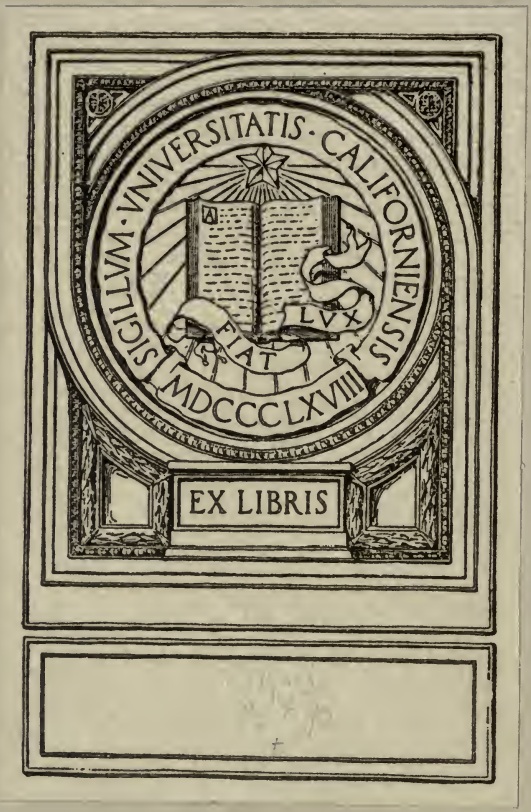
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THE THIRTEEN DAYS

JULY 23—AUGUST 4, 1914

A CHRONICLE AND INTERPRETATION

BY

WILLIAM ARCHER

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The relations between two States must often be termed a latent war, which is provisionally being waged in peaceful rivalry. Such a position justifies the employment of hostile methods, cunning and deception, just as war itself does.

General von Bernhardi.

The determined attitude of the German Empire [in the Bosnian Crisis of 1908] had sufficed to show the other Powers, acting under England's leadership, that they must draw in their horns as soon as it came to the final test, namely war. . . . To her ally, Austria-Hungary, the German Empire had done a great, nay, a decisive, service. . . . A further gain for Austria-Hungary lay in the proof that her confidence had brilliantly justified itself. The natural result was a great increase in the political self-reliance of Austria-Hungary. It had hitherto been thought that the Dual Monarchy was incapable of vigorous action in foreign affairs. The Bosnian Crisis had shown this to be an error.

Count Reventlow.

FOREWORD

THE following pages contain the sum and substance of a great historic drama—certainly the greatest and most momentous that ever was enacted in a similar space of time. The stage is Europe; the actors are four Empires and a Republic, speaking through the mouths of their statesmen and ambassadors. The dialogue is carried on, in part, face to face; but its determining factors are, as a rule, telegraphic declarations and instructions. Nor is it altogether fanciful to divide the drama into the traditional five acts, as follows:

ACT I: From the Austrian Ultimatum to the Serbian Reply. (July 23–5.)

ACT II: From the Serbian Reply to the Declaration of War on Serbia. (July 26–8.)

ACT III: From the Declaration of War on Serbia to the War Council at Potsdam. (July 28 and 29.)

ACT IV: From the War Council to Germany's Declaration of War on Russia. (July 30 to August 1.)

ACT V: From Germany's Declaration of War on Russia to Britain's Declaration of War on Germany. (August 2–4.)

In one important respect, however, this drama differs from those of Aeschylus or Shakespeare. In plays prepared for the stage, the speeches follow each other in regular sequence, only one actor speaking at a time;

whereas in the European Drama all the actors speak at once, and in the resultant babel it is often impossible to make out the order of question and answer, statement and counter-statement. To put it in another way, the plot develops at different rates of speed in the different capitals, so that, in spite of the boasted annihilation of space by the telegraph, those ambiguities are constantly arising on which Charles Lamb descants in his essay on 'Distant Correspondents'. One actor may think he is still in the second act, while the others have passed irrevocably into the third; and it is sometimes very difficult to decide what stage of development any particular speaker is, or imagines himself to be, contemplating.

An attempt is made in the following pages to reduce this confusion of voices to something like logical sequence, and in so doing to determine who was responsible for the fact that a 'happy ending' was obstinately staved off, in favour of the sanguinary catastrophe now working itself out. It would, of course, be absurd to pretend that I approached this question without any preconceived opinion. I had long ago read enough of the negotiations to assure me that the fault did not lie with Britain. But this I may say, without unduly anticipating my argument, that the more carefully I co-ordinated and the more minutely I examined the documents, the stronger became my conviction that Britain had neglected nothing that could possibly have conduced to a peaceful solution of the crisis. I went into the investigation believing, in a general way, in Sir Edward Grey's ability and good sense; I came out of it with an enthusiastic admiration for the skill, the tact, the temper, the foresight, the unwearied diligence and the unfailing greatness of spirit with which he ensued and strove for peace. Let me add that his laurels are fairly shared by the Russian Foreign

Secretary, M. Sazonof. No statesman could possibly have shown a more long-suffering spirit of conciliation.

This book was half written before Mr. J. W. Headlam's *History of Twelve Days* appeared, and was almost finished before that excellent work came into my hands. I had it before me, however, in revising my manuscript, and it enabled me to correct some not unimportant errors into which I had fallen.

No one who has not tried it can quite realize the difficulty of weaving the dispatches issued by the various Governments into a rational narrative. Each country has put together hastily, and with small care for lucidity, a sheaf of documents. The British Blue Book is certainly the clearest. It is compiled with some care, and contains valuable cross-references. Next comes the French Yellow Book, the most readable of all the collections. It presents excellent summaries of the situation from day to day, and admits, now and then, a touch of human feeling amid the cold formulas of diplomacy. The Russian Orange Book is good so far as it goes, but far from complete. The Austrian Red Book is largely occupied with the one-sided indictment of Serbia, but contains some really helpful dispatches. The German White Book is a mere harangue for the defence, illustrated by meagre fragments of telegrams. All the books contain documents which are pretty evidently misdated, and none of them (except in the rarest instances) give any indication of the hour of dispatch or receipt of a telegram. The investigator, then, has to seize upon the most trifling indications, and sometimes to rely upon long trains of reasoning, in his effort to establish the chronological order of the various documents. At best, he is often baffled.

My effort has been to tell the story of the fateful days

simply as it appears in the official documents, seldom going outside them, and making little attempt to place the events in relation to their historical or political background. That is admirably done in Professor Gilbert Murray's study of *Sir Edward Grey's Foreign Policy* (Clarendon Press, 1915, 1*s.* 6*d.* net), to which the reader is hereby referred. I have assumed without discussion certain notorious facts of recent history, such as the Kaiser's boast of the support given by Germany 'in shining armour' to Austria's Bosnian exploit of 1908–9; but I have tried to dispense with collateral evidence, to read the documents in their own light, and to make them, so to speak, self-interpreting.

I have not (consciously at any rate) selected evidence with a view to making a case, but have tried to give the substance of all the really significant documents, cutting away repetitions and verbiage, and condensing very freely, but quoting verbatim such passages and expressions as seemed to me of crucial importance. Wherever quotation-marks are employed, I have taken only the most trifling liberties with the text, such as substituting 'Austria' for 'Austria-Hungary', changing the first person into the third, and so forth. Italics are throughout my own. They appear very rarely in the original documents, perhaps because of the fact that most of these are telegrams.

Before undertaking this investigation, I had not read any of the other critical studies of the documents except that of Mr. M. P. Price (*The Diplomatic History of the War*), with whom I found myself in almost constant disagreement. Where my interpretations and appraisements, then, coincide with those of other students, it is not because I have copied them, but because I have independently arrived at the same conclusions.

Though Mr. Price's discussion of the documents seems to me singularly unfortunate, his book contains a good deal of subsidiary matter (text of treaties, newspaper extracts, &c.) which has been of great use to me.

Practically the whole of the evidence here dealt with is included in the *Collected Diplomatic Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (Miscellaneous, No. 10, 1915), issued by the British Government at the price of one shilling. Numbered dispatches I have referred to by their number, which is of course the same in all editions. Quotations from unnumbered documents I refer to the page on which they appear in the C.D.D. (*Collected Diplomatic Documents*). References to 'Headlam' and 'Price' apply respectively to the *History of Twelve Days* (T. Fisher Unwin, 10*s.* 6*d.*) and the *Diplomatic History of the War*, second edition, with paging very different from that of the first (Allen & Unwin, 7*s.* 6*d.*).

WILLIAM ARCHER.

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CHAPTER I

THE AUSTRIAN ULTIMATUM

' Germany and Austria knew, in those quiet midsummer days of July, that civilization was about to be suddenly and most cruelly torpedoed. The submarine was Germany and the torpedo Austria.'—J. M. Beck.

On Sunday, June 28, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife the Baroness Hohenberg, were assassinated in the streets of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The assassins were Bosniaks—Austro-Hungarian subjects—but of Serbian race.

The investigation of the crime was pursued by the Austrian authorities ' in the deepest secrecy '.[1] Nevertheless the papers were full of rumours to the effect that the threads of the plot were found to lead back to Serbia, and that Serbia was to be held responsible.

For more than three weeks there was practically no official communication, much less anything that could be called negotiation, between the Austrian and the Serbian Governments. On June 30, the second day after the assassination, the Austrian Legation at Belgrade inquired of the Serbian Foreign Office what measures had been taken by the Serbian police to follow up clues to the crime. The answer was that as yet the Serbian police had not occupied themselves with the matter.[2] At Vienna, on the same day, the Serbian Minister, M. Jovanovitch, sought an interview with the Foreign Secretary, Count Berchtold, but was received instead by the Under-

[1] Austrian official statement quoted in Serbian Book, No. 16.
[2] Austrian Book, No. 2.

Secretary, Baron Macchio.[1] M. Jovanovitch, on behalf of his Government, expressed the most 'energetic condemnation' of the crime, and offered to do loyally all that was possible to put down anti-Austrian agitation in Serbia, and to bring to justice any Serbian accomplices—if such there were—of the Serajevo assassins. Baron Macchio took note of this conversation and promised to communicate it to Count Berchtold. We also learn that, on a date unspecified, the Austrian Government asked the Serbian Government for information as to the whereabouts of some students expelled from a school at Pakrac, who were believed to have passed into Serbia.[2] It appears, in short, that only one communication of any importance took place between the two Governments, and in that case the initiative came from the Serbian, not the Austrian, side.

In the meantime, the Austrian officials in Serbia were reporting to Vienna all sorts of 'Great Serbian' intrigues and manifestations of anti-Austrian feeling, while the Serbian ministers at Vienna, Berlin, and elsewhere, were noting the evidences of an Austrian press campaign directed towards fixing upon Serbia the responsibility for the Serajevo crime.

Every one knew that a storm was brewing. The only question was: how and when would it burst?

It burst at 6 p.m. on Thursday, July 23, when the Austrian Minister at Belgrade, Baron von Giesl, personally presented to M. Patchou, interim Minister for Foreign Affairs, the 'Note' which, under the title of the Austrian Ultimatum, has earned for all time a sinister renown.

It was not an ultimatum in the strict sense of the word, for 'ultimatum' means the last of a series of diplomatic moves. This move was the first as well as the last in Austria's game against Serbia. It was not the finis to negotiations, but a peremptory refusal to negotiate. It was like a trumpet-blast at the gate of a beleaguered city,

[1] Serbian Book, No. 5. [2] Ibid. No. 30.

heralding a demand for unconditional surrender. The time allowed for reflection was forty-eight hours: 'The Imperial and Royal Government expects the answer of the Royal Government at latest on Saturday, the 25th of this month, at 6 p.m.' Giesl informed Patchou by word of mouth that if a satisfactory reply were not received by the hour stated, he and his staff would quit Belgrade.

CHAPTER II

HUMILIATION OR WAR

'The requirements which we demand that Serbia shall fulfil, and which indeed contain nothing that is not a matter of course in the intercourse between States which are to live in peace and friendship, cannot be made the subject of negotiations.'—COUNT BERCHTOLD.

THE Austrian note has at least the merit of being free from ambiguity or beating about the bush.

It begins by reciting a declaration of the Serbian Government, dated March 31, 1909:

> 'Serbia recognizes that the *fait accompli* regarding Bosnia has not affected her rights. . . . In deference to the advice of the Great Powers, Serbia undertakes to renounce from now onwards the attitude of protest and opposition which she has adopted in regard to the annexation . . . and to live in future on good neighbourly terms with Austria-Hungary.'

This undertaking (the Note proceeds) has been systematically disregarded.[1] The Serbian Government has done nothing to repress 'subversive movements' tending to 'the detaching of a part of the territories of Austria-Hungary from the Monarchy'. It has permitted 'criminal machinations', 'unrestrained language' in the press, 'the glorification of perpetrators of outrages,' 'the participation of officers and functionaries in subversive agitation,' and 'an unwholesome propaganda in public instruction'.

[1] It is not mentioned that Austria had in the meantime entirely failed to act up to the reciprocal obligation of 'living on good neighbourly terms' with Serbia, having balked her natural and legitimate ambition for an outlet on the Adriatic.

The depositions and confessions of the Serajevo assassins (it is asserted) show that the crime was planned in Belgrade, executed with arms and explosives provided by Serbian officers, and facilitated by the connivance of Serbian frontier officials, who allowed the criminals, with their arms, to pass into Bosnia.

Therefore (says the Note) the Austro-Hungarian Government finds itself compelled ' to put an end to the intrigues which form a perpetual menace to the tranquillity of the Monarchy '. To that intent it makes the following demands :

The Serbian Government shall publish on the front page of their ' Official Journal ' for July 26 (the following Sunday) this declaration :

> ' The Royal Government of Serbia condemn the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary—i. e. the general tendency of which the final aim is to detach from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories belonging to it, and they sincerely deplore the fatal consequences of these criminal proceedings.
>
> The Royal Government regret that Serbian officers and functionaries participated in the above-mentioned propaganda, and thus compromised the good neighbourly relations to which the Royal Government were solemnly pledged by their declaration of the 31st March, 1909.
>
> The Royal Government, who disapprove and repudiate all idea of interfering or attempting to interfere with the destinies of the inhabitants of any part whatsoever of Austria-Hungary, consider it their duty formally to warn officers and functionaries, and the whole population of the kingdom, that henceforward they will proceed with the utmost rigour against persons who may be guilty of such machinations, which they will use all their efforts to anticipate and suppress.'

This declaration shall simultaneously be communicated by the King to the Serbian Army as an order of the day, and shall be published in the ' Official Bulletin ' of the army.

Furthermore, the Serbian Government shall undertake :

(1) To suppress all anti-Austrian publications.

(2) To dissolve immediately the society styled 'Narodna Odbrana' (Defence of the People) and all other societies of anti-Austrian tendency, confiscating their means of propaganda, and seeing that they are not revived under other names.

(3) To eliminate from public instruction everything of anti-Austrian tendency, 'as regards both the teaching body and the means of instruction.'

(4) To dismiss all officers and officials 'guilty of propaganda' against Austria, their 'names and deeds' to be communicated in due course by the Austrian Government.

(5) 'To accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy.'

(6) 'To take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot of the 28th June who are on Serbian territory; delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government will take part in the investigation relating thereto.'

(7) To proceed immediately against an officer, Major Tankosic, and an official, Milan Ciganovic, who are alleged to have been concerned in the Serajevo crime.

(8) To put a stop to the illicit traffic in arms and explosives, and punish severely officials alleged to have assisted the assassins to cross the frontier.

(9) To 'furnish explanations' as to utterances of 'high Serbian officials, both in Serbia and abroad' who have, since the date of the Serajevo crime, expressed themselves in terms of hostility to Austria.

(10) 'To notify the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised under the preceding heads.' [1]

[1] Blue Book, No. 4. The 5th, 6th and 10th clauses are here reproduced word for word; the others are slightly condensed.

It is manifest on the face of it that this Ultimatum, with its forty-eight hours' time-limit, was a mere formal prelude to a declaration of war. No independent and sovereign nation could possibly swallow it entire ;[1] and Austria demanded that it should not only be swallowed entire, but without the slightest discussion. 'Its integral acceptance by Serbia', says Sir Maurice de Bunsen, 'was neither expected nor desired, and when . . . it was rumoured in Vienna that it had been unconditionally accepted, there was a moment of keen disappointment.'[2]

That Austria had reasonable grounds of complaint is not denied. She had earned the hatred of Serbia by arbitrarily annexing provinces inhabited in great measure by Serbs, by oppressing (as the Serbians contended) these kindred populations, and by cutting Serbia off from access to the Adriatic. This hatred expressed itself in anti-Austrian organizations, agitations, and press-utterances, which a Great Power could not be expected to tolerate indefinitely. So much (as we shall see in the sequel) was practically admitted by Russia,[3] and, indeed, by Serbia herself. The Austrian press embittered the quarrel by inflammatory and provocative writing ; but Serbia was doubtless not behindhand in replying.

Technically, therefore, there is no doubt that Austria had at least plausible grounds for earnestly protesting to the Serbian Government against the proceedings of many Serbian subjects.

The attempt to connect Serbia with the crime of Serajevo was a different matter. The Serbian Government

[1] Herr von Jagow, the German Foreign Minister, admitted this. Blue Book, No. 18.

[2] Letter to Sir Edward Grey, dated September 1, 1914. Blue Book, No. 161.

[3] The Russian Ambassador at Vienna admitted by implication (Blue Book, No. 118) what seems to have been notorious, that the late Russian minister at Belgrade, M. Hartwig, was a strong anti-Austrian partisan. He died suddenly, a few days before the crisis developed.

was ordered to accept without the smallest inquiry, and without the production of a single shred of evidence, the results of a secret investigation by Austrian officials—results largely based upon alleged 'confessions' by the criminals, how obtained and how authenticated no one can say. Serbia had no reason for blind faith in Austrian judicial methods,[1] and to expect her to cry 'Mea culpa!' without if or peradventure, on the bare affirmation of the Austrian Foreign Office, was to place an impossible strain on political human nature.

But Austria, in fact, cherished no such expectation. The dictatorial insolence of the whole document, and the introduction of two clauses (Nos. 5 and 6) demanding that Serbia should waive her sovereign rights, and accept foreign 'collaboration' in her administrative and judicial proceedings, proved beyond a doubt that Austria had abandoned every pretence of reason, and was plunging

[1] 'During the month of March [1909] in which the Bosnian crisis ended and the Agram trial [of 58 Serb citizens of Croatia] began, the *Neue Freie Presse* newspaper had published at Vienna an article on the relations of the Dual Monarchy to the South Slavonic problem by an eminent Austrian historian, Dr. Friedjung. This article . . . specifically charged the Serbo-Croat Coalition with being the exponents and tools of agencies in Belgrade, and supported its assertions by quotations from documents. Some of the documents purported to be official correspondence of the Serbian Foreign Office, others were minutes of a semi-official revolutionary society, but Dr. Friedjung, when challenged, refused to reveal their provenance, and the Coalition deputies accordingly entered a libel action against him at Vienna. . . . The trial at Agram had cast a lurid light upon the methods of espionage employed by the Austro-Hungarian Administration in Bosnia, Croatia and Dalmatia; now at Vienna Dr. Friedjung's documents were revealed as forgeries concocted within the walls of the Austro-Hungarian legation at Belgrade, communicated to Friedjung as genuine by the Joint Foreign Office, and utilized by him in all good faith. . . . Dr. Spalaikovitch, the incriminated Serbian official, put in an appearance and brilliantly vindicated himself and his country.' Toynbee, *Nationality and the War*, p. 200.

with open eyes into what the Germans call *Machtpolitik*—the Policy of Main Force. She offered to Serbia the simple alternative: 'Abject humiliation or war!' She took elaborate precautions, as we shall see (the time-limit being the first of them) to block every middle course.

Well might Sir Edward Grey tell the Austrian Ambassador that 'he had never before seen one State address to another independent State a document of so formidable a character'.[1] Well might *Die Post* of Berlin (July 25) say: 'Every sentence is a blow of the fist in the face of the Serbian Government.'

[1] Blue Book, No. 5.

CHAPTER III

THE DAY AND THE HOUR

'Choose thine own time, give little warning.'—MRS. BARBAULD.

THE time-limit is only the first and most obvious of the precautions which Austria took to prevent Serbia from eluding the tragic dilemma imposed upon her. Even an extension of the time-limit, to admit of rational discussion, would have rendered her humiliation less complete, or at any rate less catastrophic. But it would have been awkward to refuse such a prolongation had it been formally demanded by the other Great Powers, either directly, or through Austria's partner, Germany. It was, therefore, of great importance that the Powers should not be able to take concerted action before the time-limit expired, and that any action they might take should be baffled by plausible delays.

There is clear evidence that these considerations guided the Austrian Foreign Office in the selection of the moment for the delivery of the Ultimatum.

On July 23rd the Emperor of Austria was at Ischl, some six hours by rail from Vienna. This was his usual summer resort; but as Count Berchtold considered it necessary to consult him in person before taking important decisions, and did in fact leave Vienna for Ischl early on the crucial day (Saturday the 25th), the Emperor's absence obviously tended to cause, or at any rate to excuse, delay and loss of time.

On July 23rd the German Emperor was yachting in Scandinavian waters. He did not return to Potsdam until Monday the 27th, at least thirty-six hours after the expiry of the time-limit. No doubt he was in wireless communication with Berlin; but his absence would mani-

festly excuse delays, and enable the German Government (if such was its desire) to pursue a dilatory policy at a time when every moment was charged with incalculable consequences.

On July 23rd, M. Pachitch, the Serbian Premier, with other ministers, was known to be absent from Belgrade on an electioneering tour. He was at once recalled and reached Belgrade at 10 a.m. on Friday the 24th; so that sixteen hours, exactly one-third of the time allowed, had been lost before the Serbian ministry could even begin to discuss the situation.

These facts, if they stood alone, would justify a strong suspicion of a deliberate design on Austria's part to render illusory even the miserably scant breathing-space allowed to Serbia. But when we look in the direction of the Dual Alliance—the quarter in which Austria had most reason to apprehend trouble—our suspicion becomes certainty. We cannot resist the conclusion that the time was carefully calculated so as to exclude all possibility of effectual intervention before the sands had run out.

On the evening of July 23rd, the French President, M. Poincaré, and the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Viviani, sailed from Kronstadt on their return to France after a three days' visit to St. Petersburg. Can we suppose it a mere coincidence that the Ultimatum was delivered at this very moment? Had it been delivered twenty-four hours earlier,[1] the Russian and the French Governments, being actually in council together, would have been enabled to act with exceptional promptitude. Had its delivery been delayed by three or four days, the two Governments would at any rate have been able to communicate by the ordinary channels, and to concert their measures without excep-

[1] Speaking to Sir Horace Rumbold in Berlin on July 21, Herr von Jagow said he thought 'this step on Austria's part would have been made ere this'—an indication that the Ultimatum was ready and was being held back. Blue Book, No. 2.

tional loss of time. As a matter of fact, the respite of forty-eight hours was accurately timed to coincide with the first two days of the homeward journey of the French statesmen, so that concerted action on the part of the Dual Alliance was rendered as difficult as possible. Austria, as we shall see, was comfortably at war with Serbia (midday Tuesday the 28th) before MM. Poincaré and Viviani reached Paris. Chance does not time things so accurately as this. The choice of the day and hour for the delivery of the Ultimatum is only one of many indications of a deliberate design to 'rush' matters, and confront bewildered and gasping Europe with an 'accomplished fact'.[1]

Austrian statesmen, indeed, neglected nothing which could help to throw possible opponents off their guard. To no Ambassador—save one—was the least hint of what was brewing vouchsafed. The Ambassador of Austria's nominal ally, Italy, was left entirely in the dark. M. Dumaine, the French Ambassador, had long interviews with Baron Macchio (Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs), 'by whom he was left under the impression that the note which was being drawn up would contain nothing with which a self-respecting State need hesitate to comply. At the second of these interviews he was not even informed that the note was at that very moment being presented in Belgrade.'[2] M. Schebeko, the Russian Ambassador, had left Vienna on a fortnight's leave of absence on or about the 20th, having 'received an assurance from

[1] The scheme was foreseen by the Serbian Minister at Vienna, familiar with the methods of Austrian statesmanship. He wrote to his Government on Monday, July 20th: 'There is no doubt that Austria-Hungary has something serious in preparation. . . . She has a rooted idea that Serbia, after two wars, is completely exhausted, and that a war against us would be a mere expedition resulting in a prompt occupation. *She believes that such a war would be over before Europe had time to intervene.*' Serbian Book, No. 31.

[2] Sir Maurice de Bunsen in Blue Book, No. 161.

Count Berchtold that the demands on Serbia would be thoroughly acceptable '.[1] This 'assurance' points either to simplicity or hypocrisy on Berchtold's part; and of simplicity he is scarcely to be suspected.

The one Ambassador who was thought to be thoroughly cognizant of all that was going on was, of course, the German Excellency, Herr von Tschirscky. There is no direct evidence of his complicity; but we shall find in the next chapter good reason for believing in it.

There is no doubt that Austria, with Germany behind her, was emboldened to deliver her stroke at this time by the belief that Russia was embarrassed by serious labour troubles, that France was 'morally depressed' by the Humbert revelations regarding the army, and that Britain was on the verge of civil war in Ulster. These considerations, however, do not come within the scope of this chapter, which is directed to showing that not merely the month or week of action, but even the day and hour, had been nicely calculated so as to secure to the aggressor as free a hand as possible.

[1] French Book, No. 55.

CHAPTER IV

WAS GERMANY AN ACCOMPLICE BEFORE THE FACT?

'If it were for a moment conceivable that the German Chancellor did not know to the last detail what Austria was about to demand at Belgrade, if it were conceivable that such a bomb-shell as the note to Serbia came as a surprise to us, then we should have to confess that we were not the allies of Austria but her lackeys.'—MAXIMILIAN HARDEN.

As Germany whole-heartedly endorsed and supported the action of Austria from the moment it became known, it is of no great importance to determine whether she was apprised of it in advance. The point is, however, much debated, and a marshalling of the evidence may be found to throw some light on Austro-German political psychology.

The discussion is almost ended ere it is begun, by a circular telegram addressed by the German Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, to the German Ambassadors in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg.[1] It is dated July 23rd—the very day, as we know, when the bomb-shell was timed to burst at Belgrade. The hour of its dispatch is not given; but it is extremely improbable that the long Ultimatum was telegraphed to Berlin after its delivery at Belgrade at 6 p.m., and that then, late in the evening, the Chancellor sat down and wrote off this general order—a document of some 500 words—to his three emissaries. It is only reasonable to assume that he knew the blow was to fall that evening, and sent off the circular earlier in the day, so that the Ambassadors might all sing in tune when the text of the Ultimatum should reach the various capitals.

[1] German Book, No. 1; Blue Book, No. 9.

But the Chancellor might conceivably have known when the Ultimatum was to be delivered without having been informed of its contents. Will his circular bear that interpretation?

With the utmost difficulty. He begins by saying:

> 'The declarations of the Austro-Hungarian Government with reference to the circumstances attendant upon the murder of the Heir to the Austrian throne and his wife, disclose clearly the end which the Pan-Serbian propaganda proposed to itself, and the means which it employed to attain that end.'

Now the 'declarations' in question can be nothing but the covering letter [1] which the Austrian Government addressed to the Powers in communicating the text of the Ultimatum. Is it to be supposed that the Chancellor had received the covering letter and not the document it covered?

He goes on to restate, briefly, the Austrian case, and then says:

> 'In this condition of affairs, the action *and the demands* of the Austro-Hungarian Government must be considered as fully justified.'

Is it to be supposed that he would thus give a blank cheque to Austria, without knowing how she proposed to fill it up? or, in other words, that he would instruct his Ambassadors to support demands the details of which he did not know? Surely this is quite incredible. He goes on to indicate in the clearest terms that the Austrian action may lead to war, in which case the view of the German Government is that the Powers should exert themselves to keep the ring for Austria and Serbia, and look on as at the settlement of a purely private quarrel. 'We earnestly desire', he concludes, 'the localization of the conflict, since, in view of diverse treaty-obligations, any intervention by another Power might be attended by incalculable consequences.'

[1] Blue Book, No. 4; C.D.D. p. 9.

Note that if, when he dispatched this order of the day, the Chancellor either did not know the Austrian demands, or had only been apprised of them by telegraph that very evening, he cannot possibly have communicated them to the Kaiser and received his instructions. Who can believe that the Chancellor deliberately embarked upon a course which he knew might lead to ' incalculable consequences ', without the full knowledge and approval of his Master ? Is it not enormously more probable that both Chancellor and Emperor had been amply informed as to what was brewing, hours or days in advance, and had determined, by wireless, the course to be pursued ?

In view of this overwhelming probability, we are not surprised to find M. Allizé, French Minister at Munich, telegraphing to his Government on this same Thursday :

> ' The President of the Council said to me to-day that the Austrian note, *the contents of which were known to him*, was in his opinion drawn up in terms which could be accepted by Serbia.'

Can we suppose that the Ultimatum had been communicated to the President of the Bavarian Council, and not to the Chancellor of the German Empire ?

Nor, again, are we surprised when Sir Maurice de Bunsen, on July 30th, telegraphs from Vienna to Sir Edward Grey : [1]

> ' Although I am not able to verify it, I have private information that the German Ambassador knew the text of the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia before it was dispatched, and telegraphed it to the German Emperor. I know from the German Ambassador himself that he endorses every line of it.'

This rumour, indeed, is not evidence ; but it harmonizes with what we have seen to be antecedently probable.

On the other hand, we have repeated assertions from

[1] Blue Book, No. 95.

the German side that Austria acted on her own responsibility, and without communicating to Berlin the contents of her Ultimatum.

On Friday the 24th, the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Jagow, protested to the French Ambassador that he 'had been entirely ignorant of Austria's requirements'; and on the following day he 'repeated very earnestly' to the British Chargé d'Affaires, Sir Horace Rumbold, 'that though he had been accused of knowing all about the contents of that note, he had in fact no such knowledge'.[1]

On Saturday the 25th, Count Pourtalès, the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, delivered to the Russian Government a memorandum declaring it 'absolutely false' that the Austrian action was the result of German instigation. 'The German Government had no knowledge of the text of the Austrian note before its delivery, and exercised no influence on its contents.'[2]

On the same date the German Ambassador in Paris, Baron von Schoen, stated, both to journalists and to representatives of the French Government, that:

> 'There had been no "concert" between Austria and Germany in connexion with the Austrian Note, and that the German Government had no knowledge of this note when it was communicated to them at the same time as to the other Powers, though they had approved it subsequently.'[3]

Evidently in reference to the same communication, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris telegraphed to St. Petersburg that Schoen had declared that the note had been presented to Serbia 'sans entente précise avec Berlin', but that in his own words, 'la flèche une fois partie' (the bolt once shot), Germany could let herself be guided only by her duties as an ally.[4] Thus we find the

[1] French Book, No. 30; Blue Book, No. 18.
[2] Russian Book, No. 18.
[3] French Book, No. 36.
[4] Russian Book, No. 19.

plea of the 'accomplished fact' resorted to almost from the beginning.

On the following day (Sunday, July 26th) Herr von Schoen had an interview with M. Berthelot, Acting Political Director at the French Foreign Office, in the course of which he 'once more affirmed that Germany had been ignorant of the text of the Austrian note, and had only approved it after its delivery'.[1]

In London, on Saturday, July 25th, the same affirmation is offered. Sir Edward Grey telegraphs to Sir Horace Rumbold in Berlin:

> 'The German Ambassador read me a telegram from the German Foreign Office saying that his Government had not known beforehand, and had had no more than other Powers to do with, the stiff terms of the Austrian note to Serbia, but once she had launched that note, Austria could not draw back.'[2]

'Once she had launched that note'—'la flèche une fois partie'! It is evident that von Schoen in Paris, Lichnowsky in London, and Pourtalès in St. Petersburg, were simply (as was of course their duty) echoing the very words of von Jagow in Berlin.

Did von Jagow believe what he was saying? It is not improbable. We may note that no denial of previous knowledge comes direct from von Bethmann-Hollweg, not to mention the Kaiser. It is very possible that the Chancellor purposely kept the Foreign Minister in ignorance of the terms of the Ultimatum, in order that he might issue his disclaimer with due conviction.

But why was so much importance attached to this manœuvre? There may have been two reasons.

(1) It was Germany's cue all along to treat the Austro-Serbian difficulty as a private matter between those two States, in which no third party had any right to intervene.

[1] French Book, No. 57.

[2] Blue Book, No. 25; Russian Book, No. 20.

Had Germany appeared publicly as Austria's bottle-holder, she would have had all the less excuse for objecting to Russia's rendering Serbia the same service.

(2) There was Italy to be considered. The Teutonic members of the Triple Alliance knew, after the experience of the previous year,[1] that if they tried to make Italy their accomplice, she would certainly protest. They dared not, therefore, take her into their councils; but as they did not want to give her unnecessary offence, it was worth while to pretend that Austria had simply gone her own way without consulting her northern any more than her southern partner.

The manœuvre, unimportant in itself, is part of Germany's whole policy of these early days, which is to affect detachment, while sedulously screening Austria from all interference. If Serbia can be brought to her knees before any other Power has had time to move, what a triumph for the Central European Allies! What a humiliation for the poor, pre-occupied, practically impotent Triple Entente!

POSTSCRIPT. There is one conceivable theory according to which the German asseverations would be literally true, though still false in substance and in fact. Copies of the Ultimatum were delivered to Grey in London and to Sazonof in St. Petersburg on Friday morning. In all probability they had arrived by post or messenger on Thursday evening, if not earlier. Supposing, now, that copies had been dispatched from Vienna simultaneously to the Austrian Ambassadors in all the capitals, they would reach Berlin and Munich from eighteen to twenty-four hours before they would reach London and St. Petersburg. This would give Bethmann-Hollweg time to acquaint himself with the terms of the Ultimatum, and,

[1] In August 1913 Italy had declined to support Austria in a proposed attack upon Serbia. See Signor Giolitti's statement in the Italian Chamber, December 5, 1914. C.D.D. p. 401.

if he disapproved, to veto it by telegraph before action was taken at Belgrade : yet it would, in a sense, be true that the document ' was communicated to Germany at the same time as to the other Powers '. It is hard to imagine Germany and Austria plotting such a trumpery prevarication, or, indeed, showing any pedantic respect for the word ' truth ' ; but the thing is not impossible. On the other hand, there are people who profess to know, not only that the Kaiser had seen the Ultimatum beforehand, but that he had stiffened its exactions.

CHAPTER V

DIARY OF EVENTS

Thursday, July 23

'The possible consequences of the present situation are terrible.'—Sir Edward Grey.

