

CARLYLE AND THE WAR.

BY MARSHALL KELLY.

PROEM.

IT is loudly asseverated that the British Empire is of one mind in regard to this war against Germany; and by the arithmetical count of heads, it probably is so to an overwhelming extent, as it has long been in other matters. But one wonders how many, or how few, there may be who reflect, with a depth of stable conviction altogether diverse from the popular unanimities, that the British are in this war, as in so very much else, acting in an express defiance of the teaching of the validest Sage and Hero-soul that has lately lived among them. Yea, in a witting defiance of the clearest revelation of indubitable facts, made by the Best of themselves in their midst, vitally connected with this very matter; which it preeminently behoved the British to have learned and laid to heart, as basis and guide for their whole relation to Germany. Few indeed, I fear, are those who know thus, if compared to the millions neglectful; yet possibly more numerous than those denying millions dream of, and certainly, were it unit against the rest of the race, of more weight in the final count. These in their musings on the war, its Causes and its Issues, will have their rock-based Certainties; also their profound Dubieties; their confidence in Eternal's justice, and joy in iniquity's overthrow; their submission to His decree, however terrible the desolation, however complete and hideous-seeming the triumph of Ill. Silent for the most part, and waiting the Event unforeseeable. For the nation does not ask their counsel; spurns it if offered; and follows, as most chosen of the Lord, the Demagogues which at each moment best mouth its own impious will. Moreover, so long as anything like a flaming success shall crown its effort, no contrary word will be listened to. Should adversity befall, it might prove otherwise; and in either, or in any,

case we have and shall have our thoughts and our duties both during and after: Thoughts and duties which might perhaps gain a little in clearness if earnestly imparted, deliberated of.

To start with a small Certainty, surely sharable by many complexions: This attempt, of the Newspapers and Parliamentary Leaders, which has been and is all too successful, to work the whole nation up into a state of foam-lipped furor against the Germans, cannot conduce to wisdom in the council or valor in the field. This is not just indignation, and no profit can lie in it for Man. Neither strength to us, nor danger to the German,—save as the human may be sore bested by numberless pack.

Brutal barbarian and modern Hun, ruthless in savage atrocity; Military Autocracy, domineering of temper, bent on self-aggrandisement, destructive of freedom and seeking the tyrannous; most to be dreaded embodiment of Satanic power, whose threatened encroachments all the nations of earth should gather together to stem, fairest of the justice-loving unite with darkest minister to cut down and destroy:—Surely there are men in number, true British indeed, who have an assurance, not to be shaken by any amount of rabid clamor, that such current imagination of the German bears no manner of resemblance to German of fact; men who could fight to some purpose in a cause that was just, unmoved by campaigns of persuasion far removed from all spirit of justice; who, demanded to draw in this quarrel, thrust the blade further home in its sheath with some uttered or mute *Videat Altissimus*, shamed of their country's deed, appealing to their captain's Captain. Yea, mindful of and worthily obeying their earthly captain also, he, the greatest, noblest, justest of all modern men, Carlyle: Who bore witness of mightily different tenor to the German, his history, military and other organization, and whose witness they know to have been true. Wide and stable testimony by constant brother man, lucent with true heaven's inspiration; somewhat more sufficing than the Devil's Head in phosphorus—drawn, alas, upon no dungeon's walls, but gleaming hideous in souls mendacious walking freely in the daylight, profane in insolent denial of the Seer whom the Almighty sent to *them*. To us at least, not to them unless penitent; and may we be worthy to say to us.

CONCERT OF EUROPE.

It is very lamentable and terribly significant how widespread and genuine a persuasion has got abroad, even among the good people, that this Concert of the Powers was a sort of a sacred thing.

Colors of the vulpine do often succeed in deceiving as they wittingly propose; and a righteous indignation at the vulpine, when their true motives are disclosed, may be justified. But the concurrent belauding as holy a base policy whereof the motives have been correctly announced augurs a pravity which, if it come to know truth, can have no title to be indignant, must rather confess its own guilt. Yet even here, however stern a man's recognition of the sin, he knows the too commonly irresistible influence of a general concensus in perverting those of a bias truly virtuous. Some sixteen years, or so, ago, one time when reports of Turkish atrocities in Armenia were causing such emotion in England that many were crying for armed intervention, I remember being urged to read a speech of Lord Roseberry's. A judicious wet cloth, of course, but equally *of course*, since by British Liberal Statesman of this epoch, not a speech astutely contrived to simply dissuade from enterprise inconvenient for Ministry occupied in concerns privately more profitable for its members; on the contrary, the sincere utterance of a man self-sympathizing with the emotion, wishful for the Turks' correction, yet arguing: Husht! Dread sequel if we stir alone; in the Concert solely is there safety and salvation. And, with such unction did he perorate, the Public, in awakened sense, holily restrained its rage for its salvation's sake,—and possibly the Turk's, not quite the Armenian's. I refused at the moment to look at the thing, pained with emotions of another kind; so far as the urger knew, never looked at it; yet did, as you see, afterwards read, in resolute suppression, and for more exact knowledge of its guessed tenor, "You should read that, my son; that is a speech everybody ought to read." About the same time the same woman said to me, upon laying down a book entitled *Fire and Sword in the Soudan*, "I suppose he could not help himself, but I cannot feel any respect or sympathy for that man," the author, one Slaten, to wit. Very gently said, but she couldn't; yet thought the Roseberry address delivered in right spirit for the pulpit. How many have met the like! How many have thought the like! Too many that have innocently drunk in a belief this Concert was a sacred thing.

Yet the case of that Turkish instance was, if possible, even grosser than the subsequent Balkan ones. A dark, brutal, wretch, whatever ill he do, let no man hinder, lest his coveted den breed contention. The devil to be kept afoot in some measure; prudently maintained in possession of Eden, because the godly might fall out with one another were so lovely a spot left free to their entry.

If a murderous thief have money in his pocket, or in the bank, let every constable be wary; never dare to run him in, unless secure the Judges are agreed on how to share the spoil. In Decorum's name, what is a little outrage in the streets compared to quarrel on the Bench? The results of that are too frightful to contemplate. Hasty zeal would defeat its own end, destroy the very means of bringing offender to judgment; for without a judicious unanimity no lawful verdict were obtainable. Lawful verdicts are frequently unobtainable, sometimes too obtainable; and justice never reached *so*, yet capable of being done and left for verdict. Methinks, if man might seriously question, Have I real errand to correct this particular and so distant abuse? the question, Shall I wait on Concert with the covetous to do it? would be out of his debate. And yet I honor policy, and know the multiple involute of practical fact. There, however, it is clear, had the dubitating (and dubious) Knight Errant stood wholly out, the covetous neighbors, with or without some brush of comparatively trifling battle, would long since have contrived to share in some tolerable manner; the Balkans in whole have settled themselves the better without the meddling of such a disinterested umpire.

Truly, Prince von Kaunitz Reitberg's text, that Great Courts should understand one another, then the Small would be less troublesome, has found fat mother to breed in, and grown enormously since his day; ever the more pronounced virtuously assured of morality, up to the very moment of catastrophe from the start inevitable for it. For it? Perhaps not. The text may be meet enough for unscrupulous voracious fellow; have a real truthfulness to nature there, be well allowed by heaven, and run on to happy fulfillment so far. Voracity may be perfectly veracious; and I never blame a shark for swallowing small fry with his utmost gusto. The sight of half a dozen sharks gracefully maneuvering in Concert, for the more dexterous satisfaction of several appetites, may also have its own seemliness, the gastric desires of highest mortal confess a certain sympathy. But for creatures that have once guessed themselves made in their Maker's image, to whom a sense of the infinite of right and wrong has announced that the gaining of the whole world could not profit if achieved in treason to that image;—for them to take such text as maxim for International Policy! Why I do not know that they ever did it; only the sharks having heard tell of them, then find it expedient to deliberately cloak greed in show of holiness, and imagine they can work injustice the more

securely by professing care of equity ; whilst a huge medley of others add their votes, variously persuaded that this is the solution : For whom catastrophe is inevitable ; because they build on no truth, neither on appetite or intelligence, but on a lying compound, beast man and god alike disown, which nothing in nature will support.

