



Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany

The Anglo-French Agreement of the 8th April, 1904, was the outcome of the, honest and ardent desire, freely expressed among all classes and parties of the two countries, that an earnest effort should be made to compose, as far as possible, the many differences which had been a source of perpetual friction between them. In England, the wish for improved relations with France was primarily but a fresh manifestation of the general tendency of British Governments to take advantage of every opportunity to approach more closely to the ideal condition of living in honourable peace with all other States.

There were two difficulties: It was necessary, in the first instance, that the French Government should realise the benefit which France would derive from a policy of give and take, involving perhaps, from her point of view, some immediate sacrifice, but resulting in the banishment of all occasions for quarrels with a powerful neighbour. It was, secondly, indispensable, if French statesmen were to carry with them the public opinion of their own country, without which they would be powerless to act, that the suspiciousness of English designs and intentions, with which years of hostile feelings and active political rivalry had poisoned the French mind, should give place to confidence in the straightforwardness and loyalty of British Governments not only in meeting present engagements, but also in dealing with any future points of difference, in a conciliatory and neighbourly spirit. It was natural to believe that the growth of such confidence could not be quickly forced, but that it might slowly emerge by a process of gradual evolution. That it declared itself with unexpected rapidity and unmistakable emphasis was without doubt due, in the first place, to the initiative and tactful perseverance of the King, warmly recognised and applauded on both sides of the Channel. The French nation having come to look upon the King as personally attached to their country, saw in His Majesty's words and actions a guarantee that the adjustment of political differences might well prepare the way for bringing about a genuine and lasting friendship, to be built up on community of interests and aspirations.

The conviction that the removal of causes of friction, apart from having an independent value of its own, as making directly for peace, would also confer on the Governments of both countries greater freedom in regulating their general foreign relations, can hardly be supposed to have been absent from the mind of the British and French negotiators. Whenever the Government of a country is confronted with external difficulties by the opposition of another State on a question of national rights or claims, the probable attitude of third Powers in regard to the point in dispute must always be a matter of anxious concern. The likelihood of other Powers actively taking sides in a quarrel which does not touch them directly may reasonably be expected, and, indeed, is shown by experience, very much to depend, quite apart from the merits of the dispute, on the general trend of relations existing between the several parties. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance in such a connection of

the existence of a firmly established and broadly based system of friendly intercourse with those Powers whose position would enable them to throw a heavy weight into the balance of strength on the other side. If a country could be imagined whose foreign relations were so favourably disposed that, in the defence of its legitimate interests, it could always count upon the sympathy of its most powerful neighbours, such a country would never—or at least not so long as the national armaments were maintained at the proper standard of efficiency—need to entertain those fears and misgivings which, under the actual conditions of dominant international jealousies and rivalries, only too often compel the abandonment of a just cause as the only alternative to the more serious evil and risk of giving suspicious and unfriendly neighbours a welcome opportunity for aggression or hostile and humiliating interference. If both France and England were acutely conscious that, in the contingency of either of them being involved in a quarrel with this or that Power, an Anglo-French understanding would at least remove one serious danger inherent in such a situation, patriotic self-interest would, on this ground alone, justify and encourage any attempt to settle outstanding differences, if and so far as they were found capable of settlement without jeopardising vital interests.

It was creditable to M. Delcassé sagacity and public spirit that he decided to grasp the hand which the British Government held out to him. The attempt has been made to, represent this decision as mainly if not solely influenced by the desire to strengthen the hands of France in a struggle with Germany, since, as a result of the impending collapse of the Russian power in the Japanese war, she was incurring the danger of finding herself alone face to face with her great enemy. This criticism, even if it does not go so far as wrongly to ascribe, to the *Entente* an originally offensive character directed against Germany, will be seen, on a comparison of dates, to be founded in error. The war with Japan, which Russia herself did not believe to be imminent before it had actually begun, broke out in February 1904. It is true that the Anglo-French Agreements were signed two months later. But no one, certainly not the French Government, then anticipated the complete overthrow of Russia in the Far East, nor the disastrous reaction of defeat on the internal situation in the Czar's European dominions. In fact, the two chief criticisms directed against M. Delcassé's general policy in his own country were, first, that he would not believe those who foreshadowed a coming war between Russia and Japan, and, secondly, that when the war had broken out, he remained almost to the last confident of Russia's ultimate success. Moreover, the negotiations which ultimately issued in the Agreements of the 8th April, 1904, were opened as far back as the early summer of 1903, when few would have ventured to prophesy that Russia was shortly to be brought to her knees by Japan. If one might go so far as to believe that the bare, possibility of such a defeat may have begun to occupy the mind of M. Delcassé in the early spring of 1904, and that this reflection may have contributed to convincing him of the wisdom of persevering with the English negotiation, it would yet remain impossible to assert with truth that his primary object in entering upon that negotiation was to seek in a fresh quarter the general political support of which the temporary eclipse of Russia was threatening to deprive his country. But even if the weakening of the Franco-Russian alliance had been the principal and avowed reason why France sought an understanding with England, this would not justify the charge that the conclusion of such understanding constituted a provocation and deliberate menace to Germany. No one has ever seriously ascribed to the Franco-Russian alliance the character of a combination conceived in a spirit of bellicose aggression. That the association of so peace-loving a nation as England with France and Russia, or still less that the substitution of England for Russia in the association with France, would have the effect of turning an admittedly defensive organisation into an offensive alliance aimed directly at Germany cannot have been the honest belief of any competent student of contemporary history. Yet this accusation was actually made against M. Delcassé, and,

incidentally, against Lord Lansdowne in 1905. That, however, was at the time when the position of France appeared sufficiently weakened to expect that she could be insulted with impunity, when the battle of Mukden had made manifest the final defeat of France's ally, when internal disorders began to undermine Russia's whole position as a Power that must be reckoned with, and when the Anglo-French *Entente* was not credited with having as yet taken deep root in the popular imaginations of the two peoples so long politically estranged. No sound of alarm was heard, no such vindictive criticism of M. Delcassé's policy was even whispered, in 1904, at the moment when the Agreement was published, immediately after its signature. Then, although the world was somewhat taken by surprise, the Agreement was received by all foreign Governments without apparent misgiving, and even with signs of relief and satisfaction. At Berlin the Imperial Chancellor, in the course of an important debate in the Reichstag, formally declared that Germany could have no objection to the policy embodied in the *Entente*, and that, in regard more particularly to the stipulations respecting Morocco, she had no reason to fear that her interests would be ignored.

The history of the events that ensued, culminating in the Algeiras Conference, revealed to all the world how little Prince Billow's declaration corresponded to the real feelings animating the German Government. Those events do not require to be more than briefly recalled. They are fresh in the public memory.

The maintenance of a state of tension and antagonism between third Powers had avowedly been one of the principal elements in Bismarck's political combinations by which he first secured and then endeavoured to preserve the predominant position of Germany on the continent. It is now no longer denied that he urged England to occupy Egypt and to continue in occupation, because, he rightly foresaw that this would perpetuate the antagonism between England and France. Similarly, he consistently impressed upon Russia that it would be to her interest to divert her expansionist ambitions from the Balkan countries to Central Asia, where he hoped both Russia and England would, owing to the inevitable conflict of interests, keep one another fully occupied. The Penjdeh incident, which nearly brought about a war, was the outcome of his direct suggestion that the moment was favourable for Russia to act. Prince Bismarck had also succeeded by all sorts of devices—including the famous reinsurance Treaty with Russia—in keeping France and Russia apart so long as he remained in office. The conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance some time after Bismarck's fall filled Germany with concern and anxiety, and she never ceased in her efforts at least to neutralise it by establishing the closest possible relations with Russia for herself. From this point of view the weakening of Russia's general position presented simultaneously two advantages. It promised to free Germany for some time to come from any danger of aggression on her eastern frontier, and it deprived France of the powerful support which alone had hitherto enabled her to stand up to Germany in the political arena on terms of equality. It is only natural that the feeling of satisfaction derived from the relative accession of strength due to these two causes should have been somewhat rudely checked by the unexpected intelligence that France had come to an understanding with England.

It was, in fact, soon made apparent that, far from welcoming, as Prince Billow pretended, an Anglo-French rapprochement, the Emperor's Government had been thoroughly alarmed at the mere disappearance of all causes of friction between the two Western Powers, and was determined to resort to any measures likely to bring about the dissolution of a fresh political combination, which it was felt might ultimately prove another stumbling-block in the way of German supremacy, as the Franco-Russian alliance had previously been regarded. Nor is it possible to be blind to the fact that Germany

is bound to be as strongly opposed to a possible Anglo-Russian understanding; and, indeed, there is already conclusive evidence of German activity to prevent any such contingency from happening in the near future.

The German view on this subject cannot be better stated than was done by Herr von Tschirschky, now Foreign Secretary at Berlin, then Prussian Minister at Hamburg, in speaking on New Year's Day 1906 to His Majesty's Consul-General at that place. He said—:

“Germany's policy always had been, and would be, to try to frustrate any coalition between two States which might result in damaging Germany's interests and prestige; and Germany would, if she thought that such a coalition was being formed, even if its actual results had not yet been carried into practical effect, not hesitate to take such steps as she thought proper to break up the Coalition.”