London. The Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, to-day informed Sir Edward Grey 'that he would be able to-morrow morning to let him have officially the communication that he understood was being made to Serbia to-day by Austria'. He also sketched the nature of the demands, on which Sir Edward, in the absence of fuller information, declined to make any comment. But when Count Mensdorff indicated that 'there would be something in the nature of a time-limit, which was in effect akin to an ultimatum', Sir Edward at once scented danger, and pointed out that this 'might inflame opinion in Russia', and render it impossible to get a satisfactory reply from Serbia. If proceedings tended to drag out (he said), 'a time-limit could always be introduced afterwards'. 'A time-limit was generally a thing to be used only in the last resort, after other means had been tried and failed.' Then Sir Edward enlarged on the calamities which could not but ensue from a great European war; to which the Count replied that 'all would depend upon Russia'.[1] This remark we may bear in mind in the sequel, when we find Austria affecting surprise that Russia should interest herself in the affairs of Serbia.

The Serbian Minister, M. Boschkovitch, called upon Sir A. Nicolson, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and stated that his Government was

[1] Blue Book, No. 3.

London. 'most anxious and disquieted'. Serbia was perfectly ready to meet any reasonable demands on the part of Austria if the Serajevo inquiry, 'conducted with so much mystery and secrecy', showed that 'there were any individuals conspiring or organizing plots on Serbian territory'. But 'if Austria transported the question [from the juridical] on to the political ground, and said that Serbian policy, being inconvenient to her, must undergo a radical change, and that Serbia must abandon certain political ideals, no independent State would, or could, submit to such dictation'.[1]

Berlin. The German Chancellor sends to the German Ambassadors in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg, the circular of advice, already summarized (p. 27), in which he declares the Austrian demands to be fully justified.

Belgrade. 6 P.M. THE ULTIMATUM DELIVERED.

On the same evening, M. Strandtman, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, announced to St. Petersburg the launching of the bolt, and said, 'Patchou [the interim Minister for Foreign Affairs], who has communicated to me the contents of the Note, solicits the aid of Russia, and declares that no Serbian Government could accept the demands of Austria'.[2] A later telegram of the same night contained the text of the Ultimatum, but does not seem to have reached St. Petersburg until well on in the following day, after the document had been communicated to the Foreign Minister by the Austrian Ambassador.

[1] Blue Book, No. 30. [2] Russian Book, No. 1.

CHAPTER VI

DIARY OF EVENTS

Friday, July 24

'I do not understand why all means of retreat have been cut off.'—JULES CAMBON.

THE Russian Chargé d'Affaires had told his Government on Monday night that M. Pachitch was expected to return at 10 this morning, and it was no doubt at that hour that he arrived. His first step was to see the Russian and the British Chargés d'Affaires. To the former (M. Strandtman) he said that he would reply to the Austrian Ultimatum within the stated time, that Serbia would appeal to the 'friendly Powers' to protect her independence, and that if war proved inevitable, she would fight.[1] To the latter (Mr. Crackanthorpe) he said that the Austrian demands were such that no independent country could accept them in their entirety, and that he hoped Britain might see her way to induce Austria to moderate them.[2] He 'did not conceal his anxiety as to future developments'. Belgrade.

The Serbian Premier made no other move to-day. He and his colleagues were doubtless devoting all their energies to the drafting of the reply. The Crown Prince of Serbia, however, addressed to the Tsar a long telegram. He recited Serbia's official condemnation of the Serajevo crime and offer to co-operate in tracking down accomplices (see p. 14). In spite of this, he said, Austria had put forth demands which were 'uselessly humiliating and incompatible with the dignity of an independent State'.

[1] Serbian Book, No. 34; Russian Book, No. 9.
[2] Serbian Book, No. 35; Blue Book, No. 8.

Belgrade. Any requirements that did not compromise her independence Serbia would accept, and any that the Tsar should counsel her to agree to. 'The time-limit', he proceeded, 'is too short. At its expiration we may be attacked by the Austrian army, which is concentrating on our frontier. We cannot defend ourselves, and we implore your Majesty to come to our aid as soon as possible.' He concluded with an appeal to the 'generous Slav heart' of the Russian monarch.[1] To this telegram the Tsar made no reply until Monday the 27th [2]—one indication among many that Russia acted in no hot-headed and impulsive spirit of partisanship.

Vienna. The Note was published in this morning's newspapers. 'By common consent', says Sir Maurice de Bunsen, 'it was at once styled an Ultimatum.' [3]

The only diplomatic incident in Vienna to-day was an interview between Count Berchtold and the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, of which we have two accounts, one by Herr von Tschirscky, the other by Sir Maurice de Bunsen.[4] The Count, according to the German authority, sent for Prince Kudachef, in order to explain to him in a clear and friendly fashion the attitude of Austria in regard to Serbia. The Monarchy had no thought of posing as a conqueror, of annexing territory, or of upsetting the balance of power in the Balkans, but it must put a stop once for all to Serbian agitation, and obtain guarantees for a friendly attitude on Serbia's part in the future. As who should say: 'You *shall*

[1] Serbian Book, No. 37; Russian Book, No. 6.

[2] No *public* reply. That St. Petersburg and Belgrade were in communication in the interval is not to be doubted. The moderation of the Serbian reply was probably due to Russian influence (Blue Book, No. 22). But the fact remains that the Tsar made no haste to put himself forward publicly as the champion of Serbia.

[3] Blue Book, No. 161.

[4] German Book, No. 3; Blue Book, No. 7.

love me, if I have to thrash you within an inch of your life!' From the English authority we learn that Prince Kudachef, expressing his own personal view, said that the Austrian Note could not possibly be accepted as it stood; whereupon the Count replied that the Austrian Minister would certainly leave Belgrade unless the Note were 'accepted integrally' within the time appointed, and that the Monarchy 'felt its very existence to be at stake'. He added, what was certainly true, that 'the step taken had caused great satisfaction throughout the country'. Vienna.

At 10 a.m. (just as M. Pachitch was arriving at Belgrade) the Austrian Ambassador, Count Szapary, handed the text of the Ultimatum to the Foreign Minister, M. Sazonof. Here, then, as at Belgrade, sixteen hours out of the forty-eight were rendered useless.[1] In the conversation which ensued,[2] M. Sazonof showed clearly what he thought of the Austrian move, and indeed objected strongly to one point (the suppression of the Narodna Odbrana), which Serbia eventually accepted. He, of course, protested against the participation of Austrian agents in the internal affairs of Serbia. As for the Austrian offer to present 'a *dossier* elucidating the Serbian intrigues', he said that it was rendered useless by the fact that the Ultimatum was already delivered. 'This was the best proof that Austria did not really desire an impartial examination of the matter.' St. Petersburg.

M. Sazonof's first move was to beg the British Ambassador (by telephone) to meet him at the French Embassy; and there Sir George Buchanan, M. Paléologue, and M. Sazonof had a long conference. M. Sazonof said that Austria would never have taken such 'provocative and immoral' action except in concert with Germany; that some of her demands were impossible of acceptance, and

[1] M. Sazonof himself says 17 hours. (Russian Book, No. 77.)
[2] Austrian Book, No. 14.

St. Petersburg.

that he hoped Britain would not fail to proclaim her 'solidarity' with Russia and France. M. Paléologue declared that France would stand by Russia in word and deed; and the two statesmen insisted in chorus, again and again, that Britain ought at once to take up a definite position by the side of the Dual Alliance. Sir George Buchanan replied that 'direct British interests in Serbia were nil, and that a war on behalf of that country would never be sanctioned by public opinion'; to which the obvious answer was that it was not merely the future of Serbia, but the future of Europe, that was at stake.[1] To Sir George's question whether, if Austria attacked Serbia, Russia would at once attack Austria, M. Sazonof replied that he thought Russia would have to mobilize, but the question would be discussed at a Cabinet Council that afternoon, and decided at another, probably to-morrow, at which the Tsar would preside. To Sir George's suggestion that the first thing to do was to get the time-limit extended, M. Paléologue replied that there was no time for that. M. Sazonof admitted that Serbia could doubtless accept some of Austria's demands, but said he must consult his colleagues as to how far she should be advised to go. Ultimately, Sir George Buchanan agreed to ask Sir Edward Grey whether he would not make strong representations to both Austria and Germany as to the probable consequences of an attack by Austria upon Serbia, and whether he might not even hint that it would be difficult for Britain to keep out of any war that might ensue.[2]

After the Cabinet Council, M. Sazonof received the Serbian Minister and the German Ambassador. What he said to the former does not appear, but on leaving

[1] The question whether Britain ought to have yielded to the reiterated urgency of Russia and France and thrown her sword into the scale at an early stage of the proceedings, is discussed in Chapter XVIII.

[2] Blue Book, No. 6.

M. Sazonof's room the Serbian ran against his German colleague, Count Pourtalès, who 'appeared to be in high good humour'. Asked how the situation created by the Ultimatum was to be solved, Pourtalès replied that that depended entirely on Serbia, since the question was one between Austria and Serbia alone, and no one else could meddle with it. 'You are mistaken,' replied the Serb, 'and will soon be able to convince yourself that this is not an Austro-Serbian but a European question.'[1] St. Petersburg.

It is probable that this prediction was immediately fulfilled, to the detriment of the Count's high spirits. At all events, he telegraphed to Berlin that he found Sazonof much agitated, full of bitter complaints as to the behaviour of Austria, and emphatic in declaring that Russia could not permit the Austro-Serbian difficulty to work itself out as though no one else had any concern in it.[2] This must have dashed his roseate vision of an easy triumph for Austrian arms and German diplomacy, and Pourtalès himself, as we shall see, did not at all relish the idea of war with Russia. On Sazonof, meanwhile, 'the evasive replies and recriminations of Pourtalès left an unfavourable impression.'[3]

After the Cabinet Council, M. Sazonof telegraphed to Prince Kudachef in Vienna, instructing him to urge upon Count Berchtold the necessity for an extension of the time-limit, if 'incalculable consequences, equally disastrous for all the Powers' were to be avoided. What was the use, he asked, of Austria's offer to lay before the Powers the proofs of her accusations against Serbia, if she allowed them no time to acquaint themselves with the documents? Given time to convince themselves of the justice of Austria's case, the Powers might be able to advise Serbia in accordance with that conviction. But a refusal to prolong the term of the Ultimatum would render Austria's overtures to the Powers entirely

[1] Serbian Book, No. 36. [2] German Book, No. 4.
[3] French Book, No. 38.

St. Petersburg.

meaningless.[1] This telegram was communicated to the Governments of Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and France, but was not delivered, either in London or Paris, until the following day.

Meanwhile the Russian Government issued to the press the following announcement,[2] no doubt drawn up at the Cabinet meeting:

> 'Recent events, and the dispatch of an ultimatum to Serbia by Austria, are causing the Russian Government the greatest anxiety. The Government are closely following the dispute between the two countries, *to which Russia cannot remain indifferent.*'

Berlin.

The newspapers received the Ultimatum with a chorus of approval, deprecating any attempt on Serbia's part to appeal to the Powers, and insisting on 'the sentiment of monarchical solidarity'.[3]

In the afternoon, the French Ambassador, M. Jules Cambon, had an informal interview with Herr von Jagow.[4] In the face of Cambon's barely-concealed scepticism, von Jagow maintained that he had no advance knowledge of the Austrian demands. To Cambon's remark that the shortness of the time-limit 'would make an unpleasant impression in Europe', he replied that 'he quite expected a little excitement on the part of Serbia's friends, but that he counted on their giving her wise advice'. To Cambon's suggestion that if Russia gave good advice at Belgrade, good advice should be offered at Vienna from another quarter, his only reply was 'that the difficulty must be localized'—the 'mot d'ordre' of Berlin. He asked whether Cambon really thought the situation serious. 'Certainly,' was Cambon's very pertinent answer, 'because, if what is

[1] Russian Book, No. 4; Blue Book, No. 13.
[2] Russian Book, No. 10; Austrian Book, No. 15.
[3] Russian Book, No. 7; French Book, No. 30.
[4] French Book, No. 30.

happening is the result of reflection, I do not understand why all means of retreat have been cut off.' Berlin.

In the morning the Austrian Ambassador delivered at the Foreign Office a copy of the Ultimatum. It was pointed out to him that the presentation of so peremptory a document with so short a time-limit, at the very moment when MM. Poincaré and Viviani were out of reach, could not but cause a painful impression in France.[1] At five in the afternoon the German Ambassador, Herr von Schoen, read to M. Bienvenu-Martin, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, the German Chancellor's circular memorandum (p. 27). M. Martin remarked upon the unnecessary stringency of the dilemma presented, leaving no middle course between the refusal of all satisfaction and the acceptance of such humiliation as might well lead to a revolution in Serbia. He suggested that 'if Serbia gave obvious proof of goodwill' it could not be thought that Austria would refuse to negotiate. Herr von Schoen 'recognized the justice of those considerations, and vaguely stated that hope was always possible'.[2] Paris.

Count Mensdorff this morning delivered to Sir Edward Grey the text of the Ultimatum, and a conversation ensued,[3] which went over much of the ground already covered on the previous day (p. 33). It was now that Sir Edward said that, while the crime of Serajevo naturally aroused sympathy with Austria, 'he had never before seen one State address to another independent State a document of so formidable a character.' Demand No. 5, he pointed out, 'would be hardly consistent with the maintenance of Serbia's independent sovereignty.' Britain, however, was not concerned in the dispute between Austria and Serbia, and he should approach the London.

[1] French Book, No. 25. [2] French Book, No. 28.
[3] Blue Book, No. 5.

London. matter ' simply and solely from the point of view of the peace of Europe '. Count Mensdorff said that affairs might never have come to this pass, ' if Serbia had held out a hand after the murder of the Archduke ', but she ' had shown no sign of sympathy or help '—which, by the way, was not the case (see p. 14).

Sir Edward Grey then saw in succession the French and the German Ambassadors.

To M. Paul Cambon,[1] Sir Edward said that Prince Lichnowsky had asked him some days ago to ' exercise moderating influence at St. Petersburg '. His view now was that moderating influence at St. Petersburg would be either unnecessary, if Russia took the Ultimatum calmly, or, if she did not, unavailing—and the latter hypothesis seemed the only probable one. He suggested, and M. Cambon agreed, that the best hope lay in the possibility of joint and simultaneous action at Vienna and St. Petersburg on the part of the Four Powers not directly interested in Serbia—to wit, Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain. He thought that even if Austria moved into Serbia and Russia mobilized, it might be possible for the Four Powers to obtain a suspension of military measures, pending mediation. ' *But it would be essential for any chance of success for such a step that Germany should participate in it.*' M. Cambon thought nothing could be done if Austria once moved against Serbia, but time might be gained at Vienna, if Germany would co-operate in the effort.

To Prince Lichnowsky,[2] who communicated to him the Chancellor's circular memorandum, Sir Edward Grey repeated the substance of his conversation with M. Cambon. ' The only chance he could see of mediating or moderating influence being effective, was that the Four Powers, Germany, Italy, France, and ourselves, should work together simultaneously at Vienna and St. Petersburg in favour of moderation.' Meanwhile, it was

[1] Blue Book, No. 10. [2] Blue Book, No. 11.

very desirable to gain time by persuading Austria to delay the outbreak of hostilities; but that would be hopeless 'unless Germany would propose and participate in such action at Vienna'. Prince Lichnowsky seems to have returned no direct answer to this proposition. He merely said that Austria would certainly move when the time-limit expired, unless her demands were unconditionally accepted. He evidently knew that his Government would lift no finger towards gaining time.[1] London.

A telegram was dispatched to the British Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade, instructing him to urge moderation upon the Serbian Government, and suggest compliance on as many points as possible.[2] This advice was not, as a matter of fact, given, Mr. Crackanthorpe having ascertained that it was not needed.

Already to-day the Belgian Government sent to its representatives abroad a declaration that Belgium had exactly observed all its duties as a neutral State, and, although believing her territory safe from attack, had nevertheless taken all measures to preserve her neutrality and fulfil her international obligations. This statement was not to be delivered immediately, but only if the course of events should seem to require it.[3] Brussels.

At 6 this evening, twenty-four out of the forty-eight hours were gone. Serbia had cried to Russia for aid. Russia had appealed direct to Austria for an extension of the time-limit. The Russian frame of mind was not yet known either in London or in Paris, but it was rightly conjectured. In the West, as in the East, an extension of the time-limit was seen to be needful, but obtainable only by aid from Berlin; and it was already pretty clear that no such aid was forthcoming. Failing that, there seemed to be some hope in Sir Edward Summary.

[1] See Note 2, p. 74. [2] Blue Book, Nos. 12 and 22.
[3] Belgian Book, No. 2.

Grey's proposal of Four Power mediation at Vienna and St. Petersburg, but for this, too, the co-operation of Germany was indispensable. From Germany came nothing but the stolid iteration: 'Localize the quarrel! Keep the ring! No interference!' Austria, meanwhile, was already protesting that she had no intention of annexing Serbian territory—a declaration the worth of which we shall have to consider hereafter.

CHAPTER VII

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, July 25

'There is no question of war but of an *exécution* in a local matter.'—VON JAGOW.

COUNT BERCHTOLD having left for Ischl, Prince Kudachef, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, telegraphed to him Sazonof's request for an extension of the time-limit, and also conveyed it verbally to Baron Macchio, who said he would forward it to Berchtold, but 'had no hesitation in predicting a categorical refusal'. The Baron 'behaved with icy coldness'. When it was represented to him that to submit documentary proofs of grievances but give no time for a study of the *dossier* 'was not consonant with international courtesy', he replied that 'one's interests sometimes exempt one from being courteous'.[1] Vienna.

Berchtold promptly instructed Macchio to refuse the request, but to add that, even after the breaking off of diplomatic relations, Serbia could still 'bring about a friendly solution' by an unconditional surrender. In that case, however, she would have to pay all expenses incurred by Austria in preparing to chastise her. To Count Szapary, Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Berchtold telegraphed that it was a mistake to suppose that the *dossier* had been submitted to the Powers for discussion or appreciation. It 'merely bore the character of a statement for information'. For the rest, Austria regarded her action as a matter concerning herself and Serbia alone.[2]

[1] Russian Book, No. 11; French Book, No. 45.
[2] Austrian Book, Nos. 20 and 21.

Vienna. So far, however, Berchtold did relax his haughty attitude, as to instruct Szapary to explain away 'in strict confidence' (!) one of the most inacceptable of the Austrian demands. 'Point 5', he said, 'was in no way intended to infringe the sovereignty of Serbia': the 'collaboration' contemplated in it was merely to consist of the establishment of a private 'Bureau de Sûreté' at Belgrade, which should co-operate with the Serbian police, after the fashion of similar Russian establishments in Paris.[1] The comment on this would seem to be that, if Austria had really an admissible demand in mind, she went out of her way to conceal the fact and to put it as inadmissibly as possible.

To this day, also, belongs a dispatch of some length from Count Berchtold to Count Szapary[2] (apparently sent by post), containing a general vindication of Austrian policy. It may best be considered when we come to review the whole case.

Berlin. When we turn to Berlin, we discover the convenience, from the Austro-German point of view, of the Austrian Emperor's villeggiatura at Ischl. Both Britain and Russia request von Jagow to make efforts at Vienna in favour of an extended time-limit.[3] He consents to 'inform Vienna telegraphically of this step' on their part, but fears that 'in the absence of Berchtold, who has left for Ischl, and in view of the lack of time, his telegrams may have no result'. As for the idea that he should himself support the Russian and British appeal, he simply waves it aside. He 'is inclined to think' that any yielding on Austria's part 'might increase the assurance of Serbia'. To every suggestion that the German Government should exert its influence at Vienna 'for the avoid-

[1] Austrian Book, No. 27. On this see Headlam, p. 94.
[2] Austrian Book, No. 26.
[3] Russian Book, No. 14; Blue Book, No. 18.

ance of disastrous consequences ' he opposes an immovable negative. Berlin.

M. Jules Cambon [1] gives us a curious sidelight on von Jagow's methods. When the Russian Chargé d'Affaires asked for an interview in order to prefer the Russian request, he gave him an appointment in the late afternoon, just as the Ultimatum was about to expire, so that M. Bronewsky had to make his request in writing. Von Jagow may not have known exactly what Bronewsky wanted of him, but he cannot but have guessed that, whatever the Russian's purpose, a late afternoon appointment was likely to defeat it. At such a crisis, when every moment was precious, to put off the representative of a Great Power until the business day was over was a discourtesy which cannot have been inadvertent. The little trait is quite of a piece with the whole German policy of obstructive inertia. When at last Bronewsky came to speech with the Foreign Minister, he urged that if the time-limit could not be extended, at least the outbreak of war might be delayed, so as to give the Powers a chance of intervening. Von Jagow replied that ' there was no question of a war, but of an *exécution* in a local matter '. This though Serbia was known to have an army of 400,000 men, many of them veterans inured to victory! The term *exécution*, moreover, implied a denial of Serbia's independence.

To Sir Horace Rumbold,[2] von Jagow ' admitted quite freely ' that Austria was determined to ' give the Serbians a lesson ', and that ' the Serbian Government could not swallow some of the Austrian demands '. He relied on the Austrian disclaimer of territorial ambitions to ' calm ' St. Petersburg, nor was he to be persuaded that there was any real danger of Russian intervention. ' He remained of opinion that the crisis could be localized ' —blessed word! If, however, the relations between

[1] French Book, Nos. 42 and 43.

[2] Blue Book, No. 18.

Berlin. Austria and Russia became threatening, 'he was quite ready to fall in with Sir Edward Grey's suggestion as to the Four Powers working together in favour of moderation at Vienna and St. Petersburg'.

Here the Foreign Minister spoke in unison with the Chancellor, who to-day telegraphed to Lichnowsky in London, to the effect that, while intervention between Austria and Serbia would be inconsistent with the great principle of 'localization', in the event of an Austro-Russian controversy, Germany would be prepared to 'intercede' conjointly with the other Powers.[1] In other words: Austria must be perfectly free to thrash Serbia, but if Russia proposes to thrash Austria, we will join in persuading her to keep the peace. The apparent concession amounted to no more than this. It meant that if Austria, under the aegis of Germany, succeeded in breaking Serbia's back, Germany would be content with this enhancement of her prestige, and would try to stave off a European war. It was a small mercy, but, such as it was, it may stand to Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg's credit. The Kaiser, we observe, was still on the high seas, and even the Crown Prince was not in Berlin.

London. It will be convenient to turn next to London. While he instructs Sir Maurice de Bunsen, at Vienna, to support the Russian demand for the extension of the time-limit, Sir Edward Grey has evidently very little hope that anything will come of it.[2] On the other hand, he sees a gleam of light in an assurance which Count Mensdorff has been authorized to give him that, on the expiry of the time-limit, Austria would 'break off diplomatic relations, and commence military preparations, but not military operations'.[3] We can now realize, in the light of Count Berchtold's telegram to Macchio (p. 45), that this does not imply any willingness to negotiate, but

[1] German Book, No. 13. [2] Blue Book, No. 26.
[3] Blue Book, No. 25.

merely means that, until Austrian preparations are complete, Serbia may still escape war by unconditional surrender and the payment of expenses. Still, Sir Edward could not but welcome any postponement of actual hostilities, and see in it a breathing-space for conciliation. He foretold, only too justly, that 'we should soon be face to face with the mobilization of Austria and Russia'; and in that event (he telegraphed to Sir Horace Rumbold) the only chance of peace would be for Germany, France, Italy, and Britain to join in asking Austria and Russia not to cross the frontier till they (the Four Powers) 'had had time to try and arrange matters between them'. This was his proposal of the day before, rendered more hopeful by the promised pause before the attack; but, as he telegraphed to Sir George Buchanan, 'No diplomatic intervention would be tolerated by either Russia or Austria, unless it was clearly impartial and included the allies or friends of both. *The co-operation of Germany would, therefore, be essential*'.[1] And now, for once, it seemed as if that co-operation would be forthcoming. Prince Lichnowsky telegraphed the proposal to Berlin, and, as we have seen (p. 48), it was formally accepted by Bethmann-Hollweg.[2] Thus prospects appeared for the moment to be a little brighter. London.

Another ray of hope came from Belgrade, when Crackanthorpe telegraphed an outline of the 'most conciliatory' Serbian reply, and added, 'The Serbian Government consider that, unless the Austrian Government want war at any cost, they cannot but be content with the full satisfaction offered'.[3] Sir Edward Grey at once

[1] Blue Book, No. 24.

[2] Count Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London, reported to his Government (Russian Book, No. 22) that Grey said to him, 'This plan requires first and foremost the concurrence of Germany *and an undertaking by that Power not to mobilize*'. But this suggestion does not seem to have been conveyed to Berlin.

[3] Blue Book, No. 21.

London. communicated the forecast to Prince Lichnowsky, and expressed his hope that 'the German Government will feel able to influence the Austrian Government to take a favourable view of it'.[1]

St. Petersburg. M. Sazonof telegraphed to Count Benckendorff in London, saying that 'in the event of any change for the worse in the situation', he counted upon England at once siding definitely with Russia and France.[2] In conversation with Sir George Buchanan,[3] he took the same line. Sir George replied that England could better play the part of mediator at Berlin and Vienna in the character of a friend than in that of a declared ally. The question of England's attitude is discussed at length in Chapter XVIII.

In the same interview M. Sazonof said that his information from Germany rendered him sceptical as to the postponement of hostilities promised by Count Mensdorff. The Serbian Minister had given him to understand that, if Austria attacked, the Serbian Government would abandon Belgrade, withdraw its forces into the interior, and at the same time appeal to the Powers. Sazonof approved of this appeal. The assurances given by Serbia in 1908, to which the Ultimatum referred, were given, not to Austria, but to the Powers. Should Serbia act as proposed, 'Russia would be quite ready to stand aside, and leave the whole question in the hands of England, France, Germany, and Italy'. Sir George Buchanan spoke strongly as to the necessity for prudence in the matter of military preparations, warning Sazonof that 'if Russia mobilized, Germany would not be content with mere mobilization, or give Russia time to carry out hers, but would probably declare war at once'. Sazonof's reply was that Russia 'could not allow Austria to crush Serbia and become the predominant Power in the Balkans.

[1] Blue Book, No. 27. [2] Russian Book, No. 17.
[3] Blue Book, No. 17.

He had no wish to precipitate a conflict, but unless Germany could restrain Austria, the situation might be regarded as desperate.' St. Petersburg.

From French sources, too, we learn that Sazonof repeatedly declared that he would not break off negotiations, even if Austria came to blows with Serbia. This resolution appears to have been taken at a Council of Ministers at which the Tsar presided.[1]

Nothing of moment happened in Paris to-day. A somewhat garbled version of Bethmann-Hollweg's circular memorandum (p. 27) having got into the *Écho de Paris*, and having been described as a 'threat' on Germany's part, Herr von Schoen declared that it was not to be regarded in that light. It was at this interview that he made use of the expression, 'une fois la flèche partie'(p. 29).[2] Paris.

We have already seen that an outline of the Serbian reply had been received by the British Chargé d'Affaires, probably pretty early in the day. At 5.45 according to M. Pachitch—at 5.58 according to Baron von Giesl—the reply was delivered. Von Giesl, by his own showing, must have weighed it and found it wanting with lightning rapidity, for he and his staff left Belgrade by the 6.30 train. Crackanthorpe and Strandtman promptly telegraphed this fact to London and St. Petersburg respectively, adding that the Serbian Government was leaving that evening for Nish, where the Skuptchina would meet on the 27th. Belgrade.

The ray of hope was quenched.

It is already necessary that we should include military preparations in our survey of each day's occurrences. Here it is, for various reasons, difficult to arrive at the exact truth. In the first place, 'mobilization' is at Military preparations.

[1] French Book, Nos. 38 and 50.

[2] French Book, No. 36; Russian Book, No. 19.

Military preparations.

best an ill-defined term, and seems to be differently defined in different countries. As a rule, the calling up of reservists is the mark of transition from 'military preparations' in general to 'mobilization' in particular. In the second place, the air is full of rumours, which are repeated by persons (journalists and others) who use the word 'mobilization' very loosely. In the third place, the authorities of every country are inclined—not wholly from dishonourable motives—to exercise a strict economy of truth as to their measures, and to postpone as long as possible the use of the word of evil omen. They may be torn between a sincere desire for peace and a determination that war shall not take them at a disadvantage; and they may judge (rightly or wrongly) that the best hope of preserving peace is to minimize their preparations for war. If there were any means by which statesmen could be induced to speak the truth and to believe each other when mobilization is in the wind, the danger of war, in such a conjuncture as we are considering, would be sensibly diminished.

There is no reason to doubt that Austria had begun military preparations on the Serbian frontier several days before the presentation of the Ultimatum. In a dispatch [1] to his Government, dated July 20, the Serbian Minister at Vienna says: 'The military preparations which are going on, especially on the Serbian frontier, prove that Austria's intentions are serious'. This is perfectly good evidence, though it proceeds from a Serbian source, for M. Jovanovitch had no motive in deceiving his own Government. Indeed, he was merely alluding to what was evidently a matter of common knowledge, as the preparations in question were proceeding, so to speak, under the very eyes of Belgrade. We have the less difficulty in accepting this and other evidence to the same effect, since it would have been manifestly foolish of Austria to launch such an Ultimatum without having

[1] Serbian Book, No. 31.

taken steps to back it up. It was always possible that Serbia might simply have rejected her demands with contempt, in which case she was obviously committed to military measures. Military preparations.

The French Consul-General at Basle reports, on July 27th, that 'four days ago the German officers on leave in this district received orders to break off their leave and return to Germany'. 'Four days ago' would mean July 23—the day of the Ultimatum. Interpreting the phrase liberally, however, we can only say that it affords pretty good evidence that the German military authorities were on the alert, either before or immediately after the Ultimatum was presented.[1]

This brings us to the day (Saturday the 25th) which we have immediately in view.

On this day the Crown Prince of Serbia signed the order for mobilizing the Serbian army.[2] The Austrian Minister reported[3] that the order was issued at 3 p.m. Von Tschirscky next day pointed to this fact (in conversation with Bunsen)[4] as showing that 'the Serbian concessions were all a sham', and that 'she well knew they were insufficient'. It would be more to the point to say that she rightly interpreted the fixed resolve of Austria, an enemy who was already making military preparations at her very gates.

Russia's decision to mobilize against Austria dates from to-day. This is rendered certain by a telegram from the Tsar to the Kaiser,[5] dated July 30, in which he says 'the military measures now taking form were decided upon five days ago, and for the reason of defence against the preparations of Austria'. The determination was reached at a Cabinet Council, the Tsar himself presiding, and there is every reason to consider accurate

[1] For other early preparations on Germany's part, see Chapter XXIII, p. 217.

[2] Serbian Book, No. 41.

[3] Austrian Book, No. 23.

[4] Blue Book, No. 32.

[5] German Book, No. 23a.

Military preparations.

the summary of its decisions circulated on the following morning to the various French Ambassadors by M. Bienvenu-Martin, the French Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs.[1] M. Martin says:

> 'The mobilization of thirteen Army Corps, intended eventually to operate against Austria, was considered; this mobilization, however, would only be made effective if Austria were to bring armed pressure to bear upon Serbia.' Upon M. Sazonof 'falls the duty of fixing the day, liberty being left to him to go on with negotiations even if Belgrade should be occupied'.

Everything speaks for the credibility of this detailed account, proceeding from Russia's ally. Newspaper rumours bear it out in the main.[2] The German 'Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Tsar' reported to-day,[3] no doubt correctly, that manœuvres of troops in the Krasnoe camp had been suddenly cancelled, and the regiments returned to their garrisons. Also military pupils received their commissions as officers.

Both in Germany and France there are newspaper reports of leave being stopped to-day, and frontier forts garrisoned, but no important movements seem to have taken place.

Summary.

The direct Russian request for an extension of the time-limit is curtly refused. The British and Russian requests forwarded through von Jagow—and von Tschirscky[4]—are simply ignored, if they ever reach their destination. Berlin remains true to its great watchword, 'localization', which being interpreted, means 'no interference between Austria and Serbia'. If, however, trouble should arise between Austria and Russia, Berlin is willing to join in 'intercession'. Grey, in London, realizing the menace of imminent mobilizations,

[1] French Book, No. 50.
[2] See Price, p. 151.
[3] German Book, No. 6.
[4] Blue Book, No. 18.

does all he can to arrange a mechanism for delaying the shock as long as possible, and thus allowing time for a return to reason. With Germany's aid, this should be feasible. The Austrian declaration that no immediate attack is intended seems encouraging, still more so the Russian resolve not to make an attack on Serbia a reason for breaking off negotiations. Finally, the extreme moderation of the Serbian reply awakens high and reasonable hopes, which are presently shattered when Austria precipitately breaks off diplomatic relations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SERBIAN REPLY

'The Serbian reply involved the greatest humiliation to Serbia that he had ever seen a country undergo.'—Sir Edward Grey.

If the Austrian demands upon Serbia were scarcely to be paralleled in diplomatic history, it would certainly be no less difficult to find a more conciliatory reply to such demands than that which Serbia delivered. Here was indeed the soft answer which ought to have turned away wrath; but wrath which is only a calculated means to an ulterior and unavowed end has no ear for soft answers.

On Monday the 27th, the reply was issued by the Austrian Government, with its own running commentary. The following is a summary of this interesting document.[1]

Serbia

The reply begins by stating that since the promise of March 31, 1909, to which the Austrian Note refers, protests in the Skuptchina against the annexation of Bosnia have entirely ceased, nor has the Serbian Government or any of its representatives or agents made the slightest attempt to alter the state of things created by that annexation. Austria has during this period made no complaint

Austria

This very natural *clearing* of the ground Austria declares to be a *shifting* of the ground. The charge is not that the Serbian Government has officially tried to undo the annexation, but that it has 'omitted to suppress the movement against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy'. What Serbia undertook in 1909 was 'to change her attitude and the entire direction of her policies, and to enter into

[1] Austrian Book, No. 34; German Book, C.D.D. p. 417.

