

# CLEMENCEAU THUNDERS HIS APPEAL FOR FRANCE WHILE FRANCE ITSELF SNUBS AND DISOWNS HIM

**"Old Tiger" Making Gallant Effort to Interpret His Beloved Country to America and Prevent Breach Which He Fears Politicians Are Forcing**

**Feeble in Body but Alert in Mind, Noted Statesman Shows Intense Desire to Crown Life by New Victory**

ASK almost any Frenchman in France, and he will tell you that the man least fitted to represent France in America is Georges Clemenceau. Ask almost any American anywhere and he will tell you that the man he considers best fitted to represent France anywhere is that same Georges Clemenceau.

Ask Georges Clemenceau himself what he thinks about it and he will probably say that he doesn't pretend to represent anybody except—Georges Clemenceau.

France said a scant "good-by" to him when he left her shores to come on his self-appointed mission to this country. Her farewell was, in fact, so scant as to be an obvious snub. For Georges Clemenceau, once "Old Father Victory," is definitely and bitterly and unrecognizably at odds with the whole present French Government and is almost equally at odds with the politicians who are anti-government.

In short, "Father Victory" isn't popular in France at all; France had to find some one on whom to blame her present extremely unsatisfactory condition, so she picked the old gray head of "The Tiger" as the most easily hit target for abuse and condemnation.

Everything wrong in France today is Clemenceau's fault, according to the politicians.

## Americans Accepted "Tiger" as Real Enemy

But if those same politicians had been in New York almost any day since the liner Paris anchored off New York's quarantine and the city boats took this gray head up to the Battery and deposited him there, they would have been forced to realize that Clemenceau does very definitely and actively and satisfactorily represent something.

And a close study of the situation might reveal the fact that what he represents is America's view of the Frenchman as he ought to be, of the France America helped to fight for, of the great nation which gave us Lafayette when we called and to which we gave Pershing and a million potential Pershings when she called.

There seems no doubt about it that France of today is not that France. But, to any one who has followed Clemenceau during the hours of his present visit, it seems to be equally without doubt that he is decidedly typical of the France that we used to love so whole-heartedly and admiringly. At least, that is the way he is being treated by Americans.

There is something pathetic in the spectacle of this aged man, bowed and bent and somewhat uncertain in his shuffling steps, coming all this long way to plead with us to show a greater love for a country which now shows no love for him.

But Clemenceau seems not to hold his country responsible for this present attitude toward him. He seems not to consider it at all. Just as every family has its good little boys and its bad little boys, so he seems to think France has, and the fact that the bad little boys are just now in power doesn't for a moment swerve his all-consuming, passionate love for the family.

It is that passionate love that he wants the whole world to share. He has become afraid that we will judge his France by the bad boys who are now in power. And, judging by them, he is afraid that we will come to misunderstand the deeper and more vital fundamentals, and, in turn, be misunderstood by the real Frenchmen who make up the France of his heart.

## Looks Into the Future for Readjustments

Clemenceau doesn't want these misunderstandings. He is almost in a panic at what they may portend for the future if they are allowed to grow. And so he has come to us to talk to us and reason with us and plead with us to remember that the old France is still there and the old America is still here and all this present condition is just a bothersome and irritating outcropping that ought to be downed, and downed quickly. He himself, in his peculiarly terse and simple diction, smacking almost of the story-form for children, told how he came to decide to visit us.

"I have seen Americans in the mud of the trenches for days and days without being relieved and looking very sorry," he said, "but the moment I came and brought them the crosses of war they had so magnificently gained, you know, they were all smiles. We shook hands and we spoke of the old France, America was the old place."

"They did not cry, but I could see the twinkle in their eyes. Of course, they knew I was there and I knew they were mine."

"One day in the highway I met a troop of soldiers going home, and they made me feel sad when they spoke of the old country."

"They said: 'Won't you come to America some day?'"

"I said: 'No, I am too old; I cannot think of going there.' I said, 'You make me make speeches and it tires my lungs.' I have very few of them left. Poor, miserable things."

"They said: 'Do come.'"

"I won't go," I said, and for years and years I said I won't go."

"One morning I was in my house



Clemenceau, the youth of sixteen, long before he was known as the "Tiger of France"



Georges Clemenceau gets his first view of America in fifty-six years



Among the many notables to greet Clemenceau upon his arrival in New York was Jules Jusserand, French Ambassador to America



bordering on the sea on the other side of the water, when I received bad news from America. I heard bad names. We were called imperialists and militarists. I think that is horrid and I thought I had better go and tell them how things happened to pass and to show them that their judgment was not sane and not right.

## Decided to Answer Critics From Abroad

"One day a British newspaper arrived. It contained criticism from a man of very high standing, calling me a bad name. Before, I thought I had better go and see America. At that moment I decided I had better go to America and defend her."

"That is the reason why I am here. I do not make speeches. I don't promise anything. I come, as you very well know, on a mission."

"Nobody can ascribe any personal aim to me in visiting this country. My life is over. But it does seem to me that I can do some service in letting you know how we Europeans judge the American people."

