

These phrases have indeed become very popular, and were reckoned upon to catch those whose powers of discernment were untrained, but that the learned men of England should adopt them, even though the official publications of their own country, as well as those of France, show clearly the insincerity of such statements, is for us a matter of regret.

Sir Edward Grey, as is well-known, inquired in Berlin on July 30th, whether the German government was prepared to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as no other power violated it. And on the 1st of August the German ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, put to Sir Edward Grey the counter-question, whether if Germany pledged herself to respect this neutrality, England on her part would remain neutral.

State Secretary von Jagow in Berlin answered Sir Edward Grey's question by saying he must first ask the Kaiser and the Chancellor, a procedure that was necessary not only in our system of government. Sir Edward Grey, however, replied to the counter-question evasively: "The government would consider what to do, it must make its action largely dependent on public opinion, and above all, England is not in a position to promise to remain neutral on a promise made by Germany that goes no further than the observance of the neutrality of Belgium. "I did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone." (Blue Book No. 123.)

Germany thus made an offer to the English government to observe the neutrality of Belgium—the violation of which neutrality that government afterward proclaimed before the world as its real reason for going to war—and the English government disdainfully rejected this offer.

#### VII.

Germany, however, in her efforts to keep at peace with England, went much further. Sir Edward Grey felt himself called upon on the 2nd of August to make the following statement to the French ambassador, M. Cambon:

"I am authorized to give the assurance that if the German fleet comes into the channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power," which, as he on August 3rd added by way of explanation, would mean:

"That from this moment on England and Germany would be at war with each other." (En sorte que dès ce moment l'Angleterre et l'Allemagne seraient en état de guerre.) (Yellow Book, No. 143.)

These declarations, which, in view of the events expected, were almost equivalent to the unconditional assurances of an ally, make no reference to the question of Belgian neutrality, which is thus shown to have been in truth in no way decisive for the action of the English government. But let us even accept it as a fact, that England's honor was engaged in the matter. What did Germany do, in order once again to show that she took account of this position of England's and to render the maintenance of English neutrality possible? The answer appears from the report of the French ambassador in London, who on August 3rd announced to his government:

"The German ambassador has let it be known that if England remains neutral, Germany will refrain from carrying on a naval war, and will not make use of the Belgian coast as a base of operations." (L'Ambassadeur d'Allemagne a adressé à la presse un communiqué disant que si l'Angleterre restait neutre, l'Allemagne renoncerait à toute opération navale et ne se servirait pas des côtes belges comme point d'appui.) (Yellow Book, No. 144.)

And on the next day the Chancellor, von Bethmann Hollweg, himself declared in the German Reichstag, that so long as England preserves her neutrality, our fleet will not attack the north coast of France, and we are even ready to refrain from hostile operations against French shipping in case France for her part does not interfere with ours.

We draw from these facts the conclusion, that not only was England's honor most carefully considered by Germany, but, also, that it was not at stake, and if we give expression to our conviction that the English government made the question of the violation of Belgian neutrality the basis of its grievances against Germany, only to secure the applause of the crowd, and to allege the pretence of a moral sanction for its own longing to go to war, it would be difficult to refute us.

#### VIII.

Since, however, the English scholars dwell upon the moral significance of the so-called violation of Belgian neutrality, we deem it worth while to reply to their contention.

The character of the neutrality of Belgium, which an American has appropriately described as a "one-sided neutrality," is sufficiently indicated by a document in which the director in the Belgian foreign office, Count van der Straeten, has recorded a conversation which took place on April 23, 1912, between the English military attaché in Brussels, Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges and General Jungbluth, the chief of the Belgian general staff. In this conversation the lieutenant-colonel said as follows:

Le gouvernement britannique lors des derniers événements aurait débarqué immédiatement chez nous, même si nous n'avions pas demandé de secours.

Le général a objecté qu'il faudrait pour cela notre consentement. L'Attaché militaire a répondu qu'il le savait, mais que comme nous n'étions pas à même d'empêcher les Allemands de passer chez nous, l'Angleterre aurait débarqué ses troupes en Belgique en tout état de cause.

At the time of the recent events the English government would have at once landed troops in Belgium even if we had desired no help.

The general objected that our consent would be necessary for that. The military attaché replied he knew that, but since we should not be able to restrain the Germans from marching through our country, England would have landed troops in Belgium in any case.

Against the announcement of this manifest act of violence, neither the Belgian chief-of-staff ventured to offer opposition, nor did the Belgian government feel itself called upon to enter into a similar understanding, *mutatis mutandis*, with Germany, which an honorable neutrality policy would have led it to do. The belief of the German government that Belgium—it makes no difference whether voluntarily or yielding to the pretext of compulsion—would take her place on the side of the western powers, and that the treaty of 1839, guaranteeing neutrality, had long since become a farce, and was only kept alive nominally to lead Germany to relax her vigilance, has thus been strikingly confirmed.

#### IX.

In our task of refuting the assertions of the English scholars, point by point, we have reached the last of these. When they say that "never within living memory has there been such a unanimity of opinion in reference to a political question as now," we beg leave to refer them to the utterances of the leader of the English labor party—utterances which are at least as well known to them as to us—but above all to the stand which was taken at the beginning of the complications immediately preceding the war by the members of the cabinet, Viscount Morley, John Burns and C. P. Trevelyan; and when Ramsay Macdonald wrote:

"During the last eight years Sir Edward Grey has been a threat to the peace of Europe, and his policy a misfortune for England." The academical circles of Germany have nothing to add to this statement.

#### Conclusion

We repeat here the words upon which we laid emphasis at the beginning of our answer: if one had sought after the means of bringing the nations now arrayed against each other to know one another better, there never could have arisen such a disastrous misunderstanding as that, for example, which is to be found in the closing words of the Declaration of the English scholars. The "military system" in Germany—of this they could and ought to have convinced themselves—was not a bugbear for Europe, as even they would like to have it considered, but the shield which the German people opposed to their adversaries for the protection of their country and their homes, and the belief that Germany had "dreams of the increase of power by violence" was a delusion evoked by a disordered fancy, the result of a nightmare, to attacks of which the English organism, over-nourished by the abundance of countries it has incorporated, is often subject.

We Germans have never begrudged our Anglo-Saxon blood relations their world-encircling power. The course of this war so far has taught us for the first time that the mastery of the seas, which England regards as her hereditary right, and for which she contends up to the point of treating contemptuously established axioms of international law, makes doubtful the continuance and the further development of national culture. To fight against this claim is for us a sacred duty, the performance of which will prove a blessing to all people, and especially to those who, through their feebleness,