SERBIA	AUSTRIA
to Serbia, except on the subject of one school-book, as to which a satisfactory explanation was given. 'Serbia has several times given proof of her pacific and moderate policy during the Balkan crisis, and it is thanks to Serbia and to the sacrifices she has made in the exclusive interest of European peace, that that peace has been preserved.'	friendly and neighbourly relations with Austria '.
The Government cannot be held responsible for newspaper articles 'and peaceable work of societies', which in almost all countries are exempt from official control. Serbia has, in a great many questions which have arisen between her and her neighbour, given proof of a most accommodating spirit, so that the majority of these questions have been settled to mutual advantage.	In almost all countries (says Vienna) newspapers and societies are subject to official control, and 'this is also provided for by the Serbian institutions '. [On this statement Austria makes no comment.]
Therefore the Government has been surprised and pained to be confronted with the affirmation that Serbian subjects had been concerned in the planning of the Serajevo crime. The Government expected to be asked to assist in the investigation of the crime, and was prepared to take steps against every one accused of being implicated.	'This assertion is incorrect.' The Serbian Government knew quite well that certain definite persons were suspected and ought to have instituted investigations of its own accord. [Here there seems to be a verbal misunderstanding, real or feigned. The Serbian Government does not express surprise on hearing

SERBIA	AUSTRIA
Serbia is, however, prepared to hand over for trial any Serbian subject of whose complicity in the crime of Serajevo proofs are forthcoming.	that certain individuals are suspected, but surprise that Austria, instead of requesting that steps be taken against them, should peremptorily affirm their guilt.]
Further, she agrees to publish on the front page of the 'Official Journal,' and in the other forms demanded, the declaration prescribed in the Austrian Note, with two changes: Instead of saying: 'The Royal Government of Serbia condemns the propaganda directed against Austria', she proposes to say 'condemns *every propaganda which may be directed*, &c.'. And instead of saying, 'The Royal Government regrets that Serbian officers and functionaries participated in the above-mentioned propaganda', she proposes to say, 'The Royal Government regrets that, *according to the communication from the Austro-Hungarian Government, certain* officers and functionaries participated', &c.	The alterations 'are meant to imply that a propaganda against Austria does not exist'. 'The formula is insincere, and the Serbian Government reserves itself the subterfuge for later occasions that it had not disavowed by this declaration the existing propaganda . . . whence it could deduce further that it is not obliged to suppress in the future a propaganda similar to the present one.'
	Here again Austria detects a design 'to preserve a free hand for the future'.
Passing to the numbered demands:	
1. Serbia undertakes to introduce at the first regular session of the Skuptchina an amendment of the present law, giving the Govern-	The Austrian objection to this is scarcely comprehensible. It seems to imply that Austria will not be satisfied by Serbia's doing

SERBIA	AUSTRIA
ment full power to proceed drastically against anti-Austrian publications of any sort, and, in the coming revision of the Constitution, to take powers to confiscate any such publications.	legally what she demands, but insists that it must be done illegally. The one tangible point is that the Serbian Government does not bind itself to enforce the new laws.
2. Serbia notes that no proofs are offered of the criminal activities of the 'Narodna Odbrana' or other societies, but it nevertheless promises to suppress them.	Austria declares the tendencies of these societies to be notorious, and complains that Serbia does not promise to 'confiscate their means of propaganda, and prevent their re-establishment under other names'.
3. Serbia binds herself without delay to eliminate from public instruction anything tending to further the anti-Austrian propaganda of which the Austrian Government shall furnish proof.	Again Austria declares that proofs are entirely superfluous, and that Serbia does not promise to expel from the body of instructors as well as from the means of instruction 'all elements of hostility to the Dual Monarchy'.
4. Serbia promises to dismiss all officers and officials who shall be proved by judicial investigation to have been guilty of working against Austria, and expects Austria to furnish her with their names and with materials for proceeding against them.	Here, too, Austria objects to the dragging in of 'judicial investigations' and proof. She admits that the officers have done nothing punishable by law; therefore she can be satisfied by nothing but their summary dismissal.
5. Serbia confesses that she does not quite understand what is meant by 'accepting the collaboration of representatives of	Austria replies that international law and criminal procedure have nothing to do with the matter, which is purely one of 'state

Serbia	Austria
the Austrian Government' in Serbian territory, but ' will admit such collaboration as agrees with the principles of international law, with criminal procedure and with good neighbourly relations '.	police ', to be solved by special agreement. ' The reserved attitude of Serbia is therefore incomprehensible ', and ' would lead to unbridgeable difficulties '.
6. Serbia will, as a matter of course, take proceedings against all persons concerned in the Serajevo crime, who are on Serbian soil ; but the co-operation of Austrian officials in this investigation would be a violation of the Constitution and of criminal procedure.	Austria here accuses Serbia of deliberately misunderstanding her demand, and assuming that Austrian officials were to take part in the ' enquête judiciaire ', where it was intended only that they should assist in the police ' recherches '. This the Serbian Government wants to escape, as the investigation, ' if correctly carried out, would yield highly undesirable results for it '.
7. On receipt of the Austrian Note, the Government instantly ordered the arrest of Major Tankosic, but could not lay hands on Milan Ciganowic, an Austro-Hungarian subject, for whose arrest a warrant has been issued.	' This reply is disingenuous.' Ciganowic was spirited away by the Belgrade police three days after the assassination.
8. Serbia will render more stringent the existing measures against the smuggling of arms and explosives, and will, as a matter of course, punish those officials who permitted the assassins to cross the frontier.	[No comment.]

Serbia	Austria
9. Serbia will willingly give explanations as to any hostile utterances of its functionaries at home and abroad, after the Serajevo crime, of which Austria shall furnish proofs, and will herself collect information on the matter.	'The Serbian Government must be aware of the interviews in question. If it asks for all kinds of detail, and reserves for itself the right of a formal investigation, it shows that it does not intend seriously to fulfil the demand.'
10. Serbia will notify Austria, 'so far as this has not already been done by the present Note', of the execution of the measures in question.	[No comment.]
If Austria is not satisfied with this reply, Serbia is ready to refer the question either to the Hague Tribunal, or to the Great Powers which took part in formulating the declaration of March 31, 1909.	'The Serbian Note, therefore, is entirely a play for time.'[1]

Though the Austrian comments are drawn up with considerable ingenuity, they cannot conceal—nay, they rather throw into relief—the fact that Austria would be satisfied with nothing short of the abject, grovelling humiliation of her inconvenient neighbour. Serbia must not dare to demand proofs of Austrian allegations or to appeal to domestic law or international usage. She must not say: 'If, and in so far as, I have sinned, I repent and promise not to do it again'; she must say, 'I *have* sinned; I confess it humbly; and behold! I kiss the rod.'

The amazing concession of publishing in her Official Journal, and issuing as an Army Order, an avowal and

[1] This is the comment, not of the Austrian, but of the German Government, in republishing the document.

abjuration of national misdemeanour, is not sufficient for Austria; she will not allow Serbia to save her face by even the whisper of a conditional clause. No legal or constitutional difficulties are to be suffered to stand in the way of the instant and despotic execution of the commands of a foreign Power. Some of the Austrian objections (those, for instance, appended to Points 1 and 2) evidently refer to inadvertent omissions which a few words of explanation would have put right. Serbia would certainly have engaged to enforce the new press laws and to confiscate the 'means of propaganda' of the Societies which she promised to suppress. There is more reason for suspecting duplicity in the omission to add to the guarantee against anti-Austrian school-books the more important guarantee against anti-Austrian teachers. But if the Serbian Government was radically insincere, it would have cost it nothing to give this undertaking—and then to forget all about it. As to Points 5 and 6, if Austria really intended by them nothing inconsistent with Serbian sovereignty, she had certainly expressed herself in such a manner as to deceive not only the Serbian Ministers, but an expert like Sir Edward Grey, who remarked to Count Mensdorff on first reading the text of the note that 'to introduce Austrian officials into Serbia would be equivalent to the end of Serbian political independence'[1]—and, at that time at any rate, Sir Edward could not be suspected of any partiality for Serbia.

It should also be noted that the Serbian reply breathed no word of any sort of recrimination. It did not inquire why Austria could not govern her provinces in such a way as to prevent her subjects from plotting assassinations and involving their Serbian kinsmen in their guilt. It did not ask (as it very pertinently might) whether a muzzling order was to be issued for the Austrian as well as for the Serbian press.

No impartial reader can doubt that the Serbian Govern-

[1] Austrian Book, No. 10.

ment sincerely intended to go to the utmost possible limit of compliance. Certain it is that the conciliatory spirit of the reply struck every one as astounding. 'It exceeds all our expectations in its moderation,' said M. Sazonof, 'and in its desire to afford the fullest satisfaction to Austria.'[1] Sazonof, it may be said, is not an impartial witness; but France and England, in no way pledged to the Serbian cause, were perfectly capable, at the outset at any rate, of taking unprejudiced views; and there it was felt that the reply was all that could reasonably be desired. In Paris, M. Bienvenu-Martin, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'called the Austrian Ambassador's attention to the fact that Serbia had accepted Austria's requirements on practically every point, and that the differences that remained might vanish with a little mutual goodwill'.[2] In London, Sir Edward Grey said to Count Mensdorff that 'the Serbian reply already involved the greatest humiliation to Serbia that he had ever seen a country undergo'.[3] There can be no doubt that, if Austria had accepted the reply, with a few trifling adjustments, she would generally have been held to have won a great diplomatic victory.

Serbia humiliated did not suffice her; she must have Serbia impotent. The violent anti-Slav feeling engendered by the crime of Serajevo makes this determination comprehensible; but why did not Germany, less wrought-up and less directly interested, counsel her to hold her hand? Was Germany already, on July 25–6, bent on a European war? We need not assume so. The truth seems to be that Germany was at this point, and for two or three days more, labouring under a fatal illusion.

[1] Russian Book, No. 33. [2] French Book, No. 75.
[3] Blue Book, No. 48.

CHAPTER IX

GERMANY'S GREAT ILLUSION

'It is generally thought that once again Russia will not intervene.'—*Constantinople Report.*

It was the fixed opinion both at Berlin and at Vienna that Russia would not fight. Testimony to this fact reaches us from every hand.

We have seen how von Jagow, in his conversation with Rumbold on the 25th,[1] 'remained of opinion that the crisis could be localized'. 'I asked', says Sir Horace, 'whether it was not to be feared that, in taking military action against Serbia, Austria would dangerously excite public opinion in Russia. He said he thought not. . . . He maintained his optimistic view with regard to Russia.'

On July 26th Sir Maurice de Bunsen reported from Vienna[2] that:

> 'According to the confident belief of the German Ambassador [von Tschirscky], Russia will keep quiet during the chastisement of Serbia which Austria is resolved to inflict, having received assurances that no Serbian territory will be annexed. . . . He pointed out that the days of Pan-Slav agitation in Russia were over, and that Moscow was perfectly quiet.' Russia 'would not be so imprudent as to take a step which would probably result in many frontier questions in which Russia is interested, such as Swedish, Polish, Ruthene, Rumanian, and Persian questions, being brought into the melting-pot. France, too, was not at all in a condition for facing war.'

When Sir Edward Grey, on July 27th, telegraphs to Sir George Buchanan,[3] 'We hear from German and

[1] Blue Book, No. 18. [2] Blue Book, No. 32.
[3] Blue Book, No. 47.

Austrian sources that they believe Russia will take no action so long as Austria agrees not to take Serbian territory', he may be referring simply to these reports from Berlin and Vienna, or he may have other intelligence in mind. On the same day, however, we have independent testimony from Constantinople, where the French Ambassador reports[1] that:

> 'The Turks are delighted at the misfortunes of Serbia, but people here generally are led to believe that the conflict will remain localized. It is generally thought that once again Russia will not intervene in favour of Serbia.'

That these views result from German suggestion can scarcely be doubted.

On the following day, July 28th, the Austrian Ambassador at Berlin (Count Szogyeny) said to Sir Edward Goschen[2] that 'a general war was most unlikely, as Russia neither wanted nor was in a position to make war'. 'I think', Sir Edward adds, 'that that opinion is shared by many people here.'

On the same day (July 28th) the Italian Ambassador in Berlin reported a conversation[3] with von Jagow, in which that statesman 'again repeated to him that he did not think that Russia would move. He based this belief on the fact that the Russian Government had just sent an agent to Berlin to treat about some financial questions.'

Even so late as July 29th (Wednesday) the Marquis di San Giuliano at Rome said to Sir Rennell Rodd[4] that 'there seemed to be a difficulty in making Germany believe that Russia was in earnest'. On this date, however, Sir Maurice de Bunsen reports from Vienna[5] that 'the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here has realized, though somewhat late in the day, that Russia will not remain indifferent in the present crisis'.

[1] French Book, No. 65.
[2] Blue Book, No. 71.
[3] French Book, No. 96.
[4] Blue Book, No. 80.
[5] Blue Book, No. 94.

If only this conviction had been reached on Sunday, or even Monday, instead of on Wednesday, we might now be living in a very different world. As it was, the Central European powers were tempted by their belief in Russian inertia to go just one step too far. Austria was bent on blood-letting ; and Germany, instead of insisting on her being content with the bloodless victory of the Serbian Reply, thought it safe to play for the still more conspicuous triumph of Teutonism that would have been involved in the violent trampling to earth of a Slav state, while Russia looked idly on. In comparison with this, the ' shining armour ' exploit of 1909 would have shrunk into insignificance. In the last analysis, it was not Serbia, but Russia, that was aimed at ; and Russian prestige in the Balkans would have dwindled beyond recovery.

It was an alluring venture ; but it did not quite come off.

CHAPTER X

DIARY OF EVENTS

Sunday, July 26

'What responsibility was the German Government assuming . . . if they persisted in interposing between Austria and the Powers . . . when the slightest advice given by them at Vienna would put an end to the nightmare that weighed on Europe.'—BERTHELOT.

Vienna.

IT will be remembered (see p. 50) that on receiving an outline of the Serbian Reply, Sir Edward Grey, through Prince Lichnowsky, expressed a hope that, in view of its conciliatory tenor, Berlin would feel able to influence Vienna to take a favourable view of it. All Berlin could find it in its heart to do was to instruct von Tschirscky to pass on Grey's expressions to Berchtold—which von Tschirscky did to-day. Thereupon Berchtold telegraphed to Mensdorff[1] in London, instructing him to point out to Grey that at the very time (Saturday, 3 p.m.) when he had been conveying his suggestion to Lichnowsky, Serbia had ordered the mobilization of her army, 'which proves that no inclination for a peaceful solution existed in Belgrade'. This is a striking example of the hypocrisy which marks the whole Austrian procedure.[2] It may have been unwise to issue the mobilization-order before Austria had positively broken off relations; but to imagine that Serbia deliberately courted war with Austria, an enemy of more than sixteen times her population, is to imagine the lamb

[1] Austrian Book, No. 29.

[2] 'It is quite usual in the diplomacy of the Monarchy', says the French Ambassador in Vienna, and adds, on the authority of the Russian Ambassador, that it has 'greatly added to the irritation of the Russian Government' (French Book, No. 55).

Vienna. challenging the wolf. Proceeding from a statesman who had in his hands the almost abject Serbian Reply, the remark cannot but appear a cynical insincerity.

Herr von Tschirscky took the same line in a conversation with Sir Maurice de Bunsen,[1] parts of which have already been noted (pp. 53, 64). 'Serbia', he said, 'was about to receive a lesson which she required'; but the quarrel ought to be localized. Russia had no right to assume a protectorate over Serbia, and he did not think she would make any such claim. He asked whether Sir Maurice had been informed that Serbia had made a pretence of giving way 'at the last moment'—echoing, in the latter phrase, expressions used by Berchtold in his telegram to Mensdorff. As though forty-eight hours (reduced in practice to thirty-two) were superabundant time for drawing up so momentous a state-paper! The whole interview proves, what is asserted on every hand, that von Tschirscky was, if not the inspirer, at any rate the trusted confederate and instrument of the Austrian Government.

The Russian Ambassador, M. Schebeko, who had been encouraged by Count Berchtold to leave for Russia a few days before the Ultimatum was delivered, returned to-day, and consulted with his French and British colleagues.[2] While they were together, there arrived a telegram from Sir Edward Grey (to be afterwards noted, p. 74), containing a new proposal on the subject of Four-Power mediation. M. Schebeko and M. Dumaine 'expressed great satisfaction with its contents', but foresaw that Russia's right to 'have a say' in the Austro-Serbian dispute would be contested both in Vienna and Berlin. They also foresaw that von Tschirscky, 'in order to refuse his concurrence, would almost certainly entrench himself behind the principle of localizing the conflict'.

[1] Blue Book, No. 32.

[2] French Book, No. 55; Blue Book, No. 40.

Count Berchtold to-day sent a circular telegram [1] to the Austrian Ambassadors in Berlin, Rome, London, Paris, and St. Petersburg, announcing the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Serbia. They were instructed to inform the Governments to which they were respectively accredited that Serbia had 'refused to comply' with the Austrian demands, and that therefore Austria, 'very much against her wish', found herself 'obliged to compel Serbia, by the sharpest measures, to make a fundamental alteration in the hostile attitude she had hitherto adopted'. Vienna.

Owing to an unexplained delay in transmission, the Serbian Reply did not reach St. Petersburg to-day, though the fact of its conciliatory tendency may probably have been known, through Sir Edward Grey's telegram of the previous evening to Sir George Buchanan. St. Petersburg.

M. Sazonof to-day sent for the Austrian Ambassador and had a long and friendly talk with him, of which we have four versions — his own, Count Szapary's, M. Paléologue's, and Sir George Buchanan's.[2]

Szapary began by protesting that Austria had no ulterior designs in her action—that it was neither a move towards Salonica nor the starting-point of a 'preventive war' against Russia. 'The goal of her action was self-preservation and self-defence against hostile propaganda by word, in writing, and in action'; but that goal she was absolutely determined to reach.

Sazonof replied that the goal was a legitimate one; but, he said (according to Paléologue), 'the procedure to which you have had recourse is not defensible'. He then proposed to go over the Austrian demands point by point, and Szapary agreed, with the reservation that 'he was

[1] Austrian Book, No. 30.

[2] Russian Book, No. 25; Austrian Book, No. 31; French Book, No. 54; Blue Book, No. 44. In the Austrian Book this conversation is dated July 27th—evidently by mistake.

St. Petersburg.

not authorized either to discuss the text of the Note, or to interpret it'. Sazonof found six[1] of the ten points 'admissible without very great difficulty'. Points 1 and 2 could not be carried out without recasting the Serbian press law and associations law; while the enforcing of Points 4 and 5 'might lead to the most dangerous consequences, and even to acts of terrorism against the Royal Family'. On Point 5, Szapary was able to give the explanation authorized by Berchtold (see p. 46) that no infringement of Serbian sovereignty was intended. Sazonof, according to Paléologue, concluded, 'Take back your ultimatum, modify its form, and I will guarantee the result'. He himself phrases his proposal more diplomatically—to the effect that, in order 'to end the tension of the present moment as soon as possible', Szapary should be authorized to redraft, in consultation with Sazonof, certain articles of the Austrian Note.[2] This proposal Szapary himself does not seem to have transmitted to headquarters; but the Russian Ambassador at Vienna was instructed to convey its substance to Count Berchtold 'in a judicious and friendly manner'. It was definitely refused by Count Berchtold on Tuesday the 28th (p. 97), but was revived towards the end of the week—when it was too late.[3]

[1] Count Szapary says seven, but this is apparently a miscount.

[2] Sir George Buchanan's report of this conversation contains no new feature of importance, except that it attributes to M. Sazonof a suggestion that 'in order to put an end to the present tension, England and Italy might be willing to collaborate with Austria'. Here the text seems to need emendation. M. Schebeko said to Sir Maurice Bunsen on the following day (Blue Book, No. 56) that he understood Sazonof and Szapary 'had practically reached an understanding as to the guarantees which Serbia might reasonably be asked to give to Austria for her future good behaviour'. One suspects on reading the documents closely that Szapary, in Sazonof's presence, showed himself more amenable to reason than he dared to confess in communicating with his Government.

[3] M. Sazonof afterwards said (Blue Book, No. 78) that 'he had

It should be noted that though Szapary spoke to Sazonof of the Serbian mobilization, neither seems to have known that the Austrian Minister had left Belgrade. St. Petersburg.

By this time reports of Russian mobilization were beginning to reach Berlin, and Count Pourtalès was to-night instructed ' to make the following declaration to the Russian Government ' :

> ' Preparatory military measures by Russia will force us to counter measures, which must consist in mobilizing the army. But mobilization means war.' [1]

This, be it noted, was before Russia had actually begun to mobilize against Austria, and when there could be no reasonable suspicion of any mobilization against Germany. Count Szapary, speaking of the interview at which this announcement was no doubt made, tells us [2] that Pourtalès ' called Sazonof's attention in the most serious manner to the fact that nowadays measures of mobilization would be a highly dangerous form of diplomatic pressure ; for in that event the purely military consideration of the question by the General Staffs would find expression, and *if that button were once touched in Germany, the situation would get out of control'*.

Herr von Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, told Sir Horace Rumbold [3] that the Kaiser, of his own initiative, was returning to-night, and that the Foreign Office regretted his doing so, as his return might cause ' speculation and excitement '. Later, Herr von Zimmermann stated (what we already know) that von Tschirscky had been instructed to ' pass on ' to Berchtold Grey's hope that the Serbian Reply might be received with favour. In this act, said the Under-Secretary, ' the German Government *associate themselves to* Berlin.

proposed such an exchange of views on the advice of the German Ambassador '. The advice was probably personal, not official.

[1] German Book, C.D.D., p. 408. [2] Austrian Book, No. 28.

[3] Blue Book, Nos. 33 and 34.

Berlin. *a certain extent* with that hope. *Beyond this they do not see their way to go.'*

Herr von Jagow makes no appearance to-day, but the Chancellor sends to the German Ambassadors in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg three carefully-worded telegrams.[1] They are all to the effect that as Austria has forsworn territorial aggrandizement or infringement of Serbian sovereignty, the responsibility for 'a possible disturbance of the peace of Europe' will rest solely with Russia. After this, the telegram to London states that Russia is on the verge of mobilization, which will entail 'counter-measures' in Germany, and begs England to remonstrate at St. Petersburg 'with all possible emphasis'. The telegram to Paris makes no mention of mobilization, but says, 'We depend upon France, with which we are at one in the desire for the preservation of the peace of Europe, that it will exercise its influence at St. Petersburg in favour of peace'. The telegram to St. Petersburg merely 'trusts that Russia will undertake no steps which will threaten seriously the peace of Europe'. The interesting point in these documents is the form of the appeal to France. We shall find it develop, in the hands of Herr von Schoen, into an ingenious attempt to detach France from her Eastern ally.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires reports that 'on the news reaching Berlin that the Austrian army had mobilized against Serbia', a large crowd made noisy demonstrations in favour of Austria. There were also some slight anti-Russian demonstrations.[2]

Paris. Baron von Schoen called upon the Acting Foreign Minister at 5 p.m., and conveyed to him the substance of the German Chancellor's telegram.[3] M. Bienvenu-Martin, however, did not show himself deeply touched by the declaration that 'Germany felt herself identified

[1] German Book, Nos. 10, 10a and 10b.
[2] Russian Book, No. 30. [3] French Book, No. 56.

with France in the ardent desire that peace may be maintained'. To the suggestion that France should exercise a restraining influence at St. Petersburg, he replied, in effect, that Russia was already showing great moderation, and that it was for Germany to exercise influence at Vienna, and dissuade Austria from attacking Serbia. This, said von Schoen, 'could not be reconciled with the position taken up by Germany that the question concerned only Austria and Serbia.' At the mention of Four-Power mediation at Vienna and St. Petersburg alike, von Schoen 'entrenched himself behind his lack of instructions'. Paris.

Two hours later, the industrious diplomat presented himself at the 'Direction Politique' of the Foreign Office [1] with a proposal that, to obviate misunderstandings, the following communication should be made to the press:

> 'During the afternoon the German Ambassador and the Minister for Foreign Affairs had a fresh interview, in the course of which, in the most amicable spirit and acting in an identical sentiment of pacific solidarity, they examined the means which might be employed to maintain general peace.'

M. Berthelot (Acting Political Director) replied that, while Austria persisted in her intransigeant attitude, and Germany declined even to remonstrate with her, such a note 'would give a false security to French opinion'. Then, 'in a manner quite personal and private', he addressed to Herr von Schoen something in the nature of a 'straight talk', with the following peroration:

> 'How surprising appeared the refusal by Germany to exercise mediating influence at Vienna now that she knew the extraordinary text of the Austrian note! What responsibility was the German Government assuming, and what suspicions would rest upon them, if they persisted in interposing between Austria and the Powers, after what might be called the absolute

[1] French Book, No. 57.

Paris. submission of Servia, and when the slightest advice given by them to Vienna would put an end to the nightmare which weighed on Europe ! '

M. Berthelot's eloquence was not without its effect on Herr von Schoen, who became astonishingly conciliatory in tone. He declared that Austria was not uncompromising ; that what she shrank from was the idea of a formal mediation, the ' spectre ' of a conference [1] ; but that ' good words, in a conciliatory tone, from the Powers of the Triple Entente would have a chance of being well received '. He even added, in an effusive moment, that ' he did not say Germany would not give some advice at Vienna '.[2]

Thus ended for a time the astute attempt to lure France into an appearance of joining with Germany [3] to cast upon Russia the responsibility for the hourly more imminent war.

London. No interviews of note seem to have taken place to-day, but one very important telegram [4] was dispatched by Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassadors at Paris, Berlin, and Rome. It ran thus :

' Would Minister for Foreign Affairs be disposed to instruct Ambassador here to join with representatives of France, Italy, and Germany, and myself, to meet here in conference immediately for the purpose of discovering an issue which would prevent complications ? '

If so, Sir Edward continued, the assenting Powers

[1] It would appear from this that von Schoen was already informed of the new English proposal (see above) and had his orders as to the official line of opposition to it.

[2] Prince Lichnowsky knew better. He told Count Benckendorff (a relative of his) that ' Germany would not lend herself to any *démarche* at Vienna ' (French Book, No. 36).

[3] There is some indication in Blue Book, No. 53, that a momentary misunderstanding did in fact arise.

[4] Blue Book, No. 36.

should instruct their representatives in Belgrade, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, to urge the suspension of active military operations pending the result of the conference. London.

It seems, on the face of it, surprising that this proposal of an ambassadorial consultation in London should have been substituted for the earlier proposal of simultaneous action by the Four Powers at Vienna and St. Petersburg, *to which Germany had, in principle, consented.* Why did Sir Edward make the change? Clearly in response to M. Sazonof's offer (p. 50) that, if Serbia appealed to the Powers, 'Russia would be quite ready to stand aside, and leave the whole question in the hands of England, France, Germany, and Italy'. We know as a fact, and not merely by conjecture, that this was the reason of the change; for the French Chargé d'Affaires in London, after quoting M. Sazonof's offer, proceeds [1]: 'Sir E. Grey has taken these words as a text on which to formulate to the Cabinets of Paris, Berlin, and Rome, a proposal'— which he then details in practically the terms of Sir Edward's telegram. He adds that 'Sir A. Nicolson has spoken of this suggestion to the German Ambassador, who has shown himself favourable to it'.

Was the change a fortunate one? In view of the fact that it gave Germany an excuse for paltering with her only definite promise of co-operation, one is disposed to say 'No'. It is possible that Sir Maurice de Bunsen's account of his conversation with von Tschirscky (p. 68) led Sir Edward to feel that some change was advisable, inasmuch as nothing could be expected of any 'mediation' in which that fanatical partisan was to take a leading share. Sir Edward may have thought that the only hope of a satisfactory result lay in having Germany represented by a man of moderate views like Prince Lichnowsky. If he reasoned so, he probably reasoned justly. To expect von Tschirscky to preach moderation to Berchtold would have been like asking oil to expostulate with flame.

[1] French Book, No. 68.

London. The alteration may therefore have been a regrettable necessity; but regrettable it surely was.

From Sir Edward Grey's statement in Parliament on the following day (Monday the 27th), it would seem that he did not think of his second proposal as altering his first, but rather as supplementing and defining it. Simultaneous action at Vienna and St. Petersburg was to obtain the needful suspension of military operations, and then the ambassadorial conference was to 'endeavour to find a means of arranging the present difficulties'. This is, of course, a perfectly reasonable representation of the matter. Nevertheless the second proposal did in fact appear to modify, if not to supersede, the first, and thus favoured Germany's dilatory tactics. It might perhaps have been better to have seized upon the German promise to co-operate in simultaneous action at Vienna and St. Petersburg, and to have pressed for its immediate fulfilment, the form of procedure being left to the Germans themselves to decide. As it was, action which Berlin might perhaps have been goaded into taking on Sunday morning was postponed until Monday—probably till Monday night—and was declared on Tuesday to be 'belated' (see pp. 85, 95).

Military preparations. The Russian Consul at Prague to-day reports that 'mobilization has been decreed',[1] and from newspaper information it seems probable that, on this and the following day, Austria was mobilizing eight Army Corps.[2]

The French Chargé d'Affaires at Luxemburg reports that at Diedenhofen the reservists, 'without being completely mobilized, are forbidden to go away from their place of residence'. If this was the case at Diedenhofen (Thionville) it was probably the case elsewhere, at all events in the frontier districts. Germany's most impor-

[1] Russian Book, No. 24.
[2] Price, p. 169.

tant move to-day, however, was the recall of all her fleet from Norwegian waters.[1] Military preparations.

From France we hear to-day of 'much activity at the War Ministry' and the recall of officers on leave.[2]

As to Russia, reports are somewhat confused, but there is no reason to doubt that active preparations, short of mobilization, were going on in the districts facing the Austrian frontier. In reply to an earnest warning by Count Pourtalès [3] as to the danger of mobilization (see p. 71), M. Sazonof gave his word of honour that 'not a single horse or reservist had been called up', though 'measures of preparation were being taken in the military districts of Kieff and Odessa, and perhaps in Kazan and Moscow'. Similar assurances were given by the Minister of War, who added:

> 'If Austria crosses the Serbian frontier, the military districts of Kieff, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan, which face Austria, will be mobilized. In no circumstances will mobilization take place on the German front, Warsaw, Vilna, and St. Petersburg.[4]

The German military attaché reported (probably later in the day): 'I deem it certain that mobilization has been ordered for Kieff and Odessa. It is doubtful at Warsaw and Moscow, and improbable elsewhere.'[5] The German Chancellor in the above-noted telegram[6] to the Ambassador in London (p. 72) said that, according to information received from Russia, 'the call for several classes of the reserves is expected immediately, which is equivalent to mobilization, also against us.'[7]

[1] French Book, No. 58.

[2] Price, p. 161.

[3] Austrian Book, No. 28.

[4] It is not quite clear whether these conversations took place on Sunday the 26th or late on Saturday the 25th. The point is not important.

[5] German Book, No. 7. [6] German Book, No. 10.

[7] The last three words are omitted in the somewhat inexpert English translation officially issued in Germany.

Summary. Austria, adopting the line that the small reservations made in Serbia's acceptance of her demands amount to a refusal, announces to the Powers her intention of taking the 'sharpest measures' to bring about a change of heart in her Slav neighbour. Germany, while moving no finger at Vienna, entreats France and England to make earnest representations at St. Petersburg—that being her idea of 'localizing' the conflict. Russia admits the justice of six of the Austrian demands, and suggests that with a little goodwill the others may be modified to the satisfaction of both parties—M. Sazonof not knowing as yet that Serbia has already made even larger concessions than he would have proposed to her. France declines to fall in with a German scheme for alienating her from Russia; and England puts forth a modification of her proposal for Four-Power peace-making, which is perhaps necessary, but has the disadvantage of allowing Germany to retreat from her comparatively reasonable attitude of the day before. Meanwhile partial mobilization is going on in Austria, active preparations in Southern Russia, and measures of precaution everywhere.

CHAPTER XI

DIARY OF EVENTS

Monday, July 27

'As I was leaving, I told him [von Jagow] that this morning I had had the impression that the hour of *détente* had struck, but I now saw clearly that there was nothing in it.'—JULES CAMBON.

St. Petersburg.

THE Tsar to-day answered the telegram addressed to him on Friday the 24th by the Crown Prince of Serbia. He declared his 'cordial sympathy with the Serbian people'; stated that his Government was using every endeavour to smooth away the present difficulties; begged the Serbian Government to neglect nothing that could facilitate this task; and ended thus:

> 'So long as there remains the least hope of avoiding bloodshed, all our efforts must be directed to this end. If, in spite of our most earnest desire, we should not succeed, your Highness may rest assured that in no event can Russia remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia.'[1]

M. Sazonof, having at last[2] received the text of the Serbian Reply, telegraphed to the Russian Ambassadors abroad that its moderation exceeded all expectations, and that he did not see what further demands could be made unless Austria was merely seeking a pretext for war with Serbia.[3]

To the Ambassadors in London and Paris, Sazonof

[1] Russian Book, No. 40.

[2] The Russian Ambassador at Paris to-day made the not improbable suggestion that telegrams passing through Austria were being intentionally delayed (Russian Book, No. 36).

[3] Russian Book, No. 33.

St. Petersburg.

acknowledged receipt of Grey's proposal for a conference of ambassadors. He had, he said, entered upon conversations with Szapary which seemed to promise well; but he had not yet received an answer to his proposal for a joint revision of the Note. If this move should fail, he was ready to accept the British proposal, or any other 'that would bring about a favourable solution of the conflict'.[1]

In the afternoon he saw Sir George Buchanan, and expressed himself to the same effect [2]—Buchanan finding him 'very conciliatory and more optimistic'. Vienna had not as yet replied to his proposal of yesterday—did not, in fact, reply until to-morrow (p. 97).

Vienna.

The text of the Serbian Reply, with the Austrian embroideries, was to-day distributed to the Austrian Ambassadors.

Sir Maurice de Bunsen reports [3] that 'the country has gone wild with joy at the prospect of war with Serbia, and its postponement or prevention would undoubtedly be a great disappointment.'

[1] Russian Book, No. 32; Blue Book, No. 53. Sazonof speaks in this telegram of 'direct explanations with the Vienna Cabinet' and the 'proposal for revising the Note between the two Cabinets', which seems an odd way of alluding to consultations between himself and the Austrian Ambassador. Sir George Buchanan, too (Blue Book, No. 45), states the proposal in the form that the required modifications 'should be the subject of direct conversation between Vienna and St. Petersburg'. Nevertheless it seems clear that the proposal was nothing else than that Szapary 'should be authorized to enter into a private exchange of views in order to redraft certain articles'. This was how Sazonof himself had stated it to Schebeko (Russian Book, No. 25); it is in this form that Sir Maurice de Bunsen (Blue Book, Nos. 56 and 74) reports the suggestion; and it is in this form that Berchtold declines it (p. 97). When on July 30th, the proposal is revived, it is to '*pourparlers* at St. Petersburg between M. Sazonof and Count Szapary' that Berchtold gives his sanction (French Book, No. 104).

[2] Blue Book, No. 55.

[3] Blue Book, No. 41.

Vienna.

The principal incident of the day was a 'long and earnest' conversation between M. Schebeko and Baron Macchio, reported by Schebeko himself and by Sir Maurice de Bunsen.[1] The Russian Ambassador assured Macchio that if war broke out with Serbia it could not possibly be localized, because Russia would not give way again as she had done on previous occasions, and especially in the annexation crisis of 1909. Macchio said that it 'would now be difficult' to delay the outbreak of war, as 'a skirmish had already taken place on the Danube, in which the Serbians had been the aggressors'. Schebeko engaged to do all he could to keep the Serbians quiet, pending negotiations. To Bunsen he said that he would advise his Government to induce the Serbians to fall back before an Austrian advance, and avoid any conflict as long as possible, so as to give time for a settlement. It may be remarked that Schebeko is throughout as earnest as Sazonof in his efforts for peace, and as slow to despair of success.

