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## Blazed Path by Which His Country Rose From Wreckage Franco-Prussian War

M. Delcasse, Who Has Just Retired as Foreign Minister For France, Was One of the First in Europe to Sense Germanic Aggression—Saw Benefit and Necessity of a Closer Union of the Western Powers—France Trusted Him Because Her People Knew That no Whisper of German Iniquity, However Adroit, Would Influence His Judgment

BY W. A. WILLISON

LONDON, Nov. 8.—Last week's papers announce the resignation of M. Delcasse, the French Foreign Minister. The announcement has caused a profound impression here. His loss to France and to the Allied cause is universally regretted. His services to his country and to the Entente cannot be over-estimated. He saw with true vision that the only protection for the world against Germanic aggression lay in the creation of an Alliance with other European powers, which should be strong enough to maintain the balance of power in Europe. He blazed the path of a new foreign policy for France, which was to raise her from the wreckage of the Franco-Prussian war to her rightful place in Europe. He directed every effort towards preparing his native country for the future test, which he knew was inevitable. It was a cardinal plank of Germanic policy after 1870 that France should be at enmity with Britain. With every force at his command, Delcasse labored to defeat that policy. The fruits of his labor were the Entente with Britain and the practical development of the Russian Alliance.

**Close Union Necessary.**  
In an editorial leader, The Times says: "Nothing can undo the work that M. Delcasse has done. He has taught the French people the true basis of their foreign policy in its larger aspects. He was the first Foreign Minister to grasp what those bases must be. He saw the wisdom and indeed the necessity of a close union between the Western Powers, in face of the constant menace of German aggression. He settled the dangerous Fashoda question, he concluded the Entente with Britain, he helped to bring about the friendly arrangement of the Dogger Bank incident with Russia, and, with the help of the Czar, he thrust aside German proposals for a Continental combination against us during the Boer War. He warmly supported the Russian Alliance and did much for its practical development, while, aided by Visconti Venosta, he engaged in the first of those 'extra dances' with Italy which have had such lamentable results for her German partner. When German intrigue and German menace drove him from the Quai d'Orsay ten years ago, France saw to it that the policy he had followed was upheld in all essentials by his successors. It had become that national policy as it remains to-day, and none ventured to depart from it save at his peril. France and France's friends trusted him because they knew that no whisper of German iniquity, however adroit, would influence his judgment, and because they knew that he was absolutely free from the least suspicion of relations with those dubious elements of international finance which have sometimes exercised a sinister influence on foreign affairs. France and Frenchmen of all parties will, we are confident, realize to-day that whoever may be chosen to sit in his vacant place must adhere without flinching to the principles he laid down, and must apply them with the frank and manly firmness which made him a pillar of the Alliance and of the rights and liberties of Europe."

**Is Taciturn Southerner.**  
Elsewhere, The Times devotes a column to M. Delcasse and his career. The writer says:  
Few men can boast of intimate acquaintance with M. Delcasse. He is compounded of many contradictions, and none but his closest friends hold the key to his character. He is a taciturn southerner with a large mind and a small body. He has a warm heart beneath a reserved exterior, a bold imagination without expansiveness, quickness of perception, and steadfastness of purpose. When some Ministers resign a few questions are asked. When he resigned in June, 1905, his resignation was a European event. Since then he has resigned divers portfolios, and has voluntarily retired from the most important position in French diplomacy. His resignation last week will be classed in significance with that of 10 years ago.

**Victim of Campaign.**  
In none of the Allied countries were his qualities more fully appreciated than in Britain. M. Delcasse had, and has, a direct claim upon our gratitude. If, in 1905, he was made the victim of a skillfully-organized German campaign, which for a moment threw Paris into a state of panic, it was because he had the vision, the courage, and the faith to make the friendship with Britain one of the cardinal principles of French policy. Since 1870 it had been a cardinal principle of German policy that there should be enmity between France and Britain. Nowhere was satisfaction keener than in Berlin when the Fashoda incident seemed about to bring us into armed conflict with France. The amicable settlement of the incident, and the Anglo-French Convention of March 21, 1899, which followed it, were the work of M. Delcasse. His quickness of mind enabled him to perceive that, whereas German interests required the isolation in Europe of both Britain and France, French interests required the acquisition by France of firm friends and trusty allies.

