

## GENERAL SURVEY

IF Volumes I and II of this Diary have conveyed a true picture of the position, the reader will have derived from their perusal a presentiment that in December 1923 some imminent calamity threatened the German State. The dangers and difficulties of the preceding period had been such that they seemed to lead at no distant date to collapse or disintegration. The years 1921 and 1922 represented a rising tide of peril; in 1923 a climax was reached; some fundamental change of territory and status appeared the certain issue.

FORECASTS of a pessimistic nature were current in Berlin, and were indeed justified by an impartial survey. Even those who knew best the power of resistance and the innate strength of the German people doubted their ability to come through. The combination of external pressure with internal dissension appeared irresistible.

WHAT was the position when a pale, Northern sun rose on the snow-covered, windswept streets of Berlin on January 1, 1924? The prospect was comfortless and disquieting.

OF the territory left to the Reich by the Treaty of Versailles, a large portion of the Rhineland was still occupied by foreign troops. This was in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty, as a guarantee for the payment of Reparation; and Germany had no legal ground of complaint. But since little progress had been achieved in settling the mode of Reparation payment, there was no certainty that this occupation would cease in 1935, the date originally contemplated. It might indeed be prolonged until Reparation had been paid integrally.

A STILL more serious circumstance oppressed German minds. Outside the territory legally occupied in accordance with the Treaty, a richer, more vital province had

now been held by French and Belgian troops for nearly a year. The industry of this district—the most important in Germany—had been seized by force of arms; the mines and factories were busy under foreign managers imposed by foreign bayonets. Men who refused to work were imprisoned or exiled, recalcitrant managers were fined or incarcerated, the profits of industry were confiscated bodily, and the produce of industry was utilised to contribute to the prosperity of rival concerns abroad. The entire territory was cut off from the rest of Germany by a Customs cordon of extreme severity, mitigated only by the lenitive effect of occasional contraband. While this condition lasted, what hope could there be of recovery?

MEANTIME, the finances of the Reich had, a few weeks before, been through a crisis of almost unexampled intensity. The national currency had fallen to 1/18,000,000,000th of its original value, and had become practically worthless. All debts had been repudiated. The State, having borrowed money repayable in the old currency, took advantage of the complete worthlessness of this token of numeration to escape from effective liability, by payment in depreciated paper. Private debtors followed suit. Investors and creditors saw an aggregate obligation of 10,000 millions sterling repudiated. The effect of such proceedings on public credit and on the habit of saving appeared at that time likely to be not only temporarily disturbing, but permanently destructive.

FROM a third point of view the outlook was menacing—Separatism was again raising its head. In the Rhineland, in the Pfalz, in Bavaria, in Saxony, the previous twelve months had witnessed risings, demonstrations, "putsches," riots, all betraying the disintegrating action of powerful forces set in motion either by foreign agitators or by subversive nationals. While, in each case, the Reich had triumphed over the particular attempt, the frequency of these troubles, their widespread character,

the sympathy they excited abroad, the absence of reprobation evoked at home, made careful observers apprehensive. A poison manifesting its potency at so many points of the body politic represented a grave menace and, at the best, constituted a serious obstacle to recovery.

AGAINST this formidable array of troubles, economic, financial, political, what were the forces which Germany could bring into line? They were not at first sight imposing.

THE Ministry was accounted weak. Stresemann, as Chancellor in August and September 1923, had taken the responsibility of the final decision to renounce Passive Resistance.

IT had been anticipated that the abandonment of a hostile attitude would lead to an amelioration of conditions in the Ruhr and to an alleviation of the occupation. Nothing of the kind occurred. The severity of control was maintained. French troops continued to occupy all important towns—a Customs line still separated the Ruhr from Germany, and was thought a preparation for eventual absorption of the district into a French Customs Union. Poincaré declined to discuss evacuation until Reparation was complete, or until productive pledges had been handed over.

THIS failure to obtain any adequate return for the abandonment of Passive Resistance brought about Stresemann's downfall as Chancellor. He was succeeded by Marx, but retained the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

THIS Ministerial combination was not based on any stable majority in the Reichstag—nor did it represent any definite policy, either at home or abroad. Was the leadership adequate to the circumstances? It appeared incapable of solving so serious a crisis.

AT this date an impartial student in full possession of the facts would have said that some profound modification was imminent—constitutional change or partial disintegra-

tion. One blow had succeeded another. French troops entered Essen on January 11, 1923, the nation was already exhausted and dispirited by four years of fruitless wrangling, and this aggravation of preceding trials shook the new constitution of the Republic to its foundation.

BUT a change was at hand. Performance was better than promise. Soon after it assumed office the Ministry succeeded in devising a remedy for the most vital illness affecting the State—the extreme disorder of finance. A return of confidence in the sphere of currency was the first glimmer in a night of Cimmerian darkness.

IN three months, the possibility of financial recovery dawned upon Germany. Helfferich found a talisman—found it and died. Luther and Schacht took charge. Despondent but determined, the little Mayor of Essen was called to the Ministry of Finance. He came from the heart of the occupied district, and he realised that if the Ruhr was lost Germany was doomed. He determined to free it from foreign occupation. Hesitating colleagues and an alarmed public were compelled to bow before his financial austerity.

RIGID economy and severe currency control were his watchwords. With Schacht at the State Bank theoretical knowledge reinforced homely good sense. The combination triumphed.

AT first improvement was in the realm of finance alone; this, though important, was not enough. In the Diplomatic position there was no amelioration. The French still had a stranglehold on the Ruhr, their conditions for evacuation were such that no German Government could adopt them without ensuring its own immediate ejection from power. There appeared no egress, no solution. For months little or no progress was made.

WHEN the solution was found, it was not from Germany that it came, but from France. The German Government did little to bring about a solution; they merely abstained

from capitulation and suicide. The verdict of the French electorate saved the situation. In May Poincaré fell.