In telegraphing to his Government he says the declaration that Russia could not possibly remain indifferent in the face of Austria's action (p. 40) 'has caused a great sensation here'.

Berlin.

'The Emperor William returned to Potsdam this afternoon from Kiel.'[2]

The Serbian Reply, 'presumably in consequence of a definite Austrian request,' says the *Times* correspondent, was not published here to-day. It did not appear until the evening of the 28th, and then 'in a framework of hostile comment prepared in Vienna'.[3]

[1] Russian Book, No. 41; Blue Book, No. 56.

[2] Telegram dated July 27th in the *Times*, July 28th.

[3] *Times*, July 29th. As published in the German Imperial Gazette, it did not contain 'the most humiliating of Serbia's concessions—the publication as an Army Order of Serbia's confession of wrong-doing'. The Reply appeared in the *Times* of this (Monday) morning.

Berlin. Herr von Jagow, who seems to have rested on the Sabbath, is to-day very busy—doing nothing. He has two conversations with the French Ambassador, one with the British, and one with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.

M. Jules Cambon [1] saw him first (apparently) in the morning, before either of them was aware that the proposal for simultaneous mediation at Vienna and St. Petersburg had been modified. As to that proposal, von Jagow remarked that he was still, as he had been on Saturday, 'disposed to join in'; but had he, when every moment was precious, done anything to pave the way for it? Not a thing! He now spoke of the danger of Russian mobilization, saying, however, that Germany would not be bound to mobilize if Russia mobilized only on the Austrian frontier. He authorized M. Cambon 'formally to communicate this limitation' to his Government, but three days later [2] he declared that this 'did not constitute a firm engagement'. He expressed the opinion that the proposed intervention at St. Petersburg and Vienna 'could only come into operation if events were not precipitated'—but it does not seem to have occurred to him that it was his partner, and no one else, that was precipitating events.

The next interview was with Sir Edward Goschen,[3] who also had been on leave of absence at the critical moment, but had now returned to his post. Sir Edward submitted to von Jagow the proposal for a conference of ambassadors in London, and was at once met with the objection that this 'would practically amount to a court of arbitration, and could not be called together except at the request of Austria and Russia'. In vain Sir Edward represented that there was no question of arbitration, but only of discussing the best means 'for avoiding a dangerous situation'. Von Jagow 'maintained that such a conference was not practicable', and

[1] French Book, No. 67.
[2] French Book, No. 109.
[3] Blue Book, No. 43.

added that 'it would be best, before doing anything else, to await the outcome of the exchange of views' between Sazonof and Berchtold which he now understood to be impending[1]—the exchange which Berchtold to-morrow refused. As to mobilization, he repeated to Goschen very much what he had said to Cambon. Berlin.

After learning from Goschen the result of this interview, Cambon called a second time upon von Jagow,[2] to support the English proposal. He was met, of course, by the formal objection to a 'conference'. He made the admirable reply that 'the great object which Sir Edward Grey had in view went beyond any question of form'; and he reverted to the proposal of common action by the Four Powers at St. Petersburg and Vienna, apparently without reminding von Jagow that he had already agreed to it.[3] Such action, M. Cambon observed, would have the great advantage of proving the existence of an 'esprit européen', by showing 'four Powers belonging to the two groups acting in common agreement to prevent a conflict'. Von Jagow 'evaded the point by saying that Germany had engagements with Austria', and then shuffled back to the old position that he could not intervene in an Austro-Serbian (as distinct from an Austro-Russian) dispute.

And now ensued an incident so amazing that, if it were not reported at first hand by an entirely credible witness, one would hesitate to believe it. As von Jagow kept harping on Germany's engagements towards Austria, Cambon asked if they implied following blindfold wherever Austria led, and inquired whether his Excellency had taken note of the Serbian Reply, handed to him that morning by the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires. *He answered that he had not yet had time to read it!* Here was a docu-

[1] In his later interview with Cambon he spoke as though it were actually in progress. [2] French Book, No. 74.

[3] He may not have known that the Chancellor also had given his assent.

Berlin. ment of some 1,500 words, which even a slow reader could master in ten minutes: a document on which depended (or ought to have depended) the fate of Europe: and the Foreign Minister of the German Empire, while the issues of peace and war were trembling in the balance, did not even take the trouble to acquaint himself with its contents, but went on with his diplomatic fencing-match as though it mattered nothing! What can we conclude from this except that von Jagow knew that the Reply *did* matter nothing, the bludgeoning of Serbia being fully determined on, whatever she chose to reply? It is also possible, no doubt, that he was prevaricating, and that he had not read the document handed him by the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires because its substance had already reached him from Vienna. In any case, whether real or affected, his ignorance shows that Germany was not in the least concerned to arrive at a just or reasonable solution of the Austro-Serbian difficulty,[1] but was simply playing her part in a preconcerted scheme.

M. Cambon then asked point-blank, 'Does Germany wish for war?' Von Jagow 'protested energetically'. 'You must then,' said Cambon, 'act consistently. When you read the Serbian Reply, I entreat you, in the name of humanity, to weigh the terms in your conscience, and do not personally assume a part of the responsibility for the catastrophe which you are allowing to be prepared.' To this appeal von Jagow's only answer was that 'he was ready to join England and France in a common effort, but that it was necessary to find a form of intervention that he could accept'. The possibility that he might himself propose such a form does not seem to have crossed his mind.

A dispatch from the Russian Chargé d'Affaires[2] adds an interesting detail to M. Cambon's own account of this

[1] As Sir Edward Grey, in London, remarked to Count Mensdorff this very afternoon (see p. 88).

[2] Russian Book, No. 39.

interview. Cambon suggested, says M. Bronewsky, that the Four Powers should give their advice to Vienna in this form: 'To abstain from all action which might aggravate the existing situation.' This 'vague formula' would have 'avoided all mention of the necessity for refraining from an invasion of Serbia'; but von Jagow 'gave to the proposition a sharp refusal'.[1] Not a whisper was to reach Vienna from Berlin that should in any way hamper or delay the action of Austria. Berlin.

M. Bronewsky himself had an interview[2] with von Jagow in which he begged him to support in Vienna the proposal that Szapary should be authorized to arrange with Sazonof an acceptable re-wording of the Austrian demands. Von Jagow answered that 'as Szapary had begun this conversation, he might as well go on with it', and that he would telegraph to Vienna in this sense. On being urged to put a little more warmth into his counsels he replied that 'he could not advise Austria to give way'. Note that he had just been expressing to Sir Edward Goschen and M. Cambon a lively faith in the 'very good results' to be expected from the Szapary-Sazonof conversations. The moment he is asked to use his influence towards securing these good results, his tone drops to one of shoulder-shrugging indifference. The conversations offer a splendid excuse for side-tracking other proposals, but assume a very different aspect when it is a question of doing anything to assure their success.

The Imperial Chancellor to-day sends two telegrams to Prince Lichnowsky in London.[3] They run as follows:

> '(1) We know as yet nothing of a suggestion of Sir Edward Grey's to hold a quadruple conference in London. It is impossible for us to place our ally in his dispute with Serbia before a European tribunal. Our mediation must be limited to the danger of an Austro-Russian conflict.

[1] Mr. Price's translation.
[2] Russian Book, No. 38.
[3] German Book, Nos. 12 and 15.

Berlin. (2) We have at once started the mediation proposal in the sense as desired by Sir Edward Grey. We have communicated besides to Count Berchtold the desire of M. Sazonof for a direct parley with Vienna.'

It is rather difficult to 'place' these two communications in their relation to von Jagow's activities (or inactivities) of to-day. The Chancellor's statement that the mediation proposal (as distinct from the conference proposal) has been 'started' at Vienna must have been made either before, or very shortly after, von Jagow in his second conversation with Cambon (p. 83) had been sedulously shuffling it off. There seems to be a curious lack of co-ordination between the Chancellor's and the Foreign Secretary's departments. Or are we to assume that the Chancellor, more adroit than his subordinate, recognized that the best way of blocking the conference proposal was to make some show of moving in favour of mediation, and therefore overruled von Jagow's shilly-shallying tactics on that particular point? In that case, the second telegram would be dispatched, some time in the evening, after von Jagow had reported his doings of the day. Von Tschirscky did not carry out his instructions until to-morrow,[1] and then only to be met with a curt—too late.

Here it may be noted, once for all, that the German Book *does not contain the text of a single communication from Berlin to Vienna*.[2] It gives us two short telegrams from von Tschirscky to the Chancellor, but of telegrams passing the other way we find no trace. In other words, there is no documentary evidence for the frequent assurances given by the Kaiser and his Ministers during the current week, that they are making heroic exertions at Vienna in favour of peace. The fact is, of course, that Berlin and Vienna were in close touch, not only by

[1] German Book, No. 16.

[2] A telegram alleged to have been sent by Bethmann-Hollweg to von Tschirscky on July 30th appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* for August 1st. It will be discussed in its proper place.

telegraph, but by telephone ;[1] and even of telephonic communications some record must exist in the archives of the Wilhelmstrasse. What are we to conclude, then, from the failure to publish a single line of direct proof that Berlin attempted to exercise the smallest pacific influence at Vienna ? In what court of law would verbal assertions be accepted in place of documentary evidence which is known to exist, but is not produced ? The inevitable deduction is that the documents would not bear examination. We need not assume that when the Kaiser declared he was working for peace at Vienna he was deliberately lying ; but we may be quite sure that if there was any plausible air of sincerity in his messages, or in those of his Ministers, they would be printed at full length. Berlin.

It is needless to accumulate proof that both France and Italy accepted without hesitation the proposal for an ambassadorial conference in London.[2] At no time, either in France, Italy, or Russia, was the slightest opposition offered to any movement in favour of an extension of the time-limit, a postponement of hostilities, simultaneous mediation, or a conference of ambassadors. Any and every project that seemed to hold out the remotest hope of peace was welcomed in all these capitals. Berlin was the great rock on which everything split. Paris.

To-day's events in Paris were not of much importance. The President and the Foreign Minister were still on the high seas. Herr von Schoen renewed his endeavours to make mischief between France and Russia by inducing France to exercise a restraining influence at St. Petersburg, while Germany left Vienna entirely unrestrained.[3] This would, of course, have been equivalent to declaring Austria in the right and Russia in the wrong. Von Schoen also

[1] Blue Book, No. 121.

[2] French Book, Nos. 61 and 70 ; Blue Book, Nos. 42, 49, 51, and 80.

[3] French Book, No. 62.

Paris. returned to the point that the words ' mediation ', ' intervention ', and ' conference ' were particularly objectionable to Austria. She was more willing to admit ' friendly advice ' and ' conversations '.[1]

The Austrian Ambassador handed to M. Bienvenu-Martin ' an indictment of Serbia ',[2] and stated that his Government ' found themselves obliged to take strong measures to induce Serbia to give the satisfaction and guarantees that are required of her '. To-morrow, he said, steps would be taken to that effect. It is noteworthy that he knew that ' to-morrow ' was fixed for decisive action, but had apparently heard nothing of the acts of Serbian aggression which Macchio, in Vienna, was already alleging (p. 81) as a reason for the declaration of war.

London. In London the events of Paris were almost exactly reproduced. Lichnowsky called on Grey,[3] as von Schoen called on Bienvenu-Martin, to urge that influence should be used at St. Petersburg ' to localize the war and keep up the peace of Europe '. Grey answered that, in view of the extremely conciliatory nature of the Serbian Reply, which was doubtless due to Russian influence, ' it was really at Vienna that moderating influence was now required '. ' The Serbian Reply should at least be treated as a basis for discussion and pause '—and this the German Government ought to urge at Vienna. ' If Germany assisted Austria against Russia, it would be because, without any reference to the merits of the dispute, Germany could not afford to see Austria crushed.' Other issues would then be raised, other Powers brought in, ' and the war would be the biggest ever known '. But so long as Germany would work for peace, England would keep closely in touch.

In this interview Lichnowsky repeated, what had been

[1] French Book, No. 70 ; Russian Book, No. 34.
[2] French Book, No. 75, and Enclosure.
[3] Blue Book, No. 46 ; Russian Book, No. 42.

on record two days before, that Germany 'accepted in principle' the idea of Four-Power mediation. No allusion seems to have been made to the proposed ambassadorial conference. London.

The Austrian Ambassador also called on Sir Edward Grey [1] to announce that Austria 'must at last appeal to force' against Serbia, and to expound her policy at length; but he did not, it would seem, produce the written indictment of Serbia which was delivered in Paris.[2] Sir Edward answered, in effect, that Russia would probably think, as he did, that Austria ought to be satisfied with a reply which 'involved the greatest humiliation he had ever seen a country undergo', and that, if Austria persisted in making war upon Serbia in spite of Russian feeling, 'the consequences' (in the words of the German Government) 'would be incalculable'. 'Already', he said, 'the effect on Europe was one of anxiety'; and to illustrate that fact he pointed out that the dispersal of the British Fleet, which was to have occurred to-day, had been countermanded.

There is little additional news to-day under this head. The German Consul at Kovno (near the German frontier) reports [3] that in that town a state of war has been declared —usually a preliminary to mobilization. Newspaper correspondents at St. Petersburg give vague reports of mobilization in progress or impending. Von Jagow, in Berlin, says to Goschen [4] that 'if Russia only mobilized in the south Germany would not mobilize, but if she mobilized in the north, Germany would have to do so, *and the Russian system of mobilization was so complicated that it might be difficult exactly to locate her mobilization*'. This Military preparations.

[1] Blue Book, No. 48.

[2] This was no doubt the 'dossier' which was dispatched to Count Mensdorff by post on the 28th, as appears from the Austrian Book, No. 39.

[3] German Book, No. 8.

[4] Blue Book, No. 43.

Military preparations.

remark is important as indicating, perhaps, the main reason why reports from Russia are so conflicting. Sir George Buchanan to-day expressed to M. Sazonof the hope that Russia 'would defer the mobilization ukase as long as possible'; to which Sazonof replied that 'until the issue of the Imperial ukase no effective steps towards mobilization could be taken, and the Austrian Government would profit by delay in order to complete their military preparations'.

As regards France, we have only the report of the German Minister at Berne,[1] who 'learns reliably' that the French XIVth corps has 'discontinued manœuvres'.

The French Chargé d'Affaires in London, in reporting to-day to his Government [2] that Sir Edward Grey thinks the situation serious, adds:

> 'The attitude of Great Britain is confirmed by the postponement of the demobilization of the fleet.[3] The First Lord of the Admiralty took this measure quietly on Friday on his own initiative; to-night, Sir Edward Grey and his colleagues decided to make it public.'

Sir Edward Grey, as we have seen, called the attention of the Austrian Ambassador to this significant measure.

Summary.

Everywhere, except in Berlin, the fact that Austria should decline even to discuss the extremely conciliatory Serbian Reply causes astonishment amounting to consternation. It becomes unmistakably evident that the crushing of Serbia has been decreed in Vienna, and that Berlin (so unconcerned as to the merits of the case that von Jagow does not even read the Serbian Reply) is determined that her ally shall carry out this *exécution* without any interference. The interposition of the new proposal for an ambassadorial conference in London enables Germany to play fast and loose with her consent

[1] German Book, No. 9. [2] French Book, No. 66.
[3] It had been assembled for a great review on July 18–20.

of the day before yesterday to the proposal for simultaneous mediation by the Four Powers. When at last, after a delay of at least thirty-six, probably forty-eight, hours, she does mention the idea at Vienna, it is only to be told that it is too late. Russia, meanwhile, has not quite given up hope of bringing Austria to reason by direct negotiation ; but, failing that, is prepared to accept any other method of pacification that her friends may propose, and even to postpone any irreparable clash of arms by advising Serbia to retreat before an Austrian invasion. Austria, which, only two days ago, was protesting that the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Serbia did not necessarily mean war, has now determined to declare war to-morrow.

CHAPTER XII

DIARY OF EVENTS

Tuesday, July 28

'The quintessence of the Berlin tactics was to retreat from trench to trench, and finally to disappear once for all behind the fortress of "Russian mobilization."'—*J'Accuse!*

Vienna. TO-DAY, at midday, in an open telegram from Count Berchtold to the Serbian Premier, Austria declared war on Serbia.[1]

It was just three days since Count Mensdorff had assured Sir Edward Grey (p. 48) that the breaking-off of diplomatic relations would not mean immediate war. In order to excuse her disregard of this assurance, Austria now alleged that Serbia had committed acts of aggression. We found Macchio talking yesterday (p. 81) of a 'skirmish on the Danube', and now Berchtold telegraphs to Szapary: 'Yesterday hostilities were opened against us on the Hungarian frontier on the side of Serbia', and says to Sir Maurice de Bunsen, 'Our soldiers were yesterday fired at by soldiers from over the Serbian frontier.'[2] On the other hand, Crackanthorpe this morning telegraphs from Nish (before he has heard of the declaration of war) that 'two Serbian steamers have been fired on and damaged, and two Serbian merchant vessels captured by a Hungarian monitor at Orsova'.[3] Who actually fired the first shot may never be ascertained, nor is it of the slightest importance. When international tension is acute, a 'frontier incident' may spring up at any moment, and it does not follow that the party which pulls the first trigger is the real aggressor. It is wholly

[1] Serbian Book, Nos. 45 and 46.

[2] Austrian Book, Nos. 40 and 41. [3] Blue Book, No. 65.

incredible (this the essential point) that the Serbian Government, or any responsible Serbian, desired to precipitate war with Austria. Even if they felt it to be inevitable, their cue was clearly to delay it as long as possible, in order to give their great protector time to come to the rescue. These allegations of Serbian aggression, then, are simply examples of the wolf-and-lamb tactics which we shall find Germany still more shamelessly pursuing with regard to France and Russia. Who can believe that the nations whose manifest interest and undoubted desire is to stave off hostilities to the last possible moment, are always moved by some strange madness to strike the first blow, in an aimless, ineffectual manner, without even the excuse of gaining some momentary advantage? It is to be remarked that neither in the actual declaration of war, nor in the Note to the Powers announcing it,[1] is mention made of any breach of the peace on Serbia's part. Moreover, in Count Berchtold's 'Memorandum'[2] to the German Government, of the following day, he states that the Serbian Government 'allowed three days to elapse without showing any inclination to abandon the point of view contained in their reply, whereupon the declaration of war followed on our side'—quite independently, it would seem, of any Serbian aggression. Is it too uncharitable to suspect that his Excellency did not think it worth while to address this plea to the German Government, because they, as practitioners in the same line, would know just what value to attach to it? Vienna.

When we remember, moreover, that the Austrian Ambassadors in Paris and London knew yesterday that 'strong measures' were to be taken to-day (pp. 88, 89), but did not know anything of a Serbian attack, we may safely dismiss this allegation as part of the ritual appointed to be followed by a Teutonic Power when in the act of attacking its neighbours.

[1] Blue Book, No. 50. [2] Austrian Book, No. 44.

Vienna. The Austrian proceedings of to-day and to-morrow are marked by a sort of cool, ironical insolence, quite different from the stolid obstructiveness of Berlin. There are now three proposals in the field :

1. Simultaneous mediation at Vienna and St. Petersburg by the Four Powers not directly interested.

2. A conference of ambassadors at London.

3. Conversations between M. Sazonof and Count Szapary at St. Petersburg, with a view to modifying the terms of the Ultimatum so as to secure guarantees for Serbia's future good behaviour without prejudice to her independence and sovereignty.

Mediation, conference, and conversation—such were, briefly, the methods proposed for averting the great calamity. Let us see how each in its turn was received by the Austrian Government.

1. *Mediation.* The German Chancellor had, as we saw (p. 86), passed on to von Tschirscky, late on Monday, Sir Edward Grey's proposal, already three days old. The terms of the Chancellor's communication to his Ambassador. are unknown.[1] Had there been any sincerity in his acceptance of the proposal, he would have instructed von Tschirscky, in concert with the Italian Ambassador, the Duke d'Avarna, to urge upon the third member of the Triple Alliance a postponement of hostilities pending the efforts of the Four Powers to find a peaceful issue to the situation. It is clear that the tenor of his instructions was nothing like this, and that von Tschirscky merely ' passed on ' Grey's proposal. We can almost hear him chuckling to himself as he to-day dispatches the following reply : [2]

' Count Berchtold requests me to express to your Excellency his thanks for the communication of the

[1] It appears, from Austrian Book 44, that the mediation proposal was presented in combination with the proposal (p. 88) that the Serbian Reply should be treated as a basis for discussion.

[2] German Book, No. 16.

English mediation proposal. He states, however, that after the opening of hostilities by Serbia and the subsequent declaration of war, the step appears belated.' Vienna.

'Appears belated!' This scarcely dissembled sneer strikes the keynote of Berchtold's policy of these days, which is to treat Austria's deliberate acts as 'events' beyond her control, and therefore justifying her in saying 'Hands off!' to the busybodies who want to interfere between her and her prey. Not otherwise might an assassin, urged at least to give his enemy a few minutes' grace, reply, 'Your proposal appears belated; for, see! events have already placed my finger on the trigger.' It is the old plan of forestalling remonstrance by rushing out a *fait accompli*—the policy which the Serbian Minister foresaw, more than a week ago, that Austria would adopt (p. 24), and which we shall find von Jagow to-morrow openly attributing to her.

But the Austrian Government had another ingenious reason, beyond the march of events, for rejecting Four-Power mediation. 'It is held here', says M. Dumaine,[1] 'that the formula, "Mediation between Austria and Russia", is unsuitable, inasmuch as it alleges a dispute between these two Empires which does not exist up to the present.' May we not say that evasion so unblushing as this partakes of the nature of insolence?

2. *Conference.* The conference proposal had been brought to Count Berchtold's knowledge yesterday by a telegram from Mensdorff, which he to-day sent on to Count Szogyeny in Berlin,[2] with the comment:

> 'I believe I need not specially point out to your Excellency that Grey's proposal for a conference, in so far as it relates to our conflict with Serbia, *appears*, in view of the state of war which has arisen, *to have been outstripped by events*.'[3]

[1] French Book, No. 83. [2] Austrian Book, No. 38.

[3] On the following day this phrase is repeated: 'The Serbian

Vienna. ' Appears belated ', in a more imposing form ! This was to be the ' mot d'ordre ' at Berlin.

Sir Maurice de Bunsen to-day laid the proposal officially before Count Berchtold,[1] in this form :

> ' Following the precedent of the London conference during the last Balkan crisis, the Ambassadors of the various States mentioned resident at London should, according to the view of the British Secretary of State, keep themselves in continual contact with him for the purpose indicated.'

Sir Maurice also suggested that, if it was too late to suspend hostilities altogether, the Serbians might be advised to withdraw without accepting battle, and thus give time for further deliberation before blood was actually shed. Even the prospect of such an added humiliation for Serbia did not move Count Berchtold. He ' declined to entertain the idea of a discussion based on the Serbian answer. What Austria asked for was the integral acceptance of the Ultimatum '. By anything short of this, ' Serbia would be encouraged to continue on the path it had formerly trod, and this would, in a very short time, again imperil the cause of peace.' ' The well-known pacific character of the Emperor, as well as, he might add, his own, might be accepted as a guarantee that war was both just and inevitable.' Austria, in short, was out for blood, and no bloodless triumph, however conspicuous, would now content her.

3. *Conversation.* M. Schebeko had yesterday failed to see Count Berchtold, who was reported to be ' away '.[2] Therefore it was not until to-day that the proposal for a continuance of conversations between M. Sazonof and Count Szapary was officially conveyed to him, Szapary himself having apparently not communicated it (p. 70).

Reply has already been outstripped by events.'—Austrian Book, No. 44.

[1] Blue Book, No. 62 ; Austrian Book, No. 41.

[2] Russian Book, No. 41.

Schebeko [1] ' brought to his notice in the most friendly manner how desirable it was to find a solution which, while consolidating good relations between Austria and Russia, would give the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy genuine guarantees for its future relations with Serbia '. With this object in view, M. Sazonof, through the Ambassador, proposed that ' his exchange of thought with Count Szapary should be continued ', and that Szapary should receive instructions to that effect. Berchtold, in reply, ' emphasized that he was unable to concur in such a proposal '. No one in Austria could understand or approve any discussion of the terms of the Austrian Ultimatum or negotiation on the basis of the Serbian Reply. ' This was all the more impossible as there was a deep feeling of general excitement which had already mastered public opinion. Moreover, war had to-day been declared against Serbia.' When Schebeko pointed out the danger to the peace of Europe involved in an Austrian attack upon Serbia, Berchtold replied that he was ' well aware of the gravity of the situation, and of the advantages of a frank explanation with the St. Petersburg Cabinet '. As all the points at issue were to be rigidly excluded from the sphere of the ' explanation ', it is difficult to see what end it could serve. The really ' frank explanation ' would have been that Austria, even now, did not believe that Russia would fight. Vienna.

Though it is dated to-morrow, the ' Memorandum ' [2] handed by Count Berchtold to von Tschirscky as a general answer to the English efforts at pacification is in fact a summing-up of the Austrian ideas of to-day. Part of it has already been quoted (p. 93). The only new idea that it contributes to the discussion is this :

' The Imperial and Royal Government cannot suppress their astonishment at the assumption that their

[1] Russian Book, No. 45 ; Blue Book, No. 93 ; Austrian Book, No. 40.

[2] Austrian Book, No. 44.

Vienna.

action against Serbia was directed against Russia, and Russian influence in the Balkans, for this implies the supposition that the propaganda against the Monarchy has not merely a Serbian but a Russian origin. We have hitherto rather started from the idea that official Russia has no connexion with these tendencies . . . and that our present action is directed exclusively against Serbia, while our feelings for Russia, as we can assure Sir E. Grey, are entirely friendly.'

Again, one can only ask whether the transparent insincerity of this attempt to confuse the issues may not fairly be characterized as insolent. At the very moment when Russia is offering to assist in finding guarantees for Serbia's good behaviour in the future, Austria sets up the ridiculous pretence that Russia cannot take an interest in the fate of Serbia without an implied confession that she is the instigator of the anti-Austrian agitation in that country! As though one could not interfere to prevent a friend and kinsman from being throttled without making oneself responsible for everything he might ever have done! Similarly, the suggestion that the crushing of Serbia would not impair Russian influence in the Balkans is so flagrantly nonsensical as to amount to a sheer impertinence. The attack upon Serbia was nothing if not an attack upon Russian influence, and to plead innocence of any such design was to insult the intelligence of Europe. It is childish to say, 'I mean to shoot away that flagstaff, but I have not the slightest intention of lowering the flag that is flying from it'.

St. Petersburg.

The news of the Austrian declaration of war was apparently slow to reach St. Petersburg. M. Paléologue reports[1] that 'this afternoon', but evidently before the declaration of war was known, 'M. Sazonof received the German and Austrian Ambassadors'. The impression

[1] French Book, No. 82.

left by this interview was a bad one. 'Certainly', said Sazonof to Paléologue, 'Austria is unwilling to converse.' To Count Benckendorff, he telegraphed[1]: 'The attitude of the German Government is most alarming'. They appear, he says, 'to be exerting no influence upon their ally'. He urges that England should make another attempt to induce Germany 'to take the necessary action', adding, 'There is no doubt that the key of the situation is to be found in Berlin'. St. Petersburg.

Then came the decisive news from Vienna, and Sazonof telegraphed to Benckendorff[2]: 'The Austrian declaration of war clearly puts an end to the idea of direct communications between Austria and Russia.'[3] He now begs Sir Edward Grey to 'take instant mediatory action', and, as a preliminary, to secure the suspension of military operations. If this cannot be obtained, 'mediation would only allow matters to drag on, and give Austria time to crush Serbia'.

To Sir George Buchanan,[4] M. Sazonof made it quite clear that Russia would not be satisfied with an Austrian undertaking to respect the integrity and sovereignty of Serbia, and stated that 'the order for mobilization against Austria would be issued the day that Austria crossed the Serbian frontier'. When Count Pourtalès appealed to Sir George Buchanan to give moderating

[1] Russian Book, No. 43; Blue Book, No. 54.

[2] Russian Book, No. 48; Blue Book, No. 70.

[3] It will be noted, however (p. 112), that he to-morrow returns to the idea of direct conversations, only to drop it again when Austria's formal refusal comes to hand. Herr von Tschirscky (or his superiors at Berlin) adroitly twisted this remark so as to make it appear (Austrian Book, No. 51) that Sazonof broke off the conversations. He is made to say that 'he is no longer in a position to deal directly with Austria'. It is obvious that he is not expressing any unwillingness to converse, but merely assuming that Austria's action has, in Berchtold's phrase, 'outstripped' the idea of conversations.

[4] Blue Book, No. 72.

St. Petersburg. counsels to Sazonof, Sir George replied that he 'had not ceased to do so', and that it was now von Tschirscky's turn to 'use his restraining influence at Vienna'. 'I made it clear to his Excellency', says Sir George, 'that, Russia being thoroughly in earnest, a general war could not be averted if Serbia was attacked by Austria.'

Berlin. It should be repeated that not until this evening did any of the Berlin papers publish the Serbian Reply in full, and then along with the Austrian commentary. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires, telegraphing this morning, suggests that the Wolff Bureau is holding it back, 'being well aware of the calming effect which it would have on German readers'.[1]

M. Jules Cambon had to-day an interview with Herr von Jagow,[2] which was mainly a repetition of their interview of yesterday (p. 83). The Foreign Secretary still 'expected a favourable result' from the 'direct conversations which were in progress' between Vienna and St. Petersburg.

A consultation took place between the French, British, and Italian Ambassadors,[3] at which it was agreed that if von Jagow was sincere in his desire to co-operate in the cause of peace, and only objected to the form of the British proposal, he should be asked himself to 'suggest lines on which he would find it possible to work with us' (Goschen), or 'to state precisely how diplomatic action by the Powers to avert war could be brought about' (Cambon). This suggestion was communicated to the British and French Governments by their respective Ambassadors. To the lay mind it seems that so obvious a measure of common-sense scarcely needed the sanction of headquarters. Meanwhile the Austrian Ambassador telegraphed to Vienna[4] that the conference proposal

[1] Russian Book, No. 46. [2] French Book, No. 81.
[3] French Book, No. 81; Blue Book, No. 60.
[4] Austrian Book, No. 35.

had been declined ' on the ground that it is impossible Berlin, for Germany to bring its ally before a European Court in its settlement with Serbia '. Count Szogyeny is to-day still confident, as he assures Sir Edward Goschen, that Russia ' neither wants nor is in a position to make war '.

In the evening Sir Edward Goschen called, by invitation, upon the Imperial Chancellor,[1] who was profuse in his assurances of Germany's desire ' to work together with England for the maintenance of general peace '. The proposed conference could not be accepted, ' because it would have had the appearance of an Areopagus consisting of two Powers of each group sitting in judgement on the two remaining Powers '. Nevertheless, he was doing his very best, both at Vienna and St. Petersburg, to promote direct conversations, as to the result of which he had great hopes. But if it was true that Russia had mobilized fourteen army corps in the south, ' he thought the situation was very serious ', as he could no longer ' continue to preach moderation at Vienna '. If war were to result, ' Russia would be entirely responsible '. When Sir Edward Goschen suggested that, after Austria's refusal to take any notice of the Serbian Note, ' surely a certain portion of the responsibility would rest with her ', his Excellency replied that Austria's standpoint, with which he agreed, was that her quarrel with Serbia was ' a purely Austrian concern, with which Russia had nothing to do '.

Since the Chancellor thus approved without reserve the whole of Austria's conduct and contentions, it would be interesting to know what was the nature of the ' moderation ' he preached at Vienna. He had not preached the extension of the time-limit, he had not preached the acceptance or the discussion of the Serbian Reply, he certainly was not now preaching the postponement of

[1] Blue Book, No. 71. This must be the interview referred to in the last half of French Book, No. 92, though by some slip M. Cambon appears to refer to the interview of July 29.

Berlin. hostilities. What was he recommending Vienna to do? To continue 'conversations' with St. Petersburg? Perhaps; but since he held with Berchtold that Russia had no business to interfere in the Austro-Serbian dispute, how could he expect these conversations to lead to any result? 'Moderation' was a perfectly meaningless word unless it implied some slight unbending on Austria's part, and it is evident that Bethmann-Hollweg was 'preaching' nothing of the sort. In this interview, as throughout, we see clearly that Germany's idea of 'working for the maintenance of peace' was simply to secure by hook or by crook Russia's passive acquiescence in the Austrian *coup*.

At 10.45 this evening we hear for the first time the voice of the Kaiser in person. He sends a telegram[1] to the Tsar, denouncing the 'revolting crime' of Serajevo and the 'unscrupulous agitation' which has led up to it. All monarchs, he suggests, must stand together in self-defence. But as he fears that the Tsar and his Government may have difficulty in 'stemming the tide of public opinion', he will 'use his entire influence to induce Austria to obtain a frank and satisfactory understanding with Russia'. Here again we are left to speculate as to what can have been the nature of the 'understanding' which his Majesty had in mind. He certainly had not used his influence to induce Austria to abate one jot of her intransigeance, or even to defer the outbreak of hostilities. It is hard to believe in the sincerity of protestations which evidently do not imply the smallest intention of putting any check upon Austria.

Paris. Von Schoen, in Paris, faithfully reflects the attitude of Berlin. He assures Bienvenu-Martin[2] that 'Germany only asks that she may act with France for the maintenance of peace', but adds, 'provided that action does not take the form of arbitration or a conference', and

[1] German Book, No. 20. [2] French Book, No. 78.

fails to suggest any other form of action. He also frankly confesses that 'Germany refuses to exercise any pressure on Austria'. The British Ambassador adds[1] that von Schoen repeated that Austria would respect the integrity of Serbia, 'but when asked whether her independence also would be respected, he gave no assurance'. We shall have to bear this reservation in mind when we consider, in the next chapter, whether Russia ought to have been satisfied with Austria's disclaimer of any intention of conquest. Paris.

In London, as in Paris, this was a day of comparative inactivity. There was nothing to do but to await the development of the two ideas which (so far as was known) held the field: (1) Four-Power intervention in one form or another; (2) direct conversations between Russia and Austria. Sir Edward Grey telegraphed to the Ambassador in Berlin[2] that he had not proposed any sort of 'arbitration', but simply 'a private and informal discussion to ascertain what suggestion could be made for a settlement'. Germany having 'accepted the principle of mediation', Sir Edward was quite ready to let von Jagow himself 'suggest the lines on which this principle should be applied'. But he thought it best to 'keep the idea in reserve' until the result of the conversations between Austria and Russia should be ascertained. He did not know that Berchtold had refused to sanction their continuance, and that Sazonof assumed them to be broken off by the fact of the declaration of war. London.

The Russian Ambassador at Vienna to-day reported[3] that 'the order for general mobilization had been signed'. Either he was misinformed or the order was signed without being issued, for Russia admits[4] that general mobilization was not proclaimed until the 30th. At this Military preparations.

