life . . . its solitude . . . yet, never alone . . . playing a life-and-death game with the sea, the winds, the clouds, always on the alert, fighting the elements. . . ."

"But," interrupted my father, "isn't there enough struggle in politics for you?"

Briand smiled and went on to tell us of his early childhood . . . of Nantes, on the Loire, where he was born . . . of Saint Nazaire, by the sea, where he was brought up.

Briand is of humble birth. In his childhood he learned the meaning of poverty and the struggle of the masses to whose defense he has always been quick to respond.

He recalled with deep emotion an uncle, a pilot on the Loire, who had an enormous influence over him during his youth. It was this uncle who took the boy with him on his boat and taught him the enchantment of the sea, how to foretell weather and to manage sails. These exploits gave great displeasure to his family, who were bitterly opposed to his passion for a seafaring life.

"Yes, I wanted terribly to be a sailor. But there were my parents . . . they were violently opposed to it!"

And with a boyish smile as he refers to the opposition of his mother, he says, "Of course, she hated the idea! . . . Though I have never missed a chance to sail . . ."

Briand is a Breton. The influences which shaped his early years have left many traces on him. . . . The struggle against the great winds, the hours of solitude, which establish the habit of thought, have given him a taste for meditation common to all sailors.

"But," he went on, "it was this pilot uncle of mine who was responsible for my never becoming a sailor."

With restrained emotion, Briand told us of the ever-present tragedy in Breton families, where so many sailors and fishermen can be found among people who remain faithful to the sea in spite of the frightful toll it takes.

"One day they brought my uncle home on a stretcher. He had been drowned . . . I can see him still. . . . There he was stretched out . . . I couldn't take my eyes off his big boots which were dripping water. . . . those heavy boots. . . . I could see them filling with water and dragging him to the bottom. . . ."

This drowned uncle, lying there on the floor, became the symbol of a lost dream to young Briand.

"Naturally," he concluded, "my parents would never again listen to my ambition to become a seaman.

It was then I gave up the idea—and often have I regretted it. Never since have I been able to watch a boat clear the harbor without wishing I could be aboard . . . I mean real boats . . . sail boats that go on perilous voyages . . . two years . . . three years. . . ."

It may be that the dream of becoming a sailor was the best kind of apprenticeship for a political career. The analogy between the mariner and the statesman is frequently used. In Briand's case, one can find a perfect instance of such a substitution. His childhood dream of learning to distinguish currents and overriding them, to adjust sails before the tempest so as to offer a smaller surface for the raging attack of the elements, to execute a quick movement at a critical moment—all these were fulfilled, one way or another through his stormy political life. Briand, after all, became a pilot!

With his everlasting cigarette drooping from the corner of his mouth, Briand reminisced feelingly about his youth. He made us aware of the atmosphere of poverty and imminent disaster in which the Breton fisherfolk lived. He spoke of his haphazard but fortunate education. Briand believes in his luck and depends on it with undiminished optimism. One of his first pieces of good fortune, he insists, was to meet a professor,

named Genty, of whom he speaks in an almost reverential tone as "Papa Genty."

"I owe a great deal to good old Papa Genty," he explained. "Thanks to him I was able to study the classics. He was a really great scholar. He deserved a very important position . . . a dean of a college, at least. But he had a family of several delicate daughters who needed the sea air. So he had to stay at Saint Nazaire, fortunately for me."

Apparently M. Genty recognized in the young Briand a lad of exceptional intelligence and precocity.

"Papa Genty was an eccentric but by no means a small-minded one," Briand laughed. "Of a nervous temperament, he found it impossible to stand still. He had a positive mania for moving about, and I was always at his heels, sharing his enthusiasms and his aversions. As I was his only pupil, he took me for long strolls along the beach, where we had profound discussions. He believed in teaching by the direct method and I was all ears. He could make any subject vivid. Whatever we came across during our walks served to stimulate him. A flow of questions and answers came from him and I absorbed it all. These weren't really lessons; he appealed constantly to my intelligence and imagination and would repeat, 'Let the memory take care of itself.' "

These conversations on the beach, started by a chance

remark or observation, almost invariably led to long and exciting dissertations by Papa Genty on the history of the Greeks and the Romans. Thus the mind of the young disciple was nourished with stories of the classics in the form of small talk. Often Papa Genty would recite entire passages from the Iliad or the Odyssey, picturing, as he stood on the shore, the combats of the heroes and the burning of Troy.

" 'When you grow up,' he said, 'you will go to Marseilles to the shores of the Mediterranean, where our civilization was cradled. You will listen carefully to the laborers at the port, as they insult and threaten each other. And only then will you get an idea of the flavor of the conversation of Homer's Greek heroes.'

" 'Look and listen,' he would continue, pointing to the horizon, 'try to meditate on that illusion—try to understand the eternal motion of the sea. Listen to the tumult of the waters . . . No voice can shout that down . . . Listen to the endless commotion of the world . . . Watch the waves breaking on the sand. The meaning of that, my boy, is unfathomable . . . Observe . . .' "

Briand has preserved a deep and tender affection for his old teacher. He loves to acknowledge that it is to him that he owes his familiarity with the classics. Papa Genty introduced him to the greatest writers of France, unaware that he was preparing the youthful Briand to

become one of the greatest of modern orators. Thanks to M. Genty, a taste for Racine and for the classics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were awakened in Briand. A feeling for the flexibility of the French language, its simplicity and directness, the sardonic wit of Voltaire and the romantic idealism of Rousseau was revealed and quickly became familiar to the avid student.

Briand does not hesitate to give Papa Genty full credit for obtaining his scholarship at Nantes, which made it possible to continue his advanced studies. Immediately he became one of the leaders of his class and won, at the end of his first year, the highly coveted prize for oratory, *Discours Français*. During this period he devoted his extra-curricular hours to the study of philosophy and passed his examinations in that subject successfully. The seeds planted by Papa Genty were beginning to bear fruit.

* * * * *

Among the people who influenced the youth of Briand, prominent mention must be made of Jules Verne, immortal author of "Around the World in Eighty Days." There was a legend in our circles that Verne acted as a kind of guardian to Briand when he was at school at Nantes, after he had parted from his

family at Saint Nazaire. When I asked Briand about it, he answered with characteristic exactitude.

"No, not precisely. Verne was actually the guardian of one of my friends and he was good enough to let me accompany them on their Sunday walks. My friend was a Creole whose family owned a sugar plantation in Martinique. Often he had to go to visit his people. Then Verne took me out alone. To my disappointment, he seldom talked about his books.

"I have a very vivid memory of his home. Its atmosphere was unimaginably provincial and ordinary . . . and there it was that tales of marvelous voyages and glorious adventures were written. His rooms were very simple, very neat and ship-shape. I recall he had a number of blackboards on the walls. On these he had written many formulæ. All these figures and algebraic equations were being made for the inventions that would later appear in his books of fantastic exploits. You know, Verne really worked with the utmost scientific and mathematical precision. All his calculations were exact. They have since been verified, and now the wonders that were worked out on those blackboards are matters of actual occurrence. . . . He was a good soul, a good, calm little bourgeois. You have seen his portraits . . . his benign expression . . . his beard. . . . He knew what it was to work and to be satisfied and let everybody else consider him a fan-

tasist . . . he knew that those figures on his blackboards could not lie . . . he was really a good soul . . ."

Like all the other boys of his time, Briand loved "Around the World in Eighty Days" and "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" passionately. What youth of that time would not have envied young Aristide for the opportunity actually to talk with the man who had created an entirely new world? And young Briand was privy to the secrets of the master; he could enter his house, watch him at work, observe the process by which boats were created in an author's mind, to sail under water, circulate among forests of marine plants, grazing the monstrous fish which live only in the depths of the ocean. Imaginatively he could share the creation of machines that fly faster and higher than birds, of gramophones, of radio and television, long before another century brought them into actual existence. He was party to great prophecies, all of which were to come true during his lifetime. . . .

It was natural that Jules Verne should make a profound impression on young Briand. But it was extraordinary that Verne should be interested enough in an unknown child to predict his future with uncanny accuracy.

With boyish pride, Briand speaks about it. "Do you know that Jules Verne wrote a book of which I was

the hero? Alas, it is not one of his best known books . . . too bad! . . . It is called 'Two Years Holiday,' and it tells of the extraordinary adventures of some young Australian students who, while on a yachting trip, were wrecked during a storm and cast on a desert island. Among this youthful group, is a French boy who, due to his imagination and keenness and, above all, to his great gift of persuasion, becomes their chief, to the great annoyance of a young English boy, whom Jules Verne makes the rival of the French boy called Briant (with a 't')."

The mistake in spelling is excusable as it was written at a time when Briand was not yet famous. It is obvious that the novelist thought frequently, in creating his hero, of the boy with whom he had so often walked on Sundays.

He made his young hero a character which still remarkably resembles Briand. "Not a hard worker, very intelligent," "he often finds himself at the foot of the class, though, when he wants to, with his amazing facility of assimilation and his great memory, he lifts himself to the first rank, where he disputes the place with Doniphan (his English rival). It takes all his powers of diplomacy to manage a difficult situation. Briant is audacious, enterprising, quick at repartee, obliging, a good fellow (having none of the arrogance of Doniphan)—a little untidy and lacking, perhaps,

in style—in a word, very French—and in this, very different from his English comrades. But this does not prevent Briant in the end from gaining ascendancy over the English."

In a curious way, too, the novel constantly opposes the influence of the English Doniphan and that of the French Briant. The young Englishman Doniphan is imperious, very sure of himself and always creates difficulties. Briant is always the conciliator. It may be amusing to show the portrait of Doniphan beside that of Briant.

"Doniphan is elegant, well-groomed, intelligent and studious. He refuses to take second place. A certain aristocratic arrogance has given him the nickname of 'Lord Doniphan' and his haughty character makes him want to dominate. Between him and Briant there is a rivalry which brings them constantly into opposition. But the influence of Briant, composed of wisdom and persuasion, grows stronger every day and 'Lord Doniphan,' exasperated, ends up by vehemently accusing his young comrade of wanting to make the laws for all the world. And the young imaginary hero of Jules Verne's novel answers in words that certainly the statesman of today would not deny:

" 'I don't pretend to make laws for anyone. But I will not permit anyone to make laws when the interests of others are at stake.' "

It is curious to see that Jules Verne had discovered in the boy such a gift for leadership and organization. Even as a child, Briand, whose family's circumstances were very modest and who lived among workers who had so many difficulties to overcome in the ordinary course of their daily lives, discovered how terrible were the conditions of these people who had to do manual work, and how impossible for them to obtain any justice or defense of their rights.

Children have a great sense of justice. Many examples that he saw of the miserable conditions of those workers to whom he belonged appeared to him revolting, and he very soon felt that the only way to remedy these conditions was to overthrow the present state of society and build something new.

Referring to those early notions of revolutionary exaltation, Briand smiles and admits:

"I was a bit extravagant . . . ready for anything . . . I had a turbulent nature that time had not yet cooled down."

This calls to mind a remark of Clemenceau's:

"I think nothing of those who before twenty are not revolutionists."

CHAPTER III

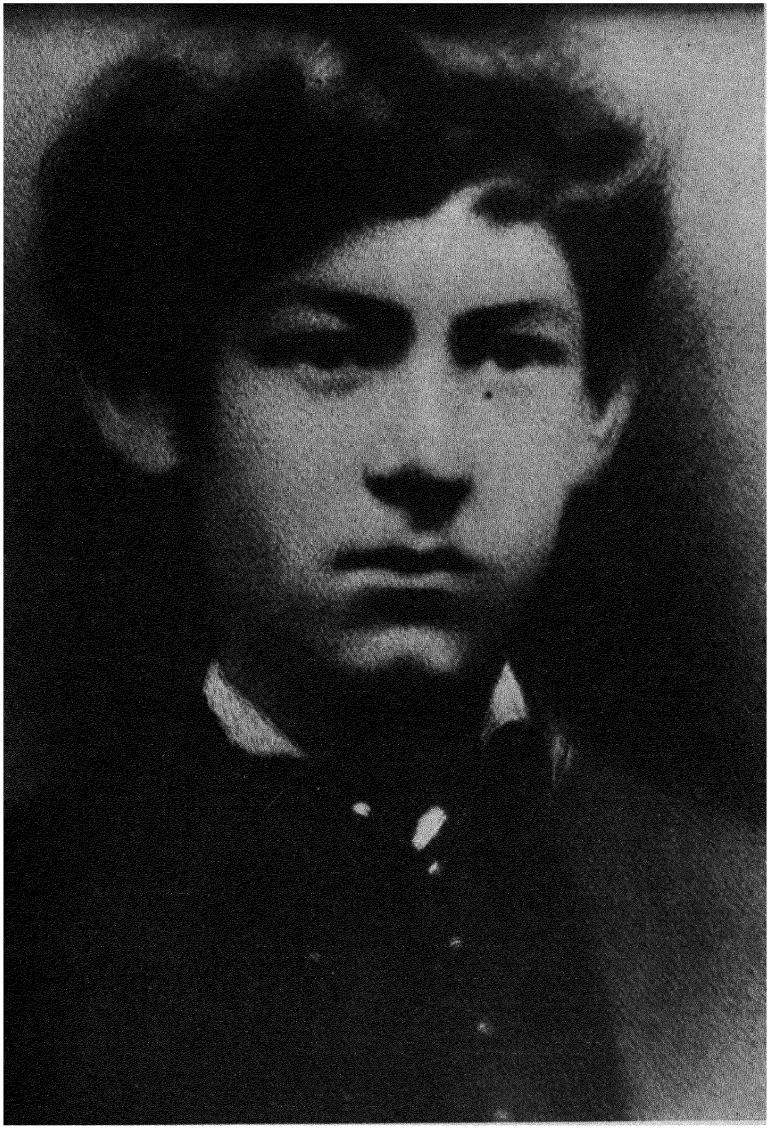
A Law Student in Paris

Hydropathes—Montparnasse—Montmartre—
Victor Hugo

HAVING been forced to renounce the dream of being a sailor, and feeling a keen sense of rebellion against the oppressive conditions under which the workers about him had to struggle, Briand turned to the study of law.

Paris, of course, had the attraction for him that it has for any French boy who looks forward to a career; and at that moment when his ideas were beginning to grow and he felt that he wanted to be in the center of political and intellectual activity, Paris seemed the only logical place to go. Paris would be the battle ground of his dreams. One could learn in Paris. He was too young to have ideas of personal fame, but he wanted to grow intellectually, to live and to observe, and he knew, though vaguely, that Paris offered the most to see and to learn.

And then, of course, being a very young man, the stories of the Latin Quarter of Paris which he had heard, a Paris boiling over with enthusiasm for politics and art, and the lighter touches of pleasure, were



Briand at the age of 12

enough to fire him with a desire to go there. For no matter how much one may love his home, Paris is always a goal to be attained!

Certainly Briand was typical of the boy in whom revolutionary ideas are seething, and who feels deeply the faults and errors of those who have preceded him; to whom zeal is all-important and experience oppressive. The boy who lives for the day when he can rebuild the world! And this is as it should be. For if youth will not undertake to improve mankind, who will? Surely not older, wiser men, who know too well the futility of such endeavors.

Briand says of himself in those days, "I was a little hot-headed—"

And so Briand went to Paris. Unfortunately, life in the capital required money. His family, small hotel keepers, could not very easily spare the few dollars a month that would have maintained him while he would be devoting himself to the study of law and to the discovery of ideas and life. But what was the lack of five or six dollars a month to an adventurous lad with a burning desire to find an outlet for forces germinating in him and ideas already felt but not yet articulate? A young boy is so often enthusiastic with no definite motive; generous, not knowing what to give; and ready to devote himself to a cause, though not having as yet discovered to what cause. He feels ardent

—one may feel ardent and not have discovered love. One may be ready to be a reformer before he knows what is wrong, and want to build before he gets the materials.

At his age and with his intelligence and a desire to work, jobs came easily. While doing clerical work for a lawyer at night, there was spare time for his studies and for his dreams about politics, about the injustice of the conditions of certain classes, the oppression of capitalism. He was acquiring the feel of the world before taking up his personal cause.

To earn the little money necessary for his subsistence, he had to copy, night after night, innumerable briefs, complaints, dispossess notices, writs and pleadings. Briand always hated the physical act of writing, and even now must force himself to the task. He trusts his memory implicitly and delivers his most important addresses extemporaneously.

"Oh, the hours of scribbling I put in! . . . The reams of paper I covered with my pen in those days. . . . What a vast number of pages covered with my handwriting could be found by souvenir collectors in the dusty files of the attorneys for whom I worked during those days! And these would really be in my handwriting, not in Peycelon's, as are those attributed to me today." He says this with an amused smile.

Gilbert Peycelon is one of Briand's oldest and most

intimate friends. Willingly Briand turns over to him all the fatiguing details of his correspondence, the compilation of data and the sifting of facts. Peycelon, who is devoted to him, is a man of infinite patience.

* * * * *

Once established in Paris as a law student, Briand flung himself into the intensely exciting life of the Latin Quarter. The center of French learning since the twelfth century, the Latin Quarter remains the kingdom of the student. The streets, the cafés and the restaurants belong to him. Since 1201, when the Sorbonne was founded for the study of theology by Robert Sorbon, Chaplain and Confessor of Saint Louis, King of France, the Latin Quarter has been both the playground and the center of intellectual life for the aspiring youth of France—and for that matter, of the whole world. For foreigners the Latin Quarter still retains the glamor of the days described by Murger in *La Bohème*. They still imagine that they will find something of the days when long-haired students, with baggy trousers and Windsor ties, walked arm in arm with wide skirted grisettes. Some of that, it is true, has survived in the Boul' Mich and in Montparnasse, where boys and girls meet, where love flourishes easily over a tiny

table in a café, where youth exchanges dreams and creates illusions that cost nothing.

At the same time, the Latin Quarter is also the domain of a very earnest and poor student body of France who work hard and play little. Bordering it is Montparnasse, where so-called artists of all colors and all races come, more often to lead wild lives and to spend their evenings at the terraces of cafés and bars that line the streets than to devote themselves austerely to a serious pursuit of art.

In spite of the sentimental pictures of the student of the Latin Quarter, the truth is that he is representative of the intellectual life of his country. Students have always interfered in politics and have had their say on all literary and social questions. A hundred years ago, the dissensions between the followers of the then new romantic school and the classical school started a genuine war which had its reverberations around the entire world.

The partisans of Alfred de Musset, Lamartine, Alfred de Vigny and Victor Hugo fought their enemies violently, and had a glorious time exchanging blows and carrying their battles from restaurants, cafés and the streets, right into the principal theaters, shouting and fighting wildly, to the great annoyance of the elegant parterre. Students were always ready to support their beliefs to the point of cracking a few heads. When

the battle was over, they would retire to their literary clubs to nurse their wounds, continue their discussions and proclaim the genius of some new luminary in the literary firmament. There, too, the new social order was proclaimed, for literature was not their only interest. There were reformers among them who declared heatedly in conversation that the government had to be overthrown. New rights were demanded for the coming man and all matters pertaining to literature and art and science and politics were debated lustily.

* * * * *

It was into this atmosphere of intellectual combat that Briand came, fresh from Brittany. He was introduced and admitted to one of the most famous clubs in the Quarter—"The Hydropathes." That group, of which he still speaks with great reverence and pride, brought him into close friendship with nearly all the aspiring youngsters who are now grown to celebrity and some of whom now sit solemnly among the Academicians. There were also men in the group who had already become famous, but who were not associating with these gay youths.

No dictionary mentions the word "Hydropathes" although it has something of an international meaning. Its origin goes back to the time when a group of

students, attending a concert in a theater on the Champs Elysée, were charmed by a Hungarian piece called "The Hydropathen Waltz." One of the youngsters, named Goudeau, made a nuisance of himself by turning to everyone he met, demanding what the meaning of the word "Hydropathe" might be. Of course no one could answer. Because Goudeau made a byword of "Hydropathe" by his persistent questions, the group came to be known as "The Hydropathes," when he later was elected chairman of one of the clubs of the Latin Quarter.

It was this coterie that eventually accepted young Briand as one of its members. One can understand what it meant to the youthful enthusiast to be able to spend his evenings in a place where he could meet men like Guy de Maupassant, the greatest French novelist; Paul Bourget, future chronicler of elegant society life; Jean Richepin, the Bohemian poet who was to become an Academician; Joris Karl Huysmans, who was even then seeing literature through veiled dreams among which appeared his vision of cathedrals; the poet, Albert Samain; Lucien Descaves, who was to be one of the heads of the Academy Goncourt; Coquelin, later the immortal Cyrano de Bergerac; and Sarah Bernhardt. How could a youth help being attracted by Sarah Bernhardt, with whom

all students were so much in love? I know of one young man who sold his cloak to get a place in the topmost gallery to see her in Ernani for the tenth time. And she would recite in her golden voice for the Hydropathes at their informal gatherings! Briand always had a tremendous admiration for Sarah Bernhardt, one that he never forgot even in later years when he had become a powerful figure, absorbed in political problems.

A famous critic of that time wrote:

"The Hydropathes are all great writers and artists in the bud. It would be a very wise thing for us to make the acquaintanceship of these brilliant youths, who have among them many who will one day reach fame."

The weekly meetings of the group took place in the Latin Quarter in a café called, curiously enough, "The Café of the Future." Besides their violent arguments on matters literary, social, political and economic, the members indulged in laughter, singing and ribaldry. No one was so eminent as to escape their scorn, for Paris laughs at everything and everybody.

Here Briand could listen to poets reciting their latest works; to scintillating discussions of the topics of the day. This was living. To think that he, the little Breton provincial, could meet the sophisticates of Paris on an even footing, argue with them, drink with them and

once or twice even trap them in an argument and make them concede his superiority—in short to obey the heeding of old Papa Genty—to listen and observe!

Little by little he became more confident of his own powers. Lightness of touch and the quick turn of wit were encouraged in his circle.

Briand's life in Paris brought him together with celebrities other than those among the Hydropathes. Certain anecdotes he still likes to tell. For example, the one about his meeting with the patriarchal Victor Hugo.

The youngsters like Briand of that time looked upon Hugo as a god. He was profoundly respected for his writings, but he was almost canonized by the youth of France because he had once been exiled for his political views, which insisted upon principles that were antagonistic to the Empire.

Hugo was a man of very simple habits. It was his custom to leave his house every day at the same hour and board the same creeping, horsedrawn omnibus which took him to the Senate. The conductor of the bus, naturally, was very proud of his distinguished passenger and reserved a seat for the great writer, forbidding anyone else to sit in it.

One day, young Aristide, who knew nothing of the throne for Hugo in the street car, climbed aboard and, finding an empty seat, immediately installed himself

comfortably in the place of honor. The conductor, busy collecting fares, had not observed the sacrilege. When Victor Hugo entered the car, he was amazed to see that his place was occupied. His Olympian face was well known by all, and when Briand looked up and realized who was standing before him, he arose, mute with respect, and paid homage to the poet, offering him his place with confused words of admiration.

Briand's juvenile enthusiasm appealed to Victor Hugo, who immediately became interested in the personality and conversation of the unknown boy. The time passed far too quickly for Briand to get all that he wanted from such a meeting. The conductor had joined in the conversation, eager to exchange ideas with Victor Hugo, who was his friend. . . . It might be of interest to add that the street car conductor was mentioned in Hugo's will . . . Briand was not.

* * * * *

Alas, the merry parties of the Hydropathes were not to last long. Dissension exists—even among young literateurs. The humorists who enlivened the parties were being quoted all over the city. They tired of the Latin Quarter. Montmartre, with its cabarets and its songs which were repeated the next day all over Paris, appealed to them. . . . Songs are part of the life of

Paris. Its whole history could be read in the songs of the day. Marie Antoinette was sung into prison. The story of modern politics could be written from the refrains of Montmartre.

The group of humorists emigrated one by one from the left side of the river to the right—climbed the steep hill of Montmartre, settled there and founded a cabaret called the "Chat Noir," which suddenly became famous. Briand, of course, was thrilled. He still boasts that he was one of the founders of the "Chat Noir" and it is amusing to hear him speak of the days in Montmartre when he was a personal friend of the song writers whom he still admires and defends.

* * * * *

It is curious that Briand, in spite of his constant association with literary men during his youth, and his admiration for them, did not acquire a taste for writing. He seems to have escaped unscathed from any literary influence. The itch to write has never afflicted him; in fact he has a positive horror of it. He insists that the art of oratory is absolutely alien to the art of writing.

I have heard Briand say: "Oratory must not merely be a piece of literature . . . a speech is meant to bring about immediate results . . . to convince . . . it

won't bear the careful scrutiny that the written word gets . . . and it depends entirely upon the direct communication of a personality to a group . . . it is almost entirely emotional in spirit and in matter. . . ."

There is even a slight touch of contempt in the way he dismisses an idea which he happens to dislike:

"Oh, that's just literature! . . ."

The brilliant weekly meetings at "The Café of the Future," though they were very stimulating to Briand, were certainly not his principal interest during this period of his life. He continued with his law studies, and never missed an opportunity to attend the gatherings of Socialists or members of the labor parties in the far-off corners of Paris, where he could absorb the ideas which were beginning to appeal to him so much. There he could hear flaming speeches and let his enthusiasm mount to the boiling point. The Socialist program seemed to him all at once to be the solution to all the ills of society. The great need for justice to the workers aroused in him a heated desire to devote himself to the amelioration of these ills. The workers appeared to him as one great family that needed his help. Carried away by his own enthusiasm and zeal he decided that when he was back among his own people he would become a reformer—an apostle of revolutionary Socialism.

CHAPTER IV

Newspaperman

Editor—Printer—Copyboy—First Law Cases

PARIS was a place of enchantment for Briand, but Saint Nazaire was home. As soon as his law studies were completed and his degree obtained, he decided to go back to his peaceful provincial town. He becomes quite poetical when he describes his native district:

"Along the River Loire are spread the tiny, busy towns, from Nantes to Saint Nazaire, quaint with the charm of France's village bustle. One small city is like another in appearance and purpose, all of them joined by the Loire in a common effort to contribute to the national life of France.

"In the shadows of the old streets, along the banks of the river and the picturesque walks which thread through Saint Nazaire, the odors of Breton flowers are mingled with the perfume of Touraine's roses and the wistaria of Anjou."

Briand felt that his greatest influence could be exercised among his own people. In Saint Nazaire, his birthplace, he would build his career. His ambition in those days was only to become a successful town law-

yer. But, much more than that, he wanted to devote himself to the new ideas seething in his mind. . . . He had become inspired with the work of the leaders of the Socialist Party in Paris and had decided to devote himself to the organization of labor. Since he had come in touch with the Socialistic groups and heard the flaming speeches of the leaders, the idea had crystallized.

Upon his arrival at his home, he turned to the labor leaders, recruited from the workers of the factories around Saint Nazaire. Briand met them daily, tried to understand their problems and became their friend. Although in a financial position which made it imperative for him to build up his practice, he did not give his time to the search of clients who could help him in a town where so much business was carried on. It became evident very early in Briand's life where his real interests lay. He was ready to defend any individual or party that had been treated unjustly; particularly a laborer, and the remuneration was the least important thing to him. Propaganda for labor absorbed him completely in those days. All his life would be devoted to pleading for different aspects of the same cause. In his political speeches, his lectures, later on in Parliament, all his efforts were bent in the direction of a plea for the organization of labor.

Saint Nazaire, where Briand launched his first

undertaking, was an ill-chosen ground for sowing the seeds of such advanced ideas. But it was not a matter of choice; Briand was born there and it was the country to which he belonged. Certainly Brittany seemed at that time to be the last place on earth one would choose to spread propaganda for Socialism. Brittany is firm in its traditionalism. At each road crossing, antique crucifixes stand as symbols of the power of the church. Legends survive from the past. It is in that district and in Vendee that the last partisans of royalty fought Republican ideas. It was from this soil that the *emigrés,* trying to escape the revolution, sailed from France. Born to reactionary traditions, the Breton has remained attached to his past, and bound not only in matters of religion, but also in political questions, to the influence of the church. Any change was looked upon with suspicion and alarm.

Yet it was in this country, hostile to any new ideas, that young Briand undertook his propaganda for the organization of the labor party, and of a practical recognition of the legal right to strike. The scattered forces of labor, kept impotent by every device of suspicion and antagonism, would have to be united. This was to meet with tremendous opposition, but to Briand's mind such obstacles were not insurmountable.

The first necessity, as he saw it then, was to find a medium for expressing himself and arousing public

opinion. There was no liberal newspaper in Saint Nazaire, and to start a newspaper then, as now, required a large capital, which neither Briand nor any of his sympathetic friends had. A backer would have to be found. . . .

But capitalists, especially in Brittany, could hardly be persuaded to finance a newspaper, the program of which would be to emancipate labor and defend strikers, who were considered dangerous revolutionaries. Such a program seemed, in the minds of the reactionary Bretons, to be nothing short of a calamity, and they would oppose it ruthlessly.

Nevertheless, Briand and his little band started the project as best they could, and after months of propaganda by means of speeches and personal persuasion, small donations were collected from friends and laborers in the district, in sums ranging from twenty cents to a dollar. The capital of what would today be one hundred dollars was finally gathered in the drive. With this to begin, *La Democratie de l'Ouest,* (Western Democracy) was launched—a weekly whose roots were planted so deeply that it exists to this day.

With so little capital, Briand and his friends could hardly surround themselves with an editorial staff and a corps of mechanical assistants. For the purposes of economy, Briand became, as occasion demanded, edi-

tor, composer, pressman and printer's devil. Under a variety of *noms de plume,* he wrote leading articles, editorials, political comment, news and even letters to the editor. No effort was too great to get the paper published, and Briand still boasts that for the sake of propaganda, he learned typesetting.

In a short time, Briand's tireless industry reflected itself in the popularity of his weekly, and he was spurred to convert it into a daily. The only thing that was lacking was a printing press capable of turning out a daily paper. There was not enough money to invest in a new press, and it seemed that the prospect of issuing a daily would have to be postponed indefinitely. But at this time, with characteristic luck, Briand ran across a notice that a bankrupt printer was about to dispose of his plant in Paris. Rushing up to Paris the following day, Briand found the printer and bought the press for what would now be forty dollars.

The coveted printing press was his at last. But unfortunately he had omitted the detail of obtaining money for taking the machine apart, packing it and sending it to Saint Nazaire, where it would have to be readjusted. After a long and careful examination, Briand decided to undertake the job himself. He took his printing press apart, made elaborate diagrams and charts by which he could recognize each fixture and

its relation to the entire machine. Each screw had a place, and every place was recorded in his notes.

He went back to Saint Nazaire to await the arrival of the machine. He was frantic with fear that some piece might be lost or that he would be unable to reassemble the parts.

When it arrived, Briand began the slow and difficult task of reassembling a machine that he did not know, following the directions he had written down in Paris. Eventually he managed to arrange a mass of levers and cylinders into their original positions. When the first copy of his new daily rolled from the press, Briand considered it one of the most notable achievements of his life. . . .

And now at last there existed a daily paper for the expression of advanced ideas. At last Briand had a medium through which he could exercise his influence. Day after day he could drum into his readers' minds the ideas he was fostering. In a weekly, it was impossible to sustain the fervor of the workers. There was too long an interval between articles, during which they could cool down. But in a daily! . . .

The inflammatory nature of some of the articles in *Western Democracy* made many enemies. One of the well known conservatives of Saint Nazaire, reading into one of the articles an attack on himself, sued the paper for libel, and it became necessary to find a de-

fender for the paper—a lawyer. This was one more job for Briand. In addition to his duties on the paper, he became its attorney as well.

Although at that time he had not yet been admitted to the local bar, Briand received special permission from the courts to defend the journal he had founded. The case was not particularly interesting except that it brought Briand to court for the first time, and if it did nothing else, it showed Briand's unsuspected ability in maneuvering—the first indication of the extraordinary resourcefulness that later was often to be responsible for his success in Parliament—his skill as a strategist.

In Saint Nazaire, the usual court procedure was to have the defense offer its plea first and then the prosecution. Rebuttal by both sides followed. It was the custom of the defense to present its entire case in its initial brief and devote its rebuttal to weakening or denying whatever questionable points the prosecution might have raised. The prosecution merely listened to the opening brief of the defense and framed its own brief on the issues raised by its opponent.

In this case, the attorney opposing Briand, M. Van Iseghem, was exceedingly prominent in the district, and since Briand was unknown as a lawyer, it was expected by everybody that he would lose. When the trial was called, Briand advanced to the bench to present

what was expected to be, by custom and tradition, the long and detailed plea for the defense. Instead, Briand recited the few lines of the formal accusation and abruptly sat down. The esteemed M. Van Iseghem jumped to his feet. This was an outrage. He demanded from Briand the meaning of such behavior, so contradictory to accepted legal practice. His surprise and bewilderment led him to confess that he could not plead under such unheard-of circumstances. Then M. Van Iseghem uttered a commentary which has been frequently quoted as containing a remarkable analysis of Briand's subsequent methods.

"I don't know whether it is cleverness or naïveté on the part of my young adversary, but I must admit that this is the first time in my many years of practice that I have been maneuvered into giving my case away first—and I am the plaintiff! I have been outwitted."

With the advantage of upsetting the plans of his opponent plus a concentrated rebuttal that brought forth the best of Briand's wit and eloquence and cleverness, he won his case. It was his first legal victory.

There is another amusing story that is told about Briand's early days in the courtroom. A journalist who had been convicted of libel, and who in the course of the trial became very angry at his accuser's lawyer, wrote an article about that lawyer which he thought was very witty.

"Do you know," he wrote, "what a lawyer is? He is an idiot who dresses in a woman's gown in the afternoon as though it were carnival time," and went on making ridiculous the man who had brought about his conviction. He also said that he thought this lawyer was a very ugly looking man and one that women laughed at.

Infuriated, the lawyer sued the journalist, who turned to Briand and asked him to defend him.

Briand was very busy at the time with his newspaper and politics, and did not take the request of his friend very seriously. It did not seem of much importance to him, and consequently he did not devote any thought to the preparation of a defense. He was terribly chagrined, therefore, upon his arrival at court, to discover that he was going to plead against one of the greatest *advocats* of the day, M. Jacquier of Lyon, the man who was known as the Great Jacquier because of his talent. The situation looked pretty bad for him, particularly when he saw that a tremendous audience had gathered to hear the Great Jacquier.

Suddenly an idea came to him. It is the custom for court house custodians to rent robes to the lawyers who come from other towns. Briand sought out the custodian and asked him whether he could rent such a robe. Of course the custodian chose the best one he could find, one almost new, but Briand rejected it.

"No," he said, "a Socialist advocate could never wear such a beautiful toga. Show me the oldest one you have, even if it is torn to pieces. I want one that nobody else would accept."

Greatly amused at the idea, the custodian said that he had a very old one that he would not even show to M. Briand. Briand insisted and was given a thoroughly decrepit rag. He was enchanted to find that the buttons were missing or hanging by a thread. He asked permission to tear them off and to enlarge the holes that dotted it.

When he entered the courtroom he created a sensation!

He had to begin the pleading, and started by saying,

"I will first apologize. My client was entirely wrong when he said that his accuser was ugly. I do not think he is a bad-looking man at all. And after all, what is ugliness? Beauty and ugliness are relative. A man who would be considered very handsome by the Eskimos would probably make no conquests in France. It is not reasonable to be offended because a man who has been severely condemned says that the lawyer who has pleaded against him is ugly."

He continued his gentle raillery, saying that he could not understand why the man was so touchy. He, Briand, permitted anyone to say that he was the ugliest of all men.

"Of course," he went on to say, looking at his torn gown, "my costume is not very elegant. If this gown were called a woman's dress, I should say that it must be the dress of a very wretched woman, very badly kept." And with much humor he began to describe that old gown, with no buttons, its spots, its holes.

Needless to say, the audience roared with laughter, and were all for Briand. The court as well as the public could not be serious. The only one who could not laugh was the Great Jacquier, who did not dare to laugh and who wondered what he could say in answer to such a plea. He understood perfectly that after such a performance whatever he said would be useless.

Briand won the case, as in later years he was to win more serious cases, and the old toga still remains a legend among lawyers.

Though occasions like the foregoing made many friends for the young lawyer, his radical attitude on matters pertaining to the workers also made many enemies for him. The boldness of his attack and his cleverness in executing his ideas were strongly opposed in certain quarters. No one could deny his ability as a lawyer nor his persuasive eloquence. He was paid the tribute of being marked a dangerous character. The reactionaries in Brittany could not tolerate a man who challenged their preconceived ideas and who, in the stronghold of traditionalism, dared insist upon the

rights of the proletariat against the arbitrary domination of capitalism.

It became increasingly apparent that something should be done to rid the district of what they considered a revolutionary young mischief-maker. To accomplish this was no easy task. His honesty could not be impugned. His enemies were forced to acknowledge that he did not look for money in his law practice. The principle for which he was fighting was his only real interest. His clients were generally selected from among the workers or the unfortunate victims of injustice, and surely from such sources he could expect little or no remuneration.

However, the greatest hatreds seem to thrive in the narrowest streets of small provincial towns. Briand laid himself open to such attacks for having championed opinions which were uncomfortable to the pillars of society. Before long they would retaliate.

The most expedient way of getting rid of a man is to begin a campaign of whispering which is designed to ruin his reputation. If the whispering is repeated enough it becomes exaggerated into a most awful clamor. Provincials are experts in this art.