"It is necessary, because in the world at this time there is a crisis which hasn't existed before. How it will end nobody knows. If you tell the bad side—well, there has been a war—we may have to go to war again. If it turns out right and the right thing is done at the right time, then it is one of the greatest steps for the civilization of mankind."

Clemenceau shows one side of his personality—the side in which he reveals himself to great audiences when he knows that his words are to be carried to many thousands of persons. He knows exactly the effect which he wanted to produce and he wanted that effect made in his own words and not in the words of another.

## France His Only Idea, the France He Loves

Any one seeing the great Frenchman only a few times might gain the impression that there are really two Clemenceaus. One reveals he is the poet, the dreamer, the inspired patriot and the man imbued with a vast love for human kind. The other is the very irascible, brusque to the point of rudeness, a duelist whose words are sharp and whose every word is direct and leaves a wound.

And yet these two seemingly different personalities are made one on a closer study of the man himself.

Clemenceau is a man who thinks in terms of thousands or millions of people and whose ideas are national or even world wide. The individual seems to irritate him unless his individual happens to be one who represents a mass of people or who thinks in masses, as Clemenceau himself does.

On the boat the reporters tried to get advance information of what this speech was to be. Clemenceau gave them no chance even to get started in their interview. In order to protect himself, he did not hesitate to be downright rude. He was witty in his answers, but the wit was always barbed and designed to raise a laugh from the on-lookers at the expense of his victim. He wanted to wound in order to discourage, and no one knows better than Clemenceau how to wound with words.

Consequently the reporters got nothing from him on that trip except an impression of a hopelessly bad-tempered old man who was entirely devoid of any semblance of human love or kindness.

## Shows Other and Kindly Side to Americans

Yet Clemenceau had not been on shore half an hour before he reviewed himself in that other life. Once standing before the official representatives of the people of America gathered in New York's City Hall, the ill-temper and the rudeness and the cold unkindness fell away from him and he became the other Clemenceau, pleading in simple, childlike words the cause of a broken-hearted people, drawing tears from his own eyes and the eyes of his hearers by the great love for France and

speech which he delivered in the Metropolitan Opera House last night about that speech for months. He knew exactly the effect which he wanted to produce and he wanted that effect made in his own words and not in the words of another.

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for all mankind that suddenly seemed to become the keynote of his whole character.

Personally Clemenceau is probably the least distinguished-looking of any national welcome to this country. You

might meet him on an automobile trip through the back country roads of Pennsylvania or New Jersey and you would say to yourself, "There is a typical old country-man."

Many have spoken of him as being remarkably young for his eighty-one

## Colonel E. M. House, once the silent diplomat of America and an ardent admirer of Clemenceau, was the "Tiger's" host upon his arrival

allowance for good behavior he should leave just about 1920.

years. This is true of his mind and his spirit, but it is unquestionably a fact that his steps are becoming uncertain and he walks like a man upon whom the years are weighing heavily.

His mind, however, seems untouched with age. It is marvellously quick and vivid and its activity is prodigious. Its brilliancy is in striking contrast to the drab and rather shabby appearance of the man himself.

Do you remember the figure you used to see in the wartime movies—the stumpy, stoop-shouldered, thick-set man whisking in and out of trenches, a shapeless and battered-looking felt hat pulled down over his head, a sagging raincoat and muddy boots, and always an ebony cane in his hand?

It was that Clemenceau who came to New York. Heavy, square-toed black shoes had replaced the trench boots and an overcoat had replaced the raincoat, but it was just as shapeless and just as sagging as the wartime garment. And the old felt hat might almost have been the very same. Clemenceau replaced this with a new hat, but somehow the new hat does not seem to belong to the man and totally spoils the picture.

## Real Man Gazes Out From Rough Exterior

This description may seem to be uncomplimentary, but really it is not. It is entirely typical and characteristic of the man. His mind is far too engrossed with problems of nations to pay even the slightest attention to the personal appearance of Clemenceau the man. Besides, in this respect, Clemenceau is an individual and individuals irritate "Old Father Victory."

The great Frenchman has often been referred to as looking like a Mongolian. At a distance, perhaps when he is talking from a stage, this impression is not very distinct, but it unquestionably is when you are close to him, especially in bright sunlight. He has small beady eyes which flash out under slanting, over-longing gray brows, and the upward slant of the eyes is accentuated by the still greater upward slant of the crow's feet which become quite deeply marked as wrinkles when he smiles.

His skin has an obvious yellow tinge. He is bronzed and burned by the sun and the salt air of his Brittany home, but this does not conceal the suggestion of Mongolian color in the skin. This characteristic led to a incident that was a favorite story in the trenches during the war.

On one of his numerous visits to the trenches he had a long conversation with an officer, who, engaged in commanding a company of infantry for the moment, incidentally happened to be a Deputy.

After Clemenceau had left the sector a "quell" stepped up to the captain and said:

"Who is the civilian you were talking to a minute ago, captain? It seems to me I've seen his picture somewhere."

The captain was nonplussed. Was it possible that one of his soldiers did not know the "Tiger"? So he decided to have a little fun with the man.

"He is a rich and powerful Chinese banker," the captain informed the soldier. "He dresses in the European fashion so as to visit the trenches without creating too much of a stir."