In pursuance of this policy, which, whatever its merits or demerits, is certainly quite intelligible, Germany waited for the opportune moment for taking action, with the view of breaking up, if possible, the Anglo-French *entente*. When Russia was staggering under the crushing blows inflicted by Japan, and threatened by internal revolution, the German campaign was opened. The object of nipping in the bud the young friendship between France and England was to be attained by using as a stalking-horse those very interests in Morocco which the Imperial Chancellor had, barely a year before, publicly declared to be in no way imperilled.

The ground was not unskilfully chosen. By a direct threat of war, for which France was known to be unprepared, she was to be compelled to capitulate unconditionally. England had, on being questioned officially, admitted that beyond the terms of the Agreement which bound her to give France her diplomatic support in Morocco she was not pledged to further co-operation. Her reluctance for extreme measures, even under severe provocation, had only recently been tested on the occasion of the Dogger Bank incident. It was considered practically certain that she would shrink from lending armed assistance to France, but if she did, care had been taken to inflame French opinion by representing through the channels of a venal press that England was in her own selfish interest trying to push France into a war with Germany, so revealing the secret intentions which had inspired her in seeking the *entente*.

We now know that this was the policy which Herr von Holstein with the support of Prince Billow succeeded in imposing on the German Emperor. It promised at the outset to succeed. M. Delcassé fell; France, thoroughly frightened, showed herself anxious to make concessions to Germany, and ready to believe that England's friendship, instead of being helpful, was proving disastrous. It is difficult to say what would have happened if at this critical moment Germany, under the skilful guidance of a Bismarck, had shown herself content with her decided triumph, and willing in every way to smooth the path for France by offering a friendly settlement of the Moroccan question in a sense that would have avoided wounding her national honour. Germany would, perhaps, have foregone some of the nominal advantages which she afterwards wrung from a reluctant and hostile France at the Algeiras Conference. This would not have hurt Germany, whose real interests, as Bismarck had long ago asserted, would be well served by France getting militarily and financially entangled in Morocco, just as England had got entangled in Egypt. On the other hand, a policy of graceful concessions on Germany's part, and the restriction of her demands to nothing more than the recognition of her existing rights in Morocco and the treatment of a friend, would have deepened the conviction which at

this stage was forcing itself on the mind of the French Government, that the full enjoyment of benefits which the agreement concluded with England had been incapable of securing effectually, could be reaped from an amicable understanding with Germany.

At this point Herr von Holstein's policy overreached itself. The minatory attitude of the German Government continued. French overtures were left unanswered. A European Conference to be convoked under conditions peculiarly humiliating to France was insisted upon. Sortie manœuvres of petty crookedness were executed at Fez by Count Tattenbach, in matters of concessions and loans, which were thought to have been already settled in a contrary sense by special agreements reluctantly assented to in Paris. It became clear to the successors of M. Delcassé that he had been sacrificed in vain. His original policy reasserted itself as the only one compatible with national dignity and ultimate independence. With it revived the confidence that safety lay in drawing closer to England. A bold demand was frankly made for her armed alliance in case of a German attack. This was perhaps the most critical moment for the *entente*.

Would France listen to and appreciate the arguments which the British Government were bound to advance against the conclusion of a definite alliance at this moment? If she saw reason, would the perhaps unavoidable sense of immediate disappointment tend, nevertheless, to react unfavourably on the only just rekindled trust in the loyalty of England? If so, Germany's object would have come near, realization. France would, however sorrowfully, have become convinced of the necessity of accepting unconditionally the terms for which Germany then held out, and which involved practically the recognition that French foreign policy must be shaped in accordance with orders from Berlin. The bitterness of such political abdication would naturally have engendered unmeasured hatred of the pretended friend who refused the helping hand in the hour of need.

The attitude adopted under these difficult conditions by His Majesty's Government has been justified by results. The difficulties in the way of there and then converting the *entente* into an alliance were frankly and firmly explained. At the same time Germany was explicitly warned, and the principal other Powers informed, that public opinion in England could not be expected to remain indifferent, and would almost certainly demand the active intervention of any British Government, should a quarrel be fastened upon France on account of her pursuing a policy in which England was under an honourable obligation to support her.

There can be no doubt that an element of bluff had entered into the original calculations of both Germany and France. M. Delcassé, who must be credited with sufficient, foresight to have realized early in 1905, if not before, that his policy exposed his country to the resentment of its Teutonic neighbour, is proved, by his neglect to take military precautions, to have in his own mind discounted any German threats as unreal and empty of consequences. He had not counted on the capabilities for taking alarm and for working itself into a panic which reside in the nervous breast of an unprepared French public, nor on the want of loyalty characteristic of French statesmen in their attitude to each other. He paid for his mistake with his person.

Germany on her part had not really contemplated war because she felt confident that France, knowing herself unprepared and unable, to withstand an attack, would yield to threats. But she miscalculated the strength of British feeling and the character of His Majesty's Ministers. An Anglo-French coalition in arms against her was not in her forecast, and she could not face the possible danger of it. It is now known that Herr von Holstein, and, on his persuasion, Prince Bülow, practically staked their

reputation on the prophecy that no British Government sufficiently bullied and frightened would stand by France, who had for centuries been England's ubiquitous opponent, and was still the ally of Russia England's "hereditary foe." So lately as the time when the International Conference was sitting at Algeciras, the German delegates, on instructions emanating from Prince Bülow, confidentially pressed upon the British representative in all seriousness the folly and danger of supporting France, and painting in attractive colours a policy of co-operation with Germany for France's overthrow. Even at that hour it was believed that England could be won over. So grave a misapprehension as to what a British Government might be capable of, manifested at such a juncture, shows better than many a direct utterance the estimation in which England has been held in responsible quarter at Berlin. The error eventually proved fatal to the persistent inspirer of this policy, because its admitted failure on the present occasion apparently made it necessary to find a scapegoat. When, contrary to Herr von Holstein's advice, Germany finally made at Algeciras the concessions which alone rendered the conclusion of an international treaty possible, he was ignominiously dismissed by Prince Bülow, who had up to then consistently worked on the same lines, and must have had the principal share in recommending the unsuccessful policy to the Emperor.

When the signature of the Algeciras Act brought to a close the first chapter of the conflict respecting Morocco, the Anglo-French *entente* had acquired a different significance, from that which it had at the moment of its inception. Then there had been but a friendly settlement of particular outstanding differences, giving hope for future harmonious relations between two neighbouring countries that had got into the habit of looking at one another askance; now there had emerged an element of common resistance to outside dictation and aggression, a unity of special interests tending to develop into active co-operation against a third Power. It is essential to bear in mind that this new feature of the *entente* was the direct effect produced by Germany's effort to break it up, and that, failing the active or threatening hostility of Germany, such anti-German bias as the *entente* must be admitted to have at one time assumed, would certainly not exist at present, nor probably survive in the future. But whether the antagonism to Germany into which England had on this occasion been led without her wish or intention was but an ephemeral incident, or a symptomatic revelation of some deep-seated natural opposition between the policies and interests of the two countries, is a question which it clearly behoves British statesmen not to leave in, any obscurity. To this point, then, inquiry must be directed.

The general character of England's foreign policy is determined by the immutable conditions of her geographical situation on the ocean flank of Europe as an island State with vast oversea colonies and dependencies, whose existence and survival as an independent community are inseparably bound up with the possession of preponderant sea power. The tremendous influence of such preponderance has been described in the classical pages of Captain Mahan. No one now disputes it. Sea power is more potent than land power, because it is as pervading as the element in which it moves and has its being. Its formidable character makes itself felt the more directly that a maritime State is, in the literal sense of the word, the neighbour of every country accessible by sea. It would, therefore, be but natural that the power of a State supreme at sea should inspire universal jealousy and fear, and be ever exposed to the danger of being overthrown by a general combination of the world. Against such a combination no single nation could in the long run stand, least of all a small island kingdom, not possessed of the military strength of a people trained to arms, and dependent for its food supply on oversea commerce. The danger can in practice only be averted—and history shows that it has been so averted—on condition that the national policy of the insular and naval State is so directed as to harmonize with the

general desires and ideals common to all mankind, and more particularly that it is closely identified with the primary and vital interests of a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations. Now, the first interest of all countries is the preservation of national independence. It follows that England, more than any other non-insular Power, has a direct and positive interest in the maintenance of the independence of nations, and therefore must be the natural enemy of any country threatening the independence of others, and the natural protector of the weaker communities.

Second only to the ideal of independence, nations have always cherished the right of free intercourse and trade, in the world's markets, and in proportion as England champions the principle of the largest measure of general freedom of commerce, she undoubtedly strengthens her hold on the interested friendship of other nations, at least to the extent of making them feel less apprehensive of naval supremacy in the hands of a free trade England than they would in the face of a predominant protectionist Power. This is an aspect of the free trade question which is apt to be overlooked. It has been well said that every country, if it had the option, would, of course, prefer itself to hold the power of supremacy at sea, but that, this choice being excluded, it would rather see England hold that power than any other State.