May not a Small nation have just or unjust cause of quarrel, reasonable or unreasonable claim or pretension, as much as a Great ? And what valid title can the Great ever have to step in and say : We will decide your disputes and your claims and in all things you shall do as we bid ? O damned canaille, jealous of classes superior, yelping distracted at each hint or suspicion of one law for Rich and another for Poor, sworn all as one man that *that* shall be the rule in law International ! Your skins are precious to you and your corpora stink. In the ideal possibilities, where the Great loved the truth and sought to do justice alone, court of their convening might be a godly tribunal, very blessed to see upon earth ; and, whatever security their power gave to its meetings, lent to enforce its judgments, most sure it is that the consideration Great or Little ? would weigh pure zero in determining right to a seat on the bench. Is this the thing we have seen ? No ; nor so much as endeavored toward. But, in clear sight of utterly diverse fact, the beneficence that would attach to this has been pretended for that diverse,—which, also, as shall shortly be referred to, could have had an honest place. Conclave of the Powerful assembled to find how their own mutual jealousies set on edge by debates 'mong the less,—glowering one at another, Take that side, if you dare ; by God I'll take this if you do—may reach compromise without wager of battle, the Small be compecsed into accepting the awards so arrived at ; and is one of the most unblest things very certainly seen upon earth. Yes, this is the thing we have seen these last thirty years and longer, growing ever the more confident to its inevitable result. Parties there have been in England and elsewhere, very vehement for the justice, or what they thought it, yet even these have all subscribed to the prime need of Concert ; admitted it were better that wrong should be done than peace 'tween the Mighty put in danger of rupture. Here, at any rate, no shadow of a plea can be found that these things were done by closeted few, the nations not witting. What the articles agreed upon each time were, what dexterous management was exercised to reach them, may be an esoteric mystery ; but what spirit wrought has been broadly visible and universally sanctioned. In England most eminently. Speeches upon speeches in Parliament and out, without respect of party ; all the newspapers in

leading articles ; and table talk in each private household ;—the argument has been everywhere the same. I know no instance of National Policy so overwhelmingly endorsed, in full sight of its true essence ; up to that last speech at the outbreak, when Sir Edward Grey,—he would not have had the Peace of Europe jeopardized for *Servia*. Aye, Sir Edward has been very consistent in this, and outspoken ; long since and constantly made it evident as could be 'twas fundamentally accepted in his Policy the weak must go to the wall rather than important persons suffer ; merely Quixotic to hope otherwise. Of course ! And God forbid he'd mammer scrupulous on such a point. Then, if the case of *Belgium* touch you nearer, step forth pure champion of the Small, in righteous zeal. The soul of man is sick at the sodden hypocrisy ; could find the deeds smell sweeter if done in conscious perfidy of the cunning. And the newspapers hope that, when the war is over, the Concert may be reestablished in such firmness any little nation attempting to draw free breath shall instantly be throttled impotent : They must never be allowed to provoke such disasters again. It does not strike you that they have just as good a right to bustle in the world as any of the Big ? That, if the Big fall a-quarrelling in sequel, the crime is their own wholly ; the true peril in their disposition so to do, and unremovable while that remains ?

None worth the name of man but must know beyond all question that the sole thing which can give a nation right to set up for Judge in another's quarrel is the resolution to do justice in it. Court convened to arbitrate on matters in dispute and primarily devoted to the maintenance of peace among the Arbiters ! Could there be a thing more impious than this ? What amazed execration would greet it, if proposed for settlement of the least sixpenny matter between private litigants ! Yet seen International applauded with unction by every man, woman and youth ; anathema only for any not zealous for such first aim, the very need for which invalidates for umpire's seat and of necessity turns the Court into one for iniquity's sanction.

Such has too terribly been the fact, and damnable. Yet we said that a fact very diverse from the professed Beneficent Arbitration could have honestly been. It is obvious that parties extraneous to an original dispute may have interests of every degree of gravity affected by that dispute ; may confer together for peaceable solution of those interests ; if unable to reach it, may each choose mediators ; and, if still at a deadlock, an umpire. Likewise that parties ex-

traneous to the original dispute and to the cross interests of the secondaries directly affected may have interests of every degree of gravity affected by division among the secondaries, and so *ad infinitum*, till there be in reality no party without interest; and conference for peaceable solution the more desirable than ever: In which reckoning, it may be worth remarking that the jumping of a flea is, in logical sequence, at all times competent to set the whole world by the ears; and wisdom, accordingly, somewhat chary how it claims interest affected. Clearly enough, the sole valid basis for those conferences among the Great Powers upon Balkan affairs was adjustment of their own differences arising through interests affected. Every man knows that nothing else ever called them into existence; that they were always in reality convened to, if possible, prevent quarrel among the Great, not for unbiassed decision in equity by them of disputes among the Small; that the pretence of a God's vice-regency by Major in Concert over Minor inclined to division was a pretence palpable, which fear alone ever led any to accredit holy. If those Conferences had been informed wholly by a spirit of greedy cunning, each party diligent for private end, they might have had their dog's day; and noble statesman kept rigorously out. For that is the law: you are not bound to have a finger in every pie; and, if you cannot interfere for good, shall not interfere at all, but leave the coil to its strugglings and such issue as the high o'er-ruling Providence may have for it.

If honest (and thereby alone truly valid), the Conference must have Justice for its first aim every whit as much as Court of arbitration; and steady refusal to force that on the less which nothing save the jealousies of the Great demands. Noble Briton, entering such Conference, might indeed have prayed heaven to grant him a tactful sagacity, fine delicacy of manipulation and a solid understanding of the doable, much more and primarily to grant him insight into the veritable right and wrong of the matters, well knowing that nothing built on miss of this could have a chance to stand, that completest Concert attained in defiance of this would infallibly prove exceedingly disconcerting. He would have utterly abhorred the accursed doctrine of the Great's right to interfere because Great, and rejected all plans based on such a supposition. Would have known, too, that, if the strong hand can sometimes parcel States, it is forever impotent to create one: That can never be done at external dictation; what nation is to be a nation must spring by nature's generation, spontaneous in a self-vitality, self-fending, self-coherent, being and expanding by its own innate powers. Ah

me! This manufacturing of States, autonomous Albanias, what not, Belgium itself for that matter, with their frontiers marked, constitutions supplied, and kings (God save the mark!) all ready chosen for them, according to model pleasing to the grandiose disposers:—it awakens thoughts we must not go into; and, any time, I would rather leave the blindest rages free to their havoc than be one in framing such a mock settlement, fraught with far deadlier havoc.

