

THE LITERARY DIGEST

April 7, 1900: p. 403

FRANCE & GERMANY

MUCH of the hope that the Boers will ultimately be saved by the European powers is based upon the supposition that the German Emperor may intervene; but the German Government is convinced that Germany is the object of more hostile regard than any other country, and that she must prepare to defend herself against more than one enemy, should a quarrel leading to war arise. The organs which reflect government opinion especially distrust France. One of the latest causes of distrust is the attitude of M. Paul Deschaux, president of the Chamber of Deputies, who, upon his election to the Académie Française, expressed himself to the following effect:

My predecessor among the Immortals of the Academy foresaw that Germany would increase and that France would suffer reverses. Hence Hervé, after the war, was a strong advocate of an *entente* with Russia, to prevent the hegemony of Germany. France can not act as a rival to England and to Germany at the same time; to establish her power on the Continent she must have her coast free. It is easier for France to bring about an accord between England and Russia than for Germany to strengthen the friendship of Italy and Austria.

Coupled with demonstrations of this kind is the increased effort of the Roman Catholics to arouse discontent in Alsace-Lorraine. There is a paragraph in the constitution of the *Reichslande* which enables the governor to act without the Assembly, under certain circumstances. It has never been enforced; but the Catholics find it a hindrance, and demand its removal. Prince Hohenlohe, however, replied in the main as follows:

I have been governor of Alsace-Lorraine for nine years, and can say that people hardly ever bothered about the paragraph there. Minister von Koller, who was four years in office there, never even read the paragraph. This proves that its value as a means for agitation has only recently been discovered. I admit that the population is loyal in the main; but doubtless there is a minority who are not. In saying this, I do not intend to censure their attitude; I state but the facts. It is characteristic that the clergy should oppose the erection of a Catholic faculty at the University of Strassburg, for fear that French influence would vanish unless the students are restricted to the anti-German Seminary. Our relations to the French Government are the very best; but Alsace-Lorraine is borderland, and we must have the right to act quickly in cases of emergency.

In England there is much satisfaction with the Chancellor's speech, altho some papers question its prudence. The *London Spectator* says:

"The Chancellor only speaks the truth, but was it necessary, or even politic, to be quite so brutally direct? In any case, his words can hardly be pleasant reading to those Frenchmen who have been dreaming that if William II. could only be recouped out of the spoils of England they might regain their provinces without fighting Germany. South Africa, for example, is richer than Elsass-Lothringen. All those dreams vanish before the blood and iron of the Chancellor's speech."

The *Kieler Zeitung* remarks that Englishmen naturally are surprised to hear the truth spoken, especially as they affect to ignore the fact that Alsace-Lorraine was always inhabited by Germans, tho for a while in the possession of France. The paper also asks if it is really thought that the Kaiser could, if he would, part with German territory as with private property. Many Liberal German papers believe that fear of France is groundless. Indeed, French papers print comments of a sort which would have been impossible a generation ago. The *Paris Journal des Débats* says:

"It is not for us to judge whether the Alsacians are perfectly satisfied, or whether, as the Chancellor remarked, there is a minority which thinks with regretful sighs of French times. What concerns us more closely is that the Chancellor admitted the cordial relations existing between France and Germany. The old wound is not yet healed with us; but we know that, if we are to persist in the colonial policy begun by Jules Ferry, it is England, more than any other power, that opposes French interests. We do not believe that cordial relations between France and England are impossible, for the world is big enough for them; but the actions of Mr. Chamberlain and his fellow ministers prove that they do not think as we do. We can not carry on a struggle on two sides, hence we must stand well with all the continental countries. We regret, however, that government organs like the *Kölnische Zeitung* are so very anti-French."

The Berlin *Deutsche Tages Zeitung* declares that neither France nor Russia can fully trust Germany unless Germany makes herself free from England. "*Los von England!*" (Away from England), says the paper; "England is never trustworthy, and she will treat us only the worse if she believes we are influenced by her."—*Translations made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.*