**Agreements with Italy.**  
The convention with Britain was followed up by agreements with Italy that went far to remove the old Italian soreness over the French occupation of Tunis; and, by the end of 1902, Anglo-French-Italian conventions had been concluded in regard to the Mediterranean. In February, 1903, a telegram from the Madrid correspondent of The Times revealed the fact that M. Delcasse had, some months earlier, made overtures to Lord Lansdowne for a complete and detailed settlement of the Morocco question; and on April 8, 1904, the overtures thus made ripened into the Entente Cordiale and the Anglo-French agreement of that year. M. Delcasse, Lord Lansdowne and King Edward had, in fact, found themselves in substantial agreement in their reading of Franco-British interests, which were, as they had not ceased to be up to the outbreak of the present war, the maintenance of European peace, and the limitation of German opportunities for mischief-making by the elimination of causes of international friction in all quarters of the globe.

**Under German Ban.**  
The story of the German Emperor's visit of protest to Tangier on March 31, 1905; of the campaign that drove M. Delcasse from office in the following June; of the Algeiras Conference, where the spirit of concord that animated M. Delcasse's

lightly drawn. Circumstances have changed, and despite the gravity of the present hour, it might be misleading now to attribute vital importance to his withdrawal from office. M. Delcasse is certainly unwell. The strain of the war, his tendency to monopolize hard work, constant anxiety, and opposition from many quarters have so told upon him that his condition last week disquieted his friends. The question whether he would have been able to retain office had this health allowed need not be answered. Lack of courage is not among his failings. He would assuredly have wished to face his critics in Chamber and Senate, and to meet their doubts as to his policy with facts and arguments. Yet he has elected to resign, and no statesman in the Allied countries who has had direct dealing with M. Delcasse will be able to overcome a feeling of loss at his departure. He has "fixed pole in the flight of phenomena," an element of stability, a reliable pledge of continuity.

**Enduring Alliance.**  
Similarly, the time has not yet come to deal critically with his diplomatic work since he resumed control at the Quai d'Orsay after the outbreak of war. His part in the negotiation of the Convention with the Italian declaration of war upon Austria-Hungary was certainly important, and perhaps decisive. The significance of that arrangement as of the various proposals unsuccessfully made by the Allies for the reconstitution of the Balkan Union, can only be judged in the light of facts not yet fully known and with due consideration for the difficulties inherent in the war diplomacy of any extensive alliance.  
But one achievement to which he contributed, if, indeed, it was not actually inspired by him—the Anglo-Franco-Russian Convention of September 5, 1914, by which the three Allies solemnly pledged themselves not to entertain proposals for a separate peace—would be itself constitute a sufficient monument to his statesmanship. It remains the enduring basis of the Alliance, and the pledge of the unqualified determination of its members jointly to pursue their efforts towards victory without thought of peace until the cause for which they drew their swords has been completely vindicated.

**Many Problems Await.**  
M. Delcasse's successor will find many a problem awaiting him, and will have no lack of opportunity to prove his quality; but he may be sure of the firm support and good will from the Allies of France if he can attain to, and maintain the high level of trustworthiness on which M. Delcasse always moved, and which is indispensable to the successful prosecution of the war.

## Louvain Burned Not Shelled

(Leon Mirman, in the Nov. Atlantic.)

The houses in Louvain were burned one after another, methodically—I would say scientifically, were I not afraid of dishonoring that noblest of noble terms. There is no possibility of mistake about it; it was not shells that destroyed those houses during the fighting, as the chance of battle decreed; it was the hand of man which brought to the spot the special machines prepared for that purpose. We have found elsewhere in the district a number of these machines for setting fires; they form a part of the regular impedimenta of the German soldiers. There is no possibility of mistake, I say: the crime is not simply attested by the witnesses who still exist; it is signed. Those who, like myself, have had the painful duty of inspecting the devastated communes after their liberation, distinguish at the first glance the houses destroyed by the deliberate incendiarism of the savages from those which were simply subjected to bombardment.