Yea, noble Briton, unable to do or to obtain justice for the Small, had sooner left them to try their own strengths than been a party to unjust compulsions. If he could not defend them from wrongful aggressions, restrictions, had sorrowfully stood aside, sooner than lent these his sanction. And if he could not have found acceptance as mediator between the Big concerning their interests affected, had similarly left them to fight it out, rather than won the crown as Peacemaker by Concert in sacrifice of the Lesser's rights. In all ways, he had stood for Justice, wrought for it, and, in such resolution, had seen the justice in some measure, as without it never; whether active or passive, had found a manful course. But, with Peace the first aim, all was naturally very different, and honorable action never possible. Man authentically actuated by that aim only is in practical deed a powerless entity. Peace! Peace! For God's sake, Peace! Lest *I* get involved, might seem contemptible too;—but not to most, when cried by a man very able to fight and adding—at any cost to those little nuisances. Had Sir Edward Grey wished peace for peace's sake he had been a nullity and thing helpless to further the least agreement; had he cared particularly for justice he might have found himself an alien spirit, still more futile to preserve peace this day; but, being heartily desirous to prevent war for reasons highly intelligible to the rest, he often did patch up matters by expedients of the moment, each time worsening the fact and rendering ultimate rupture the more certain. My fleets and armies are in readiness and I can be truculent enow, but, Gentlemen, War for *such a casus*! Come, hit on some reasonable apportionment of shares, or all forego. And then to some the *casus* was not so distant, insignificant, as to him. And when did a heaven-blessed Amity result from the like of this?

Concert of Europe, how these latter decades has this been impressed on us! The just of every nation eyeing in silence, with reflections too awful for utterance. Platform and pulpit, every shade of opinion, zealous in sacred insistence, breath bated in fear:

O ye nations called Small! God damn you, be quiet, lest the Peace of the Great be disturbed. Was there ever a doubt that the Lord of Eternity, so besought to preserve them from quarrel, would answer the Great by letting loose all their furies to ravin the worse for every stave till the morrow?

OSTENSIBLE CAUSES.

It is naturally the custom of a nation's Leaders, when they announce war on its behalf, to make some sort of public statement of the Causes which have determined them to take so grave a step; and the rarer case that the true causes are so much as touched upon in such Ostensible account of them. Very often the reasons given are so totally inadequate (to say naught else) you might marvel how any one could put them forth as explanation to be credited; why the Peoples so addressed do not instantly reply: We will not hazard life or limb for these hiccups. Yet it is not the People's custom to answer so: They usually accept the reasons given as affording convincing grounds for deeds and sacrifices so glaringly disproportioned it looks an inconceivable credulity; by many of the more philosophic, regarded perennially as a sort of bedlam possession. And no doubt it considerably is so; yet far from wholly. Blind stampede and wild unreason of mob, with brute love of war, fascination and glamor of exploit, ever is in it; yet also greatly more. Even the enthusiastic chorus, reiterating the helpless reasons offered as beyond gainsaying, springs not altogether from simple-ness, nor readiness to seize excuse, but from an instinct of a vast unspoken behind, at least belief there must be this. Yea, without conviction, persuasion, or imagination of a true *infinite* at stake, which in the name of manhood commands no cost be weighed, the nations never fall a-battling. Idea of a supreme Duty, whether radiant in clear intelligence, turbid, confused, or diabolically opposite, is always there; and even the cunning who seek to provoke wars for their own ends, cannot do so unless this be in some way excited: Its presence is a necessity; but, if not intelligent, it can be traded on. The very day before war was declared between Great Britain and Germany, newspapers were declaiming it an unthinkable absurdity, monstrous to suggest; and next day were for it in whole heart and so much of soul as they may be supposed to possess. Nor is that phenomenon purely one of the weathercock, the essence of whose utility is well known to be instant amenability to wind however changeful; a better ingredient in the recognition that division, the least word of debate, is perilous in such circum-

stances, and a loyal trust in the Leaders requisite for nations' being. Would that men knew it equally in peace, for it is equally true then; and reflect on the really awful responsibility they owe for their choice of Leaders. Exceedingly foolish, superficial is the notion too, that wars are ever caused by trifles; the wiser know that the causes are always fully adequate, perfectly proportioned in fact, could mortal trace them. No mortal can trace *them*, and the proclamation of Ostensible is never blameworthy because *that way* "inadequate"!

Granting that the Ostensible rarely touch upon the Real, they remain noteworthy, were it only as indications of the degree of intelligence. They may be subterfuges wittingly concocted by wile, or stolidities of inarticulate honesty that cannot speak its meaning. Neither is it to be forgotten that the highest true could as little really name his cause. Cause fully declarable were by the hypothesis, shallow and trivial. For, never is it the thing predicated, but the enormous sequels which hang by it; and comprehension of these intuitive tacit in faith. Nevertheless the Leaders ought to know to some extent, and who has the intuitive perception does; never will the reasons rendered by these be contrary to the fact, however limited in account of it. Well, the British Ostensible Causes are set forth in a certain White Paper familiar to all men, and to which the leaders refer as authorized statement of their "Case." While Sir E. T. Cook has volunteered an elucidated abbreviation fearlessly entitled *Why Britain is at War*. No man's breath appears to have been taken away; but, for my part, my audacity would not reach to this. How we picked quarrel; or how we closed with the offer of it; or how we were forced into it; these are Madams (if you know your Kingsley) you may hope to scrape some acquaintance with in those pages of My Lords Ambassadors' despatches; but, as to bosoming with My Lady Why, 'tis to be doubted she is not quite so free a wench. Happily there is no question that the paper, so far as it does go, is authentic; and as we say, interesting chiefly as showing degree of veracity. For absence of wile will not make a thing honest; deliberate wile can be truer than a systemic mendaciousness, which, never expressly uttering falsehood, yet speaks and acts habitually from assumptions that are baseless. It is not true, for instance, that you sought peace with your neighbor, if determined on war unless he behaved himself according to a prescription drawn up as suitable to your needs and conveniences merely; no industrial zeal, most passionate pleading to persuade to keep within the bounds set, will prevent your being, in that case, most essentially the

Aggressor. And the knave who made the prescriptions purposely to provoke war might readily stand in closer contact with truth than the wight who expected to preserve order by publicly announcing a law of conduct for those wholly without his jurisdiction. If he have only privately registered the rule, too, and, half conscious of its presumptuous absurdity, shrink from declaring it till the last moment compel, his pleading may easily be the more passionate, so that he sit down in tears to cry Pity! God witness I did all I could; but his workings are pitiful, can only prove the more disastrous through "good" intentions less subtle *perfidie* than simply disjoined from fact's realm.

Of the Austro-Servian matter with which this White Paper, so confidently referred to as exhibiting Britain's "Case," commences, we have not much to say; The Justice of the dispute was confessedly no cause of Britain's action; and I, personally, could not hold myself competent to speak a word on *it*: do not know that at all. This, however, I do know; namely, that, whether the launching of her Ultimatum by Austria was wise or unwise, its wording prudent or imprudent, if the charges made in it were true, then, certainly Austria had valid ground for most drastic action; and nothing save the complete submission of Servia could have given her security against a continuance of the alleged offences. Alleged offences which if true were wholly intolerable, inexcusable, and very great forbearance—godly insufferance or fractious compelled—shown in enduring them so long. And, if one own to something more than scepticism of Austrian political integrity generally, that would only make one the more insist on no hindrance if she had right in a particular instance. Every fair-minded man must have felt that if these charges were true, not necessarily in each detail specified but generically in whole spirit imputed, then Austria had full title to chastise with the armed hand; and would rather have guarded her from interference than been a party to it. Therefore, whosoever in any way challenged her action could only in probity do so if justified in calling the truth of the charges in question. Peculiarly futile was it to run up crying Delay! for God's sake, delay, and moderate your tone, when it was obvious that if the charges were true the time for delay or moderation was long past. If Britain, idle knight-errant with no business of her own to look after, wished to act on that score she should have acted years before. Alas! we all know she had; and added vexation enough, not so Quixotically neither, for the wound, as expediently for far other subjects.