Active and absorbed as Briand was, he did not realize what was going on. In his feverish activity in behalf of the workers of Saint Nazaire, he did not notice how all his movements were being spied upon.

Quite unworried, he followed his course, oblivious to the intrigues that were being hatched all around by his enemies.

A trap was laid. A simple meeting between Briand and a young girl to spend an afternoon on the outskirts of Saint Nazaire was the basis of the plot. The careful detective work of his enemies had made all of Briand's movements known to them. One day Briand was suddenly confronted by a policeman and summoned to answer a serious charge of improper conduct. It created a sensation in Brittany and gossip added a number of details. Witnesses were prepared to testify. The case went to court and Briand was pronounced guilty.

After sentence was passed Briand appealed to the Supreme Court and demanded his dismissal. This was denied, and it was not until he had appealed to the highest tribunal in Paris, far from the provincial intrigues, that the truth was finally established and the case thrown out of court.

CHAPTER V

The Socialist

Strike Leader—Legal Revolutionist—Fame

THE influence of *Western Democracy* was beginning to make itself felt in Saint Nazaire. The workers were not long in discovering that they had someone who could speak fearlessly for them. Especially during strikes was the paper staunch in its defense of labor, and Briand wrote not only convincing and heartening articles but kept enthusiasm alive in the ranks of labor by his stirring oratory. In this he was helped by his friend, Pelloutier.

Briand's fame as a lawyer began to spread throughout the district. The power of his newspaper became more important daily and contributed to his popularity. His familiarity with the problems of labor brought him into great prominence. His friends, and Pelloutier in particular, began to urge him to widen the field of his interests.

Supported by the Labor Party, he was elected to the first political post of his career in 1888, as a member of the Town Council of Saint Nazaire. In this campaign he had won the backing of the committee, which years

before had elected to Parliament Waldeck Rousseau, one of the greatest statesmen of France.

Speaking of this phase of his life, Briand disclaims any motive of personal ambition for a political career.

"No . . . I had not planned it. . . . It has always been a matter of circumstances with me. . . . Circumstances decided for me . . . created my ambitions. . . ."

But Briand's friends were not satisfied with mere local success. They had higher aspirations for the twenty-six year old Town Councillor. They wanted him to be a deputy who would represent the workers of the Saint Nazaire district in Parliament. Many argued that his youth was against him, but Pelloutier would not listen to such an objection. With his customary impatience he would not tolerate delay. Urging the immediate candidacy of Briand, he harangued his audiences and wrote in behalf of his co-worker:

"Even Briand's adversaries admit that he is now one of the leading attorneys hereabouts. He is young? Of course he is young. But what of it? Young or mature, he has the necessary ability, and what else is required? He is the only one who is qualified to be our representative."

When election time came, his friends of the Labor Party, under the leadership of Pelloutier, rallied to Briand. They managed to poll three thousand votes for

him, which were not half enough to elect him. But these votes indicated Briand's growing power in the district.

From the beginning, Briand had realized he was too young to succeed in the campaign, but the excitement of the fight—the power of his oratory to sway the masses had thrilled him. And above all, this early skirmish taught him the necessity of outlining a platform and of enunciating his views with the utmost clarity. Moreover, he learned how to meet and repulse attack, how to parry or outmaneuver his opponents, silence them with a threat, or cajole them with flattery. The many meetings he addressed made him conscious of his art of persuasion and of the magnetic quality of his voice.

Not at all dismayed by his first political defeat, Briand resumed his real job—the organization of the workers' union. The partnership in propaganda with Pelloutier was renewed. During the days following Briand's defeat, Pelloutier was inconsolable.

Inseparable as friends, their names are linked in the history of the founding of the Syndicalist Movement in France. To neither of them, in their youthful enthusiasm, was there place for doubt as to the ultimate triumph of their ideas. Nothing less than the complete emancipation of labor would satisfy them. Political slavery would have to go. The germs of the idea that

would bring about a complete reorganization of labor in France were beginning to formulate in Briand's mind.

"No progress can be realized through violence," he has often asserted.

To him what was required was not a revolution, but an evolution towards a better comprehension of labor's rights. He realized fully in what a continual state of disorder the country found itself as a result of isolated strikes that were aroused day after day in every industry—strikes that were the only way for workers to call to the attention of public powers their claims—strikes that too often ended as tragedies, making victims of the workers who had attempted to revolt against the domination of capitalism. As individuals they were helpless; strongly organized, the mass of workers had the power not only to discuss but to impose reforms and changes in the law that would liberate labor.

The general strike in the mind of Briand was not to be a revolutionary action. It was to be used as a weapon in the hands of those who really created the fortunes of the country and who were disarmed. All the dreams, aspirations, revolts that had thrown him on the side of the Socialists were resolving into a plan of action that had nothing to do with disorder or revolution, but with practical realization. This course Briand was to follow all his life. To him who can be thought of as the great-

est idealist—who is always aiming to some ideal that to the average person seems an unrealizable Utopia—the only thing that really counts, and to which he devotes his time, is the practical immediate realization of what might be called a constructive dream.

The law had declared that the right to strike was not to be denied. And so now Briand started on the first part of his job—the organization of unions in his own part of the world.

When he talks of these early days, Briand says, "I was a traveling salesman for Socialist ideas."

* * * * *

In September of 1892, a very important convention was called in Marseilles. The tenth annual national convention of the Socialist Congress, in which the federation of syndicates and coöperative groups of France met, was a turning point in Briand's life.

At this congress, questions of policy were determined which gave direction to the whole subsequent history of labor in France. All the prominent labor leaders of the world attended. Briand was selected to represent eleven trade unions of Saint Nazaire and was the special delegate of the metal workers of the district. It was an occasion when he could, for the first time, bring out his conception of the general strike.

This was no mere Breton gathering at which Briand could exercise his local influence. Men of international reputation and an experience of many years were in Marseilles. Around Jules Guesdes, the most powerful of Socialist leaders, symbol of extreme revolutionary ideals, were many tried campaigners, men like Paul LaFargue, son-in-law of Karl Marx, Liebknecht, who had come from Germany, Anseele from Belgium, and many others.

In such a group, Briand, who was not quite thirty years old, and had not appeared before any important congress before, naturally remained at first unnoticed. He found an obscure corner for himself and listened, waiting for the moment when he could find a chance to speak.

After the preliminary speeches, the convention got down to its real business—the discussion of the general strike in all industries. The general strike had been talked about in the ranks of labor for many years. Just as Briand had conceived it in Saint Nazaire, so other leaders in scattered portions of France had been considering it. Previous congresses had already taken notice of the growing tendency in the ranks and had discussed the possibilities of the general strike as a nation-wide weapon against capitalistic exploitation. At Marseilles, the issue of the general strike was to be faced once for all.

Briand was assigned to a special committee and appointed to present the conclusions in favor of the general strike to the convention. But Jules Guesdes was not in favor of his pacific theory.

In the debate following, this divergence became apparent. On the one side were the extremists who wanted quick and decisive revolutionary action. On the other, the moderates, agreeing with Briand's principles.

Briand asked for the privilege to speak on the question, and said:

"Considering the defective organization of capitalism, it is amazing that the methods used by the ruling class against the workers have prevented the workers from attaining any kind of emancipation during a half century of struggle. There is strong opposition between the interests of capital and labor. The law which is supposed to be liberal has not been able to break down that opposition. All the demands we have made to the powers have been useless, whenever the question of the welfare of the universal family of workers arose. . . ."

After a quick and comprehensive exposition of the ways and means at the disposal of the workers in the fight against their oppressors, Briand concluded by stating that the only thing to do when the time came was to suspend production entirely—in a word, to

use every advantage to be gained by the universal strike.

At the beginning of Briand's speech, the audience was inclined to pay scant attention. Then it became slightly surprised, and the surprise changed, little by little, to enthusiasm. Here was an extraordinary talent, newly recruited to the ranks of labor. That audience, so accustomed to loud and excited discussion which seldom stuck to the point, was immensely impressed by Briand's mild manner, his resonant yet perfectly modulated voice, and the logical arrangement of his ideas which were brought to such bold and daring conclusions. Briand achieved a personal triumph and became the idol of the congress.

Jules Guesdes, who stood for extreme revolutionary principles, did not share the convention's enthusiasm. He felt how dangerous the influence of such a talented young man could be and immediately launched an attack on Briand. To Guesdes, the uncompromising fighter, the idea of anything short of revolution was useless. A strike in which the worker was entirely passive seemed repugnant to him. He would have no mere folding of arms and cessation of work as a part of his program.

"We are the party of insurrection and rebuttal," he cried. "As soon as our ranks contain enough people in

each town to make it possible, let us fight it out in a revolutionary way . . . as revolutionary men."

Briand arose quickly to defend his position.

"Who in this day," he began, "could think seriously about revolution? It would be childish and silly to think of reliving the bloody and romantic experiences which filled the last century. Insurrection nowadays would be doomed to failure. The large, straight avenues of our modern cities make the ideas of barricades impossible. The wars in the streets belong to another age."

Briand faced the deplorable fact that the Socialist Party was not strong enough numerically and insisted that the time had come to seek new methods by which the party could grow in strength.

"The law gives the workers the right to stop working—let us organize the workers first and try the legal way of fighting a universal strike."

Briand was to obtain a tremendous success that day, despite the opposition of Jules Guesdes and his friends. On that day, the first decision of the congress was the endorsement of the general strike, in accordance with the ideas of Briand. His popularity increased steadily. All the newspapers mentioned him prominently. Whenever he spoke from the platform, he was calm and self-possessed. His oratory grew more and more

impressive. His ideas were being discussed throughout the country. He was represented as a new hope for the working class. A new political leader had emerged from the Socialist Congress at Marseilles.

CHAPTER VI

Political Début in Paris

Encounter with Anarchism—Political Writer—Rents an Apartment in Paris

FOLLOWING the Congress of Marseilles, Briand had his first taste of national fame. His defense of the general strike had been publicized all over the country, and the controversy served to create partisans and enemies right and left. Guesdes and all the left wing leaders of the revolutionary socialism were opposed to the milder, "within the law" socialists. They were quick to agree that the new schism in their ranks was led by clever men, men who were perhaps a bit too clever. The uncompromising members of the left wing of the Socialist Party looked upon Briand's eloquence with misgivings and actually spoke of it as a siren's song which would fascinate and destroy those who came under its sway.

On the other hand, the moderates nourished fears of their own. They considered Briand dangerous because he was in favor of creating a power that would be effective in opposing capitalism. The very words "general strike" were enough to make them nervous and

timid. Nevertheless, Socialists of extreme and moderate views could not deny the governmental value of a man like Briand. His theories were carefully discussed. He was looked upon as a man to be reckoned with in the future.

His rôle as a promoter of syndicates and unions in the district of Saint Nazaire had come to an end immediately after the Congress of Marseilles. Briand had suddenly earned a real place among the leaders of the Socialist Party. The future was fraught with great political possibilities. His destiny pointed to Paris.

Once more chance interfered and directed his course. A message begging him to come to Paris sealed his decision. But who were these friends who needed him so urgently? They were a group of anarchists who wanted Briand to be the defender of one of their comrades who had been arrested as a conspirator in a bomb-throwing plot. Francis, the defendant, was accused of having placed a bomb in the Café Very on the Boulevard Magenta which had shattered the building. This happened at a time when the anarchists were active in spreading their doctrines by means of acts of violence. Their reign of terrorizing acts lasted over a year and culminated in the discharge of a bomb in the Chamber of Deputies. Carnot, then President of the Republic, was the victim of another bomb. Such manifestation of political belief seemed to irritate and annoy the people

of Paris, who disliked the idea of having their homes and restaurants blown to bits by passing anarchists.

Leniency was soon to be replaced with the utmost severity. Public security demanded that the issue with the anarchists must be faced. The case of Francis looked serious. He was under the double accusation of complicity in murder and the destruction of a building by means of high-powered explosives. Two men had been killed; others wounded. The penalty for such activity was death. Only a very clever and eloquent defendr could save Francis.

This necessity made the friends and partisans of Francis think immediately of young Briand, who had established himself at the Congress of Marseilles as an eloquent pleader. They expected that the idea would appeal to Briand, for through such a case fame could be earned in a day in Paris.

Always alert to the opportunity for adventure, Briand decided, with his customary impulsiveness, to leave Saint Nazaire in order to undertake the defense of the accused anarchist, Francis. He did not know that his sudden decision would mean an absence from Saint Nazaire of three years.

* * * * *

Briand has often been accused by his critics and

enemies of changing his beliefs as a chameleon changes its colors. A graver charge is brought against him for abandoning his friends. But he does not take the trouble to deny his past, and speaking with the utmost simplicity, he enjoys recalling the days when he came in touch with Francis and the anarchists. Explaining how he happened to be on such good terms with the anarchists, he says:

"It was in the days when I spent most of my time in Socialist Congresses that I met the anarchists who were, naturally, represented there. For some reason they seemed to like me. That's why, when I was sitting rather quietly one day in Saint Nazaire, I received a letter from a group of comrades begging me to come to Paris to defend Francis, who had been arrested and accused of having tossed a bomb into the Café Very.

"I took my valise and went to Paris. There I met, among others, Severine, one of the most important French journalists of the time. Severine was very much excited and said to me, 'We must get poor Francis out of this mess. He's not guilty.' I inquired whether he already had engaged a lawyer. He had selected a man named Deplat, who was later to become chairman of the Town Council of Paris, as his attorney. Naturally, I couldn't think of taking his place. But they all insisted, made me meet Francis' wife, who also begged me to do something for her husband. I finally con-

sented to go to see him in prison to find out if I could be of any help. He had indeed chosen Deplat to represent him, but he also begged that I take up his cause. He pleaded so insistently that I ended the discussion by saying: 'I'll go to see Deplat and if he agrees to the idea of having me as his colleague, I'll do my best.'

"I met Deplat, who had heard vaguely of my coming to Paris, and he was very much upset when he learned that Francis' friends had asked me to defend him. He almost broke down and had tears in his eyes. I said to him that I didn't come to Paris to annoy him. Nor did I want to take his job from him. Ah, if you could only have seen him. He grasped my hands and shook them vigorously and thanked me, trying to explain to me that I had nothing to gain as the defender of such a cause which meant, besides, a lot to him. All the time he talked he held my hands. . . . I thought I'd never get them back.

"Well, that is the explanation of my not having defended the anarchist, Francis, and how I became friendly with this notorious character.

"However, this lost case was to have a very unexpected effect on my career. Having missed my chance, I decided to leave Paris the same evening. I was just wandering about, killing time, when on the Boulevard des Italiennes, a man who was sitting on the terrace of a café called me over. It was Rivaud, the Prefect of

Nantes, who was sitting there with a friend. 'What are you doing in Paris?' he asked. Turning to his companion, who happened to be M. Meyer, the editor of a well known radical paper, *The Lantern,* Rivaud exclaimed: 'Here's a lawyer full of talent,' and he proceeded to praise me, speaking of my work and my successes. 'He lives in a country where he is struggling very hard. His place is really in Paris. . . .' Rivaud continued.

"Introduced so cordially to the editor, I settled myself at the table and began to tell them the story of Francis, explaining that my record as a promoter of trade unions and syndicates had probably prompted the anarchists to call on me to defend Francis. As we continued our talk, I said to the editor, 'It has always seemed strange to me that the Labor question is persistently ignored by the Paris papers, even the radical ones. Don't they realize the importance of what is going on? . . . the growing strength of these unions? To our newspapers of today, the workers do not even exist. If I were you,' I said to M. Meyer, 'I would look into this matter! The growing organization of labor demands some space in your paper, I believe.'

"At that moment Rivaud broke into the conversation rather abruptly. 'It's a man like Briand that you need on your paper,' he said, pointing at me.

"I was just about to take leave and say good-by, as

it was time for me to take my train for Saint Nazaire. But the editor of *The Lantern* stopped me. 'Please don't go this evening,' he begged. 'I'd like very much to talk over this matter with you in the morning. Wouldn't you like to remain here and work with us?'

"As I did not answer immediately, he urged me by insisting on an early morning appointment in his office. I wasn't very enthusiastic and offered a number of excuses. . . . My life was settled in Saint Nazaire. My family lived there. . . . My position as a lawyer was becoming more important daily. . . . My newspaper was growing. . . . I had no money. 'I'm afraid I won't be able to do much for you in the beginning,' I said to M. Meyer. He replied: 'Your ideas on Labor are of great value. . . . I'm sure you could give my paper new life . . . and don't you think you could do more with your ideas in Paris than in a provincial place like Saint Nazaire? Don't you think that Paris is the place where you could exercise the greatest influence on the people?'

"I knew a little about newspaper work, having founded and edited *Western Democracy,* which was still doing quite well. I hesitated for a moment and then answered: 'I will give you my reply tomorrow morning.' After saying good-by I again began to wander about the streets, turning over and over in my mind M. Meyer's unexpected proposition. I was then

thirty. The suddenness of this proposal thrilled me. I loved the idea of change. I made up my mind. I went to the post office and sent a telegram to my family telling them I was remaining in Paris because I had a job.

"During the following days, I resigned as a lawyer from the Saint Nazaire bar. I didn't know at the time that I was not to return home for three years."

At this point, I remarked to Briand, "If you had not passed the café where your friend was sitting, what changes in the political life of this country might have come about . . .!"

Briand answered briefly: "For the lack of one man, the mill does not stop."

"Well," Briand continued, "I started my campaign on *The Lantern* with articles in favor of the Syndicalist labor organization, which have since been taken up by so many other papers. As I did not want to sign my name, I asked Olivier, who was then managing editor, how to sign the article I had written. Very seriously, Olivier handed me a Larousse dictionary and said, 'Open this, close your eyes and pick out a place with your pen. Then sign your name with the word you happen to strike.' The name touched by my pen was 'Volta,' the inventor, for whom the word, 'volt,' the unit of electromotive force, was included in our language. I signed all my first articles 'Volta.'"

The following is from the first contribution Briand offered in *The Lantern*.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Unions Must Be Free

Organization of Workers Now in Full Swing

When, years ago, the law was passed to give all the workers of France the right to unionize, everyone thought that the aims of the Syndicalist movement would very soon be realized. It was believed by all that the example set by the English and Americans who were so full of the spirit of association and solidarity would soon be followed by the French workers.

The French Revolution very wisely suppressed the outmoded forms of coöperative associations which had become so stiff and narrow that they had smothered the initiative of the French workers. For a long time they hesitated and were in the dark and did not know how to use the right of building up unions, made possible by law. This hesitation could not last long.

For five years the Syndicalist organization, the trade unions and federations have grown stronger and stronger in numbers and in importance. Now,

all over the country, the struggle between capitalism and labor is on in earnest. Facing the manifestation of the worker's power, it is no longer possible to remain indifferent.

We (*The Lantern*) have resolved to keep our readers in touch with those activities which cannot be ignored. The workers must be helped in their struggle toward organization of all their interests. We have decided to publish everything of importance to the workers and to devote a special department to the Labor Movement.

A detail in Briand's association with *The Lantern* which should not be overlooked was that on the day his first article appeared, which may be considered his début in Parisian life, France was without a Premier. Papers of that day offered names and spoke for the first time of the availability of M. Raymond Poincaré, as Minister of Finance.

"But," said *The Lantern,* "M. Poincaré seems to repulse the idea of becoming Minister of Finance. This Poincaré, the young man who was general reporter on *The Budget,* at thirty-three thinks that for a beginning the job is a little too big for him, even though he is in a position to know more about finance than anyone else. Not everybody would be so modest under the same circumstances."

The next day *The Lantern* announced that the duly constituted government had chosen M. Poincaré as Minister of Public Instruction. "What is the idea?" asked *The Lantern.* "Is it because he is so well versed in finance?"

The interesting aspect of this appointment is that M. Poincaré, who was later to become so closely associated with Briand, made his début in the government the same day that Briand began his services on the Paris newspaper, *The Lantern.*

* * * * *

As soon as he had come to terms with the editor of *The Lantern,* Briand began to hunt for a home in Paris. He took a walk, not knowing where he would land, searching for signs and trusting that his luck would lead him to the place he wanted. He turned his back on the Champs Elysée, scorning the large avenues that surround the Arc de Triomphe. After all, his monthly wage on *The Lantern* would amount to something around ten dollars.

Walking among houses which seemed to have been overlooked by demolishers for centuries, Briand found a quaint old place on the rue de Bondy, which advertised a room for rent in a bourgeois household. On

investigation, he found the home pleasant and clean, and the bourgeois family welcomed him most heartily. The price charged for his room was about six dollars a month. . . . "That's fine!" thought Briand. It solved the problem of his maintenance.

His hostess devoted herself to his care. Her husband was a salesman for a company of clockmakers of the small city of Cluze. Curiously enough, those clockmakers were to offer Briand one of his most important cases many years later.

Briand enjoyed the quiet days he spent in the home of these good and simple-minded people. They were his friends. In the small apartment on the rue de Bondy, he was at home, surrounded by an atmosphere of good will and solicitude. For years he remained in touch with his friends.

"They used to visit me now and then," says Briand and adds with a note of melancholy, "but when I came into power, I did not hear from them any more. . . ."

When he left the rue de Bondy to take an entire apartment in Montmartre, he again made a friend. It was the janitress who kept his home in order.

"She was really very nice," said Briand. "She cleaned the rooms and looked after my things . . . did very well indeed. But she was strange . . . nothing ever seemed to astonish or ruffle her . . . she just

went about her work and didn't bother with anything else . . . never noticed what I did.

"It so happened that I once remained a whole month without leaving the house . . . she asked no questions . . . just went on apparently unaware of my existence . . . if my enemies would only respect my privacy in the same way. . . !"

CHAPTER VII

The Dreyfus Affair

Friendship with Jaures—
Origin of the Dreyfus Affair

WHEN Briand meets with newspapermen, he likes to refer to the time when he, himself, was a professional journalist.

"I began my career as a journalist," he often asserts. "This may be why I generally know public opinion pretty well and understand the needs of the masses."

Settled in Paris, Briand, through the articles he wrote in *The Lantern* and later on in the *Petite Republique* and *L'Humanité,* not only continued his propaganda in favor of the workers, but created a new position for himself in political circles. His opinions were valued by the leaders in politics as well as by the Press. Briand quickly became a familiar figure in Paris. In the papers to which he contributed, he was to work side by side with Viviani and come in contact with men like Anatole France, who was intensely interested in the socialist movement. He also encountered his old adversary, Jules Guesdes, who had opposed him in the Congress of Marseilles, but who did not fail to acknowledge Briand's talent and to befriend him.

He was also to meet the foremost figure in the socialist party, Jean Jaures, who was to be so tragically murdered in the first days of the war. Briand and Jaures were to become great friends.

Although the two men were quite opposite in temperament, a certain similarity in background and conviction immediately brought them together.

Jaures was the embodiment of the fighter. His appearance bespoke his forcefulness. The shape of his shoulders, the great leonine head, his face alight with his burning enthusiasm, his heavy, powerful fists which he waved to emphasize a point, his deep, bellowing voice gave the impression of irresistible power. He was a man, cast in heroic proportions, a dynamic, scourging, volcanic force. When carried away by his own zeal and enthusiasm, words burst from him explosively. He had that power of moving crowds and arousing enthusiasm which makes for greatness.

Indeed he was a violent contrast to Briand who never gave the impression of a fighter, though he usually triumphed in any cause he undertook to defend. Briand is much more restrained in his approach, more the strategist who outwits his enemy rather than overwhelms him.

Both Jaures and Briand were united in their purpose of fighting the oppression of capitalism. But Jaures' temperament demanded that he fight the enemy with

snarling defiance. Anyone who ever heard him in the Chamber of Deputies where his speeches were like thunderbolts will never forget him. Who could, for example, forget the famous night when in his incisive and formidable manner he attacked what he called the last remaining Bastille—Capitalism—those fortunes which he compared to feudal castles, solidly built, carefully fortified, unapproachable, erected on steep hills, castles which would have to be blown up, torn to pieces stone by stone. He seemed to challenge and defy his listeners, and as his words poured forth, one could almost hear the pounding footsteps marching, marching, a huge, distant multitude marching, like an army, in an irresistible assault against the last citadel of despotism.

Like an enraged bull, Jaures rushed upon the object of his attack, tearing it to pieces leaving nothing behind.

Briand, though he would have acknowledged the metaphor, would certainly before attacking make a careful study of the plans of the citadel, perhaps walk around it for days and, finally, discover his way in. Eventually, he would be found sitting side by side with the owner and would undoubtedly succeed in persuading him that it might be much wiser to give up part of his goods than to be forced to give up everything.

Besides his friendship with Jaures, Briand had renewed his comradeship with some of the members of the old Hydropathes, writers like Ajalbert Lucien Descaves, Huysmans. . . . It was with such men as well as with Anatole France and Zola that he was going to face one of the most terrible crises within his own country, known throughout the entire world as "The Dreyfus Affair."

That great political crisis, which was to divide France in two camps, was raised by the condemnation to prison of an innocent, unknown Captain, a Jew—Alfred Dreyfus. He had been court-martialled by the Council of War for treason and condemned to Devil's Island, after having been forced to submit to the terrible disgrace of having his stripes and decorations torn off before his troops—forever losing his standing in the army and country.

To the very last, as he was passing before his troops and before he was taken away to the penal colony, he insisted on his innocence, swearing on the life of his wife and children that he was not guilty. But it was in vain. Evidence had been accumulated against him. Officers of the army bore witness against him. The trial was conducted according to military law and it was settled forever.

Nevertheless, a doubt remained in the minds of a few. Certain aspects of the trial struck them as being

mysterious and beyond belief. One man, an Alsatian of an old French family, Sheurer-Kestner, was to be the one who, for the first time, would awaken the conscience of the country to the outrage committed against Dreyfus.

Sheurer-Kestner was in the habit of going every Friday to a political luncheon given by friends who had known Gambetta, one of the builders of the French Republic. Among these friends were Hebrard, editor of the French newspaper, *Le Temps,* and my father, Gaston Thomson, who began his career on Gambetta's staff. These Friday meetings were held in memory of Gambetta.

My father and Hebrard had been very much upset by reading in the newspapers what was said about the attitude of Dreyfus when he was convicted, and that day were exchanging their impressions for the first time. France at the moment was going through an anti-semitic crisis, and they feared that the reason Dreyfus had so many enemies in the army was due principally to the fact that he was a Jew.

They were discussing this point when Sheurer-Kestner, himself thoroughly anti-Jewish, who was listening, became exasperated. He had more than one reason for hating Dreyfus for what he had done. Dreyfus was born in Mulhouse and was also an Alsatian. The conviction that this Alsatian-Jew had sold mili-

tary documents to Germany was unbearable to Sheurer-Kestner. He sternly asked his friends, Hebrard and Thomson, never to mention the name of Dreyfus in his presence again.

"But for a man to turn traitor," argued Hebrard and Thomson, "there must be reasons. Why should he have sold a document to Germany? He was wealthy. . . . He had never been involved in an ugly scandal. . . . Why? . . . Why? . . ."

Sheurer-Kestner answered this argument by remarking that the race of which Dreyfus was a member was sufficient explanation for his conduct, and he added that other charges had been made against him . . . that he was irresponsible with money . . . lived a very extravagant life . . . there was talk that he had bought a very expensive house. Feeling that he had not convinced his friends, Sheurer-Kestner decided that, since he always spent his holidays near Mulhouse, he would devote the next few weeks to a personal investigation into the life of Dreyfus, in order to obtain evidence that would convince even his friends that Dreyfus was guilty.

To his complete surprise, the investigation revealed rather unexpected results, and little by little Sheurer-Kestner had to change his convictions. Piece by piece, the evidence brought against Dreyfus was discovered to be false. Horrified, Sheurer-Kestner then began a

very detailed inquiry from beginning to end and prepared his evidence. As he was a personal friend of General Billot, then Minister of War, he had no doubt that mere presentation of all the proofs of the unbelievable errors of the military tribunal would serve to reopen the Dreyfus trial immediately, so that the damage could be repaired.

Alas, the reality was to be quite different than he had expected. Certain military men, standing on the false grounds of the "honor of the army," insisted that no mistake could have been made. Others started to open the fight on political grounds. Sheurer-Kestner's investigation was ignored. His inquiry was shelved, buried and was not even mentioned. But to that anti-Jew, the thought of an innocent Jewish officer exiled, condemned to Devil's Island, his proud wife and children shorn of their honor, was unendurable. He decided to enlist the efforts of everyone he could reach. It was he who started the tremendous movement among the intellectuals which, after a terrific struggle, hours of despair and bloody skirmishes, was at last to succeed in forcing the ruling powers to re-open the Dreyfus trial.

The widest differences of opinion on the Dreyfus affair existed in France. It aroused the greatest elements of discord in the country—religion, politics and militarism. The Socialists, like all other parties, had to

reach a decision as to their attitude on this burning question. In the beginning they hesitated, some being of the opinion that this was an issue to be avoided. After all, dissension between staff officers, the bourgeoise and public officials could have nothing to do with the labor party.

But the great majority in the Socialist ranks felt that no great injustice could be tolerated in the country by *any* political party. The injury done to one citizen (Dreyfus) was a menace to all others. Men like Jaures and Briand saw very clearly what it would mean to a political party for it to head such a movement . . . to be those who would represent justice and bring into the Socialist circles writers, professors, political leaders and celebrities in all fields. . . . What an occasion to spread Socialist propaganda! . . . For men who had devoted their lives to the defense of great causes, they felt that this opportunity was indeed unique. The entire Socialist Party was to back them. A Vigilance Committee, which included the greatest personalities in the Socialist Party, was immediately appointed. This committee was to become the center of all action in behalf of Dreyfus. Meetings, speeches, manifestation to arouse public sentiment were planned.

In this committee Briand, Jaures, Viviani and Guesdes were the leading spirits. Evening after evening speeches were made not only all over Paris but in

all parts of France. Partisans who thought the honor of the army was at stake tried to break up Socialist meetings, and the orators who were in favor of Dreyfus fought to make themselves heard. So heated were the controversies and so violent the rioting that France was almost in a state of civil war over the outrage committed against Dreyfus. Every day more and more people were won over to the cause. Nobody could remain neutral. Everyone had to be a partisan. Husbands and wives, families, were divided in two fighting camps.

Men like Anatole France and all the prominent writers and educators of the country signed protests. Zola wrote his famous "J'Accuse" and fought with indomitable fury in behalf of Dreyfus. The case became the means of bringing about an intellectual revolution. The aristocracy of the mind was joined in a common cause. One by one facts were unearthed which led to the truth. In the army, too, officers, at a great danger to themselves, came forward, offering their assistance. Colonel Picquart, who later became a general and Minister of War, joined the intellectuals to help right the wrong and helped considerably to bring the triumph of truth.

Through the effort of Dreyfus' defenders, the real traitor, Esterhazy, was finally discovered. The forgery was disclosed and Dreyfus was acquitted and exonerated. Until the very last days, the Committee of

Vigilance was the center of propaganda of unified action. This was to bring great transformations in the whole political alignment in France. Socialists, radicals and republicans, having fought side by side, had achieved a better understanding. New friendships, born of a united struggle, were being formed. The Socialists were no longer looked upon as revolutionists but their importance was recognized in the Republic.

Jaures and Briand, indefatigable in their work on the Committee of Vigilance, uniting their efforts in a great cause, were drawn closer to each other. It is not known whether they ever knew Dreyfus and it is not even certain that they met him after he returned from Devil's Island, a white haired man.

CHAPTER VIII

More Politics

Socialism in the Government—Famous Revolutionary Speech

EVEN during the most acute moments of the Dreyfus affair, even when Briand, with Jaures or others, went lecturing and fighting from place to place, never did he lose sight of those first unions he had promoted around Saint Nazaire. But he knew that Pelloutier and his friends were there working for the best. His job was now to devote his time to the organizing of labor all over the country.

To Briand such an organization that put responsible men at the head of each trade—men who could protect workers against those who too often tried to create trouble, men who would protect the workers against themselves—was the best guaranty for internal peace for the country.

Organization of unions was one thing; the future of the Socialist Party another. . . . Briand was now among the leaders who had to discuss principles that too often divided the party into two camps. This action was in keeping with his rôle in the Dreyfus affair.

The questions which were to be settled at this time had an effect not only on the destiny of the Socialist Party but on the future politics of the whole country.

* * * * *

At the close of the century, France was about to open the greatest exposition that had ever taken place in Paris. People from all over the world were planning to gather in the cardboard palaces around the Eiffel Tower, in which were piling up the treasures of art and the results of labor and trade, representing the activities of all human endeavor.

It was just at that time, when France was to receive the sovereigns and representatives of all countries to show to the world the results of the efforts of her young democracy, that Waldeck Rousseau was asked by President Loubet to become Premier and to head his cabinet.

Like Briand, Waldeck Rousseau was a Breton. He was born in Nantes. He also was a lawyer and perhaps one of the greatest orators France has ever had. His tendencies were democratic though his manner, his bearing and his tastes were those of an aristocrat. His house in the rue de l'Universite, isolated from the thoroughfare by a court and peaceful old gardens, was furnished in the most exquisite taste. His charming and remarkable wife, to whom he was very much de-

voted, received there all of the literati and artists and actors, clever minds of all political factions, who created around them a most interesting, amusing and brilliant circle.

Art was a delight to Waldeck Rousseau, who was himself a painter. He spent many weeks in Venice trying to picture the colors that float between the double mirror of the sky and the sea.

After the close of a trying day in Parliament, he liked nothing better than to go unseen to listen to Wagner's great operas. Music was his favorite recreation.

Because he was rather distant in manner, Waldeck Rousseau was often accused of being contemptuous. This was not true. He simply hid his very deep feelings and revealed his real self only to a very few friends.

When he became Premier, his addresses and his ideas, because of his highly cultured mind, often surprised the members of Parliament, who were not accustomed to such rare wine.

Naturally the political conceptions of such a man were of a very high order. He had, since the beginning of the Dreyfus affair, been one of those who had understood the true meaning of the crisis which it precipitated. He had come in contact with the Socialists, some of whom were his friends. He had followed the efforts of the "Vigilance Committee" with great interest.

When he was called to power, he immediately decided that the time had come for labor to take its place in the government. To him, a cabinet to be really powerful had to unite the representatives of all creative forces, without regard to opinion.

For this reason he appointed as head of the War office, General Marquis de Gallifet, and decided to place at the head of the Department of Commerce, which was to be in charge of all matters concerning the exposition, a member of the Labor Party—a young unknown deputy named Alexander Millerand.

It is difficult to realize now how daring this idea appeared in those days. All moderates, of course, considered it a terribly dangerous precedent to permit a representative of labor to climb so high; it was a door opened to the most revolutionary ambitions.

In the Socialist Party also opposition was instantly raised. One faction refused to permit one of their men to join any cabinet that represented capitalistic ideas. This group was led by Jules Guesdes and Paul LaFargue.

In the other camp were men like Jaures, Viviani and other members of the Chamber of Deputies who stated that as long as the Socialist Party had permitted its men to become members of Parliament they had no right to stop them on the way, and not allow them to share the power as members of the government. These

men wanted not only to defend Millerand but to settle the principle involved once and for all.

But Guesdes, Paul LaFargue and all the extremists were even more determined to get the majority to cast Millerand out of the party forever.

* * * * *

The question could be decided only in a full congress of the Labor Party. This took place in December, 1899. Briand, who was not yet in Parliament, immediately joined Jaures, Viviani and their followers in behalf of Millerand.

The extremists aroused the convention with arguments against any kind of an association with a capitalist government. Jaures replied on the question of doctrine. Viviani went into the purely parliamentary angle, explaining why Millerand could not refuse Waldeck Rousseau's appointment. When the time came for Briand to join the defense of Millerand, he startled the convention by launching a vitriolic attack against Guesdes, Paul LaFargue and the whole extremist group.

"If we have slid down, as you say, and found ourselves," he said accusingly, "where we are now, it is because you have paved the way—soaped it yourselves!"

With great violence, he continued to criticize those theorists who boast of their purity and who always refer to their principles even when they know so well that political life requires perpetual manœuvering and compromises! He continued,

"Paul LaFargue, insists with legitimate pride that he belongs to the early group of Socialists which believed in its ideals and dealt only with the workers to carry out the doctrines of the party, with never a thought of personal gain.

"I am sure that no one today thinks of mere personal interest even though the Socialist Party has greatly increased in numbers, but in those days—you, Guesdes, you, Paul LaFargue, only believed in direct revolutionary methods. You rejected the idea of universal suffrage and said the room where Parliament met was a corrupt place. To you it was unthinkable that a member of the Socialist Party should become a member of Parliament. Later on, even you had to accept the system—a kind of infiltration of Socialist troops into the bourgeois fortress. That was your first compromise and for that I don't blame you. I truly believe you were right then, but don't tell us now to stick to principles."

Having shown with irresistible logic that even the most uncompromising extremists had to change their tactics in the face of developing events, Briand went

on to show the changes of attitude of the whole Socialist Party during the last few years. He pointed out how deals were contracted between political factions and what compromises were essential, saying:

"All of this contributes to the country-wide impression that the Socialist Party could no longer be considered revolutionary."

He concluded his speech with an argument which he has frequently used since, whenever a Socialist is invited to become a member of the government. "Between the ballot and the portfolio there is no chasm." Again at this Socialist convention, Briand achieved great personal success, but the Guesdist revolutionary group which formed the majority of the congress remained unconvinced and undiminished.

