

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

ALL France is pleased over the reception accorded to President Faure in Russia,—pleased, but not satisfied. For tho the Czar acknowledged that Russia and France are "allied nations," no one in authority in Russia has held out the hope that Russian troops are available for an attack upon Germany for the purpose of wresting Alsace-Lorraine from her. Many European papers think that France is not anxious for war herself, and is willing to be held back by Russia; and altho Premier Meline has made a bid for popularity by expressing a hope that Alsace-Lorraine would now soon be united with France, the majority of French statesmen are very reticent on the subject. Some French papers, however, have taken their cue from the Premier. The *Rappel* is certain that the Dual Alliance is intended to hold the Triple Alliance in check, and adds:

"France may now hope to regain her lost provinces with the help of Russia. The hour for revenge has come. Alsace-Lorraine will once more be French. The peace which was mentioned aboard the *Pothuan* must be based upon the débris of those powers which have raised themselves to prominence by brutal force."

The *Intransigent* clamors for the publication of the treaty. "Boulangier," says the paper, "would have published it, if only to flaunt it in the face of Germany." The *Libre Parole* hopes that "the allied nations soon may march together," and the *Petit Parisien* asserts that "great deeds will soon follow grand words." But the more influential papers are not so sure that war is at hand. The *Journal des Débats* merely remarks that the position of both France and Russia is much strengthened by their alliance. The *Temps* says:

"It has been attempted in other countries to describe the alliance as a means by which other ambitious nations may carry out their designs. That is a mistake. France and Russia are lucky in that their alliance is for their own benefit. The aim of both countries is to preserve the integrity of their frontiers. In doing this they strengthen the peace of the whole world."

The *Éclair* expresses itself in a similar manner, and many of the most warlike organs acknowledge that there is little hope for a war against Germany. Cassagnac writes in the *Autorité*:

"This secret and anonymous treaty begins to worry the people of France very much. Peaceful demonstrations follow each other, and every chance to regain Alsace-Lorraine is weakened. In this way will be brought about a condition akin to the formal renunciation of our just demands. But Russia cares nothing for that."

Comely, writing in the *Matin*, says:

"Our friendship with Russia has been of some value in our in-

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ternal affairs, for it has strengthened the present cabinet and made the President popular. That's about all. That the alliance saves France from attack is nonsense. Nobody in Europe wants to attack us, and we give ourselves a bad name if we try to make ourselves believe that we are members of an international system formed for the sake of plunder. Were we to be satisfied, and to say that we will not demand back what has been taken from us—mind, I do not advise this—then we would need no armaments. The only reason for the existence of our army is the hope to retake Strasburg. But Russia will not help us in this, and as every nation in Europe, ourselves included, fears war, the alliance is of little value."

The *Rappel* says: "We dream of an alliance for revenge, and we get an alliance for peace, and must bury our hopes." But nothing illustrates better that the present generation of Frenchmen are glad of an excuse to give up, or at least defer, the war of revenge, than the increased publication of books and articles admitting that France has no right to Alsace-Lorraine. A French officer, Marcel de Baillehache, has published a book in which he describes how few people had learned French in the conquered provinces. The clergy then encouraged the people to hold to their German ways, just as they now advise them to become French. "I quite believe," says the author, that "the Alsatians nowadays sing French songs to tease the Germans, and from a mere spirit of contradiction. But they probably took a great deal of trouble to learn these ditties." And the *Progrès Militaire* says:

"These are bitter truths, but nevertheless truths. Alsace has been reunited with Germany quite justly. The fact is, when we had the country we were foolish enough to choose the officials among the Alsatians. Hence nothing was done during an occupation of nearly two hundred years to unite closely this rich province with France. Quite the contrary."

The Russian papers do not hold out any encouragement to the war party in France, so far as an attack upon Germany is concerned. The *Novoye Vremya* says:

"The great significance of this visit of President Faure lies in the fact that two great and irresistibly strong nations are sincerely united in their love of peace, both for their own good and to the advantage of the human race in general. The enthusiasm of the people can not but increase from the knowledge that this alliance really benefits the civilized world. The olive branch which President Faure deposited on the tomb of Alexander III. illustrates that fact."

The *Viedomosti* and the *Novosti* are also very explicit in their protestations that the alliance is for peace. The *Sviet* only gives the French *revanche* party a little comfort. It says:

"The French people will understand how our hearts beat for them just as their hearts beat for us last year when we visited them. This is no visit of mere politeness. The French President has come to strengthen the mutual understanding. Our union guarantees our strength internationally. The Russians know what the French wish and hope, and tho they do not express their thoughts in words, they do so by a significant pressure of the hand."

This paper and the *Gazette de St. Petersburg* suggest intermarriage between the two nations to prevent the threatening depopulation of France.

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The German press does not discover any reason to be dissatisfied with the friendship between France and Russia. In the main the Germans are convinced that France does not really want war, and that Russia wishes to be on good terms with Germany. The alliance, says the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, Berlin, is in the first place defensive. Neither France nor Russia trusts the powerful combination of Central Europe, and they combined their forces because singly they are no match for Germany and her allies. The *Kölnische Zeitung* expresses itself, in the main, as follows:

The Dual Alliance and the trip of President Faure will leave things pretty much as they were. But we will not deny that the Russian *people* received the French very heartily, and that they are much more anti-German than the Russian *Government*. That is only natural. The Germans, called into Russia by former Russian rulers, laid the foundation of Russian civilization, but they did not always act rightly. They adopted many of the worst traits of Russian character. On the other hand the Russian has been an apt pupil, not only in the field of industry, but also of morality. The Russians have copied very successfully some of our best traits. They wish to be free from German tutelage now, they chafe under it, and show it by their friendship for France. Yet the love for France is only skin-deep. Educated Russians know that French civilization is on the decline, and hardly equal to German civilization, faulty tho the latter may be. The cultured in Russia are aware that the Russians can and probably will build up a civilization of their own, second to none. But the common people do not know it yet, and as they are tired of the Germans, and still too much behind to be satisfied with themselves, they make love to the French. Moreover, the Russians admire Faure, a plain citizen who has risen to the highest position in his country. The citizens of Russia wish to do homage to the Citizen-President of France, and we Germans should take pleasure in this touch of human nature, tho we are ourselves forgotten over it.

The Daily News, London, says that the Czar, tho friendly with France, will not anger Germany, and adds: "Put in the language of a nation of shopkeepers, this means that he hesitates to turn a customer away"; an opinion indorsed throughout by the British press. The official *Opinione*, Rome, thinks if France and Russia fraternize in this mild way, the Triple Alliance has nothing to fear, and the *Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, is certain that everybody in St. Petersburg means peace, but some people in France do not understand that peace and war can not harmonize.—*Translations made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.*