[1] Blue Book, No. 59.
[2] Blue Book, Nos. 67 and 68.
[3] Russian Book, No. 47.
[4] Russian Book, No. 77.

Military preparations.

time, according to the Russian account, 'the mobilization of half of the Austrian army had been ordered.'

M. Sazonof to-day instructed the Russian Ambassador at Berlin [1] to announce to the German Government that in consequence of Austria's declaration of war against Serbia, mobilization would be 'announced' to-morrow (the 29th) in the military circumscriptions of Odessa, Kieff, Moscow, and Kazan. At the same time he was to declare 'the absence in Russia of any aggressive intention against Germany'. There is no reason to doubt, however, that preparations verging on, if not amounting to, mobilization were already in progress in these districts. This does not mean that Russia had any intention of deceiving Germany, but simply that she delayed to the last possible moment the utterance of the ominous word 'mobilization'. Count Berchtold to-day instructs Count Szogyeny,[2] in Berlin, to call the attention of the German Government to the 'extensive military preparations' being made by Russia, and to suggest that Germany should 'in a friendly manner' convey to the Russian Government that 'should these measures be carried out, they would be answered by the most extensive military counter-measures, not only by the Monarchy, but by our ally, the German Empire'. In other words, Austria hints that it is high time to bring the 'shining armour' upon the scene.

We have seen that in his conversation of this evening with Sir Edward Goschen (p. 101), the Imperial Chancellor complained bitterly of Russian mobilization as hampering his pacific efforts. 'Austria, who was as yet only partially mobilizing, would have to take similar measures, and if war were to result, Russia would be entirely responsible.'

From both Germany and France we have to-day newspaper reports of considerable military activity, but no evidence of any very definite movement.

[1] Blue Book, No. 70. [2] Austrian Book, No. 42.

Summary.

With the usual formality of attributing the first act of aggression to her adversary, Austria declares war upon Serbia. She asserts that 'events have outstripped' any proposal for mediation or for a conference of ambassadors, and refuses to continue any discussion with Russia of the terms of her Ultimatum or of the Serbian Reply. Her attitude, in short, is one of absolute intransigeance at all points. The German authorities, from the Kaiser downward, still protest their desire for peace, and declare that they are working for it with all their might, but produce no evidence of having taken, or even permitted, any single step that could practically conduce to that end. To-day, as always, they are simply acting as a screen for their ally. Russia abandons hope of coming to a direct understanding with Austria, but is still willing to accept any form of mediation, if only Austria will suspend active hostilities. France and England, meanwhile, can do nothing but await developments.

CHAPTER XIII

AUSTRIA'S GUARANTEE OF SERBIAN 'INDEPENDENCE'

'The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is actuated by no selfish motives in appealing to arms in order to reach a settlement of her differences with Serbia.'—COUNT BERCHTOLD.

Now that Austria has taken the irrevocable step of declaring war upon Serbia, it is time to consider whether there can have been any sincerity in her contention that this did not imply a challenge to Russia, and ought not to have been so regarded by that Power.

It was manifest that, so long as race and religion count for anything in political groupings, Russia was the natural protector of the smaller Slav and Orthodox states. From an ideal point of view, it may be undesirable that race and religion should be potent factors in national and international life; but Austria was the last Power which could plausibly affect any such idealism. Her polity was built, not on the effacement of race boundaries, but on the domination of race by race. It was ridiculous, then, to pretend that, in the world as it is, a great Slav empire could possibly be indifferent to the crushing of a small Slav state by a Germano-Magyar empire. It was not only inevitable but right that Russia should be sympathetically interested in the fate of Serbia. Only from the extreme non-resistance standpoint —the standpoint of an impracticable idealism—can this position be contested.

Russia's warm interest in the Slav states of the Balkans was, as Sir Edward Grey phrased it in 1913, 'a commonplace of European diplomacy'. 'We were perfectly aware', says the official German statement,[1] 'that a war-

[1] German Book, C.D.D., p. 406.

like attitude of Austria against Serbia might bring Russia upon the field.' Nor had Russia herself failed to give Austria ample warning that she would, in case of necessity, make Serbia's cause her own. As Sir Maurice de Bunsen reminded Count Forgach,[1] ' during the discussion of the Albanian frontier at the London Conference of Ambassadors, the Russian Government had stood behind Serbia ', and the accepted frontier-line was the result of a compromise between the views of Russia and of Austria. M. Sazonof also declared[2] that ' during the Balkan crisis he made it clear to the Austrian Government that war with Russia must inevitably follow an Austrian attack on Serbia. It was clear that Austrian domination of Serbia was as intolerable for Russia as the dependence of the Netherlands on Germany would be to Great Britain '. Austria, then, was under no illusion as to the fact that Russia would unquestionably consider an attack upon Serbia as touching both her honour and her interests. Count Berchtold, indeed, in his dispatch to Count Szapary of Saturday the 25th,[3] said :

> ' We were, of course, aware, when we decided to take serious measures against Serbia, of the possibility that the Serbian dispute might develop into a collision with Russia. We could not, however, allow ourselves to be diverted by this eventuality from the position we took up towards Serbia, because fundamental considerations of national policy brought us face to face with the necessity of putting an end to the state of affairs in which a Russian charter made it possible for Serbia to threaten the Monarchy continuously, without punishment and without the possibility of punishment.'

Thus the Austrian air of surprise that Russia should hold herself in any way concerned in the settlement of this ' local ' dispute was the thinnest of affectations.[4]

[1] Blue Book, No. 118. [2] Blue Book, No. 139.

[3] Austrian Book, No. 26.

[4] Von Tschirscky, the most faithful mirror of the Austrian frame of mind, was not slow to adopt (if he did not inspire) this

There remains, however, the official Austro-German contention that Russia, however much interested in Serbia, ought to have been satisfied by Austria's assurance that she desired no territorial aggrandizement, but would respect Serbian integrity and independence. For days the air was full of these asseverations. If they appear once in the documents, they appear fifty times. The implication was that, as Russia admitted Serbia to be in some measure in the wrong, she ought not to try to shield her from condign chastisement by any method short of dismemberment or total subjection.

On this point Count Berchtold himself reports a remark of M. Schebeko which strikes at the root of the Austrian argument.[1] Austria's warlike action, said the Russian Ambassador, ' would not in any way suppress the admitted hostile opinion in Serbia, but, on the contrary, would only increase it '. This is self-evident. If Serbia hated Austria before, her hatred would certainly be ten times embittered after a devastating invasion. It is manifest, therefore, that Austria could not possibly afford to leave to Serbia anything that could properly be called independence. She might not actually annex territory or deprive Serbia of the nominal right of self-government; but, if the Serbian menace of which she complained was not to be incomparably greater after than before the war, she was bound to render Serbia permanently powerless to take any revenge. She was bound, in short, to ' bleed her victim white ', and take precautions against any possible revival of national strength and spirit. That being so, it mattered little whether Serbia were or were not formally annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She must certainly be reduced to such a condition of helplessness that her national life should exist entirely on

pose. ' The German Ambassador ', says Sir Maurice de Bunsen on July 29th, ' feigns surprise that Serbian affairs should be of such interest to Russia ' (Blue Book, No. 94).

[1] Austrian Book, No. 40.

Austria's sufferance, and might be snuffed out at any moment. We have seen (p. 103) that Herr von Schoen, in Paris, while asserting that Austria would respect Serbia's integrity, declined to commit himself on the subject of her independence. Here he was departing from his instructions, for 'integrity and independence' (or 'sovereignty') were guaranteed over and over again by the authorities in Vienna and Berlin. But he doubtless knew that to talk of 'independence', under the circumstances, was a mere playing with words, and saw no use in keeping up the comedy.

In well-informed quarters in Vienna the report ran[1] that 'the object of Austria was to crush and disarm Serbia, and in particular to capture the Serbian artillery, and to compel Serbia to reduce her army in future to inoffensive proportions'. This may or may not have been Austria's precise design, but we may be sure that it was something like this, for anything less drastic would have left her position, not more, but less, secure. An independent Serbia, with any offensive or even defensive power, would have been no longer a thorn in her side, but a poisoned spear-head. Therefore there can be no reasonable doubt that the 'independence' and 'sovereignty' she proposed to leave to her beaten foe would have been merely nominal—an undeceptive sham.[2]

Could Russia, then, be reasonably expected to find satisfaction in such patently hollow assurances? Clearly not. 'It would be quite possible', said Sir Edward Grey to Count Mensdorff[3] on July 29th, 'without nominally interfering with the independence of Serbia, or taking away any of her territory, to turn her into a sort of vassal state.' He might have gone further and said it was not only possible but certain that Austria would

[1] Vienna telegram to *The Times*, July 29th.

[2] See Headlam, p. 81, for a very clear demonstration that Austria could not, if she would, have left to Serbia any real independence.

[3] Blue Book, No. 91.

endeavour to do so, since nothing less would serve her avowed purpose. M. Sazonof, of course, saw this clearly from the first. Already on July 28th (Tuesday) he stated explicitly to Sir George Buchanan[1] that 'Russia would not be satisfied with any engagement which Austria might take' as to Serbian integrity and independence; and on July 31st (Friday) he said to Count Szapary[2] that 'the real question which they had to solve at this moment was whether Austria was to crush Serbia and reduce her to the status of a vassal, or whether she was to leave Serbia a free and independent State'. There can be no doubt that Russia thought her honour as well as her interest involved in the continued existence of a really, as distinct from a nominally, independent Serbia. She admitted that Austria had just grounds of complaint in the past conduct of Serbia, and she actually offered (p. 97) to discuss the best means of securing the Dual Monarchy against similar trouble in the future. Had this proposal been accepted there would have been an end to the state of affairs alleged by Count Berchtold (p. 107), in which 'a Russian charter made it possible for Serbia to threaten the Monarchy continuously, without punishment'. Austria would practically have had Russia's guarantee for the good behaviour of Serbia, and, *had that been all she had in view*, her end would have been achieved without bloodshed, through the medium of an almost unexampled diplomatic triumph. The fact that this did not content her proves very clearly that her real aim was not merely to protect herself against Serbian agitation, but once for all to sweep Serbia out of her path in the Balkans. Can any impartial person say that Russia was to blame for not looking on idly at this exploit of *Machtpolitik*?

The psychology of Austria's statecraft is clear and characteristic. She gambled on Russia's imagined impotence. Believing that her great neighbour had neither

[1] Blue Book, No. 72. [2] Blue Book, No. 139.

the will nor the strength to intervene, she kindly provided her with a plausible excuse for her supposed pusillanimity, in the shape of a perfectly meaningless promise to respect Serbian independence. 'Russia does not want to fight', she argued, 'but lest the humiliation of acquiescence should prove more than she can bear, we will offer a sop to her self-esteem by disclaiming any project of annexation.' It was an ingenious conception, vitiated only by the fact that the hypothesis from which it started happened to be false. We shall find an exact parallel in Germany's offer to buy the neutrality of Great Britain by promising to respect the territorial integrity of France. Indeed, the two manœuvres are so strikingly similar that one almost wonders whether they may not have formed part of a carefully predetermined scheme, engendered in a single brain.

CHAPTER XIV

DIARY OF EVENTS

Wednesday, July 29

'. . . The purely military consideration of the question by the General Staffs would find expression, and if that button were once touched in Germany, the situation would get out of control.'
—COUNT POURTALÈS.

FROM this time forward, questions of military preparation and mobilization come so much into the foreground that they cannot conveniently be treated in a section apart. The heading of 'Military Preparations' will, however, be retained, and those details will be grouped under it which do not appear in other parts of the record.

Belgrade. The Austrians to-day began the bombardment of Belgrade, but not, apparently, until the late afternoon or evening, so that the negotiations of the day were little, if at all, influenced by the actual outbreak of hostilities.

St. Petersburg. M. Sazonof to-day addresses two telegrams to Count Benckendorff in London—one before, the other after, he has heard of Austria's refusal to continue conversations.

In the former [1] he recounts a conversation with Count Pourtalès, to whom he repeated the declaration he had already made at Berlin, that none of Russia's military measures were directed against Germany. Pourtalès expressed himself 'in favour of direct explanations' between the Russian and the Austrian Governments; whereupon Sazonof replied that this procedure did not exclude the proposed Four-Power conference, but that

[1] Blue Book, No. 93 (2); Russian Book, No. 49.

the two methods of negotiation might be carried on simultaneously. He suggested, in fact, 'parallel discussions . . . on much the same lines as occurred during the most critical moments of last year's crisis'. St. Petersburg.

In the second telegram [1] M. Sazonof says that after 'the refusal of the Vienna Cabinet to agree to a direct exchange of views', nothing remains but for him 'to rely entirely on the British Government to take the initiative in any steps which they may consider advisable'.

The extreme moderation of his attitude appears in his subsequent interview with Sir George Buchanan,[2] in which he urged that 'a return should be made to Sir Edward Grey's proposal for . . . an exchange of views between the three Ambassadors less directly interested, Sir Edward Grey himself, *and also the Austrian Ambassador, if Sir Edward thought it advisable.* Any arrangement approved by France and England would be acceptable to him, and he did not care what form conversations took'. He was even prepared to admit a suggestion, emanating from Rome,[3] that 'Serbia might be induced to accept the Note [the Ultimatum] in its entirety on the advice of the Four Powers invited to the conference', which would 'enable her to say that she had yielded to Europe and not to Austria alone'. M. Sazonof said that he would agree to this, provided it was acceptable to Serbia; he could not be more Serbian than Serbia. 'Some supplementary statement or explanations would, however, have to be made, in order to tone down the sharpness of the Ultimatum.'

In short, Russia was willing to place herself without reserve in the hands of the Four Powers, or, as M. Paléologue to-day expressed it,[4] 'to acquiesce in any measure which France and England may propose in order to maintain peace'. Only she could not, by refraining from

[1] Blue Book, No. 93 (3); Russian Book, No. 50.
[2] Blue Book, No. 78.
[3] Blue Book, No. 57.
[4] French Book, No. 86.

St. Petersburg.

any military preparation, allow Austria to suppose that she was absolutely free to do what she pleased with Serbia. Therefore, as Sir George Buchanan announced in the first line of the dispatch above cited: 'Partial mobilization was ordered to-day'.

It may have been in consequence of instructions arising out of Count Berchtold's appeal (p. 104) to Berlin to put its foot down, that Count Pourtalès paid a second visit to M. Sazonof,[1] and, repeating his threat of three days earlier (p. 71), 'informed him of the decision of his Government to mobilize, if Russia did not stop her military preparations'. 'As we cannot comply with the wishes of Germany', says M. Sazonof in a circular telegram to the Russian Ambassadors, 'we have no alternative but to hasten on our own military preparations, and to assume that war is probably inevitable.' 'The tone in which Count Pourtalès delivered his communication', says M. Paléologue,[2] 'has decided the Russian Government this very night to order the mobilization of the thirteen army corps which are to operate against Austria.' In an earlier telegram,[3] M. Paléologue stated that 'the Russian General Staff have satisfied themselves that Austria is hurrying on her military preparations against Russia, and is pressing forward the mobilization which has begun on the Galician frontier. As a result, the order to mobilize will be dispatched to-night to thirteen army corps'. It is clearly not accurate, then, to represent this action as being decided by the tone of Pourtalès's communication. The probability is that, as M. Sazonof's

[1] Russian Book, No. 58. M. Sazonof next day told Sir George Buchanan (Blue Book, No. 97) that Pourtalès said his Government were willing to guarantee that Serbian integrity would be respected by Austria. 'To this he replied that this might be so, but nevertheless Serbia would become an Austrian vassal, just as, in similar circumstances, Bokhara had become a Russian vassal. There would be a revolution in Russia if she were to tolerate such a state of affairs.'

[2] French Book, No. 100.

[3] French Book, No. 91.

own statement suggests, the effect of the German threat was to infuse new vigour into the Russian preparations. St. Petersburg.

Pourtalès himself gives a curious account of this interview,[1] or at all events of an interview of this date, which can scarcely have been the comparatively friendly talk of the morning. He dilated on 'the baneful step of mobilization', and said that 'Russia was now demanding of Germany, in regard to Austria, the same thing that Austria was being blamed for in regard to Serbia, i.e. an infraction of sovereignty'. This ridiculous remark was afterwards (somewhat inaccurately) quoted by Bethmann-Hollweg, with special approval. As though an effort to influence the will of a Government by persuasion, or even by threats, were an 'infraction of sovereignty' in any way analogous to Austria's demand that her agents should participate with authority in the internal administration of Serbia! Pourtalès then went on to say that 'there would be time enough at the peace conference to return to the matter of forbearance towards the sovereignty of Serbia'—'forbearance' towards what Austria was swearing by all her gods that she did not in any way threaten! 'It was impossible', he concludes, 'to dissuade Sazonof from the idea that Serbia could not now be left in the lurch (*im Stich gelassen*) by Russia.'

And the German Government, which publishes only a small selection from its correspondence, actually gives the Ambassador's confession of his own stupidity and tactlessness a prominent place in its anthology! The more one examines the German documents, scanty as they are, the stronger is one's impression of the insensitiveness, the maladroitness of German diplomacy. Its fingers are all thumbs.

A third interview between Sazonof and Pourtalès, in the small hours of the night, may best be considered in relation to the decisive events which took place this evening in Berlin and Potsdam.

[1] German Book, C.D.D., p. 409.

St. Petersburg.

After Pourtalès had left him, M. Sazonof had a long visit from Count Szapary,[1] who did his best to soften the effect of Berchtold's refusal to discuss the Serbian question, by suggesting 'a much broader basis of discussion' and 'declaring that Austria had no desire to injure any Russian interests'. Sazonof replied, in effect, that Serbian interests were Russian interests, and that even though Austria might stop short of annexation of territory, she was evidently determined to reduce Serbia to a vassal state. The discussion, as Szapary himself puts it, moved in a vicious circle. It naturally ended in an effort, by both diplomats, to minimize the significance of the military preparations of their respective countries. Szapary maintained that the mobilization of Austria's southern corps 'could not constitute a menace for Russia'; to which Sazonof replied that the Russian mobilization was 'only a measure of prudence which the Emperor Nicholas had found to be justified, since Austria, which in any case had the advantage of quicker mobilization, had now also already so great a start'.

Vienna.

Little is to-day heard from Vienna—indeed, nothing at all from Austrian sources. Both the French and the British Ambassadors[2] telegraph early in the day that nothing can usefully be done to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between Austria and Serbia. Austria 'is now fully committed by the Emperor's appeal to his people, which has been published this morning'. It is mentioned that the Italian Ambassador thinks it 'very probable that the imminence of a general insurrection among the Southern Slavs precipitated the resolutions of the Monarchy'.

In the evening Sir Maurice de Bunsen reports,[3] as before noted (p. 65), that Austria has realized, too late, that Russia is in earnest. He has heard from the Russian

[1] Austrian Book, No. 47.
[2] French Book, No. 93; Blue Book, No. 79.
[3] Blue Book, No. 94.

Ambassador of the Russian mobilization, but it is not yet generally known in Vienna. This telegram is notable as recording Herr von Tschirscky's solitary utterance—and that a very guarded one—of a pacific tendency. He said that: Vienna.

> 'If proposals were put forward which opened up any prospect of possible acceptance by both sides, he personally thought that Germany might consent to act as mediator in concert with the three other Powers.'

Had he, too, begun to realize that the game was a more dangerous one than he had bargained for?

M. Bienvenu-Martin makes his last appearance this morning; for the President and M. Viviani return early in the afternoon, and take the reins out of his hands. Paris.

M. Martin opens the day, as is his habit, with an excellent summary of the situation, addressed as a circular to the French Ambassadors.[1] It shows a remarkably just appreciation of the forces at work, but adds nothing to our previous knowledge. Later in the day, M. Martin reports a semi-official communication from the German Ambassador,[2] to the effect that the German Government are 'continuing their efforts' to induce the Austrian Government to 'state exactly the object and extent of the operations in Serbia', and that they 'hope to receive declarations which will be of a kind to satisfy Russia'. We shall consider later (p. 123) whether this is merely another device for wasting time, or can be regarded as a sincere though feeble movement in the direction of peace. Herr von Schoen's note concluded with the remark: 'The German efforts are in no way impeded by the declaration of war which has occurred'. Austria's declaration of war mattered nothing, but Russia's mobilization, as we shall see anon, was fatal to the exertions of these eager peacemakers.

[1] French Book, No. 85. [2] French Book, No. 94.

Paris. M. Viviani, in a dispatch of this afternoon [1] to M. Paul Cambon in London, makes the best of the German move, and urges that Sir Edward Grey should follow it up by as soon as possible renewing at Berlin his proposal for Four-Power mediation, ' which had in principle obtained the adherence of the German Government '. He thinks that the ' explanations ' which Berlin is going to extract from Vienna ' will allow the Four Powers to exercise effective action between Vienna and St. Petersburg '.

From a telegram addressed by the Russian Ambassador to his Government,[2] it appears that Viviani saw von Schoen and urged that Germany ' should hasten to give her support to the British proposal for mediation '. Von Schoen once more took refuge behind Austria's objection to the words ' conference ' and ' arbitration ' ; to which Viviani retorted, as did Cambon in Berlin (p. 83), ' that it was not a question of words, and that it would be easy to find some other form for mediation '.

London. Two very important interviews took place to-day between Sir Edward Grey and Prince Lichnowsky.[3] In the first, the German Ambassador spoke of Austria and Russia being ' in constant touch ', and apparently did not know that Berchtold had broken off the conversations, until Sir Edward Grey informed him of the fact. Lichnowsky also spoke of Germany's efforts ' to make Vienna explain in a satisfactory form at St. Petersburg the scope and extension of Austrian proceedings in Serbia '—a movement on which Sir Edward made no definite comment. While agreeing that a direct arrangement between Austria and Russia would be ' the best possible solution ', he pointed out that there was now little chance of this, and begged that the German Government, having accepted

[1] French Book, No. 97.

[2] Russian Book, No. 55.

[3] Blue Book, Nos. 84 and 90 ; French Book, No. 98 ; Russian Book, No. 54.

in principle the idea of Four-Power mediation, should do something to give it effect. London.

'They seemed to think the particular method of conference, consultation or discussion, or even conversations *à quatre* in London, too formal a method. I urged that the German Government should suggest any method by which the influence of the Four Powers could be used together to prevent war between Austria and Russia. France agreed, Italy agreed. The whole idea of mediation or mediating influence was ready to be put into operation by any method that Germany could suggest if mine was not acceptable. In fact, mediation was ready to come into operation by any method that Germany thought possible, if only Germany would "press the button" in the interests of peace.'

It was in this conversation, too, that Sir Edward Grey handed to Prince Lichnowsky a copy of a telegram [1] from Sir Rennell Rodd, in Rome, reporting a suggestion made by the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires to the Italian Foreign Minister, that if the Powers would do, what Austria would not, and offer to Serbia some explanation of the part to be played by Austrian agents under Articles 5 and 6 of the Ultimatum, Serbia might still accept the whole of that document. This, said Sir Edward, he gave to the Ambassador simply for his information, feeling that he himself could not move in the matter, 'so long as Austria would accept no discussion with the Powers over her dispute with Serbia'. He had, indeed, begun to doubt whether Austria would now be satisfied by a complete acceptance of her demands. 'As to mediation between Austria and Russia', he said, 'it could not take the form of simply urging Russia to stand aside while Austria had a free hand to go to any length she pleased.' Prince Lichnowsky replied that the view of the German Government was 'that Austria could not by force be humiliated'. To this Sir Edward entirely agreed, but said 'it was not a question of humiliating Austria; it was a question of

[1] Blue Book, No. 64.

London. how far Austria meant to push the humiliation of others. There must, of course, be some humiliation of Serbia, but Austria might press things so far as to involve the humiliation of Russia'. The situation in a nutshell!

The second conversation took place in the afternoon.[1] Sir Edward Grey now alluded to the German Chancellor's effort to make Vienna satisfactorily explain her intentions with regard to Serbia, and said, 'If he succeeded, well and good'. But if not, it was more important than ever that Germany should propose some practical method of Four-Power mediation. To this end, however, a suspension of military operations was indispensable, as otherwise 'mediation would only drag on matters, and give Austria time to crush Serbia'. Austrian forces would no doubt soon be in Belgrade and in occupation of some Serbian territory. But even then hope need not be abandoned 'if Austria, while saying that she must hold the occupied territory, until she had complete satisfaction from Serbia, stated that she would not advance further, pending an effort of the Powers to mediate between her and Russia'.

Then Sir Edward Grey took a step (more fully discussed in Chapter XVIII) which was as judicious as it was straightforward and honourable. While Germany, a country with which we had no quarrel, professed to be working towards the great common end of European peace, there was of course no reason why the tone of discussion between the British Foreign Secretary and the German Ambassador (himself an amiable man) should not be entirely friendly. But Sir Edward now conveyed to Prince Lichnowsky, in the most considerate terms, that he must not let this fact mislead him into the belief that Britain would, under all circumstances, stand aside from any war that might ensue. In other words, the good feeling which had prevailed in their personal relations, and the absence of bluster or menace in British policy, must not be interpreted as impairing

[1] Blue Book, Nos. 88 and 89.

Britain's freedom of action or engaging her to neutrality. Prince Lichnowsky took the warning in the spirit in which it was offered, and said that 'it accorded with what he had already given in Berlin as his view of the situation'. London.

Before speaking in these terms to Prince Lichnowsky, Sir Edward Grey had had a parallel explanation with M. Paul Cambon.[1] He told him what he proposed to say to the German Ambassador, but added that this must not be regarded as indicating a resolution to make common cause with France. Public opinion, he said, distinguished between the present difficulty and the Morocco question. In that case 'the dispute was one in which France was primarily interested', and Germany 'was fastening a quarrel on France on a question that was the subject of a special agreement between France and us'. Here, on the other hand, France was being drawn into a quarrel which was not hers, in virtue of her alliance with Russia. That being so, he reminded him that 'we were free from engagements, and should have to decide what British interests required us to do'. M. Cambon 'seemed quite prepared for this announcement, and made no criticism upon it'.

In the light of after events, the caution which dictated this explanation to Cambon may seem excessive. It could at worst do no harm, however, and it obviated any possibility of misunderstanding. Incidentally, it affords incontrovertible proof that the Entente involved us in no secret responsibilities, and that Sir Edward Grey's devotion to peace was such as to put him on his guard against any temptation to Quixotism, even in his sympathy for France.

The crucial events of the day, and indeed of the whole crisis, occurred this evening in Berlin. Berlin.

The morning, however, opened calmly enough. There was even a slight appearance of a disposition on the part

[1] Blue Book, No. 87.

Berlin. of the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary to do something, however little, for peace. This we gather from three interviews which may be considered as closely connected: (1) between Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg and Sir Edward Goschen; (2) between Herr von Jagow and Sir Edward Goschen; (3) between Herr von Jagow and M. Jules Cambon.[1]

The Chancellor sent for the British Ambassador, and said that he had communicated to the Austrian Government Sir Edward Grey's opinion that the Serbian Reply might form the basis of discussion, and that the answer had been 'that events had marched too rapidly'. Von Jagow, a little later, put the case more frankly and less elegantly. He reminded Sir Edward Goschen that he had said he must be very careful in giving advice to Austria, else she would be likely 'to precipitate matters and present a *fait accompli*'. He feared that this had in fact happened, and that Sir Edward Grey's suggestion as to the Serbian Reply forming a basis of discussion had 'hastened the declaration of war'. Whether it was real or assumed, the simplicity of this utterance is surely amazing.[2] One would imagine that Austria was the predominant partner in the confederacy, and that Germany could not even venture to remonstrate when her headstrong yoke-fellow took the bit between her teeth and deliberately outran reason.

Meanwhile both the Chancellor and the Foreign

[1] Blue Book, Nos. 75 and 76; French Book, No. 92.

[2] The Chancellor took the same line, saying to Sir Edward Goschen that 'he was "pressing the button" as hard as he could, and was not sure whether he had not gone so far in urging moderation at Vienna that matters had been precipitated rather than otherwise' (Blue Book, No. 107). The author of *J'Accuse!* speaking of this plea that Austria was dragging an unwilling Germany in her wake, says very frankly 'Alles dies ist eitel Lug und Trug' ('All this is sheer lying and humbug'). He adds that Berlin had only to frown and Vienna would come to heel (German edition, p. 147).

Secretary had acquainted themselves with the Serbian Reply, which the latter, as we have seen (p. 83), had omitted to do when it was first delivered to him. Bethmann-Hollweg said to Sir Edward Goschen that 'a certain desire had, in his opinion, been shown in the Serbian Reply to meet the demands of Austria', and von Jagow confessed to M. Cambon that 'he saw in the Reply a basis for possible negotiations'. Thus both implicitly confessed that in refusing to give any consideration to the Reply, Austria had gone too far. Berlin.

But what was the practical result? A warning, or even a hint, to Austria that she had better hold her hand and listen to reason? Nothing of the sort. Bethmann-Hollweg told Goschen—and made a great merit of this spirited intervention—that he had advised Austria, since her object was 'presumably' to secure guarantees for Serbian good behaviour, 'to speak openly in this sense' to Russia, whereupon, as he hoped, 'the holding of such language would eliminate all possible misunderstandings'. This was obviously the official form of the proposal which von Schoen in Paris (p. 117) and Lichnowsky in London (p. 118) represented as a suggestion that Austria should pacify Russia by defining the object and extent of her operations in Serbia.

Can we accept this ludicrously inadequate move as sincere, and not a mere manœuvre for delay? It is difficult, but not, perhaps, impossible. If the Berlin Cabinet had said, 'We have told Austria that she may exact such-and-such guarantees, but that we will not support her in going any further', that, indeed, would have been a step towards peace. The advice actually tendered[1] can at best be interpreted as a move in the direction of salving Russia's self-esteem by securing

[1] If it *was* actually tendered. There is nothing to show that Austria ever heard of it. Some phrases used by Count Berchtold on July 30th (Austrian Book, No. 50) might perhaps be interpreted in this sense, but very doubtfully.

Berlin. from Austria a more formal repetition of her assurances as to Serbian 'integrity and independence'. In other words, it was an attempt, not to save Russia from humiliation, but to make her humiliation a little easier to swallow.

After all deductions, however, the morning mood of Berlin appears comparatively pacific and reasonable. How are we to account for the extraordinary change which, as we shall see, came over the official spirit within ten or twelve hours?

The explanation is possibly to be found in the last line of Sir Edward Goschen's second dispatch[1]: 'The Russian Ambassador returned to-day, and has informed the Imperial Government that Russia is mobilizing in four southern governments.' A close examination of the documents seems to bear out what is suggested in an official *communiqué* published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* for August 1,[2] that Sazonof's message of yesterday was not delivered till this evening, after 6.30. So long a delay seems improbable, but perhaps the absence of the Russian Ambassador may account for it. At all events, this is the most plausible way of explaining the marked difference in the tone of two telegrams dispatched by the Kaiser to the Tsar—the first at 6.30 p.m., the second at one in the morning. As the German statement is consistent with the documents, and as we have nothing to oppose to it but an abstract improbability, we seem bound to accept it. In this case, the definite news of Russian mobilization must be set down as the force which, between 6.30 and midnight, caused the dial-hand to veer decisively to 'War'.

At 1 p.m. to-day, but before the Kaiser's telegram of yesterday had reached him,[3] the Tsar made an appeal

[1] Blue Book, No. 76. [2] Price, p. 405.

[3] When it did reach him, the Tsar replied to it in the following telegram, omitted in the German Book: 'Thanks for Your telegram, which is conciliatory, whereas the official message presented by Your ambassador to my minister was conveyed

to his brother potentate. An 'ignominious war', he said,[1] 'had been declared against a weak country'. The indignation in Russia, which he fully shared, was 'tremendous', and he could not long resist the pressure making for war. 'To prevent such a calamity', he concluded, 'I urge You, in the name of our old friendship, to do all in Your power to restrain Your ally from going too far.' Berlin.

To this missive the Kaiser replied,[2] as aforesaid, at 6.30. He objected to the phrase 'ignominious war'; held that Austria was justified in seeking guarantees for the fulfilment of Serbia's promises, which without guarantees were worthless; expressed the opinion that it was 'perfectly possible for Russia to remain a spectator of the Austro-Serbian War'; and was therefore endeavouring 'with all possible effort' to bring about an understanding between St. Petersburg and Vienna. 'Naturally', the telegram concluded, 'military measures by Russia, which might be construed as a menace by Austria-Hungary, would accelerate a calamity which both of us desire to avoid, and would undermine my position as mediator.'

A stiff document this, but scarcely a threatening one. Six and a half hours later, at 1 a.m., it was followed by another[3] of curiously different tone:

> 'My Ambassador has instructions to direct the attention of Your Government to the dangers and serious consequences of a mobilization. I have told You the same in my last telegram. Austria has mobilized only against Serbia, and only a part of her

in a very different tone. I beg You to explain the divergency. It would be right to give over the Austro-Serbian problem to the Hague Conference. I trust in Your wisdom and friendship.' The suggestion of arbitration, though eminently reasonable, was misplaced; for the Hague Conference was a by-word and a scoff in Berlin.

[1] German Book, No. 21. [2] German Book, No. 22.

[3] German Book, No. 23.

army. If Russia, as seems to be the case, according to Your advice and that of Your Government, mobilizes against Austria, the part of mediator with which You have entrusted me . . . is threatened if not made impossible. The entire weight of decision now rests upon Your shoulders. You have to bear the responsibility for war or peace.'

What had occurred in the interval? Very soon after the dispatch of the first telegram, the Russian Ambassador must have delivered his message. It merely confirmed what had been suspected, and scarcely doubted, for days before, and it was accompanied by the assurance that Russia had no 'aggressive intention' against Germany. The very frankness of the announcement ought to have been re-assuring, but the actual effect was far different. An Extraordinary Council was held at Potsdam,[1] in which the political and military authorities met, under the presidency of the Emperor, and there can be no doubt that, as Count Pourtalès had predicted four days ago, with the entrance of the General Staff upon the scene, 'the situation had got out of control'.

The Kaiser's second telegram is not the only evidence of this. As soon as the Council was over, the Chancellor rushed back to Berlin, summoned the British Ambassador, and thus addressed him:[2] In spite of his continued efforts for peace, war, he feared, might become inevitable. Great Britain, he understood, would never stand by and 'allow France to be crushed'. But that was not

[1] It must surely have been summoned in advance. We know that, after the Council was over, Bethmann-Hollweg returned to Berlin, and had a momentous interview with Sir Edward Goschen; that Goschen then wrote his dispatch; and that it was received in London the same evening. All this would have been quite impossible if the Council had been got together hurriedly and without warning after the Russian announcement was delivered at (say) 7 p.m. It is much more probable that the Council was actually sitting when the announcement arrived.

[2] Blue Book, No. 85.