History shows that the danger threatening the independence of this or that nation has generally arisen, at least in part, out of the momentary predominance of a neighbouring State at once militarily powerful, economically efficient, and ambitious to extend its frontiers or spread its influence, the danger being directly proportionate to the degree of its power and efficiency, and to the spontaneity or "inevitableness" of its ambitions. The only check on the abuse of political predominance derived from such a position has always consisted in the opposition of an equally formidable rival, or of a combination of several countries forming leagues of defence. The equilibrium established by such a grouping of forces is technically known as the balance of power, and it has become almost an historical truism to identify England's secular policy with the maintenance of this balance by throwing her weight now in this scale and now in that, but ever on the side, opposed to the political dictatorship of the strongest single, State or group at a given time.

If this view of British policy is correct, the opposition into which England must inevitably be driven to any country aspiring to such a dictatorship assumes almost the form of a law of nature, as has indeed been theoretically demonstrated, and illustrated historically, by an eminent writer on English national policy.

By applying this general law to a particular case, the attempt might be made to ascertain whether, at a given time, some powerful and ambitious State is or is not in a position of natural and necessary enmity towards England; and the present position of Germany might, perhaps, be so tested. Any such investigation must take the shape of an inquiry as to whether Germany is, in fact, aiming at a political hegemony with the object of promoting purely German schemes of expansion, and establishing a German primacy in the world of international politics at the cost and to the detriment of other nations.

For purposes of foreign policy the modern German Empire may be regarded as the heir, or descendant of Prussia. Of the history of Prussia, perhaps the most remarkable feature, next to the succession of talented Sovereigns and to the energy and love of honest work characteristic of their subjects, is the process by which on the narrow foundation of the modest Margraviate of Brandenburg there was erected, in the space of a comparatively short period, the solid fabric of a European Great

Power. That process was one of systematic territorial aggrandizement achieved mainly at the point of the sword, the most important and decisive conquests being deliberately embarked upon by ambitious rulers or statesmen for the avowed object of securing for Prussia the size, the cohesion, the square miles and the population necessary to elevate her to the rank and influence of a first class State. All other countries have made their conquests, many of them much larger and more bloody. There is no question now, or in this place, of weighing or discussing their relative merits or justification. Present interest lies in fixing attention on the special circumstances which have given the growth of Prussia its peculiar stamp. It has not been a case of a King's love of conquest as such, nor of the absorption of lands regarded geographically or ethnically as an integral part of the true national domain, nor of the more or less unconscious tendency of a people to expand under the influence of an exuberant vitality, for the fuller development of national life and resources. Here was rather the case of the sovereign of a small and weak vassal State saying: "I want my country to be independent and powerful. This it cannot be within its present frontiers and with its present population. I must have a larger territory and more inhabitants, and to this end I must organize strong military forces."

The greatest and classic exponent in modern history of the policy of setting out deliberately to turn a small State into a big one was Frederick the Great. By his sudden seizure of Silesia in times of profound peace, and by the first partition of Poland, he practically doubled his inherited dominion. By keeping up the most efficient and powerful army of his time, and by joining England in her great effort to preserve the balance, of power in face of the encroachments of France, he successfully maintained the position of his country as one of the European Great Powers. Prussian policy remained inspired by the same principles under his successors. It is hardly necessary to do more than mention the second and the third partitions of Poland; the repeated attempts to annex Hanover in complicity with Napoleon; the dismemberment of Saxony, and the exchange of the Rhenish Provinces for the relinquishment of Polish lands in 1815; the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864; the definite incorporation of Hanover and Electoral Hesse and other appropriations of territory in 1866; and, finally, the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine from France in 1871. It is not, of course, pretended that all these acquisitions stand on the same footing. They have this in common—that they were all planned for the purpose of creating a big Prussia or Germany.

With the events of 1871 the spirit of Prussia passed into the new Germany. In no other country is there a conviction so deeply rooted in the very body and soul of all classes of the population that the preservation of national rights and the realization of national ideals rest absolutely on the readiness of every citizen in the last resort to stake himself and his State on their assertion and vindication. With "blood and iron" Prussia had forged her position in the councils of the Great Powers of Europe. In due course it came to pass that, with the impetus given to every branch of national activity by the newly-won unity, and more especially by the growing development of oversea trade flowing in ever-increasing volume through the now Imperial ports of the formerly "independent" but politically insignificant Hanse Towns, the young empire found opened to its energy a whole world outside Europe, of which it had previously hardly had the opportunity to become more than dimly conscious. Sailing across the ocean in German ships, German merchants began for the first time to divine the true position of countries such as England, the United States, France, and even the Netherlands, whose political influence extends to distant seas and continents. The colonies and foreign possessions of England more especially were seen to give to that country a recognized and enviable status in a world where the name of Germany, if mentioned at all, excited no particular interest. The effect of this discovery upon the German mind was curious and instructive. Here was a vast province of human

activity to which the mere title, and rank of a European Great Power were not in themselves a sufficient passport. Here in a field of portentous magnitude, dwarfing altogether the proportions of European countries, others, who had been perhaps rather looked down upon as comparatively smaller folk, were at home and commanded, whilst Germany was at best received but as an honoured guest. Here was distinct inequality, with a heavy bias in favour of the maritime and colonizing Powers.

Such a state of things was not welcome to German patriotic pride. Germany had won her place as one of the leading, if not, in fact, the foremost Power on the European continent. But over and beyond the European Great Powers there seemed to stand the "World Powers." It was at once clear that Germany must become a "World Power." The evolution of this idea and its translation into practical politics followed with singular consistency the line of thought that had inspired the Prussian Kings in their efforts to make Prussia great. "If Prussia," said Frederick the Great, "is to count for something in the councils of Europe, she must be made a Great Power." And the echo: "If Germany wants to have a voice in the affairs of the larger oceanic world she must be made a 'World Power.'" "I want more territory," said Prussia. "Germany must have Colonies," says the new world-policy. And Colonies were accordingly established, in such spots as were found to be still an appropriated, or out of which others could be pushed by the vigorous assertion of a German demand for "a place in the sun": Damaraland, Cameroons, Togoland. German East Africa, New Guinea, and groups of other island in the Pacific. The German example, as was only natural, found ready followers, and the map of unclaimed territories was filled up with surprising rapidity. When the final reckoning was made up the actual German gain seemed, even in German eyes, somewhat meagre. A few fresh possessions were added by purchase or by international agreement—the Carolines, Samoa, Heligoland. A transaction in the old Prussian style secured Kiao-chau. On the whole, however, the "Colonies" have proved assets of somewhat doubtful value.

Meanwhile the dream of a Colonial Empire had taken deep hold on the German imagination. Emperor, statesmen, journalists, geographers, economists, commercial and shipping houses, and the whole mass of educated and uneducated public opinion continue with one voice to declare: We must have real Colonies, where German emigrants can settle and spread the national ideals of the Fatherland, and we must have a fleet and coaling stations to keep together the Colonies which we are bound to acquire. To the question, "Why must?" the ready answer is: "A healthy and powerful State like Germany, with its 60,000,000 inhabitants, must expand, it cannot stand still, it must have territories to which its overflowing population can emigrate without giving up its nationality." When it is objected that the world is now actually parcelled out among independent States, and that territory for colonization cannot be had except by taking it from the rightful possessor, the reply again is: "We cannot enter into such considerations. Necessity has no law. The world belongs to the strong. A vigorous nation cannot allow its growth to be hampered by blind adherence to the *status quo*. We have no designs on other people's possessions, but where States are too feeble to put their territory to the best possible use, it is the manifest destiny of those who can and will do so to take their places."

No one, who has a knowledge of German political thought, and who enjoys the confidence of German friends speaking their minds openly and freely, can deny that these are the ideas which are proclaimed on the housetops, and that inability to sympathise with them is regarded in Germany as the mark of the prejudiced foreigner who cannot enter into the real feelings of Germans. Nor is it amiss to refer in this connection to the series of Imperial apothegms, which have from time to time served to crystallize the prevailing German sentiments, and some of which deserve quotation: "Our

future lies on the water.” “The trident must be in our hand.” “Germany must re-enter into her heritage of maritime dominion once unchallenged in the hands of the old Hansa.” “No question of world politics must be settled without the consent of the German Emperor.” “The Emperor of the Atlantic greets the Emperor of the Pacific,” &c.

