

THE FRENCH HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, FROM THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE.

MEN WITH A FUTURE:

M. HANOTAUX, FRENCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.



THE career of M. Hanotaux, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been one of steady, continuous, and well-earned success. At the same time, the rise of this industrious student of the *École des Chartes* to a place among the most influential politicians of Europe, at little more than forty years of age, may be said to owe quite as much to what he is not as to what he is. In the first place, it would be hard to imagine anyone more unlike the average French politician than is M. Hanotaux, and for this very reason the Foreign Minister inspired confidence at a time when both France and the rest of the world had come to regard French politicians with considerable suspicion. There is nothing of the adventurer in M. Hanotaux.

It was, moreover, distinctly in his favour, when in May, 1894, M. Dupuy offered him the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that he was almost unknown outside the Foreign Office. People at once inquired into his record, and what they found was entirely to his credit. Albert Auguste Gabriel Hanotaux was born at Beaurevoir, in Picardy, on November 19,

1853. At first, after leaving school, he studied law, but in 1876 he was nominated by the Government a pupil of the *École des Chartes*. It was here that he began to qualify for the *Quai d'Orsay* by the study of ancient documents. He stayed there for three years, not, be it noted, attracting attention by any special brilliancy of scholarship, but passing his examinations creditably—no more than that. By great good fortune M. Hanotaux discovered, in 1879, the lost "Maximes d'État" of the great Richelieu, and thereby not only acquired a certain amount of fame among historians and scholars, but received, it can hardly be doubted, a definite impulse towards the cautious and somewhat unscrupulous statecraft of the Cardinal-Duke.

From this discovery, moreover, dates the commencement of M. Hanotaux's great work—the "Life of Richelieu"—the first volume of which did not appear until sixteen years had been spent in original research and indefatigable collation of documents.

This fact by itself throws a flood of light on the conscientious industry and perseverance

of the Foreign Minister of France. The value of the work itself was attested last year by the fact that it won M. Hanotaux to the Academy. In 1879 M. Hanotaux entered the Archives Department of the Foreign Ministry, but for the next four years he also worked as a professor at the *École des Hautes Études*, while he was becoming better known at the Foreign Office as a careful, keen, critical, and always reliable official. At the same time leisure was found for articles—chiefly on Richelieu—in the magazines, and even a book (“*Villes Retrouvées*”) in 1880.

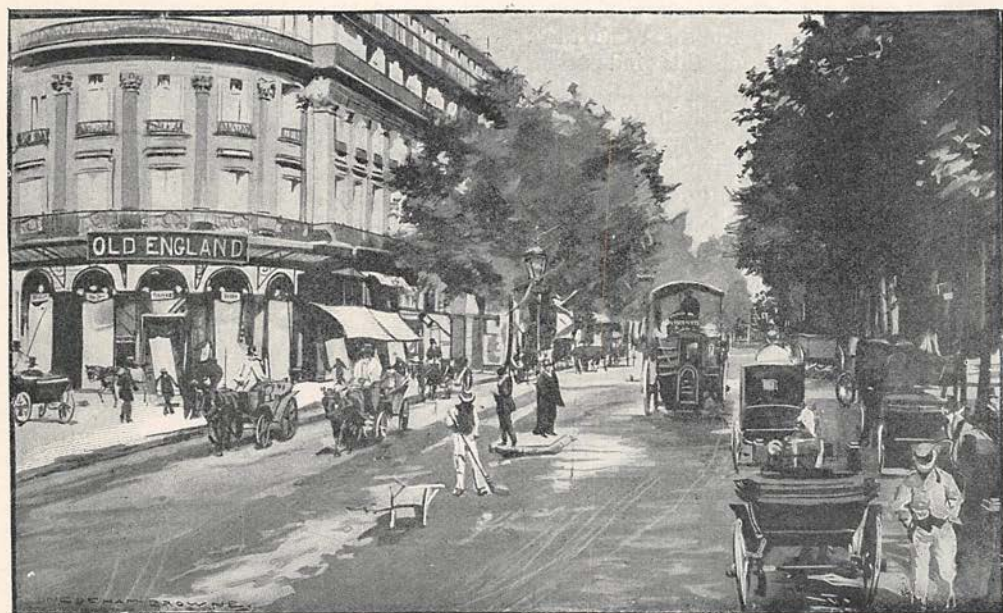
In December, 1881, Hanotaux became Under-Secretary of the Ministerial Cabinet; in 1883 he was Joint Secretary to the Cabinet in which M. Jules Ferry was Foreign Minister. Quiet, intelligent work had now won him a firm foothold in the political, or rather the diplomatic, career.

