CHAPTER XIII

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

"If generous honesty, valour, and plain dealing be the cognizance of thy family, or characteristic of the country, hold fast such inclinations sucked in with thy first breath, and which lay in the cradle with thee. Fall not into transforming degenerations, which under the old name create a new nation."

— Sir Thomas Browne.

Going to the House of Commons on Monday, August 3rd, a member might have been forgiven for loitering a little while in the halls of Westminster and St. Stephen. What scenes in our history came thronging to the mind! What an enacting and annulling and amending of statutes! What change and decay of customs and of men! What beginnings and endings of wars! What speeches on the benefits the wars would bring to the people! Memories of North and Burke rising to mock one, and abruptly turn one's thoughts to the last dispute between us and folk of our own stock. Loitering there the mind became so full that time lost its significance; and memory so crowded the halls with the ghosts of our national drama that never ends, that Cromwell seemed to pass under the arch out into the Palace Yard.

The House was full long before Mr. Speaker appeared with mace and chaplain. Never so many came to prayers before. How speedily the prelimi-

naries were dealt with after the service. The haste to get to war eclipsed anything ever done to make for peace and happiness. Earlier in the forenoon the whisper, "Are we in it?" passed from member to member in the lobby. The Foreign Secretary had not been speaking for more than five minutes when the question was approached. Those who had relied on the answers of the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey to the many questions put in time past regarding secret understandings with France, did not lose hope until they heard the following:

"I come first, now, to the question of British obligations. I have assured the House — and the Prime Minister has assured the House more than once — that if any crisis such as this arose, we should come before the House of Commons and be able to say to the House that it was free to decide what the British attitude should be, that we would have no secret engagement which we should spring upon the House, and tell the House that, because we had entered into that engagement, there was an obligation of honour upon this country. I will deal with that point to clear the ground first."

These were strange words to come from a Foreign Secretary at such a time. Members had assembled to hear a complete statement of the foreign imbroglio. Were they to be treated to an explanation and a defence of what Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey had said in reply to questions? Surely the answers when they were given were quite sufficient to dispose of the ugly rumours. Why unearth all those answers now? Was it not enough, the assurance that no compact of any kind committing the country to obligations of war would be entered into without the consent of the House? Even the Foreign

Secretary, himself, in November, 1911, had said:

"I saw a comment made the other day, when these articles (Moroccan secret agreements) were published, that if a Government would keep little things secret, *a fortiori* they would keep big things secret. That is absolutely untrue. There may be reasons why a Government should make secret arrangements of that kind if they are not things of first-rate importance — if they are subsidiary to matters of great importance. But that is the very reason the British Government should not make secret engagements which commit Parliament to obligations of war. It would be foolish to do it. No British Government could embark upon a war without public opinion behind it, and such engagements as there are which really commit Parliament to anything of that kind are contained in Treaties or Agreements which have been laid before the House. For ourselves, we have not made a single secret article of any kind since we came into office."

That statement was made just one year before he exchanged letters with the French ambassador, and about six years after he authorized the conversations between the British and French military and naval experts. There was nothing to spring on the House! On August 3rd, the House was quite free to decide what the British attitude would be. Quite! It could recall the fleet if it thought fit, it could countermand the orders to the Expeditionary Force, and it could tear up the plans of General Staffs. The mockery of it all! when Reuter told us what was happening in Petersburg:

"ST. PETERSBURG, August 3rd.

"Crowds of thousands of people made demonstrations to-day before the British Embassy here. Sir George Buchanan, the ambassador, appeared at the window and

addressed the crowd. Amid frantic cheering he declared England's perfect sympathy with Russia. The Secretary of the Embassy, standing beside the ambassador, then raised cheers for Russia."

Did the British ambassador at Petersburg believe the House of Commons was free to do anything else but vote supply? And what would it have mattered to the Government if one hundred members challenged a division on a vote of credit? There were five hundred to vote for it. Opinion in the House was ripe enough, if it were not nearly ripe in the country. The week end had made all the difference. Why the statement was not made on the Friday, or on the Thursday when Sir Edward Grey was told repeatedly that a British declaration to support France and Russia would have made for peace, must be obvious to any one who has gone into the whole matter. The Cabinet were not agreed until Sunday night. There were other weighty reasons, but that was the chief one. Preparations had gone too far on Sunday for the Government to decline to honour the negotiations of the "Commander of the Forces."