"He might better raise an army of five or six million Chinese and come and give us a little less against the Germans," replied the "quell" gallantly.

## Aminty Ruthless to Strong Enemies

The "Tiger" is charged by his enemies with being lenient. He has never shown any mercy to a powerful enemy; the fight was always a rush. To be lenient, however, he has been known to be lenient.

After the court had sentenced young Cottin to death in 1919 for firing a bullet seven miles into the head of the automobile in which Clemenceau was riding, two of which struck the "Tiger," he recommended that the young anarchist's sentence be commuted to a term of imprisonment.

"How long shall we give him?" the Minister of Justice asked.

"About ten years," said Clemenceau. "I'll be dead and gone before he comes out. In case he should like to use me for a target again."

Cottin has now served nearly four years of his sentence and with time al-

In Strasbourg, during the never-to-be forgotten voyage to the retrieved provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, he visited most of the places of worship of the various religions—Catholic churches, Protestant temples and Jewish synagogues.

"I have chosen my religion," he told a friend one evening. "The Jewish religion."

His friend expressed great surprise. "It is the only religion where one may keep one's hat on at all times," he explained, rubbing his bald head.

Clemenceau got his first experience as a newspaper man during his sojourn in the United States between 1898 and 1902.

Throughout his residence in America Clemenceau sent contributions to the Paris Times. "Letters from America," they were called, and they dealt with all the foremost questions of the day. His articles on the future of the Negro race in the United States, written two years after the end of the Civil War, are a model of style and show a clear understanding of this complex problem. They set forth the difficulties and dangers besetting the relations of the white and colored races in the United States.

Clemenceau wrote them after an extensive tour of the South and he drew a vivid picture of conditions in that then devastated area. Admirable literary documents, displaying democratic tendencies, brilliant foresight and large philosophical ideas, they show on the part of this young man of twenty-seven nearly all the qualities of the remarkable old man of today.

## His Book on America Written Years Ago

A New York editor, after Clemenceau's fall from power in 1909, asked him to write a book on America.

"It is already written," replied Clemenceau. "Just look through the Times files for 1897 and 1902."

On the way uptown on the day he landed in New York Clemenceau passed on Lafayette street the site of the old Astor Library, where he read for days at a time when he lived in New York. Turning west into North street, the procession passed the Hotel Lafayette, another life spot in his memory, and through the heart of what was the French quarter, near Washington square in those days. He had already passed on lower Broadway the site of Puff's restaurant, which he eagerly inquired for. On the ride from the Battery up he recognized Trinity, St. Paul's Chapel, the City Hall and Madison and Union squares.

Clemenceau speaks with an accent, but has an eloquent vocabulary of English words. He seldom gesticulates, but rarely does he shrug. At times he gives a slight tilt or shake. His demeanor is one of calmness.

## Depew Sees Future Ahead of "The Tiger"

Chauncey Depew, who is older than Clemenceau by some seven or eight years, predicted that this nerve of his is going to hold him up for some time to come and warns us that we must not consider Clemenceau through with public activities by any means.

## Depew Sees Future Ahead of "The Tiger"

At present he is blamed for all the ills of the Peace Treaty and the failure of the League of Nations and for everything else that is unfavorable in the France of the present day. Among French politicians, Left, Right and Center can agree only on one thing, and that is their hatred of this old man who has come to visit us.

And yet he remains a truly national figure, perhaps the only one in contemporary France since Foch has turned quarrelsome and garrulous over his Rhine. It is even quite on the cards that there may be a distinct reaction in Clemenceau's favor should any measure of success in America's struggle with a State League of Nations and for everything else that is unfavorable in the France of the present day. Among French politicians, Left, Right and Center can agree only on one thing, and that is their hatred of this old man who has come to visit us.

## France Has Failed to "Get Its Plea Across"

As a fact, France seems to be her own worst enemy. The official French method of convincing the United States of the pathetic bent of French policy is to export mendacity to talk in Detroit on the glories of Molere or to stifle about sanctity with a St. Philippe Lausanne once sickly compliments. France has not yet learned the difference between publicity and propaganda. The British are adepts at the former, and it still goes the matter in the dead as is discussed. Molere has taught to do with the Sanr mines. Georges Clemenceau at least understands that and is no propagandist.

Publicity and its publicity, with great prestige behind it, publicity, first for the theme that France is no militarist nation, while handicapped by the possession of a surplus of marshals and old equipment and able to work high publicity, secondly, for the thesis that if the Versailles Treaty was imperfect and not executed as planned, that those who contribute to the cause ought now to get together again and fight for the peace of their own vital well-being.

That Clemenceau has been badly treated by his own government, especially by Marshal Foch—one day the "Tiger" retorts scurrilously to the usual "no question."

He comes to talk history, not to actual individuals and that not one actual individual could come out of France today to try to convince the United States on one or two vital points is doubtful. The very fact of his being so communicated of both parties and apparently with small idea for his argument called back.

But what adds greater force to it is the curious phenomenon by which France is today behind the idea and the United States. Only a hundred or two years ago—between Foch and Clemenceau—a national prohibition was in effect.



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