UNDER a new French Government alleviation came, and a tolerable solution. A moratorium relieved the German Exchequer, a loan provided the necessities of the immediate present. The Ruhr was evacuated—German industry resumed its activity. By the end of the year a great change was apparent. The contrast between January 1924 and January 1925 was dramatic in its intensity. On the earlier date, clouds of menace and disruption; on the latter, the light of returning day, the promise of a fairer morrow.

VAST difficulties had indeed been overcome; currency had been placed on a sound basis, Reparation had been settled, the Ruhr had been restored. But the most essential question of all, that of Security, still remained untouched. With that problem unsolved, all gains were ephemeral and insecure.

WITH or without reason, for a legitimate cause or on a pretext, foreign troops might again invade, foreign authority might again confiscate and fine, might again imprison and exile.

IF, as alleged, the underlying cause of past violence had been genuine fear, could not this source of hostility be eliminated? Let reasonable cause for fear be removed from both sides, the most potent motive of suspicion and distrust would disappear. It should not be beyond the wit of man to devise an agreement which would quiet apprehension and inspire confidence.

THAT was the task before statesmen when the year 1925 opened. No one anticipated a rapid solution; if the comparatively easier problems of Reparation and Disarmament had dragged through months into years of inconclusive wrangling, could the fundamental issue of Security be brought to international agreement in a shorter period? Cautious statesmen had advocated the post-

ponement even of its discussion—alarmed at possible complications—alarmed at the passions which might be aroused.

THE event proved this apprehension exaggerated. Looking back on the negotiation after an interval of four years I still wonder how the successful result was reached. While it is true that the idea of a pact of peace, guaranteeing the frontiers both of France and Germany, was not entirely new, since it had been put forward near the end of 1922, the position was worse than if nothing had previously been done, since the proposal when first presented had been abruptly turned down by France without benefit of clergy. A similar fate had attended the proposed Pact of Security at Cannes in 1922. It thus came about that, in January 1925, public opinion both in France and Germany was entirely unprepared for so startling a development as the German proposal of a Pact of Mutual Security.

THERE was another reason against the success of the negotiation: the fact that of the three intended signatories, England, France and Germany, the representatives of two were at heart hostile to the idea, being partial to—almost in love with—an alternative plan, viz. a defensive pact against Germany. Even in Germany itself there was no certainty of a majority in favour of the renunciation of claims on Alsace-Lorraine, and yet without a concession of this nature it was clearly impossible to obtain protection for the frontiers of Germany.

JANUARY 20, 1925, should be written in golden letters in the history of post-war Europe, for on that date the German Government communicated to London the first sketch of the proposed pact. The proposal was deliberately couched in a form that would soften refusal if refusal came—as in fact it did come at the outset. The British Government was not asked to accept or refuse the proposed pact. It was requested merely to give advice as to the best form in

which such a proposal could be brought by Germany before the Allied Powers. Even in this veiled and mitigated guise, the proposal met with so chilly a reception in London that it was nearly killed on the spot. The Foreign Office pointed out that negotiation on so vital a matter could not be conducted with one Ally without the full knowledge of the other. Chamberlain almost resented the fact that the original question had been directed to him alone, regarding it as an attempt to seduce him from the path of loyalty to France. The German Government were disappointed that, what they considered so favourable an initiative on their part, did not evoke enthusiasm. Grave misgiving was felt in the Wilhelmstrasse as to the expediency of persevering with the proposal. Some were in favour of abandoning the initiative taken. It was feared that the Stresemann plan of 1925 would not receive any better treatment from the Allies than the Cuno proposal of 1922. Happily bolder and wiser counsel eventually prevailed, and it was decided in the early days of February to make an official communication to the French Government of similar purport to that which had been telegraphed on January 20 to London. But in this case the request was not for advice as to how best to present a proposal. It was an official proposal in due form.

It so happened that the German Ambassador in Paris, through whom the communication had to be made, was unwell. Action had therefore to be taken through the First Secretary, who handed Herriot the text of the Note on February 9. The absence of the Ambassador limited the conversation, perhaps fortunately, and the interview was reduced to the simple transmission of a written document. PRECISELY what then occurred has not yet been revealed. But no suspicion reached the public that an event of this importance had taken place. When the secret history of the period comes to be published from French sources we shall ascertain what happened. For the present it is

probably wise not to push enquiry too far, but to thank Providence for timely intervention in checking the usual course of press omniscience and revelation. For it is certain that the publication of the text of the German Note in early February would have sealed the fate of the whole negotiation, and destroyed any chance of a successful issue.

IN the event there was no sudden publication. Rumours began to circulate, but only after considerable delay, and public opinion was gradually acclimatised to the fact of an important negotiation. It thus fell out that when nearly two months later the precise tenor of the German communication became known there was no surprise; indignation was confined to nationalists and irreconcilables. Opposition from these groups was indeed inevitable, and they remained hostile to the proposal not only in the initial stage, but up to the official initialling of the Treaty of Locarno on October 16. Indeed, through the greater part of the ensuing months their influence appeared likely to preclude any successful issue. And until the date of signature diplomats were almost unanimous in predicting the failure of the proposed agreement. If statesmen had recorded their true expectation it is doubtful if they would have been more right than the diplomats. Even in Berlin, where opinion was on the whole less hostile, the balance of opinion was certainly against the possibility of agreement. It required indeed exceptional ability and skill on the part of the three Foreign Ministers concerned. While the highest praise has deservedly been allotted to Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann, it would be unjust not to recognise the immense service rendered by others like Schubert and by the legal advisers of the Foreign Offices of the three countries. These latter luminaries were called together in advance of the meetings of Ministers, and to their detached discrimination and to their skill in drafting much of the final success was due.



BUT when full praise is awarded to all personalities concerned, it will not, I hope, be esteemed a derogation from the dignity of the event if I state my opinion that Locarno was one of the most surprising strokes of good fortune recorded in history—the phrase being understood to signify—advantage gained beyond reasonable expectation.

