

CHAPTER IV

FRIENDSHIPS

“FOR all purposes of a resident ambassador, I hear persons extensively and well acquainted among our foreign embassies at this date declare, That a well-selected *Times* reporter or ‘own correspondent’ ordered to reside in foreign capitals, and keep his eyes open, and (though sparingly) his pen going, would in reality be much more effective;—and surely we see well he would come to a good deal cheaper! Considerably cheaper in expense of money; and expense of falsity and grimacing hypocrisy (of which no human arithmetic can count the ultimate cost) incalculably cheaper! If this is the fact, why not treat it as such? If this is so in any measure, we had better in that measure admit it to be so! The time, I believe, has come for asking with considerable severity, How far is it so? Nay, there are men now current in political society, men of weight though also of wit, who have been heard to say, ‘That there was but one reform for the Foreign Office,—to set a live coal under it,’ and with, of course, a fire-brigade which could prevent the undue spread of the devouring element into neighbouring houses, let that reform it! In such odour is the Foreign Office too, if it were not that the Public, oppressed and nearly stifled with a mere infinitude of bad odours, neglects this one,—in fact, being able nearly always to avoid the street where it is, escape this one, and (except a passing curse, once in the quarter or so) as good as forgets the existence of it.”

—Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*.

It is hard to believe there was a time when Germany desired neither colonies nor fleets. We have

heard so much in recent years of Germany wanting our place in the sun, of her determined policy to wrest from us all our colonies, that the Bismarck of the early seventies seems a personage connected with the Swiss admiralty rather than a Chancellor in Berlin. A day or two ago a reputable journal told its readers that the whole of the present trouble came from the ambition of Bismarck to found an empire as vast as that of Britain, with naval and merchant fleets dominating all the seas. The statement was not true; but in war-time that is a small matter. It was, however, a relief to find neither Nietzsche nor Treitschke responsible for the existence of the Kiel Canal and the Hamburg-American Line. The cry “ Colonies for Germany ” had no force until 1883, and then Bismarck had only an electioneering affection for it. Ten years earlier he told Odo Russell that “ Colonies would only be a cause of weakness, because colonies could only be defended by powerful fleets. Many colonies had been offered him — he had rejected them, and wished only for coaling stations acquired by treaty from other nations.” The letters of Lord Ampthill indicate clearly how the change in Bismarck’s policy came about:

“ I am in perfect despair at Prince Bismarck’s present inclination to increase his popularity before the general election by taking up an anti-English attitude. Compelled by the colonial mania, which has gradually come to the surface in Germany, to act contrary to his better convictions in the Angra Pequena question, he has discovered an unexplored mine of popularity in starting a colonial policy. . . . The laxity of our quarantine regulations has always been a German grievance, and the news that the German

Government has brought it before the Conference, has been hailed with enthusiastic approval in the German press. Men like Professor Virchow and Dr. Koch accuse us openly of having brought the cholera into France."

In 1884 Lord Granville wrote to Lord Ampthill:

"I have never had a more arduous fight; the difficulty being that the Colonial Office had a very strong case which they had already put in writing, and their opposition was strongly backed by the Chancellor . . . Bismarck's attitude is disagreeable. He has always been violently opposed to colonization. He is now obliged to yield . . ."

Rulers may have short reigns, but they have sometimes long memories. In all the weary wranglings between London and Berlin in the early eighties there is nothing more noticeable than the suspicion in Bismarck's mind of all our manœuvring with regard to his colonial grievances. There was much to remember which would cause suspicion. Fitzmaurice gives some reason for this. In thinking over the following extract, it may be well for us to let our minds go back to early August, and recollect how chary our Foreign Minister was of touching the Luxembourg question when the neutrality of that state was an affair of the hour. Fitzmaurice lifts the curtain and reveals these signposts of foreign policy which were not to our credit:

"In the Liberal Secretary of State for the Colonies, Prince Bismarck had not failed to recognize the old Conservative Foreign Secretary, the Lord Stanley of 1867, who in his opinion had betrayed Europe over the Luxembourg question by allowing his own signature to the Treaty of that year to be explained away: a proceeding which he had never forgiven. In order to avoid war between France

and Prussia, it had been agreed that Luxembourg should be neutralized, that the Powers should guarantee the neutrality of the Duchy, and that it should be placed under their collective guarantee. But the ink was hardly dry on the paper which embodied these conditions before explanations were added as to the character of this collective guarantee by Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, which seemed to reduce the international sanction thereby given to the level of a moral sanction only. The Treaty, it was explained, gave a right to make war, but it imposed no obligation; none in any case on any of the high contracting Powers, unless the others all fulfilled their own obligations simultaneously. If this interpretation were correct, Lord Granville had said at the time, speaking from the benches opposite, it was difficult indeed to understand the importance which Russia had attached to the guarantee, or why Lord Stanley had shown such hesitation in becoming a party to it. The old wound still rankled, and if in 1884 considerations of domestic policy were pushing Prince Bismarck into a course of conduct hostile to Great Britain in order to secure the colonial vote in the German Parliament, he was not discouraged by the reflection that he was simultaneously annoying the Colonial Secretary. There were those also who deemed that Prince Bismarck enjoyed the thought that he was once more opening up the ancient chapter of accounts with England, which, notwithstanding all the recollections of 1814-5, no German statesman has ever entirely forgotten in regard to the betrayal of Frederick the Great by Lord Bute in 1762, when the British Minister not only deserted his ally, but while the alliance still subsisted was believed to have revealed the plans of Frederick for the next campaign against France to Choiseul himself."

In foreign affairs the devil is really just as black as he is painted; and the British devil is as black as the Continental devil. "Love your neighbour as

yourself," was not a text to be found over the bed in the guest chambers at Downing Street, nor yet in the Continental chancelleries. Distrust, suspicion, intrigue, and bitter memories animated the vast majority of men who were entrusted with the construction of treaties, friendships, and alliances. Odo Russell wrote from Berlin in 1881 to Lord Granville:

"For ten years have I preached confidence in Bismarck as a means of success in foreign policy, but in vain! I never could overcome the deep-rooted distrust his wish for a cordial understanding with England inspired at home."

Bismarck himself found the want of consistency in the policy of successive British Cabinets a source of great vexation. In a letter he wrote in 1883 he complained of the "astounding policy of succeeding English Cabinets." In the same letter he said:

"Assuming that the ambition of an English administration in regard to Egypt were to overstep the limits which, in my opinion, a reasonable British policy ought to respect, we should not feel called upon to quarrel with England, even out of friendship for other Powers. . . . The greatest difficulty, however, we encounter, in trying to give a practical expression to our sympathies for and our relations with England, is in the absolute impossibility of confidential intercourse in consequence of the indiscretion of English statesmen in their communications to Parliament, and in the absence of security in alliances for which the Crown is not answerable in England, but only the fleeting Cabinets of the day. It is therefore difficult to initiate a reliable understanding with England otherwise than publicly and in the face of all Europe. Such public negotiations from their initiation, and even without arriving at any definitive result, would be highly detrimental to most of

our European relations; but all these difficulties should not be allowed to stand in the way of our cordially entertaining any advances made to us, or to prevent us from cultivating the consolidation of our and Austria's friendship with England."

A sidelight is thrown on our Foreign Office by Lord Acton, who in his letters to Mary Gladstone said:

"Yes! at last, foreign affairs are in a very wretched way, and are unjustly and unreasonably injuring Mr. Gladstone's own position. If Morier is still in England, I wish he could see him before Petersburg. He is our only strong diplomatist; but he is only strong.

"You know that for all people not private friends of his own — is disappointing. He is a bad listener, easily bored and distrustful of energetic men who make work for themselves and for the Foreign Office. Morier, in particular, has force without tact, and stands ill with a chief who has tact without force."