Sancho's stomach made one sufficing trial of his master's Balsam, wambled at the mere snuff ever after: Can you wonder then, if Austria at length grew squeamish of Grey Powder for every ill she had a mind to mend?

When Servia, after shuffle and enquiry round, replied to the Ultimatum, our Sir Edward swore he'd never seen a nation make a more prostrate salaam to truculent Bashaw. To which I fear the answer is: It had much of that character, and was a thing of paper; very fit to rank among Ostensibles: And, showing more suppleness in performing a required kowtow than sincerity in penitence, gave properly no assurance of a better loyalty in future deed. Nothing in that nominal submission offered hope of stable working; and, of course it is one way evident that, once things had reached this pass, nothing short of the almost miraculous could. Since, if the charges were untrue the party who made them was bent on mischief and would take no answer; whilst, if true, the party of whom they were true would have needed to do a considerable conversion before becoming able to make reply of such radically different tenor as could have seemed to Man a ground to try anew upon. I think these are facts, and in Sir Edward Grey's despatches there is not the slightest recognition of them: Which, whether he believed the first alternative or the second or the more probable compound of both, there assuredly should have been. Intense pleading these is in those despatches. But it is all prompted by absolutely self-interested motives; flows not from care of Austria's welfare or of Servia's, but of our own skin's solely; owes its fervency to the heart text: Mercy on us! Hold your hand you, bow down t'other, both accept shadow for substance, lest your differences breed a brawl of wider compass wherein *we* should not 'scape. It was Sir E. Grey's duty to look after our interests; and, if he meddled in this foreign matter, the first law for *that* was to see the facts of *it* and conform to them; there could be no hope in resource which flew in the teeth of them. But the dread of cataclysm misled, as fear, even makes men traitors to themselves and all mankind. Moreover, it was no case of a normal integrity erring in one instance, but of a quite habitual attempt to build on the untenable, to safeguard by methods essentially mendacious, howsoever, persuaded of needful expediency or claiming regard of common welfare.

For, for Great Britain, on her own initiative, uninvited, to write *any* despatch to Austria on her Servian affair was in reality an indefensible proceeding; and every man knows that Britain herself would be the last to suffer the like from another. Had any nation

presumed to offer us advice in any of our numerous disputes with little states or big what sort of answer should we have made? You all know it; A peremptory injunction never to repeat the like insolence under penalty. It is, indeed, a flatly impossible position this, that self-fending independent states shall be perpetually prevented from managing their own disputes without consult of neighbors. A thing justly intolerable to the states so checked. (And, on the other side, however prone the big may be to bully, to enchant the arm of power from its natural exercise is sure to prove a cherishing of license.) When done, as here on the plea of You mustn't, lest we others get to loggerheads, reduced to the extremity of impious absurdity. Doubtless the far-seeing, equitable, sagacious Ruler would recognize the existence of such mad notions in his neighbors' heads, and weigh them; but he above all others would know the notions to be baseless delusions, vicious in origin, pernicious in act; would proceed on his own business none the less, whether in wary evasion or open contempt. The more ordinary, so beshouted to stop, would, if he deigned to look over his shoulder at all, merely rejoin: "you will fight with each other, say you? That is surely your affair. I wish you good luck, and may God salve your wits, for they need it more than your wounds will."—Most clearly, to continually prevent the settlement of disputes is to create a danger immeasurably greater than any their fiercest let could have brought about; and if others get to quarrel in sequel the responsibility thereof rests on their own heads. Austria has to answer to God for the justice of her war upon Servia; but not *therefore* for the European War.

According to the White Paper, Germany's Ostensible attitude toward this Austro-Servian matter was that Austria had the right to manage in it as she herself thought fit, and no other a title to interfere: This was, in fact, the only right attitude, unless you were constituted Judge of the dispute, or had good grounds and duty to challenge the justice of Austria's action; and if, as one hopes and believes, the Ostensible was so far the Real, there is not a word can be said against it. The one straight forward manful cause there was for third parties not directly concerned. Britain, whatever her thought or resolution for subsequent developments, possible, probable, or certain, ought thus far to have taken the same; and had she done so, there would have been a different tale to tell in the subsequent developments. Simple refusal to be a Busybody. Nor need such passive role, in case liable to grow com-

plicated, be a whit the less simply this because he who takes it is, as he should be, alive to the complexities also, ready for action in them, if they do result. Sir E. T. Cook, seeking the sinister, full of a preconceived belief of it, repeats with exclamation mark, her minister's statement that Germany very well knew what she was about in so "Backing up Austria," said "backing" consisting in what the English call a traitorous refusal to unite with them in forbidding Austria to manage her own concerns. Has it really, then, become a sin to a Briton that a man should know what he is doing? It often almost seems so. *The* most dangerous crime, at least, and surest mark of nefarious proclivity to say one thing and not mean another; safety and virtue alone in those transparent mendacities—Which, since all men see through them, cannot surely be hypocrisies?—whereby our Faith and Policy are kept secure from ravin and inspiration alike. For my part, I devoutly hope that Germany did know what she was doing, though the sequel have proved beyond mortal forecast. Let her have courage; for, if so, the ultimate issue may likewise prove beyond mortal's hope. But Germany was the only one that took this course; and took it, we will hope, in a courageous simplicity. Quarrel not with the word; or do so to your heart's content. Took it, we will hope, in faithfulness to the fact; and the more awake to and prepared for the probable consequences the greater credit to her. Boundless clamor there at once was and continues to be that she took it in duplicity; clamor originating in presupposition to that effect, and up to the present not, that I know of, supported by a shred of evidence. For the notable thing to me in these despatches is that those of the German bear the impress of veracity; they alone are not condemnable on *self*-evidence, but cohere together consistently throughout as the words of men that, in spite of limitations, did essentially mean one thing before God and the same thing before men; which is not true of those of any of the others. Of these others so far as we may meetly speak:

The Russian ground was different; had nothing to do with the damned plea of Peace! Lest *we* quarrel; based itself on claim of weighty interests directly affected, in short, of being a party to the dispute and not an outsider at all. Even without this, and in a total disregard of the justice of the dispute, it could have a certain validity: Two fall ajar; a third says Let them fight it out; a fourth, No, I'll join in: All these might have solid foothold in the wide realms of nature's truth, intelligent or lustful; but he who cries,

and in the name of an intelligent humanity cries, Stop! Stop! you over there, lest I and others, leagues distant from you and unconcerned in your debate, should fall out with one another. What ground has he to stand on? Vacuity. A very meddlesome fellow, you would say, and one seeking a currying with a diligence not easily matched. But for the Russian: If his intervention was primarily directed against Austria only, which of us is there can say he had no right to appear on the field and try what he could do there? One does not know. Moreover one allows to the half-barbarous, inarticulate, a sort of brute right to *try* propensities—no curtailment of another's right to drub him well for trying them and so teach the animal becoming manners—such as, to those who have ever known higher law, one could by no means allow.

But, as far as this Austro-Servian matter went, there it should have stopped. Nothing in it was cause of the spread of the war beyond. That Balkan troubles would issue in war between Austria and Russia was probable, or as good as certain; but, if other nations made alliances which would bring them into conflict in that event, they have themselves alone to thank for it.