The significance of these individual utterances may easily be exaggerated. Taken together, their cumulative effect is to confirm the impression that Germany distinctly aims at playing on the world's political stage a much larger and much more dominant part than she finds allotted to herself under the present distribution of material power. It would be taking a narrow view of the function of political criticism to judge this theory of national self-assertion as if it were a problem of morals to be solved by the casuistical application of the principles governing private conduct in modern societies. History is apt to justify the action of States by its general results, with often but faint regard to the ethical character of the means employed. The ruthless conquests of the Roman Republic and Empire are recognized to have brought about an organization of the world's best energies, which, by the characteristic and lasting impulse it gave to the civilization of the ancients, fully compensated for the obliqueness of the conquerors' political morals. Peter the Great and Katharine II are rightly heroes in the eyes of Russia, who largely owes to their unscrupulous and crafty policies her existence as a powerful and united nation. The high-handed seizure of Silesia by Frederick the Great, the low intrigues by which the first partition of Poland was brought about, the tortuous manoeuvres by which Bismarck secured Schleswig-Holstein for Prussia are forgotten or condoned in the contemplation of a powerful Germany that has brought to these and all her other territories a more enlightened government, a wider conception of national life, and a greater share in a glorious national tradition than could have been their lot in other conditions. Germans would after all be only logical if they did not hesitate to apply to their current politics the lesson conveyed in such historical judgments, and were ready to leave to posterity the burden of vindicating the employment of force for the purpose of spreading the benefits of German rule over now unwilling peoples. No modern German would plead guilty to a mere lust of conquest for the sake of conquest. But the vague and undefined schemes of Teutonic expansion (“die Ausbreitung des deutschen Volkstums”) are but the expression of the deeply rooted feeling that Germany has by the strength and purity of her national purpose, the fervour of her patriotism, the depth of her religious feeling, the high standard of competency, and the perspicuous honesty of her administration, the successful pursuit of every branch of public and scientific activity, and the elevated character of her philosophy, art, and ethics, established for herself the right to assert the primacy of German national ideals. And as it is an axiom of her political faith that right, in order that it may prevail, must be backed by force, the transition is easy to the belief that the “good German sword,” which plays so large a part in patriotic speech, is there to solve any difficulties that may be in the way of establishing the reign of those ideals in a Germanized world.

The above very fragmentary sketch has given prominence to certain general features of Germany's foreign policy, which may, with some claim to impartiality, accuracy, and clearness, be deduced from her history, from the utterances and known designs of her rulers and statesmen, and from the, unmistakable manifestations of public opinion. It remains to consider whether, and to what extent, the principles so elucidated may be said, on the one hand, to govern actual present policy, and, on the other, to conflict with the vital interests of England and of other independent and vigorous States, with the free exercise of their national rights and the fulfilment of what they, on their part, may regard as their own mission in this world.

It cannot for a moment be questioned that the mere existence and healthy activity of a powerful Germany is an undoubted blessing to the world. Germany represents in a pre-eminent degree those highest qualities and virtues of good citizenship, in the largest sense of the word, which constitute the glory and triumph of modern civilization. The world would be unmeasurably the poorer if everything that is specifically associated with German character, German ideas, and German methods were to cease having power and influence. For England particularly, intellectual and moral kinship creates a sympathy and appreciation of what is best in the German mind, which has made her naturally predisposed to welcome, in the interest of the general progress of mankind, everything tending to strengthen that power and influence—on one condition: there must be respect for the individualities of other nations, equally valuable coadjutors, in their way, in the work of human progress, equally entitled to full elbow-room in which to contribute, in freedom, to the evolution of a higher civilization. England has, by a sound instinct, always stood for the unhampered play and interaction of national forces as most in accord with Nature's own process of development. No other State has ever gone so far and so steadily as the British Empire in the direction of giving free scope to the play of national forces in the internal organization of the divers people gathered under the King's sceptre. It is perhaps England's good fortune, as much as her merit, that taking this view of the manner in which the solution of the higher problems of national life must be sought, she has had but to apply the same principle to the field of external policy in order to arrive at the theory and practice governing her action as one of the international community of States.

So long, then, as Germany competes for an intellectual and moral leadership of the world in reliance on her own national advantages and energies England can but admire, applaud, and join in the race. If, on the other hand, Germany believes that greater relative preponderance of material power, wider extent of territory, inviolable frontiers, and supremacy at sea are the necessary and preliminary possessions without which any aspirations to such leadership must end in failure, then England must expect that Germany will surely seek to diminish the power of any rivals, to enhance her own by extending her dominion, to hinder the co-operation of other States, and ultimately to break up and supplant the British Empire.

Now, it is quite possible that Germany does not, nor ever will, consciously cherish any schemes of so subversive a nature. Her statesmen have openly repudiated them with indignation. Their denial may be perfectly honest, and their indignation justified. If so they will be most unlikely to come into any kind of armed conflict with England, because, as she knows of no causes of present dispute between the two countries, so she would have, difficulty in imagining where, on the hypothesis stated, any such should arise in the future. England seeks no quarrels, and will never give Germany cause for legitimate offence.

But this is not a matter in which England can safely run any risks. The assurances of German statesmen may after all be no more genuine than they were found to be on the subject of the Anglo-French *entente* and German interests in Morocco, or they may be honestly given but incapable of fulfilment. It would not be unjust to say that ambitious designs against one's neighbours are not as a rule openly proclaimed, and that therefore the absence of such proclamation, and even the profession of unlimited and universal political, benevolence are not in themselves conclusive evidence for or against the existence of unpublished intentions. The aspect of German policy in the past, to which attention has already been called, would warrant a belief that a further development on the same general lines would not constitute a break with former traditions, and must be considered as at least

possible. In the presence of such a possibility it may well be asked whether it would be right, or even prudent, for England to incur any sacrifices or see other, friendly, nations sacrificed merely in order to assist Germany in building up step by step the fabric of a universal preponderance, in the blind confidence that in the exercise of such preponderance Germany will confer unmixed benefits on the world at large, and promote the welfare and happiness of all other peoples without doing injury to any one. There are, as a matter of fact, weighty reasons which make it particularly difficult for England to entertain that confidence. These will have to be set out in their place.

Meanwhile it is important to make it quite clear that a recognition of the dangers of the situation need not and does not imply any hostility to Germany. England herself would be the last to expect any other nation to associate itself with her in the active support of purely British interests, except in cases where it was found practicable as a matter of business to give service for counter-service. Nevertheless, no Englishman would be go foolish as to regard such want of foreign co-operation for the realization of British aims as a symptom of an anti-British animus. All that England on her part asks—and that is more than she has been in the habit of getting—is that, in the pursuit of political schemes which in no way affect injuriously the interests of third parties, such, for instance,, as the introduction of reforms in Egypt for the sole benefit of the native population, England shall not be wantonly hampered by factious opposition. The same measure, and even a fuller measure, England will always be ready to mete out to other countries, including Germany. Of such readiness in the past instances are, as numerous as they are instructive; and this is perhaps the place where to say a few words respecting the peculiar complexion of the series of transactions which have been characteristic of Anglo-German relations in recent years.

It has been so often declared, as to have become almost a diplomatic platitude, that between England and Germany, as there has never been any real clashing of material interests, so there are no unsettled controversies over outstanding questions. Yet for the last twenty years, as the archives of our Foreign Office show, German Governments have never ceased reproaching British Cabinets with want of friendliness and with persistent opposition to German political plans. A review of British relations during the same period with France, with Russia, and with the United States reveals ancient and real sources of conflict, springing from imperfectly patched-up differences of past centuries, the inelastic stipulations of antiquated treaties, or the troubles incidental to unsettled colonial frontiers. Although with these countries England has fortunately managed to continue to live in peace, there always remained sufficient elements of divergence to make the preservation of good, not to say cordial, relations an anxious problem requiring constant alertness, care, moderation, good temper, and conciliatory disposition. When particular causes of friction became too acute, special arrangements entered into succeeded as a rule in avoiding an open rupture without, however, solving the difficulties, but rather leaving the seed of further irritation behind. This was eminently the case with France until and right up to the conclusion of the Agreement of the 8th April, 1904.

A very different picture is presented by the succession of incidents which punctuate the record of contemporary Anglo-German relations, 1884 onward, when Bismarck first launched his country into colonial and maritime enterprise, numerous quarrels arose between the two countries. They all have in common this feature—that they were opened by acts of direct and unmistakable hostility to England on the part of the German Government, and that this hostility was displayed with a disregard of the elementary rules of straightforward and honourable dealing which was deeply resented by successive British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs. But perhaps even more remarkable is this

other feature, also common to all these quarrels, that the British Ministers, in spite of the genuine indignation felt at the treatment to which they were subjected, in each case readily agreed to make concessions or accept compromises which not only appeared to satisfy all German demands, but were by the avowal of both parties calculated and designed to re-establish, if possible, on a firmer basis the fabric of Anglo-German friendship. To all outward appearance absolute harmony was restored on each occasion after these separate settlements, and in the intervals of fresh outbreaks it seemed true, and was persistently reiterated, that there could be no further occasion for disagreement.