IT has been demonstrated that success was improbable when the negotiation commenced, and indeed at a much later date. It is moreover true that public opinion in both France and Germany was far behind the progressive spirit which animated the negotiators, and finally led to success. Comparing the Pact of Locarno with the Treaty of Versailles, the broad spirit of appeasement which animated Locarno was in strong contrast with the somewhat vindictive preoccupations which hampered wisdom at Versailles. And in 1925 the public temper resembled Versailles rather than Locarno—certainly in France, probably in Germany and among influential sections in England. Locarno was a break with tradition, and constituted an almost violent step towards the abatement of secular hatred. It is easier to praise than to explain; easier to be thankful than to understand how the initial dangers were surmounted. Others may at a later date write more fully than I have done, but I doubt if any authentic narrative will invalidate the conclusion that the proposal which led to Locarno had an almost miraculous survival from the perils of infant life.

OF the three major events recorded in this Diary—the Dawes settlement in 1924, the Locarno Agreement in 1925, and the entry of Germany into the League of Nations in 1926—the greatest was Locarno. Dawes laid the foundation—Geneva crowned the edifice, but the essential building was carried through in October 1925, in that now historic village on the Italian lakes. Imagination has been stirred by Locarno—Locarno is the central theme of the present volume.

## STRESEMANN

It is difficult for me to give a balanced, critical account of Stresemann. I was too close to the man, too intimate, too attached to him. During six years we were in almost daily intercourse, either in personal interview or by confidential intermediary, and I believe that no two men in similar positions were ever more frank with one another or more free in the interchange of suggestion and criticism. A FIRST impression of Stresemann was that he might have been Winston Churchill's brother. The same silhouette—almost identical colouring. And in temperament and mental characteristics a close analogy.

BOTH brilliant, daring and bold. In both, more than a dash of recklessness—and a pronounced predilection for the unorthodox. Compare the views held by Stresemann on permanent officials with what Winston thinks of Colonels and Major-Generals; neither class would come off much better than the other. Minor differences of course there were. Winston's voice is soft and lisping, with a slight impediment in delivery. Stresemann's tones were resonant and clear—they have been occasionally criticised as rasping. And his mind was no less clear than his voice. No half tones; no blurred outlines.

THE divergence between English and German methods of public speaking is so great that a comparison between the oratorical performances of individuals is difficult. The German normal method is formal and enunciatory; the English easy and conversational. But the real strength of Stresemann, as with Winston, lay less in statement than in reply—in reply he was brilliant, and equipped with a complete command of the weapons of sarcasm.

TURNING from oratory to the less external side of Stresemann's gifts, one finds qualities which were equally remarkable. The most hostile critic cannot deny con-

sistency and courage. Whether his policy was right or wrong, it was pursued unrelentingly and without deviation from 1923 until his death in October 1929. There was also a certain element of good luck, without which, in troublous times, no statesman can come through.

It may sound paradoxical but, in considering the character of Stresemann, I have been impressed with his resemblance to certain types in Greek life. There was in him a definite note of freedom from superstition and a very marked directness based upon complete incapacity for self-deception. Moreover, the humanist bias was with him in all that he undertook. He valued life for what it was, not for what it might be thought; he valued achievement because it gave him power, and gave him the consideration of his contemporaries. If he idealised, it was the idealism of common things. If it be true that the Greek felt and expressed extraordinarily keen pleasure in eating and drinking and in the enjoyment of life, then Stresemann was Greek. In the capacity to appreciate simple pleasures, no one could excel him; he would have sympathised with the character in Greek comedy who boasted that he drank from the pitcher when the cup had been broken by a slave.

It was not only in the frank enjoyment of things that Stresemann came near to the Greek type, but also in the clearness of his vision—I had almost said in his intolerance of cant and humbug; vague imaginings never clouded his conception of life.

My real friendship with Stresemann began in 1921. I had met him before, but we had only exchanged commonplace civilities. In one of the numerous crises which occurred between Berlin and the Western capitals during the years following Versailles, Stresemann—representing at that time an important Parliamentary group—came to the British Embassy with four questions which he wanted answered. These questions were so pungent and precise

that I was totally unable to answer them myself, and, indeed, when I promised to telegraph to London to ascertain the views of the British Government, I anticipated receiving from official sources either an evasive reply or a reminder that it was hardly consistent with diplomatic usage to transmit definite points of such a searching nature. It happened, however, that Curzon, who was then at the head of the Foreign Office, was no less ready with pen and tongue than Stresemann, and no less disinclined than he was to seek safety in silence or evasion. So the answer came to these four questions, and from that date Stresemann and I became close friends. Once reassured as to the essential good faith of English policy; once convinced that we were not seeking to hold Germany down in a subordinate position, but to procure Peace in Europe on a durable basis, his whole attitude became one of cordial co-operation. It was part of his frank, buoyant nature to put his entire case forward, to explain his own difficulties, and to relate, without reticence or reserve, the origin of his doubts and hesitation—when, indeed, doubts crossed his mind, for the occasions were rare when he hesitated about anything.

PERHAPS the gravest decision which Stresemann ever had to take was in the autumn of 1923, when it fell to him to abandon the campaign of Passive Resistance with which Germany countered the French occupation of the Ruhr. There was no question about it; Passive Resistance had to be abandoned; it was not the will to resist which had changed, but the possibility of continuing subventions. The paper money with which the German Government had assisted the miners from January 11, 1923, up to September of that year, had fallen in value to such an extent that it was no longer of any effective use; Germany must therefore submit. The question was whether submission would obtain for her alleviation of the intolerable condition of affairs which menaced her whole industrial life. Strese-

mann, who was then Chancellor, took the decision—took it unwillingly, hoping for the best. The best did not accrue; there was no alleviation; Poincaré remained adamant, the entire control of the Ruhr industry continued in French hands. Disappointment in Germany was so intense that the Government fell; Stresemann ceased to be Chancellor, but remained in office as Foreign Minister, and was still the most influential member of the Government. IN spite of his failure to obtain concessions from Poincaré, Stresemann was constant to the policy of a settlement between Germany and France if reasonable terms could be obtained, but he would not negotiate with France alone: England must be a party to every negotiation; on no account would he sacrifice the English connection.

REGARDING the Rhineland and the Palatinate, Stresemann was persistent in declaring that Germany was ready to renounce any idea of using these districts for military purposes, either in Peace or War—provided that a similar obligation was undertaken by France.