The question, therefore, here arises Did Germany's Alliance with Austria necessarily bring her in if Russia came in? If the answer to that be affirmative, Germany smarts for having made such alliance. The answer has been universally concluded affirmative; yet only in those mad assumptions of international compacts whereby, in infallible sequel, every flea's jump was to set the world on fire. Concluded affirmative? Yes, and with equal readiness *negative*; according to which assumption suited the righteous British arguer's mood at the moment. If the terms of the Triple Alliance made the answer affirmative, how stands Italy out, and *unheaped* with opprobrium by a Britain so virtuously indignant at treaty breakers? You know very well that the use you make of this is based on the assumption the answer *is* negative. Sir E. Grey's pleadings, reported in despatch forty-six (see later, page 545), also presuppose the negative, though the Briton there arguing that, by the International Compacts, Germany was not bound to support Austria if attacked by Russia was simultaneously allowing that France was bound to support Russia if attacked by Germany! So far as this question, of Germany's alliance with Austria compelling her support against Russia, *is* shrouded in doubt, the uncertainty is due to the inextricable interlacements and difficulty of separating one thing from so many others simultaneous. What slender testi-

mony the White Paper offers is against an affirmative: Germany would not mobilize if Russia only mobilized in South, i. e., against Austria alone. And, in truth, there is again no evidence that Germany would have entered if a reasonable assurance existed that the war could lie between Russia and Austria merely; on the contrary, the evidence is that she would not, but knew this too hypothetical a case to dwell on.

Assuming the negative, namely no treaty bond, as the British did when it suited them, Germany were only condemnable for her armed intervention if: (1) She had no title by the complexion of the present case. On which Britain argued: Please don't have any; *because* France, with confessedly none, must be allowed to have full (See pp. 546-547). (2) If Russia was verily not meditating hostility to her also. And the proverty of these White Paper despatches for throwing any certain light on *that* point is too palpable; they are here too exclusively Ostensible! We do not however require any despatches to tell us that many and weighty matters existed between Germany and her huge Eastern neighbor, nor that she would in any event be very closely touched by a war between that country and Austria. That her sympathies, apart from all her Alliances, would in general be with Austria rather than Russia, and that her interest would similarly cause her to lean the same way, are likewise foregone conclusions. It may be added also, that such bias was in the main accordant with justice and the true everliving interests of man, though of this we have more to say under *Alliances*. In the particular instance, by the evidence before us, such as it is, there is no ground to doubt that Germany sincerely wished peace between Russia and Austria, much more sincerely than we wished peace with her; nor that her action was in essence defensive against Russian Aggressive; some momentary gleam of a possibility of standing out, if properly guaranteed, swiftly swallowed in the certainty that no guarantee would be given. A passing thought of guarantee from Russia saving spread of war, standing in strong contrast with France's eager prestatement she would *take* none from Germany! A request for self-security vastly different from the demands which Britain subsequently made of the Germans! Who never said to Russia: You, offering not even the color of violence to me, seeking my friendship rather, shall only engage with your foe on terms of my dictating; whether vanquished or victor shall, in conclusion, go home again with nothing save your labor for your trouble: He has not yet reached these depths of sanctimonious effrontery. Then,

leaving the assumption of no bond or predetermination and granting that Germany had made express treaty to support Austria, or from the start of the Servian dispute, was resolved to support Austria if interfered with in that, who is there can say she was wrong? Britain, of all nations on earth, by her own conduct in the further developments here, has the least title to breathe a whisper in criticism of such determination to support a neighbor.

With Germany involved the war could still have remained in the East; nothing save France's action brought it into the West. But, before proceeding to that, look at these despatches pleading for peace between Austria and Russia, for Germany not to support the former.

For the first: They are all identical in spirit with those pleading for peace between Austria and Servia. The one argument submits *that* dispute to the Powers' decision. And we have already said enough of that; need not express our pious thankfulness that, whatever followed, this was *not* again done. Russia would have been willing for it, and it is made guilt in the two Teutonic nations that they were not. The four to whom the decision was to be left were Britain, France, Italy and Germany; Three of those four had already pronounced adversely to the Austrian: Much fairness did the Slav show! Leave it to the Powers again, who have so often happily damped it down before and ever to spring in renewed vigor to-morrow. The Chairman Power glorying in utter contempt of the justice of the quarrel; the minority of one alone having ever expressed the least care for this. It is Germany's steady refusal to be again a party to such godless futility that is the one thing the human mind can dwell on without loathing. Help me to save the peace, said the Briton. With all my heart; and earnestly did her endeavor to further reason among the parties, ownful of unreason in her ally too, yet aware of the iron limits. Britain wished peace by patching up the matter anyhow, lest fire kindled scorch her own pretty complexion: Germany wrought for peace on solid basis, prepared to take the issues if it proved unattainably solid: Which is really the criminal?

For the second: If there be any truly *British*, in the grand old sense when the word was synonymous with soul of fair play, straightness in dealing, generous frankness to foe as to friend, and, however completely now shut out from smallest voice in their nation's deeds, one cannot but believe there still are such men,

these, in their study of our White Paper, must early have been struck with a certain thing, which, as they realized its proportions and significance, might have filled them with amazed horror and indignation, had their knowledge otherwise gained of modern British Statesmanship left room for amazement or special indignation at any trick it played in slippery cunning or course it pursued openly in persuasion of magnanimity devoid of integrity. What I refer to is the proposals made by Russia, France, and Italy that Britain should declare her solidarity with the two former, unite with them three, or two, in *menace* of Germany; and the way those proposals were listened and replied to by Britain. The proposal is first made strongly in despatch number six and *repeatedly* after. Pray announce your determination to fight along with us if Germany persist in countenancing Austria; and, in the face of such a threat, she will at once cower out: It will be in the interests of peace that you should do so. Sterling Briton, thus addressed, had, in tone of sleeping thunder half awakened, answered: Silence! sirrahs. And immediately informed the German of the Proposal: There, sir, friend or foe, know by this your neighbors' tempers, what sort of impartial hearing they are prepared to give your Ally's case. And do you suppose the German did not know the proposals had been made; what sort of answer they actually got; find himself enlightened, if further enlightenment he needed, as to British sincerity in sequent suggestions made to him? Pinchbeck Briton, all gold to the eye, did not fall in with the proposals, much less answer as above. He received them in very friendly manner; courteously explained his discreet opinion that the interests of peace would be better served if he continued to enact the role of disinterested party; and—well, continued to enact in such fashion now fully transparent to all eyes friendly or hostile. A behavior thoroughly accordant with *decadent* English character and solely possible to men steeped to the bone in mendacity, swallowed in the blackest of terrestrial curses, the Apotheosis of Attorneyism; gaining for itself also the unanimous endorsement of the masses (similarly saturate) as *perfection* in any role does. It is second nature to an attorney to plead with passion, 'real' for the moment by his brief, even in full knowledge of facts contrary; and the Prime Minister, later, for his objects, named some German proposals infamous; yet have I met no Briton who knew these to be so.

And, in fact they were not. In the circumstances, it was nothing perfidious for France and Russia to beg: Unmistakably announce your determination to fight along with us—since you are so

determined. No, gentle Allies—Beg pardon!—No, loving members of an *Entente* uncommitted, we must maintain the fiction,—Alas! I stumble again. For of course it was no fiction. Of course not, said they. And Husht! Messieurs. Who said I was determined to fight along with you? We see, said they. Who doubts they saw? It were a dolt indeed that did not. Yet naturally persisted, in the firmer confidence accrued, to urge their view; it being merely a difference in opinion as to Ostensibles, the reality understood to mutual satisfaction. So Russia “deplored” the effect upon Germany of a notion that Britain would stand aside; and Grey soothed with a Pooh! Is there not dumb show enough in our fleet? Plenty of dumb show and very easy to read. While France, no wise abashed by the comforting answer, contentedly toed the line set by susceptibilities of British Conscience; and passed on to discuss preparations in common for war—of course only in the hypothetic possibility of your deciding to join us: We will not again press you for any more definite assurance on that head. Most unnecessary that you should, Messieurs. No, the proposals were not infamous. Yet I know of few things better meriting the description than the answers they got.