The peculiar diplomatic methods employed by Bismarck in connection with the first German annexation in South-West Africa, the persistent way in which he deceived Lord Ampthill up to the last moment as to Germany's colonial ambitions, and then turned round to complain of the want of sympathy shown for Germany's "well-known" policy; the sudden seizure of the Cameroons by a German doctor armed with officially obtained British letters of recommendation to the local people, at a time when the intention of England to grant the natives' petition for a British Protectorate had been proclaimed; the deliberate deception practised on the Reichstag and the German public by the publication of pretended communications to Lord Granville which were never made, a mystification of which Germans to this day are probably ignorant; the arousing of a profound outburst of anti-English feeling throughout Germany by Bismarck's warlike and threatening speeches in Parliament; the abortive German raid on St. Lucia Bay, only just frustrated by the vigilance of Mr. Rhodes; the dubious proceedings by which German claims were established over a large portion of the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions; the hoisting of the German flag over vast parts of New Guinea, immediately after inducing England to postpone her already-announced intention to occupy some of those very parts by representing that a friendly settlement might first determine the dividing line of rival territorial claims; the German pretensions to oust British settlers from Fiji and Samoa: these incidents constitute the first experience by a British Cabinet of German hostility disguised as injured friendship and innocence. It was only England's precarious position resulting from the recent occupation of Egypt (carefully encouraged by Bismarck), the danger of troubles with Russia in Central Asia (directly fomented by a German special mission to St. Petersburg), and the comparative weakness of the British navy at the time, which prevented Mr. Gladstone's Government from contemplating a determined resistance to these German proceedings. It was, however, felt rightly that, apart from the offensiveness of the methods employed, the desires entertained by Germany and so bluntly translated into practice, were not seriously antagonistic to British policy. Most of the territory ultimately acquired by Bismarck had at some previous time been refused by England, and in the cases where British occupation had lately been contemplated, the object had been not so much to acquire fresh provinces, as to prevent their falling into the hands of protectionist France, who would inevitably have killed all British trade. It seems almost certain that had Germany from the outset sought to gain by friendly overtures to England what she eventually secured after a display of unprovoked aggressiveness, there would have been no difficulty in the way of an amicable arrangement satisfactory to both parties.

As it was, the British Cabinet was determined to avoid a continuance of the quarrel, and having loyally accepted the situation created by Germany's violent action, it promptly assured her of England's honest desire to live with her on terms of absolute neighbourliness, and to maintain the former cordial relations. The whole chapter of these incidents was typical of many of the fresh complications of a similar nature which arose in the following years. With the advent of Lord Salisbury's administration in 1885, Bismarck thought the moment come for inviting England to take sides with the Triple

Alliance. Repeated and pressing proposals appear to have been made thenceforward for some considerable time with this end.* Whilst the British Government was too prudent to abandon altogether the traditional policy of holding the balance between the continental Powers, it decided eventually, in view of the then threateningly hostile attitude of France and Russia, to go so far in the direction of co-operation with the Triple Alliance as to conclude the two secret Mediterranean Agreements of 1887. At the same time Lord Salisbury intimated his readiness to acquiesce in the German annexation of Samoa, the consummation of which was only shipwrecked owing to the refusal of the United States on their part to abandon their treaty rights in that group of islands in Germany's favour. These fresh manifestations of close relations with Germany were, however, shortly followed by the serious disagreements caused by the proceedings of the notorious Dr. Carl Peters and other German agents in East Africa. Dr. Peters' design, in defiance of existing treaties, to establish German power in Uganda, athwart the line of communication running from Egypt to the head-waters of the Nile, failed, but England, having previously abandoned the Sultan of Zanzibar to Germany's territorial ambitions, now recognised the German annexation of extensive portions of his mainland dominions, saving the rest by the belated declaration of a British protectorate. The cession of Heligoland sealed the reassertion of Anglo-German brotherhood, and was accompanied by the customary assurance of general German support to British policy, notably in Egypt.

On this and on other occasions England's spirit of accommodation went so far as to sacrifice the career of subordinate British officials, who had done no more than carry out the policy of their Government in as dignified a manner as circumstances allowed, and to whose conduct that Government attached no blame, to the relentless vindictiveness of Germany, by agreeing to their withdrawal as one of the conditions of a settlement. The several instances the German Government admitted that no fault attached to the British official, whilst the German officer alone was acknowledged to be at fault, but asked that the latter's inevitable removal should be facilitated, and the outside world misled, by the simultaneous withdrawal of his British colleagues. In one such case, indeed, a German Consul, after being transferred with promotion to another post, was only a few years afterwards reinstated on the scene of his original blunders with the higher rank of Consul-General without any British protest being made.

The number of British officials innocently branded in this manner in the course of some years is not inconsiderable, and it is instructive to observe how readily and *con amore* the German Government, imitating in this one of the great Bismarck's worst and least respectable foibles, habitually descend to attacking the personal character and position of any agents of a foreign State, often regardless of their humble rank, whose knowledge, honesty, and efficient performance of their duties are thought to be in the way of the realization of some particular, probably not very straightforward, piece of business. Such machinations were conspicuous in connection with the fall of M. Delcassé, but tales could be told of similar efforts directed against men in the service of the Spanish, Italian, and Austrian, as well as of the British Government.

It seems unnecessary to go at length into the disputes about the frontiers of the German Colonies in West Africa and the hinterland spheres of influence in 1903-1904, except to record the ready sacrifice of undoubted British treaty rights to the desire to conciliate Germany, notwithstanding the provocative and insulting proceedings of her agents and officials; nor into the agreement entered into between Germany and France for giving the latter access to the Niger, a transaction which, as the

German Government blandly informed the British Embassy at Berlin, was intended to show how unpleasant it could make itself to England if she did not manifest greater alacrity in meeting German wishes.

It was perhaps partly the same feeling that inspired Germany in offering determined resistance to the scheme negotiated by Lord Rosebery's Government with the Congo Free State for connecting the British Protectorate of Uganda by a railway with Lake Tanganyika. No cession of territory was involved, the whole object being to allow of an all-British through communication by rail and lake steamers from the Cape to Cairo. It was to this that Germany objected, although it was not explained in what way her interests would be injuriously affected. She adopted on this occasion a most minatory tone towards England, and also joined France, who objected to other portions of the Anglo-Congolese Agreement, in putting pressure on King Leopold. In the end the British Government consented to the cancellation of the clauses respecting the lease of the strip of land required for the construction of the railway, and Germany declared herself satisfied.

More extraordinary still was the behaviour of the German Government in respect to the Transvaal. The special treaty arrangements, which placed the foreign relations of that country under the control of England, were, of course, well known and understood. Nevertheless, it is certain that Germany believed she might by some fortuitous circumstances hope, some day to establish her political dominion over the Boers, and realize her dream of occupying a belt of territory running from east to west right across Africa. She may have thought that England could be brought amicably to cede her rights in those regions as she had done before in other quarters, but, meanwhile, a good deal of intriguing went on which cannot be called otherwise than actively hostile. Opposition to British interests was deliberately encouraged in the most demonstrative fashion at Pretoria, which went so far in 1895 that the British Ambassador at Berlin had to make a protest. German financial assistance was promised to the Transvaal for the purpose of buying the Delagoa Bay Railway, a British concern which had been illegally confiscated by the Portuguese Government, and was then the subject of an international arbitration. When this offer failed, Germany approached the Lisbon Cabinet direct with the demand that, immediately on the arbitration being concluded, Germany and Portugal should deal with the railway by common agreement. It was also significant that at the time of the British annexation of Amatongahand (1895), just south of the Portuguese frontier on the East Coast, Germany thought it necessary to warn England that this annexation was not recognised by the Transvaal, and that she encouraged the feverish activity of German traders to buy up all available land round Delago Bay. In the same year, following up an intimation that England's "opposition to German interests at Delagoa Bay"—interests of which no British Government had ever previously been informed—was considered by Germany as one of the legitimate causes of her ill-will towards England, the German Government went out of its way to declare the maintenance of the independence of the Transvaal to be a German national interest. Then followed the chapter of the Jameson raid and the Emperor's famous telegram to President Krüger. The hostile character of that demonstration was thoroughly understood by the Emperor's Government, because we know that preparations were made for safeguarding the German fleet in the contingency of a British attack. But in a way the most important aspect of the incident was that for the first time the fact of the hostile character of Germany's official policy was realized by the British public, who up to then, owing to the anxious care of their Government to minimize the results of the perpetual friction with Germany, and to prevent any aggravation of that friction by concealing as far as possible the unpleasant details of Germany's aggressive behaviour, had been practically unaware of the persistently contemptuous treatment of

their country by their Teutonic cousins. The very decided view taken by British public opinion of the nature of any possible German intervention in South Africa led the German Government, though not the German public, to abandon the design of supplanting England at Pretoria. But for this “sacrifice” Germany, in accordance with her wont, demanded a price—namely, British acquiescence in the reversion to her of certain Portuguese Colonies in the event of their eventual division and appropriation by other Powers. The price was paid. But the manner in which Germany first bullied the Portuguese Government and then practically drove an indignant British Cabinet into agreeing in anticipation to this particular scheme of spoliation of England’s most ancient ally, was deeply resented by Lord Salisbury, all the more, no doubt, as by this time he was fully aware that this Dew “friendly” settlement of misunderstandings with Germany would be no more lasting than its many predecessors. When, barely twelve months later, the Emperor, unabashed by his recent formal “abandonment of the Boers,” threatened that unless the question of the final ownership of Samoa, then under negotiation, was promptly settled in Germany’s favour, he would have to reconsider his attitude in the British conflict with the Transvaal which was then on the point of being submitted to the arbitrament of war, it cannot be wondered at that the British Government began to despair of ever reaching a state of satisfactory relations with Germany by continuing in the path of friendly concessions and compromises. Yet no attempt was even then made to seek a new way. The Agreement by which Samoa definitely became German was duly signed, despite the serious protests of our Australian Colonies, whose feelings had been incensed by the cynical disregard with which the German agents in the group, with the open support of their Government, had for a long time violated the distinct stipulations of the Samoan Act agreed to at Berlin by the three interested Powers in 1889. And when shortly after the outbreak of the South African war, Germany threatened the most determined hostility unless England waived the exercise of one of the most ancient and most firmly-established belligerent rights of naval warfare, namely, the search and citation before a Prize Court of neutral mercantile vessels suspected of carrying contraband, England once more preferred an amicable arrangement under which her undoubted rights were practically waived, to embarking on a fresh quarrel with Germany. The spirit in which this more than conciliatory attitude, was appreciated at Berlin became clear when immediately afterwards the German Chancellor openly boasted in the Reichstag that he had compelled England by the display of German firmness to abandon her absolutely unjust claim to interference, with the unquestioned rights of neutrals, and when the Emperor subsequently appealed to his nation to hasten on the building of an overwhelming German fleet, since the want of superior naval strength alone had on this occasion prevented Germany from a still more drastic, vindication of Germany’s interests.