* * * * *

It was at the second meeting of the Congress that Briand made the famous revolutionary speech that has since been so widely repeated and the meaning of which was later twisted by those who wanted to prove him a dangerous revolutionist, as well as by the Socialists who were to reproach him when he came into power . . . to make him out a traitor to the labor party.

It is necessary to understand the atmosphere that

pervaded the convention and to see the situation in all its ramifications.

In a political meeting oratory is often used to precipitate a climax or to answer arguments and charges soon forgotten. Quoted words, judged many years later with no knowledge of the atmosphere and purpose for which they were uttered, can easily be misinterpreted.

On the second day of the convention, the thing uppermost in Briand's mind was to prevent Millerand from being excluded from the Socialist Party—not only for Millerand's sake but as a matter of conviction.

"Why should you," asked Briand, "be able to propose a law and be denied the power to enforce it? Why be a Deputy if you can't progress and become a member of the cabinet—a premier?"

At the time Briand knew that the Guesdists and their supporters represented the majority and could decide by force of numbers to expel Millerand. Naturally, the first idea to occur to a strategist like Briand was to attempt to break up a block of forces which, when united, could not be defeated. Shrewdly, he acted upon this maneuver.

He knew that the principle of the general strike could always bring about a division of the two forces. Acting on this inspiration, he decided to drop Millerand's cast temporarily and bring out the question of

the organization of unions and the federation of unions on a single issue—the general strike.

By this device he immediately brought about a separation of the followers of Guesdes into two camps and proceeded with his speech, emphasizing a single idea with which he hoped to impress the extreme groups whose numbers seemed irreducible to him. His idea was to raise their enthusiasm and then overpower them. The audience, caught in the spell of Briand's emotion and enthusiasm, was swayed to his purpose. Briand was again dealing with a mob and he knew how to handle it. It is only necessary to record here a portion of this famous speech which in later years was to be held against him.

"You say to the workers 'start a revolution.' Of course, if it depended entirely on them, they would be only too willing to do so. If they don't go, it is only because they know too well what would happen . . . how they would be met . . . it is because they know how their first efforts would be drowned in their own blood.

"They have learned that the revolution which will take place tomorrow to liberate all the proletarians cannot be planned as in former days as a sort of insurrection. Not that I personally condemn those who take such extreme measures. . . . I am among those who feel that no revolutionary effort should be discouraged

. . . go and fight holding your ballot if you feel like it. I have done that myself as a voter and a candidate. . . . I may do it again tomorrow. . . . Go and fight with spears, weapons, swords, pistols, muskets . . . not only will I not disapprove but I will consider it my duty to be among you! But don't ever discourage the workers when they try to unite all their efforts toward a single action that they believe may be effective!"

Those are the famous words which were so much reproached. If you isolate the phrase that begins "go and fight with spears, weapons, swords, pistols, muskets—I may consider it my duty to be among you," you make of Briand a man who incites murder and insurrection, though his whole attitude is along contrary lines. But if they are left in the context of the speech in which they were delivered, their meaning is perfectly clear, particularly to those who have followed the various stages of his work for the organization of labor and social reform.

CHAPTER IX

The Advocat

•

In Parliament—First Address—Cluze

BRIAND'S destiny could only be fulfilled in Parliament. This was the place where his talent as an orator could really be brought to light, where his ability as a strategist and his magnetic power of persuasion were to give him the authority that grew ever since he sat in the Chamber of Deputies.

His first friends, in Saint Nazaire, had definitely felt this way when, more or less against Briand's will, in the early days, they started a premature campaign and voted for him with no hope of success. Briand also knew that his real place was in Parliament where laws were formulated and passed.

A few years later, he was to try again. This time, his adversary was a poet named Clovis Hugues, who had written "The Right to Happiness" and had spent quite a few years in prison after the revolutionary days of the "Commune."

The third time, Briand almost won the election in a suburb of Paris. He was this time defeated by a stone-cutter.

It was only in the beginning of the year 1902 that he was offered the office as representative of the Department of Loire. The place seemed to be meant for him. Saint Etienne, the principal town, was filled and surrounded with factories and, because of the mines that could be found all around that country, the population included a great number of workers.

In that department there existed already some very influential unions, which, of course, were all ready to welcome a man who was considered as one of the founders of Syndicalism in France. It looked then as though Briand were fated to remain ever faithful to that River Loire, on the side of which he was born, whose source is in the center of France, not far from Saint Etienne, and which meets the sea very near Saint Nazaire.

The towns which Briand was to represent were very near the source of that river on which he had learned to row and had passed so many happy days in the boat of his uncle, the pilot. Now he was going upstream!

Although he arrived in Parliament, preceded by his reputation as an orator, having made for himself in the days of the Dreyfus affair quite an important place among the political leaders and had been elected secretary of the Socialist Party, Briand did not seem in great haste to make his début in Parliament. At no moment of his life did he ever appear greedy for fame

or power. For months he remained modestly in the background, sitting peacefully at the extreme left of the session room, observing, trying to understand the rules of a game which he was in the future to play better than anyone else.

It was not until six months after he had been elected that Briand made his first important address, very much in line with the causes he had defended all over France for the Labor Party. Once more he was to appear as one who always assumed the defense of the proletarians.

The incident which had taken place in a small town in Briand's district, called Terrenoire, and which brought his first intervention in the Chamber of Deputies, was a tragic one. To Briand it was only an episode of the great drama that constantly opposed labor and capitalism.

In October, 1902, the National Federation of Miners, representing the workers of the coal mines of France, had called a general strike, demanding, among other things, an eight-hour day in the mines, and the granting of pensions. On the 10th of October, work in all the mines throughout France was brought to a standstill. The strikers were thoroughly organized and well disciplined. In all places absolute order was maintained, the workers showing by their attitude that they did not want to fight, but wanted only justice. Curi-

ously enough, the only dramatic incident was to take place in Terrenoire, which Briand represented. Events were taking a normal course when suddenly, for some unknown reason that so often causes trouble in strike days, a policeman, apparently unprovoked, began shooting, killed two workers and wounded two others. Why this was done, what prompted this action on the part of the policeman was never clearly explained. . . .

Of course, this news affected Briand deeply, and one can imagine with what eagerness he took up the pleas against such treatment of men who were not guilty of any offense; the right to strike having been recognized by law.

He began his defense by pointing out that such an unwarranted action on the part of the policeman proved the low mentality of those in authority, whose attitude was always that of law-abider against law-breaker. Why were the strikers treated so shamefully, when they were within their rights to strike? He then gave a description of the conditions in which the workers find themselves immediately upon the calling of a strike: At once the country is filled with policemen, soldiers and cavalrymen. Weapons of all sorts are prominently displayed by these "keepers of the law," who therefore assume that they are bound for battle. What can they do after that, but seek an enemy? . . .

Who can that enemy be? . . . The question is easy to answer—the enemy is the striker.

"Now don't tell me," he said, "that these soldiers and policemen have received orders to remain neutral. . . . I know that such orders are given, but I also know that a soldier cannot remain neutral. When you put him in action he immediately starts finding an adversary. If you realize that during a strike he is forbidden to speak with any strikers, or any of their representatives of the factories, and get their suggestions, you can readily realize that regardless of what you tell him about remaining neutral, he automatically gets the impression that the only possible enemy is the striker.

"As for the policeman, he has received his orders to watch carefully what is going on and to beware of the movements of the workers. Now again don't tell me that he will do that in a neutral spirit. . . . When a policeman casts his official eye upon somebody, believe me, his mind does not run to neutrality. The striker, however orderly he is, will always be, in the eyes of a policeman, a dangerous man capable of any sort of misdemeanor, a culprit. Consequently, the policeman does not hesitate to show his authority and use any excuse to shoot and kill. He himself may be the menace, though they have been put there to prevent accidents!

"If you knew what progress has been made among

the workers since the organization of unions, you would understand that now the risks and dangers have greatly diminished. Especially in a general strike like the one organized by the miners, great discipline has to be maintained and the forces have to be united in every part of the country. The method which is employed to do this makes the risk that much smaller. Some day the government will discover how much wiser it would be to permit those forces, so well organized, to be their own policemen, to leave to the unions themselves the responsibility of taking police measures necessary in times of the strike. In other words, to put them on duty, leaving the entire responsibility to themselves.

"As an excellent example of the success of this suggestion, let me tell you what happened on the day of the funeral of the unfortunate Terrenoire victims."

Turning then to the Premier as he uttered the last phrases of his speech, Briand explained what to his notion, the attitude of the government ought to be towards strikers. In referring to the funeral, the order and solemnity that were imposed by the foremen of the strikers on all the men, though they were terribly incensed over the cold-blooded killings, Briand spoke of the trustworthiness of these people. These people who, though they felt so deeply the ghastliness of the crime and the great wrong done them, submerged ad-

mirably their feeling of outrage and were a dignified, solemn and reverent army, marching gravely behind the biers of their unjustly killed comrades.

"You understand, Mr. Premier," said Briand, "and for that, let me congratulate you. You understand that the presence of soldiers on such an occasion would not have prevented any outbreak. It would only have tended to aggravate the situation, break the tension and undoubtedly create a new and greater danger. You left to the heads of the unions full responsibilities in the matter of keeping order—to those unions who had written to the Prefect of the Loire: 'We guarantee that there will be no disorder if you leave us unguarded during the funeral procession. . . .'

"Not one soldier, not one policeman could be seen on the road where ten thousand mournful workers dismally followed the coffins that were taking their murdered comrades to their last rest. You trusted them, and I congratulate you again. You were right in trusting them. . . . As you know, no mishaps interrupted the majesty of that imposing ceremony.

"Now let me ask you something. That confidence which you were brought to display to that group of workers of Terrenoire—why can't you systematically accord it to the whole proletariat? Honestly, let me say that that group of strikers you trusted, really deserved this faith . . . by their touching, everlasting

and bountiful devotion to the Republic, always hoping that promises made them would be fulfilled. Always deceived—by that devotion, they deserved your trust.

"Don't you think that the time has come for our Republic to pay at least *part* of her debt to these faithful people who trusted her, who believed in her for so many years, giving her the credit that one day she could certainly come to their aid and show them justice? . . . Don't you think it high time that the Republic did not find itself in that humiliating and unpleasant position of being indebted? Yes! It *is* time that that ugly relationship which exists between the debtor and the indebted be eradicated. . . ."

For the first time Parliament was allowed to hear the magnificent voice of Briand, claiming justice for all those who, in the dark, coöperate and work towards the riches of France.

For the first time, they heard what they would have considered, coming from other lips, very revolutionary doctrine but expressed with such sound logic and in such a matter-of-fact and restrained manner that they understood that the orator was pleading for the rights of every human being. Everyone who listened to Briand that day was aroused to a high pitch of excitement and the most tremendous applause greeted him each time he paused.

If we study carefully Briand's life from the time he was twenty until he reached Parliament, we can see that all that period was one long plea for the workers, who to him were the backbone of France. He knew that without those who make the paper in the factories, no book can be published; that without coal that has to be unearthed, we cannot have heat; the intellectual at his desk cannot express his thought if he cannot get light or heat. . . . Manual labor is at the base of every human production.

To Briand, the knowledge that these workers, so vital to humanity, were underpaid, that their salaries were so meager as not to allow them even the necessities of existence, that these people without whom the world would be at a standstill, were being so poorly recompensed—these appeared to Briand the greatest possible injustice and crime. He hated to see the government as well as the capitalists perpetually bargaining in the matters of salary or amelioration of the condition of life of those workers, who were the number, the mass, the strength, not only of industry, but of the country.

The famous speech before Parliament on the Terrenoire tragedy was to be followed later on by another memorable discourse which climaxed dramatically all Briand's efforts in behalf of the labor movement.

If we include this first discourse in the special study

of Briand as an *advocat,* it is because this was much more of a plea than a mere political issue. Each question he took up is a part of that great drama for which he pleaded and so often repeated in behalf of the worker.

His second memorable speech, in favor of the strikers, was made in court, but it gives us an occasion to understand better the various aspects of those strikes raised in the interminable struggle of capitalism and labor.

The setting for this second great cause, which conclusively took him to the top as a defender of the Labor Party, was among the unassuming clock-workers of the Swiss Alps. It was in one of those charming, peaceful and quiet little towns called Cluze. This time it was not a question of salary or pensions, but because seven workers in a factory owned by a man named Crettiez had been discharged for no other reason in the world than that they had helped to organize one of the first workers' unions in that region. What a crime—to want to organize, to create a union to protect their interests! And for this seven men were dismissed —thrown out of work. The meek, industrious workers of Cluze, sitting quietly and with infinite patience, toiling with their tiny instruments, precisely assembling the watches, did not look very much like violent, destructive revolutionists. But, however, aroused by the

outrage, they decided the only thing for them to do was to go on strike as an indication of their resentment towards the directors of the factory, who tried to prevent the organization of unions.

The strike had proceeded peacefully for some time, when suddenly, one day, the situation became critical. The strikers had organized a gigantic parade, and carrying the symbolic red flag, they marched through the town, singing the songs of the revolution of 1789, "La Carmagnole." They were passing in front of the Crettiez factory when suddenly an unknown hand threw a stone against one of the windows. The stone hit no one, but the glass broke and landed on the pavement below with a terrible crash.

Immediately the crack of gun-fire answered the smashing of the glass. It came from one of the windows, where stood one of Crettiez' sons. A man in the workers' ranks fell dead. From the second story of the building another of Crettiez' sons was discerned as having fired another fatal shot. Following this, shots came from other windows of the first storey of the factory, and subsequently a terrible barrage of shooting from every part of the structure killed a number of workers and seriously wounded others.

Terrified, the mob dispersed wildly in all directions. But after a moment's hesitation, and as one man, they were drawn back to the scene. The peaceful little place

under the shelter of the trees bore a most gruesome aspect—men dropped wounded; many were dead; others were dying. Horrified, outraged, wild with fury at the cowardice of their employers, these suddenly transformed peace-loving watchmakers, rushed back to the factory, bent upon revenge.

Now the shooting from the factory was resumed with a vengeance and continued for some time, until the militia, braving the danger, rushed into the factory to disarm the murderers, who, incidentally, they were forced to protect from the anger of the mob. The maddened workers and countless other citizens who had gathered at the scene were clamoring to have the murderers lynched.

Of course, as soon as the shooting had ceased, there was an immediate and terrific onslaught of the building. Strikers, armed with whatever weapons they could lay their hands on, began to wreak havoc all over the place. One with a sledge hammer, another with a pick-ax, another with a log of wood had broken down the door. The place was a bedlam. The soldiers tried to intervene but they were powerless against the furious mob. Policemen who tried to bar the door were overpowered and had to give it up. Like cattle they thronged the factory, breaking furniture, wrecking machines, destroying everything in sight.

For a full hour they went on in this manner, finally

filling the rooms with straw and setting fire to the structure, with the result that half of it was demolished.

Naturally a tremendous hue and cry was raised. The Crettiez sons were arrested as well as the leaders of the strike, who were held responsible for the destruction of the factory. Both sides had their advocates and Briand, of course, was called upon by the workers to defend them.

Briand's defense was not only a defense but the most terrible accusation against the real murderers—Crettiez's sons, whose lawyer, wanting to save them, pleaded that the whole affair was certainly unfortunate, most regrettable and suggested that the best thing for all would be to draw a veil over the incident . . . to forget . . . and "now the only thing to do is to cry over our dead."

With impassioned indignation, Briand arose. "Between those who are dead," he said, "and those who murdered them—there is no possible union!" And turning to the defender of Crettiez, "You said a few moments ago, 'let us throw a veil over this affair and forget all that sadness, and let us now cry over *our* dead.' You dare to say, 'our dead.' Those who died were killed by you! While I was listening to those words, I could see the muskets leveled at the defenseless strikers, scattering in all directions, trying to escape death. I could hear the terrible sound of gun-fire. But



Times Wide World Photo

Briand at Cocherel in Normandy.

what contempt you must have for all those humble people if you think that they can today put their hands into yours. They have a dignity that you seem to ignore. They don't want a verdict induced by pity or compromise. To acquit us today, at the same time with your clients, would be a gross offense to us and our comrades, and would mean that you condoned Crettiez' crime. That would be exactly as if you said to the strikers that they were in the wrong, that they deserved to be shot. We don't want to be acquitted in that way. That would be the most degrading of all verdicts!"

Having so presented his plea to the jury, Briand once more took advantage of this opportunity to bring out his theories that he had already outlined in Parliament after the incidents at Terrenoire. He took the defense and explained the real part of a leader in strike time.

"In all strikes," he said, "the leader is made the scapegoat. Do you realize what a leader really is? It is I—I who am speaking here; I am a leader. I am often denounced and condemned because I went in strike time to the workers who asked me for my advice and help and begged me to speak for them. To whom could they turn to present their claims, to extricate them from the traps which are always put in their way, to know whether their demands are within the law, if they did not turn to their political friends? And when the cru-

cial hour has come, and trusting us by instinct, they turn to us and implore our aid, wouldn't we be criminals if we turned our backs upon them? . . . deceived them?

"But the real rôle of a leader is very different from your conception of it. His is a work of organization, which means pacification. It is just because the leader is conscious of his heavy responsibility that he does his best to prevent any irremediable occurrences."

Briand then quickly pictured all the demonstrations which had taken place on the streets of Cluze and about which Crettiez' defender had spoken with indignation.

"I will probably astonish you," said Briand, "when I say that to me those demonstrations are the best guarantee of peace, order and security. If I dared, I would advise the public powers not only to authorize these demonstrations, but to instigate them! In the organization of such parades, the strikers have to make an effort toward discipline which absolutely precludes the possibility of any real disorder. Do you know where the real danger lies in strike time? I will tell you. The danger is not in the organization but in the isolation of the individual striker. After fifteen days or a month of a strike, when the unfortunate striker begins to feel hunger gnawing at his vitals, when at home he has to listen to the whimperings of his children, and to the

recriminations of his wife, it is then that he becomes desperate, and maddened, he again becomes redoubtable. It is because he is isolated that in the night bombs suddenly explode and the gleam of knives can be discerned.

"No, on the contrary, the processions organized by the unions, bringing men and women daily together, help them to keep up their spirits, even their happiness. Let them sing—there is no danger in song!"

Briand's plea was received with great acclaim and enthusiasm. The jury acquitted the six workers and condemned the four sons of Crettiez to prison. From that day on, the Socialist Deputy of Saint Nazaire was known all over France and brought Clemenceau to say: "If I had stolen the towers of Notre Dame, I would like to be defended by Briand."

* * * * *

In those two appeals, his first speech in Parliament and his Cluze discourse, Briand seems to have expressed and summed up his dominating interest during the foregoing ten years. First, his daily efforts in Saint Nazaire were to build up a solid base of unions. Later on, he helped in the creation of the first federation of unions in Nantes. Then, his conception which slowly grew, that the organization of the general strike was

the only salvation for the workers from a nation which enslaved them. And last, the action which he took in the congress of Marseilles, where he arrived practically unknown, and became in one day, because of his eloquence and force of argumentation, the man to fight Jules Guesdes' ideas; Guesdes being then the leader of all the advanced and revolutionary groups of Socialists. Nevertheless, Briand thrust his opinion at the assemblage and got a majority to vote upon the proposition of the general strike, to which he referred as being a revolution *within the law*. That day he became the leader of all the moderate Socialists who did not believe in the insurrectional ideas of Jules Guesdes' party.

It was then that Briand brought out clearly that no real progress can come out of violence. All these different factors were the motivating ones, the steps which finally led him to the platform in Parliament where he could make this pronouncement:

"Towards these millions of unknown men who work for you, who slave for you, who are the force and backbone of our country, the Republic owes a tremendous debt, and that debt must be paid!"

These words in themselves were a program to which he remained ever faithful. But Briand's destiny now compelled him to turn to the multiple affairs of state. His contributions to the daily discussions of the important problems of state involved him in what can be

called "high politics." Constantly in touch with the various statesmen, he became interested in the questions that had to be solved for the best interests of the country.

This digression from the labor problem brought on the accusation, which he had to fight for many years, that he had betrayed the Labor Party. This was not true, for just as the average man has the welfare of his family at heart in spite of any outside cares, so Briand always kept in mind the amelioration of that big family of workers to whom he considered he belonged.

PART II

"I believe that religion is one of the strongest points of dissension among the French. . . . That is why I felt that it was on this premise, first, that peace should be realized. . . ."

ARISTIDE BRIAND

Discourse at Perigueux

October, 1909

CHAPTER X

In Parliament

Separation of Church and State

CURIOUSLY enough through all his life, Briand was never attracted by easy problems. Each time he decided to defend a cause, it always appeared impossible to realize. His lot in life seemed to be that of a man whose mission is to reform and convince people, to fight old standards, to bring the country to face situations with a new and progressive outlook.

During the early part of his life, in the most reactionary part of the country, he fought for the organization of the Labor Party—for the rights of the strikers. Accused of being a revolutionary, he carried out all the reforms for which he had pleaded and was helped to do so by the most moderate-minded people, whom he had managed to convince that to settle labor problems was the best way to prevent any revolutionary outbreak.

When Briand reached Parliament he again was attracted by a new problem that appeared insoluble—the reform of religious policy which resulted in the law of the Separation of Church and State. Religious questions always arouse French people to the most intense

pitch of excitement. It is certainly more a question of politics than a question of faith.

* * * * *

Briand himself explains how he became the defender of that reform called the Separation of Church and State; how he became not only the originator of the law, but how he had to defend it daily in the Chamber of Deputies and, finally, imposed it on the country.

"I once had the opportunity of becoming the founder of a great reform—the Separation of Church and State," Briand said. "If I agreed to be the defender of that reform, it was because I believed that the germ of all dissension among the French is principally in matters of religion. That is why I thought that it was on this premise, first, that peace had to be realized."

* * * * *

It was in the days when Roosevelt was a candidate for the presidency of the United States, when all the countries in the world were trying to attain the maximum of power, influence and industrial leadership. At the time of the Exposition of 1900, France appeared to be standing as one of the most flourishing nations. But once more she was going back to the internal

political fight and religious differences, which too often had paralyzed her efforts. In fact, the entire social, intellectual and political life of the country between the years 1892 and 1896 seemed dominated by religious discussion, disagreements and even riots.

For years the question of the Separation of Church and State had been discussed by all political factions. It had been made a part of the program of men who were representatives of the most diverse and opposed political ideas.

Some of the greatest Catholic minds, such as Montalembert and Lamenais, believed that the church had to be absolutely freed from the control of the state.

Anti-religious leaders who were tired of seeing the church interfering in politics were also, naturally, in favor of the separation. But many wise political men, aware of the fatal trouble religious questions raise in France, were afraid to start a discussion which involved such sources of misunderstanding.

But certain questions cannot be left aside any more than certain wars can be prevented. Incidents arise, skirmishes take place, and suddenly adversaries are transformed into enemies.

For years a dangerous hostility existed, more or less openly, between religious powers and the French government. Day after day, incidents arose which created trouble and ill-feeling between the government and the

church. The government decided to take over the control of all the schools, a decision which, of course, was protested by various church officials and resulted in an open letter from the cardinals to the President of the Republic. Discussions with Rome took place about protocol questions in the choice of bishops. All these events were the rumblings of war between the two powers so bitterly opposed to each other.

Finally, a question arose which actually opened the discussion between the Government and the Vatican.

Since the King of Italy had the year before paid a visit to Paris, the President of the Republic decided to return the visit and go to Rome. The fact that the chief of a Catholic country went officially to pay a visit to the King of Italy in Rome was considered by the Pope as insulting to the Holy See, who said this would appear to be a recognition of the abolition of the temporal power of the Pope.

Parliament having voted the necessary funds for a trip to Rome, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a message to the Pope explaining that there was no thought of offending the Vatican but that it was simply a matter of maintaining friendly relations between the two countries. It was a mere act of courtesy to return the visit of a king.

Nevertheless, the pontifical court sent a protest, which was aggravated by a letter from Cardinal Merry

del Val, to the Catholic leaders protesting against M. Loubet's visit and the general attitude of the government. This letter, which was of course widely publicized in the papers, fanned political passions into such a flame that the French government recalled its ambassador from the Vatican.

The question was taken up at the Chamber of Deputies. A heated discussion took place and a special commission was appointed to study the question in order to determine what steps should be taken to avoid further complications and to cause the withdrawal of the concordat.

This commission selected Briand to be the *rapporteur* of the new law designed to separate state and church. For three months Briand devoted himself to the discussion of what he considered *his law*. He himself has stated in what spirit he undertook this tremendous task. He always protested vehemently when he was accused of having done it in an anti-religious spirit.

"Efforts were made," he said, "to mislead public opinion. Efforts were made to create insurrections by bringing the French Catholics to believe that it would no longer be possible for them to seek consolation in the faith in which they believed. People even spoke of tyranny. . . .

"The day after the law was passed the church doors remained open. The hands of the French Republic

were extended, offering the church all the goods that were hers, asking the church simply to obey legal formalities, which had to be observed."

Briand's idea was to realize what he called a liberal law.

"In this country, where millions of Catholics observe their religion, some of them because of their faith, others by habit or family tradition, it is impossible to think of a law of separation that they could not accept.

"Many political men reproached me for making a law that could be accepted by the church. There again I will say the church in France means millions of people. You can't make a reform against such an integral part of a nation."

And after a speech, in which he examined all the aspects of the question, he concluded.

"We have left to the Catholics, Protestants and Jews what belongs to them—the churches—and we have given them complete liberty to observe the faith in which they believed."

* * * * *

Nobody thought that the law of separation would really be enforced in a country where so many people were devoted to tradition in matters of religion. But Briand knew that he would succeed. Once more ap-

peared that power of obstinate will and faith that made him triumph over all obstacles, when once he had decided his course.

Political men were very skeptical. . . . M. Rourvier, a great financier and statesman, who was then Premier, one day questioned him. "Do you really believe in that law?—It seems rather naïve of you! . . . We may speak of it again in ten years. . . ."

Three months later the law was voted upon and passed. Rourvier was expelled as Premier. It had taken Briand only three months, not only to build up the law but to argue every phase of it and to have it passed. Indefatigably he carried on the discussions in a most masterful way. For three months, every day—and sometimes four and five times a day—he had to make speeches, to explain, to discuss, to argue, and to fight.

Even at the last moment, the opponents concentrated all their efforts on having the voting postponed, to persuade Parliament to wait until after the elections that were approaching, before forcing the issue. But Briand would not accept what would have been a personal defeat.

"You cannot accuse us," said he, "of any prejudice or fixed purpose in our discussions. We have conceded and followed your ideas as much as possible and our original plans were altered whenever we could do so without endangering the law. I had promised myself

to create a law that even my adversaries would accept. I know I have succeeded.

"I ask you to show me one article—just one—that permits you to accuse me of not considering first of all, the rights of the people to religious freedom—each one free to follow his own cult. You dare not contradict this, because you know it is true."

Discussion having been carried on openly—the country was now enlightened. The people were awaiting a decision. . . . The law was voted on and finally passed. This brought a change in the government, and Briand was asked for the first time to come into the Cabinet.

Briand's first arrival in power was to have a rather unexpected result and a great influence on another great figure in politics—M. Georges Clemenceau.

* * * * *

In those days, the name of Georges Clemenceau was, in political centers, a synonym for violence and opposition. For years his biting remarks, the terrifying ruses he played on the leaders of the government, the flaming articles he wrote against nearly all the Cabinets, his turbulence, never seemed to calm down for an instant. He had been one of the leaders in the Dreyfus



An official hunting party

affair and he had a tremendous influence on the final result. His convincing enthusiasm in this affair had impressed many. He had fought tirelessly in the newspapers and in political groups against everyone who tried to smother the truth. But the public as well as every person connected with the government considered Clemenceau a man who, although of great talent, brilliant mind and tremendous wit, remained a man of opposition.

One day when we were discussing the character of the "Old Tiger," Briand said to me. "Do you know that I am the one who extricated Clemenceau from the position of an opposer and brought him for the first time to the Cabinet?" He then told me the story. "In those days Clemenceau, who was Editor of *L'Aurore,* had been reproaching me in his articles about the course I had taken, the way I had understood the law of separation of church and state. He thought I was too mild and weak. Very anti-religious, he thought that I was giving too much consideration to the Catholic point of view. He used to tease me, saying that I had the manners of a priest, and called me the 'Papalist.' I am not lucky . . . I am always criticized by both sides. Extremists are always against me. Nevertheless, we were good friends."

Though Briand was working very hard, building up and defending the law and living a very active life in

Parliament, he had not entirely given up his newspaper work. He always felt the necessity of having a medium to proclaim his ideas, and had, in association with Jaures, helped to found the extreme Socialist paper, *l'Humanité.*

"One day I was sitting in my office of *l'Humanité,* when Clemenceau, the editor of *L'Aurore,* walked in. Rourvier's Cabinet had just been dismissed.

" 'Well, old man,' said Clemenceau, 'you're going to be obliged to become a member of the Cabinet. It's time for you to take a hand in the government. Power is waiting for you.'

" 'Well,' I answered. 'That idea never struck me as being very exciting!'

" 'You must accept this time,' answered Clemenceau. 'When you have given birth to a child you have to take care of it and nourish it. You have created a law, you will now have to see that it is carried through successfully. It is imperative that you become a member of the Cabinet. The Cabinet cannot exist without you.'

"I laughed and said, 'What about you? You have never been a member of any cabinet. . . .'

" 'If it had been offered to me,' he replied, 'you can wager I would have accepted—I would have jumped at the opportunity. But it was never offered to me.' And after a moment of silence he added: 'After all, the question is now in your hands. If you want me to be-

come a member of the Cabinet,' and after another moment's reflection, he turned to me and said, 'Let us make an agreement. You say that the only condition under which you will accept the offer is if I am asked to come into the Cabinet.'

"I did as we agreed and that is how I was responsible for the first appearance of Clemenceau in the government."

* * * * *

CHAPTER XI

In the Cabinet

Introduces Clemenceau—Honors Old Professor—
Sarah Bernhardt

THINGS occurred just as Clemenceau had prophesied. The next day, M. Sarrien, who as Premier had to select a Cabinet, sent for Briand and said to him:

"The law of the separation of church and state is your work, but it will have no effect if it is not properly enforced in this country. It is your duty to fight for it. Only you have the authority, ability and tact to carry it through successfully."

Briand felt some slight hesitation in accepting, because of his position in the Labor Party, and said that before he could answer he would have to consult with his friends.

He remembered well what opposition Millerand had met with in the Labor Party when he was asked to come into the government with Waldeck Rousseau. He turned for advice to his friend, Jaures.

Jaures unhesitatingly advised him to accept, saying that the emergency and necessity of enforcing the law was the only thing to be considered. Briand then spoke

of resigning from the Socialist Party—to be really free. But on this point Jaures did not agree.

"Circumstances are much too grave," he answered. "Your position is forced upon you by the more important interests of the Republic. The Socialist Party will certainly understand. There is no reason for you to resign."

Nevertheless, Briand decided to go that day to the meeting of the National Socialist Council. There he would discuss matters. He went with Jaures and, to his utter amazement, the case was not on the program for discussion. The formation of the new Cabinet was not even mentioned. Again Jaures advised him not to raise the question himself. They left the Council together.

Later, Briand was to hear that as soon as he had left the meeting a proposal was made to exclude him from the Socialist Party. And without even being allowed to defend himself, he was cast out of the party. This action had the merit of leaving him entirely free to follow his own inclinations. Since that day Briand has never followed the policies of any group.

* * * * *

When he arrived in power there were many who thought that Briand was too young and had not spent enough years in Parliament to deserve the appointment

of Minister of Public Instruction, which made him "The Grand Master of the University."

* * * * *

Someone asked him in a rather superior manner what had been his impression when he spent his first night where such important men as Duruy, Cousin and other celebrities had slept in other times. . . . Briand answered, "Well—to be entirely honest, the one thought I had was that those old-fashioned Louis Philippe beds were decidedly uncomfortable."

* * * * *

As soon as he took his place in the Cabinet and began to figure out how he was going to enforce the law of separation, Briand discovered how difficult his position would be. He knew that he was going to meet with terrific opposition. Among the formalities imposed by the new law, according to the transmission of powers, were the inventories which had to be taken before the church buildings and goods were handed to the church.

This was to be the source of the most terrible difficulties. Protestations and even riots took place day after day, feeding for months the anger and excitement

prevalent all over the country. With infinite patience but great firmness, Briand had in each case to show his authority.

There again he triumphed. All the discussions that took place are now forgotten; artificial hatred has cooled down and Briand's relations with Rome are now excellent.

* * * * *

Briand's activity in the matter of struggling to enforce the law of separation did not mean that he neglected his other duties as head of the Department of Public Instruction. Among other things he had to prepare his first recommendation for the Legion of Honor. This evoked a charming side of Briand's nature.

His first thought was of his old professor, "Papa" Genty, who for years had devoted his time and efforts to teaching the boy, Briand. He certainly deserved to be honored and it was a great joy for him to receive the cross of the Legion from an old pupil of whom he was so proud.

Faithful to his first admirations, Briand decided also to honor Sarah Bernhardt, the great tragedienne, who had done so much for French art all over the

world and with whom he sat at café tables in the days of the Hydropathes in his youth.

But there he was to meet insurmountable opposition from the Council of the Legion of Honor. Women, in those days, were not welcome to the Legion of Honor. Nobody could deny that Sarah Bernhardt was a great artist but . . . she had not succeeded in her financial enterprises . . . she had not paid the rent for her theater. . . . And Briand was not permitted to give her the cross.

* * * * *

Briand's situation as "Grand Master of the University" created new duties for him, opened a new field for his ideas and contributed toward making his eloquence still greater. He did not confine himself now to political speeches. He was coming into the kingdom of Art and Science.

One of the greatest discourses he made in those days was at the funeral of M. and Mme. Marcellin Berthelot. The story of the great scientist who had been unable to survive the death of his wife is very beautiful and touching. Finding life without her unbearable, he followed her, dying of a broken heart a few hours later. Briand pronounced the eulogy for that remarkable couple who were buried together.

"Marcellin Berthelot," said Briand, "was one of the most prodigious men of our day. His ideals were of the highest. He had made science such a noble aim that it appeared as the sanctification of his life. According to him, there is not only the positive science that allows of investigations in the kingdom of facts, but there is also an ideal science that enlightens the moral world. . . .

"Renan, the great philosopher who was Berthelot's friend, has given us the formula of his creed of life: 'The true way to worship God is to learn how to know and love what he has created!'

"I have mentioned Renan, because the names of Renan and Berthelot are inseparable. They will be united in the future as they were in life.

"In his private life, Berthelot, as in the world of science, was an example of all that was noble and pure. But it was in his home, with his family, that he truly appeared in all his human perfection. For his sons he was ever the 'friend with the big heart,' always standing by, ready to comfort, to advise, to guide. Oh, the marvelous joys of those two beautiful companions, M. and Mme. Berthelot, walking side by side through life's illusions, daily giving to each other new love and new life. How could one possibly speak of them without an emotion that is overwhelming?

"Mme. Berthelot had all the qualities of a true woman,—lovely, gracious, kind, helpful, courageous,

:upied not only with hopes and dreams, but also the ırk of this man of genius with whom she lived so ppily and in such close communion of sentiment and ɔughts that they were the perfect mates, animated th but one soul. . . .

"The pathetic details of their death are filled with auty. The devoted companion of all his life gone, rthelot could not endure life any longer and, for the st time, broke down and refused to direct the forces life. He had not the desire to master it any more. He ıs willing to die. He had always thought of death ith serenity. Broken-hearted he welcomed the death at enabled him to follow his wife."

Philippe Berthelot, one of their sons, was soon to be- me Briand's close friend and, as General Secretary the foreign office, was to collaborate with him in ost of his future work.

* * * * *

Briand's place in the government, after so short a rm in parliament, and his growing popularity were ı make more than one enemy for him. The Socialist arty which had cast him out was waiting for an op- ɔrtunity to retaliate against him. The last Socialist ongress had decided that a Socialist could not enter ıy bourgeois or capitalistic Cabinet. This point has

since come up each time a new Cabinet is appointed.

Briand has a story about that question too. It had been voted by a majority of one, at the Socialist Congress held at The Hague, that a member of that party could not become a member of the government.

He still accuses a Japanese journalist of being the one who constituted this majority.

"You know," Briand said, "he voted with the French delegation on the day he lunched with them. And he voted with the Germans on the days he dined with them. That is why the Socialists can't come into power."

At any rate the Socialists had the feeling that Briand was no longer one of them. They were to pounce on him on the first occasion they could. When he was in the government for the first time, questions of policy, one after the other, arose. One of them was in regard to the school teachers who wanted to form unions. Briand considered them government employees and, therefore, did not have the same rights as the workers. Then a strike was declared among the letter-carriers of Paris. But they too were employed by the government.

So Briand, attacked on all sides, thought that once more he had to justify himself, and he again brought out his point of view on the organization of labor and his theories of the general strike, which was meant for the worker, and not for the government functionary.

ut this time, a terrible adversary was going for the rst time to attack him, an adversary who had for years :en his friend, with whom he had joined forces in the reyfus affair, who had advised him to enter the Cabi-:t, and who was now a great leader of the extremists the Socialist Party,—Jean Jaures.