Among other things that might provoke amazement, but too sorrowfully cannot, is despatch 46 where Sir E. Grey reports his having had the impudence to “Observe” to the German Ambassador “that if Germany assisted Austria against Russia it would be because *without any reference to the merits of the dispute* (italics ours) Germany could not afford to see Austria crushed.” This in face of the clear fact that Germany alone had ever expressed care for the justice of the dispute, and had at the very start plainly stated her belief that Austria had good grounds for her proceedings against Servia, and ought not to be interfered with in them. Sir Edward Grey himself, meanwhile, having ever unblushingly expressed a total indifference to the justice of the dispute; and in another despatch of the same date, Number forty-eight, reiterates that if Austria could satisfy Russia she might do what she liked with Servia. Merit of the dispute! Sop Russia and damn the merit; it is the want of that sop alone that affects me.—I said before, page 541, that this observation of Grey’s presupposed belief in no treaty bond of Germany to Austria: It obviously ought, but I would not take oath it did: and if it was that Germany “could not afford to see Austria crushed” how heinous must such a *casus belli* seem to every Briton now fighting lest France should be!

Britain, enacting the impartial role and rejecting the comparatively straightforward course proposed by France and Russia, that of a united menace, had her own ideas as to how to persuade Germany not to support Austria; of which the last paragraph affords one sample. And, in our inquiry of veracity shown, the results continue shameful to this land of our nativity, forbidden veneration. For it argues that Germany should not support Austria without ever arguing, or, as I should more strictly put it, without ever *having* argued, that France should not support Russia. This could only pass at all if the treaty between France and Russia was much more definite than that between Germany and Austria: I have met nothing worth regard that builds on this assumption. Allow that Germany acted more by the present case, will Britain call this *less* reputable than act by pledge to fight regardless of present cases? That Britain which professed free hand and gloried in the right to decide by instant merits in each conjuncture. But the truth is that this has passed with the hasty mob through a fact of sequence which a moment's reflection shows you did not affect the matter in the slightest degree, could never by deliberate statesman have been imagined to do so. France would not enter the field unless Germany did. No, nor Germany unless Russia did. This fact, that France was to be the third stepper, Germany the second does not *touch* the matter here at issue, namely the integrity or wisdom of either in entering. Britain deliberately besought Germany to leave her Ally undefended if attacked and never the while so much as whispered suggestion to France that she should similarly leave her Ally in the lurch; yet whatsoever applied to the one case applied with equal force to the other. Nay, with much greater force! For Germany was necessarily closely touched by war between Austria and Russia, France not by war between Russia and Germany, far removed from her borders. Moreover there is very strong *prima facie* evidence that except for her confident assurance of France's support, Russia would never have done aught provocative to Germany, that, had there been no such assurance, the war might have remained between Russia and Austria. Still Britain kept arguing with Germany Don't you, convinced of justice in your Ally's quarrel, support her, yet never said a word of similar import to France; knew fully from the start, as all the world did, for this was public property and known to be without an if, that France was definite to strike in: nothing save that knowledge produced the pleading: As I said before (p. 542) the plea was Forego your title *because* France must be allowed full tether for hers. A

long *tether*? Ay, and a strong, could haul the whole British Empire in. One sees not what business Britain had to suggest either that Germany should not support Austria or France Russia, but to urge the first without the second was totally indefensible. If we had right to plead so with either, then overwhelmingly the greater right to plead with France; because of the mighty obligations which our statesmen well knew, though the country at large did not, she was under to us; in reality, only daring to act as she did from confidence of British cover. Finally, of this, be it clear that I am not suggesting it was really possible for Britain, in those late hours, to demand of France, to hint to France, that she should not support Russia; but the fact that it was impossible made it perfidy in her to ask the passivity she did from the German.

Proceeding now to the question of French intervention; also of Britain's sincerity of wish that the war should remain in the East: With Germany involved, of which question we have already spoken, it is, of course, palpably undeniable that nothing except a declaration of neutrality by France could have prevented war in the West; and equally undeniable that such declaration would. Here, in the case of war in the Western theatre, it is perfectly certain that the French and the English were the aggressors, that Germany acted as compelled for self-defence. By the circumstances, absolutely no manner of call lay upon France to join in: Word pledged to Russia is the utmost she can plead. I say not that the word pledged should not be sacred, but bid you note that there was absolutely no other ground. If any mortal believe that the word was either given or kept for God's sake, why afflict his innocence? And therewith we will leave France's share to her own conscience.

But, on the no-question of France or Germany the aggressor, add: France, toeing the line to suit susceptibilities of British conscience and bettering instruction, kept ten kilometers from her frontiers after mobilization; and, anticipating demand of neutrality from Germany, as known not aggressive upon her, had many times stated she would never give it. Yet, by these delicacies of manœuver has persuaded *you* of her lamblike intentions, Germany's wanton inroad, in character of devouring wolf?—And of the eleventh hour treble Peace still! Both Russia and Austria have consented, so exquisitely set off to an admiring audience by these French trippings on the light fantastic toe, what other word than simply *Too late!* Germany could not possibly pause then on any plea of *further dis-*

cussion. Delay would have been extremely advantageous to every other, her Ally included; to herself perilous. What sort of sincerity there was in the Austrian consent you have but to read despatch one hundred and forty-one to know; one hundred and thirty-nine for Russia's humor to Germany in her consent, aforesaid very cheap. With such odors regaling her nostrils, Germany would have been a nose of wax indeed to pause. The plea was the old accursed futility of submit the Austro-Servian matter to the Powers for settlement, with certainly no *increase* of likelihood that a peaceable patch up till to-morrow would be once more arrived at. A ground for suspension which none honorable could then have made to the German; which no German who knew what's what could at that hour do other than totally disregard. That, in a straight courteous manfulness, compliance was explained impossible is creditable, for the suggestion might justly have been altogether ignored.

For England's sincerity of wish that the war should remain in the East:

Alas! it is a sort of mockery to speak of sincerity in her doings here. Yet I grant that, when the inevitable sequel of his acts comes upon a man, he may often wish intensely enough that they could be avoided, and exhibit a spectacle of very strenuous zeal in that direction. England, in a full knowledge that France had engaged herself to Russia, entered into what you call an *Entente*, with her. Not an Alliance? Oh no! Count Bruhl, a famishing dog in sight of a too dangerous leg of mutton, long comforted himself he had never signed anything; but this did not help him out of Pirna, if considerably *into*. Maria Theresa, too, with troops ready massed on the border and Allies on march, when demanded Would she attack him (Friedrich) this year or next? Replied vaguely in limbo, swore the Partition Treaty against him non-extant, a thing of his own imagination merely. Whereon, Carlyle comments: Since she would have shuddered at the lie direct, I suppose it was not on paper; but truer in fact no treaty could be. Had England ever honestly wrought that war in the East of Europe should not cause war in the West, she would have used her endeavors to induce France to terminate her Alliance with Russia; for this Alliance was the standing menace, and sole cause why war in the East should provoke war in the West. Had England ever wrought that she herself should not be involved in war through war in the East, she would have absolutely refused to enter into any arrangement with France so long as her alliance with Russia existed; would have made the termination of that alliance an inexorable *sine qua*

non before she put herself under any species of obligation to assist France. These are certain facts, wholly indisputable. But England was possessed with a dread of German Aggression, to the blinding of her eyes and the corruption of her heart: equally by them. And she wrought persistently in favor of mighty Combination which should effectually checkmate German evil intentions. Not *wishful* of war, If you please so to describe it, passionately desirous to preserve peace. And hoping to do so by raising such a formidable looking barrier all round the Bad Teuton that he would never dare to try breaking it, but die in sight of victuals like goose surrounded by a circle drawn with chalk. For never yet were the counsels of men with such an aim informed by wisdom but always have their plans been shady, and their workings brought upon them the thing they chiefly sought to avoid.