The work of the Foreign Office, in conjunction with similar departments abroad laid, in the eighties, the foundations of the vast scheme of armaments we have to carry to-day. It seemed then that the more we tried to preserve the peace the more strained foreign relations became. When we were not quarrelling with Germany, we were not on speaking terms with Russia; when we were not colonizing African deserts, to use Mr. Chamberlain's phrase, we were fighting the battles of the Ameer. There were bitter attacks and votes of censure in the House of Commons, but for the most part on strictly party lines; the Opposition dearly desiring for themselves an opportunity of keeping up the grand tradition of

the Foreign Office. In 1886 the following resolution was moved:

“That in the opinion of this House it is not just or expedient to embark in war, contract engagements involving grave responsibilities for the nation, and add territories to the Empire, without the knowledge and consent of Parliament.”

It was lost by only four votes. It was opposed by Mr. Gladstone, though he did not attempt to defend the Foreign Office system as an ideal one.

We now enter upon the period when the rise in expenditure on armaments must be traced very closely. Beginning just after the policy of “Colonies for Germany” became popular, in 1887, the figures for naval expenditure of Britain, France, Russia, and Germany were as follows: Britain £12,375,000, France £8,452,000, Russia, £4,352,000, and Germany £4,179,000. In 1892 the French fleet visited Kronstadt, and in 1893 the Russian fleet visited Toulon. Wild demonstrations took place on both occasions. Germany was not delighted with the sentiments expressed by the orators at the dinners given to the officers of the dual navies. The French shouted, “Long live Russia,” and the Russians shouted, “Long live France.” The peace of Europe was the only aim of the demonstrators at these feasts. At a dinner given at the Élysées Palace, the Russian ambassador said:

“Before drinking a toast to which will respond from the depths of their hearts, not only those who are within these walls, but even those—and, that, too, with equal force—whose hearts near by and far away, at all the points of great, fair France, as also in all Russia, at the present

moment are beating in unison with ours,—permit me to offer—” and so on and so on, “the true significance of the magnificent peaceful festivities, etc., etc.”

Czar, and President, and ambassadors, and bishops, etc., etc., all united in glorifying the “peaceful festivities.” Naval demonstrations have no other object! Anyway, Germany did not rejoice. The figures for naval expenditure for the Entente Powers and Germany in 1897 were as follows: Britain £21,972,000, France £10,444,000, Russia £6,239,000, and Germany £6,467,000. These are an enormous increase for peace establishments! Russia and France combined spent that year over £10,000,000 more than Germany. When it is assumed by politicians and journalists that Germany is to blame for all the vast millions spent on navies in recent years, it would be just as well if it were shown when and how Germany led the way. One writer on naval affairs, whose articles occupy much space in the monthly reviews, stated recently that Germany began the armament race at the time of the Boer War. There is no evidence of this in the figures of expenditure; and to these we must look, no matter what the Kaiser said in his speeches at that time.

Let us begin with the year before the war in South Africa broke out. In 1898 Britain spent £25,674,000, and Germany spent £5,972,000; a difference of less than £20,000,000. After all the agitation in Germany for a colonial policy, there was no great expansion in fleet building. Indeed the Franco-Russian celebrations at Kronstadt and Toulon fell within a period when Germany pushed ahead in naval affairs. From 1892–3 the actions of

France and Russia must not be left out of account in tracing the growth of Germany's navy. It has been the policy of British Governments and the press to concentrate attention on Germany and Britain alone, as if Germany had no other consideration than naval expansion solely against England. Now at the close of the Boer War, in 1904, Britain spent £42,431,000 and Germany spent £11,659,000; a difference of over £30,000,000. In 1904 our expenditure on the navy was equal to a four or five Power standard. Germany then spent less than France or Russia. The figures for 1904 are instructive: France £12,517,143, Russia £12,072,381, and, as Germany had to reckon with both countries since the "peace festivities," no one can say her naval expenditure was more of a menace to the peace of Europe than that of France and Russia. If we take the years 1890 and 1901 and compare the figures of France and Russia with those of Germany we shall see how "peace festivities" conduce to fleet building.

	<i>France</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Germany</i>
1890	£ 8,060,000	£ 4,360,000	£ 4,938,000
1901	£13,107,701	£11,659,766	£ 9,624,956

France and Russia were spending against Germany at the rate of a two and a half Power standard. The British Government and a certain well-informed section of the press knew that, but it was not the game to give the show away. Admiral von Tirpitz, speaking in the Reichstag, in 1900, said:

"We should be in a position to blockade the Russian fleet in the Baltic ports, and to prevent at the same time

the entrance to that sea of a French fleet. We must also protect our ports in the North Sea from blockade."