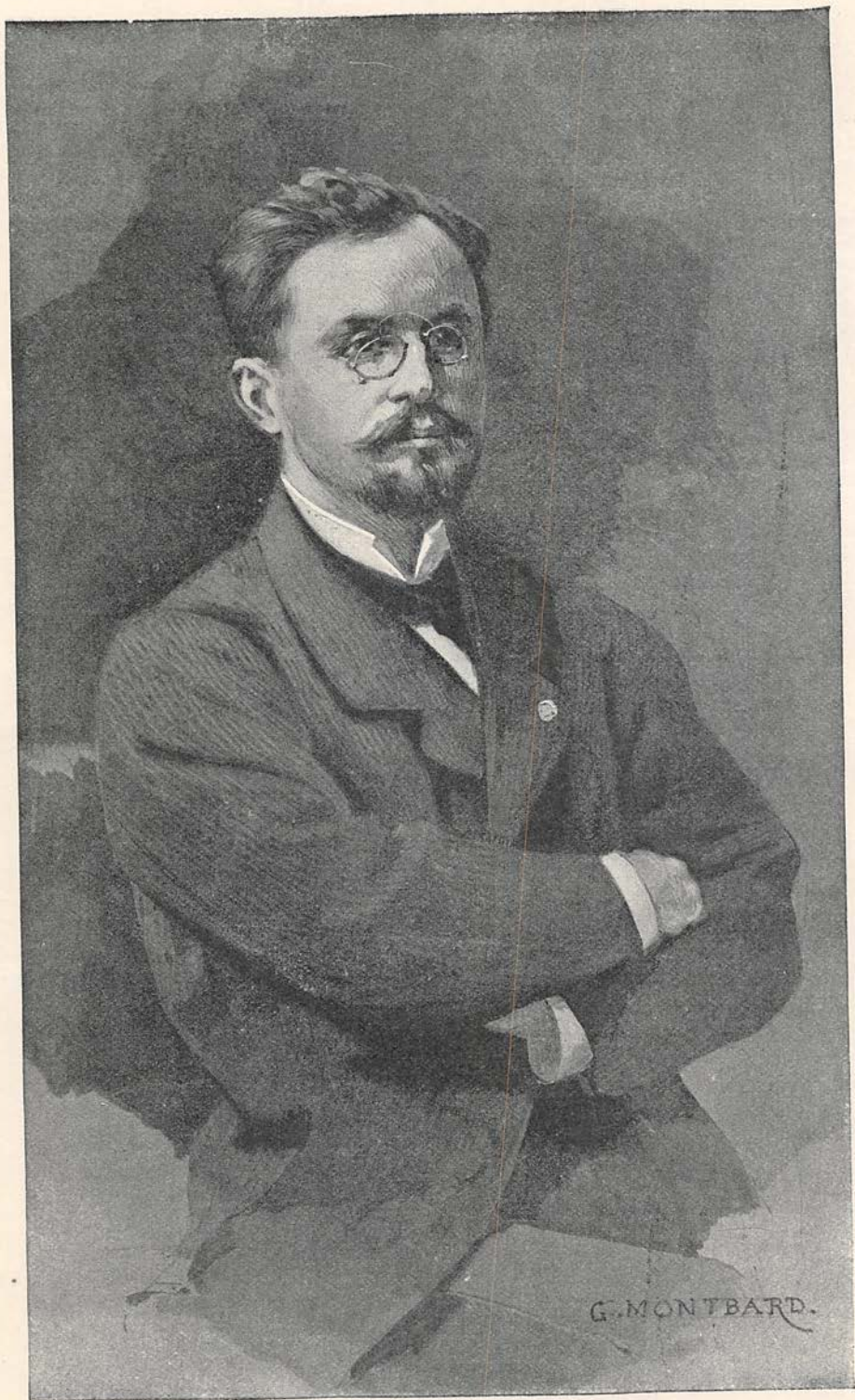
In 1885, M. Ferry, finding Hanotaux exactly the agent he wanted—precise, keen, indefatigable, a master of detail—sent him to Constantinople as Councillor of Embassy under the Marquis de Noailles.

On his return to Paris, M. Hanotaux entered the Chamber as member for the department of the Aisne; but as member of Parliament the defects of his qualities kept him in the background and thus enabled

him to mature quietly, away from the dangerous notoriety of party conflict.

M. Hanotaux has never possessed the gift of speaking long and eloquently when there is nothing of importance to be said, and it is this failing—from the demagogue's point of view—which has, perhaps, won him more respect from the crowd than many of his undoubted qualities. He is considered, and very justly, a man who *knows*, a careful, far-seeing, thoroughly safe guide. With all this it is not to be wondered at that M. Hanotaux is somewhat lacking in initiative. He is supposed to depend a little too much on his subordinates, to pay undue regard to precedents, and to be over-slow in moving when an emergency may demand bold and confident action. Nevertheless, he has been almost uniformly successful; the Congo triumph, the Madagascar coup, and the growing influence of France in Europe and in the East, all may be due in part to his undoubted good fortune; but, together with his opportunist policy, M. Hanotaux has a very definite idea of what France wants, and how she can obtain it. His keen sight reaches not only into the past but also far into the future; he is no idealist, but he has a certain practical, patriotic enthusiasm; he believes in France, and, above all things, he believes in himself.





MONSIEUR HANOTAUX.
(Minister for Foreign Affairs in France.)