Germany's purpose. 'Provided that the neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France.' With excellent presence of mind, Sir Edward Goschen 'questioned his Excellency about the French colonies', but 'he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect'. The neutrality of Holland would not be threatened. 'It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.' Then the Chancellor enlarged upon the prevailing benevolence of his policy towards England, and mentioned his hopes for a 'general neutrality agreement', to which England's neutrality at the present conjuncture might be a prelude. Sir Edward Goschen's reply must have prepared his Excellency for the coming disillusionment. He said 'he did not think it probable that at this stage of events Sir Edward Grey would care to bind himself to any course of action'. Berlin.

This scene enables us to reconstruct with tolerable confidence the course of the Council which had immediately preceded it. The diplomatists were pitted against the soldiers, and the Emperor sat in the judgement-seat between them. Asked to report as to the prospects of the bloodless triumph they had promised, the diplomatists had but a poor tale to tell. Russia was evidently not going to take it lying down; the efforts to detach France from her ally had failed; and even England, while backing Russia in her demands for negotiation on the basis of the Serbian Reply, was keeping her fleet mobilized.[1] 'Behold', said the soldiers, 'what diplomacy is

[1] Von Jagow told Goschen the next day (Blue Book, No. 98) that Lichnowsky's report of Grey's warning did not reach Berlin until very late at night; 'had it been received earlier, the Chancellor would, of course, not have spoken in the way he had done.'

Berlin. preparing for us! Not a brilliant revival of 1909 but a disastrous repetition of 1911! Only the sword can hack us out of the tight place in which diplomacy has landed us.' It is not necessary to suppose that the soldiers completely carried the day, and that war was then and there decreed. If England could be bound over to keep the peace, it was still possible that Russia might be bluffed into acquiescence. Whether for peace or for war, the first essential was to disintegrate the Triple Entente. It was unthinkable that supine, decadent England should really take up arms for France, if a loop-hole of escape were offered her. Some concession must be made in order to disguise from her her pusillanimity —what about an offer to respect the 'integrity and independence' of France, the question of her colonial empire being kept discreetly in the background? This game had not succeeded very well with Russia, but England was still more embarrassed and unready. The attempt was at any rate well worth making, and the Chancellor, empowered to that effect, stepped into his automobile and sped through the summer gloaming to place his 'strong bid' in Goschen's hands. Meanwhile, to pave the way either for a triumphant peace, or for saddling Russia with the responsibility for war, the Kaiser sat down to re-write, in terms of indignant menace, his afternoon missive to his 'friend and cousin' in St. Petersburg.

St. Peters-burg. To that capital we must return for a moment, before we have done with the transactions of this agitated night. It is clear that the Kaiser's telegram was not the only one dispatched after the Potsdam Council. News

It is hard to see the reason for this 'of course'. The Chancellor's 'bid' sounds very like a *result* of Grey's warning. As the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary are not always in touch with each other, one wonders whether von Jagow may not have been mistaken as to the time of the telegram's arrival.

must have reached Count Pourtalès that the General Staff was getting the upper hand, for he descended upon M. Sazonof at two in the morning, and (says Sir George Buchanan[1]) 'completely broke down on seeing that war was inevitable'. His emotion, we may be sure, was not wholly humanitarian, for, as he had consistently told his Government that Russia would not fight, war would mean, to him, a great professional failure. He 'appealed to M. Sazonof to make some suggestion which he could telegraph to the German Government as a last hope'. M. Sazonof, according to M. Paléologue,[2] replied : Military preparations.

> 'The situation is too serious for me not to tell you all that is in my mind. By intervening at St. Petersburg while she refuses to intervene at Vienna, Germany is only seeking to gain time so as to allow Austria to crush the little Serbian kingdom before Russia can come to its aid. But the Emperor Nicholas is so anxious to prevent war that I am going to make a new proposal to you in his name :
> "If Austria, recognizing that her dispute with Serbia has assumed the character of a question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum the clauses which are damaging to the sovereignty of Serbia, Russia undertakes to stop all military preparations."'

Count Pourtalès 'promised to support this proposal with his Government',[3] and we shall hear a good deal more of it in the sequel ; but from the moment it reached Berlin it was doomed.

The French representatives in Frankfort and Munich report very marked military activity in Germany.[4] Regiments in service dress are arriving at Frankfort, Military preparations.

[1] Blue Book, No. 97. [2] French Book, No. 103.

[3] This was afterwards semi-officially denied (*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 21, 1914), but is probably true, though it may also be true that Pourtalès said he had little hope of its acceptance. [4] French Book, Nos. 88 and 89.

Military preparations.

'especially by the roads from Darmstadt, Cassel, and Mayence, which are full of soldiers'. Bridges and railways are guarded. Mills are asked to stop delivery to their ordinary clients and keep all their output for the army. Motor guns for firing on aeroplanes are passing through Strasburg. Non-commissioned officers and men, who were on leave in Bavaria for the harvest, have been recalled to their regiments.

The French Consul at Prague reports, among other things, that cavalry divisions in Galicia are mobilizing, that reservists are being called together in this district, and regiments transported from Vienna and Buda-Pesth to the Russian frontier. Moreover, Bronewsky, in Berlin, tells von Jagow that 'according to information in his possession', Austria is mobilizing against Russia. In his Reichstag speech of August 4, Bethmann-Hollweg admitted that at the time when Russia's partial mobilization took place, Austria, in addition to her mobilization against Serbia, had mobilized two army corps 'towards the north, and far from the Russian frontier'.

Count Berchtold to-day sends to Count Szogyeny in Berlin a telegram similar to that of yesterday, but in stronger terms. 'If the Russian measures of mobilization are not put a stop to without delay,' he said, 'our general mobilization would have, on military grounds, to follow at once.'

Summary.

At Belgrade to-day the first shots are fired. Russia, while she sees in partial mobilization the only way of convincing Austria that she is in earnest, still hopes that something may come of the British proposal for Four-Power mediation, and is willing to accept it in any form. Sir Edward Grey endeavours to induce Germany to make some move in this direction, giving to the proposal whatever form she thinks fit, but Germany prefers to waste time upon an inspiration of her own, that if Austria can be induced to define her intentions with respect

to Serbia, Russia may thereby be placated. The official announcement of Russia's partial mobilization makes it clear that diplomacy, if it hoped for a peaceful triumph, had grossly miscalculated, and the result is that, at the Potsdam Council, the General Staff become, to all intents and purposes, masters of the situation. The Chancellor offers what is doubtless considered a spirited bid for British neutrality; the Kaiser makes a determined effort to intimidate the Tsar; and Count Pourtalès, realizing the failure of the policy of bluff, tries desperately to stop the avalanche he has helped to set rolling.

Summary.

CHAPTER XV

DIARY OF EVENTS

Thursday, July 30

'If we succeed in this object [preserving the peace of Europe] the mutual relations of Germany and England will, I believe, be *ipso facto* improved and strengthened. For that object His Majesty's Government will work with all sincerity and good-will.'—Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade and Nish.

The bombardment of Belgrade was to-day continued. From Nish, where the Government of Serbia had established itself, the Crown Prince addressed to the Tsar [1] a reply to His Majesty's telegram of the 27th: 'The future of Serbia', he said, 'is secure now that it is the object of your Majesty's gracious solicitude. These painful moments cannot but strengthen the bonds of deep attachment which bind Serbia to Holy Slav Russia'.

[1] Serbian Book, No. 44; Russian Book, No. 56. There is some difficulty about the date of this telegram. The Crown Prince refers in it to 'the telegram which Your Majesty was pleased to address to me yesterday'—which would seem to imply that the answer was dispatched on the 28th. But in the Serbian Book it is quite definitely dated 'Nish, July 30th'; and in the Russian Book (No. 57) the Russian Chargé d'Affaires says, under date July 29th: 'I have communicated to Pashitch the text of the telegraphic reply returned by His Majesty the Emperor to Prince Alexander. On reading it Pashitch crossed himself and exclaimed, "The Tsar is great and merciful!" He then embraced me and was overcome with emotion. *The heir-apparent is expected at Nish late to-night.*' It would appear, then, that the telegram did not reach Prince Alexander until the 29th, and that he ought to have said, not 'which you addressed to me yesterday', but 'which I received yesterday'.

As Berlin is now more clearly than ever the point on which everything hinges, our survey of the events of the day may best begin here. Berlin.

A very significant event was the publication, and instant withdrawal, of an order for general mobilization. It appeared about midday in a special edition of the semi-official *Lokal-Anzeiger*, whereupon von Jagow instantly telephoned to all the embassies that the news was false, and that the edition of the paper had been confiscated.[1] To the Russian Ambassador he explained that 'the news-sheets had been printed in advance, so as to be ready for all eventualities'. At the same time the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs confessed that 'the military authorities are very anxious that mobilization should be ordered, because every delay makes Germany lose some of her advantages', but added that 'up to the present the haste of the General Staff had been successfully prevented'. It is clear then that the *Lokal-Anzeiger* was not merely indulging in 'intelligent anticipation'. The mobilization order had actually been sanctioned at the Council of the previous evening, but the political authorities, having slept upon it (or perhaps failed to sleep), had determined to hold it back. Who was responsible for the premature firing of the fuse may never be known. Perhaps the Foreign Office had forgotten to countermand the order for publication; perhaps the War Office had determined to steal a march on the diplomatists, and, by hurrying the publication, to confront them, in true German fashion, with a *fait accompli*.

At all events, the incident shows that, during the early part of the day, there was hesitation in the Prussian councils, and the dial-hand was, for the moment, wavering backwards towards 'Peace'. No doubt this was largely the result of Sir Edward Goschen's chilly reception of the bid for British neutrality, and of Prince Lichnowsky's report of Sir Edward Grey's warning.

[1] French Book, No. 105; Russian Book, Nos. 61 and 62.

Berlin. One is disposed, then, to see an authentic symptom of this relenting mood in a telegram purporting to have been addressed by the Imperial Chancellor to Herr von Tschirscky, which was published in the *Westminster Gazette* on August 1, but does not appear in the German Book. It ran thus[1]:

> 'The report of Count Pourtalès does not harmonize with the account which your Excellency has given of the attitude of the Austrian Government. Apparently there is a misunderstanding which I beg you to clear up.
>
> We cannot expect Austria to negotiate with Serbia, with which she is in a state of war. The refusal, however, to exchange views with St. Petersburg would be a grave mistake.
>
> We are indeed ready to fulfil our duty as an ally. We must, however, refuse to be drawn into a world-conflagration through Austria not respecting our advice.
>
> Your Excellency will express this to Count Berchtold with all emphasis and great seriousness.'

On the previous day M. Bronewsky had telegraphed to M. Sazonof[2]: 'The Secretary of State tells me that he received a telegram to-day from Pourtalès stating that you seemed more inclined than you previously were to find a compromise acceptable to all parties.' This may very probably be the 'report of Count Pourtalès' alluded to in the telegram. Again, Sir Maurice de Bunsen to-day telegraphed from Vienna[3]: 'The French Ambassador hears from Berlin that the German Ambassador at Vienna is instructed to speak seriously to the Austrian Government against acting in a manner calculated to provoke a European war.' In face of these collateral indications, it seems difficult to doubt that the telegram is genuine, and represents the Chancellor's mood of a few hours on this Thursday morning. It has been

[1] See Price, p. 393; Headlam, p. 239.

[2] Russian Book, No. 51.

[3] Blue Book, No. 95.

suggested that the telegram, though drafted, was never dispatched ; but the official statement which accompanied it in the *Westminster Gazette* speaks of Berchtold's reply to it—that 'there was in fact a misunderstanding' which had already been cleared up. We shall see reason to think that it cannot have been this telegram that caused the slight relaxation in Austria's attitude which is perceptible to-day. Nevertheless, it is notable as the one positive indication we possess that the German Chancellor did really, for a moment, intend to act up to his professions of influencing Vienna in the direction of peace.[1] Berlin.

But if the Chancellor had any sincerely pacific leanings, he ought to have kept a tight hand upon von Jagow, whose incorrigible obstructiveness to-day did more decisive mischief than ever before. He took two steps which were absolutely fatal.

When M. Jules Cambon inquired[2] 'what reply he had made to Sir E. Grey, who had asked him to draw up himself the formula for the intervention of the disinterested Powers', he answered that 'to gain time' he had 'decided to act directly, and had asked Austria to tell him the ground on which conversations might be opened with her'. Thus he had deliberately, and on a ridiculous pretext, shelved the whole principle of Four-Power mediation, to which, three days ago, he stood definitely committed. Incidentally, as M. Cambon points out, he had eliminated England, France, and Italy, and 'entrusted to Herr von Tschirscky, whose Pan-German and Russophobe sentiments are well known, the duty

[1] The only alternative hypothesis would be that it was deliberately concocted to throw dust in the eyes of England, and make her believe Russia responsible for the war. Even if we held the Chancellor capable of such clever rascality, we could scarcely suppose that he had time to think of such a machination in the crowded hours of this Thursday and Friday. The telegram appeared in London late on Saturday.

[2] French Book, No. 109.

Berlin. of persuading Austria to adopt a conciliatory attitude '. If this was not a deliberate move to impede pacification, it was an act of amazing stupidity.

More deplorable still was his other proceeding. M. Sazonof, it will be remembered, had, at two in the morning, dictated to Count Pourtalès the following declaration [1]:

> ' Si l'Autriche, reconnaissant que la question austro-serbe a assumé le caractère d'une question européenne, se déclare prête à éliminer de son ultimatum les points qui portent atteinte aux droits souverains de la Serbie, la Russie s'engage à cesser ses préparatifs militaires.'

In notifying the Russian Ambassador in Berlin of this proposal,[2] M. Sazonof added: ' Please inform me at once what attitude the German Government will adopt in face of this fresh proof of our desire to do the utmost possible for a peaceful settlement, for we cannot allow such discussions to continue solely in order that Germany and Austria may gain time for their military preparations.' The Russian Ambassador at once communicated the text of the proposal to von Jagow, who had received ' an identic telegram ' from Pourtalès. ' *He then declared* ', says the Ambassador, ' *that he considered it impossible for Austria to accept our proposal.*' [3]

If we can lay our finger on any one point at which the last hope of peace became extinct, this is surely it. Here was an offer from Russia to do the very thing that Berlin was clamouring for, and stop her mobilization. To it was attached a condition which, in substance if not in expression, ought to have been perfectly acceptable to the Power which had been unwearied in protesting that it had no wish to impair the sovereignty of Serbia, and had even authorized its Ambassador at St. Petersburg (p. 46) to explain in that sense one of the clauses of the sacrosanct Ultimatum. What, then,

[1] For English translation, see p. 129.

[2] Russian Book, No. 60.

[3] Russian Book, No. 63.

does Herr von Jagow do? Does he consult Austria? Berlin.
Does he (as Sir Edward Grey did) propose a verbal modification that should obviate any possible scruple on Austria's part? Does he even submit the momentous decision to his superiors, the Kaiser and the Chancellor? [1] No! On his own responsibility he curtly 'turns down' the extremely reasonable and conciliatory proposal, which even Pourtalès had promised to support. As a matter of fact, it never reached Vienna at all, or in such a garbled form as to be unrecognizable.

What was the effect at St. Petersburg of von Jagow's action? M. Sazonof tells us three days later, in his review [2] of the events leading up to the declaration of war:

> 'Germany considered this Russian proposal unacceptable to Austria. At that very moment news of the proclamation of general mobilization by Austria reached St. Petersburg.
>
> All this time hostilities were continuing on Serbian territory, and Belgrade was bombarded afresh.
>
> The failure of our proposals for peace compelled us to extend the scope of our precautionary military measures.'

We may fairly say that, when von Jagow declined even to transmit the Russian proposal to Vienna,

> 'Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell'.

Meanwhile Berlin had positively deigned to hand on to Vienna Sir Edward Grey's suggestion to Prince Lichnowsky that Austria, after occupying Belgrade and some Serbian territory, might consent to stay her hand, 'pending an effort of the Powers to mediate between her and Russia'. When Sir Edward Goschen saw von Jagow

[1] These authorities may, of course, have been consulted before the interview with the Russian Ambassador, but there is no indication of this. It rather appears that von Jagow simply did not recognize the crucial nature of the decision he was taking.

[2] Russian Book, No. 77.

Berlin. to-day, he had received no reply from Vienna,[1] but it afterwards appears[2] that Berchtold answered, late in the evening, to the effect that 'he would take the wishes of the Emperor' next morning. The result will appear in due course (p. 152).

To this day belongs an exchange of telegrams between Prince Henry of Prussia and King George.[3] Prince Henry, who had just returned from a visit to England, dwelt upon 'William's' earnest solicitude in the cause of peace, and the difficulties created by the military preparations of both his eastern and his western neighbour, 'while we have as yet taken none'. He begs that, to avert the 'cruel calamity' of a European war, King George 'should, by his influence, try to secure the neutrality of France and Russia'—or, in other words, leave Austria a perfectly free hand to demolish Serbia. It need scarcely be pointed out that had this been possible at the present juncture, after a week of eager negotiations, the Austro-German triumph would have been ten times greater than if Russia had simply acquiesced from the first in Austria's proceedings. King George says in reply:

> '. . . My Government is doing its utmost to suggest to Russia and France that they should postpone further military preparations on the condition that Austria declares herself satisfied with the occupation of Belgrade and the neighbouring Serbian territory as pledge for a satisfactory regulation of her terms, while other countries should at the same time suspend their military preparations. I am confident that William will use his great influence in order to move Austria to the acceptance of this proposal. . . .'

There is nothing to show that William moved a finger in support of the almost extravagantly conciliatory suggestion.

[1] Blue Book, No. 98. [2] Blue Book, No. 112.

[2] Full text in Headlam, pp. 197 and 229; and in Price, p. 393.

There is good reason for thinking that Vienna, like Berlin, but without any influence from Berlin, was this morning beginning to wonder whether it might not be wise to draw in its horns a little. Yesterday, as we saw (p. 116), Bunsen reported that Austria had realized, too late, that Russia was in earnest; and the effect of this realization is apparent in a very significant circumstance: though the fact of Russian mobilization on the Austrian frontier was perfectly well known, *it was, evidently by order, kept out of the papers.*[1] This order, which must have preceded, by many hours, the German Chancellor's admonition to Herr von Tschirscky (p. 134), shows an unmistakable desire to give peace a chance. Vienna.

The same tendency was apparent in a conversation between Berchtold and Schebeko,[2] in which Berchtold tried to explain away his refusal to sanction further 'conversations' between Sazonof and Szapary. There had been a misunderstanding, he said; he thought it had been proposed that Szapary should be given powers 'to modify the terms of the Austrian Ultimatum'. He was now quite content that conversations should be resumed, on the understanding that Szapary was 'only authorized to discuss what settlement would be compatible with the dignity and prestige for which both Empires had equal concern'. He admitted, incidentally, that Austria had taken steps towards mobilization in Galicia; but he and Schebeko exchanged assurances that on neither side should military preparations be 'interpreted as signs of hostility'.

M. Schebeko in this interview proved himself a true diplomatist. He must have known that there had been no misunderstanding, and that it had, as a matter of fact, been proposed that Szapary should be empowered to modify the terms of the Ultimatum. But he knew,

[1] French Book, No. 104.

[2] Blue Book, No. 96; French Book, No. 104.

Vienna. too, that words matter nothing and intentions everything; and as Berchtold evidently intended to reopen the door to discussion and conciliation, it was none of his business to inquire whether the reason he alleged for doing so was real or pretended. He came away from the interview in a hopeful mood; and Sir Maurice de Bunsen, on hearing of its tenor, at once assured him that England would entirely approve of the resumption of direct conversations.

It is possible, of course, that Berchtold's comparatively tractable attitude may have been a result of Bethmann-Hollweg's remonstrance; but considerations of time render this highly improbable; and, in view of the suppression of the news of Russian mobilization, we need not doubt that the movement was spontaneous.

The return to reason, however, is much less evident in Count Berchtold's own telegrams to Count Szapary[1] than in his conversation with M. Schebeko, as reported by that gentleman to his French and English colleagues. To Szapary, Berchtold is verbose and woodenly official. The Ambassador is authorized to 'give M. Sazonof any explanations he desires' with regard to the Ultimatum; but they can only 'take the form of subsequent explanations, as it was never our intention to depart in any way from the points contained in the Note'. Twice his Excellency returns to his favourite formula, and states that the Ultimatum has 'already been outstripped by recent events', which can only be interpreted as a blandly self-complacent way of saying, 'You see, we have been too quick for you!' Twice, too, he hints that Szapary should try to divert attention from Serbia by shifting the discussion to the general relations between Austria and Russia.[2] Then, passing to the question of military

[1] Austrian Book, Nos. 49 and 50.

[2] This Szapary, according to Sir George Buchanan (Blue Book, No. 139), duly attempted to do; but Sazonof told him that 'while the Serbian question was unsolved, the abstract discussion

preparations, he relates that in talking to Schebeko he said he could not understand the Russian mobilization on the frontiers of the Monarchy, 'as there was no dispute between us and Russia'. The harping on this tedious quibble is very characteristic of Austrian methods. 'In view, however,' he continued, 'of the circumstance that Russia was openly mobilizing against us, we should have to extend our mobilization too'—of course without the slightest hostile intention.[1] Vienna.

There is an apparently inextricable confusion as to the order of the telegrams passing between St. Petersburg and Paris. For instance, when M. Viviani, under date July 30,[2] says: 'M. Isvolsky came to-night to tell me that the German Ambassador had notified M. Sazonof of the decision of his Government to mobilize the army, if Russia does not cease her military preparations', we can only assume that he is telegraphing in the small hours of the morning, and that by 'to-night' he means the evening of July 29. A similar ambiguity attaches to M. Paléologue's telegrams of this date.[3] It is scarcely worth while, even if it were possible, to unravel the tangle, for nothing very important is involved, the really crucial events of the day being clear enough. At one time, seemingly on the night of July 28–29, we find Russia 'suspending all measures of military precaution', in deference to advice from France that she should do nothing 'that could offer Germany the pretext for St. Petersburg and Paris.

of the relations between Austria and Russia was a waste of time' (see p. 149).

[1] Berchtold says he denied that Austria had mobilized 'a single man' against Russia. According to Schebeko he admitted 'steps towards mobilization in Galicia'. The ambiguity of the term 'mobilization' probably accounts for this discrepancy.

[2] French Book, No. 101.

[3] French Book, Nos. 102 and 103. It seems pretty clear that No. 102 ought to be dated July 29th instead of July 30th; but that does not remove the whole difficulty.

St. Petersburg and Paris.

general mobilization'. But immediately after, 'the Russian General Staff and Admiralty receive disquieting information concerning the preparations of the German army and navy'—doubtless the same information referred to by Sir George Buchanan[1] when he says M. Sazonof told him that 'absolute proof was in the possession of the Russian Government that Germany was making military and naval preparations against Russia', especially in the Gulf of Finland.

What we know for certain is that two telegrams today passed from St. Petersburg to Berlin. One, from M. Sazonof to the Russian Ambassador, has already been noted (p. 136). The other was from the Tsar to the Kaiser,[2] dispatched at 1.20 p.m. It begins: 'I thank you from my heart for your quick reply'—and thus, it would seem, ignores the second telegram of the previous day (p. 125). 'The military measures now taking form', it proceeds, 'were decided upon five days ago, and for the reason of defence against the preparations of Austria. I hope with all my heart that these measures will not influence in any manner your position as mediator, which I appraise very highly. We need your strong pressure upon Austria so that an understanding can be arrived at with us.' The Tsar plainly wished to leave the way open for a possible change of heart in his fellow potentate, but had very little hope of it.

In Paris, President Poincaré made to the British Ambassador[3] a practically, though not literally, accurate statement of the Russo-Austro-German situation of the moment, leading up to an appeal for a declaration of British solidarity with France, which is discussed in Chapter XVIII. He declared incidentally that the Government had reliable information that German troops were concentrated round Thionville and Metz ready for war.

[1] Blue Book, No. 97. [2] German Book, No. 23a.
[3] Blue Book, No. 99.

A much fuller statement of German military preparations, as contrasted with French, was to-day sent by M. Viviani to M. Paul Cambon in London,[1] and was by him conveyed, in a somewhat condensed form, to Sir Edward Grey. Germany, he says, has made her covering dispositions a few hundred metres from the frontier, all the way from Luxemburg to the Vosges ; France, even to the prejudice of her plan of campaign, and against the protests of local populations left undefended, has kept her troops ten kilometres from the frontier. Germany has rushed large numbers of troops from the interior to the frontier ; France has done nothing of the kind. The arming of positions (clearing of trees, placing of batteries, &c.) was begun in Germany on the 25th ; it is only to-day being taken in hand in France. German reservists have been recalled by tens of thousands, and the interior communications of Germany (railways, roads, &c.) have been subjected to regulations which mark ' the last stage before mobilization ' ; none of these measures have been taken in France. ' England will see from this ', says M. Viviani, ' that, if France is resolved, it is not she who is taking aggressive steps.' Paris.

Sir Edward Grey to-day sends to Sir Edward Goschen his answer[2] to the Imperial Chancellor's bid for British neutrality. As it is one of the most momentous, and at the same time most honourable, documents in British history, the essential part of it must be quoted in full : London.

> ' His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms.
>
> What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies.
>
> From the material point of view such a proposal is

[1] French Book, No. 106 ; Blue Book, No. 105, Enclosure 3.
[2] Blue Book, No. 101.

London. unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.

Altogether apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover.

The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either.'

Sir Edward then went on to reply to the Chancellor's suggestion of a 'general neutrality agreement' between England and Germany, that the one way of maintaining good relations between the two countries was that 'they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe'. 'And I will say this', he concluded: 'If the peace of Europe can be preserved . . . my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she would be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy should be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. . . . The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis . . . be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto.'

The olive-branch was held out with a noble sincerity which could not but have elicited some response from a generous opponent. Germany was not asked to forgo a victory for herself or her ally—that was assured them in the proposal that Austria should occupy the Serbian capital, pending the mediation of the Powers. All she was asked to do was to admit the intervention of the common sense of Europe between Austria and her prey, and for that small concession to reason she was offered

the active concurrence of England in establishing a new era of peace and international comity. She rejected the offer [1]: she trampled the olive-branch in mud and blood. Why? Because peace and comity were precisely what she did not want; because the element of truculence in her mentality had taken the control of her actions, and the voice of her world-ambition said 'Now or never!' London.

Meanwhile Prince Lichnowsky had conveyed to Sir Edward Grey [2] that his Government 'would endeavour to influence Austria, after taking Belgrade and Serbian territory in region of frontier, to promise not to advance further, while Powers endeavoured to arrange that Serbia should give satisfaction sufficient to pacify Austria'. It is characteristic that in the German Book [3] this proposal is mentioned as follows: 'We even as late as the 30th of July forwarded the English proposal to Vienna, as basis for negotiations, that Austria should dictate her conditions to Serbia, i.e. after her march into Serbia' —nothing being said of mediation by the Powers. Rightly or wrongly, however, Sir Edward Grey received the impression from Prince Lichnowsky that Germany would actually work for this proposal, and, in order to facilitate it, he suggested a modification of M. Sazonof's wording of the conditions on which Russia would stop her military preparations (p. 129). He proposed that no mention should be made of 'eliminating points in the Austrian Ultimatum', but that it should simply be stated that 'the Powers would examine how Serbia could fully satisfy Austria without impairing Serbian sovereign rights or independence'. To this modification Sazonof gave his consent.[4] Needless to say, it availed nothing.

M. Paul Cambon to-day recalled to Sir Edward Grey letters which had passed between them in November 1912, to the effect that, though France and Britain were under no obligation to lend each other military aid, yet

[1] No notice was ever taken of it.
[2] Blue Book, No. 103.
[3] C.D.D., p. 410.
[4] Russian Book, No. 67.

when either nation 'had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power', they should 'immediately discuss what measures they were prepared to take in common'. In other words, the two nations declared: 'We do not pledge ourselves to intervene in each other's quarrels, but should it in any case appear in the east probable that we may wish to do so, we will take measures betimes to render such intervention effective'. Copies of the letters embodying this understanding were now forwarded to the British Ambassador in Paris.[1]

Military preparations.

Mr. Price[2] states that the order for partial mobilization appeared in all the Russian papers of to-day, and adduces newspaper evidence to the effect that the decree of general mobilization was issued late this evening. This is quite consistent with Sazonof's statement (p. 137) that von Jagow's rejection of his proposal to Pourtalès determined Russia to 'extend the scope of her precautionary measures'. He states, in the same passage, that the news of von Jagow's refusal reached him simultaneously with the news of 'the proclamation of general mobilization by Austria'. It seems pretty clear, however, that Austria did not actually proclaim mobilization till the 31st, so we may assume that he was thinking of Berchtold's statement to Schebeko that Austria would have to 'extend' her mobilization.[3] The telegrams from Vienna and from Berlin would very probably arrive about the same time.

As for Germany and France, there is every reason to suppose that M. Viviani's statement (p. 143) is substantially accurate.

Summary.

There are certain signs of relenting this morning, both in Vienna and in Berlin. We shall not be far wrong

[1] Blue Book, No. 105. [2] Price, pp. 158, 171.

[3] This conjecture is confirmed by Sir George Buchanan's telegram of July 31st, Blue Book, No. 113.

if we say that both Berchtold and Bethmann-Hollweg showed a desire to *seem* to make concessions, whereas formerly their desire had been to avoid even the appearance of listening to reason. Berchtold, with very careful reservations, agrees to the re-opening of the discussions at St. Petersburg which he had broken off two days ago. Bethmann-Hollweg drafts, and probably dispatches, a telegram ordering Tschirscky to make a move in the same direction. Von Jagow, on the other hand, is as obstinately unhelpful as ever. He makes no response to Sir Edward Grey's proposal that he should suggest a formula for Four-Power mediation, and he abruptly rejects the conditions on which Sazonof proposes to suspend Russian mobilization. Thus, though the prematurely-issued order for German mobilization is withdrawn, it is clear that before evening the war party have regained any ground they may have lost in the morning. King George and Sir Edward Grey cling to the hope of mediation after Austria shall have occupied Belgrade, and Grey writes the historic dispatch in which he refuses the bid for British neutrality, but offers to work for a beneficent *rapprochement* between the two groups of Powers if only this crisis can be tided over.

CHAPTER XVI

DIARY OF EVENTS

Friday, July 31.

'We worked for peace up to the last moment and beyond the last moment.'—SIR EDWARD GREY.

St. Petersburg.

ALTHOUGH the bombardment of Belgrade had 'provoked very deep feeling' in Russia,[1] M. Sazonof remained true to his declared intention of continuing to negotiate so long as a spark of hope was left. There were two possible means of escape from the deadlock: (1) action on the basis of Sazonof's own proposal to Pourtalès (p. 129), as amended by Grey; (2) direct discussions with Szapary.

(1) Although von Jagow had declined even to let Austria consider Sazonof's formula, Grey's amendment seemed to open a renewed possibility, and Sazonof to-day[2] telegraphed his acceptance of it to the Russian Ambassadors in the five great capitals. The formula would now run as follows:

> 'If Austria consents to stay the march of her troops on Serbian territory, and if, recognizing that the Austro-Serbian conflict has assumed the character of a question of European interest, she admits that the Great Powers may examine the satisfaction which Serbia can accord to the Austro-Hungarian Government, without injury to her sovereign rights as a State and to her independence, Russia undertakes to preserve her waiting attitude.'

To Sir George Buchanan M. Sazonof said[3] that he hoped the suggested 'examination' by the Powers might take place in London. But the formula was never even

[1] French Book, No. 113. [2] Russian Book, No. 67.
[3] Blue Book, No. 120.

considered in Berlin or Vienna. It was in very truth 'outstripped by the march of events'. St. Petersburg.

(2) For a moment, there seemed to be more hope in the Sazonof-Szapary conversations. M. Sazonof himself reported to-day's development in the following terms: [1]

> 'The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador declared the readiness of his Government to discuss the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. M. Sazonof replied by expressing his satisfaction, and said it was desirable that the discussions should take place in London with the participation of the Great Powers.
>
> M. Sazonof hoped that the British Government would assume the direction of these discussions. The whole of Europe would be thankful to them. It would be very important that Austria should meanwhile put a stop provisionally to her military action on Serbian territory.'

The two points to be noticed about this are, first, that, in suggesting the transference of the discussions to London, M. Sazonof appears to have aimed at merging this line of action with that arising out of the amended formula; second, that he does not seem to make the suspension of hostilities an absolute *sine qua non*. As to the proposed change of the venue to London, Szapary said that he would consult headquarters.

From M. Sazonof's account of his conversation with Szapary, given next day to the French and British Ambassadors,[2] it appears that Szapary obeyed his instructions by trying to deflect the discussion from Serbia to Austro-Russian relations at large. Sazonof replied that this was 'a waste of time'. Austro-Russian relations in general were 'perfectly satisfactory'; but the question was 'whether Austria was to crush Serbia and reduce her to the status of a vassal'. He added that 'discussion was being made impossible by the action of Austria in subjecting Belgrade, a virtually unfortified town, to bombardment'.

[1] Blue Book, No. 133.

[2] Blue Book, No. 139.

St. Petersburg.

It is not easy to determine how far Austria really intended to go in the direction of submitting the terms of her Ultimatum to discussion. M. Sazonof says above that she is willing to discuss ' the substance '. M. Viviani and M. Jules Cambon [1] use the term ' basis ' (' even as to its basis ')—the French word being *fond*. But Count Szapary, in a dispatch to Berchtold,[2] says that what he offered was ' to subject the text of our Note to discussion in so far as related to its interpretation '—which would mean that Austria was not willing to waive or to modify any requirement of her Ultimatum, but only to explain away the more inacceptable points. As this was the utmost length that his instructions (p. 140) permitted him to go, it is probable that Szapary meant nothing more.[3] We frequently find that Austrian diplomatists appear to their interlocutors to say more than they themselves are afterwards willing to admit they did. Count Berchtold to-day begged M. Schebeko to remove in St. Petersburg the impression that Austria had ' banged the door ' on further conversations, and Count Mensdorff drew Sir Edward Grey's special attention to this fact.[4] There is no doubt that Vienna wished at this point to wear an appearance of great reasonableness ; and Austrian statesmen perhaps sincerely desired to dissociate themselves from

[1] French Book, Nos. 120 and 121.

[2] Austrian Book, No. 56. This dispatch is dated August 1st, but either that date is wrong, or the first words of the telegram should run : ' I visited M. Sazonof yesterday.'

[3] M. Schebeko told Sir Maurice de Bunsen on Saturday that ' Count Szapary had at last conceded the main point at issue by announcing to M. Sazonof that Austria would consent to submit to mediation the points in the Note to Serbia which seemed incompatible with the maintenance of Serbian independence. M. Sazonof', M. Schebeko added, ' had accepted this proposal on condition that Austria would refrain from the actual invasion of Serbia. Austria, in fact, had finally yielded.' (Blue Book, No. 161.) This is a decidedly roseate view of the Austrian frame of mind—much more so than the documents warrant.