Last, in these Ostensibles, is Britain's Intervention.

Let us look first, though it does not come first in time, at that peculiar offer made by Sir Edward Grey which has been applauded, by Sir. E. T. Cook among others, as a sort of acme in magnanimous generosity, and sealing proof of intents charitable. It is in despatch number one hundred and one where Grey offers thus: "If the peace of Europe can be preserved and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavor will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies, by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it, as far as I could, through the last Balkan Crisis, and Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian, Etc." Of the value of such an offer, in International Politics, from the point of view of its being that of a single individual in the insecure tenure of a British State Secretaryship, it is superfluous to speak. Granting the promise binding on the nation, on the three nations, it would remain sufficiently peculiar. In the first place it admits—Shall we say frankly admits? Helplessly and in spite of itself admits were nearer the mark—that the attitude of the three so promising nations had been and was of a nature to somewhat strongly call for assurance from them that their intents were not hostile or aggressive; and may surely at once pass muster as so far veridical. Whether the German would find it an item of much weight in assuring him of the fact so acknowledged? Hardly, I should think. Might better find it

a sealing proof of the quality of our magnanimity and charitable purpose. But the message did not intend to convey recriminations on the past, nor shed light on it; it was for security in the future. Dear friend, not foe I hope this instant, submit to-day, at our ardent intercession let Austria go to pot, and I for reward, will promise to do my private utmost in the to-morrow to obtain for you an Agreement whereby each of these three now in threatened league against you shall enter into bond that they will never more, either singly or collectively pursue a policy aggressive or hostile to you. Such fact, to drunk sense too Utopian, was all you ever sought, bond for it you never asked. But never again! never again! I swear it on my knees beseeching grace: this shall be a lesson to me all my days remaining. If we can read it quite so without stretch, some breath of personal sympathy for Grey may well be in us. O Sir Edward! this turn dropped from my pen as I wrote, without premeditation, and has banished all harsh feeling toward you. For I can believe it may have been thus with you. Yet the leopard does not change his spots. And as for any species of security to Germany in the future having been hereby offered, there is not the shadow of such a thing. Did the remorseful one, really or hypothetically remorseful, himself even contemplate a removal of the fences, not a strengthening of them, if given further time to do it in? Checkmate to be abandoned? Perhaps I should not have gone so far in these ambiguous realms. Perpetual check, check, without a mate,—or for your mate's sake—and your own—is also a known thing; if often pleasing to the checker somewhat liable to grow irritating to the checkee. Then stalemate is surely the fairest draw of all, long reckoned even, and leaving honor to the staled. Chalk line itself can be charitably circumscribed, the confined one grow fat enough; all circumscribers consent they'll not disturb the circle, and the Goose clearly a party to the compact. Happy stay within instead of discontented, and our Policy triumph at last. See! child, we will teach you to build your own ring wall, at least you shall have a hand in building it, then shall you sit blessed in freedom from check, whilst we sweep wide o'er the earth in unburdened cheer.—The offer was peculiar; if you can read a gleam of private grace in it, 'tis happy so far; but to speak of it as magnanimous, to refer to it in any way as of the smallest weight in the issues, betokens strange latitudes.

These things are a little pregnant, reader! Choice of sequence not unadvised would you grapple with the Whole. Turn back, then, to what is called The Infamous German Bid for British Neutrality.

I will say foremost that this British description of Germany's conduct is "amazing," even to me. I have nowhere met the like of it; in sheer sodden mendacity of soul, it surpasses everything of its kind I have heard of, and deserves to be held in permanent record as a *non plus ultra* in that line. Here is no knave's shuffle, no hypocrite's deliberate suppression of the truth, but an open publicly declared and printed statement of the facts as they were; and then an interpretation instantly concluded of them, for campaign of unctuous eloquence and selfrighteous indignation, excuse and cover of most fateful deed, utterly and glaringly in total incompatibility with those facts, for which those facts offered no momentary possibility of a conceivable color to any honest-minded mortal. Such emphatic stricture may not apply to many members of the general public who only heard of the facts through the interpretation, or along with it; but I could not reduce a syllable of this stricture for the men who gave out the interpretation at the same time that they made the facts known. Germany, looking into now almost certain war with Russia and knowing, as you and all the world did, that France would not remain neutral but side with Russia, aware also of certain vain pretensions tenanted in British lodgings too sadly furnished with them, had the candor and forbearance, suppressing all comment on those pretensions, to say thus, through her Chancellor:

"That it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be.¹ That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no territorial acquisition at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.

"I (Sir E. Goschen) questioned his Excellency about the French Colonies, and he (the German Chancellor) said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect. As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that, so long as Germany's adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give His Majesty's Government an assurance that she would do likewise. It depended on the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter

¹That same Britain that a little before had called it unwarranted for Germany to refuse to stand by and see Austria crushed.

upon in Belgium, but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany." (Despatch number eighty-five.)

What is there either of "bid" or "infamy" in this? What did you expect of Germany? That when engaged in war eastward, she should just shoulder arms along her western border; stand patiently waiting there till the French were ready to attack her; and then, in height of fantastic heroism merely defend the border, resolutely brush back, if she could, (you will allow her that right I suppose?) any French attempt to cross. Yet never under any provocation herself set foot beyond; and, when the war was over, retire with sage bow and lifted hat, remarking Our deepest thanks to you, Messieurs, for this spiritual exercise, and all good hopes the amusement has proved beneficial to you? It verily seems that little short of this would have contented you. And I know that your rage arose through finding your baseless prescriptions not obeyed and diplomacy turned to water. What shadow of a title had Britain to settle the terms on which Germany should fight France, that Britain which had never done aught to keep France from seizing opportunity to satisfy grudge? Is Britain the God of this lower world? and what just God would lend cover to one side against another, then forbid that other to exact the least penalty if victorious? You call it an infamous bid by Germany, and the fact was an infamous dictation of terms by Britain. Infamous dictation wisely recognized extant, and dealt with in an admirable restraint.

The German, wisely perceiving the existence of certain pretensions in some heads, where, however baseless in fact, their existence can in verity become momentous enough, saw that it could profit nothing to give the least expression to his thought of those pretensions, though we need not doubt he had his thoughts, but in a manful prudence mildly enquired How far do these Olympian ideas extend? Beyond *this*? And Britain in immovable majesty, disdaining affront, replied from aloft: Of course, far beyond. Not outgone in forbearance at the first blush, merely with the eye suggested Darest propose a limit to our sovereign jurisdiction? Who could treat with you, Gentlemen? Germany may defend her countries, quite large enough for her in our supreme decision, our Almightyness graciously concedes so much; but, by our omnipotence, and world-shaking nod, let her expend what blood and treasure she may, she shall go home again with nothing save her labor for her trouble; no hair of France's head shall be harmed, and she, meanwhile, under our

sheltering wing, have free allowance if victorious to keep what'er she can wrench. O soul of Equity! must not the whole just of the earth rise in sternest wrath to crush the thievish miscreant would not before entering conflict take oath on demand at once and humbly to observe these righteous terms? Truly, I have never met their match, and grow in respect for the German could still restrain and try yet further: Will you, if we promise not to infringe Belgian neutrality—and even, it would seem by speech in Parliament, though it is not in White Paper, forego our right to attack the northern coasts of France—Shall you even on these extreme compliances with your Lordship's *arbitrium*—and, bravely, without a hint they were compliances and the *arbitrium* most exsufflicate,—refuse to promise neutrality? Imperious Yes, we will and do refuse. We may perhaps, on those conditions, permit you to enter the war without us for terrible opposite, but will give you no manner of assurance that, once in, we will not fall upon you in time and circumstance convenient for us. 'Tis easy now to see that the second offer was useless; for he who named the first a “bid” and “infamous” could only be confirmed in exalted spurn by an amendment conceding more to folly's vain impious challengings. O British Jove offended! ominously grasping the lightening, I can tell you one way in which Germany's “bid,” if *then* ever made, might have been *infamous*. The way of own course honorable, when the bare suggestion of your dreaming to lay down a rule whereby she should fight, might well have shocked you with its atrocity.