I REMEMBER a conversation with Stresemann in March 1924, which shows a curious side of his character. He said to me: "Are people in England anxious about the possibility of another war?" When I replied in the negative, he said: "I will tell you a curious incident. X of the Deutsche Bank—quite a serious man—told me the other day that he had just seen two officer friends of his who had been to a gipsy fortune-teller. They asked her what the future held in store for them. She said, 'In 1927 you will return to the Army to fight in another war.' They replied, 'We have had one war, and that is enough for a lifetime.' The gipsy rejoined: 'It is just as certain there will be another war and that you will fight in it as it is that the child of one of you is now dead.' The officers returned to their hotel, and one of them found a telegram from Munich saying that his child had been run over by an automobile and killed."

EARLY in 1925, when the Pact of Peace first came into practical negotiation, Stresemann's apprehension was that it might be less desirable to come to an agreement with Herriot (who was then French Premier) than with Briand or Loucheur. The former, a Radical Socialist, would meet with more opposition from the Right. He said: "It is an analogous case to that of Germany where, with the Nationalist members that I have at last succeeded in getting into the Government, I am able to come to a fair arrangement with the Allies; better than the Socialists could have done. No one believed that my object in bringing in Nationalist members was to be conciliatory; now they see that what I said was true, and that I can afford to be more conciliatory than the Socialists, with whom the French continue to intrigue against me."

STRESEMANN never had any doubt that Germany would endeavour to carry out the Dawes Report. He had a firm belief in the importance of American financial support, and received, not without a certain deference, financial counsel from American experts. It may be said that the permanent trend of his policy was definitely Western as opposed to the East. It might indeed be foolish for Germany to sacrifice the Moscow connection, unless something solid and permanent could be obtained in the West. But if wise men once came from the East—rich men, with money to loan, now hailed from another quarter.

Also, as to Poland, it is doubtful whether he believed much in the possibility of any arrangement. The policy of France might be to trust to the Polish alliance. But for Germany to support Poland would mean the inevitable hostility of Russia, and Russia was bound to come back. Undue partiality for Poland had been the underlying cause of Napoleon's catastrophe; his support of Polish aspirations in the years succeeding Tilsitt was the ultimate reason of the Russian hostility which led to his downfall. Similar arguments applied to-day: neither Russia, under

present auspices, nor Poland, at any time, was to be relied upon as an ally of Germany.

THESE reflections apply to Stresemann's policy in the years 1925-6. Whether he retained the same ideas in later years, whether he would have retained them permanently, may be doubtful. His was a most lively and progressive mind; there was no cast-iron immobility, but a great power of adaptation to the necessities imposed by changing circumstances.

A STRIKING instance of his facility of apprehension may be cited.

IT so happened, in the months preceding Locarno, that Augustus John was staying at the British Embassy, and had made sketches of several prominent persons in Berlin. He had particularly desired to do a portrait of Stresemann, being impressed by the vivacity of his expression and the energy of his personality. The Chancellor willingly fell in with this plan, and I arranged that he should sit to Augustus John. When the portrait was well under way, the thought struck me that the sittings might be a favourable opportunity to discuss with Stresemann the larger possibilities adumbrated in the German Notes of January 20 and February 9.

AUGUSTUS JOHN knew no German, so the conversations could be carried on between Stresemann and myself as if we were alone. The advantage of the occasion as compared with an ordinary interview with the Chancellor resided in the fact that for the purpose of the portrait he was compelled to maintain immobility and comparative silence, whereas the usual tenor of other interviews with him was that I had difficulty in giving adequate development to my thoughts—his lively intelligence and extreme facility of diction inclining him to affect monologue rather than interchange of ideas. When sitting for his portrait, however much he might desire to hold forth, artistic considerations would keep him immobile, silent, and possibly attentive.

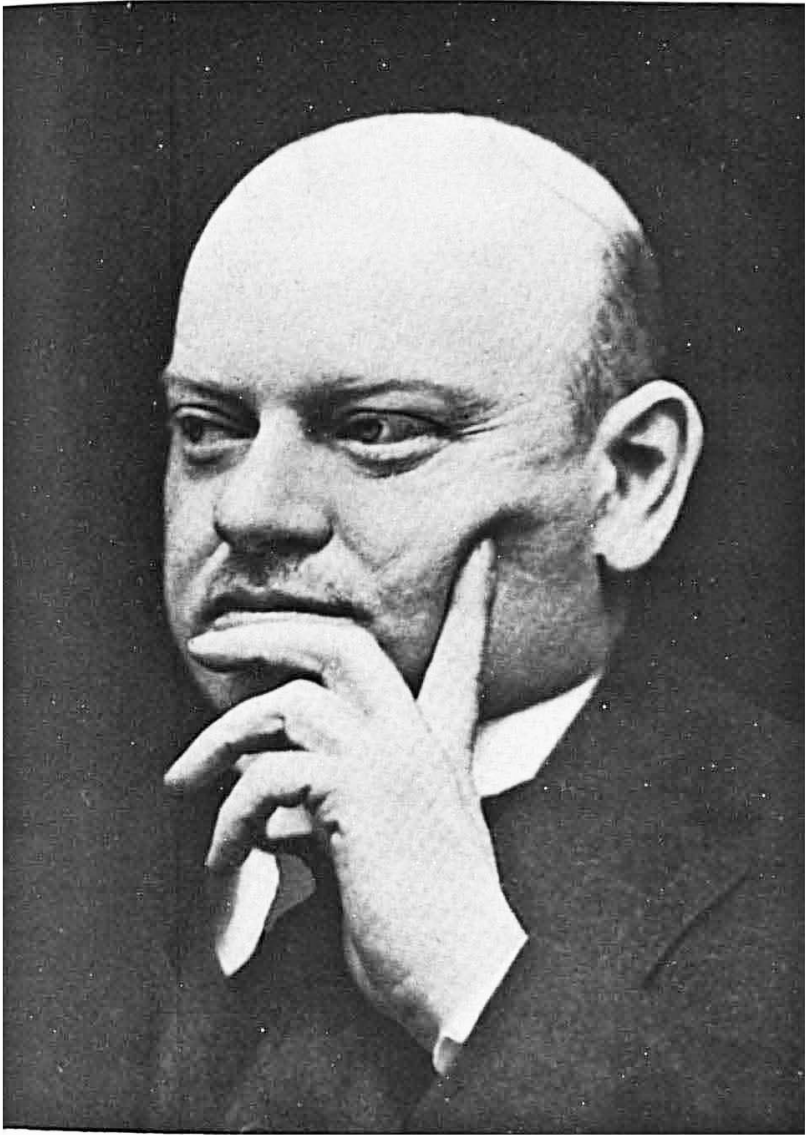
THINGS fell out according to plan. After a sentence or two on the subject of international conciliation, Stresemann naturally wished to interject considerations of his own, considerations which, developed without restraint, would have been neither consenting nor concise. But Augustus John protested and imposed artistic authority; I was therefore able to labour on with my own views without interruption.