With his customary power and violence of argu-ientation, Jaures broke out, reproaching Briand for :serting his party, for being unfaithful to his first eals, denouncing what he called his new attitude. peaking of this "attitude," which Briand had taken gainst the National Federation of Labor, Jaures ormed. Recalling the days when they fought side by de and Briand's ideals on the general strike at that me, Jaures accusingly cried:

"The principles of the Federation of Labor which ou are today condemning were yours,—your prin-ples!!" And carried away by his fury and passion, he roceeded to mimic him, reviving a phrase pronounced ears ago when Briand was defending Millerand, he uoted the famous revolutionary words:

" 'Go and fight with spears, weapons, swords, pistols, uskets . . . not only will I not disapprove but I will nsider it my duty to be among you! But don't ever scourage the workers when they try to unite all their forts toward a single action that they believe may be fective.' "

Agonized at having to answer his one time friend in public, Briand, with unconcealed emotion, stepped up to the tribune. Mastering himself, he reproached Jaures for taking a few isolated phrases which when presented apart from his entire address naturally lent an entirely different meaning to his words.

"My discourse—you didn't read. . . . And you were right. For if you had, you would not have produced the effect you wanted. You have pantomimed and mimicked me; you acted, assuming soft and supple variations of voice and employed such great eloquence of gesture, that it was really amazing, M. Jaures. You have made me the arouser of the working class, the man who had encouraged anarchism all over the country. You ask 'Is there a difference between your conceptions in those days and the ones in the Federation of Labor today?'

"You know that difference very well, M. Jaures. Do you know that even on that ground—the general strike—I had all the anarchists against me who today are at the head of the Federation of Labor? Do you know that I have always been opposed to violence? That all my efforts consisted of cooling down and keeping the working class steady, in organizing it solidly, in trying to systematize their ways so as to ameliorate the situation of the workers? . . .

"When one is in the government, one is not there

to seek personal popularity. It takes more courage to act, knowing that you will have to face criticism and invective, than to know that you will win only applause.

"This discussion has suddenly become very personal. I did not want this to happen, but I must answer certain attacks. It is very painful to me that Jaures should attack me. Coming from any other person I might have understood it.

"You embarrassed me in the first part of your speech, Jaures, but after that you became marvelous. I almost felt like applauding. A dying friendship is apparently an occasion for you to outdo yourself. I only want to know whether your speech is the most generous one you could deliver.

"I could also attack some of your writings—show some of the things you said and wrote that would not put you in a very favorable light. You adapted yourself very easily to the vice-presidency of the Chamber of Deputies—no doubt you, too, at that moment were considered a renegade from the party. But I only went along in the natural evolution of my character. All I ask the Parliament to do is to judge me by my actions."

On the fourth of January, 1908, Clemenceau, who had become Premier, called Briand to become Minister of Justice, and without any feeling of bitterness on account of the attacks of the Socialists, Briand accepted

the office and proceeded to prepare many reforms for the workers. Among them was to throw open juries to the workers who had heretofore been practically excluded, and to raise the salaries of the humbler clerks in the law courts. Though he was considered a renegade by the Labor Party, he never lost his interest in its organization. He felt that the country was in a difficult position because of strife between the government and the new unions, but that the reason was that France had given more freedom to the workers than any other country.

CHAPTER XII

The Premier

Political Pacifier

IN a speedy and successful campaign, Briand was very soon to reach the apex of his political career. After only seven years in Parliament, having been already at the head of two departments (Public Instruction and Justice) he was to take the place occupied by such men as Waldeck Rousseau and Clemenceau, and become Premier.

Of course, the position in which he then found himself was not an easy one. He was the first Socialist ever asked to head a government. This was to alarm many moderates. And he was a Socialist ousted by his party, a Socialist who was to find his bitterest adversaries among his first friends.

Like all premiers in France, to live, to carry through his program, he was dependent on a majority which made it possible for him to remain in power. To constitute that majority was not an easy problem for him. Briand, who was in those days accused by the Socialist Party of being a renegade, had but one idea—that of remaining faithful to his beliefs and to his conception

of Socialism, to be able to realize, as a Premier, the reforms he had planned for labor since he turned to political life in his early youth in Brittany. The first declaration he made, as he appeared on the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies to deliver his address, was to say that he denied nothing of his past. The words he uttered then show how thoroughly he realized the difficulties he would have to face.

"I did not accept the mission with which the President of the Republic has entrusted me without anxiety. I felt the responsibility of the position I would find myself in so acutely that I looked back over my whole life and asked myself whether I was really equal to the task, whether I was worthy of it, whether for the good of my country I had the right to accept such a mission.

"I tried to postpone my acceptance, to refuse the honor; but when the moment came I decided that since I had been summoned it was my duty to assume the responsibility. Indeed I should have been a sorry creature if I had accepted the office as an easy conquest; if I had gone to it with only a feeling of satisfied vanity or if I had been dazzled by the glamor of personal success.

"But then there began to grow in me, not a new man, but a man adapting himself to his new functions. You have had proof that the ideals I like best are those ideals which can be practically and immediately real-

ized. I am a man of action. It is only on that principle that my whole life has been built."

The anxiety and hesitation reflected in this first speech was not to last long. Briand who arrived in power after a terrible period of agitation in the country was immediately to make himself popular, in declaring that the program of the new Cabinet was to be one of appeasement and relaxation.

That idea became crystallized in the public opinion after a famous speech Briand delivered in the small town of Perigueux, in the South of France. That speech which was widely discussed at the time really gave him the status of a statesman. Though full of generous projects in favor of the workers and though his last words were a plea for Socialism, it was no longer the speech of a mere political leader. Once more, Briand had reached a higher standard. To understand fully what may be considered his political credo, one must remember the struggles he had been through; the fights that had taken place among the French people since he had decided to devote his life to political reforms. In Brittany there had been the fights aroused by his propaganda for the rights of the workers; in Paris, during the days of the Dreyfus affair; and later, when he undertook to establish the separation of church and state—always he had found the same ferocious opposition . . . always he had had to face the complications

created by the violence that brought French political parties to fight like bitter enemies. Was it not possible for the French people to be brought to coöperate toward the welfare of the country they loved? Could there not once be a program to unite the efforts of all?

This was what Briand was going to try to do. He was going to attempt to rid the country of the quarrels caused by differences of opinion. It was that need for political peace that he expressed in his famous *Discours de Perigueux,* the speech that presented him for the first time as a genuine political pacifier.

The first part of this address was directed entirely against the selfishness of certain political *coteries* which closed their doors to all new ideas. He compared these little groups of self-centered interests to stagnant puddles in which bacteria collect, around which the air is fetid and which can be cleansed only by flushing them with a current of fresh water. It was his desire to dissipate the morbid germs and to clarify the air as well as the water. In short, to join all the republican groups together, and bring them to direct their activities in a common effort for the welfare of the country; to urge them not to attach so much importance to slight differences in opinion, and to coöperate in the great work that would bring the country to a realization of its highest power.

"Peace," said Briand, extending his hand even to

those who had never really coöperated with the advanced group of the Republican Party.

Speaking for the Cabinet, Briand then expressed his gratitude to the country.

"When we came to power we were greatly touched by the atmosphere of sympathy that welcomed us. . . . It made us very happy, but it also worried us a little. . . . Worried us because we wondered whether we would be strong enough to justify that confidence. The reason for our welcome can be found in two words; which are the underlying principles of our program: appeasement and relaxation. Yes, the people were confident that we would bring with us peace and relaxation. Our country has reached a point now, where, above all, there is an overwhelming need for union. So great in the past, our country must now strive to achieve an equally glorious future, not only for its own sake but for the sake of all humanity, and this can be done only if it rids itself of the everlasting struggles and fratricidal fights of the French against the French."

After describing more fully his conception of that union, he expressed his own feelings vigorously, by saying, "If there is one thing that I am grateful for, it is that I was chosen to head the Cabinet at this most propitious moment—when the union of the people can be realized."

He then reviewed the efforts he had made to pacify

the political atmosphere of the country, the strong and systematic organization of the Labor Party to prevent the numerous incidents which occurred on all sides, raising conflicts between Capital and Labor.

Once more, he explained in what spirit he had really undertaken separation of church and state.

"I believe that religion is one of the strongest points of dissension among the French. . . . That is why I felt that it was on this premise first that peace should be realized. . . ."

It is impossible in a few excerpts to do justice to such an important exposition of principle. Briand was to finish with an appeal to all French people, asking them to back his efforts, to gather them into a single effort for the sake of the Republic and the love of France. He concluded with a protest against those who held the patriotism of the Socialist Party suspect.

"All the French are united when it comes to a question of defending their country. We have the good fortune to be the one country among all others which made the gesture of liberation and gave birth to ideas of freedom. For this reason, everyone looks to us now for new ideas and hopes, and to justify that hope we must remain strong, confident of ourselves. Our country has shown its reasons for existing in the past. If it wants to flourish in the future, it will never permit anyone to defile the glory of its existence."

And in words that were soon to appear prophetic, he concluded,

"If, unfortunately, events necessitated all the French people to fight for their soil they would stand united without exception, brothers, forgetting all the discords and all the differences of opinion. . . . They would march together for the defense of a country which they love, and they would by that act insure victory in war."

* * * * *

As soon as the new session was opened, Briand proved how faithful he had remained to Labor. He introduced the pension law for workers. Pensions had been the basis for so many strikes. It was voted a few months later. He took in hand the interests of the miners and many other reforms. No Cabinet before had ever accomplished so much for Labor in so short a time, but this was not going to lessen the rancor of the Socialists against him. He was to be violently reproached for asking the moderates to join the government in his speech in Perigueux.

CHAPTER XIII

Strike Breaker

BRIAND who had placed the future political standing of his Cabinet on the principle of interior pacification was soon to be confronted with a terrible drama.

For a man who had always been in favor of the general strike, he was as a Premier soon to be compelled to face a situation which once more aroused Jaures and the entire Socialist Party against him.

On the eighth of October, 1910, as a result of a trifling incident and without having made any preliminary claims, a group of workers in the Companie du Nord abandoned work. The Companie du Nord immediately discharged the Chairman of the Federation of Mechanics and Locomotive Engineers. This action outraged the workers and a meeting was held at which thousands decided to call a strike. The situation was very grave indeed, but what made it still worse was the influence of the anarchistic element which had slipped into the movement and inspired the sabotage that went on for several days.

This news was terrible for Briand who had always pleaded for the right of the strike but had never been

a partisan of either insurrection or sabotage. Above all, at the moment, he was responsible, as head of the government, for the safety of all citizens.

Measures had to be taken, not to forbid the strike, since strikes were allowed by law, but to prevent any violence that would threaten the safety of the citizens. A general strike of the railways would place Paris in a very dangerous position. Prompt measures toward security had to be taken for the entire country. Without any hesitation, Briand assumed all the responsibilities that the situation entailed.

He declared that the strike appeared to him not as a professional manifestation but a revolutionary and political action; that he had reason to know that the majority of the workers were hostile to the strike. He believed that the revolutionary leaders had forced them to act and that there had been no apparent discontent among the workers.

As Premier, he immediately appealed to the Minister of War to provide military protection on all the railway lines so that all the workers who desired to continue to work in spite of the strike, could do so. Whatever was to happen, the supply of food for Paris had to be insured.

To these measures of Briand's, the National Railway Syndicate responded by declaring an immediate and general strike on all the railway lines of France.

But Briand had been well informed and the order was not obeyed. Only a few individual strikers left their work, and a few days later the leaders of the strike had to give orders to permit the men to resume work.

The strike was over but the question, being of great political importance, came up in the Chamber of Deputies. It was too good an opportunity for cornering Briand for his adversaries to drop the matter.

The Socialists and the Radicals were very bitter toward him. They accused him of having stood by the directors of the different companies, to have acted in favor of Capitalism and to have strangled the strike.

Briand's answer was very direct. He declared that there is a right superior to all others, the right of the nation to keep alive and to remain independent. The country cannot permit its frontiers to remain open. "And I will tell you one thing," he said, "that will probably arouse your indignation. If, in order to protect the existence of the nation, the government could not have found means within the law to permit it to remain the master of its frontiers; if it had not been able to keep in hand the railways, an essential instrument of national defense, it would have resorted to illegal means to do so."

At the mention of illegality, the left wing flew into a frenzy, hurling insults at Briand, menacing him with

their fists. The cries of "DICTATOR" could be heard on all sides.

"YOU ARE A DICTATOR! YOU DON'T SAY ANOTHER WORD! DISMISS HIM!!—DISMISS HIM!!!"

The President of the Chamber tried vainly to interrupt the tumult.

"The Premier wants to explain himself," he said.

"NO! NO! DISMISS HIM!!—DICTATOR!! —DICTATOR!!!—LONG LIVE THE LAW!!"

The Chairman again asked the deputies not to stop the proceedings. Briand then tried to shout down the noise. "I have the right to explain my words."

But the extremists shouted still louder. "DICTATOR!!—DICTATOR!!" To which Briand replied, "You have no right to prevent me from being heard." Briand appealed to the Republican majority, saying that this was a comedy, that he would not allow himself to be trapped in that way.

"I won't permit you to treat me like a tracked-down fox—I will face my hunters, ready to spring back!"

Never had any greater disorder been witnessed in the Chamber. Briand was standing at the tribune, helpless. I had never seen him so pale, though he was calm. Two or three times he tried to make himself heard above the uproar, but it was in vain. Suddenly he leaned over the tribune and started speaking in a normal tone

of voice to the row of stenographers who sat before him. At first we all wondered why he was speaking so quietly to the stenographers, who continued writing, but we were to understand later what his purpose had been. The words that his adversaries in the audience wished to prevent him from saying, in other words, what he wanted to say in his own defense, he was going to oblige them to read in the newspapers the next morning, and he was too sure that his position was right to permit them to strangle his words. Also it was most important to him that his defense appear in the official record.

When he had finished, he walked slowly down the steps of the tribune. The extremists rushed up to him threatening him with their fists and shouting as if they were bent on killing him.

When I spoke to Briand recently about that famous day, I referred to the scene I had witnessed and asked him what his impressions had been at that moment. He is very brave, and of course quite accustomed to the most tempestuous meetings, but when I spoke about these moments which to the spectators had appeared so tragic, he smiled.

"It wasn't really so terrible," he said. "There was a lot of false indignation, bravado screaming—just noise. The idea, of course, was to cause me to be ousted as Premier, but as I walked through the group that had

seemed so ready to throw themselves upon me, they let me pass unmolested. There are a great many comedians among us. My opponents knew that if they had become too disorderly the guards would have stopped them. It was really one of the most interesting sessions of my life. I remember one moment, as I attempted to continue to speak, the President said to me, 'You are going to strain your voice.' I knew, of course, that I was not going to strain my voice because I was peacefully speaking to the stenographers. It was really very much like one of those sessions in real revolutionary days. I might have had for a few minutes the same sensations that Robespierre had to go through. When I came down from the tribune quietly, they all seemed out of their minds, and some of them came to me and said, 'Don't go home. It will be foolish. Come into the Eighth Office. Liberty must be defended.' I could not understand why liberty had to be defended, especially in the Eighth Office. I do not know yet what they meant.

"Jaures was shouting so much that I thought he was going to have a fit.

"It is amusing what things people think of under stress. My only idea was to get home and get some food. It was half-past nine and I was terribly hungry. I simply left them all shouting and talking and went home, forgetting about saving liberty.

"I remember the evening very well too. I could not

find peace even at home. Friends, representatives of newspapers came to see me to discuss the *tragic* events of the day. I remember I was peacefully eating some fried eggs. I like fried eggs. They were all walking about, and the fact that I was silent and just eating my supper seemed to upset my friends terribly. One of the editors of a paper turned to me angrily and said, 'Well, of course, a question like that cannot be settled by eating two fried eggs.' "

* * * * *

The next day when Briand came into the session room, it was crowded, but a suppressed silence was maintained. Having read the morning papers, the deputies had to admit the justice of Briand's arguments. They realized that what he said would appear perfectly sound to the whole public, including their own electors.

Briand then explained: "It is impossible that anybody could misunderstand the real meaning of my words yesterday. When I was interrupted, no one really believed that I could even think of doing anything illegal. I had just said that all the measures that the government had taken were within the law. I was simply explaining that there was a right superior to all others—the right that a nation has to live and not to leave its frontiers open to a possible invasion. That is

why I added that if there had been no law to cover an occasion of a strike of railways, the government would then have had a good excuse if it had taken some extra legal action to insure the security of its people."

How clever he appeared to us all on that famous day, when he came to the tribune in that extraordinary silence, and started to speak in a very low voice—with greatly restrained emotion!

He went into a detailed discussion of the strike; of the railway mobilization; but the great effect was in his attitude, when after having shown how difficult the situation was, with what danger it was fraught, and the terrible accidents that are the outcome of nearly every strike, he finished, sadly, bitterly. He alluded to the artificial tempests raised against him, particularly the accusation that he was a dictator, and asked the audience whether he really looked like a dictator.

"Ah, what a poor dictator I look like . . . !" He was standing there, so slim, so pale, his clothes hung so limply and pathetically on his emaciated body. An impressive silence was the only answer . . . then dropping his hands, he said, "The strike is over . . . look at my hands . . . there is not one drop of blood on them."

CHAPTER XIV

The Eloquence of Briand

"WORDS without action mean nothing," says Briand, when any allusion is made to his talent as an orator. "One must not combine the art of speaking with the art of writing. When you prepare a speech in advance by writing it in a literary way, it is very easy to see how it is going to unfold. Too often your auditor knows before you have spoken what you are going to say and loses interest."

Briand hates trite expressions and even sentences with an ordinary rhythm. For him the art of oratory lies in the power to keep an audience on the *qui vive*. An unexpected word, a sentence that catches the interest, even though sometimes it may not be quite accurate, is more impressive than an elaborate explanation, and can arouse the interest of an assembly which might become torpid under the somnolent effect of long stretches of oratory, though the words themselves may be beautiful. Just as in private conversations, words must convince an individual, so speeches must convince a crowd.

Briand shrugs his shoulders at the idea of publishing any speech. When people speak to him of the judg-

ment of posterity, he answers, "When you can find two sentences in a discourse worth recording, it is remarkable. What remains of the most famous speeches delivered by our great political statesmen cannot be read today."

It is very difficult to analyze what it is that determines that mysterious, magnetic power that speakers have over a crowd. More than any other present-day politicians, Briand has the gift to charm and overwhelm an assembly, even when it is composed partially of adversaries waiting for his fall.

He never abandons his colloquial, familiar way of address. He likes everyday words and is contemptuous of grandiloquence. He dislikes dressing up his words or himself. This simplicity, which is at the basis of Briand's nature as well as of his talent, recalls a phrase that was applied to another great orator. "He speaks like nobody the language of everybody."

Briand is essentially an improviser. He never takes any notes—he depends altogether upon his prodigious memory. Neither does he ever prepare any notes or outlines, not even for the most important and technical addresses. Nobody has ever seen him consult any documents at the tribune. It is in his preparatory meditation that all such work is accomplished. For days, for weeks before an address he will work over in his mind the

question with which he is preoccupied. In his mind he will work out the difficulties, see the course that must be taken, the aim to be reached. He works out the question, never the speech.

As he was leaving Paris for Perigueux, where he was to deliver his famous political speech, a journalist asked him if he would be good enough to give out in advance what he was going to talk about.

"If I give you any information about it today," he answered, "it would certainly not be the same as what I will deliver on Sunday."

It is such a fixed principle with him to improvise, that even on the day when he has to deliver a speech before Parliament on which depends the future of his Cabinet, even on the day when he has to speak to all the nations with which he is dealing and make statements that will become pages of modern history, he refuses to change his customary habits. On that day, he hates any reference to the coming events; he does not want to hear about it; he does not want to speak of it; he does not even want to think about it. His only concern is to arrive at the assembly with a fresh mind. He knows his subject so thoroughly that there is no necessity for last moment preparation.

* * * * *

On the day Briand is to deliver an address, he always invites an intimate friend to lunch with him, so as to prevent him from thinking about what he is going to say. It is always a friend who is aware of this idiosyncrasy and who knows that Briand must be distracted, and so the conversation at luncheon is always casual chatter about anything but the afternoon's event. Never does Briand seem less preoccupied than at those moments. He will tell anecdotes to his friend, evoke old memories, and take his guest on most unexpected flights of imagination. He likes to laugh and play about with ideas.

If occasionally circumstances have prevented him from inviting an intimate friend to luncheon, he shuts himself away from everyone and reads anything—a book of travel or adventure or a novel. The book to him is of no importance. He reads only to prevent himself from thinking of his speech.

* * * * *

Nothing is more interesting than to observe Briand in the Chamber of Deputies on one of those important days when he is going to deliver an address. He always comes into the session room alone. His gait is slow and lumbering, and he looks abstracted. He speaks to no one. He does not notice anyone. He goes directly to

his place and drops down on the bench, his shoulders slightly hunched, his hands stretched out before him on the table. He appears tired and despondent. His adversaries watch him craftily and whisper to one another in a murmur that catches hold and travels around the room.

"He looks dreadfully tired!" . . . "You know I have heard that he is ill." . . . "Really? . . . He is certainly very much changed since last year." . . . "He looks sick." . . . "He looks badly." . . .

Many await his fall, already thinking of the place that may be vacant tomorrow. . . .

What a mistake! Those who are really familiar with Briand know well that it is at that very moment that there is gathering in him the magnetic force which is at the root of the genius of his personality. The man who seems so absent-minded and worn out, whose half-closed eyes seem not to see, is actually getting in contact with his audience psychically, determining the degree of animosity or sympathy that is scattered about the assembly. He is acquiring the feel of the currents that divide the audience. Not a word or a whisper escapes him. With quick perception he senses the attitude of the whole assemblage. Everything registers in his brain, even the silent hostility of the man whom he knows he is going to have to fight.

He does not move, except for an almost imperceptible

tible fluttering of his fingers on the desk. At times he will look like a cat that is perched motionless on a shelf, eyes scarcely open, which, seeing its prey, suddenly leaps forward and springs on it. Briand sits there quietly and then suddenly will rise. It is his moment to speak, —the psychological instant. He knows now what he will say and how he will say it. The question he has lived through; his opinion has been built up gradually, but the form that the discourse will take is born out of his emotional contact with the audience.

His talent for dramatic oratory could serve as a lesson to playwrights. He holds the interest of his audience constantly by sudden changes in rhythm, quick variations in theme and very few gestures, which because of their rarity add to his eloquence. He is never monotonous.

"You must avoid encumbering details," he explains. "Always keep before you the principal question in hand and when you feel that you have produced an effect on your assembly, impress it upon them."

Briand always begins his speech in a low voice as though to compel his audience to stop all other activities and listen to him. His first phrases are generally rather vague, like a sailor tacking from side to side to catch the breeze. He speaks. No one who has ever heard his voice will ever forget it. That deep persuasive voice, so irritating to his adversaries—that voice that

they compare to the songs of the sirens who beckon the sailors out of their path and cause them to be wrecked. It is a deep, musical voice with a cello-like quality, and it has an unmistakable ring of sincerity. A crowd reacts to it as one man. It has the natural power to fill the greatest auditorium, but suddenly Briand bends over the tribune. His voice is now low and muted. He whispers as though revealing a great secret, giving each person in the assembly the impression that he speaks for him alone, imparting information so confidential that it must not be repeated to anyone. . . .

The next moment, his voice explodes like a thunderbolt and he startles the entire audience with his apparent indignation. He has caught up some slight word of an adversary and pounces on him with reproaches, rousing himself and his listeners to a climax. His voice booms as he overpowers his enemy and the entire assembly sits breathless, mastered by his voice which has grown enormous and his words which are full of passion.

His triumph is quick and easy. The display of indignation was for the purpose of exciting his assembly, which is now in his hands.

At times he will become melancholy. All at once he appears small, tired, thin. His clothes seem empty; he looks incapable of any effort. He gives the impression that he is indifferent to his envied power and will not

fight for it. He is ready to let it go, to drop it like a discarded old rag.

Suddenly with another abrupt change, he faces those in the auditorium over whom he must triumph. He points out to them the importance of the work he has accomplished, tells them that he is the only one who is capable of carrying it out. . . . Challenging his adversaries, he explodes.

"Yes, gentlemen, yes! I do want to remain in power! I will cling to my power!"

* * * * *

Briand at all times maintains his high standard of dignity and simplicity. Even when he wants to impress a mob he never resorts to cheap demagogic phrases which can always be counted on to arouse popular enthusiasm. He respects his audience—whether workers, statesmen or diplomats. If he is carried on to great heights of oratory it is because of the quality of his ideas. He never permits himself to become intoxicated on cheap wine; there is always the flavor of a rare vintage about his eloquence.

Above all, he has tact. It is that tact which is the basis of his diplomatic success and that shows itself even in the most tempestuous sessions of Parliament. Never is

Briand carried away by his words. His mind is always in control.

It is overwhelming to think of the number of problems and situations he must face every time he speaks in public.

In the tumult of an assembly he must, while he is speaking on a question of international politics, think of the repercussion of his words in all the different nations that are waiting to read his declarations; he must answer questions fired at him by his audience and at the same time not disclose facts that are not yet ready for disclosure; speak of negotiations without telling his real aim; try not to antagonize countries whose interests are opposed; and at the same time win approbation of the unknown little deputy whose vote may decide the important matter of his majority in that evening's vote.

* * * * *

To know Briand's talent in all its different aspects, one must follow him to the antechambers that surround the assembly hall. It is there that the deputies meet and talk; that plots are hatched and also revealed. There the wise old foxes who know all about politics, devise the strategic manœuvers that at the crucial moment will permit the government to triumph.

Briand is very popular behind the scenes. If one sees a crowd, composed of men of varied opinions, all listening eagerly to some invisible orator, one may be sure that it is Briand who is in the center of the group. He knows how to make a personal friend even of an adversary. He is always thoroughly informed and has the gift of finding just the word that will bring a laugh and clear the atmosphere.

* * * * *

Briand has spoken. The discontented factions, which in the beginning had joined hands to defeat him, have disbanded. Once more he stands supreme. Very simply, he steps down from the tribune, and shakes whatever hands are stretched out to greet him. He knows that the most fervent at that moment, are often those who had meant to trap him—but what of that? . . . He goes back to work.

CHAPTER XV

Country Home

"I LIKE a quiet life," Briand often repeats, sometimes with a little touch of melancholy. But whenever he escapes for a few hours he is quickly brought back by the agitation of public life. He has, however, always maintained the habit of disappearing for short periods to some remote spot unfamiliar to Parisians. Formerly, he could do this in comfort, but now his pictures and his caricatures that appear daily in the newspapers have made his face so familiar to all that he cannot long remain unrecognized.

Many years ago he took a fancy to a little place called Cocherel on the bank of the River Eure. He used to go there long before he thought of buying a house. Now he owns several old farms and fields—quite a little domain.

"I like to live there quietly," he says. "The people of the farm take care of me. Years ago I used to come to this little village under an assumed name. No one knew me. My name was Durant . . . Dupont . . . I don't remember which. I was perfectly happy. But one day some Parisians passed through the country, took one look at me and recognized me immediately. They

came up to the inn at which I was living and asked for lunch. For some reason or other, the good woman who ran the inn, and who was a kind hostess to me, refused to serve them a meal. They insisted. 'Why will you not serve us, when Briand sits there eating?'

" 'Briand?' The woman shrugged her shoulders. 'There is no Briand here.' And with that she ushered them out.

"She approached me, saying, 'What jokers those Parisians are. Do you know what they were telling me there behind the door? . . . that you were Briand!'

" 'Funny people!' I replied, and no more was said about it. For a while life went on in its accustomed way.

"One day shortly after that, however, Sabatier, the newspaper cartoonist, who used to come to Cocherel on Sundays, saw me fishing on the bank of the river and took a snapshot of me from the other side. This picture appeared on the first page of *Illustration,* entitled, 'The Pleasure of the Wise,' and a subtitle, 'What can be seen every Sunday at Cocherel.'

"A few days later my hostess came to me and said, 'Well, you have had the laugh on me for the last few years.'

" 'I?' I exclaimed, astonished. 'What do you mean?'

" 'Well,' she said, 'what about this?' and handed

me the portrait from *Illustration,* saying, 'Those Parisians who said you were M. Briand—they sent this to me.'

"I glanced at the portrait and said very seriously, 'Of course I must say it does look like me!' as though I were examining the picture very closely.

" 'I am quite sure that it is you,' declared my good hostess.

" 'How silly,' I said, making a desperate effort to maintain my incognito. 'Do you believe that if I were really Briand I would have the time to come here quietly and spend hours fishing all alone?'

"She thought it over for a moment, and with a long glance at the picture, said, 'It's all right . . . what you want after all, is to be left in peace . . . it's all right . . . I understand . . . I'll say nothing to the others.' "

* * * * *

It was through his great love of hunting and fishing that Briand discovered Cocherel. He used to go there with a friend. What Briand calls hunting is to go out with a shot-gun over his shoulder and now and then aim at some passing bird. Most of the time, however, he walks along dreamily, looking at the trees . . . the

fields . . . perhaps remarking about the crops. . . . What he enjoys most about hunting or fishing is the walk out of doors and the long luncheon that follows, during which he tells some of those stories and anecdotes of which he knows so many. . . . He was to grow really attached to Cocherel and feel that he would like to live there.

One day he said to his friend, "If you could find me a very small house, I could come here more often."

And what he bought eventually can indeed be called a very small house. There were three little rooms, all on one floor, and a small garden down on the bank of the river. The cost of the whole piece of property did not amount to two hundred dollars. Briand must have found the money in some forgotten envelope. His friends all tell of his curious manner of putting aside money. They say that if at the end of the month he has not spent all that he has, he leaves what remains in an envelope forgotten in a drawer. When he has something to pay for he looks to see what there is in the envelopes.

The picturesqueness of his little home, with its thick weeping-willow trees dipping over the side of the river, was a constant source of delight to Briand, and what enchanted him above all was the sound of the water rippling by his garden.

Sometime later an old farm on the other side of the

road was offered for sale. Briand bought it. It was a little larger than his first purchase. It included a house to live in, stables and buildings for the farm implements. He furnished it like an old peasant home, with a huge mantelpiece over a fireplace, so large that one can burn a tree in it, dark carved chests, an old clock, country chairs and tables, and in the vast kitchen hung shiny copper pots and pans. The first floor of the house was very simple, and there was only one spare room for one friend.

Little by little he had taken on the soul of a landowner, now and then buying a field, and later exchanging with a peasant for another. In that way he acquired another little house. Of course, he did not have very much money to pay for all of this and had to buy slowly. After the war, when he had been awarded the Nobel prize jointly with Gustave Stresemann, he used the money from the prize to pay for some of his property.

He now has quite a little estate on which there are three farms, carefully cultivated—all by Bretons, his countrymen. He holds an annual contest for his farmers and gives a prize to the one who has done the best work. But with typical thoughtfulness, he arranges matters a little so that the same man will not win the prize year after year.

He is a very capable farmer. He really makes his land pay for itself and bring him some returns as well.

He has a gift for agriculture and knows quite a little about sheep and cows and pigs. He divides his farm into two—one part for raising grain and the other for cattle. He has many ideas about the breeding of animals which are practiced on his farm. He is exceedingly generous and knows that occasionally he is cheated a little, but to that he says, "Well, everybody has to live, I suppose."

In the country Briand always dresses most informally, wearing old corduroy pants, worn out jackets and unbelievably heavy shoes. He trudges from one farm to another, a stick in his hand, asking about the children, and speaking at great length to the peasants. He is very fond of the peasants, and says they are full of common sense.

He now has a charming little house for the summer just a few hundred yards from his main house. It is perched halfway up on a cliff. It is the ancient home of an old priest. Briand bought it from the priest, but was so reluctant to take it from him that he permitted the priest to live in it to the end of his days. This little house is also surrounded by a garden, literally filled with flowers and trees. He has transplanted roses from Brittany and Anjou. It is arranged a little like the inside of a boat. There is just one big room on the lower floor, and the front of it has a large bay window opening on the fields. On the upper storey there is a bedroom and

a tiny bathroom. One can see all over the countryside from the little wooden balcony.

It is amusing that Briand, the lover of peace, should have chosen Cocherel for his home, for Cocherel is the ground on which a famous battle was fought. The day before Charles V. was crowned in Rheims, Cocherel was the scene of a great victory by Duguesclin who was commanding the French against the Captal de Buch.

It was a terrible fight that can be considered one of the first uprisings of patriotism in France. The impact of the two armies as they clashed was terrific.

"For the love of God" said Duguesclin to his soldiers, "Remember that tomorrow we have a new King of France and that we must offer him the Captal de Buch as a present for his coronation."

The English defended themselves bravely, but suddenly a troop of thirty armored warriors, mounted on the finest horses in the kingdom, broke through the ranks, surrounded the Captal de Buch and galloped away with him, leaving the enemy stupefied at seeing their chief taken from them.

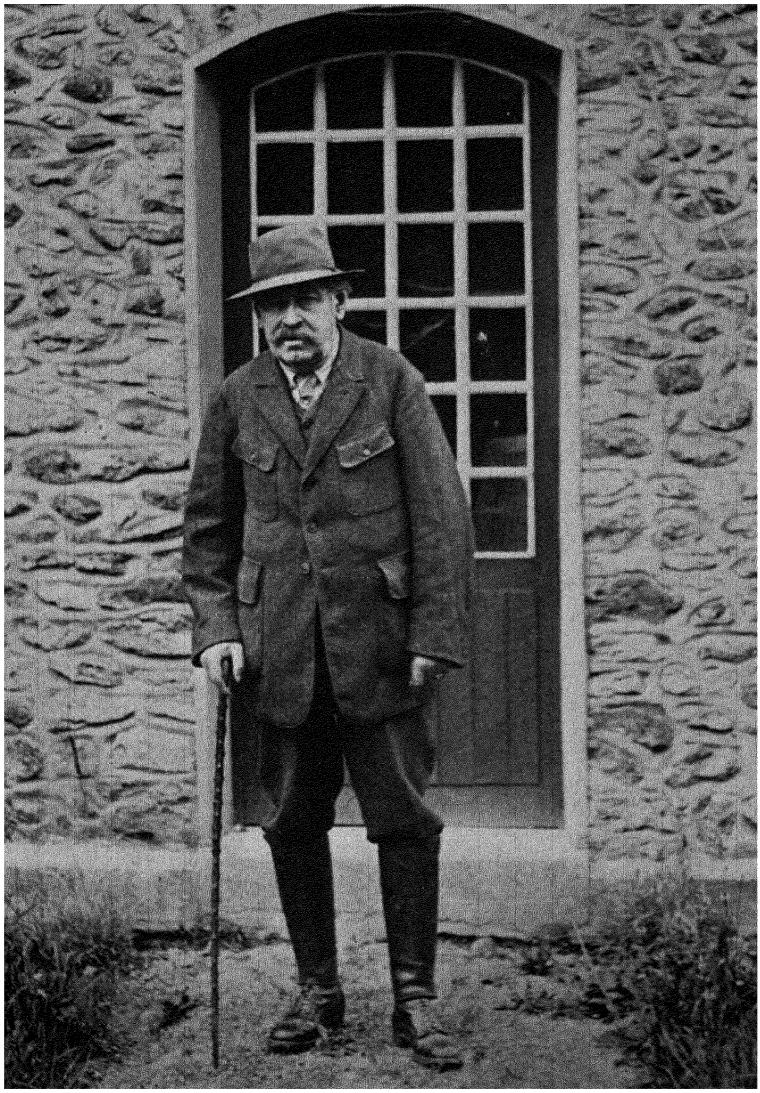
The entire battle resounded with the words shouted by the knights:

"Notre Dame—Duguesclin."

Briand loves to speak about the Battle of Cocherel with its tremendous armies of a few hundred men

. . . of those big, powerful troops . . . thirty men in armor . . . and to wonder what happened to the famous captains, stiffened in their iron casings, when they fell on their backs. He impertinently refers to them as sardines in tin boxes and conjectures how they were killed . . . whether or not they had to be taken out of their armor in order to be killed. . . .

However, in our day, no trace of battle can be found in Cocherel, where Briand spends his most peaceful hours and where very few intimate friends are admitted and all newspapermen are barred.



Times Wide World Photo

Briand in walking clothes at Cocherel.

CHAPTER XVI

Briand and Poincaré

BRIAND was still deposed from power when on July first, 1911, the Kaiser sent the gunboat, "Panther" to Agadir, to defy the French who were increasing their influence in Morocco.

This manifestation, of course, aroused French patriotic susceptibilities to the utmost. The crisis became so acute that, although no one in France desired the war, it suddenly seemed inevitable.

However, Great Britain stood by France, and went about making formal objections to Germany's acquisition of any territorial influence in Morocco. A treaty was signed, conceding to Germany some territory in French Equatorial Africa in recognition of her political protectorate in Morocco. The treaty giving up French colonial land was not popular and M. Caillaux, who had signed it, was rather badly received at the Chamber of Deputies, though he was successful in preventing a war with Germany. The opposition in the Senate was still greater. Clemenceau attacked Caillaux furiously.

He was outraged with the treaty which he considered a weak act, undermining French power in favor of Germany. He also resented the manner in which nego-

tiations had been directed. The attitude of the Senate induced Caillaux to resign as Premier and brought to power Raymond Poincaré as head of the Cabinet and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Poincaré immediately asked Briand to be Vice-President and Minister of Justice.

