

"SEND ROOSEVELT TO FRANCE,"

CRIES HANOTAUX

French Authority on International Affairs Wants America's Ex-President to Visit Trenches That He May Tell How a Free People Fight for Freedom

By EDWARD MARSHALL.
TO the task of bringing nearer together the people of the United States and those of his own country one of the greatest men of France has set his hand. He is Gabriel Hanotaux, already so well known to our people that he needs no further introduction than the mention of his name. This could be said of scarcely any other living Frenchman.

It is his belief that the three free peoples of the world, France, England and the United States, should in some measure link their destinies, and, even though France and England now are fighting side by side as allies in a great war in which America is not involved, he feels that the bonds between his country and our own, which are of peculiar and unique strength, have been and should be strengthened by the crisis.

The interview with M. Hanotaux, which follows, was obtained by me in Paris, and may be regarded as one of the most significant messages which have been sent across the sea since the outbreak of this war. It is a message of something warmer than good will. It is an invitation to and promise of sympathetic cooperation. It is an expression of the warm, sympathetic understanding which seldom goes from the mouth of a great man of one nation to the eyes of the people of another.

And it is rendered definite, unique, by the fact that it includes the first public announcement of an unqualified invitation, that of a great Government at war to a single citizen of a nation at peace, a citizen at present occupying no position of official significance, but world famous for the things which he has done, to visit it and study at first hand, untrammelled anywhere and aided everywhere, the processes of its battle for existence, the details of its struggle for the preservation of its freedom, the method of its expulsion from its soil of an invader.

It was after I had asked a question indicative of the friendly feeling which stirs the heart of every American who has seen France at war that M. Hanotaux made the utterly unexpected reply which indicated the extraordinary plan which has been conceived and developed of late in the minds of those important Frenchmen who are most eager for a strong Franco-American future friendship and for a complete Franco-American future understanding.

M. Hanotaux has just exclaimed: "If America tenders her hand to France it will be warmly received."

"How can we best hold out our hand?" I asked.

"Send us Roosevelt!" was his entirely unexpected reply. "Before the war comes to an end send us Roosevelt to go into the French trenches. Let him come to us with our great struggle at close range. He will know that for which this free people has gone into the field. Let him come and see if we at war acquit ourselves as a free people should."

This was an extraordinary tribute from a Frenchman to an American. I had heard many tales of French complaints against Americans, and, in spite of the many evidences of the contrary which I had seen here during the spring and early summer, I still wondered if there might not arise somewhere in France a voice of protest against this extraordinary honor offered to a citizen of that neutral country which, during the course of the great conflict, has had the most difficult of parts to play.

"Are you sure that if he comes he will be well received on all sides?" I asked.

"Will he be well received?" Mr. Hanotaux repeated my inquiry smilingly, as if incredulous that any one should ask a question of the sort. "He will be received like a great king," he declared emphatically. "He will be received as might have been Alexander the Great if invited to be a witness of the battles of a Power friendly to him. Do you know him?"

I explained to M. Hanotaux that it chanced that I know Col. Roosevelt rather well, having been wounded while attached as a correspondent to the Rough Riders in Cuba and having been made by the permanent regimental organization its official historian.

"Then urge him to come," said the great Frenchman. "The invitation will not be wholly unexpected, perhaps, although it has not been made public that it is to be extended and although we have not the slightest idea whether or not it will be accepted."

"If you can do anything through newspapers or otherwise which will help to influence him toward the acceptance of it you thereby will be doing the finest thing for France which you, as an American, could do. A visit, while we are at war, from Theodore Roosevelt! Through such an episode, indeed, America really might hold out the hand of fellowship to France."

"Have the people of France been satisfied with the attitude of the United States during the course of the great war?" I asked.

"We have been very satisfied with the American attitude," said M. Hanotaux. "The efforts to convince the people of the United States that this is not the case have been made by the enemies of France."

"We have received from the people of the United States a sympathy and understanding which have been very welcome and which have tended to sustain our courage and determination. We have received from the resources of the United States, financial, industrial and economic, enormous aid."

"While your Government strictly has maintained complete neutrality, as it has been right that it should do, your people have sent us food for our popu-

lation at a time when its own production has been hampered by the intense efforts in other directions necessitated by the war; they have sent us munitions from your wonder working factories which have been of the utmost moment to us; to our wounded they have offered succor and assistance through many splendid enterprises, of which the American Ambulance in Paris ever will remain a shining example of the fine spirit which animates American friendship for France."

"And what France, indeed what can any one say in adequate appreciation of the marvellous outpouring of pure charity and understanding, wholesome generosity which has come from the United States to aid poor Belgium—that one of our allies which most has suffered and the gallantry of which ever will remain glorious in history?"

"It has been suggested by many very careful thinkers that in an alliance of the three free peoples—those of France, those of Great Britain and those of the United States, may be a possible plan by means of which to preserve the world from future disasters comparable to this war," I ventured.

"An understanding of the sort would be the strongest influence for good the world ever has known," said M. Hanotaux. "At present the feeling in France is that we must think of nothing but the war until we, in connection with our allies, have brought it to a victorious conclusion. We must concentrate upon the task in hand."

"But it would be well, even while the war proceeds, to prepare the machinery which may help toward such an understanding as you mention. It may be that I shall find no better opportunity during our talk than this in which to express, as a Frenchman, the strength and depth of the feeling of all France toward England."