A bare allusion must here suffice to the way in which the German Government at the time of the South African war abetted the campaign of odious calumny carried on throughout the length and breadth of Germany against the character of the British army, without any Government official once opening his mouth in contradiction; and this in the face of the faithful reports known to have been addressed to their Government by the German military officers attached to the British forces in the field. When the Reichstag proceeded in an unprecedented fashion to impugn the conduct of a British Cabinet Minister, it was open to Prince Bülow to enlighten his hearers as to the real facts, which had been grossly misrepresented. We know that he was aware of the truth. We have the report of his long interview with a distinguished and representative English gentleman, a fortnight after Mr. Chamberlain’s famous speech, which was alleged to be the cause of offence, but of which a correct version revealing the groundlessness of the accusation had been reported in a widely-read German paper. The Prince then stated that his Government had at that moment no cause to Complain of

anything in the attitude of British Ministers, yet he descended a few days afterwards to expressing in the Reichstag his sympathy with the violent German out-cry against Mr. Chamberlain's supposed statement and the alleged atrocities of the British army, which he knew to be based on falsehoods. Mr. Chamberlain's dignified reply led to extraordinarily persistent efforts on the Chancellor's part to obtain from the British Government an apology for the offence of resenting his dishonouring insinuations, and, after all these efforts had failed, he nevertheless intimated to the Reichstag that the British Government had given an explanation repudiating any intention on its part, to imply any insult to Germany by what, had been said.

As if none of these things had happened, fresh German demands in another field, accompanied by all the same manifestations of hostility, were again met though with perhaps increasing reluctance, by the old willingness to oblige. The action of Germany in China has long been distinctly unfriendly to England. In 1895 she tried to obtain from the Chinese Government a coaling station in the Chusan Islands, at the mouth of the Yang-tsze, without any previous communication with the British Government, whose preferential rights over the group, as established by Treaty, were of course well known. The manner in which Kiaochow was obtained, however unjustifiable it may be considered by any recognized standard of political conduct, did not concern England more than the other Powers who professed in their Treaties to respect China's integrity and independence. But Germany was not content with the seizure of the harbour, she also planned the absorption of the whole of the large and fertile province of Shantung. The concession of the privileged rights which she, wrung from the Chinese Government was obtained owing in no small degree to her official assurance that her claims had the support of England who, needless to say, had never been informed or consulted, and who was, of course, known to be absolutely opposed to stipulations by which, contrary to solemn British treaty rights, it was intended to close a valuable province to British trade and enterprise.

About this time Germany secretly approached Russia with a view to the conclusion of an Agreement, by which Germany would have also obtained the much desired foothold on the Yane-tsze, then considered to be practically a British preserve. These overtures being rejected, Germany wished at least to prevent England from obtaining what she herself had failed to secure. She proposed to the British Cabinet a self-denying Agreement stipulating that neither Power should endeavour to obtain any territorial advantages in Chinese dominions, and that if any third Power attempted to do so both should take common action.

The British Government did not conceal their great reluctance, to this arrangement, rightly foreseeing that Germany would tacitly exempt from its operation her own designs on Shantung, and also any Russian aggression in Manchuria, whilst England would solemnly give up any chances she might have of establishing on a firm basis her well-won position on the Yang-tsze. That is, of course, exactly what subsequently did happen. There was no obvious reason why England should lend herself to this gratuitous tying of her own hands. No counter-advantage was offered or even suggested, and the British taste for these one-sided transactions had not been, stimulated by past experience. Nevertheless, the policy of conciliating Germany by meeting her expressed wishes once more triumphed, and the Agreement was signed with the foreseen consequences: Russian aggression in Manchuria was declared to be altogether outside the scope of the stipulations of what the German Chancellor took care to style the "Yang-tsze" Agreement, as if its terms had referred specially to that restricted area of China, and the German designs on Shantung continue to this day to be tenaciously pursued.

But Germany was not content with the British renunciation of any territorial claims. The underhand and disloyal manœuvres by which, on the strength of purely fictitious stories of British plans for the seizure of various Chinese places of strategical importance (stories also sedulously communicated to the French Government), Germany wrung out, of the Peking Court further separate and secret guarantees against alleged British designs, on the occasion of the termination of the joint Anglo-Franco-German occupation of Shanghai, betrayed such an obliquity of mind in dealing with her ostensible friends that Lord Lansdowne characterized it in the most severe terms, which did not prevent him from presenting the incident to Parliament in the form of papers from which almost every trace of the offensive attitude of Germany had been carefully removed, so as not to embitter our German relations. And this was after the reports from our officers had shown that the proceeding of the German troops in Northern China, and the extraordinary treatment meted out by the German General Staff to the British and Indian contingents serving, with a loyalty not approached by any of the other international forces, under the supreme command of Count Waldersee, had created the deepest possible resentment among all ranks, from the British General Commanding to the lowest, Indian follower.

Nor was any difficulty made by the British Government in shortly afterwards cordially co-operating with Germany in the dispute with Venezuela, and it was only the pressure of public opinion, which had gradually come to look upon such co-operation for any political purpose whatsoever as not in accord with either British interests or British dignity, that brought this joint-venture to a very sudden and somewhat lame end.

It is as true to-day as it has been at any time since 1884, in the intervals of successive incidents and their settlements, that, practically every known German demand having been met, there is not just now any cause troubling the serenity of Anglo-German relations. So much so, that the German Ambassador in London, in reply to repeated inquiries as to what specific points his Government had in mind in constantly referring to Its earnest wish to see those relations improved, invariably seeks refuge in the vaguest of generalities, such as the burning desire which consumes the German Chancellor to be on the most intimate terms of friendship with France, and to obtain the fulfilment of this desire through the good offices of the British Government.

Nothing has been said in the present paper of the campaign carried on against this country in the German press, and in some measure responded to in English papers. It is exceedingly doubtful whether this campaign has had any share whatever in determining the attitude of the two Governments, and those people who see in the newspaper controversy the main cause of friction between Germany and England, and who consequently believe that the friction can be removed by fraternizations of journalists and the mutual visits of more or less distinguished and more or less disinterested bodies of tourists, have not sufficiently studied—in most cases could not possibly be in a position to study—the records of the actual occurrences which have taken place, and which clearly show that it is the direct action of the German Government which has been the all-sufficient cause of whatever obstacle there may be to the maintenance, of normally friendly relations between the two countries. If any importance is in this connection to be attributed to the German press, it is only in so far as it is manipulated and influenced by the official Press Bureau, a branch of the Chancellor's Office at Berlin of which the occult influence, is not limited to the confines of the German Empire. That influence is perceived at work in New York, at St. Petersburg, at Vienna, at Madrid, Lisbon, Rome, and Cairo, and even in London, where the German Embassy entertains confidential and largely

unsuspected relations with a number of respectable and widelyread papers. This somewhat unsavoury business was until recently in the clumsy hands of the late Chancellor of the Embassy, whose energies are now transferred to Cairo. But, by whomsoever carried on, it is known that the tradition of giving expression to the views of the German Government for the benefit of the British public, and even of the British Cabinet, by using other and less direct methods than the prescribed channel of open communication with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, survives at Carlton House Terrace.

There is no pretence to completeness in the foregoing survey of Anglo-German relations, which, in fact, gives no more than a brief reference to certain salient and typical incidents that have characterized those relations during the last twenty years. The more difficult task remains of drawing the logical conclusions. The immediate object of the present inquiry was to ascertain whether there is any real and natural ground for opposition between England and Germany. It has been shown that such opposition has, in fact, existed in an ample measure for a long period, but that it has been caused by an entirely one-sided aggressiveness, and that on the part of England the most conciliatory disposition has been coupled with never-failing readiness to purchase the resumption of friendly relations by concession after concession.