BEING by nature a poor expositor, and having only a limited command of technical German phrases, the assistance given by the inhibitive gag of the artist was of extreme value. Without Augustus John, armed with his palette and his paint-brushes, the chances of profitable interchange of thought would have been considerably diminished. Reduced to abnormal silence in the manner indicated, Stresemann's quickness of apprehension was such that he rapidly seized and assimilated the further developments to which the Pact proposals might lead.

OF the qualities shown in the negotiations which followed, the most remarkable was perhaps physical courage. At any time during 1925 the chances of assassination to which Stresemann exposed himself were such that no prudent Insurance Company would have assumed the risk of a life policy.

It is impossible to review the years from 1920 to 1926—that is to say, the years which led from post-war animosity to the relatively peaceful haven of Locarno—without endeavouring to determine which of the statesmen of Europe deserves the highest meed of praise for what was achieved. As readers of this diary know, I have the highest opinion of Briand and of his services to the cause of Peace, but if one estimates the value of a contribution by the amount of difference it would have made had that particular contribution not been available, Stresemann is perhaps entitled to the highest place. He assumed bigger risks in carrying out his policy; he was more peculiarly





GUSTAV STRESEMANN

*Photo Topical Press Agency*

fitted to influence public opinion in his own country than was either Briand in France or Chamberlain in England. And this for a simple reason: by temperament and by historical antecedents he belonged to the other side. If against expectation he was to-day for Peace there must be reasons of exceptional cogency.

STRESEMANN began life as a pugnacious student of the full-blooded type, a militant and aggressive Nationalist. During the war he was an advocate of the strongest and most bellicose measures; an opponent of any pledge to restore Belgium, an advocate of submarine warfare and a bitter critic of all negotiations which would, in his opinion, lead to premature Peace. This past gave him a position with the Nationalists (the party from whom opposition to the Peace policy was most to be feared) of an exceptional character. They might detest the measures he proposed; they might consider his concessions dishonourable and dangerous, but they could not attack him with the same vehemence with which they would have attacked similar measures introduced by a Socialist or Catholic minister. His general orientation had been similar to theirs; he had not recanted in principle; he could only be a convert to measures of conciliation from imperative motives of expediency.

STRESEMANN's relations with his former friends of the Right and Right Centre were peculiar and fluctuating. At times he co-operated with them; at times they were his most vehement opponents. While in sympathy with them in being a partisan of the Hohenzollerns, he diverged from them in his readiness to adopt measures he considered politically necessary. Stresemann, in pursuit of his policy, was prepared to co-operate with any party, either with the Nationalists on the one side or the Socialists on the other; he found no consistent support from either; he did not find support even in his own party—the Volkspartei—itsself divided into several sections and subsections. So,

to gain the necessary majorities for carrying measures that he considered essential, he had to get together casual—almost fortuitous—majorities, enlisted wherever he could find them.

WHAT was his essential policy? To bring about such a moderation of hostility between France and Germany as would permit European pacification. So long as the acute fear of German attack existed in France, so long as Germany was under the menace of armed intervention from France and threatened by a repetition of the Ruhr invasion, any broad policy of European pacification was impossible. Once public opinion in Germany and France was reassured as to the particular danger arising from the other side of the Rhine, everything became easier. There was no more definite objective in Stresemann's mind than the above. The first step was all that he visualised clearly; once that step was taken international politics would settle down and many other things might become possible.

IT is called the triumph of Stresemann's career that he achieved not only Locarno but the revision of the Dawes Plan at The Hague. I have always thought Locarno incomparably the more important of the two. Indeed, I have doubted the wisdom of bringing about the revision of Dawes at so early a date, and my doubt has not been removed by the fact that the disputes consequent upon the Young Agreement undoubtedly precipitated the death of Stresemann. What financial benefit can be compared with the loss to Germany and to Europe of such a man? As to the merit of Locarno, that appears to be incontestable. In 1925, in the course of a few weeks the European barometer passed from "Storm" to "Fair," and while it has since fluctuated at times, it has never receded to the menacing level which was normal up to 1925.

THE last years of Stresemann's life were marred by ill health—ill health largely brought about by overwork in the interest of his country and in the interest of Peace.

He would, indeed, have broken down many months before the final catastrophe but for his indomitable will and intense nervous vitality. He was, moreover, unusually fortunate in his family life: two sons in the early twenties, both of them good-looking, intelligent and artistic—one of them something of a musical genius; his wife, one of the most charming members of Berlin Society, looking as young as her sons, and maintaining in the family circle an atmosphere of cheerfulness which made the home both stimulating and refreshing. If Stresemann was older than the other three members of the group, he enjoyed life as much as the youngest of them. He relished his own talents, his incisive resonance, his unique capacity for clear thought and clear expression; he was proud to be German, prouder still to be the compatriot of Goethe. Admirably versed in German literature, he could quote with verbal accuracy long passages both of poetry and prose. Indeed, he went beyond the limits of his own language, for he could quote Shakespeare, in German and in English. In addition to literature, he had an intense appreciation of the good things of life; good wine, good music, were relished to the full; his capacity for enjoyment was not marred by any hesitations or doubt as to whether the course he happened to be pursuing was right. It was always right—always inevitable. He once said that he never regretted anything he had done—his only regret was for the opportunities of enjoyment which he had foregone or missed. Above all, he enjoyed the success of his own policy, and was rightly proud of the services he had rendered to his country and the high personal position he had attained.

