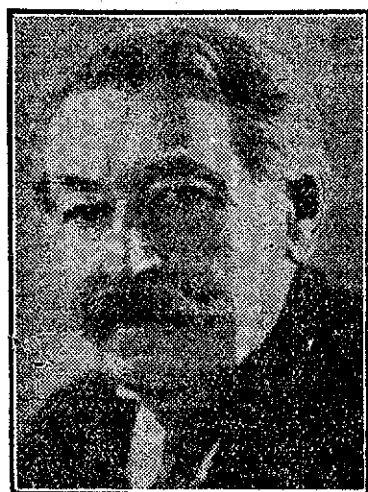
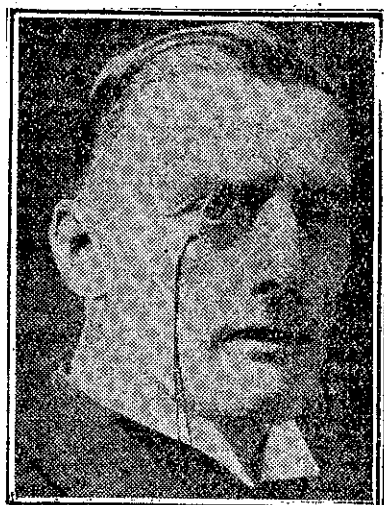


Moulding the Destiny of Two Great Nations



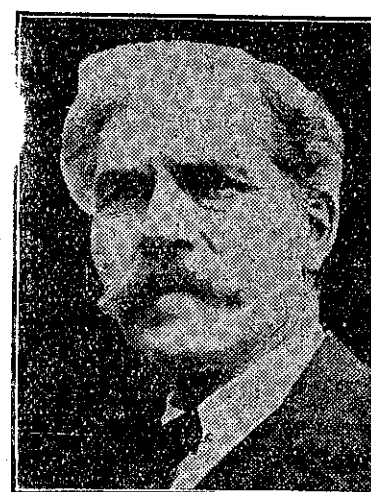
M. Briand



Austen Chamberlain



M. Herriott



Ramsay MacDonald

England and France

A Study of Contrasts

By L. R. R. DENNY, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

IT is a frequent matter for surprise that, separated as they are by no more than twenty miles or so of sea, France and England, after more than a thousand years of intimate relationship, are yet so far from any real understanding of each other. The European War, instead of tending to an increase of understanding, has, superficially at least, served to emphasize, not indeed their divergences, but their common incapacity to bridge them.

Before I pass in rapid review the main features in the political relationships between the two countries over the last twenty-five years, there are one or two points which deserve at least passing notice. Public opinion is still prone to hasty generalisation about great countries. People still dismiss foreign and international relations with an airy wave of the hand and, perhaps, the remark "All foreigners are so spiteful."

Others, especially with respect to France, make the mistake of regarding Paris as France. In this way the difficulty of appreciating the ultimate motives of the French becomes well-nigh insuperable. Any one who has to any extent travelled in France knows that there is a world of difference between the France of the capital, and the France of the Provinces; the thoughts and aspirations of the Marseilles Canebiere are not those of the Grands Boulevards; and always as Paris grows more and more cosmopolitan so must her statesmen, and her men of letters fall increasingly out of touch with the slower impulses of their provincial and rural fellow citizens.

A second factor in building up public opinion is the superficial observation of indiscriminating tourists. Admittedly the foreign visitor

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is a fair prize for fleecing. The scale of charges for any commodity varies surprisingly from shop to shop; and it varies, too, within each shop according to the status of the customer. The native comes off the best; a strange French pays a little more; the regular foreigner more still, and the strange foreigner most of all. If he has served his apprenticeship he will save something by bargaining. Mostly he pays up. Still it is not always easy to accept it

philosophically. The impression gained by a foreign eye-witness travelling through France was, is of a country with little unemployment and considerable contentment; taxation is definitely lighter than it is in England; and it seems likely to remain so.

I want to emphasize that in all questions of reparations, of taxation for armaments and for security it is the opinion of thousands of peasants and artisans that counts infinitely more than the noisy tirades of politicians. The French peasant is no different from any other peasant in desiring security for his home, his income, his land. If armaments and militarism are essential for that security he will pay. But he is much more pacifist and non-aggressive than he is given credit for. His opinions are seldom those of an excitable Quai D'Orsay executive. I turn now to a survey of the history of my period.

SINCE the days of King John, some seven hundred years ago, rarely have the relations of England and France been worse—save in times of acute controversy or of actual hostilities—than they were at the opening of the present century.

(Continued on page 8)