"It should be unnecessary for a Frenchman to give voice to this, for it should be entirely and fully understood upon all sides. But a very definite and ingenious campaign has been organized for sowing the seeds of dissension among the people of the allied nations, and more especially for spreading in the neutral countries false tales of misunderstandings, rivalries and half hidden agreements."



GABRIEL HANOTAUX
FORMER
MINISTER OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS FOR
FRANCE



ON THE
FRENCH
FRONT
IN THE
ARGONNE



COLONEL
THEODORE
ROOSEVELT.

"Even in France by devious means efforts have been made to bring about dissatisfaction with our splendid British allies. Just as efforts have been made in many quarters to generate the thought that France has fallen out of sympathy with the United States."

"Naturally such efforts are deceiving nobody in France with regard to England any more than the similar efforts are deceiving any one with regard to America. That the effort should have been made at all in either case is but one more indication of that lack of knowledge with regard to international psychology which has characterized the procedure of our enemies from the days of the beginning of the war."

"As a matter of fact a grateful and appreciative France fully realizes that in this day of great world crisis England is playing in the world her usual role of the defender of justice and the protector of human liberty. I have put forward my very firm conviction upon this subject in the preface which I have written for Mrs. Humphry Ward's 'L'Effort de l'Angleterre' (England's Effort). I am glad to have this opportunity of repeating the statement of my convictions for the benefit of our readers. They are the convictions of all Frenchmen."

"But to-day I am glad to speak principally of the feeling of France for the United States. Cordiality always has been the keynote of the relationship between our two countries. So far as I am aware no opportunity for its expression in words ever has been neglected by a Frenchman, and besides such expressions there have been continual and more practical manifestations of it through great financial, commercial and industrial interchange between the nations."

"It has been my continual and personal aim and wish to further this relationship of friendship and to bring the two countries constantly closer together. A very definite effort is now and for some time has been in operation in Paris toward this end, in the form of the American Clearing House, of which I am the president."

"At first this was principally an organization devoted to the efficient and proper distribution of that magnificent charity which has been manifested by

America in France since the beginning of the war, but now it has developed further, and has become an organized machine devised for the purpose of bringing closer together in an intimate acquaintance and friendship those representatives of both our peoples who have become interested in the common object of alleviating the misery thrust upon the world by those who are responsible for this great war."

"No task could be more congenial to me. I have traveled extensively in the United States and may lay claim to some personal knowledge of your splendid people and your magnificent country. I have perceived the psychological richness, the mental keenness, the tremendous physical activity of your people with delight."

"So, realizing that in the nature of things America must seem distant indeed to many of our French people, I have definitely aimed at the achievement of producing here a more intimate knowledge of and as an inevitable sequence a more friendly feeling toward the United States."

"Out of the unnecessary and unforgivable gloom into which the world has been plunged by this execrable war some bright details gleam. One of these is the fact that we have reason to believe that our unwearying efforts have impressed not only the British but the Americans of unsuspected capabilities in France. We believe that through the war we have become more accurately known to these our friends and to other friends in Belgium, in Italy, in Russia and elsewhere. That has been a gain which has accrued to us in the midst of days of strain and tragedy."

"It is our especial hope that America and England through this appreciation of our exhibition of reserve strength may form a true conception of the effort which we shall be able to exert when the day comes for the peace overtures to be made. That is a point to be remembered."

"It is well that all Americans who read these words should, indeed, consider them with care. M. Hanotaux did not further elucidate his meaning, but to those capable of reading between the lines will be found here an expression of that grim determination which finally forms the substratum of all French thought in these days—that grim determination that the war shall permanently decide the great questions which are being argued with the thunder of its guns and the sharp points of its bayonets. No one who has spent in France as many war-time weeks as I have been my previous to spend can doubt that such a determination comes to an end it will have left few points undecided."

"M. Hanotaux turned the conversation presently into channels less militant. It is plain that already he has thought deeply upon the things which will be most desirable after the war's end and upon that new philosophy which the war has brought to France."

"But, after all," said he, "France wishes to stand before the world as a fighting nation and during such a period as may be necessary to make that her enemies may be convinced that she is capable of defending her ideals, her property and her traditions."

"Really France stands in the world not for military power but for her art, her sciences and the beautiful things for which France is famous. As an international medium of exchange art must not be despised. The industries and branches of commerce which supply the cities with their requirements have an importance as vital to the growth of civilization as that of more material things."

"It is certain that the marriage of American and French ideals, the union of French activity with American ambition would produce excellent offspring. I do not doubt that through the exchange of thought, which, though traveling by different paths, proceeds exactly in the same direction and through the exchange of your wonderful commodities of great effort and vast enterprise for our products, among them by no means forgetting power for women and every thing connected with the beautiful beauty which we call 'la mode' we shall arrive at a complete accord between the countries, taking the steps necessary to insure that our respective civilizations in the future shall be far above the other Jack-in-the-box with which Germany deceived herself and endeavored to deceive the world."

"I always have advocated the idea that French students should go to America to study the great commercial and industrial activities of your country, as I always have been among those who most heartily have welcomed American students who have come here to learn of our arts, our sciences and the sentiments of our civilization."

"In this interview I find it impossible more fully to develop this theory, but in cooperation in America with my close and valued friends Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University; Dr. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard, and Col. Roosevelt I have been making the greatest possible efforts to bring about this union between our two peoples, our two republics—the union for which the foundations were laid by Washington and our Lafayette; foundations upon which during this war, by your help and by your sympathy, you Americans have built a more important portion of the growing structure than you have appreciated."