WHILE Stresemann's achievements finally won general approval, it was long before he gained public confidence. Indeed, he was of those for whom it is easier to inspire admiration than to create trust. His capacity for arousing animosity was quite exceptional. Why, it is difficult to say. Perhaps his mind was too rapid to give an impression

of solidity—his enunciation too resonant and the phrases too brilliant to suggest reflection or measure.

Of him it may be said, not that he had the qualities of his defects, but that his qualities—clearness, rapidity and decision—earned him a reputation for defects from which he was entirely free—recklessness, and lack of conviction. With the latter weakness he certainly could not be charged, for he adhered steadfastly to beliefs, when they were not only inconvenient, but damaging.

COMPARING Stresemann with other German statesmen of the last half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, it should be remembered that Bismarck and Bülow had at their disposal military force and military prestige. With Stresemann these conditions, no less than high rank and social status, were completely lacking. In measuring his achievement, such fundamental differences in basic conditions must be kept in mind. Stresemann may claim to have raised Germany from the position of a stricken and disarmed foe into that of a diplomatic equal, entitled to full consideration as a great Power, and enjoying international guarantee for the protection of her frontiers. To have accomplished this in a few years of power without the support of armed force is a feat worthy of those who have written their names most memorably on the scroll of fame. Stresemann left Germany infinitely stronger than when he took the helm in 1923, and Europe incomparably more peaceful. This achievement is the more remarkable in that Stresemann was not, by temperament, a pacifist; it might indeed be said that pacific results of such magnitude were never before attained by so bellicose a champion.

As one who knew him well through difficult years, who saw him triumph over grave opposition from without and from within, I hold that Germany has never had a wiser or a more courageous adviser.

## AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

THE basis of Austen Chamberlain's policy during the first months of his tenure of the Foreign Office was the closest alliance with France. His admiration for France was proclaimed in every speech he made: no other Power—no Dominion even—was mentioned with similar warmth. It was therefore presumed that the project of a military pact between France and England would find a warm advocate in him. It appeared certain that England would become engaged in what would amount to an anti-German defensive league.

THE idea of such a league was not popular in England. It had been urged upon us by France ever since the United States refusal of the Anglo-American Guarantee Treaty in 1919. Briand had pressed it with persistence and skill. Poincaré had demanded it as a right, and had endeavoured to impose it upon Lloyd George at Boulogne in 1922, with words that were not far short of unacceptable pressure. The reception of the idea in England had never been enthusiastic; as time went on, English opinion hardened against it. Lloyd George had, indeed, acceded to the idea, but he did so with evident reluctance, and had on many occasions endeavoured to limit the scope of our engagement and restrict the *casus belli*. Moreover, he demanded the abolition of submarines. One specific French demand he had definitely refused, viz. that the amount of military assistance England was prepared to furnish should be laid down in advance.

IT is of interest to note, as showing the state of public opinion previous to the Ruhr occupation, that, while reluctant to undertake precise engagements of too onerous a character, Lloyd George had not raised any objection to the principle of a military agreement binding England to defend France—without any reciprocal clause guaranteeing

the German frontier against French attack. Germany was still considered the potential aggressor—the one State powerful enough to take the risk of a new war.

UP to the end of 1922, public opinion in England, while hostile to the idea of accepting binding obligations, acquiesced sullenly in the general policy, perceiving no alternative. But when public opinion is driven to a given course merely because there is, at the moment, no apparent substitute, it is apt to spring back on the first favourable occasion. And this occasion presented itself in 1923. The occupation of the Ruhr excited profound distrust in England. It revealed the fact that peace in Western Europe was liable to be disturbed—not only by Germany, but by France. France and Belgium had shown, by the forcible seizure of Germany's richest province, that military predominance was on their side, and that they were prepared, on occasion, to take advantage of it. Under the circumstances, there was neither common sense nor sound policy in binding ourselves to defend those who, for the present at any rate, needed no defence, if by so doing we perpetuated war animosities and divided Europe into two hostile groups. It must be made clear that France, who possessed—and had just proved that she possessed—the means to do so, would not infringe the frontiers of others. Our fundamental object was pacification—a one-sided engagement was not the path towards it.

CONSIDERATIONS of this nature were so much in the public mind that Ministers were influenced. Whether they originally intended to sign a Unilateral anti-German Pact may be uncertain. What is certain is that the idea, if originally held, was abandoned.

RECIPROCITY—a reciprocal guarantee of frontiers between France and Germany—became the only basis on which England would agree to guarantee French territory from attack.

IT was in the negotiation on this basis that Chamberlain rendered Europe such signal service.

HE was peculiarly well placed to exercise decisive influence. It has sometimes been said that his honesty and impartiality carried the day. It would be more correct to attribute success to his honesty coupled with partiality. For he continued to exhibit, and indeed to parade, his strong attachment to France. When, therefore, he told the French representatives that no other course was possible than the signature of a Bilateral Treaty, they accepted his word, as they would not have accepted that of a less friendly statesman. France regarded Austen as a trusted lover. Even the Quai d'Orsay, which is rarely inspired by emotion of the gentler sort, realised, because Chamberlain had said it, that the Unilateral Treaty idea was not practical politics. There was only one possibility for France if she desired to obtain real security on her frontiers and the support of England, viz. to adopt the reciprocal, bilateral basis.