Well might the Admiral of the German navy set industriously about the business of preparing to meet his "peaceful" neighbours. He perhaps had his eye on M. Delcassé, who had great ambitions for France in Morocco. It is nauseating to think of all the intrigue, the chicanery, and the lying, that were expended over the Moroccan affair, and to read it again at this time is enough to fill one with the desire of Carlyle's friend to place a live coal under the Foreign Office, and all such departments wherever found. To think of our claim to uphold the integrity and independence of Belgium, after the Lansdowne-Grey traffickings with France and Spain in connection with Morocco, is extremely humiliating. A Government pledged to uphold the integrity and neutrality of a territory, which, behind the back of men representing nations determined to carry out that policy, makes secret arrangements to allow that territory to be partitioned, is not morally in a position to uphold the independence and integrity of a South Sea Island. It is a revolting page in the history of diplomacy that records the secret negotiations affecting Morocco. In *Morocco in Diplomacy*, Mr. Morel says:

"France had in 1901 and 1902 publicly assured Morocco upon repeated occasions that she had not the least intention of threatening the independence or the integrity of that state. France had formally and publicly declared in an agreement with Great Britain that she had no intention of altering the political status of Morocco. France and Spain had formally and publicly declared their firm attachment to the independence and integrity of Morocco.

France and Spain, and, by implication, Great Britain, were, therefore, publicly pledged towards Morocco and towards the world at large to maintain the integrity and independence of Morocco. In point of fact, France, Spain, and Britain had privately entered into contracts with one another whereby the destruction of the independence and integrity of Morocco was decreed, the date of the event to depend upon circumstances."

To bargain away Moroccan independence and integrity for one or two paltry advantages gained from France in the Mediterranean was an act of treachery.

The Agreement between France and Britain respecting Egypt and Morocco was signed April 8th, 1904. Our relations with Germany at that time may be inferred from the following excerpt from an interview, published in the *Nineteenth Century Review*, with Count von Bülow, the German Chancellor:

"I cannot conceive that the idea of an Anglo-German war should be seriously entertained by sensible people in either country. If they will coolly consider the enormous damage which even the most successful war of this character would work upon their own country, and when they reckon it out it will be found that the stake is much too high in view of the certain loss. For this reason, I, for my part, do not take the hostility of a section of the English press too tragically. I hope that the destinies of the two countries will always be determined by those cool heads who know that the best advantage of Germany and England will be served not only for the present, but for all future time so far as it is discernible to the human eye — by the maintenance of the present pacific relations."

The North German Gazette in March, 1904,

said, "so far as can be gathered at the moment," German interests in Morocco were not in danger, as France had repeatedly stated that "neither the conquest nor occupation" of Morocco was contemplated. M. Delcassé assured the German ambassador at Paris that it was the wish of France "to uphold in Morocco the existing political and territorial status." Four days after Britain and France signed the secret articles attached to the public declaration, the German Chancellor said in the Reichstag that he had not been notified of the declaration, but he saw no reason to believe that it was directed against Germany:

"We are interested in that country (Morocco), as, moreover, in the rest of the Mediterranean, principally from the economic standpoint. Our interests therein are, before all, commercial interests; also are we specially interested that calm and order should prevail in Morocco. We must protect our commercial interests in Morocco and we shall protect them. We have no reason to fear that they will be set aside or infringed by any Power."