Sir Edward Grey's explanation of what took place in January, 1906, is curious, looked at in the light of the Delcassé interview and the Lausanne revelations referred to elsewhere. He said:

"In this present crisis up till yesterday, we have also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support — up till yesterday no promise of more than diplomatic support. Now I must make this question of obligation clear to the House. I must go back to the first Moroccan crisis in 1906. That was the time of the Algeciras Conference, and it came at a time of very great difficulty to

His Majesty's Government when a general election was in progress, and Ministers were scattered over the country, and I — spending three days a week in my constituency and three days at the Foreign Office — was asked the question whether if that crisis developed into war between France and Germany we would give armed support. I said then that I could promise nothing to any foreign Power unless it was subsequently to receive the whole-hearted support of public opinion here if the occasion arose. I said, in my opinion, if war was forced upon France then on the question of Morocco — a question which had just been the subject of agreement between this country and France, an agreement exceedingly popular on both sides — that if out of that agreement war was forced on France at that time, in my view public opinion in this country would have rallied to the material support of France. I gave no promise, but I expressed that opinion during the crisis, as far as I can remember, almost in the same words, to the French ambassador and the German ambassador at the same time. I made no promise, and I used no threats; but I expressed that opinion. That position was accepted by the French Government, but they said to me at the time — and I think very reasonably — 'if you think it possible that the public opinion of Great Britain might, should a sudden crisis arise, justify you in giving to France the armed support which you cannot promise in advance, you will not be able to give that support, even if you wish to give it, when the time comes, unless some conversations have already taken place between naval and military experts.' There was force in that. I agreed to it, and authorized those conversations to take place, but on the distinct understanding that nothing which passed between military and naval experts should bind either Government or restrict in any way their freedom to make a decision as to whether or not they would give that support when the time arose."

Nothing binding! But what did the French Government care about that; all they wanted was his

consent to the conversations. That was all-sufficient. Once conversations had gone so far as to affect the military and naval positions of the two countries, the experts and General Staffs would see to it that Britain would be unable to leave France in the lurch when the " sudden crisis " arose. No one can blame the French ambassador for taking every advantage of the new Foreign Secretary; in the game of diplomacy M. Cambon won all along the line. But was it not bad enough to leave the making of war and peace to a Cabinet; bad enough to let the fate of a nation remain in the hands of diplomatists? To yield up the most vital interests of our people to the whims and caprices of militarists was the most colossal blunder a Liberal statesman could be guilty of in these days of armament-rings and a subsidized Jingo press.

We now understand many cryptic utterances of Conservative statesmen delivered during the month of December, 1905. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had spoken at the Albert Hall on armaments and suggested a reduction of expenditure. Five days afterwards, Mr. Balfour replied to the new Prime Minister's speech. Mr. Balfour said:

" I noticed with amazement that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, at the Albert Hall, in the speech to which I have just referred, announced to his audience that he meant to cut down the cost, and, as I understood him, with the cost the number and magnitude of the defensive forces of the Crown — Army and Navy, as the case may be. I wonder whether he consulted the present Secretary of State for War before giving that pledge. I doubt whether he did. . . . His pledge to reduce the cost of our armaments and the magnitude of our armaments is a pledge not given with

knowledge, not given after study, not given in consequence of our Imperial responsibilities."

Did Mr. Balfour mean that the new Liberal Government had not only taken over the foreign policy of their predecessors, but they had also taken over the secret understandings with France to give armed support when the "sudden crisis" would arise? What else could Mr. Balfour mean? Lord Percy, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said, just before his Government resigned, that, "no one doubted for a moment that the Liberal party would faithfully fulfil the obligations which the Government had already entered into with various countries. They would, of course, fulfil in the spirit and the letter the understanding which we had happily made with France." Why should Mr. Balfour wonder whether Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had consulted Mr. Haldane, the Secretary for War, before suggesting reduction of "cost of armaments and the magnitude of our armaments," if it were not a matter of our being committed to obligations of war with France? Continuity of foreign policy entailed continuity of armed support, and all the diplomatic sins of political forefathers were inherited by the Puritan fathers, who were pledged to the country to walk in the paths of freedom, righteousness, and peace.