It might be deduced that the antagonism is too deeply rooted in the relative position of the two countries to allow of its being bridged over by the kind of temporary expedients to which England has so long and so patiently resorted. On this view of the case it would have to be assumed that Germany is deliberately following a policy which is essentially opposed to vital British interests, and that an armed conflict cannot in the long run be averted, except by England either sacrificing those interests, with the result that she would lose her position as an independent Great Power, or making herself too strong to give Germany the chance of succeeding in a war. This is the opinion of those who, see in the whole trend of Germany's policy conclusive evidence that she is consciously aiming at the establishment of a German hegemony, at first in Europe, and eventually in the world.

After all that has been said in the preceding paragraphs, it would be idle to deny that this may be the correct interpretation of the facts. There is this further seemingly corroborative evidence that such a conception of world-policy offers perhaps the only quite consistent explanation of the tenacity with which Germany pursues the construction of a powerful navy with the avowed object of creating slowly, but surely, a weapon fit to overawe any possible enemy, however formidable at sea.

There is, however, one obvious flaw in the argument. If the German design were so far-reaching and deeply thought out as this view implies, then it ought to be clear to the meanest German understanding that its success must depend very materially on England's remaining blind to it, and being kept in good humour until the moment arrived for striking the blow fatal to her power. It would be not merely worth Germany's while, it would be, her imperative duty, pending the development of her forces, to win and retain England's friendship by every means in her power. No Candid critic could say that this elementary strategical rule had been even remotely followed hitherto by the German government.

It is not unprofitable in this connection to refer to a remarkable article in one of the recent numbers of the "Preussische Jahrbücher," written by Dr. Hans Delbrück, the distinguished editor of that ably conducted and influential magazine. This article, discusses very candidly and dispassionately the question whether Germany could, even if she would, carry out successfully an ambitious policy of expansion which would make her follow in the footsteps of Louis XIV and of Napoleon I. The

conclusion arrived at is that, unless Germany wishes to expose herself to the same overwhelming combinations which ruined the French dreams of a universal ascendancy, she must make up her mind definitely and openly to renounce all thoughts of further extending her frontiers, and substitute for the plan of territorial annexations the nobler ambition of spreading German culture by propagating German ideals in the many quarters of the globe where the German language, is spoken, or at least taught and understood.

It would not do to attribute too much importance to the appearance of such an article in a country where the influence of public opinion on the conduct of the affairs of State is notoriously feeble. But this much may probably be rightly gathered from it, that the design attributed by other nations to Germany has been, and perhaps is still being, cherished in some indeterminate way by influential classes, including; perhaps, the Government itself, but that responsible statesmen must be well aware of the practical impossibility of carrying it out.

There is then, perhaps, another way of looking at the problem: It might be suggested that the great German design is in reality no more than the expression of a vague, confused, and unpractical statesmanship, not fully realizing its own drift. A charitable critic might add, by way of explanation, that the well-known qualities of mind and temperament distinguishing for good or for evil the present Ruler of Germany may not improbably be largely responsible for the erratic, domineering, and often frankly aggressive spirit which is recognizable at present in every branch of German public life, not merely in the region of foreign policy; and that this spirit has called forth those manifestations of discontent and alarm both at home and abroad with which the world is becoming familiar; that, in fact, Germany does not really know what she is driving at, and that all her excursions and alarums, all her underhand intrigues do not contribute to the steady working out of a well-conceived and relentlessly followed system of policy, because, they do not really form part of any such system. This is an hypothesis not flattering to the German Government, and it must be admitted that much might be urged against its validity. But it remains true that on this hypothesis also most of the facts of the present situation could be explained.

It is, of course, necessary to except the period of Bismarck's Chancellorship. To assume that so great a statesman was not quite clear as to the objects of his policy would be the *reductio ad absurdum* of any hypothesis. If, then, the hypothesis is to be held sound, there must be forthcoming a reasonable explanation for Bismarck's conduct towards England after 1884, and a different explanation for the continuance of German hostility after his fall in 1890. This view can be shown to be less absurd than it may at first sight appear.

Bismarck suffered from what Count Schuvaloff called *le cauchemar des coalitions*. It is beyond doubt that he particularly dreaded the hostile combination against his country of France and Russia, and that, as one certain means of counteracting that danger, he desired to bring England into the Triple Alliance, or at least to force her into independent collision with France and Russia, which would inevitably have placed her by Germany's side. He knew England's aversion to the entanglement of alliances, and to any policy of determined assertion of national rights, such as would have made her a Power to be seriously reckoned with by France and Russia. But Bismarck had also a poor opinion of the power of English Ministers to resist determined pressure. He apparently believed he could compel them to choose between Germany and a universal opposition to England. When the colonial agitation in Germany gave him an opening, he most probably determined to bring it home to England that

meekness and want of determination in foreign affairs do not constitute a policy; that it was wisest, and certainly least disagreeable, for her to shape a decided course in a direction which would secure her Germany's friendship; and that in co-operation with Germany lay freedom from international troubles as well as safety, whilst a refusal to, co-operate brought inglorious conflicts, and the prospect of finding Germany ranged with France and Russia for the specific purpose of damaging British interests.

Such an explanation gains plausibility from the fact that, according to Bismarck's own confession, a strictly analogous policy was followed by him before 1866 in his dealings with the minor German States. Prussia deliberately bullied and made herself disagreeable to them all, in the firm expectation that, for the sake of peace and quiet, they would follow Prussia's lead rather than Austria's. When the war of 1866 broke out Bismarck had to realize that, with the exception of a few small principalities which were practically enclaves in the Kingdom of Prussia, the whole of the minor German States sided with Austria. Similarly he must have begun to see towards the end of his career that his policy of browbeating England into friendship had failed, in spite of some fugitive appearance of success. But by that time the habit of bullying and offending England had almost become a tradition in the Berlin Foreign Office, and Bismarck's successors, who, there is other evidence to show, inherited very little of his political capacity and singleness of purpose, seem to have regarded the habit as a policy in itself, instead of as a method of diplomacy calculated to gain an ulterior end. Whilst the great Chancellor made England concede demands objectionable more in the manner of presentation than in themselves, treating her somewhat in the style of Richard III wooing the Lady Ann, Bismarck's successors have apparently come to regard it as their ultimate and self-contained purpose to extract valuable Concessions from England by offensive bluster and persistent nagging, Bismarck's experience having shown her to be amenable to this form of persuasion without any risk of her lasting animosity being excited.

If, merely by way of analogy and illustration, a comparison not intended to be either literally exact or disrespectful be permitted, the action of Germany towards this country since 1890 might be likened not inappropriately to that of a professional blackmailer, whose extortions are wrung from his victims by the threat of some vague and dreadful consequences in case of a refusal. To give way to, the blackmailer's menaces enriches him, but it has long been proved by uniform experience that, although this may secure for the victim temporary peace, it is certain to lead to renewed molestation and higher demands after ever-shortening periods of amicable forbearance. The blackmailer's trade is generally ruined by the first resolute stand made against his exactions and the determination rather to face all risks of a possibly disagreeable situation than to continue in the path of endless concessions. But, failing such determination, it is more than probable that the relations between the two parties will grow steadily worse.

If it be possible, in this perhaps not very flattering way, to account for the German Government's persistently aggressive demeanour towards England, and the resulting state of almost perpetual friction, notwithstanding the pretence of friendship, the generally restless, explosive, and disconcerting activity of Germany in relation to other States would find its explanation partly in the same attitude towards them and partly in the suggested want of definite political aims and purposes. A wise German statesman would recognise the limits within which any world-policy that is not to provoke a hostile combination of all the nations in arms must confine itself. He would realize that the edifice of Pan-Germanism, with its outlying bastions in the Netherlands, in the Scandinavian

countries, in Switzerland, in the German provinces of Austria, and on the Adriatic, could never be built up on any other foundation than the wreckage of the liberties of Europe. A German maritime supremacy must be acknowledged to be incompatible with the existence of the British Empire, and even if that Empire disappeared, the union of the greatest military with the greatest naval Power in one State would compel the world to combine for the riddance of such an incubus. The acquisition of colonies fit for German settlement in South America cannot be reconciled with the Monroe doctrine, which is a fundamental principle of the political faith of the United States. The creation of a German India in Asia Minor must in the end stand or fall with either a German command of the sea or a German conquest of Constantinople and the countries intervening between Germany's present south-eastern frontiers and the Bosphorus. Whilst each of these grandiose schemes seems incapable of fulfilment under anything like the present conditions of the world, it looks as if Germany were playing with them all together simultaneously, and thereby wilfully concentrating in her own path all the obstacles and oppositions of a world set at defiance. That she should do this helps to prove how little of logical and consistent design and of unrelenting purpose lies behind the impetuous mobility, the bewildering surprises, and the heedless disregard of the susceptibilities of other people that have been so characteristic of recent manifestations of German policy.