[4] Blue Book, No. 137.

the headlong war policy of Germany, holding that their ends might still be gained by the skilful 'playing' of Russia. But it is very doubtful whether Austria ever had the slightest intention of making any real concession. St. Petersburg.

Russia to-day ordered general mobilization. M. Paléologue[1] calls it 'a result of the general mobilization of Austria, and of the measures for mobilization taken secretly, but continuously, by Germany for the last six days'. A like account of the matter is given by Sir George Buchanan.[2] In point of fact, the two decrees seem to have been issued almost simultaneously in the small hours of the Friday morning.

About two in the afternoon, a telegram from the Tsar to the Kaiser crossed one from the Kaiser to the Tsar.[3] They are not important. The Tsar, who is still 'your cordially devoted Nicholas', says that it is 'technically impossible to discontinue our military preparations', but declares that so long as negotiations continue 'his troops will undertake no provocative action'.[4] 'I hope', he concludes, 'for the success of your mediation in Vienna.' The Kaiser's telegram is simply a repetition of the complaint that Russian mobilization has made his mediation 'almost illusory'. Nevertheless he has 'gone to the extreme limit of the possible in his efforts for the preservation of the peace of the world'. He disclaims all responsibility for 'the misfortune which now threatens the entire civilized world', and upbraids the Tsar with ingratitude for past friendship, especially in times when Russia was 'in serious affliction'.

[1] French Book, No. 118.

[2] Blue Book, No. 113.

[3] German Book, C.D.D., p. 411.

[4] There is here a bad mistranslation. The Tsar is made to say, 'As long as the negotiations between Austria and Serbia continue,' which is nonsense. What he really said was, 'As long as the negotiations with Austria on the subject of Serbia continue.'

Vienna. The French Ambassador [1] reports that 'general mobilization for all men from 19 to 42 years of age was declared this morning at one o'clock'.

The Austrian deliverances of to-day are for the most part mere repetitions of the old phrases—no hostility to Russia, no designs upon Serbian integrity or independence, mobilization in Galicia purely defensive, and so forth.[2] 'The *pourparlers* between the Cabinets at Vienna and St. Petersburg are being continued, and from these we hope that things will quieten down all round.' The only document of importance is an account by Berchtold [3] of a conversation between himself and von Tschirscky, who 'yesterday, in accordance with instructions,' told him of Sir Edward Grey's conversation with Prince Lichnowsky on the 29th (p. 120) and of Sir Edward's strong advocacy of mediation *à quatre*. The precise form in which he put the proposal does not appear, but it is evident from Berchtold's reply that Tschirscky paid no attention to Bethmann-Hollweg's pet principle that there could be no question of mediation between Austria and Serbia, but only between Austria and Russia. The reply was: 'We are quite prepared to entertain the proposal of Sir E. Grey to negotiate between us and Serbia. The conditions of our acceptance are, nevertheless, that our military action against Serbia shall continue to take its course, and that the English Cabinet shall move the Russian Government to bring to a standstill the Russian mobilization which is directed against us.' In other words: We are willing to let you talk to us while we crush Serbia, on condition that Russia renounces all idea of forcible interference on her behalf. Or, more briefly: You can mediate as much as you please, so long as we have everything our own way. Count Berchtold, for all his disclaimers of 'door-banging' and his desire to appear reasonable, certainly

[1] French Book, No. 115.
[2] Austrian Book, No. 53; Blue Book, No. 118.
[3] Austrian Book, No. 51.

did not carry the spirit of accommodation to extravagant lengths. Vienna.

Unofficial accounts of Russia's general mobilization reached Berlin early in the day.[1] Sir Edward Goschen called upon the Chancellor in the morning [2] to deliver the British reply to the 'bid' of Wednesday night, but found him so much taken up with the Russian news that he could not give his mind to it, and asked Sir Edward to leave him a written memorandum of its contents. He complained bitterly of the way in which 'his efforts to preach peace and moderation at Vienna' had been 'handicapped' by Russian military measures, and of the conduct of the Tsar in mobilizing just when the Emperor, at his request, was actually engaged in mediation. He was at that moment going to have an audience with His Majesty. Berlin.

A few hours later, the Chancellor again saw Sir Edward Goschen.[3] Official news had now been received of the mobilization of the Russian army and fleet. *Kriegsgefahrzustand* (a state of danger of war) would at once be declared in Germany, and its natural sequel, mobilization, could not long be delayed. 'The news from St. Petersburg seemed to him to put an end to all hope of a peaceful solution of the crisis.'

He did not tell Goschen that Germany had already sent, or was on the point of sending, what was practically an ultimatum to Russia, and something very like an ultimatum to France. Pourtalès was instructed [4] to announce to Sazonof the proclamation of *Kriegsgefahrzustand* and to add:

> 'Mobilization is bound to follow if Russia does not stop every measure of war against us and against Austria within 12 hours and notify us definitely to this effect.'

[1] Russian Book, No. 68.
[2] Blue Book, Nos. 108 and 109.
[3] Blue Book, No. 112.
[4] German Book, No. 24.

Berlin. Von Schoen, in Paris,[1] was to inform the French Government of this step, and to ask ' whether it intends to remain neutral in a Russo-German War. Reply must be made in 18 hours '.

In the afternoon, Goschen called upon von Jagow [2] to convey to him fresh proposals from Grey, to be hereafter recorded (p. 157). It was then that he learned of the ultimatum to Russia. Why, he asked, had Germany demanded demobilization in the south as well, thus making it ' even more difficult ' for Russia to comply? Von Jagow answered that it was ' to prevent Russia from saying that all her mobilization was only directed against Austria '. According to von Jagow, both the Emperor and the Foreign Office had been working hard for peace, ' and telegraphic and telephonic communications from Vienna had been of a promising nature—but Russia's mobilization had spoilt everything.' It did not seem to strike him that, on his own showing, Russia's mobilization in the south had not led Austria to break off negotiations and send an ultimatum. From the first, indeed, Austria was much less excited than Germany about Russia's military measures. There is nothing to indicate that the mobilization of the southern provinces did in fact ' undermine ' the Kaiser's position as mediator. On the contrary, as we have seen, Austria had for two days past been adopting a comparatively conciliatory tone [3]—at the very time when the Kaiser was protesting that Russia's military preparations were rendering her deaf to his blandishments.

Late in the day Sir Edward Goschen paid a second visit to Herr von Jagow, the result of which we shall have to

[1] German Book, No. 25 ; French Book, No. 116.

[2] Blue Book, No. 121.

[3] The Austrian Ambassador in Paris to-day stated to M. Viviani that Austria ' was ready to discuss the grounds of her grievance against Serbia with the other Powers '. Russian Book, No. 73.

chronicle when the question of Belgium comes into the foreground (p. 159). Berlin.

Viviani's circular dispatch[1] of this morning to the French Ambassadors signifies his adhesion to Grey's amendment of Sazonof's formula, and urges Russia to agree to it—of course on the understanding that Austria stops her advance after the occupation of Belgrade and surrounding districts, and evacuates the occupied territory as soon as she has received satisfaction. In a second circular dispatch he announces Sazonof's acceptance of Grey's amendment, and then gives the following admirable summary of the whole situation : Paris.

> 'Nevertheless, the constant attitude of Germany who, since the beginning of the conflict, while ceaselessly protesting to each Power her peaceful intentions, has actually, by her dilatory or negative attitude, caused the failure of all attempts at agreement, and has not ceased to encourage through her Ambassador the uncompromising attitude of Vienna ; the German military preparations begun since the 25th July and subsequently continued without cessation ; the immediate opposition of Germany to the Russian formula, declared at Berlin inacceptable for Austria before that Power had even been consulted ; in conclusion, all the impressions derived from Berlin bring conviction that Germany has sought to humiliate Russia, to disintegrate the Triple Entente, and, if these results could not be obtained, to make war.'

At seven in the evening Herr von Schoen informs M. Viviani[2] of the declaration of *Kriegsgefahrzustand*, and the demand for Russian demobilization, and announces that he will call at one o'clock the next day (that is, eighteen hours later), to learn 'what the attitude of France would be in case of a war between Germany and Russia'.[3] Viviani tells Paléologue that he does not

[1] French Book, Nos. 112 and 114. [2] French Book, No. 117.

[3] That he had no doubt as to what France would reply was

Paris. propose to reply to this question, as 'the Republic need not give any account of her intentions, except to her ally'.

An autograph letter from President Poincaré[1] was this evening delivered to King George. It briefly surveyed the situation, and expressed the conviction that there was still a chance of peace 'if Germany were convinced that the *entente cordiale* would be affirmed, in case of need, even to the extent of taking the field side by side'. 'Our military and naval arrangements', said the President, 'leave complete liberty to your Majesty's Government. . . . But the character of close friendship which public feeling has given in both countries to the *entente* . . . and the signs of sympathy which your Majesty has ever shown to France, justify me in informing you quite frankly of my impressions, which are those of the Government of the Republic, and of all France. It is, I consider, on the language and the action of the British Government that henceforward the last chances of a peaceful settlement depend.'

King George's reply,[2] delivered the following day, faithfully reflected, as it was bound to do, the view of his Government. He is still working for peace; and 'as to the attitude of my country', he says, 'events are changing so rapidly that it is difficult to forecast future developments'.

The French Government naturally makes other endeavours to assure itself as to England's attitude,[3] while England seeks assurances as to Belgian neutrality. Both points will be dealt with in the following section.

London. Sir Edward Grey's first telegram of this morning (to Sir George Buchanan)[4] is written in ignorance of the general mobilizations of Austria and Russia. He expresses

proved by the fact that on this occasion he already, to all intents and purposes, 'asked for his passports.' French Book, No. 120.

[1] C.D.D., p. 542.
[2] C.D.D., p. 544.
[3] Blue Book, No. 124.
[4] Blue Book, No. 110.

satisfaction at the resumption of discussions between Russia and Austria, and says he has told Prince Lichnowsky that he does not see how Russia can be urged to suspend military preparations unless Austria will put some limit to her advance in Serbia. London.

Next comes a telegram to Sir Edward Goschen in Berlin,[1] embodying two separate proposals, either of which might have saved the situation if Germany had been willing to give a moment's attention to them.

The first is a suggestion for the basis of Four-Power mediation: to wit, that if all Powers would suspend further military operations or preparations, the four less interested Powers should promise Austria that they would obtain full satisfaction of her demands on Serbia, which do not, as she has declared, involve any infringement of integrity or sovereignty, while they should at the same time promise Russia that they would see that Serbian integrity and sovereignty should be respected. If there was any sincerity in Austro-German professions, it is hard to see what objection could have been raised to this proposal.

But Sir Edward evidently doubted (quite justly) whether Germany was in any mood to give it fair consideration. So, as a last resource, he made to Prince Lichnowsky an offer of extraordinary daring. He communicates it to Goschen in these terms:

> 'I said to German Ambassador this morning that if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris, and go the length of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it His Majesty's Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but, otherwise, I told German Ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in.'

[1] Blue Book, No. 111.

London. It is not too much to say that Sir Edward Grey took his political life in his hands in making this offer. Had Germany taken him at his word, had he found her proposals reasonable, and had Russia and France dissented, it would have meant the break-up of the Triple Entente, and very likely the break-up of the Liberal Government; for there would assuredly have been a strong party in England which would have denounced Sir Edward Grey's conduct as a base betrayal. He no doubt felt that he could rely on M. Sazonof's acquiescence in any reasonable proposal; but, in view of the exasperated state of public feeling, was it certain that M. Sazonof would be able to carry Russia with him? Any misunderstanding might have been disastrous to Sir Edward's own political fortunes and those of his associates. He took the risk for the sake of peace: what Minister could have done more? We shall find him to-morrow pressed to formulate the conditions on which Britain would remain neutral; and he is sometimes blamed for not having done so. But here he had done so in advance. Britain would remain neutral on the very simple condition that Germany should put forward a reasonable proposal, showing herself sincerely anxious for the preservation of peace.

But Germany was by this time rushing full speed into war, and nothing could stay her career.

After a Cabinet Council held this morning, Sir Edward Grey saw M. Paul Cambon, who pressed once more for a definite promise of British support for France,[1] on the ground that the uncertainty as to whether we should intervene 'was the encouraging element in Berlin'. Sir Edward replied that Germany no longer trusted to our neutrality; that he had this morning warned Lichnowsky of the probability of our being drawn in; but that the Cabinet was not as yet prepared to give any pledge to France. 'Up to the present moment, we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or

[1] French Book, No. 110; Blue Book, No. 119.

obligations of this country were involved.' He then went on to say that 'the neutrality of Belgium might be, he would not say a decisive, but an important factor in determining our attitude'. London.

As soon, in fact, as it was known that German mobilization was imminent, the question of Belgium became a cardinal issue, and Sir Edward Grey took steps accordingly. He addressed to both the French and the German Government a formal inquiry[1] whether each would 'engage to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as no other Power violated it'; and he instructed the British Minister at Brussels to inform the Belgian Government that these inquiries were being made, and to add that 'he assumed that the Belgian Government would maintain their neutrality to the utmost of their power'. The answers to these inquiries were (1) a prompt declaration in the affirmative by France;[2] (2) a refusal by Germany to reply, on the ground that to do so 'could not but disclose a certain amount of her plan of campaign';[3] (3) a statement by Belgium that she 'expects and desires that other Powers will observe and uphold her neutrality, which she intends to maintain to the utmost of her power'.[4]

The mobilization of the Belgian Army was this morning decreed, to take effect on the following day.[5] Brussels.

The French Minister spontaneously assured the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Davignon, that his Government would respect the neutrality of Belgium.[6]

The Secretary-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs had an interview[7] with the German Minister, Herr von Below, in which he explained that mobilization merely showed the desire of Belgium to fulfil her international

[1] Blue Book, No. 114.
[2] Blue Book, No. 125.
[3] Blue Book, No. 122.
[4] Blue Book, No. 128.
[5] Belgian Book, No. 10.
[6] French Book, No. 119.
[7] Belgian Book, No. 12.

Brussels. obligations, and implied no distrust of her neighbours. The Secretary also reminded the Minister that in 1911 Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg had privately given the Belgian Government assurances that their neutrality was in no danger from Germany, and that in 1913 Herr von Jagow had publicly repeated these assurances.[1] Herr von Below replied that he knew of the Chancellor's utterances ' and was certain that the sentiments expressed at that time had not changed '.

Military preparations. As all mobilizations except that of Britain are now either officially announced or on the eve of announcement, details are no longer important. It may be noted, however, that the Paris correspondent of the *Times* to-day states that it has been decided at a Cabinet Council to bring the French ' covering troops ' up from a peace to a war footing—thus confirming the statement that there had previously been no approach to mobilization. He also confirms M. Viviani's declaration of the previous day that the French troops are being kept at a distance of 10 kilometres from the frontier. As for Germany, the distinction between *Kriegsgefahrzustand* and mobilization is admittedly a technical one, and it matters very little whether it was strictly observed or not. The only point

[1] In the Budget Committee of the Reichstag on April 29th, 1913, Herr von Jagow, in answer to a question, said : ' Belgian neutrality is provided for by International Conventions, and Germany is determined to respect those Conventions.' In answer to further questions he reiterated this declaration.—*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, quoted in Belgian Book, No. 12. The Chancellor had objected to making a public declaration on the ground that it ' would weaken Germany's military position in regard to France, who, secure on her northern side, would concentrate all her energies on the east '. Mr. Headlam (p. 359) has some excellent remarks on the Chancellor's attitude, which already showed that Germany's respect for her plighted word was subordinate to considerations of military convenience. Von Jagow's subsequent plunge into public mendacity was forced upon him by the pestilent Social Democrats.

of any real interest is to determine how far Germany had covertly advanced towards mobilization during the earlier days of the week.

Summary.

Even before it is known that Germany has sent an Ultimatum to Russia, the hopes of peace have dwindled almost to nothing. Nevertheless M. Sazonof is still willing to follow either of two lines of conciliation which are not yet absolutely blocked; while Sir Edward Grey puts forward an old proposal in a new shape, and at the same time makes an offer to Germany which shows that there is nothing he will not dare in order to save the last glimmer of hope from extinction. Austria, meanwhile, is still professing willingness to negotiate, though it does not appear that she has any intention of abating a jot of her demands. Germany, seized with real or pretended panic at the news of Russia's general mobilization, sends an Ultimatum to St. Petersburg, and demands from France a statement of her intentions. As soon as Germany's mobilization is seen to be imminent, Sir Edward Grey requests from both Germany and France an assurance that Belgian neutrality will be respected. France gives the assurance without a moment's hesitation; Germany, in a very ominous way, declines to reveal her intentions in the matter. Meanwhile, Belgium calls attention to recent German disclaimers of any designs upon her neutrality—but at the same time prepares to defend it.

CHAPTER XVII

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, August 1

'The most conscientious statesmanship in Europe toiled breathlessly in the rear of the racing engines of war.'—*The Nation.*

St. Petersburg.

At midnight on July 31st, Count Pourtalès delivered to M. Sazonof the Ultimatum requiring demobilization within twelve hours. Russia made no answer.[1]

At 3.30 a.m. King George addressed to the Tsar a telegram[2] in which he quoted a long statement from Berlin, asserting the pacific intentions and efforts of Germany, and complaining of their being thwarted by Russian mobilization. The chief interest of this statement lies in the following lines:

> 'The proposals made by the German Government in Vienna were conceived entirely on the lines suggested by Great Britain, and the German Government recommended them in Vienna for their serious consideration. *They were taken into consideration in Vienna this* [*Friday*] *morning.* During the deliberations of the [? Austrian] Cabinet, and before they were concluded, the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg reported the mobilization of the entire Russian army and fleet.'

This is very significant. It shows that the most important step which Germany can claim to have taken at Vienna—the step on which she stakes her credit as a peacemaker—was von Tschirscky's communication to Berchtold, on Thursday the 30th, of Grey's proposal to Lichnowsky, made on the previous day (pp. 120, 152).

[1] German Book, C.D.D., p. 412. [2] C.D.D., p. 536.

It is clear from Count Berchtold's account[1] that von Tschirscky did no more than literally obey his instructions in communicating the fact that such a proposal had been made. Of any pressure for its acceptance there is not the slightest trace. And this is the best that Germany has to show for all her protestations of pacific activity! St. Petersburg.

Having quoted the German statement, King George goes on to say that he thinks some misunderstanding must have led to this deadlock; and he appeals to the Tsar to try to remove it. The Tsar's reply we shall see in due course (p. 165).

At midday Germany's time-limit expired. At 2 p.m. the Tsar addressed a telegram to the Kaiser,[2] saying:

> 'I comprehend that You are forced to mobilize, but I should like to have from You the same guarantee which I have given You, viz. that these measures do not mean war, and that we shall continue to negotiate for the welfare of our two countries and the universal peace which is so dear to our hearts.'

To this the Kaiser replied:

> 'I thank You for Your telegram. I have shown yesterday to Your Government the way through which alone war may yet be averted. . . . An immediate, clear, and unmistakable reply of Your Government is the sole way to avoid endless misery. . . .'

'On the same afternoon', says the German Book,[3] 'Russian troops crossed our frontier and marched into German territory. Thus Russia began the war against us.'

We have already noticed the remarkable circumstance that, according to German accounts, it is always the nation which is comparatively unready, and to which every hour of delay is precious, that commits the first act of war. It was Serbia that attacked Austria; it is Russia that here attacks Germany; and we shall presently

[1] Austrian Book, No. 51. [2] German Book, C.D.D., p. 413.
[3] Ibid.

St. Petersburg.

find France accused of committing a similar act of madness. Can there be any doubt that these assertions are simply an obligatory part of the German ceremonial of war-making? It may conceivably be true, as a matter of fact, that some Russians crossed the German frontier. Such an incident easily happens. M. Viviani stated on Thursday the 30th that 'on two occasions yesterday German patrols penetrated our [French] territory';[1] and as he was not declaring war, nor seeking a pretext for doing so, we can easily believe his assertion.[2] When hundreds of thousands of men are nervously on the alert, it is doubtless difficult to prevent some of them from straying out of bounds. But it is wholly incredible that the Russian trespass of to-day, if it ever took place, was anything but a local error, for which, on due remonstrance, apology would at once have been made. Germany's one possible excuse for cutting short all negotiations was that Russia's desire to continue them might be merely a device to gain time for her admittedly slow mobilization; yet she deprives herself of that excuse by affecting to throw upon Russia the responsibility for the first breach of the peace! It is hard to understand why serious statesmen should think it worth while to put forward these wholly undeceptive pretexts.

And yet, who knows? Perhaps they serve their purpose by deceiving—Germans.

At ten minutes past seven this evening, Pourtalès delivered the Declaration of War, in the form of a state-paper of some length.[3] One little fact makes it apparent that it must have been drafted in Berlin before the expiry of the time-limit at midday, and consequently could have had nothing to do with the alleged frontier incident of the afternoon. It had been drafted to meet

[1] French Book, No. 106.

[2] Bethmann-Hollweg, in his Reichstag speech of August 4th, admitted one violation of French territory.

[3] Russian Book, No. 76.

two contingencies: either a refusal to demobilize or a failure to reply; and, by an oversight, both the alternative forms appeared in the document as delivered. It of course began with the usual affirmation of Germany's desire for peace. Then it proceeded: St. Petersburg.

> 'In compliance with a wish expressed by his Majesty the Emperor of Russia, the German Emperor had undertaken, *in concert with Great Britain*, the part of mediator between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg; but Russia, without waiting for any result, proceeded to a general mobilization of her forces both on land and sea.'

It would have been wiser to have omitted the italicized phrase, since we might then have imagined the Emperor personally making heroic efforts to bring Austria to reason, in missives at once too august and too confidential to be given to the world. But the words italicized rule out any such fantasies. The reference is evidently to measures taken through the ordinary diplomatic channels; and we know exactly how much the German Government did 'in concert with Great Britain'.

In the evening the Tsar replied to King George's telegram:[1]

> 'I would gladly have accepted your proposals had not the German Ambassador this afternoon presented a note to my Government, declaring war. . . . Every proposal, including that of your Government, was rejected by Germany and Austria, and it was only when the favourable moment for bringing pressure to bear on Austria had passed that Germany showed any disposition to mediate. Even then she did not put forward any precise proposal. Austria's declaration of war on Serbia forced me to order a partial mobilization, though, in view of the threatening situation, my military advisers strongly advised a general mobilization, owing to the quickness with which Germany can mobilize in comparison with Russia. I was eventually

[1] C.D.D., p. 537.

St. Petersburg.

compelled to take this course in consequence of complete Austrian mobilization, of the bombardment of Belgrade, of concentration of Austrian troops in Galicia, and of secret military preparations being made by Germany. That I was justified in doing so is proved by Germany's sudden declaration of war, which was quite unexpected by me, as I have given most categorical assurances to the Emperor William that my troops would not move so long as mediation negotiations continued.'

It seemed worth while to quote almost at length this most lucid and statesmanlike summary of the situation.

True to his promise of negotiating to the very last, M. Sazonof this morning told the French and British Ambassadors[1] that the amended formula (p. 148) had been forwarded by the Russian Government to Vienna, 'and he would adhere to it if you [Grey] could obtain its acceptance before the frontier was crossed by German troops. In no case would Russia begin hostilities.' He also delivered a little epilogue to the drama of the past ten days:

> 'The policy of Austria had throughout been both tortuous and immoral. . . . Similarly the policy of Germany had been equivocal and double-faced. . . . Germany was unfortunate in her representatives in Vienna and St. Petersburg: the former was a violent Russophobe, who had urged Austria on; the latter had reported to his Government that Russia would never go to war. He was completely weary of the ceaseless endeavours he had made to avoid a war. *No suggestion held out to him had been refused.*'

This was the literal truth. He had throughout displayed a genuinely conciliatory spirit, complete straightforwardness and admirable patience. One parts from him, on the brink of the catastrophe, with sincere respect.

[1] Blue Book, No. 139.

Vienna.

From Vienna we have nothing to-day except a report from Sir Maurice de Bunsen[1] of the fluttering agitation in the diplomatic dovecot under the imminent thundercloud. 'The Russian Ambassador . . . says that the so-called mobilization of Russia amounted to nothing more than that Russia had taken military measures corresponding to those taken by Germany. . . . Russia would, according to the Russian Ambassador, be satisfied even now with assurance respecting Serbian integrity and independence.' In this last sentence, 'assurance' must evidently mean something quite different from 'assurances'. The air had been full for a week past of assurances as to Serbian integrity and independence. M. Schebeko must have meant that if Russia could be assured of the reality of Serbian independence, she would rest content.

Berlin.

The mobilization of the entire army and navy was ordered at 5 p.m.[2]

Goschen had to-day an interview with von Jagow,[3] in which he asked why, when Austria and Russia were ready to discuss matters, Germany, if she sincerely desired peace, could not have held her hand. Von Jagow went over the old story of Russia's mobilization, and added:

> 'Russia had said that her mobilization did not necessarily imply war, and that she could perfectly well remain mobilized for months without making war. This was not the case with Germany. *She had the speed, and Russia had the numbers*, and the safety of the German Empire forbade that Germany should allow Russia time to bring up masses of troops from all parts of her wide dominions.'

There would be some force in this observation had it been a question of waiting for weeks or months; but if there was any sincerity in Austria's willingness to

[1] Blue Book, No. 141. [2] German Book, C.D.D., p. 413.
[3] Blue Book, No. 138.

Berlin. negotiate, a few hours might have secured a suspension of mobilization, and a few days might perfectly well have sufficed to lay down the lines of a peaceful solution, and so to permit of a general demobilization. Of course if Germany knew that the negotiations were bound to be fruitless, it is clear that, in letting them drag on, she would be sacrificing an advantage. But if she was sure that Austria would not consent to any solution that Russia could possibly accept, what are we to think of the sincerity of her alleged efforts at conciliation ?

A misunderstanding which arose to-day with regard to a supposed offer by England to secure French neutrality may best be dealt with under the heading of LONDON.

Paris. Orders were given at 3.40 this afternoon for a general mobilization of the French army. The decree was accompanied by a proclamation signed by the President and all the Ministers, explaining that mobilization is not war, and that ' in the present state of affairs, it is the best means for France of safeguarding peace '.[1]

Herr von Schoen called on M. Viviani at eleven o'clock,[2] two hours before the expiry of the time-limit. M. Viviani expressed to him his astonishment at the action of Germany in presenting an ultimatum to Russia just when a peaceful settlement seemed to be in sight, and just when Russia had accepted ' the English formula ' (more properly Sazonof's own formula, amended by Grey and reworded by Sazonof), ' which implied the cessation of military preparations by all the countries which had mobilized '. Herr von Schoen thought that there was perhaps ' a glimmer of hope ', but does not seem to have indicated the quarter of the political heavens in which he discerned it.

The French Book, oddly enough, contains no record of the German Ambassador's call at the stated hour of

[1] Blue Book, No. 136 ; French Book, No. 127.
[2] French Book, No. 125 ; Blue Book, No. 126.

one o'clock. But he doubtless paid it punctually, for he telegraphed at five minutes past one: 'Upon my repeated definite inquiry whether France would remain neutral in the event of a Russo-German war, the Prime Minister declared that France would do that which her interests dictated.' [1] Paris.

M. Viviani sent a long telegram to M. Paul Cambon [2] in London, rebutting a reported German attempt to make England believe that Russia was responsible for the war. In it he makes a statement, which is several times repeated in Paris to-day, that Austria led the way in general mobilization, and that Russia 'found herself obliged to imitate her'. This is true in substance, but not in the letter. Russia knew, before she ordered general mobilization, that Austria intended to take the same step; but the two decrees seem, as a matter of fact, to have been issued almost simultaneously (pp. 146, 151, 152). M. Viviani also says: 'Last Wednesday, well in advance of Russian mobilization, Herr von Schoen announced to me the impending publication of *Kriegsgefahrzustand*'—which would be interesting if we could regard it as certain. But one cannot but think that M. Viviani's memory may have deceived him. It seems scarcely probable that von Schoen knew of this determination, and blurted it out, forty-eight hours in advance. He may have said, conjecturally, that this step would probably be taken.

Germany's refusal to state her intentions with regard to Belgium apparently did not reach London until after a morning meeting of the Cabinet. On receiving the news from Berlin, Sir Edward Grey told M. Paul Cambon [3] that he would ask the Cabinet at its next meeting to authorize him to state in the House of Commons on Monday that 'the British Government would not permit a violation of Belgian neutrality', and that the British London.

[1] German Book, No. 27. [2] French Book, No. 127.
[3] French Book, No. 126.

London. fleet would ' oppose the passage of the Straits of Dover ' or ' any demonstration on the French coasts ' by the German fleet.

To Prince Lichnowsky, Sir Edward said[1] that ' the reply of the German Government with regard to Belgium was a matter of very great regret. . . . If there were a violation of the neutrality of Belgium by one combatant while the other respected it, it would be extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in this country '. Prince Lichnowsky asked whether we would remain neutral if Germany promised not to violate Belgian neutrality. Sir Edward replied that ' our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion. He did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone '. Lichnowsky then pressed him to state the conditions on which Britain would remain neutral, even suggesting that the integrity of France *and her colonies* might be guaranteed. Sir Edward definitely refused to make any promise of neutrality ' on similar terms ', and said that we must keep our hands free.

The attitude of the Foreign Minister in this interview has been much criticized. It is, indeed, rather difficult to see why he did not take higher ground on the question of Belgium—why he seemed to detach the Government from the nation, as though respect for treaty obligations were stronger outside the Cabinet than in it. If it be true that the Great General Staff was divided against itself on the subject of Belgium, it seems just conceivable that a firm word from Sir Edward at this moment might have strengthened the hands of the party opposed to the great outrage. If he had said (in diplomatic terms), ' Tell your Government that if they break faith with Belgium they will be committing a crime which will set the whole world against them ', one does not see that it could have done any harm, and it might have done good. Perhaps he was, in fact, restrained by the

[1] Blue Book, No. 123.

knowledge that the Cabinet, as then constituted, was not so solid on the point as it ought to have been. London.

It must also be remembered, in estimating both the feeling in the Cabinet and the language of Sir Edward Grey, that at this time the violation of Belgian neutrality was still, so to speak, an abstract idea, and no one could have anticipated the concrete horror of the process. There are degrees in crime ; even a burglar is not necessarily a brute ; and though the wrong contemplated was bound to be great, there was as yet no reason for speaking of it with the abhorrence which it now inspires throughout the civilized world. We must not criticize either Sir Edward Grey or his colleagues as though they ought to have known—what we now know—that they were face to face with one of the darkest deeds in history.

In other respects, it is hard to see how Sir Edward could with dignity, or even with safety, have acted otherwise than he did. It was not for England to say, ' If only you hold your hand at this point or at that, you may inflict on France what punishment you will for the crime of being faithful to her Russian alliance '. If England had judged France to be in the wrong, she was free to stand aside altogether. Judging her to be in the right, she could not make terms with the oppressor on the basis of his putting such-and-such limits to his oppression. Besides, Sir Edward had already stated the condition of British neutrality—that Germany should make some proposal for conciliation so reasonable that Russia and France would put themselves in the wrong if they refused it (p. 157).

Learning to-day that M. Sazonof had accepted the amended formula (p. 148) and that Austria had declared her readiness ' to discuss the substance ' of the Ultimatum to Serbia, Grey communicated these facts to Goschen [1]

[1] Blue Book, Nos. 131, 132, 133. In No. 131 Sir Edward says : ' The Russian Government has communicated to me the readiness of Austria to discuss with Russia, and the readiness of *Austria*

London. in Berlin, urging that 'things ought not to be hopeless so long as Austria and Russia are ready to converse'. But Germany was awaiting the inevitable news that Russia had rejected her ultimatum. She had finally closed her ears to the voice of the peacemaker.

We now come to a somewhat puzzling incident. Sir Edward Grey sends to Sir George Buchanan in St. Petersburg the following telegram:[1]

> 'Information reaches me from a most reliable source that Austrian Government have informed German Government that though the situation has been changed by the mobilization of Russia they would, in full appreciation of the efforts of England for the preservation of peace, be ready to consider favourably my proposal for mediation between Austria and Serbia. The effect of this acceptance would naturally be that the Austrian military action against Serbia would continue for the present, and that the British Government would urge upon Russian Government to stop the mobilization of troops directed against Austria, in which case Austria would naturally cancel those defensive military counter-measures in Galicia, which have been forced upon Austria by Russian mobilization.
>
> You should inform Minister for Foreign Affairs and say that if, in the consideration of the acceptance of mediation by Austria, Russia can agree to stop mobilization, it appears still to be possible to preserve peace.'

The document which Sir Edward here reports is Count Berchtold's telegram of yesterday to Berlin (p. 152); and it has been represented that Germany, in failing to forward it to London, repeated the manœuvre of the Ems telegram, and perfidiously extinguished the last hope of peace. Here, for once, we may probably acquit her. As Berchtold did not telegraph till after a meeting

to accept a basis of mediation which is not open to the objections raised in regard to the formula which Russia originally suggested.' For the second 'Austria' we ought surely to read 'Russia'. The amended formula seems never to have been considered by Austria.

[1] Blue Book, No. 135.

of the Cabinet,[1] the message probably did not reach Berlin till pretty late, when all was excitement over the dispatch of the Ultimatum to Russia; and the failure London.

[1] German official statement, C.D.D., p. 536. It is not *absolutely* certain that the proposal here stated to have been under consideration by the Austrian Cabinet was Sir Edward Grey's proposal; but it is difficult to accept any other theory. We know that von Jagow did, on Thursday, send on to Vienna Grey's proposal to Lichnowsky that Austria, after occupying Belgrade, might stay her hand 'pending an effort of the Powers to mediate between her and Russia'. We know that when this was communicated to him, Berchtold said that he would take the pleasure of the Emperor on Friday morning. Germany declares that she submitted to Vienna proposals 'conceived entirely on the lines suggested by Great Britain' and that they were considered by the Vienna Cabinet on Friday morning. Is it to be supposed that, besides forwarding Grey's proposals, Germany sent other proposals of her own entirely on the English lines, and that Berchtold answered Grey's proposal without consulting the Cabinet, and then went to the Cabinet meeting to deliberate on another Anglo-German suggestion? This is surely incredible. What the Cabinet discussed must have been Grey's proposal as passed on by von Tschirscky and altered in passing; for mediation between Austria and Russia has become mediation between Austria and Serbia. Grey, indeed, in the telegram above quoted, accepts this as his proposal, but that must have been simply because it was immaterial to him what form the mediation took, so long as it took form at all. He had never, as a matter of fact, proposed mediation between Austria and Serbia, that having been barred by Germany herself. The German statement says that no answer was given to the proposals of mediation. This suggests a reason why Berchtold's answer was not forwarded—namely, that Szogyeny did not deliver it at the Wilhelmstrasse till the time-limit attached to the German Ultimatum was expiring or had expired.