The House had listened to the Foreign Secretary's explanation with the receptiveness of children, but without their insistent inquisitiveness. The House was not in an analytical mood, for the combative instinct does not carry analysis with it. The explanation of how the letters came to be exchanged with M. Cambon was accepted without amazement:

"The Agadir crisis came — another Moroccan crisis — and throughout that I took precisely the same line that had been taken in 1906. But subsequently, in 1912, after discussion and consideration in the Cabinet it was decided that we ought to have a definite understanding in writing, which was to be only in the form of an unofficial letter, and these considerations which took place were not binding upon the freedom of either Government; and on the 22nd of November, 1912, I wrote to the French ambassador the letter which I will now read to the House; and I received from him a letter in similar terms in reply. The letter which I have to read to the House is this, and it will be known to the public now as the record that, whatever took place between military and naval experts, they were not binding engagements upon the Government:

"'My dear Ambassador: From time to time in recent years the French and British military and naval experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

"'You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government have grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

"'I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve

peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common.' "

The most important sentence in the letter which is given in full in the White Paper, not published until August 6th, was *not read* to the House:

"If these measures involved action, the plans of the General Staffs would at once be taken into consideration, and the Governments would then decide what effect should be given to them."

A remarkable letter! If there had been a paragraph in it on the neutrality of Belgium it would have been complete. But what it had to do with the Agadir crisis no one but the Foreign Secretary knows. It bears a date twelve months after the Agadir affair was closed. It is an amazing document, look at it how you will. It might seem to some people that it should bear a date somewhere about the beginning of July, 1911; others might think a date not later than July 29th, 1914, would be nearer the mark. There is, however, this to be considered: when Lord Hugh Cecil heckled the Prime Minister in February, 1913, he described the position quite fairly; but, on the other hand, in the session of 1913, both in the Commons and the Lords, Ministers stated quite frankly that it was left to the French fleet to bear the brunt of looking after British interests in the Mediterranean.

If the House had been given the last paragraph of the letter it would have been in a better position to understand the Foreign Secretary's desperate pleading for sympathy for the undefended northern and western coasts of France. He went on to say:

"The French fleet is now in the Mediterranean, and the

northern and western coasts of France are absolutely undefended. The French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, the situation is very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given them a sense of security that there was nothing to be feared from us. The French coasts are absolutely undefended. The French fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries. . . . If we say nothing at this moment, what is France to do with her fleet in the Mediterranean? If she leaves it there, with no statement from us as to what we will do, she leaves her northern and western coasts absolutely undefended, at the mercy of a German fleet coming down the Channel, to do as it pleases in a war of life and death between them. If we say nothing, it may be that the French fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean. . . . We have not kept a fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal to dealing alone with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean."

So it was friendship and confidence that kept the French fleet in the Mediterranean and left the northern and western coasts absolutely undefended. The conversations between the British and French experts had nothing to do with it. The General Staffs, trusting wholly to the friendship which had grown up, left the coasts of Brittany, Normandy, Biscay, and the Straits, absolutely undefended. According to military laws, they ought to have been shot. In the early days of M. Delcassé there must have been keener men on the staff, for in July, 1905, the Foreign Secretary of France said, " The *entente* between the two countries, and the coalition of their navies, constitutes such a formidable machine of

naval war that neither Germany, nor any other Power, would dare to face such an overwhelming force at sea." Friendship and confidence then evidently did not supersede military resource and naval foresight.

The British Foreign Secretary made great play with the story of the French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, and the French coasts being absolutely undefended. In the French despatches in the Yellow Book, however, there is nothing about the French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, and the northern and western coasts being absolutely undefended. Indeed all reference to the disposition of the French fleet and the defenceless position of her northern and western coasts are suppressed in French despatches. Perhaps the story was for British consumption only. Singularly enough the French diplomatic documents throw quite another light on the question of the French fleet. It was on August 1st that the question was discussed between Sir Edward Grey and M. Cambon. The French ambassador then sent word to the French Prime Minister that "Sir Edward Grey will propose to his colleagues that they should declare that the fleet will oppose the passage of the German squadrons through the Straits; or, if they passed the Straits, to any demonstration on the French coasts." That was the day before the matter was discussed by the Cabinet. The authorization to this proposal was given by the Cabinet the next day; but in the French ambassador's despatch to his Government he did not refer to the disposition of the fleet; he did not say why the British Cabinet had given the pledge to assist the French "if a

German fleet were to undertake acts of war against the French coasts or the French mercantile marine."