Poincaré in almost all ways is a contrast to Briand. He is typically *the* great lawyer. Few people have such a capacity for working. The most characteristic quality he possesses is his intensity. Before a discourse, he spends hours in the preparation of his material. His addresses are very well built up, with evidence of much research and packed with facts. He can talk on high finance, quoting figures spontaneously, seeming to know the entire discourse by heart. But, though he is a good orator, his voice is rasping and incisive.

Intensely devoted to his country, he is a model of integrity. Born in Lorraine, Poincaré not only loves his country but is the very embodiment of patriotism. He is known, too, for his great sense of observation and his touch of irony.

His friendship for people never prevents him from being clear-sighted. In daily contact with Briand, he was not long in discovering that though Briand never neglected his department, he was very much attracted to international problems and the work in Foreign

Affairs, which was then new to him. In his memoirs Poincaré underlines the fact with a little malice. . . .

"M. Aristide Briand, whose duties in the Cabinet permitted him occasional leisure, would often walk across the gardens of the Tuileries and the Seine to come from the Place Vendome to the Foreign Office on the Quai d'Orsay to visit with me. His conversation was interesting and forceful. I have always admired his penetration, his delicate sensitivity and his charm, which is a bit feline. I never knew another person with the power so to bewitch and delight the people to whom he talked.

"He used to come and sit with me. I would read to him the cables from our agents abroad, and we would exchange ideas about the events. M. Briand has made a virtue of his witty nonchalance which in others might be considered a fault. He was keenly interested in general politics and particularly at this time in Foreign Affairs, which though he had not taken a hand in their direction, fascinated his intelligent curiosity. I congratulate myself more and more each day on having such an able and brilliant mind so close to me. M. Briand did a great deal toward making me, a year later, President of the Republic."

Indeed, the election of Poincaré in 1913 was of great significance. Since the incident of Agadir, once more

the Nationalistic feelings of many French were aroused. Poincaré's patriotism was as keen as that of all inhabitants of Lorraine, a province which had never recovered from the wounds that victorious Germany had inflicted upon her—slicing her little domain in two. His election at that very moment was indicative of the French Nationalist's point of view. His first official act was to recall Briand as Premier.

Naturally, Briand's political program reflected the tendencies of the moment. Germany did not take any pains to hide her bellicose mood. Briand immediately introduced a project for a law lengthening the period of compulsory military service to three years, thereby giving France additional reserves to be used in case of emergency. This act did not increase Briand's popularity with the Labor Party and all the workers. The three years, during which they had to abandon their work to prepare for an eventual war in which they did not believe, outraged them. Briand was again considered a traitor to his past beliefs. Too, his association with Poincaré led people, already antagonized, to call him a Nationalist.

The discussion of the "Three-Year Service" law was a difficult thing to carry out. It meant, of course, a sacrifice to almost every family, and nobody had any real notion of the growing danger in the near east.

After many difficulties and great opposition in the

Chamber of Deputies, Briand was deposed as a Premier in the Senate. Once more, indefatigably, he returned to interior politics, devoting his time to the creation of a league, a federation of parties that appeared to him ever a necessity.

The coming elections which took place in the Spring a few weeks before the war, were exceedingly heated, due to the three-year military service law, which had not yet been voted on. It has, of course, since been suppressed, but at that time Briand was held responsible for the law.

A few weeks before the elections, a huge banquet was arranged in Paris in Briand's honor by his admirers. This appeared to his enemies as a unique occasion to manifest their ill feelings against him. All the Socialist papers, including *L'Humanité* which he had helped to found, invited their friends and readers to meet at the door of the banquet and to manifest violently against Briand. Unions, federations of unions sent their representatives to demonstrate against Briand.

The crowd that gathered before the building was tremendous and their shouting and singing raised a hue which filled the streets and rang into the banquet rooms. They noisily shrieked insults and menaces, calling Briand "RENEGADE!" "TRAITOR!" "DESERTER!" "THROW HIM IN JAIL!" "HARD

LABOR FOR HIM!" They hissed and booed, roared and howled their insults and threats, aroused to a pitch of frenzy.

"RENEGADE!"—"TRAITOR"—"JAIL HIM!"

Briand, arriving at the banquet hall, had to pass through the howling, menacing crowd. The police were not strong enough to check the mobs of Socialists who filled the streets, shouting their denunciations of Briand. The entrance to the hall was mobbed by these frenzied, raving mobs, to the indignation of Briand's friends who were arriving. There were numerous fights and riots and even after Briand's arrival, the masses continued to surround the banquet hall. It was impossible to disperse them and to the accompaniment of these shouts the celebration inside took place.

Briand began his address to his friends with traces of the emotion he had felt upon finding that the demonstration against him was being led by men who not many months before had been his friends, men whom he had helped and even pleaded for in past days.

"At this moment," he said, "when around this hall, excited by cries of passionate hatred, poor people demand that I be sentenced to prison and hard labor; at this moment when the leaders are trying to dissuade the people from that ideal of peace that my friends and I have tried to create in this country; at this moment

when an attempt is being made to take away from us the best of the French Proletariat, nothing must make us deviate from what we consider not only the good of the Labor Party, but of all French people. . . .

"Those problems brought out by the rights of the workers are as prevalent in France as in other countries. They will cause terrible convulsions except in a country which recognizes that they are coming and which is not afraid of progress, which will quietly solve those problems one by one in a sane way, in the calm and dignity of peace. That country—what a beautiful place it could be—I would like it to be mine. I would like it to be the French Republic which radiated and shone after giving liberty to the individual, which will again impress the entire universe by liberating the workers and proclaiming liberty and justice."

Three weeks later the general elections took place. Briand had a terrible fight in his district. The Socialist extremists fought him ferociously. He was often menaced and in danger; revolvers were shot off in meetings; but, undaunted, he continued to attend these meetings, even when friends pleaded with him not to expose himself. In spite of all these obstacles, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies by a majority of ten thousand votes over the five thousand given to all his adversaries together. After that election a Cabinet

was appointed, headed by M. Ribot. This Cabinet holds a record for the shortest existence in the history of France. It lasted just twenty-four hours.

It was then Rene Viviani was called to power in the first days of June, 1914.

CHAPTER XVII

The Agony of Peace

Rumblings of War—Death of Jaures—European Conflagration

PARIS was brighter than ever in early June, 1914. Naturally, there were the people who worried about business, trade, personal troubles, and there were the usual complaints about the government which is always held responsible for anything going wrong. But there was no anxiety whatsoever about the impending tragedy. Now and then among the everlasting political discussions that delight the French, arguments would take place about the three-year service law which was now in force. Only occasionally a passing allusion would be made to the menace that was growing in the formidable armament that was taking place in Germany. . . . The war budget had been voted unanimously by all parties including the Socialists. . . . Twice war had seemed inevitable and twice it had passed like a storm that darkens the sky but does not burst. The French were accustomed to the sound of the rumble of German thunder far away in the east.

As for Briand, he was gloomy and morose in those

days. In his conversation, generally sparkling and witty, he harped continually on the subjects of military service and German armaments. It seemed an obsession with him. People thought he was trying to justify the three-year military law.

War is inconceivable to those who had known only peace. True, elderly people often spoke of the days of 1870. They had lived through the hours when France was invaded and Paris besieged, but all of that to the younger generation, though intensely patriotic, meant nothing more than a few pages at the end of a history text book.

* * * * *

On Sunday, the 28th of June, 1914, a brilliantly sunny day, all of Paris seemed to have turned out at Longchamps for the great horse race that takes place each year at the end of the season. The brightly colored dresses of the women looked like flower beds on the green lawns surrounding the race track.

A crowd of officials were gathered in the tribune which bloomed with floral decorations. The President of the Republic and Madame Poincaré were in the midst of the crowd. I happened to be there with my father, a member of Viviani's Cabinet. The atmosphere buzzed with gayety and informal chatter. Celebrities

and diplomats came in and out of the tribune, bowing to the Chief of State, exchanging a few words with the important men present. Now and then some prominent man would escape from the official tribune to greet a pretty woman whom he had discovered in the passing crowd, another would creep away secretly to place his bet.

I was talking with the late Ambassador Myron T. Herrick, who was shortly to become one of the most popular figures in France. We were discussing casually the last race, the entries and their chances. Beside us sat the Ambassador from Austria.

Suddenly there was a bustle of excitement among the people crowded at the back of the tribune. A man looking rather distraught and agitated pushed his way through the crowd and came up to the Austrian Ambassador. He bent over the back of the diplomat's chair and spoke to him in a low voice. Startled, the Ambassador turned to President Poincaré, with whom he exchanged a few words. Instantly, the heads of all the officials present came together and an undercurrent of murmuring was started. . . .

A few seconds later Myron Herrick turned to me. I was struck by the emotion in his face as he said, "The Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria has been murdered at Sarajevo." He told me briefly the few details that had just been told to him. An awful silence seemed

suddenly to have descended upon the tribune. The Ambassador from Austria walked out. Ambassador Herrick who had remained absorbed in his thoughts murmured, "This is indeed grave." The atmosphere of tenseness and uneasiness remained.

* * * * *

It was really on that sunny day that the first warning came like a clap of thunder preceding the tempest that was about to burst forth.

In the evening all conversations in political circles were about the pro-German and pro-Slav interests in Central Europe. Too often certain of the big powers of Europe had attempted to further their own interests by inciting the Balkan people to fight each other, and certainly the Balkans have never been loath to fight.

But still all this did not raise real emotion among the people. To Parisians, the Balkans seemed very far away. Only those who were aware of the possible diplomatic complications began to feel really anxious.

A month later Austria declared war on Serbia. But still there were many who did not realize the danger. Among the members of the government, anxiety had been growing for days. The idea of mobilization had become a reality. Briand, who at that time, was not a member of the Cabinet, passed hours in the office of

Viviani, reading the latest cables, following with careful attention the terrible course of events. Unanimously the Cabinet was animated by the same idea—to attempt every means of preventing once more the awful catastrophe. But this time no will had the power to alter the course of events directed by an implacable volition.

However, hope remained. To the last moment nobody would believe that a European conflict could come true; that any civilized nation could think of destroying another. All eyes were turned to England . . . waiting for a decision. At the end of each day officials would be asked eagerly about the British Government. What were the last words of Lord Grey? What does England say?

Day by day, the reality of war became more imminent. Each report fell on the French like a blow, leaving us breathless. One country after another was aroused to fight.

* * * * *

And then in the stupor of the horrifying reality came the final acts of etiquette, when the German Ambassador, recalled by his government appeared for his last visit to the Premier. Briand, walking toward Viviani's office, passed the departing Ambassador.

When the worst comes, Paris is always sublime. Day and night in the streets, the songs of the men leaving the next day could be heard. The stations were crowded, the trains which were to take the boys to join their regiments were decorated with flowers. Every woman tried to smile. . . . Skirmishes were already taking place along the front, though the French had withdrawn their troops a few miles back from the frontier to prevent any unexpected friction between French and German soldiers.

Men of all ages, all classes, all opinions, all religions, had but one thought—"They shall not pass."

Briand had prophesied well when he said in 1912, "All the French are united when it comes to a question of defending their country. If, unfortunately, events necessitated that the French people fight for their soil, they would forget their discords, stand together without exception like brothers—"

Unfortunately, politics were to add another dramatic touch to the tragic hours. A terrible piece of news was broken to us on the eve of the declaration of war. Jaures had been murdered by a half-witted man as he was dining in a small restaurant. The reason given for his assassination by the instigators of the crime was that the dangerous influence of an internationalist like Jaures was a menace in mobilization days. This aroused the indignation of men of all parties who had been

Jaures' friends. My father had often spoken with him of the German menace in the days when he used to pass part of the summer with us in the Vosges, from the summit of which can be seen that part of Alsace that had been seized by Germany in 1871. Jaures would have given his life willingly for the sake of his country. It never occurred to him that an internationalist's point of view, attempting to prevent wars, would interfere with the defense of one's country, should a war break out. In fact, his son who had been brought up to follow his father's ideas was killed in the defense of his country. To the men who had known and appreciated Jaures, who realized how much help he could have been because of his influence on the populace, his death appeared as a disaster.

Though the circumstances were distinctly unfavorable to any kind of ceremony, all the people of Paris seemed to have turned out for the funeral of Jaures. When the coffin left the little house where he had lived with his wife and children, there passed once more the tremendous crowd of workers dressed in their best costumes, but with stern and resolute faces, that army of workers who knew that the next day they would all be soldiers.

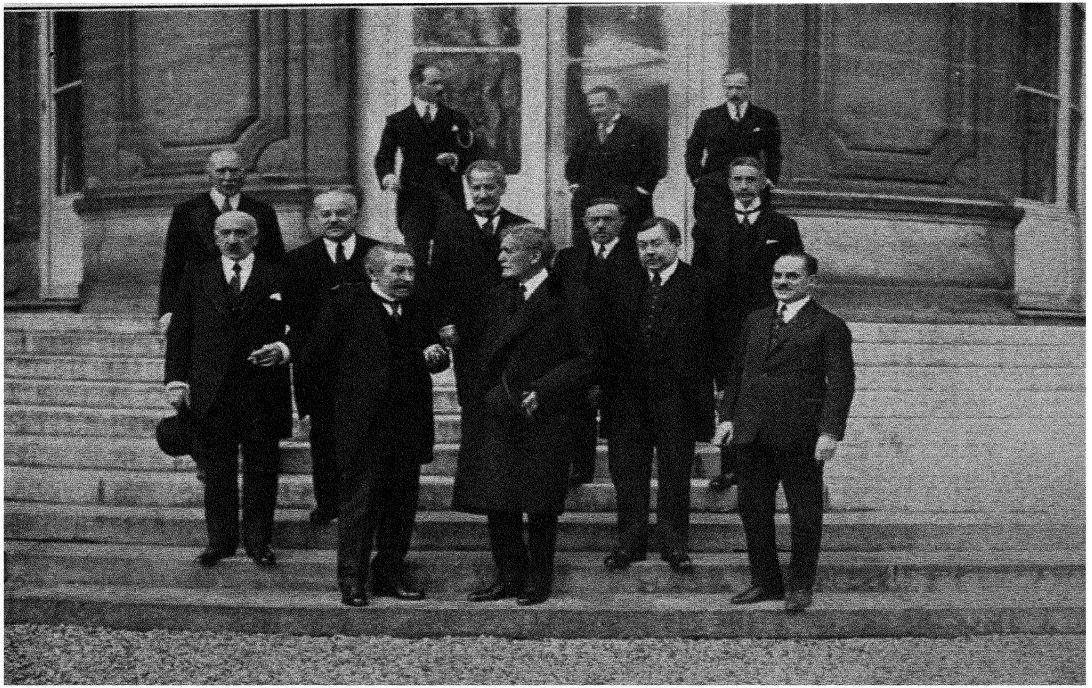
Briand was terribly shocked by the murder of Jaures, his old companion in the days of the Dreyfus affair, when both had propagandized for Socialist ideas. He

was sad, indeed, as old memories came trooping through his mind of little things that had happened on the road when they were traveling together, lecturing all over France in the days when they were dreaming of giving more happiness and bringing more comfort into the lives of the workers who were now marching along to war.

* * * * *

That same afternoon in Parliament, Viviani delivered the address in which the declaration of war was announced. Every place in the Chamber of Deputies, including the galleries was occupied but one. In the section at the left where the Socialists sat, silent for once, there was a conspicuous vacancy—the seat that had been Jaures'.

When Viviani appeared at the tribune, pale with emotion, Parliament arose, as one man. His eloquent inflamed words raised enthusiasm to a feverish pitch. Indeed, there was really a sacred union. All French hearts beat as one. Patriotism and exaltation were the mood at the moment, but some of us could not help thinking of the reality of the thousands of grave-faced workers who had walked silently in that last procession of peace.



Times Wide World Photo

Premier Briand and Ambassador Herrick, with members of the government, on the anniversary of the signing of the first treaty between France and the United States. In the group are Paul Painleve and Philippe Berthelot.

A very few days later a new Cabinet was to be formed. Viviani remained Premier, but men, representatives of all opinions, including labor, came to share the responsibility of power. Among them were Jules Guesdes, the old revolutionist, Marcel Sembat, Ribot, Doumergue, Thomson, my father, and others. Briand, as Vice-President and Minister of Justice joined this Cabinet of National Defense. Only one powerful figure was absent. In vain Clemenceau was solicited by Viviani to coöperate in the work of the War Cabinet. In vain his friends begged him to join their efforts. He refused obstinately and would not hear any of the arguments. He was enraged at the turn that events were taking, enraged at the leaders. He remained, as always, a man of opposition. As for Briand, his chief concern was to coöperate in work that had to be done so quickly to prepare for the defense. It mattered not to him whether he was Minister of Justice or just a deputy; there was work to be done and he could do it. In the councils that followed, he worked incessantly, suggesting ideas, working out plans, taking a leading rôle in the work of organization. His growing influence was to bring him shortly to take very important steps and to assume grave and unexpected responsibilities.

CHAPTER XVIII

1914

Battle of the Marne—Departure for Bordeaux

A VERY few days later the German army was on the verge of reaching the gates of Paris. The Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre, declared that the continuance of governmental action had to be insured whatever happened. For that reason, the Cabinet and the entire administration centered in the capital had to be transferred to some spot out of the war zone. Bordeaux was chosen. This evacuation of the tremendous machinery that composed the whole of the government organization had to take place immediately. Regardless of any complications, the country had to be governed steadily.

For days the news had been growing worse and worse. The only great encouragement had been England's decision to enter the war. Though stories of fights between England and France fill historical books, there is not one ugly page to be found in the everlasting battles that aroused English and French against each other. Between England and France war had been a succession of matches in many rounds car-

ried on in a spirit of gallantry and sport. Friendship can exist between such adversaries and, to the French, England's decision meant final victory. However, everyone was aware that it would take months for the British to organize an army, and the Germans were menacing Paris more ominously every day. France had to face alone the problems of defending her life, and also had to take great care to spare her forces so that they would last long enough to allow the British armies, scattered in all corners of her tremendous Empire, to be centralized in England and trained.

All those circumstances had brought the staff in command to decide that they would defend their ground in lines that pass south of Paris. They planned to take the German army as far as possible from its original base and, by so doing, to weaken its lines. According to that plan, Paris, like Brussels, would have been an open city. . . .

To the members of the Cabinet, leaders of all political parties who had joined in a spirit of sacred union at the crucial hour with the one thought of helping national defense, the idea of abandoning Paris was unbearable. The thought of opening the doors of the city to the enemies was considered by them as downright sacrilege. Paris meant too much to the world.

A heated discussion took place. Some members of

the Cabinet expressed the opinion that, in war time, responsibility should be left entirely to the general in command. But others, revolted at the thought of giving up Paris without even an attempt to stop the Germans, protested and refused to obey.

Briand was at the head of that faction. He thought, as did a few others, that the government's place was in Paris—whatever happened. To give up the city without putting up a fight appeared disastrous to Briand. Was the military staff the only power that could decide such a question? Wasn't there a governmental point of view? Of course, he was in favor of leaving to General Joffre all responsibility in strategic matters, but Paris could not be considered only as a strategic point. It was much more than that. The question had to be decided on higher lines.

Gustave Le Bon, who has written such interesting works about the psychology of crowds, clearly explained what the situation was at that time. "The Battle of the Marne saved us," he said, "but, in order to win it, one had first to consent to fight it. And it very nearly was not fought." After transmitting to the members of the Cabinet the decision of General Joffre to retreat on lines south of Paris, the Minister of War, M. Millerand said to his colleagues that he had decided not to interfere with military strategy. A discussion followed in which, backed by President Poincaré,

Viviani, Ribot and Thomson, Briand persuaded the council to pass an order to Joffre to stop the retreat, to defend the ground, and to start the battle before the Germans reached the doors of Paris.

"Only under these conditions would the Cabinet leave for Bordeaux, according to the desire of Headquarters of the general staff."

* * * * *

Paris did not fully realize the drama. The people were not aware of the imminence of danger. The daily official military communiques were extremely vague. They always indicated reassuringly that the French retreating army was intact. No indication of the real position was given. The public did not know how close to Paris the head of the German army had already reached. To the very few who knew the truth, who were in a position to imagine what the spirit of those Parisians would be when they awoke and found the Germans at their very doors, that ignorance in which the mass was kept appeared terrible. Certainly the army was intact. But how would they stand against the powerful, well-trained, thoroughly armed and equipped German army? And if victory was not to come, if we had again to face momentary defeat, what would then become of Paris?

Now destiny had to take its course. Orders had been given and had been understood. General Joffre, as were all the chiefs and soldiers, was in that frame of mind in which miracles are created. And then to satisfy the general in command, the government was to leave for Bordeaux. The people of Paris did not know of this departure from the capitol. No one outside of the narrow political circles knew that a train carrying the chief of state and the Cabinet was to leave the city that night.

I had to see Briand at the end of that afternoon, the last that the Cabinet spent in Paris. I went to see him at the Minister of Justice's office on the Place Vendome. Even at such a time, Briand is ready to help unfortunates. Much had to be accomplished that day but nevertheless he found time to give his attention to a few individual needy cases which I brought to his attention. One was always sure to find him ready when kindness was required.

Paris was a desert. All the taxicabs were requisitioned for military transportation. The official buildings were empty. The personnel with its records had already started for Bordeaux. When I came into the building of the Minister of Justice, generally crowded with people, the place was practically empty. I went through the vast, high-ceilinged rooms, and nobody was in sight. Not a sound could be heard. At last I entered the big

office where Briand was seated, alone. The large French windows of the old building were opened on the little garden, sheltered by high trees. Briand looked tired. His face was sad but his eyes were full of hope when he spoke of the latest news from headquarters.

He hated to leave Paris at that moment and had begged the government to leave at least a delegation, including himself, in Paris. This had been refused. The whole Cabinet had to act as one man.

Briand could speak of nothing but the attack on the German army, which was to take place within forty-eight hours. He had gone the day before, with a few colleagues, among them my father, to have a long conversation with General Gallieni, head of the military organization of Paris, who was to play such an important rôle in the coming battle. He had been very much impressed and relieved by that exchange of ideas with the General, who was all in favor of defending Paris and was full of confidence, not only in the French army but in the actual circumstances. A new army had been secretly formed within the last three days. It had been recruited from the remains of the regiments of General Debner, brought back from Charleroi, the new divisions which had just arrived from Algeria, and all forces that could be found. This army, ignored by the Germans, kept in reserve under the orders of General Maunoury, was to be one of the principal assets in the

days of the famous battle of the Marne, one of the factors which was to bring about the rout of the German army. All this secret preparation, augmented Briand's confidence . . . he believed utterly in the soldiers, in the chiefs, in the steadiness and clear vision of General Joffre. Even that day he remained obstinately optimistic, full of faith in the outcome of justice in that cause.

Suddenly, as we were talking, firing was started on all sides of the garden. Close to the windows and in that far distance we could hear the noise of the guns. High in the peaceful blue skies could be heard the throb of the German airplanes, insolently flying over Paris in the glorious sunshine. The defense of the city was not yet really insured and, childishly in those first days of the war, the people would take whatever weapons they could find and shoot at the airplanes from the roofs on all sides of Paris.

Briand shook his head and could not help laughing. "Yesterday," he said, "I asked one of my men called Jean, who was gravely carrying a weapon, whether he actually thought he would reach the German airplanes with such a fire-piece, originally meant to kill larks, and which had a range of about forty yards. Jean, looking at me with contempt, answered boldly, 'I may not reach the Germans, but never mind, it scares them just the same.' "

Of course the danger was really to the people in the streets who were exposed to unexpected injury.

* * * * *

I was to meet Briand again the same night in rather tragic circumstances. He was walking back and forth on the platform of the railway station, beside the special train that was to take President Poincaré and the Cabinet members to Bordeaux. What a night! There were no lights in Paris. No evening paper made any allusion to the departure for Bordeaux of the President and Cabinet members. No one was aware of what was taking place. The little station near the Bois de Boulogne was wrapped in darkness. Like shadows cast by the train, all the political men, famous, well known figures—Poincaré, Millerand, Briand, Viviani, other members of the Cabinet—appeared and disappeared. Not one word was spoken; it was a kind of dreary, tragic cinema—those official faces, so familiar as they appeared for a second while passing some small ray of light, like a procession on a screen before they vanished into the dark.

Briand, in keeping with his nature, stopped at my side to tell me that he had given orders for the care of the people I had called to his attention that afternoon.

There were no farewells. No faces appeared at the

darkened windows of the train as it pulled slowly out of the station. Not a word was exchanged among the few people left on the platform, their eyes focused on the tail light of that departing train, slipping away like a shooting star, before disappearing in the night.

* * * * *

Briand was not to remain long in Bordeaux. As soon as the news of the first victorious results were sent to the government, he asked to be allowed to return to Paris. As a delegate of the Cabinet, he went straight to the battle front. He arrived in the midst of the Battle of the Marne. The picture he carried away of the battlefield he was never to forget. The horror of it was to anchor in him forever the hatred of war. When he came back to Bordeaux a few days later, he could speak of nothing else but of the abnegation of all those men who individually had given up their lives to save Paris.

"That," he would repeat, "is the real miracle of the Marne." His admiration for the unknown French masses, in whom he had always believed, was unbounded.

* * * * *

Though the victory of the Marne had created a

new spirit, life in Bordeaux was hard for those men who carried the responsibility. They had to create behind the battle front factories, industries, transportation, a huge organization big enough to supply an army, growing every day; to provide it as well with food and clothes, ammunition and arms, equal to the enemy's equipment.

Problems had to be solved daily as they developed. The necessity of living in a crowded town, to improvise homes as well as offices for the members of the Cabinet, had brought political men closer together, created a kind of family life among those who were more or less refugees. Daily, men like Briand, Viviani, and my father would take their meals together, planning and arguing about business. Each day brought a new plan that had to be realized. Briand, the man of emergency, was among the most eager to coöperate, to enlarge the effort for the future as well as bring immediate necessary results.

Viviani, then Premier, often used to join our little group. Very patriotic, he was of an intensely nervous temperament and easily went to extremes, showing his anxiety plainly, though he kept up the spirits of the nation with his flaming speeches. All problems in those days seemed to oppose one another. The two big questions that dominated the whole situation were the necessity of sending as many men as possible in the

shortest time to strengthen the lines of trenches that stopped the German advance, and the necessity, at the same time, of re-opening factories and creating new industries to take the place of all the northern factories that were in the hands of the Germans. This, of course, meant more men.

Viviani in those intimate conversations would show his genuine state of mind. Brusquely he would speak of the superiority of German armament. Implacably, he harped on the length of time it would take before we could bring in line the necessary guns. As for Briand, with his customary desire for speedy action, he was interested only in what could be accomplished on the spot. He became so interested in the war problems that he substituted for Millerand each time, as Minister of War, Millerand had to go to the front. In daily contact with a military staff at the War Office, Briand became more and more familiar with the questions of strategy and problems brought by the state of war.

He would question the officers, trying to get personal knowledge of the questions that had to be solved. It was then that he got the idea to send to the army all the guns that had been intended for battleships and which were still in the factories, as well as all other arms scattered about the country in forts and navy depots.

At each time a new field was opened to his imagina-

tion, Briand could think of nothing else. He held everlasting conversations with the officers of the staff. He remained bent over the maps, studying them intently, as if in search of new possibilities.

It was at that time, very shortly after the Battle of the Marne, that I heard him for the first time discuss with my father the creation of the new front—what was to be called the Oriental Front. His idea was to attack helpless Vienna and to tear Austria from Germany. The Austrian army then occupied two widely separated frontiers, one facing Russia and Galicia, the other in Trentino, for the purpose of warding off a possible attack from Italy, which had not yet entered the war. The way from Belgrade to Vienna was clear. Why not try a division in that part of the world? Why not a siege on Germany, obliging her to divide her forces?

It was Briand's far-sightedness and imaginative conception of war that prompted this plan, but it met with extreme opposition from the general staff, who were concerned with the menace of the line near home and could see no immediate reason for weakening their efforts to protect France by sending troops and ammunition to a remote part of Europe. Nobody believed that the war could last as long as it really did. Everybody expected that it might take a year or a year and a half, but surely a second victory in the north of France would end it all.

CHAPTER XIX

Premier in War Time

United Front—Verdun

ON a beautiful Autumn day in October, 1915, at the time when Viviani's Cabinet was approaching its last days, Marcel Sembat, Minister of Public Works, and his wife, asked a few friends to spend a Sunday with them at their home in Bonnière, in the valley of the Seine. There were just three of us, Briand, Henri Turot and myself. Marcel Sembat had shared the struggles of politics with Briand. Turot, an old friend of both, was a newspaperman of great talent.

We all knew that Viviani was ready to resign as Premier; that Briand was on the verge of coming back to power. The premiership was a grave responsibility at that hour of the war when the Germans were attacking furiously on the Eastern front. The tremendous effort of creating armies in England as well as in France had been realized. Factories had been established and enlarged. This accomplished, new ways had to be discovered to strengthen the position of the Allies, for it had begun to look as though the war would last forever.

Away from his office and relaxing with good friends, Briand is usually an entertaining companion who jests wittily about current events and recounts many humorous stories. On this day, however, he was silent and absorbed.

After lunch, as we were wandering in the hills, splattered with the first touches of gold of the coming Autumn, he walked slightly apart from us, with a troubled look in his eyes. We had, as if by mutual agreement, avoided all discussion of the war. To us it was an obsession. As if Briand's silence was contagious, we were just walking about making banal remarks about the peacefulness of the landscape when our promenade brought us to a high cliff which inclined over a railroad track coming out of a tunnel. We all leaned over and followed with our eyes a train passing far below. "You know," said Turot, "that the owners of this place in 1914 were suspected of being German spies who had bought this piece of land with the intention of blowing up this tunnel. Their neighbors were so unpleasant about it that they were forced to sell it and move away."

These words started Briand on a train of thought that brought him back to the first days of 1914, when anybody in touch with any German business was looked upon with suspicion. This evoked memories of the anxiety of the first days of the war in which we had

all shared and the turn in events brought by the victory of the Marne.

Briand continued, as if addressing an invisible audience, to outline all the work that had been accomplished in the year. What a tremendous effort it had been! "Of course, there have been many mistakes made since the beginning," he said, referring to the attacks made against the Cabinet which was now drawing to a close, "but how could they have been avoided and why do people always want to make a man responsible for events over which he has no control?" He spoke heatedly of those who in time of difficulty and disappointment choose to shift responsibility and referred to the campaign that was then being waged against General Joffre. There were many who, thinking they knew all about war and growing from day to day more impatient, wanted Joffre replaced by what they termed a better tactician. Briand knew what had been the real rôle Joffre had played in the victory of the Marne and he could not bear the unfairness of these critics. "I knew Joffre well," he said. "He was the best man for the job at that time . . . the one man to resist the terrible upheavals breaking around. We needed a solid, placid, dependable man like him at that post; he stood up before those attacks like a rock which is beaten and battered by the waves, but which reappears each time unmoved and as solid as before. He

reorganized the armies and replaced incompetent generals. He did not attempt to burst through the armies against which our regiments would have been smashed as against a stone wall, but kept persistently gnawing at the enemy's line . . . alas! that will take a long time. . . ."

After a short silence Briand continued, "When the Germans suddenly threw themselves on France, what else could we do but defend ourselves? Why should we have accepted the domination of German ideas? Because they had more guns or an army trained to conquer? No!" Again he was silent, and then as if suddenly finding a solution: "The great thing to do would be to create a new Europe where such aggressions would be impossible. In the first days of this war, all nations had been in accord and had seen clearly what Germany was up to, some action might then have been taken to stop her."

"Nations will never be in such complete accord," said a voice among us, like an echo of old European conventions.

"Why?" asked Briand. "The important thing would be to create a meeting ground for nations . . . a defense against brutal attacks. . . . A nation has as much right to live as an individual," and as if outlining a plan not yet entirely formulated in his mind, Briand began to speak of a new world where such catastrophes

could not take place. . . . A permanent organization, overpowering nations. . . .

During the first days of the Marne and in the time that followed, I had often heard Briand deplore the vicarious relationships between nations, heard him say how urgent it was to build a new system for Europe. But this was the first time I heard him make any direct allusion to the realization of such a plan, the first time I became aware that he was secretly planning, in his mind, a new system of relationships between nations.

In those hectic days when everyone was absorbed in the immediate defense of the country, he was advancing one step farther, already reaching out toward an international European point of view. We all listened, engrossed. This was no cheap pacifism, no dreaming of a better and finer humanity where people will not fight because they love their neighbors; but a practical, common-sense organization to prevent war, which would protect humanity against its own impulses and, above all, make it impossible for chiefs of state to destroy human lives in order to carry out their own personal ambitions.

As Briand talked, the lines of the edifice he was building up in his mind began to take form for us . . . some of them hardly perceptible, vague, as though seen through a fog . . . others neat, solid, clear. He touched, in passing, on certain plans which were al-

ready practically developed in his mind . . . a kind of high tribunal where international conflicts could be adjusted . . . a pact which would bring all European countries together to prevent any nation from imposing itself forcibly on another and to insure the recognition by all European countries of the rights of any one nation.

"But such a peace has to be prepared," he said. "It should be planned long beforehand," and he added in a discouraged tone, "don't they realize what it cost us not to be ready for war in 1914? Shall we allow ourselves to be caught by the propositions of peace just as we were by the declaration of war?"

This was an allusion to Clemenceau's daily attacks in his newspaper. To Clemenceau anyone who refused to think of anything but the French victory and to whom anybody who made any reference to future peace immediately became a suspect.

A few days after this conversation in Bonnière, Briand was once more appointed Premier. His first gesture was to turn to Viviani whom he was succeeding and ask him to remain by his side as Vice-President of the Cabinet, insuring a continuation of the work they had done in common since 1914.

That Cabinet, which was called The Cabinet of the Sacred Union, included Gallieni, to whom Briand had remained attached since the early days of the war when

Gallieni had backed him in his stand for the battle at the gates of Paris. Gallieni was made head of the War Office. Briand called to his Cabinet all of the men who had been Premiers in preceding years, making it the strongest group that had ever governed France. It included such men as Doumergue and Painleve, Meline, Denis Cochin, Leon Bourgeois, the great pacifist, and others.

In delivering his opening address, Briand said, "The hour for action has struck. Men have come from all parties, forgetting all political differences, and having, as their only preoccupation, the question of national defense and, as their only aim, final victory. Never has France been more worthy to be victorious. Chiefs and soldiers are united in mutual trust. They rival each other in bravery in the trenches and in the battlefields, showing the best qualities of our race. They will fight until they have reached the goal that must be accomplished, full of confidence in their final success. Our enemies must not expect from us either lassitude or discouragement. We have the firm will to vanquish them and we will."

And proceeding to the motif of his speech, he pronounced the words, "Peace through Victory."

Peace! For the first time the word was spoken at the tribune. Briand was not afraid of it.

"Would France be satisfied with a selfish peace?

"No. In this war it is our honor that France is the champion of the world. Sword in hand, she is fighting for the independence of all people. When she will lower her sword, it will mean that all ideas of tyrannical domination will have disappeared, that the idea of progress and the right to autonomy of all countries will have been preserved for the whole world. It is for such a peace that French soldiers are dying."

Even in the first days of the war, he felt that the real peace to be signed should be the one on which could be based the rebuilding of a new Europe, a Europe where an international organization would have the power to act immediately in case of emergency as a tribunal strong enough to settle any conflict without resorting to the brutality of war. Victory to him was no settlement. The real victory would be the creation of new international relations, where European interests could be really protected.

Of course, such an organization did not appear immediately concrete in his mind. The anxiety of the first days of 1914, when no power could stop either the occupation of Belgium or the invasion of France, the impossibility of calling for justice, was to give birth to the plans that were after the war to make Briand the champion of peace.

Faithful to his motto, "Peace through Victory," Briand devoted all his activities to the preparation for that victory. However great his desire for peace, he nevertheless gave himself to the immediate needs of the war, and even on these lines, he adhered to his principle. He not only tried to get the maximum effort out of France, but augmented this effort in that he brought about an active coöperation between the French and English staffs for the first time, which had, until that day, acted independently of each other, like two separate armies.

A month after Briand arrived in power, the English and French generals in command of the armies met for the first time in a war council in Paris. This was one of the first results obtained by Briand in his effort to unite the French and British, whether in war or in peace. But it was only the first step.

On the sixth of December, 1915, an international war council took place in Paris that brought together representatives of all the allies then in the war, enabling them for the first time to discuss their problems in common and to draw up plans for continuing the war coöperatively, each with a full knowledge of what the other allies were doing on all fronts. This was the beginning of a work of coöperation that was to be followed in war as well as in peace.

The first signs of peace appeared long before the war

came to an end. But Briand, no more than Clemenceau, wanted no precipitated, hurried peace. To him peace could not be discussed before the Germans had realized they were defeated. The spirit of war had to be killed. Too many had died hoping that they had sacrificed themselves for a future in which such things would not be possible.

Briand's idea was not to prolong the war any longer than was absolutely necessary. But to him, peace had to be genuine; not just an easy way out of the war, allowing any nation to get out by a subterfuge. In September, 1915, German dispatches made some allusions to possible propositions of peace. The terms were very vague, tentative suggestions as if to get the reactions of the allied nations. Without waiting for any further official proposition, Briand brought up the question in Parliament and once more spoke of the responsibility of the war.