So honest men generally believed; and indeed all through the rest of that year, millions of Britishers, Frenchmen, Spaniards and Germans, were utterly ignorant of the secret articles. These were not made known to the world until the Paris papers got hold of them and published them in November, 1911. In the early spring of 1905, the Emperor of Germany paid a visit to Tangier. If he had strangled Charon and invaded the dim plains of Helusion there could not have been a greater outcry in Christian Britain. Many journalists, ignorant of the secret articles, imagined the Emperor's visit

was "a blow on the heart" of Britain because of the Anglo-French Entente. The British press screamed at Germany, and the German press screamed at Britain. It was a dirty campaign condoned by the Foreign Office; some said, inspired by the Foreign Office. Anyway, it is only necessary to raise the landmarks here so that we may the better understand why naval expenditure rose to gigantic proportions in the ensuing years. Still, the words of a French Senator might be quoted, to indicate the opinion of an honest man as to the public and secret policies of the Anglo-French Agreement. Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, in February, 1912, said:

"The French Parliament, by an abuse morally, if not constitutionally, unpardonably was kept in ignorance of this policy. . . . Far from ensuring general peace, the arrangements of 1904 tended to compromise it. . . . Why was the French Parliament told only half the truth when it was asked to pass its opinion upon our arrangement with England? Why was it allowed to suspect that this arrangement had as its complement and corrective some secret clauses and other secret treaties? It is this, it is this double game towards Parliament and towards the world which becomes morally an abuse of trust. . . . Now the whole effort of the arrangement of 1904 appears to-day in its truth and in its vanity. It was a Treaty of friendship with England recognizing the freedom of our political action in Morocco and also proclaiming our will to respect the integrity of that country; that was what the public knew and approved. But the public was ignorant that at the same time, by other Treaties and by contradictory clauses hidden from it, the partition of Morocco between Spain and France was prepared, of that Morocco of which we guaranteed the integrity. There existed two irreconcilable

French policies in Morocco: that of the public arrangements, that is to say, a policy of integrity which was not the true one; and that of secret arrangements postulating a Protectorate and the partition of Morocco."

The reason the Emperor visited Tangier must be clear to any honest business man. The German Foreign Office had been deceived. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Percy, said in the House of Commons, in April, 1905, that the German Government was not officially notified as to the Anglo-French Agreement having any reference to Morocco. France should have communicated it to Germany but she failed to do so. Germany was ignored.

Only a year before Lord Lansdowne left the Foreign Office he spoke at the Guildhall, and no doubt thought the Agreement he had made with France would help to keep the peace of Europe. After quoting from the American Secretary of State, Mr. Hay, that "war is the most ferocious and the most futile of human follies," he said:

"We can conceive no more terrible, no more life-long punishment, than that remorse that would be felt by any Minister who either from a fault of temper or from love of a passing popularity, or because they were unable to put themselves in the place of their opponents, brought upon the country the scourge of a needless war."

Yes, but the trouble is, that the work of the Foreign Office is usually done by men of long lineage and short vision. He hoped that something might be done "to give a stimulus to the existing desire for the discovery of some less clumsy and brutal

method of adjusting international disputes." Certainly not by making secret treaties!

Peace advocates all over the world believed when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took office that a new era had opened. Arbitration-men, disarmament-men, non-resistance men, thought this leader of the Liberal party would bring Britain into the promised land where brotherhood was something more than an abstraction. From Liberal platforms all over the country during the general election of 1906 audiences heard the gospel of peace and good-will among nations preached by thousands of orators. The new Prime Minister led the way at the Albert Hall, in December, 1905, when he said:

"It is vain, it is vain, to seek peace if you do not also ensue it. I hold that the growth of armaments is a great danger to the peace of the world. A policy of huge armaments keeps alive and stimulates and feeds the belief that force is the best, if not the only, solution of international differences. It is a policy that tends to inflame old sores and to create new sores. And I submit to you that as the principle of peaceful arbitration gains ground it becomes one of the highest tasks of a statesman to adjust those armaments to the newer and happier condition of things. What nobler rôle could this great country assume than at the fitting moment to place itself at the head of the league of peace, through whose instrumentality this great work could be effected."

Fine sentiments those, for a new government. After fourteen wars in a period of ten years even some Jingoës felt the time had come for a lower income-tax. Millions spent on Mad Mullahs, campaigns in India, expeditions to Tibet, Boxer feuds, and chastising Kruger for not giving the vote to

men in the Transvaal who in most cases would not have one at home,—these things had stimulated a spirit of arbitration in many an imperialist breast. Even Mr. Balfour was inclined to turn over a new leaf. He said:

“In future we shall not see wars, unless, indeed, we can conceive that either a nation or a ruler should arise who feel that they cannot carry out their schemes of aggrandizement except by trampling upon the rights of their neighbours. I see no prospect of any such calamity in Europe. It would indeed be a tragic reversion to ancient days if Europe had again to make a coalition against any too ambitious Power.”