On August 2nd, M. Viviani, the French Prime Minister, telegraphed to the French ambassador at London as follows:

"In communicating to the Chambers the same declaration that Sir Edward Grey has made to you, of which your last telegram gives me the text, I will add that we have herein obtained from Great Britain a first support, the value of which is precious to us.

"I propose, moreover, to indicate that the assistance which Great Britain has the intention of giving to France, with the view of protecting the French coasts or the French mercantile marine, would be so exerted as to afford equal support to our Navy by the English Fleet, in the case of a Franco-German conflict, in the Atlantic as well as in the North Sea and in the English Channel."

This does not coincide with the statement made in the House by Sir Edward Grey. If the French fleet were concentrated in the Mediterranean and the northern and western coasts were absolutely undefended, how could the French fleet fear an attack from the German navy in the Atlantic, or in the North Sea, or in the English Channel? Either the French Prime Minister did not know where his fleet was at the time, or Sir Edward Grey had been misinformed by the French ambassador. The British Foreign Secretary was certain when he notified our ambassador at Paris on August 2nd, of the Cabinet decision to give naval support to France, that the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean, and that the north coast was "entirely undefended." And we were led to believe such was the disposition of the French fleet when the Foreign Secretary spoke

to the House on August 3rd, and made out an extremely pathetic case which served its purpose.

The first half of the speech was devoted to France and the second half to Belgium. He referred to the German reply to his question about observing the neutrality of Belgium, but he said nothing about his interview with Prince Lichnowsky. All the House got from him on the real situation was just so much as would help his case and no more. After dealing with his communication to the Belgian Government he said:

"It now appears from the news I have received to-day — which has come quite recently, and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form — that an ultimatum has been given to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, sir, until one has these things absolutely definitely, up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one were in the position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information on the point. We were sounded in the course of last week as to whether if a guarantee were given that, after the war, Belgian integrity would be preserved that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality."

That was an absolutely misleading account of what had taken place between Berlin and London. "I do not wish to say all!" All! no indeed, it would not have done to say all on August 3rd. But, then, it was only the House of Commons he was addressing; a House of Commons without the White Paper, without documents of any kind relating to the mo-

mentous business it was supposed to deal with. Suppose he had informed the House that up to Friday, July 31st, he had been told over and over again by both Russia and France that a declaration of British solidarity with those countries would have made for peace. Suppose he had told the House that the German Chancellor would not have made the suggestion about Belgian integrity after the war, if the Foreign Secretary had let the British ambassador at Berlin know about the warning given to Prince Lichnowsky, as soon as he let the British ambassador at Paris know of it. To refer to despatch No. 85 without giving the House the information in despatches Nos. 98 and 102, and the explanation of the three despatches, was not quite honourable to say the least.

"We worked for peace up to the last moment, and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace last week, the House will see from the papers that will be before it."

Strove for peace! Yes, that was true. And what a striving! Bound hand and foot from the beginning to support France, and working night and day for peace. It was one of the greatest triumphs of French diplomacy since the days of Talleyrand. So the House was left with its hands quite free to decide — what? That the will of the experts shall prevail. Then, having performed the duties of a representative body, members passed from the period when costly armaments were sure preventives of war, and foreign friendships the safest guardians of peace, out into a world distraught in which a "whole generation of men went mad and tore themselves to pieces."

While the Foreign Secretary was busy explaining himself to the House of Commons, the French Government thought it was high time to do something practical in the interests of Belgium, so they offered military support. The British ambassador at Brussels sent the following message to Sir Edward Grey:

"French Government have offered through their military attaché the support of five French Army Corps to the Belgian Government. Following reply had been received to-day:

"'We are sincerely grateful to the French Government for offering eventual support. In the actual circumstances, however, we do not propose to appeal to the guarantee of the Powers. Belgian Government will decide later on the action which they may think it necessary to take.'"