"It is constantly the same words that come back on German lips: 'We have been attacked; we are only defending ourselves.' To this," said Briand, "I will answer for the hundredth time . . . whatever you say, the facts are there, screaming out that the blood is on their hands and not on ours. The conditions under which propositions of peace are made force me to denounce them as a maneuver meant to disassociate the

Allies, mislead and weaken the morale of the troops by giving them hopes that cannot be realized."

At the tribune of the Senate, he took the same attitude. "It is just a trick," he declared . . . "a maneuver . . . those propositions may be a proof of the enemies' fatigue but also they are essentially a ruse."

This first sign of peace manifested itself at about the time when the nations at war received the famous memorandum from President Wilson in which he asked what were the aims of the war of each country. Briand was the first to make reply to the United States officially. The essential basis of the future peace treaty was formulated by Briand when he answered Wilson: Reparations, restitutions and guarantees. . . . The principle of each nationality was to be recognized and the populations that were under the domain of other nations were to be liberated.

This was the first step taken on the road toward peace.

CHAPTER XX

The Oriental Front

Saloniki—Dramatic Meeting at Calais

FROM the very beginning of the war, right after the battle of the Marne, Briand had begun to realize that strengthening the eastern front, though most necessary for the protection of France, might not have the decisive effect upon the end of the war that certain people expected it to have.

In his conversations with officers around him in the days when he substituted as Minister of War for Millerand, he often argued about that fact, pointing out that something else should be attempted in some other place to weaken the position of the Germans. I remember his conversation in Bordeaux with my father, who was a great partisan of the idea of using our freedom in the Mediterranean Sea to send an army to join Serbia and create a diversion of Germany's forces on other lines.

But Briand was to meet opposition on all sides when he proposed this idea. The General Staff concentrated all its efforts on the immediate problems of raising troops, manufacturing ammunition, and would not

even listen to such a plan. Briand became obsessed with the plan. He was certain that it was wise and feasible. His friends used to laugh at his strategic plans. He would study maps and atlases, explaining about the open road that would allow the French armies to join Serbia.

At the beginning of the war, in 1914, the activities of the Austrians against the Serbs were very limited. It was only in November that they really attacked the Serbian army, which counter-attacked with such success that the Austrians were forced to abandon Belgrade on the 10th of December, routed by the victorious Serbians. At that moment the military forces of the Austrians were divided into camps, one against the Russians in Galicia and the other in Trentino, awaiting a possible attack by the Italians. From Belgrade to Vienna the way was free. Any army could go from Saloniki on the Mediterranean straight through to unprotected Vienna. Such a campaign was not possible with only the limited forces of the Serbs, but if they were augmented by the British and the French in sufficient numbers, it appeared as a very favorable plan to Briand.

He explained this idea to the Council of Ministers that met in January, 1915. Briand was then Minister of Justice, and he proposed that in collaboration with the British a strong expedition be organized and sent

to a port either on the Mediterranean or the Adriatic to join and reinforce the Serbian army. This was the origin of the creation of the Oriental Front.

The idea was not accepted then; the General Staff would not consider it. It was only when Bulgaria, having declared war on Serbia, and the Serbians had been defeated by an Austro-Bulgarian-German offensive, that the French and British sent a few divisions to aid the Serbians.

These divisions debarked at Saloniki, but could do nothing more than save the remains of the Serbian army.

Though Briand had been unsuccessful in putting over his plan, when he became Prime Minister in 1915, he decided that the thing to do was to cling to Macedonia, foreseeing in a very clear vision that it was there that the wall which surrounded Germany could be broken.

It is difficult to realize how great were the obstacles that were put in Briand's way when he attempted to develop the Oriental Front.

As so often happened in the early days of the war, the French and the British followed different schemes with the same object in view. The British were in favor of an expedition to the Dardanelles and the French General Staff agreed to the plan. Winston Churchill had been the champion of that idea, which certainly

had many merits, but the eventual failure of which was undoubtedly due to the fact that inadequate preparations had been made for it, either by the French or the British.

When Briand turned to the British with his plan for sending troops to Saloniki he was greeted with as much opposition there as he had met in France, though Lloyd George saw many possibilities in it. Lord Kitchener would not hear of an Oriental Front, perhaps because of what had happened in the Dardanelles.

Clemenceau was among those who opposed the idea most violently. It was a new opportunity for him to attack Briand.

In the Army Senatorial Commission he asked for the immediate evacuation of Saloniki, and after Briand's earnest and impassioned pleas that more men should be sent, Clemenceau said threateningly, "Do you realize that this is a question that might bring you to be judged by the High Court?"

"I accept the risk," answered Briand boldly.

No amount of opposition could force him to change his plans. It is in his nature to stick obstinately to an idea when he has once decided that it is the right thing to do.

There were some among the military chiefs who looked upon Briand's idea with favor, some who saw the possibilities of an attack on the Oriental Front.

General de Castelnau, who was then in Amiens, was one of them. Paul Painleve, the great mathematician who was to become Premier in war time and who was passionately patriotic, told me of an interview he had had with General de Castelnau in which the General had said to him,

"There is an open window in the Oriental Front. Passing through it we could go to Vienna. On the French Front we will never pass."

Another man in favor of the plan, who had already been in accord with Briand on other occasions, chiefly on the necessity of fighting the battle of the Marne, was General Gallieni. He was to help Briand to reinforce the Front at Saloniki, as he was made Minister of War when Briand came back to power. But, alas, General Gallieni was to remain for only a short time in the War Office. A terrible illness interrupted the fine work he was doing; he died shortly afterward.

The day before he left the War Office, as he was sitting poring over his maps, a young staff officer entered the room. He watched Gallieni who was studying a small map of Europe and said to him, "I suppose, General, you can see very big things on that small map."

Gallieni only answered with a tired gesture, then suddenly taking a pencil he pointed to Saloniki and tracing the line of the Vardar he said, "It is there that

in two years the victory will begin—otherwise we will be defeated."

Except for those few individuals, public opinion was against the Oriental Front, but this did not depress Briand, who in his long career had encountered many sudden changes in public opinion. But reports brought back from Athens by Lord Kitchener and a French member of the Cabinet, M. Denis Cochin, who had been sent there on a mission, precipitated Briand's decisive action. Both declared that they had surveyed the situation at Saloniki and had come to the conclusion that immediate withdrawal was necessary. They presented, as a further argument in favor of withdrawal, the offer of the King of Greece to protect the embarkation of the allied troops from the base at Saloniki with his army.

Briand's comment on this was, "When I heard that the King of Greece wanted the French and English troops recalled from Macedonia, I said to myself, 'That man is simply playing the game of his brother-in-law, Kaiser Wilhelm.' "

Briand was now faced with the necessity for immediate decision. While the British held the base, the French army, commanded by General Sarrail, had been fighting. Briand received reports saying that General Sarrail's forces were weakened and partially isolated. He decided then that the troops must be

strengthened immediately. They were fighting bravely but losing strength each day. To do this, however, it was necessary to obtain the coöperation of the British government.

A meeting of representatives of the two countries was called at Calais for the purpose of discussing this and other problems. There were present at the meeting Asquith, Lloyd George, Balfour, Kitchener, Ribot and Briand. Before he went, Briand calculated that it was necessary for the English to send three divisions to Saloniki as their share of the reinforcements.

When he opened the meeting by reading the list of subjects to be discussed he mentioned the matter of the three divisions first. I shall never forget the intensely dramatic tale I was to hear later from Briand's lips.

"As the meeting opened I took up the program and read the first article aloud. 'The necessity of sending new divisions to Saloniki.'

"The words had scarcely left my lips when Asquith arose. I can still see him standing there, his face pale and drawn, as he said, 'After mature deliberation, the government of His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, has decided not only not to send new troops to Saloniki but to recall those that are there now.'

"This was a terrible blow to me, and you can imagine my state of mind at that moment. I did not falter, however, or show by a single movement what an impres-

sion his words had made upon me. I had, as a matter of fact, what I thought was a rather good inspiration. I merely said, 'Let us proceed to the second article.'

"As I looked down at my program I was conscious of a certain agitation. The members of the British Commission looked at one another, astonished. Before I could proceed, Lloyd George arose and said,

" 'Mr. Premier, have you nothing to say to us?'

" 'Well, if you question me,' I replied, 'I will tell you, in the name of the Republican Government, what I have to say. We have organized an expedition in common. You were to hold the base at Saloniki while our troops went forward. Those troops are now isolated—25,000 men who have fought well. My answer to your question is that those troops will now go on fighting unaided to the last man. History will judge which of us is right.'

"There was a buzz of conversation. Balfour said, 'But we cannot end the discussion with those words. We must retire and deliberate again.'

"A recess was called until after lunch. Ribot said to me, 'Everything is ruined.' I replied, 'Wait, nothing is ruined.'

"We met again after lunch and Asquith arose and reported the result of the conference that had taken place during the recess.

" 'Mr. Premier,' he said, 'the Government of His

Majesty the King of Great Britain, as a result of your highly effective pronouncement, has reconsidered its decision and has voted to send to Saloniki the three divisions for which you ask.'

"At this Lord Kitchener jumped from his seat, threw his portfolio on the table and left the room. Asquith turned to me and said, 'Won't you talk to him and try to make him understand?'

"I went out to look for Kitchener and found him on the pier. I tried to talk to him but he rebuffed me. I was insistent.

" 'This is absurd,' I said. 'You can't go off like this in war time.' He began to argue with me and finally I brought him back to the meeting. He picked up his portfolio and said resentfully, pointing at me, 'That long-haired advocate is actually forcing us to lose the war.' Again I replied, 'History will decide who is right.' "

And Briand with a light of triumph in his eyes concluded, "It was at Saloniki that the enemy's front was broken and defeated. Hindenburg, after the battle, wrote to the Kaiser, 'There is only one thing for us to do now and that is to sign a treaty of peace.' "

CHAPTER XXI

In the Days of Verdun

Visit to Italy—U. S. to Join Allies

THREE great accomplishments bear the imprint of Briand's influence during the period in which he was wartime Premier. They are the creation of a united front of the allies, the reinforcement of the troops at Saloniki that created the new Oriental Front and, above all, the organization of the unforgettable defense of Verdun.

The Germans were attacking furiously on the front at Verdun. To the Kaiser, a victory was of extreme necessity. The fight for the ruins of Verdun was symbolic. To certain chiefs of the army who were discussing whether Verdun was or was not a strategic point worth the sacrifices being made for it, Briand answered,

"I don't know the strategic value of Verdun exactly, but I do know that all the French would resent it bitterly if you gave it up now."

To him also, at that period of the war, the victorious resistance by the French troops and the breaking

down of the German menace were of crucial importance.

As the head of the Foreign Office, Briand's accomplishments were of no less importance. His outstanding preoccupation was to augment the power of the Allies by bringing new allies to share the efforts of the soldiers who had been fighting since 1914, as well as to reinforce in all directions the military organization already in existence.

In February, 1916, to bring the Italians around to his point of view, Briand went to Rome, accompanied by Leon Bourgeois. Briand was very popular in Italy. The newspapers from the very beginning had carried articles in favor of his plan in the Balkans.

The *Popolo di Italia* referred to Briand's conception of the war on the Oriental Front as one of genius.

"Autumn 1916 must repair the mistakes of 1915 when, for lack of foresight, reliable information and absence of coöperation between the allies, Mackensen's army was allowed to pass over the body of martyred Serbia, thereby leaving wide open the road between Germany and the Orient. Like all ideas of genius, Briand's plan is most simple. It was merely to cut off communications between Berlin and her Eastern allies, obliging the Germans to send forces to defend themselves on a new front."

Italy was to welcome Briand with the greatest enthusiasm. Referring to that visit Briand says:

"My only idea in those days was to obtain united action on a united front."

This was the theme of all speeches he delivered in Rome.

Briand was altogether successful in his dealings with the Italian government and military leaders and was later on to refer to that coöperation so freely given by Italy with everlasting gratitude.

In a letter published a few years later in *Les Annales* he said:

"It is a great debt that France has contracted with Italy. For me, I will never forget with what a virile heart Italy accepted with no hesitation the conception of a united front, which meant, and they realized it, a great expansion of her field of action and new and grave sacrifices. I cannot think of those hours without feeling again the deep emotion that overwhelmed me when the admirable people of Italy took the resolution to join with us in a new effort to vanquish the enemy. We had a victory in common, but at what a price!"

Another of Briand's accomplishments was the completion of the Latin Alliance against the Central Empire. This included the entrance of Roumania into the war, largely due to Briand's efforts in the Balkans.

Reviewing his achievements in that year and a half, during which he was War Premier, they appear now in their full significance, but at that time a great restlessness possessed France. The Parliament, reflecting this restlessness, soon grew discontented with the direction of affairs and like sick patients who believe that a new doctor will work miracles, they thought that a new Premier might change the course of events.

Just as Viviani before him had felt that he was forced to give up his premiership after having accomplished the heavy task of organizing the French defense, so Briand, too, realized that in spite of his successful and continuous efforts, his power over the Chamber of Deputies was waning.

The period was critical for France because it was the battleground of the world. Once more a victim of the injustice that makes nations hold individual men responsible for events that overpower all human influence, Briand found the majority of the Parliament aroused against him. The Chamber of Deputies itself was in a difficult position, responsible to the nation for the destiny of the country and yet forced to submit to the military command each time a question arose which had any bearing on the war.

Aware of certain mistakes that were inevitable, the Parliament turned against Briand, who found him-

self attacked on all sides. As Premier he was held responsible on questions relating to the high command of the war. Joffre had just been made Marshal; Nivelle had taken his place as the head of the army and was being discussed at great length. The front of Saloniki was harshly criticized. The attitude of Greece was very doubtful and Briand's action in the Orient was said to be responsible for it. The Chamber of Deputies decided to hold closed meetings at which Briand had to explain himself on every point, political, foreign and military. He came out of these trials victorious, but he knew that in war time, more than at any other time, the responsible man at the head of the government must be backed by a very steady and solid majority.

Things might have gone on in this way, had not an unexpected incident occurred that compelled Briand to resign his offices as Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs. General Lyautey, Minister of War, having refused to give the Chamber of Deputies some information that he judged either too technical or too confidential, aroused a sudden tempest in Parliament, and, being himself quick-tempered, resigned his portfolio. Briand tried to replace him immediately, but having received refusals from two or three important political personalities, he decided to resign.

Still he was to have one more great satisfaction before he retired—the assurance that the time had come when the United States would join the Allied cause.

To some French people it seems hardly possible to fix a date when the Americans really came into the war. Since the first days when the catastrophe overwhelmed France, they had been such good friends and had done so much in all directions, that they appeared to the French as Allies since the first hours. The real American spirit had joined the French cause the day that the Lafayette Escadrille, composed of volunteers, flew against Germany right over the French army . . . the day when boys like Norman Prince and Victor Chapman fell on French soil for the defense of French rights.

However, the decision of the United States was breathlessly awaited by all France. To Briand as well as to the whole French nation, the decision of the United States meant victory.

Briand always speaks with great emotion of that day on which he learned that America had taken the resolution to stand by the Allies.

"I remember one evening, very shortly before I left the Foreign Office, being told that Ambassador Sharp of the United States wanted to see me. He came in with his interpreter. He did not speak French. He

looked pale and excited. He started to say a few confused words in English that I did not understand. The interpreter then translated for me what he had to say and started asking me a series of questions.

" 'In the name of my government, I have come to ask you whether you will give me full information about the following facts: When war was declared by France, what were the particular steps taken in each State Department?'

"And he went on asking me about certain precise points that all revolved about the actions that had been taken on the eve of the declaration of war.

"I interrupted him, asking, 'Then it is done—you are joining us?'

"The Ambassador merely nodded his head. His eyes filled with tears and he could hardly answer, 'Yes.'

"I realized at that second what big things had just been accomplished for victory. . . . And that is how I learned that the United States had decided to come into the war."

* * * * *

Feeling no resentment, although his resignation was tendered under pressure, Briand was to come back to his seat as a Deputy. He decided to help what-

ever government would take his place and work for the good of the nation. However bitter he may have felt at being put aside at a moment when he felt that he could do so much for the country, he was to find as a compensation full recognition in the future in military as well as on diplomatic lines. He was to be considered by many as the man who prepared the road to victory.

Referring to that period, General Denvignes was to write:

"The unheard of prestige of M. Briand in foreign countries is not only due to the realization of the pact of Locarno, though his adversaries tried to insinuate that it is. M. Briand will always remain the man of Saloniki—the man of Verdun."

CHAPTER XXII

Peace?

WHATEVER may have been Briand's desire for solitude, however sincere he may have been in his resolution not to interfere with the affairs of those who succeeded him, it was nevertheless his destiny to become the leading man of peace. Everything conspired to direct toward him any person with the authority to discuss any future propositions for a possible peace. His former position in the foreign office and his personal standing with the British as well as with the French governments made him the logical man to act as negotiator between any two powers which did not want to deal openly.

It was inevitable that the day would come when the Germans would attempt to learn what was the real disposition of the French government toward peace. They were too clever not to try to get out of the war by some arrangement before they gave up openly, thus acknowledging their defeat, and the end of the Kaiser's power.

No communications were possible between the French and the Germans except through Switzerland, and it was through that channel that in June, 1917,

the Countess de Merode, a member of an aristocratic family in Belgium, came to Briand to inform him that she had made the journey for the purpose of giving him some information and to bring to him propositions that she considered of great interest.

In the interview that followed, the Countess described what was then the real position of the Germans, whose attitude had changed entirely in those past few months. The Baron von Lancken, a German diplomat in close touch with the Court, had not concealed his anxiety about the future of the war.

"If the Allies were ready to speak of peace," he had said to the Countess, "the Emperor would show himself favorably disposed."

But of course the Kaiser's problem was to act in a way that would not put him in a false position with his country, thereby turning popular feeling against him.

Briand, very reserved, answered that of course he understood the value of the information brought to him, but that this by no means could be considered as a serious proposition and that France, tied by a pact with her allies, could only listen to propositions that would be in accord with the aims of the Allies, as they were outlined in his answer to President Wilson. Any conversation that would not be in accordance with

those agreements would be useless, and consequently harmful.

Having in that way, without closing the door to new parleys, evaded any real answer, Briand immediately consulted with M. Poincaré, President of the Republic, and with M. Ribot, who had taken Briand's place as Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On September 8, 1917, he was to receive another visit from two very important Belgians, the Barons Coppée, father and son, who came to see him and to tell him that the attempt made by the Countess de Merode was a very serious one, that a number of high personalities in Belgium had been able to verify the value of the propositions of the Baron von Lancken. The Baron was not officially empowered, but the Kaiser knew only too well that if such a proposition was a failure, the Pan-Germanists would depose him immediately. It was necessary for the Kaiser to prepare everything underground and to be sure that such a proposition would be considered.

Briand asked for the names of the Belgians who were aware that this conversation was taking place. The Barons Coppée mentioned a great many, among others Cardinal Mercier, whose moral authority was as great in Belgium as in France, also M. de Brocqueville, Premier of Belgium. Two days later Briand and

de Brocqueville were to meet and to agree that the proposition was one that should be listened to.

"I can act as a delegate for Belgium," said de Brocqueville, "and it would be very easy for you and me to examine the situation and to find out what is the real value of the propositions that are being made to us."

The next day Briand again turned to M. Ribot, who proved decidedly hostile to the idea. He refused to face any proposition of that kind. It was then that Briand wrote a letter to Ribot for the purpose of clarifying the situation and declaring his stand.

"Paris, 20 September, 1917.

"M. Ribot, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

"Dear President:

"At the end of the conversation that we had in the Chamber, the Premier, you and I, it was decided that I should give you a note that could be used as a basis of a confidential consultation with our Allies on the action to follow the proposition. I consider it my duty as former Premier and as a Frenchman to bring it to you. The conversation that is requested of us could take place only if the following conditions were accepted:

"First. There cannot be any question as to the solidarity of France and her Allies. Whatever is proposed

to France, she cannot separate her cause from that of the Allies. The pact of September 1914 remains intact.

"Second. Whatever issue the conversation may bring forth, no official negotiation for peace can be faced before all the Allied soil has been evacuated by the armies of the enemy.

"Third. To the French the only basis of a possible peace must be the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine.

"Fourth. The restitution of the goods carried away from evaded countries, and reparations for damages.

"Fifth. The question of guarantees which must be admitted on principle, but the characteristics of which are still to be discussed.

"Sixth. To exclude any possibility of raising the question of the left bank of the Rhine.

"Seventh. Complete peace to be accomplished in economic as well as in political lines, the German people to be permitted to continue their work freely.

"To summarize the different explanations that were given to me, I think that the proposition of peace is being made for the following reasons:

"The leaders in Germany have a great desire for peace. They do not see any possible solution through direct contact with the Governments. Their armies occupy Belgium and a part of our territory. They understand that even the beginning of official negotiations is not acceptable to us as it could, as a result, cause

our soldiers to put down their arms. On the other hand, the German leaders have to deal with public opinion in their own country, particularly with the extremists, the Pan-Germanists. They cannot let the public know the aims of the war, based on the concessions they will have to make, without knowing in advance that those concessions have a chance to be accepted at least in principle, and to be the basis of further negotiations that might bring peace. Their advice is that peace is to be prepared, organized beforehand, through secret conversations. If they have come to me it is because I am out of the Government, because I have been a Premier and it was I who answered the first proposition Germany made, and as I had in those days answered in the name of all the Allies, they supposed that they could not help trusting me now.

"Here is, my dear President, the résumé, as faithfully as I can make it, of the explanation that can be the basis of your consultation.

"I could not let you ignore these suggestions. If I bring them to your knowledge, it is only for the benefit of my own conscience. I will take all the risk for myself if you do not want the French Government to appear. I would be only too happy if it was possible for me to serve the interests of both my country and the Allies, and to advance, even if by one day, the end

of this most terrible drama that we have been living through for more than three years.

"Please accept, my dear President, assurance of my devotion.

". . . Aristide Briand.

"P. S. I must add to my letter that the person who is to explain that Germany is ready to make propositions with a view to bringing about peace must be fully qualified to speak and must be able to give me proof that he is."

This letter was never answered by M. Ribot. . . .

Can these facts be considered as a proposition of peace? No. As a sign that the Germans had come to a point where they were forced to make such propositions to the Allies? Yes.

It was Briand's fate now, because of the way in which he had listened to the first propositions, that any others would come to him. The Austrians, as well as the Germans, felt that their chances of victory were over. They were also to send emissaries to Briand but this was later. It occurred at a time when Briand had no governmental influence, at a time when the affairs of the nation were in the hands of the man who embodied the new spirit of war, the man who allowed nobody to interfere with his authority—the Premier who was to end the war, Georges Clemenceau.



Pacific and Atlantic Photo. Courtesy of The New York Times

The French Apostle of Peace beside an olive tree which was presented to him by the town of Locarno.

PART III

"Just one step toward peace means a great success if one is determined to take another the next day."

ARISTIDE BRIAND

Senate, 1917

CHAPTER XXIII

Briand and Clemenceau

The Spirit of War—The Spirit of Peace

WHEN Clemenceau berated Briand for wanting to send more men to Saloniki and threatened him with the words "Do you realize that this is a question that might bring you to be judged by the High Court?" it was the threat of the man who embodied war to the man who was beginning to symbolize peace.

This antagonism of Clemenceau against Briand was the result of two clashing principles—war and peace. This comparison is by no means meant in criticism of Clemenceau's attitude, nor is it an attempt to diminish his greatness. His rôle at that turn of the war was certainly one of the determining factors of the victory. Regardless of political opinion, it is impossible not to admire the grand figure of the Old Tiger. Clemenceau, who, since the beginning of the war, had always opposed and criticized all governments, was as time was passing growing more and more irritable. When Briand was Premier in 1915, Clemenceau's attacks against him were more violent

than ever. He was hypnotized by the idea that it was a crime against patriotism to pronounce the word of peace as long as France was not victorious. Anybody who made any allusion to future peace, immediately became a suspect to him. Because of this he had even attacked President Wilson in 1915 when he had offered to be an arbitrator in the question of peace. He vehemently reproached the President of the United States with being in too great a hurry to speak of peace when it was impossible to foresee any sign of it.

A few days later he was to retract that opinion; having found out the real intentions of President Wilson, he apologized very courteously. To Briand he was never so kind, even when he agreed on certain decisions. For example, when Briand called for young men to enlist in 1917, he did not even then stop attacking him and always remained hostile. He held Briand responsible for anything that happened and reproached him harshly for what he did as well as for what he did not do.

What really exasperated Clemenceau against Briand, who had nothing to do with it, was the fact that the military censors suppressed some of the articles he published daily in his paper, *l'Homme Libre*. Many times his paper appeared with blank white spaces where his articles were to have appeared. He

claimed he had a right to criticize any human power and in particular any Minister of War or member of the Cabinet. *l'Homme Libre* (*The Free Man*) having been suppressed, he then created *l'Homme Enchainé* (*The Chained Man*), but this did not prevent the censors from continuing to cut his articles in whatever paper he wrote.

Clemenceau then started sending to all the members of Parliament the text of the articles suppressed or mutilated. Certain papers like *le Temps* and *l'Humanité*, asked him to explain why he did not accept in 1914 the invitation to become a member of the Cabinet. This would have allowed him, as a member of the Government, to participate in its affairs. He never answered this, and simply stated that he had already said everything he had to say on that subject.

* * * * *

It was after a Cabinet of short duration, headed by M. Ribot, and a still shorter one headed by Paul Painleve that Clemenceau became Premier and Minister of War in November, 1917.

Clemenceau attained power at exactly the right moment. He was unquestionably the one man capable of arousing the necessary enthusiasm of the peo-

ple, now almost completely exhausted by the long years of fighting. His striking figure was to all the Allies as well as the French, the personification of the spirit of victory. Everything about him contributed toward his great popularity—his biting remarks, so widely repeated, his rough cordiality, which won the hearts of the soldiers, his motto, "I am at War!" which coming, as it did, from a man who had the spirit of youth though he had lived nearly a century, earned him the admiration of the world. His personality and influence at that psychological moment buoyed up the ebbing spirits of those who had to go on fighting. He was indeed a chief.

Had Clemenceau been a milder person, less spectacular in his methods of working, certainly his success would not have been so great, but his position since 1914 that had not permitted him to participate actively in the war, now infused him with a desire for action. He was a dynamic person, overcharged with energy.

Briand, silently working at the formulation of peace, carefully examining any symptoms of the coming end brought to his knowledge, could not have the same popular appeal. Peace has not the glamor of victory. It is not preceded by drums and trumpets, flags waving boldly in the sky. Briand obviously

wanted victory with the same intensity as Clemenceau, but faithful to what had been the bond that brought the Allies to France's side, to kill the spirit of war. His great preoccupation was the creation in the future of a new Europe where such wars would be made impossible. Strangely enough, in those days when so many had died, the spirit of challenge seemed to possess France. Behind the lines Clemenceau had raised the enthusiasm of the country to such a degree that just the desire for peace was considered a sign of weakness.

Disdainful and silent, Briand withdrew to the background and retired to his work of meditating on what he obstinately looked upon as the great work for the future, to win the peace. Briand's temperament never makes of him an open opponent. When political circumstances table his ideas, he just waits for better days to come and goes on working in solitude, planning out the practical realization of what he foresees in the future.

When Briand is asked now whether he believes that the war could have been terminated sooner, he refuses even to discuss the question and answers "Why bring up that question when so many died in the last month of the war? How can one tell what would have happened if events had taken another course?"

But friends who used to meet him in those days remember well with what anxiety he watched events, how helpless he felt not to be able to coöperate, and how he regretted being kept aside when he had since the first days of 1914 taken such an active part, giving his heart and soul to the defense of France and to the strengthening of her relations with other nations. He was bewildered; he was not in accord with the political atmosphere maintained by Clemenceau. For a man accustomed to analyzing any event that turned up and to welcome any propositions brought to him, that feeling that he was just a bystander, not able to back anything in which he believed, was most distressing. It is impossible for anyone but Briand to retrace the details of that epoch of his mind.

Knowing how touchy Clemenceau was on the question of war and peace, how eager he was to keep up the spirits of the people and raise them to the highest pitch of military excitement, Briand did not want in any way to have any personal dealings with any emissaries of the enemy.

However, he could not prevent important personalities who trusted him from bringing to him the propositions of any belligerents that wanted to discuss peace. The Austrian diplomatic records published since the war have made public the propositions

brought to Briand in those days. These parleys impressed Briand because they were in accord with the ideas that had been his since 1914. To him the real plan was always to separate Austria from Germany. Feeling what could be done at that time through diplomatic conversation with that country, Briand deplored more than ever his helplessness. But Clemenceau was not to be approached. He went his own way waiting for a military victory, believing only in a solution by arms.

Strangely enough, Clemenceau was to receive credit for more than one proposition that had been started by Briand. The creation of a united front of the Allied armies was to come to maturity and prove the wisdom of the idea that had brought the Allies to decide that the command should be placed in the hands of one chief. The British at that moment were in favor of the nomination of Marshal Foch. Clemenceau, who had worked with Foch before he had come in power and had backed him ever since he had been a Premier, was, for some reason, not altogether in favor of making him Commander-in-Chief of all the Allied forces.

Speaking of Foch, Briand says "There are some chiefs who benefited by chance. The necessary men were found at the psychological moment. Joffre was certainly the man we needed in the first days of the

war. A man like Foch might have lost too many men that Joffre spared. But he became a commander only at the end of the war, at the moment when the thing to do was to break through the lines that had been weakened by time. We had been strengthened by the arrival of the American army and had new forces. The nomination of Foch was forced on Clemenceau by the British, due to a great extent to the intervention of Sir Douglas Haig."

Another ironic fact is that the victory on the Oriental Front was also to take place under Clemenceau's Premiership. It was in the Orient that the enemy's front was broken for the first time. Of course this created a scene in the Parliament in which Briand was congratulated as the Man of Saloniki. Colleagues gathered around him, comparing his policies to those of Clemenceau.

"Yes," answered Briand generously, "Clemenceau was for a long time hostile to that expedition. He fought against me but when he studied the question carefully he changed his opinion, thereby showing that he was a real statesman."

By another strange twist of destiny that too often occurs when, after the victory and armistice days, the time came to open the peace conference that was held in Paris on the 18th of January, 1919, Briand

was not among the French delegates. Clemenceau, who had not relented in his position, did not invite him to partake in the discussions that were to take place. The conference was opened in the presence of President Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, but there were many who took particular note of the fact that Briand was not there. . . .

In accordance with his principles, Briand did not protest or even seem to take notice of the injustice of this action. When the treaty of Versailles came up for discussion in the Chamber of Deputies, he did not oppose it. . . . He merely said, "The treaty of peace has been elaborated among the greatest difficulties. I have too often suffered myself from unjust criticism to act in that way toward others. I know too well what difficulties have to be met and what concessions have to be made to be astonished when others fail to achieve the maximum."

On only one point Briand allowed himself to criticize. This was the way the Armistice had been signed —to him it was a mistake.

"Germany has been vanquished," he said, "but psychologically that was not made apparent to the people of Germany. Their leaders did not understand anything of the generosity of the Allies. If the coercive measures taken had been strong enough, they

would at least have realized that something had changed since the war of 1871, as a result of the World War. . . .

"Instead they were permitted to come home, their military bands playing victorious marches at the head of their regiments." This was to raise more than one difficulty in the future.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Aftermath of the War

Clemenceau Defeated for Presidency—Disarmament Conference in Washington—Cannes

IN January, 1920, an important event was to take place in French politics. Poincaré had finished his term of seven years as President of the Republic and had decided not to be a candidate for reëlection. He was anxious to retire.

Georges Clemenceau seemed the obvious candidate to succeed him, but there were many who had been deceived by the Treaty of Versailles and the events that followed it. Many felt that after the war a new spirit should come into the country, one that was not obsessed by the spirit of war. Many of those who were opposed to Clemenceau gathered around Paul Deschanel, who was then President of the Chamber of Deputies, and who had many partisans.

Briand was to bring to that faction all the backing of his ability and influence—the influence that had caused Poincaré to say seven years before, "In great part my election was due to M. Briand."

The successful election of Paul Deschanel was to

bring Briand back into the limelight. For three years he had been more or less in retirement.

A very important speech he made in Parliament on the question of French politics in the Orient, and other repeated and successful interventions were once more to make of him the logical candidate for Premier. The new President of the Republic called him in 1921 to head the Cabinet.

Briand in his customary way of speaking ironically about events and about his own situations, laughingly referred to the ups and downs of politics.

"I am among those who are called 'old politicians.' It is customary to call 'young politicians' those who have not yet been in power, even though they may be graybeards of seventy. They are young politicians because they have not been members of any Cabinet, and have a tremendous desire to come to power. I have so often been in power that I am one of those who are considered as a part of the old personnel. However, a day had to come when many of the people thought that an old politician might still render a few little services to his country, and for that reason I suppose the reins of the government have once more been placed in my feeble old hands."

The malicious smile that accompanied those words and the sight of Briand in the full maturity of his power and talent underlined his words amusingly.

In his first address, when Briand reappeared in Parliament after that long eclipse, he boldly gave his opinion of the actual situation.

"We have a peace treaty," he declared, "but we have not the only enduring peace—one based on justice and morality—the only one that can insure the security of France. That peace we will obtain only when Germany will have been disarmed and when she has paid her debt. It is for us a vital question that shows what must be the first duty of the government. Republican France is essentially pacific. It is to the real peace to which she wants to bring Germany. . . ."

The situation in Parliament was to be particularly difficult for Briand. Groups had gathered together in the Chamber of Deputies and had formed a supergroup with nationalistic tendencies that really mastered the situation. It was known as the National Bloc. This was not to make the task of fixing the problem of international relations an easy one.

Many problems had come out of the Treaty of Versailles. Briand immediately realized that the first urgent thing to do was to fix the amount of the German debt. The treaty had specified that a decision had to be made before the first of May. There was no time to lose. A conference took place in Paris in January in which the Allies decided on the conditions of the debt. In the month of February, Briand accom-

panied by Philippe Berthelot, General Secretary of the Foreign Office, went to London, where they were to meet German delegates to discuss the debt. Briand was full of confidence about the result of the conference.

"Lloyd George and I know each other well enough to be able to find a solution for the most perplexing questions," he declared. "No misunderstanding can be raised between us. Nobody in England will make any mistake about the nature of the French claims. We will see the end of the difficulties of peace just as we saw the end of the difficulties of war by walking hand in hand. The union between England and France is the basis of the whole system. I thought that four years ago; it is still my conviction today."

He was right to believe in the British and in Lloyd George, for after the conference in the presence of all the delegates of the five allied nations, the English Premier declared that the counter-propositions of Germany did not even deserve to be examined or discussed and that an ultimatum of four days was to be given to them to accept the agreement proposed in Paris. The occupation of the Ruhr was to be the result of this decision. This measure, according to Briand's words, was not to be considered as an act of war but as an act of justice. The Germans had to understand that they must pay.



Photo Vidal, Madrid

The ministers of Foreign Affairs of France and Germany, Briand and Stresemann, during a private conference held at the Hotel Ritz.

The discussions about the occupation of the Ruhr, and the interference of the National Bloc, weighed heavily on the future of French politics. More than ever, Briand longed for the moment when all the problems brought up by the liquidation of the war and enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles would come to an end. He knew that no constructive work was to be thought of in Europe as long as all nations, including Germany, did not come to a real pacific settlement. Fortunately, the support the French interests had obtained in England and in the United States even when they were obliged to occupy the Ruhr with military forces gave the certitude that the Allies would be willing to continue the work for peace in close coöperation.

The following month was devoted by Briand to questions of foreign politics—about Silesia, Angora, Greece, which had refused the intervention of the Allies in her difficulties with the government of Angora.

In all directions Briand acted as a mediator, and brought the different nations to pacific settlements.

On the 12th of July, Briand announced to the Chamber of Deputies that France would be represented at the disarmament conference at Washington which had been called by President Harding.

"Yesterday," he said, "while I was explaining at

the tribune the conditions of our foreign affairs, and outlining the position taken by our government in many difficult and complex problems, an important visit took place in the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A representative of that great power, the United States of America, came there to transmit to the French Government an invitation from the Chief of State of the United States to the principal allied powers to partake in a conference which would study the best conditions to insure the continuation of peace in the Pacific Ocean and at the same time to discuss limitation of armaments not only for the navies but for the armies.

"I am certain that I speak for the whole nation when I thank President Harding for having taken this noble initiative and for having thought first of turning to our country. It is a homage rendered to the sentiment of pacifism that France has proved under all circumstances. I do not need to add that the French Government has willingly accepted this invitation. It means the possibility of partaking in the discussion relating to the Pacific Ocean in which France has such a great interest."

In another speech, delivered in his old town of Saint Nazaire, Briand was again to express his opinion about that disarmament conference that was to take place in Washington in November, 1921.

"A voice has come from across the seas inviting us to come and study ways of preventing such fires from again flaring up. I considered it an honor to answer 'Present' for my country. We will go to Washington because of our gratefulness to the brave and noble soldiers who came from so far, guided by the flames of idealism. They have now returned to their country but we have not forgotten them. We will discuss with our friends and allies the problems that comprise the program of the conference. I will express the sentiments of France. No nation has a greater desire to limit armaments, but no country has a greater duty to remain armed as long as its security is not really insured.

"If France had not for forty years worked up a strong army what would have happened to the peace of the world in 1914?"