Along with this claim to dictate the conditions of Germany's combat with France, simultaneous throughout runs the figment of British Free Hand, no binding obligation to bestir on France's behalf but liberty to take any side according to judgment of merits of each particular case that might arise. You pledge yourself to maintain Belgian neutrality (whereon a word further shortly), you stand resolved that you will permit to Germany no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France or her Colonies, in other words, that, if she have war with France, she shall on its conclusion go home again with nothing but her labor for her trouble; what more one knows not; but finally and above all you undertake to protect the northern coasts of France and prevent by force any attack upon them by Germany: And then you say you were not under treaty obligations to fight on France's behalf! Never was more hideous mockery of faith; vilest conspiracy plotting for attack and partition were clean in comparison. Those despatches

of Sir Edward Grey's wherein he expounded to France and Russia the delicate and fine distinctions which left Britain no treaty ally but a member of *Entente* with hand free, were not purposely *cunning* at all yet did simply *point the way*. The Russ was thick of comprehension at first but the nimble Celt perceived in a twinkling, and with eyes privately twinkling, though listening to Sir Edwards dissection with all sobriety of countenance. Just so, your Excellency. The British lion owns no harness and the Island Ape which rides him cannot intervene *except* under certain contingencies. Adieu; till tomorrow; we will not importune you till wanted, and when wanted you have told us. We proceed then alone yet secure of your aid the moment we act thus and thus. Incredible as it may seem to a German, only credible as it is to Man when sadly conversant with the phosphorescences which once noble moralities gone putrid sometimes exhibit, Sir E. Grey did *not* mean. Act you in such and such a fashion in order that our hands may appear clean to the world; he wrote in *sincerity*, what is called sincerity, yet no whit the less simply pointed the way.

Instead of open declaration of common cause with France, conclusion of definite alliance offensive and defensive, you gave France secretly the utmost cover it was in your power to give short of such definite bond, and properly it was not for France's sake but for your own. And then, if the German would have conformed to the outrageous conditions imposed on him by that cover, you might perhaps have been content to stand neutral. Great was your magnanimity! noble your rage that the Teuton rejected your conditions. The Prime Minister made a great point in his speech, and inflamed the country with "infamous" German, by exclaiming: Were we to stand by with folded arms and see the northern coast of France bombarded! that coast left undefended through our agreements with France! Most true, *by your agreements!* How came those coasts to be defenceless? Why was the French fleet concentrated in the Mediterranean? You secretly made compact to defend those coasts so that the French fleet could leave them; and then exclaim as if their defenceless state were one of helpless innocence, calling to humanity for protection, came by no subtilty of yours; and say you had free hand to decide every case on its merits! It is the fearfulest exhibition of shameless sodden mendacity I have come across; no "perfidy" could be worse if this be not perfidious. You wished *peace*, you say? And, to preserve it, privately made arrangement with one neighbor which gave him the fullest cover you could contrive; for the other had thereby laid down conditions

of combat utterly outrageous, devoid of any sort of basis outside your own convenience: Then proclaim yourself Champion of Right unwillingly forced into war by considerations of highest duty because the one made that use of the cover afforded him he was sure to make and the other refused your delirious prescriptions of conduct for him!

On the question of Belgian Neutrality it is not necessary to say more than a word further. One could have well wished it respected by all, but knows not how it could have been so by Germany. One thing is quite certain, it was not Britain that should have been foremost in demanding it, but Belgium herself, in direct friendly interchange with Germany, not through appeal to Britain in pre-conclusion of hostility and palpable leaning to one side; or, next, by France, equally in the way of direct mutual agreement with Germany; and Britain only if at all, as honestly impartial third. But it is folly to speak of the prohibitions which might have been. Alas! no, which never had a chance of being. For Britain to demand as she did, especially in conjunction with other items in the same despatch, was at once a threat of Beware! or I come in unless you conform to my rules as self-constituted Marshal of these Lists. And thus, to the German, the thing was from the first suspicious and to be rejected as obviously not demanded for equity but in the interests of his adversaries. For Germany to grant it, too, was a much heavier demand than for France. The German said that he had unimpeachable evidence that France meant to attack him in that quarter; and personally, I have little doubt the French assurance was given in the certainty it would never be required of them to fulfil it; that the swifter moving German would be the first to cross the border, and so they could throw the opprobrium upon him without risk to themselves. For the Belgians, it is sure that, however they may have desired to escape damage, they were not neutral of spirit but exceedingly adverse to Germany. It has been said since the war began that, if France had violated Belgian Neutrality, Britain would equally have gone to war: It is sufficiently probable she would—on just the same side she now has. Britain would not have sided with Germany against France for Belgium's sake: All men know that completely, and the saying she would is a deliberate Lie, straightforward enough for once. A thing just safely *said* after, known without any foundation. A most godless farce is all this pretence of British championship of Belgium. On every ground, care of Belgium's welfare would have

counselled: Yield. On that compulsion, yield; grant the Germans the free passage they demand. This alone had been the magnanimous course, and most earnest persuasion of any champion for Belgium. I am not quite saying you were called to do this; but you are emphatically called to admit that, in urging Belgium to resist to the utmost on promises of help you knew could never reach her in time, you were deliberately throwing her under the harrow of war, with possible loss of national independence, for no other object than to gain time for yourselves. Had Belgium then been Ally the urgement to resist had been fair; to a neutral, it had nothing in it "magnanimous," can only pass as natural to selfseekers diligent to use all means within reach to gain their own ends. Neither is there any manner of doubt that Britain solely ever undertook to support Belgian Neutrality by force for her own interests in fear of Germany's power.

In summary of these Ostensible Causes: Except, it is a big exception, Britain's possession by dread of German Aggression, involuntarily made all too apparent, no Real Cause comes to light. And, when you speak of Real Causes, you have to ask, even of that Dread, whence came it? What ground, if any, had it to stand on? Hence no answer whatever is given here to the question—Why are we at war? but only is how we have come to be at war a little told. And the true value of these White Paper Despatches is as documents testifying of the integrity of the several writers, as representing their nations, or at least Governments. In this view, the Servian is cunning, shifty, and wittingly never shows true face. The Austrian and Russian keep their motives hidden, reveal to impertinent curiosity no more than their proud heights to deem suitable. The French are clear, incisive, declare a singleness of purpose, whatever wiliness of method; namely to make the most of the opportunity if it came now, with readiness to wait for a better if need be. In the German a grand resolvedness, weight of meaning, sagacious instead of alert; very determined indeed, yet restrained, forbearant, rising to fateful enterprise unescapable in meditations cloudy profound: their words have everywhere a right sterling ring. In the British, an utter hollowness, most zealous pleading far removed from all contact with the facts. No secrecy of the conscious hypocrite, but that *bottomless* mendacity which, self-contemplating its own false face truly rendered back in the mirror, cries on the world to witness Saw ye ever a fairer or more blameless!