As regards Germany, Chamberlain's partiality for France exercised no deterrent effect. German opinion on the military situation differed fundamentally from the view held in Paris. There, German aggression was a constant bogey. In Berlin, even the most bellicose Teutons discarded, as unrealisable, the conception of successful military aggression or invasion of the French frontier. Their technical military understanding realised the impossibility of carrying on modern warfare without "matériel"—notably without aeroplanes and heavy artillery. If other countries still feared German military aggression, they made a false estimate of Germany's present power. This mistaken appreciation by foreign nations might be welcomed by Germany, since it tended to facilitate negotiation. If foreign military advisers supposed that the unarmed would attack the fully armed, and were prepared to advocate concessions in order to buy off the unarmed, so much the better. As for Germany herself, she had no such illusions. She



desired peace and security for her own territory. She was therefore ready to negotiate on the basis of equality and of reciprocal safety. The German Government was even prepared to submit all differences with France to arbitration, and to renounce all claims to Alsace-Lorraine. The most delicate point was that regarding her Eastern frontier, but here, again, German Ministers were willing to give a solemn pledge against the use of force in any attempt to rectify the frontier as laid down by the Treaty of Versailles. CHAMBERLAIN realised the possibilities of negotiation on this basis. A modification of his previous attitude would bring him into line with English public opinion, which had become definitely hostile to a Unilateral Pact against Germany. His extreme honesty and uprightness protected him from any charge of time-serving. The opportunity was unique. He had the courage to take the fullest advantage of it. Without hesitation or reserve, he pressed forward the cause of the Bilateral Pact with vigour and conviction. It was said at the time that his sincerity and good faith enabled him to modify his previous attitude in a manner only equalled by one prototype, namely, St. Paul. And in vigour and zeal he was not inferior to his apostolic forerunner.

ENGLISH diplomacy never achieved a more striking success than the Treaty of Locarno. The agreement formally adopted by the plenipotentiaries of France, Germany, England and Italy was drawn up on a basis of conciliation, so complete and far-reaching that a year before it would have been ridiculed as Utopian in any of the countries who became signatories. Indeed, immediately before Locarno, a vast majority of the leading diplomatists of Europe considered the whole negotiation as idealistic, sentimental, and doomed to certain failure.

COURAGE was requisite on the part of Chamberlain to take the line he did ; skill and authority were demanded to direct the negotiations at Locarno ; above all, it was indis-



SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

*Photo Elliott & Fry*

pensable that the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany should feel confidence in the absolute integrity of the British representative. It was his power of inspiring others with a belief in his complete reliability which won the day by creating the atmosphere of possible agreement. Good faith contributed more powerfully to pacification than honeyed words—more than any subtle combination of intrigue reminiscent of the old diplomacy. In the relations established at Locarno, eloquence became unnecessary, and finesse gave way for a time to frankness and plain dealing.

AFTER the Treaty of Locarno and the achievement of bringing Germany into the League of Nations, Chamberlain reverted to more simple tasks. His general attitude towards Europe was one of persistent attachment to France, and he incurred considerable criticism, since the influence in Paris which he sacrificed so much to maintain was unsuccessful in bringing about the evacuation of the Rhineland by French and Allied troops. This evacuation had seemed a natural and legitimate consequence of Locarno, and its prolonged postponement left the task of pacification incomplete.

THERE was, further, the question of relations between England and America. Regarding these, the public felt that Chamberlain was less friendly to an Anglo-American pact than to one between England and France. Matters came to a climax when it became public that a naval agreement had been arrived at between England and France, which was construed as being hostile to America.

IN the General Election of 1929, the announcement that Chamberlain, in the event of a Conservative success, would remain at the Foreign Office, failed to secure for his party any notable accession of voting strength. While it was realised that Chamberlain had undoubtedly achieved much at the Foreign Office, it was thought that the possible advantages obtainable through his methods and his declared—

perhaps over-emphasised—attitude were exhausted. Close union with France had without doubt carried Europe through years of considerable difficulty, but the time had come when a new orientation would be at once safer and more agreeable; Anglo-American amity became the leading objective in English foreign policy.

CHAMBERLAIN was not the man to deviate from his previous attitude or from his assured convictions. He left the Foreign Office with a record of unswerving fidelity to the French connection.

## CARL VON SCHUBERT

ONE is unaccustomed to associate exceptional wisdom or philosophic depth with a heavy cavalry physique ; it comes, therefore, as a surprise when the two are found in combination. And yet there is little historical foundation for underrating the ability of this particular type of manly build. Bismarck was structurally the Cuirassier: Tiberius and Vespasian appear from contemporary portraits to have been built like heavy dragoons. Whether Carl von Schubert will attain in history the plane of these historic personages may be uncertain, but he is of the same physical type, combining ponderous shoulders with the traditional cavalry walk. And he has the political sagacity of an old Roman. THE force of his intelligence is not apparent at first sight. Rather a stiff manner, no special verbal felicity—shrewd rather than quick ; a deliberateness which creates the impression of a mind slow to grasp new ideas. But the true explanation is not that he understands more slowly than others, but that he is resolved to understand better. This is the essential characteristic ; a desire to grasp thoroughly, to explore in every aspect—to master every detail before committing himself to a reply. Essentially German, but German in the best sense. So far does Schubert push caution that his habit is to decline to answer verbally, saying : “ If you will allow me, I will send you a short memorandum to-morrow, giving my provisional reply.”

AND on the morrow the memorandum always comes : it is never short—it is generally earnest and exhaustive—the line adopted clear and definite. It is certainly not provisional, for there is rarely any subsequent change.

ADMITTEDLY such an attitude would not be appreciated in a Paris salon ; nor does it inspire admiration among the superficial and frivolous ; but applied to serious affairs of

State it promotes in the highest degree the transaction of business, and the establishment of confidence between nations.

THERE is a prevalent misconception—dating from war propaganda—that Germans in general, and the German Government in particular, are exceptionally unreliable—that they are more than usually apt to break their word. It may be that since the Great War the European standard in this respect has been lowered. The new form of diversion devised by the Soviets of breaking engagements in pure malice may have led us to expect less. Possibly Germany has improved. To-day she certainly stands high in her reputation for reliability.

GERMAN negotiators may be, and perhaps are, difficult to deal with, slow to be persuaded, pernickety, and disposed to quibble on small points, over-careful, making an infinity of reserves and precise pre-conditions on conjunctures and developments which, in all human probability, will not arise. But once they sign an engagement, their written signature is good, as is also their spoken word. Such is my experience of the statesmen and the officials with whom I have had to deal, and I take pleasure in bearing testimony.