That conference in Washington, the first one in which naval and military disarmament problems were faced, was to bring interesting parleys between Briand and President Harding and other prominent American personalities, not only on the question of limitation of armaments, but on other important problems. It proved again the usefulness of personal contacts that in Briand's opinion bring much greater results than any diplomatic conversations.

Personally Briand was keenly interested in going

to the United States. The American mind had interested him greatly ever since the war when he had come in contact with men who represented all of the different activities of that country and who awakened his consciousness to the organization of that tremendous power. Briand had been a close friend of Myron Herrick's and had admired his great generosity at the time of the Battle of the Marne. He had also been very friendly with President Wilson, who had expressed a great interest in Briand's ideas and who had deplored the fact that such a man as Briand with his ideas about peace had not been among the French delegates who worked on the Treaty of Versailles.

"I found President Wilson to be a very generous man with noble sentiments," said Briand, "a man who certainly has had a powerful influence for peace. I had discussed with him many of my future plans. I found that he had been greatly struck by the League of Nations, about which I spoke for the first time when the Duma was received in Paris."

The government of the United States, its economic organization as well as the industrial production in which it resulted, the dominating power that gave it that supreme place that it occupies today, was of the utmost interest to Briand whose mind was working on the coördination of European forces. His im-

pressions of Washington were to have a great influence on the development of his future plans.

The agreements made in Washington were later to be ratified by the French Parliament. This session gave Briand an occasion to deplore the unfair accusation so often brought against France, that the country is militaristic.

"Our country has an international spirit. Disarmament has to be moral as well as material."

Throughout that whole period Briand was faced by two great problems, the coöperation with the United States in the idea of disarmament and pacification, and the question of French security with the danger of clashes with Germany on the other side of the frontier. To him the whole problem was centralized on the question of the Rhine. That appeared to him as a frontier not only for France and Belgium but also for England.

This question was the *motif* of the famous conference held at Cannes in January 1922, which was to be so fatally interrupted.

Briand was not completely backed by public opinion which had remained rather nationalistic after the war, nor did Parliament share his ideas about foreign affairs and pacific settlements.

Briand is a great partisan of that sytem of con-

ferences by which the Allied nations are kept in perpetual contact.

"It is easy to laugh at international conferences, but nations must meet for the discussion of international problems," said Briand. "It is at Cannes that the principle of the meeting of Genoa was decided, the meeting at which the pact of non-aggression was to be signed."

* * * * *

The conference of Cannes started in a very friendly way. A golf party which was held during the early days of the conference remains historical.

Lloyd George persuaded Briand to play golf. He tried, but it cannot be said that Briand acquitted himself with any brilliancy on the golf links. He said that it seemed a very great problem to him to hit the little ball.

The innocent pastime, indulged in during a few leisure hours, received so much publicity and was so distorted in the public press, that it became the ground for attacks against Briand by his own countrymen. He still laughs when he speaks of that golf party and the excitement that it aroused.

In spite of these social criticisms, the conference of Cannes was accomplishing perhaps the most important

work that had been done since the Treaty of Versailles.

Later Briand was to explain what happened at the conference in the following terms:

"I said to Mr. Lloyd George, 'There have been some differences of opinion between our two countries about the Treaty, that should be signed now. Your country speaks of helping France. France cannot accept those terms. A menace to France is also a menace to Belgium and to England. The Rhine is a common frontier to all three countries.'

"Mr. Lloyd George then turned to his government for advice, and the next day, after our discussion, England recognized that it was her duty to defend the Rhine frontier.

"I came back from Cannes to bring to my government that promise of England, but a reversal of opinion had set in in the Chamber of Deputies. As I am not a man who feels that he can force himself to cling to a position, I simply resigned, leaving the whole job to my successor."

What Briand does not say in the explanation is that he was at that moment abandoned not only by Parliament but by certain high officials. Even members of his Cabinet were opposed to him.

Some time after Briand had resigned and was replaced by M. Poincaré as Premier and Minister of the Foreign Affairs, the question of the pact of guaranty

was taken up by the French Parliament. When some of the deputies deplored that such a pact did not exist, M. Poincaré answered:

"Then the thing to have done was to accept the Pact of Guaranty at Cannes."

To which a deputy answered,

"The pact of Cannes was unsatisfactory."

Briand then arose from his place as a deputy and defended his plan in the following words:

"I hear a voice say that the pact was unsatisfactory. Of course, it was only outlined in general terms and could have been ameliorated. But remember what was in it just as it stood. In case of an unprovoked German aggression, Great Britain was to stand immediately at our side with all her forces on sea and land and in the air. If you consider that as nothing, I ask you this question: if in 1914 on the eve of the war such a pact of guaranty had been signed with England, if it had been published, can you dare say that Germany would have continued her attacks? Germany would not have moved.

"Some people considered that the ten years during which the English offered their aid was not long enough. The Government of Great Britain agreed to extend it to twenty years. The English Premier himself said to me, 'It is a question that will raise no difficulties with my country.' Then there was the question

of how to execute the pact, how to create contacts between the two countries. Again Great Britain agreed to our plans. Finally the inevitable happened—so many difficulties were raised that public opinion in England changed.

"There is no use returning to things that cannot be helped now, but if you place yourselves in the moment of the conference of Cannes, I have a right to tell you that if at that moment you had placed your hand in the hand of Great Britain, if the pact had been realized, France would have found herself in a much more secure position."

As Briand says, there is no use going back over such dramas as that of Cannes.

But one can deplore that too often French interior politics paralyze, or at least interfere with international interests and retard good work.

When Briand retired this time, he did not stop his political activities. These leisure hours allowed him to concentrate on the work of the League of Natons, in which he was going to play such an important rôle and which was to be the background of all the conferences that were to lead to his conception of the organization of Europe.

CHAPTER XXV

Geneva

THERE are some places in this world where certain ideas flourish more freely than in others, where the soil is more favorable to new plants. This seems to be true of the shores of Lake Geneva.

It was there that men like Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau gave birth to the ideas which were to grow into the revolution of 1789 and to create a new ideal of liberty for the world. It is there again that ideas are now growing for the formation of a new Europe.

The aspect of Geneva, which is usually a peaceful, well-organized quiet city, changes suddenly when the representatives of all nations, journalists, delegates and sightseers pour into the hotels of the city for the meetings of the League of Nations. Her streets are crowded with motors and with men holding parleys before the doors of the hotels and the Hall of the Reformation, where the sessions take place.

On a day when Briand is to deliver one of his speeches that are so famous in the town and have made him one of the most popular figures in Geneva, everybody wants to be in the galleries of the square room, where the representatives of the world meet. Every-

body wants to see Briand, to shake his hand, to obtain his autograph. When he comes down from the tribune he finds it almost impossible to escape the crowds that besiege him. He is forced to steal away and to board one of the small lake boats to get any privacy at all.

There are many opinions as to the usefulness or importance of the League of Nations. To Briand it appears as an absolute necessity for international politics. He refers to it as the first existing meeting ground on which political leaders can become acquainted with each other, where they can discuss the problems of their countries, either in private conversations or at the meetings, and come into human contact, which always brings more satisfactory results than the ancient formal methods. Briand feels that if the first meetings had accomplished only these human contacts and brought countries so widely separated geographically to be interested in each other's problems and understand them, they would have been worth while for that alone.

Briand's great gift for bringing better understanding between people, his personal influence on any individual who approaches him and his quick perception of the essentials of any question that is raised have brought him to the point where he is considered as one of the leading diplomats of Europe.

The first great manifestation of the existence of the League of Nations was the meeting for the discussion

of the protocol that was to unite the delegates of forty-seven nations who were present for the preparation of peace through arbitration.

Briand himself explains the idea in an article he wrote for *l'Europe Nouvelle* on September 18th, 1924.

"It is here in Geneva that the only administration that has the power to insure the peace of nations is being organized. Almost all the ministers of Foreign Affairs are present. They are working to create a new spirit of international solidarity. The right to security is the first principle of the declaration of the rights of nations. It is as vital as the right to daily bread, work and instruction. It can only be insured by the coöperation of the great powers in a vast work of mutuality."

Further on he shows what is the real spirit in which the League is working by an allusion to the position of Germany.

"The conventions are not bristling with accusations against any nation. Any conferences that have taken place agree that Germany could be called to play her part in the League as soon as she had subscribed to the pact of non-aggression of Genoa."

The ideas that were the basis of Briand's discussions appealed not only to the big nations who had suffered so much from the war, but to all the nations of Europe. If one recalls the words he pronounced when at that

session, one can understand why it appeals to all nations.

"When tomorrow we will have said to a nation 'reduce your armament to what is strictly necessary, you are a member of a vast pact of mutual insurance, which is your guarantee,' it will be a sacred duty, if any country is menaced, or still more if it is attacked, to give it the security to which it has a right. What is beautiful in that pact is that it makes no distinction between the so-called little and big nations. All of them have to coöperate to help another, small or large, if any danger appears for one of them."

In all the sessions of the League of Nations, Briand is the personification of the policy of international organization for the guaranty of peace and he is surrounded by men like Paul Boncour and Edouard Herriot.

Though in March, 1925, under the auspices of Sir Austen Chamberlain, this protocol of Geneva was tabled, the coöperation that had been started between the nations was not useless. It was to bring the agreements of Locarno a few months later in which Germany, who was now a member of the League, was to appear among the other nations. In fact it was Germany who had suggested that such a meeting should take place with the idea of working again on certain phases of the treaty of Versailles. But Briand, not in

accord with the German point of view, cleverly transformed the suggestions of Germany into a system of European guaranties that would not meet the same British objections as the protocol of Geneva.

The principles which the Allies had jointly accepted were communicated to the German government which agreed to meet the Allies at a future conference that was to be held in Locarno.

Before we come to that conference which marks the beginning of the new era of peace, it is interesting to follow what was Briand's influence on the constructive work of the League of Nations for the prevention of any new conflicts that turned up in Europe.

The Balkans seem to be the sore spot of Europe. So many of the big nations have interests there and so many peoples are centered in that small territory that disputes and conflicts are continually arising. The people have probably begun to feel that a state of war is almost more normal than a state of peace.

A new conflict was to break out between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. The case was carried before the League of Nations. Briand, as President, called a meeting of the Executive Council of the League of Nations, and invited the two warring governments to send representatives. He reminded them of their obligations as members of the League, their solemn undertaking not to turn to war for the settlement of disputes and the

consequences that would be the result of the violation of the pact. He exhorted them to give orders to stop immediately any military preparations and draw back their troops from both sides of the frontier.

The Council met on the 26th of October, 1925, in the French Foreign Office. Austen Chamberlain had come from London to participate. Briand, in speaking to the delinquents, said to them authoritatively,

"Before the Council begins to work, it wants to know whether the two parties are willing to withdraw their troops and stop any bloodshed."

The Bulgarian delegate answered affirmatively, "Bulgaria has no troops on Greek territory."

The representative of Greece cautiously answered that he did not want to promise anything before he had communicated with his government. A favorable answer came from Greece immediately. Greece would have found herself in a very dangerous situation, exposed to an economic blockade. In this way the League of Nations imposed its power and prevented a war that could have had the most serious consequences.

If one remembers what were the results of the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo, one cannot deny that the intervention of the League of Nations worked out in a way to prove Briand's contention as to its importance.

But Briand's attitude was not always to be that of an

arbitrator who attempts to pacify everybody in a mild way. The different sessions of the League of Nations were to show him in varying moods.

At the ninth session of the League he was to become very vehement and eloquent in a discussion that took place between him and Chancellor Herman Müller of Germany. At that session the Chancellor had thought it clever suddenly to propose a general disarmament, hoping that such a proposition would make an impression upon the principal powers and bring the Allies to liberate entirely the region around the Rhine.

Briand objected to a certain phrase in Chancellor Müller's address, in which he spoke of nations with double-faced policies.

In answering him, Briand started his speech by reminding his audience that the League of Nations remains the best organization for international collaboration. He spoke of his thorough attachment to peace, and then came to the question of disarmament. He said that it was being postponed only because certain nations were not meeting their obligations, thereby forcing the others to insure their security by the protection of arms.

To Briand the question of peace is mingled with his love for his country. It is because he loves France that he hates war. It is because he hates war that he has be-

come the artisan, the great animator, of peace. He has faith in peace. It is the only condition for civilization.

"The work of a statesman is glorious not only because he brings to triumph the interest of his country. He can find another glory when he serves the cause of humanity," says Briand.

CHAPTER XXVI

Locarno

WHEN Briand started out for Locarno he knew that there were many who anticipated the failure of the meeting that was going to take place there. He was to say to the journalists a few days after his arrival:

"As we were sailing on the Lake of Locarno, I had the feeling that there were submarines hidden under the peaceful waters of the lake."

This first contact with the Germans was to be a heavy responsibility for Briand. He would have been reproached bitterly by France for any misstep or any failure of the conference. The place that he occupied in the League of Nations, the fact that he had conducted dealings with the Germans, made him fully responsible for what would happen. Too many people were ready to criticize those international parties. Briand knew that the meeting of Locarno was to be the decisive moment upon which depended the success of his future plans.

* * * * *

Locarno has become a word that is synonymous with peace; a word that evokes visions of that wonder-

ful day on which was signed what may be called the real treaty of peace. It was the summit of achievement, but indeed that summit was not easy to reach, the road that led to it was a stony and dangerous one.

In Briand was the spirit that was to animate all activities in those days. It was he who smoothed out difficulties, who watched that no friction should occur, and who was always on the alert that no accident should mar the successful culmination of the conference. He depended more than ever on his marvelous instinct for influencing men as well as events.

The first official contacts between the Germans and the Allies had not passed off without some slight difficulties and deceptions. The Germans had come into the conference stiff and solemn, perhaps because they felt a little shy. An impression of iciness could have paralyzed all the good will that had brought the delegates together.

Briand was to realize this danger immediately and, in accordance with his usual method, put forth every effort to attempt to change the atmosphere and the tone of the discussion. In his human, bright way, as an orchestra leader conducts the men before him, he gradually brought all the delegates around to his own mood. He addressed them directly, in an informal, familiar way, laying aside all diplomatic stiffness. And when the conference came to an end everyone was talking in

a free, coöperative manner in a new atmosphere favorable to conciliation.

These tactics are customary with Briand. For him, a discussion, even a diplomatic one, must take place in a good mood. He has created what might be called an "amiable diplomacy." He believes that in solemn interviews it is impossible to break down the barriers, and therefore always tries to arrange informal luncheons or other intimate, informal meetings for the purpose of creating a feeling of good will among the delegates. Never does he show more charm and more power to convince than on these occasions. He knows how to make himself irresistible.

While the official conferences are taking place, Briand finds it most necessary for his comfort and his health to discover some quiet spot to which he can escape from the curiosity of the crowds and the newspapermen.

At Locarno he found such a place in the picturesque little inn called Albergho Elvezia, situated on the lake side. Here he used to come with a friend, usually Alexis Leger, for a quiet meal and a few hours of rest and meditation, and there he had discovered a cat with which he used to play and to which he probably disclosed many state secrets. It was at this inn that he was to meet Chancellor Luther, and in the privacy of a tête-à-tête, where nothing is official, to smooth out many

of the difficulties that could have arisen at the meetings. It was there, for the first time, that Briand was to express the idea that was to be the basis of the future agreements.

"You are a German," he said to Luther. "I am a Frenchman. On this ground alone we have many reasons to be antagonistic, to enter into discussions and even to quarrel. But can't I remain a good Frenchman and be a good European? Can't you be a good German and think also of that superior interest of Europe, and can't we on that ground come to an understanding?"

This appealed to Dr. Luther. Since the armistice, it was the first time that France and Germany, represented by two statesmen, had found themselves sitting side by side, at a rustic little table under a green arbor over a basket of fruits. The simplicity of the scene is particularly amazing when one considers what human interests were at stake.

When it came to the meetings of the conference, which were held in the little City Hall of Locarno, the setting was more austere and the discussions more grave. The first important discussion was about the entry of Germany into the League of Nations. To Briand this appeared as the only possible basis for mutual guaranty.

"Until this day," he said, "the lack of security has been the only obstacle to the general disarmament.

The pact about the Rhine will be the first step on the road to the reconciliation of the people."

While Sir Austen Chamberlain was also having parleys with Dr. Luther, Briand was to have long conversations with Dr. Stresemann. Chancellor Luther and the German Minister of Foreign Affairs both knew that there was no use discussing the treaties already in existence, and that the future situation depended on Germany's entrance into the League without any restrictions.

Briand's attitude and ideas were to appeal to them. Every conversation seemed to bring them nearer to their aim.

Briand went to great trouble to make the atmosphere pleasant for the Germans. He took the opportunity afforded by the birthday of Mrs. Austen Chamberlain to give a party on the lake. This permitted them to continue in a friendly atmosphere the conversations that were bringing them closer to the moment when they would finally come to a definitive agreement.

Of course such days were exhausting for Briand. He was constantly active, discussing most important subjects and at the same time arranging informal and social events. When he came out of the conference in the evening, he was usually so fatigued that he would go to his hotel and dine simply and be in bed at nine o'clock.

It is difficult to give any idea of the atmosphere that prevailed at Locarno during the last hours that preceded the signing of the treaty. People had come to the little town from all the surrounding villages as well as from all parts of the world. Some of them did not know exactly what they were waiting for, but it was as if an instinct had drawn them to gather in the place where something tremendous, some new hope was going to be given to the world.

The feeling of tenseness grew from minute to minute. Under the windows of the little City Hall more and more people were gathering. In the convents surrounding the town prayers were being said for peace. Peasants were kneeling in all the churches and at the wayside shrines. Sinister reports had been put into circulation. The people were told that the conference would not come to an end. Others said that Luther and Stresemann would be murdered. Sudden sensational reports would catch and fly like wildfire, adding to the nervousness of those people who had come from so far to wait for . . . what?

That day Mussolini had come to be present at the final meeting. There was great excitement. People had seen him arrive. The waiting grew more and more tense. It seemed that all the hopes of the people were directed to those windows behind which was being discussed the destiny of Europe.

Everybody was speaking about the delegates. What were they doing? They had been seen by some people. Aristide Briand and Austen Chamberlain were the heroes of the day. Both of them had given themselves completely to the success of the treaty. Chamberlain, a sincere friend of France, had been constantly at Briand's side, trying to conciliate the different interests. As two friends, the two representatives of Great Britain and France had acted during all the parleys in complete accord. But would they be powerful enough to overcome all difficulties? Would the Germans sign? If not, what would happen? Would that tremendous effort have been in vain? Would the hope of the whole world symbolized by that mass of people pressed close to that little house be deceived?

It was at seven o'clock that a window was opened and the news that the treaty of peace had been signed was announced to the crowd. As if maddened with joy, and seized with frenzy, a shout of relief went up, and voices began to call. They wanted to *see* the treaty. It was brought to the window and lights were thrown on it to satisfy the people.

Then came an outburst of the most extraordinary enthusiasm that had ever been seen. All through the evening, all through the night, there took place in that little city an unheard of manifestation of popular joy. There was music and dancing and singing. People

seemed intoxicated with excitement and hope. They felt that they had participated in one of the greatest events that had ever happened, on which depended the future of the world.

But Briand, faithful to his habits, even on that eventful evening, was in bed at nine o'clock, and in his solitude was meditating on the work he had accomplished.

* * * * *

In all the churches prayers of thanksgiving went on all through the night. The peasants did not know what were the agreements of Locarno, many of them could not even have read them if they had seen them. The crowd could not realize what were the diplomatic difficulties that had to be overcome before the treaty was finally signed, but it was as if a unanimous instinct had told them that this was something to be grateful for, something new that had been born in that simple little building in Locarno that to the world meant salvation.

The news that the treaty had been signed was to be celebrated in the newspapers of the whole world. The proportion of the event was growing every minute. A new era was announced. In the French papers, Locarno was referred to as the greatest event since the war. Who would have thought that such a dream could be realized; that in a conference that lasted less than fifteen

days a treaty tying together so many nations would be agreed upon and signed; that allies and enemies, victor and vanquished, could come into close coöperation for the sake of peace? What a reward for Briand who had been so cruelly treated at the moment when the idea was conceived in Cannes, but who without ever permitting himself to be discouraged had never been turned from his goal!

At the moment the treaty was signed, Stresemann declared:

"The German delegates accept the final protocol. The development of European peace will have this meeting at Locarno as a start. It is an important step toward amicable relations between nations. We believe that living pacifically near one another will insure the real development of our states. But Locarno must not be an end. It is the beginning of a collaboration in confidence."

To these words Briand answered: "My mission is ended. It is in my own name that I am now going to speak. If we had done but one thing here—to negotiate the terms of the treaty and then have gone home each to his own country, trusting to chance to realize future promises on these lines—the gesture would have been in vain. If that gesture does not answer to a new spirit, if it does not mark the beginning of an era of confidence it will not produce the effect that we are ex-

pecting. Between our two countries remain many reasons for friction, many painful points. The pact signed here must act as a healing balm on a wound. Any difficulty that may arise must be smoothed down. I am certain that France will understand the importance of this act; that she will do everything in her power to bring between us a feeling of appeasement. When that is done we will be able to work in common toward the realization of that ideal which is ours, a Europe accomplishing her destiny, remaining faithful to her past of civilization. It is in this spirit that all of us have come here. I hope that our two countries will soon feel the effect of this new policy."

* * * * *

Since the beginning of the human race enthusiasm has always been aroused by bravery, heroism, battles and victory. Martial music reacts with equal force on nearly all minds. A man has no right to murder, but a nation has. An ambitious chief who conquers the world and carries his legions with him over the ravaged villages and devasted homes is certain to inflame popular enthusiasm.

Locarno lies at the base of those last little foot hills that end the tremendous chain of the Alps. High above her, haughty among the clouds, is the summit of Saint

Bernard, over which Bonaparte passed with an army. Pointing to those rich plains of Lombardy where he was going to start the series of victories that would take him as a conqueror through all Europe, his gestures seemed to say to his soldiers "All that lies before you is yours. . . ."

* * * * *

In historical contrast, a hundred years later, in a little village in that very plain to which Napoleon pointed, a new spirit is being celebrated, the spirit of peace and the defeat of war, and prayers are ascending to those high hills that the new peace may last forever.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Spirit of Locarno

ONE month later, when the Painleve Cabinet fell, Briand, who after the tremendous success of Locarno was the most popular political figure in France, was asked once more to become Premier. He was not very eager to add the responsibility of daily political struggles in Parliament and all the other heavy charges imposed on a Premier to the work he was accomplishing in the Foreign Office for France and Europe. However, superior considerations obliged him to consent and, once more, on November 28th, 1925, he became the pilot of the government. As soon as the affairs of state were put in order, he departed for London to take part in the ceremonies which were to surround the ratification of the treaty of Locarno.

Although the court was in mourning for Queen Alexandra, the British government had decided to invest this historical meeting with all the ceremony possible. Austen Chamberlain, who presided, first delivered a message from the King. Then each representative of the powers who were to sign was asked to speak. Briand, who was by the courtesy of all present made the central figure of the ceremonies, expressed himself in the following terms: "The agreements of

Locarno have brought a great manifestation of enthusiasm from all nations. That does not mean that all people have considered the clauses of the articles in all their details. That manifestation is characteristic, an instinctive one. Among the mass of letters that I have received personally, there is one that has touched me deeply. That letter alone would make me feel that this act is the most important one of my whole political life. It is a simple letter from an unknown woman lost in the crowd. She says to me. . . .

" 'Allow a mother to congratulate you. At last I am going to be able to look at my children without that terrible apprehension of war and to love them with security. . . .'

"The agreements of Locarno bring something new into the world, because they substitute a spirit of solidarity for a spirit of suspicion. It is by human solicitude that we must make war impossible. Here opposite me sit the delegates from Germany. That does not mean that I shall not remain a good Frenchman, or that they have not remained good Germans. But here we are all Europeans. By our signatures we affirm that we want peace. Our two races have for centuries clashed with each other on the battlefield. They have often left there with their blood the best of their forces. The agreements of Locarno will be valuable if they mean that those massacres will not begin again and if they bring

the result that the foreheads of our women will not be darkened by black veils; that our cities will not be ravaged and our men mutilated. We must collaborate in the work of peace. It is in that spirit that I sign as the delegate of France, that I make this solemn declaration, certain that I am expressing the sentiments of my compatriots. You may be certain I shall attempt, for the work of the future, to draw out of these arrangements everything that they can give to prevent war."

It was to Briand that Dr. Stresemann seemed to dedicate his answer:

"I would like to thank you, Mr. Briand, for what you have said about the necessity of coöperation between our people. You start from the idea that each of us belongs first to his own country, as a good Frenchman, a good Englishman, a good German, but that to this is added the fact that he is a European, united for the great traditions of civilization. It is a fact that through the terrible upheavals of the war has come out a community of destiny that unites us now. That is why we cannot remain hostile to each other but have to hold out our hands and collaborate. It is only in that way that we will be able to establish the basis of a future of which you have said yourself in words with which I want to associate myself, that the only rivalry that will be permitted will be in the progress of civilization."

M. Scialoja in the name of Italy, M. Vandervelde, in

the name of Belgium, M. Skrzinski, in the name of Poland, all joined their words saying that the love of country is augmented and embellished by the love of humanity.

The moment to ratify the treaty had come. It is of interest to know the outline of the spirit of that treaty, conceived in the enthusiasm of Locarno, and ratified by the leading powers on that day.

PACT OF SECURITY BETWEEN GERMANY, BELGIUM, FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN AND ITALY, SIGNED AT LOCARNO ON OCTOBER 16, 1925.

The President of the German Empire, His Majesty, the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty, the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and all Britannic Territories beyond the seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy.

Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection animating the nations that suffered the scourge of the war of 1914-18,

Witnessing the abrogation of the treaties of neutrality of Belgium, and conscious of the necessity to insure peace in the zone which was frequently the ground of European conflicts,

And equally animated by the desire to give to all the contracting powers necessary guaranties according to the spirit of the League of Nations that already exist between them,

Have taken the resolution to conclude a treaty to those ends and have appointed their plenipotentiaries who have agreed on the following dispositions:

Here briefly are some of the outstanding points in the treaty:

The maintenance of the frontiers between Germany, Belgium and France and the inviolability of these frontiers as they were fixed in the Peace Treaty signed at Versailles on the 28th of June, 1919.

Germany, Belgium and France promise not to attack or invade each other or in any case to resort to war as a settlement.

Germany, Belgium and France promise to clear up by pacific means and in the following way all questions that might arouse them against one another . . . those questions will be brought before judges whose decision those parties promise to obey.

All other questions will be submitted to a Com-

mission of Conciliation and if the agreement proposed by that Commission is not agreed upon between the two parties it will be brought before the Council of the League of Nations.

If one of the contracting parties believes that any violation of the Treaty of Versailles has been committed it will immediately take the question before the Council of the League of Nations.

As soon as the Council of the League of Nations will have agreed that such a violation has been committed it will notify the powers that have signed this treaty and each of them promises to come to the immediate assistance of the power against which the act has been directed.

In case of violation of article two, in which France, Belgium and Germany take reciprocal engagements not to attack and invade one another, each of the other contracting powers undertake to give their assistance to the one against whom such a violation will have taken place.

All the articles of the present treaty are placed under the guaranties of the high contracting parties.

This treaty was signed by Luther, Stresemann, Vandervelde, Briand, Chamberlain and Mussolini.

The significance of the treaty of Locarno was certainly of greater spiritual and moral importance than

the usual diplomatic documents. The fact that the representatives of the Reich had spontaneously joined the Allies and proclaimed in the face of the world that they freely accepted the Treaty of Versailles and renounced war, as a solution to the difficulties that might arise between nations, was perhaps one of the most significant that had ever occurred in Europe. In England the enthusiasm was tremendous. In all Europe there was a feeling that a new era of peace had started.

As soon as the event was consummated, Briand left London on the morning of the second of December. He arrived in Paris in the afternoon and went straight to the Chamber of Deputies to deliver his first address as a Premier, which he had not had time to do before going to London. He then had to attend a meeting of the Commission of Finance, after which he came back for a session in the Chamber of Deputies which was to last the whole night and was only to finish at the Senate at the end of the next day after thirty-six consecutive hours of discussion.

As morning approached, Briand, who felt how important it was after the triumphal meeting of London not to be defeated, what effect it would have on the whole world if he was to fall, after the solemn signatures of the accords of Locarno that placed France so high among the nations, dramatically turned to the deputies as if making a supreme appeal to their reason:

"Never have I felt any regrets when I looked at the door through which I would have to pass when I resigned, but today, and I assure you that it is for the first time, I feel that my duty is to cling to my power as a Premier. I really believe in my heart and soul that if you oust me now you will be committing a very grave injustice against our country."

This statement produced a great emotion among the audience. The sincerity of Briand's appeal could not be discussed. Herriot, presiding at the session, came down from his seat solemnly to cast his ballot for Briand. The Cabinet received a majority of two hundred votes, but the fight was not over, and shortly after, as the discussion went on, the majority was to be reduced to six votes.

"Six votes," said Briand disgustedly, "a mere pittance". . . and then stiffening, he went on defiantly, "after all that is five votes more than I needed to go on," and pointing to the assembly with dignity, he continued: "Oh, my country, look, all that is but politics . . . but be reassured, try and realize that your salvation is in your hands and that regeneration will come out of your own forces."

The ratification of the agreements of Locarno was not to take place in the Chamber of Deputies until the month of February, 1926.

In his discussion of the Treaty, Briand said, after

some explanations about the pact and the Treaty of Versailles, "It is not enough to say that you want peace, you must want it with your heart and soul and take every occasion offered to serve it. Peace is an exacting mistress, still more exacting than war. You are carried to war by events that overpower you, that drag people into it without leaving them time for reflection, but peace demands a more continued and tenacious devotion, she wants a persistent effort and she doesn't admit any feeling of doubt.

"What is wonderful in a country where in so many families places are empty, where so many young men are mutilated, where so many people have lost their goods, is that the pact of Locarno allows mothers to look at their children with the hope that they will not be torn to pieces some day on a battlefield.

"Locarno has done that and, if it had done but that, it would have been my honor to have signed it. People have said that I planted an olive tree on the shore of Lake Maggiore and that that olive tree will not give much shade. It is not even that. It is the germ of an olive tree that exists in Locarno. It is trying to get out of the earth, looking for some sunshine. It will grow and find it if no brutal foot comes and crushes it, and if, unfortunately, a foot were to crush it, I merely wish that it will not be a French foot that is guilty of such a crime.

"You speak of the German people. Do you think that I went without emotion to that rendezvous on the side of the lake where I was to meet the German delegates? I went there and they came there and we spoke together as Europeans. It is a new language that we will all have to learn. France does not belittle herself in taking a part in discussions that prepare Europe for tomorrow. Can you imagine France sitting aside in a corner wrapped up in her victory and looking at the people belligerently? Impossible. Can you imagine such a France? Never. In signing the agreements, she has remained herself, the France of yesterday and the France of tomorrow."

This address so aroused the enthusiasm of the Parliament that it voted that Briand's words be printed and put on posters in all cities. All the political men in Parliament realized what were the results brought by Briand's prolonged tenure in the Foreign Office. It seemed that never had Briand been in a better position, that never had he been backed by a more devoted majority.

But alas, in French politics, such beautiful days are often followed by political storms. Briand, who had obtained so great a success in Foreign Affairs, was, on the eve of starting for Geneva, for the purpose of opening the session of the League of Nations, to be abandoned by his majority on a minor question of finance,

and dismissed from the Premiership at the moment when he had to face in Geneva the discussion about the admission of Germany to the League of Nations. This problem, in which as the head of the French delegation, he was to play such an important rôle, he had to face immediately. Without taking the time to bother with the question of interior politics, he left Paris to go to Switzerland, and there he had a conference with Chamberlain and Stresemann which only took him one afternoon. He had no right to speak in the name of the French government, France being at that moment without a Premier and without any Minister of Foreign Affairs. He came back to Paris to receive the charge to form a new Cabinet, and then he returned to Geneva, invested with new authority, to take part in the discussions which were to follow.

CHAPTER XXVIII

French and German Relations

SINCE the signature of the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871, which ended the Franco-Prussian War, and cut Alsace-Lorraine from France, resentment had remained in the hearts of all who had suffered from that war.

However, generations do not usually harbor the hatreds or admirations of those who have preceded them. Each generation wants to create its own traditions. The old hatred of Germany was a feeling more acute with the former generation in France than with those who were to fight in the War in 1914. When the Germans were overpowered by the Kaiser and the Pan-Germanists who made the war inevitable, it came as an astounding surprise to many French people.

Though the suffering during the war was horrible for all, the chief result was not the resentment of French and German soldiers against each other, but rather the creation among all the belligerents of a common hatred of war. All minds realized that something had to be done to prevent such catastrophes, that in the future no man or nation should be allowed to have enough power to enforce such disasters upon the world.

That is why Briand's idea, that international assurances were the only ones which could give real security, was to appeal to the whole nation, and that is certainly the reason why in France, where men remain for such a short time in power, where they are so easily overthrown, Briand was allowed to continue in the Foreign Office for so many years. No Cabinet was complete without him. It seems sufficient proof that France is a pacific country that throughout so many years she has turned continually to the only man who consistently symbolized peace.

I remember speaking a few months ago to Briand about the necessity for coöperation between the German and French spirits. The two nations are so different and often come to such great misunderstandings that I expressed doubt that it could ever be practically accomplished.

Briand interrupted me in his usual optimistic way to say:

"Why do you doubt that it can be accomplished? It has already been started. There are already many tangible evidences of that coöperation. There are always over-patriotic people on both sides who are dangerous. The important thing is not to permit such men to become masters of the situation. People like Luther, Stresemann and Wirth have done a great deal for the sake of the two countries. Stresemann's death has

caused a great loss to the cause of peace. For three years he worked most courageously for peace, afraid of no responsibility. Our relations were always cordial."

When one thinks of all that happened between August, 1914, when the Germans were at the doors of Paris, and September, 1926, when Germany was solemnly received into the League of Nations and welcomed by Briand, one is amazed. The fact becomes still more significant if one remembers that it was on the anniversary of the Battle of the Marne that this ceremony took place. Indeed, this was a great day for the League of Nations that in itself justifies its existence.

The first address at the ceremony was the one by Mr. Stresemann. No recriminations, no allusion to the responsibilities of the war could be found in his words. His declarations were based on the assurance of the pacific intent of the Reich, which he said "has the desire to collaborate with all nations on the basis of reciprocal trust."

To this Briand was to answer: "Isn't it a comforting spectacle to think that a few years after the most dreadful of all wars, those same nations that fought so hard should meet in this assembly and express their common desire to collaborate in the work of universal peace? Peace for Germany and for France! This means an end to those bloody encounters which have blem-

ished the pages of all our past history. It is finished, the war between us—finished are the long veils of mourning for the pains which will never be soothed. From now on we will settle our differences by pacific procedure. Draw back the rifles, the machine guns and the cannons—here come conciliation, arbitration and peace! A country grows in history not only because of the heroism of its soldiers on the battlefield; it grows also when it turns to justice and right for the consecration of its interests. . . ."

The newspapers of the whole world reproduced these words of Briand's, calling him the reconciler of nations. When Germany entered the League of Nations, it was but the first step.

During this same session of the League, another meeting, afterwards known as the "Conversation of Thoiry," was to take place. It was the kind of private interview in which Briand delights. In a little village in the country of Gex, in the picturesque Jura mountains, just a short motor drive from Geneva, a conversation took place on September 17, 1926, between Briand and Stresemann which was discussed all over the world. The two statesmen were to examine there all the questions of common interest to the two countries, inspired by a desire to establish together a plan to come to an agreement. The details of the technical realization of this plan were to be discussed later.

But though this interview had all the aspects of a private, cordial meeting, the results of it were given to the press and excited the interest of the whole world.

* * * * *

Back in Paris, Briand received the approval of the government for his work in Geneva and Thoiry. The merit of such conversations as the one of Thoiry was that it was to bring an immediate practical result on commercial questions as well as in diplomatic relations. One of the first signs of coöperation between France, Germany and Belgium for a new organization, which was to be followed by many others, was in the distribution and sale of steel. It was agreed that they were no longer to fight for customers and underbid each other as they had done formerly, but instead, to divide the customers according to a proportion which had been agreed upon.

This is only one very small fact, but it shows the appearance of a bond on economic and commercial lines which was to grow. The reception of Germany into the League, the new efforts started by Briand and Stresemann were to arouse the admiration of neutrals like Sweden, which had always suffered from French and German antagonism.

In recognition of their successful efforts, the Insti-

tute of Stockholm decided in 1926 to bestow the Nobel Peace Prize upon Briand and Stresemann. This prize had been given in France only once before, to the great pacifist, Leon Bourgeois.

Further approval was to come to Briand at the reception held by the President of the Republic on the first of January, 1927, at the Elysée at which Monsignor Maglione, apostolic Nuncio, the representative of the Pope, acting as dean of the diplomatic corps, presented the greetings of all the diplomats for the new year. He proclaimed in the following terms the approval of the Holy See of the policy of Locarno:

"Our felicitations for the new year are warm and sincere, and it is my wish to tell you with what sympathy we watch the efforts accomplished by France for the pacification of Europe. We are certain that your government will go on with that work, worthy of the traditions of the country, of its noble soul, of its big heart. The confidence we always had was confirmed by the plans that your Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed several months ago in Geneva to the representatives of such a great number of nations. Nobody can think without emotion of the eloquent words that he pronounced. For that good work France can be assured of the active and loyal collaboration of our governments, and in particular, of the one I represent,

which has never ceased to call for disarmament of the spirit."