This offer of five army corps from the French is suppressed in the Belgian White Paper. The reason for this is evident in the communication M. Davignon made on August 3rd, to the German ambassador:

"The German Government stated in their note of August 2nd, that according to reliable information French forces intended to march on the Meuse via Givet and Namur, and that Belgium, in spite of her best intentions, would not be in a position to repulse, without assistance, an advance of French troops. The German Government, therefore, considered themselves compelled to anticipate this attack and to violate Belgian territory. In these circumstances, Germany proposed to the Belgian Government to adopt a friendly attitude towards her, and undertook, on the conclusion of peace, to guarantee the integrity of the Kingdom and its possessions to their full extent. The note added that if Belgium put difficulties in the way of the advance of German troops, Germany would be compelled to consider her as an enemy, and to leave the ultimate ad-

justment of the relations between the two States to the decision of arms."

Further, the Belgian Minister said that if France violated the neutrality of Belgium, her army " would offer the most vigorous resistance to the invader."

In Sir Edward Grey's message to the British ambassador at Berlin he refers to the telegram from the King of the Belgians to King George, and mentions the proposal of the German Government for a free passage for troops through Belgium; but nothing is said of the French plan, alleged by the Germans, to march on the Meuse.

The Germans entered Belgian territory on the morning of August 4th. When the House of Commons met, the Prime Minister made a short statement, and sent an ultimatum to the German Government respecting the neutrality of Belgium, calling for a reply before midnight. The Army Reserve was ordered out on permanent service.

That same evening the British ambassador at Berlin received his passports, and after eleven o'clock that night a state of war existed between Germany and Great Britain.

The saddest note of all was, perhaps, that from the French ambassador at Brussels to the French Government:

" The Chef du Cabinet of the Belgian Ministry of War has asked the French military attaché to prepare at once for the co-operation and contact of French troops with the Belgian Army, pending the results of the appeal to the guaranteeing Powers now being made. Orders have therefore been given to Belgian provincial governors not to regard movements of French troops as a violation of the frontier."

Co-operation! The cries at Liége and Namur were, "Where are the French? Where are the English?" And General Leman who thought it possible to hold Liége for three days, astonished the whole world by the heroic struggle which kept the Germans at bay for ten days!

Neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary in their speeches on August 3rd, and 6th, mentioned the interview recorded in despatch No. 123. The whole case Mr. Asquith made against Germany was based upon the "infamous proposal" despatch No. 85. When towards the end of August the Foreign Secretary was asked "whether the proposals of Prince Lichnowsky were submitted to and considered by the Cabinet, and if not, why proposals involving such far-reaching possibilities were thus rejected," Sir Edward Grey replied, "These were personal suggestions made by the ambassador on August 1st, and without authority to alter the conditions of neutrality proposed by the German Chancellor." Then followed a rambling statement about Cabinet efforts on the 2nd, to find conditions on which Britain would remain neutral; but no word about Prince Lichnowsky's suggestions being submitted to the Cabinet. The Foreign Secretary's explanation of the reason why he did not refer to No. 123 is as follows:

"I have been asked why I did not refer to No. 123 in the White Paper when I spoke in the House on August 3rd. If I had referred to suggestions to us as to conditions of neutrality I must have referred to No. 85, the proposals made not personally by the ambassador but officially by the

German Chancellor, which were so condemned by the Prime Minister subsequently, and this would have made the case against the German Government much stronger than I did make it in my speech. I deliberately refrained from doing that then."