BUT to return to Schubert. It is difficult, in the case of permanent officials, to disentangle what is due to their own initiative from what is executed by them on the initiative of others. But the view in Berlin of those best able to judge is that if European pacification has made such considerable progress, it is in large measure due to the sagacity and moderation of the German Secretary of State.

## RAMSAY MACDONALD

THE irony which appears to underlie so many of the workings of Providence was rarely made more manifest than when it cast Ramsay MacDonald for the rôle of Labour Foreign Secretary.

PUBLIC anticipation would have expected the first Labour Foreign Minister to be little conversant with continental ways or languages, and to be at once ignorant and careless concerning manners. It was easy to conceive the outraged feelings of Canning and Castlereagh, of Palmerston and Granville, when they ascertained in the Elysian Fields that their Downing Street mantle had passed to a Labour successor, and to imagine the elaborate explanations they devised in order to prove that this temporary indignity had not permanently dimmed the high tradition of their great office.

As it happened—or rather, as Providence in its irony ordained it—no apology or explanation was necessary. The first Labour Foreign Secretary was in appearance more distinguished than most of his predecessors in office ; in intelligence and personality, he had none of the deficiencies anticipated. A long, fore-and-aft, finely modelled head, deep-set eyes, well-cut features ; a tired, reflective air, suggestive of an exhausted aristocratic strain ; no aggressiveness, no stridency, but in their place disillusionment, calm and resignation.

IN discussion, marked subtlety and some slyness ; profound knowledge of the arts of debate ; an aversion to the obvious and a rare preoccupation about the secondary effects of any given action—the mind attaching more weight to remote than to immediate consequences.

SOMEWHAT unsimple and indirect—always calculating several moves ahead—a system which enables him to escape the danger of receiving an immediate checkmate,

but which has also led to missed opportunities for a decisive stroke.

WITH so long an experience of Trade Union conferences abroad, he was more conversant with foreign men and foreign methods than most English Ministers. In knowledge of languages—whether desirable or not in a Foreign Secretary, and this is a moot point—he was not obviously their inferior. French, “as she is spoke” by successive Foreign Ministers in Downing Street, would be an interesting historical study—and conceivably one not devoid of unexpected conclusions.

RAMSAY’S skill in negotiation proceeded largely from his power of appreciating the internal difficulties of the other side. Accustomed through life to be supported by colleagues and companions, who were not averse to replacing him, and many of whom considered their claims as at least equal to his own, he recognised the necessity, in the spokesmen of either side, for extreme caution and for a vigilant eye on the benches behind. He therefore abstained from asking the impossible, and presented his demands in the form least likely to cause his opponent trouble at home.

IN another sphere Ramsay belied anticipation. His knowledge of art, his interest in æsthetics, his capacity for discoursing intelligently on past masterpieces and modern developments—was far above the level of the average statesman. The National Art Collections had no better friend—no more intelligent supporter.

THE artistic and cultural bias, which Ramsay MacDonald took pleasure in proclaiming, completed the disillusionment of those who had expected Labour to provide Ministers with rough and horny hands. The first Labour Premier might be credited with a more delicate sensibility and a finer touch than certain of his Whig and Tory predecessors. And in administration there were neither the anticipated defects of tact nor the anticipated elements of rough-hewn strength. He succeeded Curzon, and was popular both



with the Foreign Office Staff and with Foreign Representatives at the Court of St. James's. There was no palpable or obvious break with tradition. One Minister of Foreign Affairs had succeeded another.

IN many departments of administration Ramsay MacDonald held very definite views. He was credited with the intention of revising the conditions of selection and training for the diplomatic service, holding the present method to be liable to produce men of an exaggerated Oxford type, little versed in knowledge of the rougher outer world. One of his ideas was the creation of a diplomatic Sandhurst, specialising candidates for diplomacy at an earlier stage than is now done. Whether this scheme will ever see light, and whether if it does see light it will produce in its alumni the necessary acquaintance with the outer world, may be doubtful. It would seem that some other system must be adopted, possibly the German plan of fusing the diplomatic and consular services, or if fusion is undesirable, a more frequent interchange. The obvious defect of the diplomatic service to-day is insufficient acquaintance with commerce, finance, and with the world of politics. Experience is too narrow; contact with men and affairs too rare. Consular work and an early apprenticeship under Commercial Secretaries and Commercial Counsellors would certainly widen the present field of experience.

IN another department Ramsay MacDonald was credited with subversive views, namely, a desire to suppress or largely curtail the activities of the Secret Service. His experience of this department concurred with the views of many who have relied upon it, namely, that the reports received are in a large majority of instances of no political value, based mainly upon scandal and tittle tattle, and prepared apparently with no discrimination as to what is really important.

THE great achievement of his administration of the Foreign Office was the London Conference of August 1924, which

adopted the Dawes Report, and settled—temporarily—the problem of Reparation. If overshadowed by the even greater importance of the Locarno settlement a year later, the London Conference which was presided over by Ramsay MacDonald with marked authority and tact, achieved a definite result. For the time being it removed from the path of international misunderstanding the question of Reparation Payments by Germany. Twelve international conferences had attacked this problem in vain; it had precipitated the fall of no less than thirty-nine Cabinets in the countries of Central and of Western Europe.

To this achievement Ramsay MacDonald has added in his second Premiership the great service to the Empire represented by his recent visit to the United States and Canada. In earlier days he had contemplated a series of lectures in the United States, attracted by the thought that such a tour might help in some degree to cement friendship between Great Britain and America.

At that time no one could foresee the probability of such an occasion as presented itself in 1929. As the first British Premier to visit the States in an official capacity Ramsay MacDonald not only discharged the duty of his high office with exceptional ability but won favour by his dignity and nebulous idealism. Whatever service he may subsequently render to the State, his mission across the Atlantic in 1929 will always be remembered as a powerful contribution to world peace, which depends in so marked a degree upon the maintenance of a close friendship between the United States and Great Britain.