After that great utterance a few words on the secret articles of the Anglo-French Agreement might have aroused a very notable amount of interest.

It was Lord Rosebery, however, who touched directly on the question which concerns us now. He had upset a good many people in June, 1904, by denouncing the Anglo-French Agreement. Whether or not he knew anything about the secret articles, he said it was the most “onesided agreement ever concluded between two Powers at peace with each other,” and added his hopes “that the Power which holds Gibraltar may never have cause to regret having handed Morocco over to a great military Power.” In October, 1905, he said:

“I cannot understand why friendship with France would involve such violent polemics with Germany as now rage between the two countries, and which I do not believe represent the real feelings of the two nations, though they may represent the feelings of some or all of their Governments; of that I know nothing; but I do view those

polemics as a serious danger to peace, as poisonously influencing the two nations, and the growing generations of the two nations; and, therefore, I am one of those who deprecate most sincerely the view which appears to prevail in some quarters, that cordial relations with France mean irreconcilable animosity to Germany. Remember, that these are not solitary matters with which we are dealing. Those great nations represent millions of men, huge fleets, also prepared for war, that in some day when it is least expected, the feelings of a nation may become so exasperated that the guns, as was said on another occasion, may almost go off by themselves; and therefore, I beg of you carefully to think of the heavy responsibility that weighs on you and your representatives with regard to foreign affairs."

Only a few days before Lord Rosebery warned the country of the dangers which beset a foreign policy that breeds violent polemics between a Power with whom we had entered into friendly and secret compacts, and one that felt aggrieved by our want of diplomatic courtesy, Sir Edward Grey spoke on the question of alliances:

"People do say with perfect truth, that any question of entering into a definite alliance with regard to future contingencies with any Power whatever is one which should be carefully guarded and watched. An alliance which appears a source of strength to-day might, under some future conditions, become a matter of embarrassment; and, were the policy of alliances rashly entered upon, I quite admit that there would be a danger that this country might be led into undesirable entanglements. That, I think, is perfectly true; and all that should be borne in mind whenever it is a question of contracting any new alliance with a foreign power."

It is hard to believe these were the words of a man who in a few months would consent to the pro-

posal from the French Government that conversations between British and French military and naval experts should take place. What might England, and poor broken, crushed, outraged Belgium, to say nothing of France, have been spared if the advice laid down by himself had only been followed! If we had not been led into undesirable entanglements what slaughter would have been avoided! Or if all the philosophies and systems discovered since the beginning of this war had been known to the journalists and statesmen who have told us, when it is too late, what they ought to have known before Liège and Louvain! How misled in foreign affairs we have been ever since 1904! It is perfectly amazing now to read column after column in Liberal newspapers of but a year or two ago telling us to cultivate friendship with Germans; to find Minister's speeches interspersed with expressions of admiration for German culture and town-planning; — while all the time, they, as keepers of the British conscience, should have known that "Germans were only scheming to destroy us." Treitschke, Bernhardi and Nietzsche were not authors black-listed by the caretakers of municipal libraries, or placed on the list of forbidden books by the Home Office. Some people, indeed, found it much easier to get the works of these authors than to get information of secret treaties and understandings from the Government. Surely when Lord Haldane was at the War Office the Secret Service Department notified him of the existence of all these poisonous authors. Could Lord Rosebery have imagined, when he referred to the violent polemics of 1905, that all the journalists were thoroughly well-informed as to the real rea-

sons why we should be at daggers drawn with Germany? It was not always thus. Indeed there was a time when Liberal statesmen and journalists took offence at vulgar abuse of Germans. When a Cabinet Minister referred to Germany in a hostile way, or ventured to criticise the size of the silver used at banquets in Hades, indignant Liberals poured their censure on his head. Mr. Chamberlain, who in his latter days liked Germany's fiscal policy better than her foreign policy, once incurred the displeasure of the present Foreign Secretary by referring to the length of the spoons guests should use when they sup with the Devil. Sir Edward Grey touched on that breach of table manners when he spoke on foreign policy at Cheltenham in February, 1905:

"They would hear much of foreign policy, the parrot cry of Conservatives in distress. But when they talked of foreign policy, what policy did they mean? Was it the policy of the long spoon, or of the Triple Alliance of Great Britain, the United States, and Germany which Mr. Chamberlain had been anxious to bring about, but which had been dropped because the countries chiefly concerned did not take kindly to the idea? Did they mean the foreign policy which had moved British ships out of Port Arthur to let the Russian ships in? It was well to remember history sometimes, as they did not wish these things to be repeated."

Excellent advice after the fact. It is hard to find fault with the advice given to the electors before 1906 by the Foreign Secretary. It is well to remember history, difficult as that task seems to be for diplomatists. As to the Anglo-French Agreement, Sir Edward thought the spirit of it preferable to the letter. He admitted there had been diplomatic friction since the agreement had been made. He

also thought the policy of the Government of which Lord Lansdowne was Foreign Secretary had not been distinguished through all its years of office by consistency and continuity,—meaning continuity within limits, not in the sense that Bergson or Sir Oliver Lodge would use the term. Continuity in foreign policy to the ideal diplomatic mind was essential for the maintenance of the Empire. It was, however, practised only between the declining months of one Government and the adolescent months of its successor. It is a term more honoured at St. Stephen's than at Downing Street. That the Government should truly represent the people was of paramount importance in directing continuity of foreign affairs. Mr. Asquith in August, 1905, before he became Prime Minister dealt with this point:

“When he was told that it was essential to our interests as an Empire that the present Government, through Lord Lansdowne, should go on under existing conditions managing our foreign affairs, he pointed out that exactly the reverse was the case. They could not have a state of things more dangerous for the stable conduct of foreign relations and for the permanent arrangements of great and difficult questions with external Powers than one in which every foreign government knew perfectly well that it was dealing with caretakers, with persons who were only provisionally in power, and who had lost by a thousand manifest and indisputable signs the confidence of the very country in whose name they professed to speak.”

Representation here means that the Kingdom should be governed by a party that has lost no bye-elections.

The Anglo-French Agreement was made in the

last year of the Conservative reign, and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was signed after the last session of that reign closed. Some Liberal statesmen regarded these treaties with favour, but there was one who did not see eye to eye with his political friends. As to the Anglo-French Agreement, Lord Rosebery was opposed to it from the first. In March, 1905, he said:

“Let me take another agreement, as to which I am a well-known and conspicuous heretic, the Anglo-French Agreement. I am not going to say anything here about this which will make anybody’s hair stand on end. I only wish to accentuate my own position in that matter, and to say that, while desiring as earnestly as any human being in these islands the inestimable boon of a good understanding with France, I have the deepest and most serious doubt as to the treaty by which that understanding was attained.”

Again in October, 1905, he referred to the agreement:

“There is another agreement which the Government has concluded as to which there is a much more unanimous assent in this country, so far as I can gather—I mean the agreement with France. I myself am sworn down not to speak of that agreement. I am sorry to say that my prophecy as to the complications which must be the inevitable result has only been too abundantly fulfilled.”

One cannot help but wonder what Lord Rosebery would have said if he had known of the secret articles attached to that agreement. Notwithstanding Mr. Asquith’s statement as to the necessity of a government dealing with foreign affairs truly representing the people of Britain, Lord Percy, the Conserva-

tive Under-Secretary, did not see how any one could for a moment doubt that the Liberal party would faithfully fulfil the obligations which the Government had already entered into with various countries,—particularly the spirit and the letter of the understanding which they had made with France.

In December, 1905, the King sent for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. He formed a ministry, and in the opening speech of the General Election, the new Prime Minister said:

“As to our general policy to our neighbours, our general foreign policy, it will remain the same in Government as it was in Opposition. It will be opposed to aggression and to adventure, it will be animated by a desire to be on the best terms with all nationalities, and to co-operate with them in the common work of civilization. . . . We want relief from the pressure of excessive taxation, and at the same time we want money to meet our own domestic needs at home, which have been too long starved and neglected owing to the demands on the taxpayer for military purposes abroad. How are these desirable things to be secured if in the time of peace our armaments are maintained on a war footing? Remember that we are spending at this moment, I think, twice as much on the army and navy as we spent ten years ago.”