The best that can be said for that answer is that the Foreign Secretary had not taken the precaution of reading again his speech before replying to Mr. Keir Hardie. Not only did the Foreign Secretary refer to No. 85, but he scored one of his biggest points in telling the House what his reply was to the suggested "bargain." But the important point is not whether the interview referred to in No. 123 was discussed by the Cabinet, but whether Sir Edward Grey told the Cabinet that the "bargain" would not have been made had the German Chancellor known early on the 29th, that the Foreign Secretary "was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky not to count on our standing aside." The "bargain" was suggested before the German Chancellor knew that Britain might not stand aside, and before the Foreign Secretary asked the Belgian Government what they intended to do about their neutrality. The "bargain" was suggested on the night of July 29th, and the first communication from the Foreign Office, recorded in the White Paper, to the British ambassador at Brussels, was sent on August 1st. If the Cabinet had known on the 30th, the contents of despatch No. 98, there might have been no necessity for sending No. 101, which contained the reply to No. 85. So little did the Cabinet think of the question of the neutrality of Belgium that they had not agreed to make it the *casus belli* until the even-

ing of Sunday, August 2nd,— four whole days after the German Chancellor spoke to the British ambassador at Berlin about it.

The suggestions made by the German ambassador on August 1st, were personal and offered without authority, but does despatch No. 123 indicate in the slightest degree that the Foreign Secretary was under the impression when he spoke to the German ambassador that he was dealing with a man who had no authority? If Sir Edward Grey doubted the authority of Prince Lichnowsky, why did he neglect to ask, in his message to Sir E. Goschen, if the ambassador had authority from the Berlin Foreign Office to discuss terms of British neutrality? For the British Foreign Secretary to try to escape from a dilemma by casting doubt on the authority of the accredited agent of the German Government was not clever; because the Foreign Secretary had at least five opportunities of finding out from Sir E. Goschen whether Prince Lichnowsky had power to act for the German Government.

But, whether the German ambassador had authority or not, whether the suggestions were personal or official, the Foreign Secretary declined the lot,— lock, stock, and barrel. He " felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms." Britain must keep her hand free, so that the Government's attitude might be determined largely by public opinion. " The neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here," but he " did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone." Such a maze of contradiction and equivocation was enough to make the wretched German ambassador

wonder whether the British Foreign Secretary had authority to make a direct statement on any question but free hands and agreements that would not bind the Government.

Thus, secret diplomacy, conversations of military and naval experts, and the plans of General Staffs, launched this nation into war. And Germany sent her troops into the small, weak, State of Luxembourg, without a word of remonstrance from Britain, the guardian of international "scraps of paper." The Jingoes, and many of those "in the know," got what they had sedulously toiled for through eight long years of scares in which every brutish instinct was stirred. The only regret some of them had was that the War Office could not put 500,000 men into Belgium when the trouble arose.

Jingoes there are in every country; but the difference between the Prussian and the British cult is that Prussian Jingoes are soldiers as a rule and British Jingoes are not. Whether it is better to let military Jingoes run an empire than trust its fate to commercial Jingoes, is a question that must wait solution until the empire that has always spent many more millions on armaments than Germany, destroys Prussian militarism. Is it then too much to hope that when the empire that has had little rest from wars and expeditions, teaches the empire that has known very little war since 1870, how to suffer military defeat as well as diplomatic humiliation, that a Jingo will find it as difficult to lodge upon British territory as Germans to find their place in the sun?

The question of Who began it? caused little controversy during August, because it was considered most unpatriotic to blame any one but the Kaiser

or the Crown Prince or the German Chancellor or the German ambassador at Petersburg or Vienna. Some people went so far as to deny any credit to an Austrian. Few were as wise about it as the man on the 'bus who said, "Well, guv'ner, we're in it; that's all." But no wăr can be fought without a scapegoat; it is almost as necessary as a map and pins with coloured heads. In starting out to fix responsibility on some person or Power, it is essential that the date from which investigation starts should be selected with certainty to embrace all those issues and events which are relevant to the foreign policies of the countries involved in the dispute. To begin with the murder of the Archduke is sensational, but much too recent; it is convenient for the theory that the Kaiser dictated the Austrian note to Servia; that, however, is its only merit.

Not through Servia or Austria are the signposts to be found which will enable us to retrace our steps to the place and date when we fell "into transforming degenerations." We must look south, towards Agadir, then to Fez, and back through Tangier, Spain, and Paris, to London, where the Anglo-French Agreement was signed April 6th, 1904. It was not a person, or some one particular Power, that was responsible for this war. It was a system that brought it about; and that system was secret diplomacy.

Who then is to blame for secret diplomacy? The people of the nations which practise it; and those nations boasting the freest institutions should bear the greatest responsibility.