Coming from lips as authorized as those of Monsignor Maglione, this was tremendous backing for Briand's policy.

* * * * *

In the eighth session of the League of Nations, Briand was again to deliver an important address on the question of the limitation of armaments.

"France knows the importance of the engagements she has taken to limit her armaments. It is a duty for all to follow that policy without any restrictions in the back of their minds.

"But when a country has suffered so much and shows that it is slightly cautious, who would dare say it is wrong? There is no solid peace for the world if all those who belong to the League of Nations do not have the clear vision that they are all a part of the same human world family, animated by universal thoughts and decided to work openly in such an honorable way that it is worthy of the light of the sun!—Peace—peace through arbitration."

A few days later, outlining a program for France as well as for Germany, he said:

"Just one step toward peace means a great success, if one is determined to take another the next day."

Briand was not always to be in complete communion of thought with the Germans. A controversy over the occupation of the Rhine was to take place between Briand and Stresemann. Briand showed himself willing to conciliate but was very firm and explained the French point of view in a session in the French Senate. Other little storms appeared from time to time, for example, in the ninth session of the League of Nations when Chancellor Hermann Müller suddenly took up the question of disarmament in an unexpected way. But this was not to bring any serious complications in the relations between France and Germany. Locarno had really cleared the atmosphere and brought coöperation between those who were known as the principal belligerents, later to be augmented and universalized by the initiative of the United States, represented by Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg. Mr. Kellogg brought into that transaction that new spirit of growth that causes America to build monuments on a grander scale than Europe.

CHAPTER XXIX

The Kellogg-Briand Pact

"LET us make each day just one step toward peace! . . ." says Briand.

These words seem to express all of his international policy. He never stops on the way. The League of Nations and Locarno were to lead to the pact against war known familiarly as the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

Born in Briand's mind, it was to be transformed under the inspiration of Secretary of State Kellogg and to become the greatest manifestation for peace ever heard of—a general renunciation of war.

On the day of the tenth anniversary of the entrance of the United States into the World War, Briand, through the Associated Press, sent a message to the American people in which can be found the original idea of the Pact. On the sixth of April, 1927, it appeared in all the American newspapers.

"At the moment when the thoughts of the Occidental world are drawn back to the solemn date on which the United States joined the World War, I send to the American people the spirit of the deep and brotherly sentiment of confidence that the French people will always have for the American people. I shall

never forget that I was to be the first one to hear through the personal communication of Mr. Sharp, the Ambassador of the United States in Paris, that the Federal Government had taken the determination that was to have such a great influence on the World War.

"Ten years have passed now since the American nation, in a magnificent gesture, became associated with the nations allied for the defense of menaced liberty, and, during the course of those years, that same spirit of justice and humanity has never ceased to unite our two countries, who desire equally to bring an end to war and to prevent its recurrence.

"France wants to have around her an atmosphere of confidence and peace, and her efforts have been to sign agreements to make impossible all menaces of conflicts. The limitation of armaments is eagerly sought by our two governments. It answers to the ardent wishes of the whole of the French people on whom have weighed so heavily for more than half a century such burdensome military obligations, and who have supported for four years on their own territory horrible devastations that have not yet been repaired."

After having shown what technical difficulties the question of disarmament raises, Briand outlined what had been the French activities along pacifist lines during the past few years. He pointed to the different propositions made by France for the control of chem-

ical and industrial disarmament as well as a general military disarmament.

He referred to the idea of creating what he called a General Peace Staff and after having shown what had been done for the future of peace, he came to the following conclusion:

"But more than this or this question of technical elaboration of any plan for disarmament, the fundamental principle of our policy must lie in the will to peace. It is the spirit of peace that really is important. The disarmament, after all, can only be the result of that wish for peace in the civilized world, and it is in that that the American mind is sure to find the coöperation of the French spirit.

"For those who are devoted to the only living reality, peace, France and the United States are already morally joined. If it is needed, if those two great democracies must give a higher and more solemn example to the world, France would be ready to come to a mutual agreement with the United States in accord with the American idea of outlawing war.

"To renounce war as a matter of national policy is familiar to those who have already signed the pact of the League of Nations and the agreements of Locarno."

He finished his message with a thought for the American Legion, which was to convene in Paris that year.

"I hope that the representation of the American Legion will be as numerous as possible. The Legionnaires will be warmly welcomed by France. From the too short time that they will pass with us, I know that they will carry away the souvenir of a France working as eagerly for peace as she was ardent for war and anxious to share all that is grand and generous, and that makes our hearts beat in the same rhythm."

* * * * *

This message was to be followed by the outline of a pact of perpetual friendship between France and the United States which Briand delivered to Ambassador Herrick at Paris in June, 1927. Mr. Kellogg answered, through diplomatic channels, insuring the good will of America. Discussions and conversations were to follow. To that suggestion of a pact between the two countries, Mr. Kellogg was to answer by a proposition of far greater proportions, stating that the most powerful nations of the whole world might also be brought to sign such a pact, which would mean so much more for universal peace.

After a long and cordial exchange of telegrams and letters through the accredited ambassadors, a plan was to take shape, and on April 13th, 1928, a note outlining the plan proposed by France and the United States to

bring about an international renunciation of war was sent by the government of the United States to Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Japan.

Stresemann was to answer for Germany, welcoming the proposition of both the United States and France. He declared in his letter to the American government that Germany also wants to eliminate forever all possibility of military conflicts.

The Kellogg-Briand pact which had taken more than a year to achieve was to be solemnly signed in Paris on August 27th, 1928, in the presence of plenipotentiaries of fifteen nations. . . . The ceremony took place in the French Foreign Office, in the large drawing room known as the "Salon de l'Horologe." Briand presided, having at his right Gustave Stresemann and at his left Frank B. Kellogg. Opposite him sat Raymond Poincaré and the Presidents of Parliament.

The session was opened by Briand, who delivered the only address that was to be made on that day. The first delegate whom he welcomed officially and heartily was Secretary of State Kellogg, "whose optimism and tenacity were to defeat human skepticism." He praised Kellogg's loyalty and the clear mind with which he had conducted the lengthy correspondence and discussions. He spoke of the way he had clarified all matters that might have aroused difficulties.

And then turning to Stresemann, received officially in France for the first time, he expressed his emotion by saying:

"What higher lesson could we give to the civilized world than this meeting for the purpose of signing a pact against war? Germany, willingly, and on the same footing as all others, takes her place with her former adversaries. More striking still is the sight of a representative of France receiving, for the first time in more than half a century, a German Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"Let me add that, when that representative of Germany is named Gustave Stresemann, people can believe me when I say that I am particularly happy to pay homage to the distinction of his mind and to the courage of that eminent statesman who, for more than three years, has never hesitated to take any responsibility when a question of coöperating for the work of maintaining European peace arose."

After expressing his regret at the absence of Sir Austen Chamberlain, who had been prevented from attending because of ill health, he spoke of the indefatigable devotion to the cause of peace of that noble soul and said: "But I cannot help thinking of the happiness he would have felt to be here today."

He then told what were the principal characteristics of the pact now ready to be signed. He spoke of those

nations which had such troubled pasts of political struggles, fights and war. He declared that the time had now come for the renunciation of all wars and more than any others, selfish, involuntary wars.

"Peace had been proclaimed," declared Briand, "but now we have to organize it, and to substitute legal remedies for solutions influenced by arms. This is the work of tomorrow."

Turning to the men gathered there in a common desire for peace, he proposed that they join in another thought, also common to all nations that had in the past war given part of their blood on the battlefields.

"I propose that we dedicate the great event that we are going to consecrate by our signatures to all those who have died in the war."

A great emotion overwhelmed the assemblage as Briand concluded his speech.

And once more there took place the customary diplomatic ceremony of the signing of a treaty.

This time, just as in Locarno, diplomatic signatures had legalized a document that had more of a moral significance and mystic appeal than the usual diplomatic treaties.

* * * * *

No redress was provided in this treaty in case any

nation violated any of its covenants. In this respect the Kellogg-Briand pact differed from the Treaty of Locarno which recognized the mobilization of armies for the purpose of protecting a nation attacked by any one of the signatories. This fact had been pointed out by Sir Austen Chamberlain in his official answer to the invitation of the United States to partake in the new treaty. The two pacts were in reality slightly contradictory.

But we cannot ask treaties which are but human expression and of human creation to be more logical than humanity. The great, important, magnificent fact was that in that meeting in Paris there had been joined in a friendly way, not only the French and German governments, but delegates of fifteen nations, scattered all over the world, had come to sit as an international tribunal and pronounce forever the condemnation of war.

CHAPTER XXX

The Man of the Foreign Office

Intimacies—Relaxation—Methods of Work

ONE of the charms of France is that though she went through a revolution that was to cut the past from the future with the blade of a guillotine, she was, nevertheless, to continue the traditions of art, beauty and elegance in all their forms.

Tradition has certainly remained among the walls of the present Foreign Office, where such events as the signing of the Pact of Paris are now taking place. Briand himself has not assumed any of the diplomatic atmosphere. In appearance he has remained what he started out to be, a man of the people; but he has now the authority and the manners of expression that make him appear quite at home in that palace which has been the scene of so many historical events.

No place is more solemn, more typically characteristic of diplomatic receptions than that domicile of the Foreign Office. The room is extremely vast, the ceilings are so high that their gilded carvings seem drowned in the shadows. The huge windows look too heavy to be opened. Mantelpieces are monuments and

the official red carpets and hangings add to the impression of solemnity. Armchairs can scarcely be moved because of their weight. The canopies along the walls are stiff and formal. The clocks are so high that you cannot see the time. The doors, covered with sculpture, are double and seem to close on weighty secrets. The *huissier* move about solemnly; they have seen so many personages come and go, they are so accustomed to announcing ambassadors, celebrities and royalty, that they seem to have caught the spirit of importance and are themselves haughty in their bearing.

When you pass through the heavy door that separates Briand's office from the antechamber, you find him generally sitting at his desk. It is as interesting to study him here in the privacy of his work as it is in Parliament and in diplomatic circles. He has built up a life of his own in the Foreign Office which has become like a second home to him. The large room is preciously adorned with carved wainscoting, but Briand likes it only because its large French windows open on an old garden sheltered by high trees in which roost flocks of birds.

In this office Briand gives his audiences and works with his staff, maintaining around him an atmosphere of cordiality and intimacy.

The immediate impression one gets upon coming in contact with Briand's personality is one of kindness

and charm. This may well be one of the principal reasons for his power over huge assemblages as well as over individuals.

How can one analyze what is charm? Is it the expression of the eyes, the sound of the voice, or an obvious sincerity?

His entourage, the heads of his staff who are always his close friends, are all devoted to him. Briand, who is a bachelor and has no family around him, has chosen as his intimate friends the men who work with him and who have collaborated with him in some of his most important undertakings. It is with these people that he is his real self.

Curiously intuitive, Briand is an excellent judge of men. He likes to work only with men whom he can trust and befriend, who travel with him and in whose presence he can think aloud. He likes to argue with them, to watch their reactions to the plan he has in mind. He seems to try out his ideas on them. The conversations that he holds only with those whom he has admitted into his intimate life are a part of his work.

* * * * *

When one calls on Briand at the end of an afternoon and remains talking to him, forgetting that his time

is precious, the door behind him opens and Alexis Leger, who heads his personal staff and who is an indefatigable worker, appears, impatient to go on with his work. A moment later it is Gilbert Peycelon, for years a comrade of Briand's, who shows his good face. He does not ask you to leave, but he also has some important questions to take up. Briand's intimate staff is composed of just such good friends, men who execute his work and collaborate in his plans.

Two men in particular for the last few years have shared in his work, have lived in the intimacy of his thoughts and plans—Philippe Berthelot, who has been in the diplomatic service for thirty years, and Alexis Leger, who is also in the Foreign Office.

* * * * *

Whether you speak to Berthelot, to Leger or to Peycelon, the reaction is the same. All men who have worked and lived with Briand are fascinated by him and like to speak about him.

Berthelot, who is a charming talker and knows Briand well, asserts that he has the soul of an artist, a solitary who lives among his thoughts.

"I can only work for someone I am devoted to—whom I trust," says Berthelot, "and Briand has always inspired in me both of these sentiments. There are

some men destined to command; others to serve. I am among the latter."

Berthelot and Briand take the keenest delight in teasing each other. One day as Briand was talking with Anatole France and Berthelot, France, who did not like many persons but who was rather fond of Briand and appreciated the subtlety of his judgment, made some remark that caused Briand to declare that Anatole France was a man of great kindness.

The great writer, who was more ironical than kind, honestly protested:

"No, I am certainly not a kind man. I may have now and then a genuine sense of pity for people, but it is you, Briand, who are really kind."

At this point Berthelot, interrupting peremptorily, asserted:

"No, no . . . Briand is not kind!"

Briand wheeled around indignantly and demanded:

"What do you mean by saying that I am not kind?"

Berthelot answered quietly:

"Well, I just don't think the word kind is applicable to you."

"Why?" insisted Briand.

"To me," Berthelot continued, "you are much more than kind—you are human. . . ."

"Oh, so that's it!" retorted Briand. "Then it appears that Anatole France is not kind . . . neither is he

human . . . you state that I am not kind . . . I suppose then, that you are the only one here who is both kind and human. . . ."

* * * * *

Berthelot is not the only man whom Briand likes to tease. One of his favorite pastimes, when the duties of the Foreign Office left him a few days of leisure, was to go out on a little yacht in the Mediterranean where he could retire for a while from politics. He was often accompanied by his good old friend, Dr. Emery.

On one occasion he was to receive a visit on the yacht from the Admiral B. Coming from his battleship on a little launch, the Admiral thought it would be very amusing to take the wheel himself. As he neared Briand's boat, however, an unexpected wave came between the two vessels, forcing him to collide with Briand's boat with such force that he tore a hole in it. Never was anyone more amused or delighted than Briand was with what he called the clever maneuver of the Admiral. For a long time he sent postcards of the little yacht, called La Gilda, to the Admiral, on which he went to considerable trouble to draw, with pen and ink, huge holes in the side of the boat. He invariably added: "This is the result of the maneuver of Admiral B. . . ."

Ordinarily he refused to see anyone while on these short cruises and would become terribly annoyed if people approached him, if only to shake hands with him.

One day a man turned up and asked him casually what was his opinion of the advertising posters that lined the roads of the country.

Briand said brusquely that he thought that they were a horrible mar on the landscape.

The next day, to his chagrin and amazement, he discovered in one of the newspapers an interview several columns in length, giving in great detail what he had said about his aversion to that form of advertising.

These trips at sea were among the few relaxations he permitted himself for many years. The life on the water made a new man of him and reminded him of his youth in Brittany.

He is never happy among the noises of the city. And it is a slight incident that was to persuade him to install himself in the ministerial apartment of the Foreign Office. One night when he came back from Geneva and was forced to stay overnight in the Foreign Office because he was too tired to go to his own apartment, a storm blew up and the wind blew furiously on the river and among the high trees of the garden behind the Foreign Office. That concert of winds was one that Briand had always heard in his native Brittany,

and he was so enchanted with it that he decided to remain there in that apartment.

* * * * *

It was in past days that Briand could escape on these jaunts. Today too many activities center around him. Not only is he a political man of France, the head of all the Foreign Office work, but also he is obliged to know the interests of all the nations of Europe, in order to work out his economic plans for Europe.

Contrary to many statesmen who work extensively as functionaries, remain at their desks a definite number of hours each day, dictate copious notes to their secretaries with which to fill heavy files, Briand exerts every effort to ignore details. He turns over that part of the work to his staff with the desire to keep his own mind unencumbered with useless information. He gives to one of his devoted collaborators the theme of the work, he outlines it, and then leaves it to him to find the best way of bringing it to realization.

Leger says of him: "He is a man who always stands on the highest crest and judges all questions from the highest point."

Though Briand hates systems, bundles of papers, routines, old methods that he considers a waste of time, this does not prevent him from knowing the work of

his organization more intimately than anyone else. He is that contradictory type of man—a man of imagination and dreams and yet a practical creator. Though he loves meditation, he devotes his life to direct action, and though he loves solitude, he is usually to be found with a few friends.

When people, misled by his appearance, say that he is lazy, Philippe Berthelot answers:

"He never stops working. He accomplishes his work in the hours when he is meditating . . . he works when he is smoking his cigarettes . . . at meal times . . . when he remains silent . . . he works at night, in his bed, when he rests . . . I truly believe that he works even when he sleeps. . . ."

To Briand work is not a task that is accomplished by sitting at a table, pen in hand making little marks on pieces of white paper. To write even a few lines is an effort for him. It is almost impossible to find any lengthy specimens of his handwriting.

His working instruments are his mind in which he is always building up some scheme and his imagination that enables him to discover a solution to any question that is troubling him. The work of his staff consists in creating the road that will lead to that solution.

Curiously enough, Briand who started life as a revolutionist, never wants to destroy. He has never attacked

a government in power. He does not waste his time demolishing, but uses whatever material he finds to build with. He is certainly the only man in the French government who has remained so continuously in power.

When he settled in the Foreign Office in 1921 it was to be for a long period. He was to become a sort of permanent Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the freedom to continue his own work logically and uninterruptedly. This was to enable him to build up the steps of the beautiful staircase that led to the peace he had dreamed of, a staircase whose halting places were the parleys in London and Paris; the conference in Washington; the first signature by forty-seven nations of the protocol of Geneva for the League of Nations; the conference of Genoa where the pact of non-aggression was signed; Locarno, which most dramatically symbolizes the idea of peace; the pact of Paris. . . . Indeed, the work accomplished was colossal. Yet Briand was often attacked and criticized. But all this did not seem to touch him. He felt too keenly what was going on for the good of Europe, what new spirit was born on the shore of the Lake of Locarno to stop and quarrel with personal antagonists.

CHAPTER XXXI

The United States of Europe

THOSE who have watched the development of Briand's career through his conversations as well as through his actions, know well enough that an idea comes out of the soil of his mind just as a plant grows. Underground the unseen germ grows stronger each day, the roots lengthen and sink deeper into the ground. When the plant finally bursts through the earth, it grows imperceptibly each day, flourishing when the sun shines and the season is favorable, progressing until the tree has spread out all its branches.

Briand himself uses that image when he refers to the germ of an olive tree which he planted on the banks of the lake at Locarno. He describes the first shoot of the fragile plant that burst through the soil with such difficulty, and begs the people not to crush it rudely, knowing that when the tree will have attained its full growth, the people will love to rest under its shade.

It would be possible to point out in Briand's career each moment at which an idea first took shape. As far back as 1915 the idea of the League of Nations had appeared to him, as we saw on that autumn day at Bonnière. The horror of the war and the necessity of creat-

ing a meeting ground for nations to which they could be called in case of emergency, appear like *leit motifs* in all his private and political conversations from that day.

When his plan is to bring European nations to build up a permanent system for coöperative relations, it cannot be accomplished in one day, but he always supplies some temporary solution that allows him to start the work immediately.

"It is for this reason," he declares, "that so many conferences had to take place while Europe was unconsciously waiting for the formation of the League of Nations, which is after all just a permanent conference."

To Briand these conferences, succeeding one another, are all part of a grand scheme. The conference of Genoa grew out of Cannes. In the conference of Genoa there was a germ of the Kellogg Pact, as each of the nations that were there had to sign a pact of non-aggression. A new world is slowly emerging out of all the chaos that was left by the War.

Briand believes in the League of Nations. When people speak lightly of it before him he points indignantly to what it has already accomplished. But this does not mean that to him the League of Nations is the final answer. He feels that there is in Europe the

need for another organization that will be a bond between nations and that still has to be created.

This is the idea to which he referred for the first time on September 5, 1929, at the meeting of the League of Nations and which was called "The United States of Europe."

The newspaper men, who know that it is Briand's way to announce unexpectedly in a speech important ideas that have been germinating in his mind, always watch him expectantly and then amplify his suggestions in the Press. He is considered by them as the man who has always carried out his promises and who may tomorrow put France at the head of any progressive movement.

The first time Briand referred to the plan as the United States of Europe, the effect was tremendous. The phrase appealed to the popular imagination and was taken up by the newspapers and the populace.

The last time I saw him, feeling what there was in that idea, I brought up the subject in an attempt to find out what were his hopes for success, whether he had started the work of realizing the plan.

Briand, with his usual practical common sense, interrupted me, "The work doesn't have to be started," he said. "It has begun already. Every day strengthens the link between countries which are growing accustomed to the idea of coöperation. The League of Na-

tions did a great deal for that. Of course, there are new steps to be taken. A practical organization has to be constructed, and such things take time. Don't you remember the first time I spoke of the idea of the League of Nations how far away it seemed? It was when a representative of the Duma was received by the Chamber of Deputies. I had already spoken of it at the end of my first address to Parliament as a Premier. It struck President Wilson, and he spoke to me about it. He was very much interested and said, 'I am very much in favor of that idea, I will do everything I can to introduce it into the peace treaty.' "

Briand's idea now is that between nations geographically grouped like those of Europe, a federal link must be created and that it is necessary for nations to be able at any moment to come together to discuss their own interests and take resolutions in common. In a word, what must be built is a permanent organization to handle European problems.

It is that federal bond that Briand spoke of on September 5th, 1929 before the League of Nations. For the first time the principle was raised which is actually the basis of the discussions and the studies that are going on now. Briand added that this European bond was by no means to take the place of the League of Nations; that it was purely a question of European organization.

Referring to the phrase, "The United States of

Europe," which has since been repeated all over the world, he pointed out how great was the prestige of words and how they could excite public opinion. The bond of which he was thinking was just a settlement, the logical conclusion of all the meetings and conferences in which the nations had come together on so many questions.

With admiration he spoke of the powerful organization of the United States, smiled at the idea that there was any thought of challenge in the plan to make such an organization for Europe. One could see that the idea of federation was born partly through admiration for American production.

"The scattering of European efforts injures all economic interests," he said. "Many Americans are in favor of the plan, which will mean prosperity for Europe and consequently more business and trade between the two countries.

"It cannot be a question of a real United States," he continued, "because each nation of Europe must retain its sovereignty. But since Europe is geographically a unit, there are problems which exist for all. The economic question should be the first one to be considered, but even in political and social problems, it would often be to the advantage of the various countries to meet and solve questions in common."

When one reviews the work of the League of Na-

tions in the past years, it is easy to find more than one example of what has already been brought about by the coöperation instituted by the League. In 1920 there was a menace of typhus from Russia, the results of which might have been terrible in Europe where war had already done so much damage. All Europe had to face a common danger. A hurried meeting was called in Warsaw of the European Sanitary Department of the League of Nations. Not only were measures taken to stop the danger, but plans were made for the organization of preventive measures for countries outside of Europe, among them China.

These measures against the menace of typhus were possible only because there was in existence such an organization as the Health Department of the League of Nations. It would have taken weeks and probably months before the war to bring together all the representatives of European countries and it is probable that all of Europe would have been contaminated by typhus before such a meeting could have been arranged.

But even in matters of less urgency than a possible epidemic, in such matters as transportation and intercountry communication through river traffic and the rapid distribution of newspapers and information, the League is considering every day more questions that can be solved on international grounds.

The field of economics which included the questions

of customs, industry, production, trusts, prices and labor certainly should bring an exchange of ideas between the governments of Europe. But this aspect of the work is not yet practically organized and it is probably in that domain that the greatest need for organization is felt. This was underlined in the last meeting of the League of Nations when it was said that an armistice in customs and duties would be of great value, if, as a balance, there was constituted between producers of various countries an industrial settlement that could be controlled.

Briand's idea is that all this activity now going on in disjointed efforts would have to be coördinated and organized permanently to form that federal bond so necessary to the economic prosperity of Europe. It was out of his feeling for this need of coördination that grew the idea referred to as a United States of Europe.

He explains that this plan could work out practically by calling periodic meetings at some chosen point, Geneva, for instance, where responsible representatives of the governments could examine the suggestions of the League of Nations and see how they could be resolved practically to the satisfaction of each nation. Once these practical, economic questions were settled, it might then be possible to take up those political questions which have until now been carefully avoided

by the League of Nations because of fear of complications.

Are not those political problems the ones which weigh most heavily on the relations between the nations? The possibility of being able to discuss them on a common ground seems such a desirable aim to Briand that he refused to put it aside. Though he says in his speeches that it is a question for the future, to him the future is never far away.

When one suggests to Briand that the federal bond might take the place of the League of Nations, he denies it most vigorously. "The League of Nations must not lose its essential characteristic of universality. The federal bond will confine its efforts to Europe, the League of Nations occupies quite another place in the scale of values, because of its international quality and will keep its power of control even over Europe."

In Briand's mind there are three distinct gradations —the nation, the federal bond that will unite Europe, and the League of Nations.

All of these ideas will be submitted to the individual countries by the French government on the basis of a questionnaire, and in the meeting of the League of Nations that is to take place in September, 1930, the program will be discussed and settled.

But Briand does not doubt that the League will

adopt the idea and that the discussion will be devoted only to methods of carrying it out.

Though this scheme appeared as a glamorous solution to the problems of Europe, it will take weeks and months of conferences and discussions to work it out in all its practical details. But, at least, it is constructive work. When one considers what a financial catastrophe a war like the last one is—even to the victorious nations—no sacrifice is too great to prepare the economic organization that will insure the solidarity of Europe.

Briand, who knows all this, is optimistic nevertheless. He knows that already the bellicose nations of Europe have signed a pact renouncing aggressive attacks, that it has been possible to bring Germany and France to coöperate, to sign the Kellogg Peace Pact under the influence of America, casting out war. To those who doubt that such a thing as uniting the different countries of Europe is possible we will say as Briand does:

"It may meet opposition . . . it may bring discussions . . . it may take a long time, but one day surely it must be realized. . . ."

CHAPTER XXXII

The Man of the People

BRIAND'S work goes on, and no one can say what new chapter will be added tomorrow to the chronicle of peace.

* * * * *

However, in Geneva work continues steadily on the bond that will in the future bring Europe closer and closer, until there is created a real federal organization. There is no doubt that since the World War, problems between nations are being discussed on a higher standard. This is perhaps the best reason to hope for a better future. High ideals, no more than sunrise, can be stopped by frontiers.

Historians in days to come will probably discuss and find out what has been the influence of these meetings on the development of European politics. They will write about Briand and Lloyd George and analyze the conversations that brought Stresemann, Briand and Luther to a roadside inn to decide the destinies of their respective countries.

* * * * *

As one looks back on Briand's life, he appears as one of the few men who has remained faithful to his first beliefs. Accused by advanced political parties of being a renegade, he shrugs his shoulders. Reproached in the past by certain moderates as having revolutionary ideas he smiles and goes on his way. The truth is that whether in the early hours of his life, when he devoted himself to freeing labor, or whether he pleaded for the strikers rendered desperate by the unfavorable conditions of their work, or working for the release of political victims, he is always the man of the people, understanding their needs, and full of pity for the suffering uselessly imposed upon them.

That human pity is the basis of all that he believes, of all his undertakings, of all the plans that he has carried through. That pity he felt more keenly than ever when he saw men come from every station of life, from the fields, and the factories and the sea, to form an improvised army at the crucial hour. Insufficient armament, makeshift equipment, hurriedly appointed chiefs . . . but never mind . . . the French are used to defending their soil in the face of immediate menace or in hours of revolution. Animated as they were by the will of the people that the enemy shall not pass, they were united in thought and stood as a human wall against the well-oiled, well-prepared and well-armed iron legions of the Kaiser. Imaginative and sensitive,

Briand was to realize fully the beauty of such a sacrifice. He knew those people so well. There were among them the workers of the factories for whom he had pleaded in Saint Nazaire, the fishermen who had been the friends of his youth, the typographers with whom he had bent over the machines. All of them appeared so touching, so simple in their abnegation. He felt that they had to be protected.

He knew also that the German worker, the German farmer, wanted no more than the French to have those massacres imposed upon them.

It is on that ground of human pity that he felt the necessity for a revolution in ideas. Once more Briand was to become a revolutionist—a pacific one. Out of the noise of the machine guns and the explosions of the shells was to grow that vision of peace. Each time during the war when Briand saw the ravages that were being inflicted upon men and homes, his horror grew. He felt keenly the tremendous debt that the world had contracted with those men.

The only way to pay was to be true to the ideals which had brought the Allies together, to assure them that this war would be the last war, that those who had died had died for a better future, that they were preparing for their sons a world where such cataclysms could not happen. All those promises had to be kept. The world had to rid itself of its militaristic ideals and

the illusion that a country could be protected only by armies and navies. There was something above all that —a combination of rights of human beings and nations. That was to be the work after the war.

* * * * *

That idea of the black veils worn by the widows, of the pains of the mothers, of the terror for the children left to them, haunted Briand. Like black ghosts they appeared in all his speeches. Even when he spoke before the most formal diplomatic assemblages, he referred to the plaintive voices that he heard all the time, to the lonely souls who turned to him for help.

Masses of letters came to him from all those people who unconsciously realized that that man, who thought so well and spoke so eloquently and simply in a language that they all understood, was their friend. When they met him, they had the impression that he was kind. He would listen to them patiently. They did not consider him such a great man. He did not make them self-conscious, whether they stopped him on the roadside in the country or whether he stood by the bed of a wounded man.

Often he used to go to the hospitals to those boys whom he considered as an unknown family. He never said to them any of those trite sentences, any of those

grandiloquent phrases that too many passers-by obliged the soldiers to listen to. No—Briand, when he said any word at all, showed that he appreciated their troubles. He did not try to hold out to them any vague hope. Sometimes he would even say gruff words to them, shake them, scold them in an attempt to stiffen their spirits. And when he promised anything, it was always something that he had the power to give and that he never forgot.

* * * * *

Among those who had suffered so terribly from the war and who had survived, Briand was most popular. His plan for a future Europe allowed them to hope that their sacrifices had really helped to build it. He gave them sound reasons to be proud of themselves.

After Locarno he was once invited by the *Poilus d'Orient* to a great luncheon given in his honor, where he was to be received by nearly a thousand soldiers. The luncheon was in honor of the man they called "The Man of Saloniki" and who had now become the Man of Peace. By his side stood military chiefs, among them General Gouraud, so popular among the troops.

Briand was presented with a medal on which was engraved a drawing of the town of Saloniki, and over it the open wings of Victory.

What an audience he had that day! Every word of his speech was cheered, every sentence applauded. The members of Parliament were not always so kind. He was at that moment going through a difficult period, being attacked on political lines.

Among those with whom he felt so friendly, ready to share his ideals, he explained and defended his political-pacific aims, explained to those men who had each gone through so many deadly hours that human victory was now to be prepared and fought for to reach the real peace.

Eagerly they all listened. . . .

* * * * *

What France had to fight for now was not a powerful army. It was peace. . . .

"Many do not understand," he said with a slight tinge of bitterness. "What about that? If it is a crime to want to increase the moral strength of France, then I will commit that crime, but I do not think, as I am speaking to soldiers who have made so many heroic sacrifices to the country, that my words will this time fall on closed ears, or ears that do not want to hear. I am sure that my thoughts go to your hearts and that you are with me."

The feeling that those men are standing by his side,

believing in him, is his great comfort. Each time a delegation of mutilated men came to him, he received the same impression. On a day when the agreements of Locarno were criticized and attacked and to which he had to reply, he answered simply by telling a story that symbolizes what were his feelings at that moment.

"Very recently, I had the honor to receive a delegation of young men of different nations, all of whom had been wounded in the war. Every one bore on his body the proofs of some terrible injury. One of them was an Austrian who had been led into the room by his wife, his eyes staring vaguely and empty of life and light. Both his arms were gone and his efforts to walk were pitiful. He came close to me and talked to me in a voice shaking with emotion.

" 'Sir, don't let yourself be stopped in your work. We are five million mutilated men. In their names, I, blind, I, without arms, a mere fragment of a man, but who at least has the right to speak, I come to you to tell you that our hearts are with you . . . please go on . . . go on.' "

END.

INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF NAMES

Anseele 58
Asquith 219
220
Balfour 219
220
Bernhardt, Sarah 34
131
Berthelot, Marcellin 132
316
Berthelot, Philippe 134
252, 311
Billot 82
Bonaparte 280
Bourgeois, Leon 208
223, 297
Bourget, Paul 34
Brocqueville de 232
Buch Captal de 171

Caillaux 173
Carnot 64
Castelnau de 217
Chamberlain, Austen 265
267, 274, 276, 281, 287, 291
305, 307
Chapman, Victor 227
Clemenceau 27
111, 124, 128, 140, 173, 189
207, 210, 216, 236, 239, 249
Cochin, Denis 208
218
Coppée 232
Coquelin 34
Cousin 130
Crettiez 105

Debner 195
DeMusset, Alfred 32
Denvignes 229
Deplat 66
67
Descaves, Lucien 34
79
Deschanel 249
DeVigny, Alfred 32
Doumergue 189
208
Dreyfus, Alfred 79–85
Duguesclin 171
Durcuy 130

Emery, Dr. 313
Esterhazy 84

Foch 245
France, Anatole 76
79, 83, 312
Francis 64–67

Gallieni 195
207, 217
Gallifet de 89
Gambetta 80

Genty 20
36, 131
George, Lloyd 216
219, 220, 247, 252, 258, 327
Goudeau 34
Grey, Lord 185
Guesdes, Jules 58–61
63, 76, 83, 89, 94, 112, 189

Haig, Sir 246
Harding 253
255
Hebrard 80
Herrick, Myron T. 183
256
Herriot 288
Hindenburg 221
Hugo, Victor 32
36
Hugues, Clovis 96
Huysmans, J. K. 34
79

Jacquier 48
Jaures 76–79
83, 85, 89, 126, 128, 136, 147
152, 186
Joffre 190
192, 193, 196, 204, 226, 245

Kellogg, F. B. 299
303
Kitchener, Lord 216
218, 219, 221

LaFargue, Paul 58
89
Lamartine 32
Lamenais 119
Lancken, von 231
232
Le Bon, G. 192
Leger, Alexis 311
315
Liebknecht 58
Loubet 87
121
Lucien, A. 79
Luther, Chancellor 272
274, 287, 293, 327
Lyautey 227

Mackensen 223
Maglione, Mgr. 297
Maunoury 195
Maupassant, G. de 34
Meline 208
Mercier, Cardinal 232
Merode, Countess de 231
232
Meyer 68
Millerand, Alex. 89
93, 128, 136, 192, 197, 200
213
Montalembert 119
Müller 268
299
Murger 31

Mussolini 275 287
Nivelle 226
Olivier 70
Painleve 208 217, 241
Pelloutier 53 54, 86
Peycelon, Gilbert 30 311
Picquart 84
Poincaré 72 174, 182, 183, 192, 197, 232 249, 259, 304
Prince, Norman 227
Ribot 180 189, 193, 219, 220, 232, 233 236, 241
Richepin, Jean 34
Rivaud 67 68
Robespierre 152
Rourvier 123 126
Rousseau, J. J. 262
Rousseau, Waldeck 54 87, 128, 140
Sabatier 166
Samain, Albert 34
Sarrail 218
Sarrien 128
Scialoja 283
Sembat, Marcel 189 202
Severine 66
Sharp 227 301
Sheurer-Kastner 80
Skrzinski 284
Sorbon, Robert 31
Stresmann 169 274, 283, 287, 291, 293, 295 299, 304, 327
Thomson, Gaston 80 189, 193
Turot 202
Val, Merry del 120
Van Iseghem 46
Vandervelde 283 287
Verne, Jules 22
Viviani 76 83, 89, 180, 182, 185, 188 193, 197, 199, 202, 207, 225
Voltaire 262
Wilhelm, Kaiser 218 222, 230
Wilson, Woodrow 212 231, 240, 247, 256, 321
Wirth 293
Zola 79 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AUBERT, ALFRED, *Briand, Sa Vie Politique, l'Orateur, l'Homme, son Oeuvres.* Etienne Chiron, éditeur, Paris.

BERET, GEORGES, *De Gambetta à Briand.* Oudin, 1914.

BLUM, GEORGES, *L'Allemagne Mise à Nu.* (Société d'Édition.)

BONNAMOUR, *L'Apaisement.* Bernard Grasset, éditeur.

BRIAND, ARISTIDE; *La Séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat. Discussions de la loi.* Tome I, Tome II. 2 volumes, publiés Chez Fasquelle, Éditeur, en 1909.

BURÉ, EMILE, *Aristide Briand.* "L'Illustration." 23 Novembre, 1918.

BUREAU, PAUL, *Quinze Années de Séparation.*

CORNILLEAU, *De Waldeck Rousseau à Poincaré.*

DANIÈLOU, *Carnet d'un Parliamentaire.* Figuière, éditeur.

FABRE-LUCE, ALFRED, *Locarno sans Rèves.* Bernard Grasset, éditeur.

HARDEN, MAXIMILLIAN, *Aristide Briand.* "Le Monde Nouveau." 14 Avril, 1926.

PELLOUTIER, MAURICE, *Fernand Pelloutier, sa Vie son Oeuvre.* Schleicher Frères, éditeur.

SISCO, JOSEPH, *Aristide Briand.* Marcel Rivière, éditeur, Paris, 1930.

ZÈVAÉS, ALEXANDER, *Le Socialisme en France depuis 1871.*

Le Cri de Paris. 24 Avril, 1927.