The new Prime Minister set to work at once to reduce expenditure on armaments, and in the first two years of office the naval estimates were reduced by over £2,000,000. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman died in April, 1908. Then in 1909 the estimates jumped up suddenly with an increase of £2,500,000. Since that year Britain has increased her expenditure on the navy from £36,059,652 to £52,261,703, while in the same period Germany

raised her expenditure from £20,090,000 to £23,284,531.

In the Guildhall speech, of 1908, Mr. Asquith, Sir Henry's successor, said:

"A variety of circumstances have recently caused the relations between Great Britain and Germany to become a subject of active public discussion. It is exactly a year since the German Emperor was the guest of your predecessor, my Lord Mayor, in this very hall. Some of us, and I was one, who were present on that occasion, cannot forget His Majesty's emphatic and impressive declaration that the governing purpose of his policy was the preservation of the peace of Europe, and the maintenance of good relations between our two countries. It is in the spirit of that declaration, the spirit which aims not only at peace, but at good will, that we desire to deal with other Powers, with Germany certainly not less than others."

The potentate who in March, 1905, upset us so much by his visit to Tangier, and who was the subject of many a journalistic atrocity for poking his nose into Moroccan affairs, was in a few short years the honoured guest of my Lord Mayor at the Guildhall, the palace where gastronomics are practised only by the most respectable and cultured epicures to be found near London on the ninth of November. Poor Lord Mayor, little did he know that he took a viper to his bosom. For all he knew the Emperor might have had a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* secreted under his uniform. As a matter of course the Emperor's peaceful visit was followed speedily by a period of panic. There is nothing like emphatic avowals of peace for unsettling Jingoës. Continuity of foreign policy was again backed by con-

tinuity in naval policy. The reductions made under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman did not suit the Whigs, who, at a loss for information as to what the German Emperor really meant by his cryptic announcement at the Guildhall, adopted the suggestion of an agent of the armament ring to start what might be called a "World Against Us" policy. True, we were on good terms with France and Russia, and our relations with Germany, according to the Prime Minister and the German Emperor, were all for the preservation of the peace of Europe. So amicable were the relations between Britain and Germany, in 1908, when the naval estimates were introduced, that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the German Emperor exchanged letters of banter, as Lord Rosebery said of the incident. The two Governments without alliance, or treaty, or entente, or secret articles, were bound together in the spirit which aims only at peace. But Lord Cromer did not think so. Something alarmed him. In the House of Lords, in July, 1908, he said:

"What I would ask, in the present condition of Europe, is the main duty which devolves on the Government of this country? For my own part, I have no sort of hesitation in replying to this question. Their main duty is to make provisions betimes for the European conflict which may not improbably be forced on us before many years have elapsed. I am aware that the mass of the people of this country, who do not follow foreign affairs with any very close attention, are not alive to the possibility of any such conflict taking place. I say it is the duty of a Government gifted with both patriotism and foresight, who have means of information at their disposal which is not available to the general public, to provide betimes for that danger — a danger of

which I, in common, I believe, with most people who can speak with real authority on foreign affairs, am very firmly convinced."

Germany was the country Lord Cromer had in mind; there was no other country in Europe that could directly force a European conflict on us. So all the fine statements of the Prime Minister and the sophisticated utterances of the Foreign Secretary did not allay the agitations of those men who had "means of information" at their disposal. What information? That was the time when Mr. Mulliner was busy finding men who would believe his yarns about German naval expansion. We shall deal later on with that "information." Anyway, Lord Cromer's statement was more than a warning; it was an indictment of the Foreign Office system. It was also a reflection on the Admiralty and the Government. If it meant anything at all it meant that a policy of secrecy, hyperbole, and evasion, enabled the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty to withhold from the House and the country the real state of affairs, and conceal from the people the nature of the information Lord Cromer, not a member of the Government, had in mind when he made his speech.