

M. Poincare

AS THE FRENCH SEE HIM.

M. Barthou, an ex-President of the French Republic and a member of the Academy, has written a series of portraits of his contemporaries in his recently-published "Le Politique." M. Poincare appears in this book under the fanciful name of Mosanus. The following are extracts from M. Barthou's enthusiastic description of the man who has become the most important, and perhaps, the most menacing, statesman in Europe:—

In the House, there is no art more difficult than that of speaking well while reading and giving to this reading the effect, the movement, and the action of a speech.

"Mosanus."

Mosanus excels in this art of which he is a past-master. But Mosanus is a great orator, and the orator who has given spirit and form to the speech remains an orator as he reads it; he watches over it, completes it, corrects it, gives life to it. The skill of Mosanus is extraordinary in all things. There is not a clearer, a more orderly, a more methodical mind than his. He sees at a glance that is as swift as it is sure, the whole of a question and its details; from the trees he discovers the forest. When his plan is laid in all its parts and every idea on development is placed there in its tropical order, he writes, almost without erasures, in a small handwriting, elegant and spontaneous, a speech which he would have improvised with the same ease. This memory of Mosanus is well-nigh miraculous, and, as he is always exercising it, are has not weakened its prodigious facilities. Memory is a secondary gift; but the higher gifts of the orator do not attain their full development in him who is without it.

Ironical, Cruel, Magnificent.

Mosanus, whose greatest desire is to convince, is not incapable of pleasing. His mind has charm, but irony is his chief weapon. Mosanus is not the slave of the speech the pages of which he turns in an incomparable manner. When he is interrupted, the rejoinder comes quick, biting, often cruel. He has dignity and pride, and will not suffer these to be touched. But, above all, let no one reflect on France. To defend her Mosanus can impart magnificent tones to his voice. He is not the kind with whom one can easily rub shoulders or soon become familiar.

There are two ways of drawing it up (a ministerial declaration): either the President of the Council alone takes charge of it, or he asks each of his colleagues to contribute their paragraph. The mosaic method is a bad one; each minister has a quite natural tendency to pull the declaration his way and to lengthen it out. Mosanus practised the other method: whence his declarations have gained in brevity and in clarity.

The sacrifices made by the successors of Tigris towards the unity of the Allies; failed to produce such advantages as were expected from them. Mosanus, armed with this experience, demanded that the peace should give what it still had to give, and, to save his victorious and mutilated country from new deceptions and burdens, he took pledges from the enemy who, while he could pay, evaded the discharge of his promises by means of treacherous manoeuvres. Mosanus was considered more tenacious than pliable, but it was precisely tenacity that France needed more than pliancy. Mosanus, who had "deserved well of his country" during the war, deserves no less from her (for his service) during the peace. To the glory of being a great orator he has added that, which he prefers, of being a great citizen.

It is not always home policy that is of first importance; M. Poincare and M. Millerand were carried to the Presidency by a popularity due above all to the success of their foreign policies.

Besides, a man in active politics and in for submits to the Presidency of the Republic rather than desires it: M. Poincare in 1913 and M. Millerand in 1920 were driven thither against their inclinations by obstructions and circumstances over which neither had any control.

Tigris is, of course, M. Clemenceau, the tiger.

Sleep

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of the poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield us from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw.
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou dost.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine, by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
Lay down thyself, Stella's image see.
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