It is like this: these houses have not crumbled, nor are they riddled with holes; the four walls are generally intact, and so are the chimneys, hollow masses of brick adhering to the walls, which quickened the flame with their draft. The photograph of a street taken along its length, would give a false impression of the real condition of the town; apparently not a building is injured, and yet each house is an empty skeleton remain, all blackened with smoke on the inside; not one has been demolished by shells.

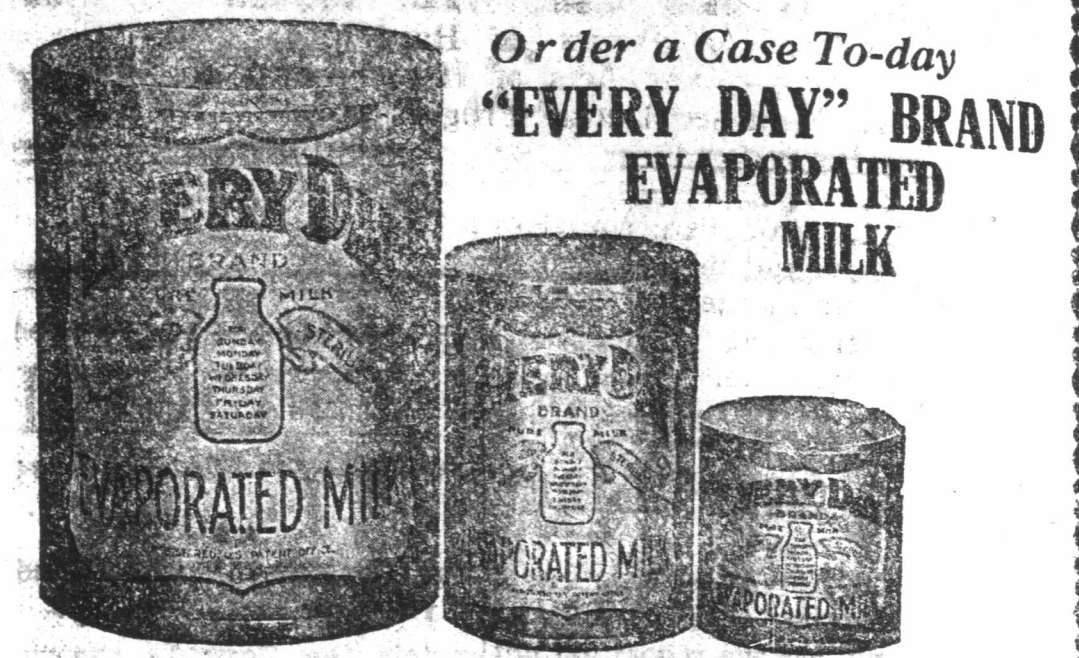
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diplomacy inflicted a severe reverse upon Germany, has been too often told to need repetition now. For some years M. Delcasse lived under the German ban; but his sterling qualities brought him again into prominence, and enabled him to undertake the reorganization and development of the French Navy. His influence on French foreign policy remained, nevertheless, real, albeit indirect, and his appointment in February, 1913 to be French Ambassador to the Russian Court was greeted with gnashing of teeth in German and Austrian official circles. In Petrograd M. Delcasse succeeded in linking the interest of Russia even more closely than before to those of France, and in helping to promote the intimacy of Anglo-Russian relations. Upon the details of his work in connexion with the Bulgaro-Rumanian negotiations of 1913, and with the Treaty of Bucharest in the following autumn, historians will be able to deliver judgment when secret archives are available. But there is no question that at Petrograd, as in Paris, his unvarying aim was the consummation of European peace by the promotion of international concord.

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