If it be considered necessary to formulate and accept a theory that will fit all the ascertained facts of German foreign policy, the choice must lie between the two hypotheses here presented :

Either Germany is definitely aiming at a general political hegemony and maritime ascendancy, threatening the independence of her neighbours and ultimately the existence of England;

Or Germany, free from any such clear-cut ambition, and thinking for the present merely of using her legitimate position and influence as one of the leading Powers in the council of nations, is seeking to promote her foreign commerce, spread the benefits of German culture, extend the scope of her national energies, and create fresh German interests all over the world wherever and whenever a peaceful opportunity offers, leaving it to an uncertain future to decide whether the occurrence of great changes in the world may not some day assign to Germany a larger share of direct political action over regions not now a part of her dominions, without that violation of the established rights of other countries which would be involved in any such action under existing political conditions. In either case Germany would clearly be wise to build as powerful a navy as she can afford.

The above alternatives seem to exhaust the possibilities of explaining the given facts. The choice offered is a narrow one, nor easy to make with any close approach to certainty. It will, however, be seen, on reflection, that there is no actual necessity for a British Government to determine definitely which of the two theories of German policy it will accept. For it is clear that the second scheme (of semi-independent evolution, not entirely unaided by statecraft) may at any stage merge into the first, or conscious, design scheme. Moreover, if ever the evolution scheme should come to be realized, the position thereby accruing to Germany would obviously constitute as formidable a menace to the rest of the world as would be presented by any deliberate conquest of a similar position by "malice aforethought."

It appears, then, that the element of danger present as a visible factor in one case, also enters, though under some disguise, into the second; and against such danger, whether actual or contingent, the same general line of conduct seems prescribed. It should not be difficult briefly to indicate that line in such a way as to command the assent of all persons competent to form a judgment in this matter.

So long as England remains faithful to the general principle of the preservation of the balance of power, her interests would not be served by Germany being reduced to the rank of a weak Power, as this might easily lead to a Franco-Russian predominance equally, if not more, formidable to the British Empire. There are no existing German rights, territorial or other, which this country could wish to see diminished. Therefore, so long as Germany's action does not overstep the line of legitimate protection of existing rights she can always count upon the sympathy and good-will and even the moral support, of England.

Further, it would be neither just nor politic to ignore the claims to a healthy expansion which a vigorous and growing country like Germany has a natural right to assert in the field of legitimate endeavour. The frank recognition of this right has never been grudged or refused by England to any foreign country. It may be recalled that the German Empire owes such expansion as has already taken place in no small measure to England's co-operation or spirit of accommodation, and to the British principle of equal opportunity and no favour. It cannot be good policy for England to thwart such a process of development where it does not directly conflict either with British interests or with those of other nations to which England is bound by solemn treaty obligations. If Germany, within the limits imposed by these two conditions, finds the means peacefully and honourably to increase her trade and shipping, to gain coaling stations or other harbours, to acquire landing rights for cables, or to secure concessions for the employment of German capital or industries, she should never find England in her way.

Nor is it for British Governments to oppose Germany's building as large a fleet as she may consider necessary or desirable for the defence of her national interests. It is the mark of an independent State that it decides such matters for itself, free from any outside interference, and it would ill become England with her large fleets to dictate to another State what is good for it in matters of supreme national concern. Apart from the question of right and wrong, it may also be urged that nothing would be more likely than any attempt at such dictation, to impel Germany to persevere with her shipbuilding programmes. And also, it may be said in parenthesis, nothing is more likely to produce in Germany the impression of the practical hopelessness of a never-ending succession of costly naval programmes than the conviction, based on ocular demonstration, that for every German ship England will inevitably lay down two, so maintaining the present, relative British preponderance.

It would be of real advantage if the determination not to bar Germany's legitimate and peaceful expansion, nor her schemes of naval development, were made as patent and pronounced as authoritative as possible, provided care were taken at the same time to make it quite clear that this benevolent attitude will give way to determined opposition at the first sign of British or allied interests being adversely affected. This alone would probably do more to bring about lastingly satisfactory relations with Germany than any other course.

It is not unlikely that Germany will before long again ask, as she has so often done hitherto, for a "close understanding" with England. To meet this contingency, the first thing to consider is what exactly is meant by the request. The Anglo-French *entente* had a very material basis and tangible object—namely, the adjustment of a number of actually-existing serious differences. The efforts now being made by England to arrive at an understanding with Russia are justified by a very similar situation. But for an Anglo-German understanding on the same lines there is no room, since none could be built up on the same foundation. It has been shown that there are no questions of any

importance now at issue between the two countries. Any understanding must therefore be entirely different in object and scope. Germany's wish may be for an understanding to co-operate for specific purposes, whether offensive or defensive, or generally political or economical, circumscribed by certain geographical limits, or for an agreement of a self-denying order, binding the parties not to do, or not to interfere with, certain things or acts. Or the coveted arrangement might contain a mixture of any or all of these various ingredients. Into offensive or defensive alliances with Germany there is, under the prevailing political conditions, no occasion for England to enter, and it would hardly be honest at present to treat such a possibility as an open question. British assent to any other form of co-operation or system of non-interference must depend absolutely on circumstances, on the particular features, and on the merits of any proposals that may be made. All such proposals England will be as ready as she always has been to weigh and discuss from the point of view of how British interests will be affected. Germany must be content in this respect to receive exactly the same treatment as every other Power.

There is no suggestion more untrue or more unjust than that England has on any recent occasion shown, or is likely to show in future, a *parti pris* against Germany or German proposals as such, or displayed any unfairness in dealing strictly on their own merits with any question having a bearing on her relations with Germany. This accusation has been freely made. It is the stock-in-trade of all the inspired tirades against the British Government which emanate directly or indirectly from the Berlin Press Bureau. But no one has ever been able to bring forward a tittle of evidence in its support that will bear examination. The fact, of course, is that, as Mr. Balfour felt impelled to remark to the German Ambassador on a certain occasion, German communications to the British Government have not generally been of a very agreeable character, and, unless that character is a good deal modified, it is more than likely that such communications will in future receive unpalatable answers. For there is one road which, if past experience is any guide to the future, will most certainly not lead to any permanent improvement of relations with any Power, least of all Germany, and which must therefore be abandoned: that is the road paved with graceful British concessions—concessions made without any conviction either of their justice or of their being set off by equivalent counter-services. The vain hopes that in this manner Germany can be “conciliated” and made more friendly must be definitely given up. It may be that such hopes are still honestly cherished by irresponsible people, ignorant, perhaps necessarily ignorant, of the history of Anglo-German relations during the last twenty years, which cannot be better described than as the history of a systematic policy of gratuitous concessions, a policy which has led to the highly disappointing result disclosed by the almost perpetual state of tension existing between the two countries. Men in responsible positions, whose business it is to inform themselves and to see things as they really are, cannot conscientiously retain any illusions on this subject.

Here, again, however, it would be wrong to suppose that any discrimination is intended to Germany's disadvantage. On the contrary, the same rule will naturally impose itself in the case of all other Powers. It may, indeed, be useful to cast back a glance on British relations with France before and after 1898. A reference to the official records will show that ever since 1882 England had met a growing number of French demands and infringements of British rights in the same spirit of ready accommodation which inspired her dealings with Germany. The not unnatural result was that every successive French Government embarked on a policy of “squeezing” England, until the crisis came in the year of Fashoda, when the stake at issue was the maintenance of the British position on the Upper Nile. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs of that day argued, like his predecessors, that England's

apparent opposition was only half-hearted, and would collapse before the persistent threat of French displeasure. Nothing would persuade him that England could in a question of this kind assume an attitude of unbending resistance. It was this erroneous impression, justified in the eyes of the French Cabinet by their deductions from British political practice, that brought the two countries to the verge of war. When the Fashoda chapter had ended with the just discomfiture of France, she remained for a time very sullen, and the enemies of England rejoiced, because they believed that an impassable gulf had now been fixed between the two nations. As a matter of fact, the events at Fashoda proved to be the opening of a new chapter of Anglo-French relations. These, after remaining for some years rather formal, have not since been disturbed by any disagreeable incidents. France behaved more correctly and seemed less suspicious and inconsiderate than had been her wont, and no fresh obstacle arose in the way which ultimately led to the Agreement of 1904.

Although Germany has not been exposed to such a rebuff as France encountered in 1898, the events connected with the Algeciras Conference appear to have had on the German Government the effect of an unexpected revelation, clearly showing indications of a new spirit in which England proposes to regulate her own conduct towards France on the one hand and to Germany on the other. That the result was a very serious disappointment to Germany has been made abundantly manifest by the turmoil which the signature of the Algeciras Act has created in the country, the official, semi-official, and unofficial classes vying with each other in giving expression to their astonished discontent. The time which has since elapsed has, no, doubt, been short. But during that time, it may be observed that our relations with Germany, if not exactly cordial, have at least been practically free from all symptoms of direct friction, and there is an impression that Germany will think twice before she now gives rise to any fresh disagreement. In this attitude she will be encouraged if she meets on England's part with unvarying courtesy and consideration in all matters of common concern, but also with a prompt and firm refusal to enter into any one-sided bargains or arrangements, and the most unbending determination to uphold British rights and interests in every part of the globe. There will be no surer or quicker way to win the respect of the German Government and of the German nation.

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