If further proof be demanded that the Grey-Lichnowsky proposal, and no other, was what Germany submitted to Austria, it may be found in the introductory narrative to the German Book (C.D.D., p. 410). It is there written: 'We even as late as the 30th of July forwarded the English proposal to Vienna, as basis for negotiations, that Austria should dictate her conditions in Serbia, i.e., after her march into Serbia. We thought

London. to send it on may have been a mere inadvertence. We may the more readily take this charitable view, as we can scarcely suppose that it would be regarded as a promising basis for a pacific settlement, and therefore as being dangerous to the designs of the war party.

The odd thing is that Sir Edward Grey, when a side-wind brought it to his knowledge,[1] seems to have thought it worth serious consideration. When he says, 'The effect of this acceptance would naturally be that the Austrian military action against Serbia would continue for the present,' we discern a misunderstanding. In his conversation with Lichnowsky he had assumed that Austria would soon be in possession of Belgrade and its environs; and what he means in the above sentence is doubtless that Austria should 'continue her military action' until she thus held a portion of Serbian territory, and should then call a halt pending mediation. But in Berchtold's mind there is no such idea. He simply stipulates that 'our military action against Serbia shall take its course'; which would mean that, by judiciously protracting the negotiations, Austria would be able to crush Serbia at her ease, while Russia stood paralysed. It would manifestly have been futile to approach Russia with such a proposition. But it seems strange that Sir Edward should even have seen some hope in the proposal as he understood it—that Russia should stop mobilization, while Austria was still battering at Belgrade.[2]

that Russia would accept this basis.' If Germany thought this a hopeful proposal, can we imagine that she submitted another, also on English lines, almost simultaneously with it?

[1] In all probability the 'most reliable source' was Count Mensdorff. We know that the telegram was communicated by Berchtold to the Austrian Ambassadors in London and St. Petersburg; and we know that Mensdorff called on Grey this morning (Blue Book, No. 137). The mystery is probably due to the fact that Mensdorff was not officially instructed to make the communication.

[2] Sir Edward probably knew, it may be said, that M. Sazonof

Count Mensdorff to-day called twice at the Foreign Office,[1] to communicate telegrams designed to show Austria in a pacific and accommodating mood. It was now that he quoted and emphasized Count Berchtold's request to the Russian Ambassador 'to remove the wholly erroneous impression in St. Petersburg that "the door had been banged" by Austria on all further conversations' (p. 150). London.

A misunderstanding which arose to-day, and led to an exchange of telegrams between the Kaiser and King George, affords the one element of 'comic relief' in this sombre drama.[2] The episode was explained by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on August 28th. It had been reported to Sir Edward that Prince Lichnowsky had suggested the possibility that Germany might remain neutral if France and England did so likewise, Austria and Russia being thus left to fight it out between themselves. Sir Edward naturally addressed himself to Lichnowsky to ascertain whether this was a serious proposition; and Lichnowsky (perhaps mishearing what he said on the telephone) understood him to ask whether, if France promised neutrality, Germany would refrain from attacking her. This misconception he at once passed on to Berlin, where it evidently caused a flutter of surprise and delight. 'What!' we can hear them exclaiming: 'England will hold France in check while we dispose of Russia! We shall be able to crush the Entente Powers one by one instead of together! Truly our *alte gute Gott* is on our side!' The Kaiser instantly dashed off a telegram to King George. It was technically impossible, he said, to

had spoken on the previous day (see p. 149) as though the suspension of hostilities against Serbia were not a *sine qua non*. But Sazonof was not here thinking of any proposal which involved the stoppage of Russian mobilization. He could never have consented to such a measure while Austria refused to place any limit to her action against Serbia.

[1] Blue Book, No. 137. [2] Documents in Price, pp. 398–401.

London. stop mobilization on the western frontier; 'but if France offers me her neutrality, which must be guaranteed by the English army and navy, I will of course cease to consider an attack on France, and use my troops in another direction. I hope that France will not be nervous.' Oddly enough, it was the Germans who published this simple-minded missive.[1] One would have expected them to be ashamed of having strayed even for a moment into such a fool's paradise. King George at once replied: 'I think there must be a misunderstanding'; Sir Edward Grey cleared the matter up; and Lichnowsky, at 8.30 p.m., telegraphed to cancel the telegram of 11 a.m., which had conveyed his erroneous impression.

Rome. The Marquis di San Giuliano to-day informed the German Ambassador[2] 'that as the war undertaken by Austria was aggressive, and did not fall within the purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance . . . Italy could not take part in it'.

Summary. As Germany cannot possibly have expected that Russia would submit to the unexampled humiliation of demobilizing at her orders, and at twelve hours' notice, all hope of peace had of course vanished. The Tsar at the last moment held out a flag of truce by suggesting that negotiations should continue in spite of the mobilization of both countries; but the Kaiser would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender. At 5 p.m. mobilization was decreed, and two hours later the declaration of war was delivered. All negotiations are thus reduced to insignificance; and the one point on which interest now centres is the question of Germany's intentions towards Belgium. Sir Edward Grey points out to

[1] Not in their official Book: in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* for August 20.

[2] French Book, No. 124.

Prince Lichnowsky the ominous contrast between the prompt assurances of France as to Belgian neutrality and Germany's ambiguous reticence. He makes no response to Lichnowsky's entreaty that he will formulate the conditions under which Britain will remain neutral; and he indicates to Cambon that Britain will refuse to permit a naval attack by Germany on the Channel ports of France. Austria, evidently thinking Germany's challenge to Russia too precipitate, seeks to emphasize the moderation of her attitude; and Italy announces that she is not to be dragged into a war of aggression by her partners of the Triple Alliance.

CHAPTER XVIII

DID BRITAIN HANG BACK TOO LONG?

'Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;
Threaten the threatener.'—SHAKESPEARE.

'Suaviter in modo: fortiter in re.'

FROM the moment the crisis became acute—that is to say, from Friday the 24th onward—Russia and France repeatedly urged that Great Britain should lose no time in affirming the effective reality of the Triple Entente, and thus warning the Central European Powers of the magnitude of the task they were facing. In this country, too, it has been argued—by Mr. Bernard Shaw among others—that peace might have been preserved if Britain had taken a firm stand earlier in the controversy. Let us examine a little into this argument.

On July 24th, in his first interview with Sir George Buchanan after the presentation of the Ultimatum,[1] M. Sazonof said 'He hoped that His Majesty's Government would not fail to proclaim their solidarity with Russia and France'. Sir George replied, as we have seen (p. 38), that 'direct British interests in Serbia were nil, and that a war on behalf of that country would never be sanctioned by public opinion'. M. Sazonof's answer was that, not merely the Serbian question, but the general European question was involved, and that 'Great Britain could not afford to efface herself from the problems now

[1] Blue Book, No. 6. The French Ambassador took the same line at this interview and telegraphed to his Government: 'Nothing but the assurance of the solidarity of the Triple Entente can prevent the German Powers from emphasizing their provocative attitude' (French Book, No. 31).

at issue'. Sir Edward Grey expressly approved the Ambassador's attitude in this interview.[1]

Again, on the following day, Saturday, July 25, M. Sazonof returned to the charge.[2] Germany, he said, was unfortunately 'convinced that she could count upon our neutrality'.

> 'He did not believe that Germany really wanted war, but her attitude was decided by ours. If we took our stand firmly with France and Russia there would be no war. If we failed them now, rivers of blood would flow, and we would in the end be dragged into war.'

The latter part of this prognostic has been only too completely justified; but it does not follow that the former part would have been fulfilled had England acted as the Russian statesman desired. Sir George Buchanan's reply at the moment was that England could better play the mediator in the character of a friend to Russia and France, 'who, if her counsels of moderation were disregarded, might one day be converted into an ally, than if she were to declare herself Russia's ally at once'.

Two days later, on Monday the 27th, Sir George Buchanan,[3] having meanwhile received Sir Edward Grey's approval of the line he had taken in the interview of Friday, made the English position still clearer by saying to M. Sazonof that

> 'His Excellency was mistaken if he believed that the cause of peace could be promoted by our telling the German Government that they would have to deal with us as well as with Russia and France if they supported Austria by force of arms. Their attitude would merely be stiffened by such a menace, and we could only induce her [Germany] to use her influence at Vienna to avert war by approaching her in the capacity of a friend who was anxious to preserve peace.'

To this Sazonof seems to have made no direct reply, nor did he, personally, urge his point of view any further,

[1] Blue Book, No. 24. [2] Blue Book, No. 17.
[3] Blue Book, No. 44.

though he probably inspired[1] the strong appeal to the same purpose which was made by the French President three days later. To this we shall presently return. In the meantime, let us consider whether, in these early days, Sir Edward Grey ought to have yielded to M. Sazonof's importunity and taken a firm stand by the side of Russia and France.

It is certain that Germany was under an illusion as to England's frame of mind, just as Austria was under an illusion as to Russia's. There were in those days many unfortunate illusions abroad in Central Europe. On July 27th (the day of Buchanan's answer to Sazonof) the French Chargé d'Affaires in London reported to his Government that ' the German Ambassador and the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador allow it to be understood that they are sure that England would preserve neutrality if a conflict were to break out.'[2] It is regrettable, no doubt, that Germany made this miscalculation. Had she formed from the first a juster estimate of the factors in the problem, she might have ordered Austria to behave with a little more circumspection. But it by no means follows that after the plunge was taken, and the two confederates were committed to the adventure, a sudden and aggressive disillusionment as to England's frame of mind would have brought them up short and restored them to reason.

Sir Edward Grey's conduct must of course be examined, not from the point of view of the ideally desirable, but of the practically possible. An autocrat and the minister of an autocrat can do many things that are impossible to the responsible minister of a constitutional state. It is only human, however, to reflect upon the ideally desirable, and to express regret if the practically possible be

[1] See French Book, No. 101.

[2] French Book, No. 63. M. de Fleuriau adds, however, that Sir Arthur Nicolson, in conversation with Prince Lichnowsky, has done something to shake his confidence in Britain's immobility.

not found to coincide with it. Was that the case in the present instance?

If Sir Edward Grey, on the Saturday or the Sunday, had felt free to declare to the German Government: 'Unless Austria desists from her attack on Serbia, which is practically an attack upon Russia, England will throw the whole weight of her land and sea forces into the scale of the Triple Entente'—is it probable that that announcement would have secured peace? To any one who realizes the German frame of mind in regard to England,[1] it must seem improbable in the highest degree. Here was Germany publicly embarked on a dashing political adventure which was to enhance the prestige of the Central Powers to an unexampled pitch: was she to cry 'Halt!' at the bidding of the hated islanders who had balked her over Morocco, and whom she believed to be blocking her world-policy on every hand? The exasperation over the Agadir incident was still fresh in the public mind, and it would have been very difficult for the Government, even if it had so desired, to beat another retreat before a menace from Great Britain. We must remember that the weight of the threat would have been discounted by the prevalent opinion that England's hands were tied by her Irish troubles. It is conceivable, of course, that prudent counsels might nevertheless have prevailed, and that Germany, in a temper of white-hot fury, might have determined once more to bide her time. But it is very improbable that even this postponement of the inevitable

[1] A friendly critic objects that no account is here taken of the 'new friendship for England' which the German Government was showing, and in which some English statesmen seriously believed. The answer is that, whether genuine or not, this amicable sentiment was certainly confined to a very few people. If any one doubts this, he has only to read Count Reventlow's *Deutschlands auswärtige Politik*, published in the spring of 1914. Besides, Germany's alleged friendship for England would seem to be a poor reason for taking the first opportunity to threaten her with war.

would have been secured. The chances are that, as Sir George Buchanan said, Germany's 'back would have been stiffened by such a menace', the war would have come, perhaps a day or two sooner, and England, instead of having striven to the last for peace, would have stood before the world as the Power which first threw her gauntlet into the arena.

There seems, then, to be no reason for regret that Sir Edward Grey was not an autocrat and did not try to act as one. Still clearer is the case when we consider what was his constitutional position and the limits it imposed upon him. Nothing could have been more foolish than for the British Government to shake a mailed fist without knowing that Parliament and the nation were behind it; and nothing can be more certain than that on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, the 25th to the 27th of July, Parliament and the nation would not have endorsed anything approaching to a threat of war. We must throw our minds back to these dates, and forget all that subsequent events have revealed. At that time no one could tell that Vienna would be obstinately unreasonable, Berlin immovably obstructive, and St. Petersburg reasonable to the utmost limit of compliance. All we then knew was that Austria was seeking reparation for a dastardly crime, and it did not seem to be denied that she had some just grounds of complaint against Serbia. Her method of procedure, it is true, was inexcusably peremptory; but there was as yet no reason to despair of her relaxing her truculent attitude. Could Sir Edward Grey have come before Parliament and said, 'For the sake of Serbia, a country with which we have no historical or racial connexion, and in which our interests are practically nil—a country, too, which has admittedly put herself more or less in the wrong with regard to her powerful neighbour—for the sake of this remote and morally dubious nation, I have pledged Great Britain, in certain not improbable

eventualities, to go to war, in alliance with Russia, against Germany, Austria, and possibly Italy as well'? It was unthinkable that any minister should place himself in such a hopeless position. When we remember the state of the public mind a week later—indeed, down to the moment of the invasion of Belgium—we cannot but realize that when M. Sazonof and M. Paléologue implored Britain to 'proclaim solidarity' with Russia and France, they were urging a course which would have been unwise in theory and was in practice impossible. Had Sir Edward Grey needed anything to dissuade him from such an error, he might have remembered the unfortunate effect of Lord Palmerston's incautious attitude of menace before the Danish War of 1864.

M. Sazonof himself, indeed, seems to have recognized later that his early exhortations to 'solidarity' were premature. On Friday the 31st, before England was in any way committed to warlike action, he expressed to Sir George Buchanan [1]

> 'his deep gratitude to His Majesty's Government, who had done so much to save the situation. It would be largely due to them if war were prevented. The Emperor, the Russian Government, and the Russian people would never forget the firm attitude adopted by Great Britain.'

If this utterance was sincere—and there was no motive for insincerity—it is very authoritative evidence against the view that any tardiness or indecision on England's part contributed to the catastrophe.

By July 30 (Thursday), when M. Poincaré took up the Russian strain and begged England to make it clear that she was to be reckoned with, events had so developed that some of the foregoing arguments no longer apply. Let us consider, then, whether M. Poincaré was right in his judgement of the situation.

[1] Blue Book, No. 120.

He expressed it thus (as reported by Sir F. Bertie) : [1]

> ' The President is convinced that peace between the Powers is in the hands of Great Britain. If His Majesty's Government announced that England would come to the aid of France in the event of a conflict between France and Germany . . . there would be no war, for Germany would at once modify her attitude.'

It may be admitted that a recourse to threats would have been better justified on Thursday than on Monday, since suasion, expostulation—in a word, negotiation—had had a fair trial, with scant promise of success. It could not have been said that England was impetuously rushing into the fray, and proving herself ' more Serbian than the Russians '. But is there any reason to suppose that Germany would have retreated before the English menace ?

There is less than no reason for such an assumption. On Monday retreat might still have been possible with a fair show of dignity. Only the initiated need have known how deeply Germany had committed herself to the support of Austrian intransigeance. If things had been skilfully managed, the general public might scarcely have realized the fact of a retreat, since they would have had no certain knowledge of the extent of the advance. There would have been no obvious disgrace in insisting that Austria, suppressing her ingenious commentary, should make the Serbian reply a basis for negotiation. The Austrian jingoes would have been furious, but it is possible that the German nation, as distinct from Junkerdom and officialdom, might have remained comparatively calm. On Thursday all was different. War was declared, Belgrade bombarded, and there is not the slightest doubt that military preparations on a large scale were going on in Germany, and must have been known to everybody. It was clear to the man in the street that Germany was backing Austria against Russia for all she

[1] Blue Book, No. 99.

was worth. If, then, there had been a sudden right-about-face, and a rush towards peace instead of towards war, every one would have seen that some new factor had entered into the problem; nor could there have been any difficulty in divining what that factor was. It would have been Agadir over again on a ten times larger scale. The shearer would have come home very conspicuously shorn, and the rage, not merely of the military, official, Pan-Prussian classes, but of the whole German people, would have threatened revolution.[1]

The theory that England could at this point have intimidated Germany may with all the more confidence be rejected, since Germany, as a matter of fact, was no longer under any illusion as to England's attitude. England had, without any definite menace, made it clear that her neutrality was not to be counted on. Already on July 25 (Saturday), Sir Edward Grey had said to Prince Lichnowsky[2] that if Austrian mobilization led to Russian mobilization 'a situation would exist in which the interests of all the Powers would be involved. In that event Great Britain reserved to herself full liberty of action'. Again, on the 27th (Monday), he said to Lichnowsky[3] that 'the British Government were sincerely anxious to act with the German Government as long as the preservation of peace was in question, but, in the contrary event, Great Britain reserved to herself full liberty of action'. On the same day, Sir Arthur Nicolson spoke to Prince Lichnowsky to the same intent, and, it would seem, in still graver terms.[4] To any

[1] It may perhaps be thought that this argument implies that the German Government could not safely have made any move in the direction of peace, and is therefore not to be blamed, after the first days, for its obstructive policy. But there is all the difference between the voluntary adoption of a reasonable course and a retreat before menaces. If it be said that the menaces need not have been publicly known, the reply is that these things always leak out.

[2] Russian Book, No. 20.

[3] Russian Book, No. 42.

[4] French Book, No. 63.

diplomat with a trained ear, these expressions must have struck a clear note of warning. But, determined that there should be no mistake, on the 29th—the day before M. Poincaré made his appeal—Sir Edward Grey spoke to the German Ambassador in these terms: [1]

> 'I said that I wished to say to him, in a quite private and friendly way, something that was on my mind. The situation was very grave . . . and I did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation—which I hoped would continue—into thinking that we should stand aside.
>
> He said that he quite understood this, but he asked whether I meant that we should, under certain circumstances, intervene.
>
> I replied that I did not wish to say that, or to use anything that was like a threat. . . . But we knew very well that if the issue did become such that we thought British interests required us to intervene, we must intervene at once, and the decision would have to be very rapid, just as the decisions of other Powers had to be. I hoped that the friendly tone of our conversations would continue as at present, and that I should be able to keep as closely in touch with the German Government in working for peace. But if we failed in our efforts to keep the peace . . . I did not wish to be open to any reproach from him that the friendly tone of our conversations had misled him or his Government into supposing that we should not take action, and to the reproach that, if they had not been so misled, the course of things might have been different.
>
> The German Ambassador took no exception to what I said; indeed he told me that *it accorded with what he had already given in Berlin as his view of the situation.*' [2]

Is it too much to say that this conversation gives the completest possible answer to every accusation of tardiness and indecision on England's part, at all events up

[1] Blue Book, Nos. 87 and 89.

[2] Von Jagow, on receiving Lichnowsky's report of this interview, said that he heard of it 'with regret, but not exactly with surprise' (Blue Book, No. 98).

to the point of Germany's declaration of war against Russia? It is hard to imagine a more judicious move, or one more rightly timed. Instead of rushing in with a threat, and thereby, for the sake of one chance of peace, incurring ninety-nine chances of making England appear to have precipitated the struggle, Sir Edward Grey at first confines himself to the purely diplomatic warning conveyed in the phrase 'full liberty of action'; and then—when he sees that Germany is on the verge of decision—without, so to speak, raising his voice, or putting into it the smallest note of menace, he conveys an intimation that she must not count on England's neutrality. His action is as straightforward as it is adroit. It leaves Germany free to alter her course with the least possible loss of dignity, the least possible appearance of yielding to pressure. If the weight of British metal was to deflect the balance in favour of peace, this was assuredly the way to apply it.

The conversation with Lichnowsky took place on Wednesday afternoon. On the same evening the War Council assembled at Potsdam, and on his return to Berlin the Imperial Chancellor made his bid for British neutrality (p. 126). Sir Edward Goschen's very cool reply—'I did not think it probable that at this stage of events you would care to bind yourself to any course of action, and I was of opinion that you would desire to retain full liberty'—must at once have warned his Excellency that there was small chance of its acceptance. On the morrow (Thursday) it was emphatically refused (p. 143), and on Friday the refusal was communicated to the Chancellor (p. 153). At least thirty-six hours, then, before Germany declared war upon Russia, she was quite definitely aware that England was not to be lulled into inaction by a promise of the 'integrity' of France, any more than Russia was to be narcotized by a similar engagement with regard to Serbia. The verdict of history will surely be that Sir Edward Grey hit with

astonishing accuracy the middle course between a policy of bluster, which would have saddled England with a large share in the responsibility for the war, and a policy of flabbiness, which might fairly be accused of hiding from Germany the gravity of the situation confronting her.

Observe that so far back as Monday the 27th, Sir Edward Grey had pointed out to the Austrian Ambassador[1] (and it must have been perfectly well known in Germany) that the British fleet, which was to have dispersed on that day, had been kept in a state of mobilization. If, in the face of that fact, Germany felt any false security, the blame certainly did not lie with England.

It does not even appear that there is any need to fall back upon Sir Edward Grey's position as a constitutional Minister in order to explain or excuse his action. One does not see where or how he could have done better had he been an autocrat. In the unqualified rejection of Germany's bid for neutrality, Sir Edward (of course with the Cabinet behind him) probably went a good deal further than public sentiment would, at that moment, have warranted. He did not shrink from taking a certain risk. He was pretty safe in putting his foot down about Belgium; but there was such a widespread feeling against co-operation with Russia, that a large and influential party would certainly have been tempted to argue that our obligations to France would be fulfilled if we secured her certain immunities as to which Germany was apparently willing to bargain. It was quite on the cards that, if Germany had given satisfactory assurances about Belgium, the anti-Russian party, combining with the peace-at-any-price party, might have turned against the Government and dragged it down. Sir Edward took the stand which he felt to be right, and the fact that events have justified him does not make his conduct any the less courageous.

Towards the other Powers of the Entente, too, his

[1] Blue Book, No. 48.

policy seems to have been eminently judicious. An early declaration of complete solidarity, even if it had been possible, would have been open to the objection of making for war by rendering Russia's championship of Serbia more aggressive and less conciliatory. Only by preserving complete freedom of action could Sir Edward make sure that his counsels of moderation would have their full weight. As it happened, Russia did not require any such counsels. Her disposition to be reasonable, her desire for conciliation, needed no reinforcement. But in keeping his hands entirely free to the last possible moment, Sir Edward certainly took the course that enabled him to exert to the fullest his influence in favour of peace. Incidentally, he afforded a complete answer to the critics who accused him of not having disclosed to Parliament and the nation the full extent of the obligations involved in the Entente. It is patent on the face of all the documents that, except for the naval arrangement assigning the Channel to the British, and the Mediterranean to the French, fleet, England was under no definite obligation whatever either to France or to Russia.

CHAPTER XIX

DIARY OF EVENTS

Sunday, August 2

'The weak nation is to have the same right to live as the powerful and vigorous nation. The whole idea represents a presumptuous encroachment on the natural laws of development.'—BERNHARDI.

THE fight for peace was over. We have no longer to follow proposals, and amendments, and refusals, and 'bids' and menaces, whizzing to and fro between capital and capital, like the shuttles in a giant loom, and weaving, alas! a Nessus-robe for Europe. Britain's participation in the war was not yet assured, but it depended no longer on negotiation, but on the course of events—on the Belgian frontier.

After a Cabinet Council held this morning, Sir Edward Grey handed to M. Paul Cambon the following declaration:[1]

> 'I am authorized to give an 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.
>
> This assurance is of course subject to the policy of His Majesty's Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty's Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German fleet takes place.'

This undertaking was a mere corollary to the arrangement by which the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean, leaving the Channel and the North Sea

[1] Blue Book, No. 148; French Book, No. 137.

to the British fleet. It did not necessarily involve war with Germany, for Germany might be (and in fact was) willing to abstain from naval action in the Channel and the Atlantic, if she could thereby secure British neutrality. In this assurance, said M. Viviani, 'we have obtained from Great Britain a first assistance which is most valuable to us.'[1]

This morning 'very early' German troops invaded the Duchy of Luxemburg at several points, and armoured trains, with troops and ammunition, were sent over the frontier. The Luxemburg Minister of State at once informed France and England of the violation of the guaranteed neutrality of the Duchy, and sent a protest to the Berlin Foreign Office.[2] Bethmann-Hollweg, through the German Minister at Luxemburg,[3] declared that these proceedings 'did not constitute a hostile act' but were 'solely measures intended to assure the use of the railways which have been leased to the Empire, against the eventual attack of a French Army'.

Sir Edward Grey pointed out to M. Cambon the distinction between Britain's obligations to Belgium and her obligations to Luxemburg. She was bound to protect the neutrality of Belgium, if necessary, alone; whereas she was bound to protect the neutrality of Luxemburg only in concert with the other guaranteeing Powers.[4]

M. Viviani to-day reports [5] in some detail several acts of war committed by German troops on the frontier near Belfort. He gives the name of the regiment (the 5th mounted Jaegers) two patrols of which penetrated more than ten kilometres over the frontier, killed a French soldier, and carried off a number of horses. M. Jules

[1] French Book, No. 138.

[2] Blue Book, No. 147; French Book, No. 131.

[3] French Book, No. 132.

[4] Blue Book, No. 148; French Book, No. 137. The origin of this distinction is very clearly explained by Mr. Headlam, 'History of Twelve Days,' Chapter XVI.

[5] French Book, No. 139.

Cambon, at Berlin, was instructed to protest against these outrages. It is not improbable that they were deliberately planned, in the hope of goading France into a declaration of war.

The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day informed the German Minister that though he did not doubt that the intentions of Germany towards Belgium were 'perfectly correct', a formal declaration to that effect would be received by the Belgian nation 'with joy and gratitude'. Herr von Below replied that he had not been instructed to make any declaration, but that the Belgian Government 'knew his personal opinion as to the feelings of security which they had the right to entertain towards their eastern neighbours.'[1]

At seven in the evening, Herr von Below presented to the Belgian Government a 'Very Confidential' letter,[2] which is, in its different way, a companion-piece to the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia—the one a triumph of hypocrisy, the other of truculence. Germany has 'reliable information' that French forces intend to march against Germany 'on the line of the Meuse, by Givet and Namur'. The German Government fears that Belgium will be unable without assistance to repel this French attack, and consequently proposes to 'anticipate' it, but will feel 'the deepest regret' if Belgium regards this as an act of hostility. To prevent all misunderstanding the German Government makes a declaration under four heads:

(1) If Belgium will maintain 'an attitude of friendly neutrality towards Germany' her integrity and independence will be assured her at the end of the war.

(2) Germany will evacuate Belgian territory on the conclusion of peace.

(3) Germany will pay her way and compensate for damage.

(4) 'Should Belgium oppose the German troops . . .

[1] Belgian Book, No. 19. [2] Belgian Book, No. 20.

Germany will, to her regret, be compelled to consider Belgium as an enemy. In this event Germany can undertake no obligations towards Belgium, but the eventual adjustment of the relations between the two States must be left to the decision of arms.'

A reply was demanded within twelve hours.

The French intention to invade Belgium was purely fictitious. France, to her cost, had made all her dispositions in view of an invasion on her eastern frontier. Germany had done her best to lure France into an infringement of Belgian neutrality,[1] but France had not fallen into the trap. The accusation was simply a pre-arranged manœuvre, utterly undeceptive to any one not determined to be deceived.

At 1.30 in the morning, Herr von Below, on instructions from Berlin, burst in upon Baron van der Elst (Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs) with the intelligence that French dirigibles had thrown bombs, and a French cavalry patrol had crossed the frontier. Baron van der Elst asked where these incidents had happened. The answer was 'In Germany'. The Baron then observed that in that case he could not understand the object of the communication. Herr von Below replied 'that these acts, which were contrary to international law, were calculated to lead to the supposition that other acts contrary to international law would be committed by France'.

It was a desperate attempt to bolster up the fiction of a projected French invasion.

If it were not the prelude to so great a tragedy, how comic it would be!

[1] On this complex piece of diplomatic finesse see Headlam, pp. 359 and 377.

CHAPTER XX

DIARY OF EVENTS

Monday, August 3

'France must be so completely crushed that she can never again come across our path.'—BERNHARDI.

AT seven in the morning Belgium returned its answer to the German ultimatum.[1]

That document 'has made a deep and painful impression upon the Belgian Government'. The intentions attributed to France by Germany are in contradiction to formal declarations made by France on August 1. Should France break her word, Belgium is prepared to offer a vigorous resistance to the invader. The independence and neutrality of Belgium are guaranteed by the Powers, 'and notably by the Government of His Majesty the King of Prussia'.

'The attack upon her independence with which the German Government threaten her constitutes a flagrant violation of international law. No strategic interest justifies such a violation.

The Belgian Government, if they were to accept the proposals submitted to them, would sacrifice the honour of the nation and betray their duty towards Europe.

Conscious of the part which Belgium has played for more than eighty years in the civilization of the world, they refuse to believe that the independence of Belgium can only be purchased at the price of violation of her neutrality.

If this hope is disappointed, the Belgian Government are firmly resolved to repel, by all the means in their power, every attack upon their rights.'

[1] Belgian Book, No. 22.

Surely it cannot be mere prejudice that sees, throughout these documents, a marked and illuminating contrast between the demands of the Germanic Powers (for they are always demanding) and the replies which they elicit. On the one side, menace, bribery, chicanery; on the other side, sincerity, honesty, and unswerving, though unmenacing, resolution. It may certainly be said for the Germanic utterances that, though far from noble themselves, they are the cause of nobleness in others; and of that the Belgian reply is a striking example.

The King of the Belgians addressed to King George the following telegram: [1]

> 'Remembering the numerous proofs of Your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessor, the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of Your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.'

Until her territory was actually violated, Belgium made no appeal for armed assistance, and even declined that which was offered by France.[2]

The course of events in London may be read in the telegrams addressed by M. Paul Cambon to his Government.

First Sir Edward Grey confirms his intention of laying before Parliament his statement of yesterday (p. 190) respecting the protection of the Channel coast of France from naval attack, and adds that this also 'implies protection against a demonstration from the Atlantic Ocean'.[3]

Next M. Cambon reports that just as Sir Edward Grey was starting for the Cabinet meeting, Prince Lichnowsky called 'to press him to say that the neutrality of Great Britain did not depend upon respecting Belgian neutrality. Sir Edward Grey refused all conversation on this matter.'[4]

[1] Belgian Book, No. 25.
[2] Belgian Book, No. 24; French Book, No. 142.
[3] French Book, No. 143. [4] French Book, No. 144.

M. Cambon then alludes to an extraordinary step taken by the Councillor of the German Embassy in communicating to the press a couple of paragraphs[1] arguing that 'the maintenance of British neutrality would in no way injure France; on the contrary . . . by remaining neutral Great Britain could give France exactly as much strategic assistance, and a good deal more effective diplomatic help'. Any help that Britain could render by land would be negligible, 'considering the enormous numbers engaged'; and Germany would agree to make no maritime attack on France 'in the north'. To this Bethmann-Hollweg, in the Reichstag on the following day, added that if France made a similar engagement, Germany 'would not undertake any hostile operations against the French mercantile marine'. At first sight it seems as though Germany were practically offering to put her fleet out of action as the price of England's neutrality;[2] but it must be noted that nothing is said of the Mediterranean coast of France or (more important still) of the French colonies.

A third telegram from M. Cambon runs as follows:

> 'Sir Edward Grey has made the statement regarding the intervention of the British fleet. He has explained, in considering the situation, what he proposed to do with regard to Belgian neutrality; and the reading of a letter from King Albert asking for the support of Great Britain has deeply stirred the House.
>
> The House will this evening vote the credit which is asked for; from this moment its support is secured to the policy of the Government, and it follows public opinion which is declaring itself more and more in our favour.'

The scenes of to-day and to-morrow in Parliament will be ever memorable in history, but do not belong to the diplomatic record which we are here following.

[1] Text in Headlam, p. 337.

[2] Mr. Headlam (p. 338) writes as though this were actually the case. He represents Germany as agreeing 'that the war with France should be confined to the mainland and not extend to the sea'.

M. Viviani to-day telegraphed a contradiction[1] of a ridiculous German story that eighty French officers in Prussian uniform had attempted to cross the German frontier in twelve motor-cars. He begged M. Cambon 'to draw the attention of the Foreign Office to the German campaign of false news which is beginning'.

At 6.45 p.m. Herr von Schoen handed to M. Viviani the German declaration of war.[2] It began by asserting that French military aviators had violated the neutrality of Belgium by flying over Belgian territory; had tried to destroy buildings near Wesel; and had thrown bombs on the railway near Carlsruhe and Nuremberg. 'In the presence of these acts of aggression', the document continued, 'the German Empire considers itself in a state of war with France in consequence of the acts of this latter power.'

Careful inquiry has failed to discover any confirmation of the 'acts of aggression' here enumerated. They seem to have been heard of in Berlin, but not in the different localities where they are alleged to have occurred.[3] They were simply part of the prescribed German ritual. 'Let it be the task of our diplomacy', wrote General von Bernhardi in 1912, 'so to shuffle the cards that we may be attacked by France.' The aeroplane story is a last and pathetically helpless attempt to 'shuffle the cards' according to order.

But the German authorities were guilty of one serious omission. They forgot to allege that the Belgian army had invaded Germany, or that Belgian aviators had thrown bombs on Cologne Cathedral.

The Belgian Minister in London telegraphs to-night to M. Davignon:[4] 'The Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed me that if our neutrality is violated it means war with Germany.'

[1] French Book, No. 146.
[2] French Book, No. 147.
[3] Headlam, p. 281.
[4] Belgian Book, No. 26.

CHAPTER XXI

DIARY OF EVENTS

Tuesday, August 4

'A pacific agreement with England is, after all, a will-o'-the-wisp which no serious German statesman would trouble to follow.'—BERNHARDI.

THIS morning at six o'clock the German Minister handed to the Belgian Government a note [1] declaring that since they rejected 'the well-intentioned proposals' made to them by the German Government, 'the latter, to their deep regret, find themselves compelled to take—if necessary by force of arms—those measures of defence already foreshadowed as indispensable, in view of the menace of France.'

At what hour does not appear, but evidently early in the day, M. Davignon telegraphed to the Belgian Ministers at London and Paris: [2] 'The General Staff announces that Belgian territory has been violated at Gemmenich.' The Belgian Government at once declared that 'they were firmly decided to resist the aggression of Germany by all means in their power'. 'Belgium appeals', they added, 'to England, France and Russia to co-operate as guarantors in the defence of her territory.' [3]

Sir Edward Grey, telegraphing to Sir Edward Goschen [4] in Berlin before the actual invasion of Belgium was known, said: 'His Majesty's Government are bound to protest against the violation of a treaty to which Germany is a party in common with themselves, and must request an assurance that the demand made upon Belgium will not be proceeded with.'

[1] Belgian Book, No. 27.
[2] Belgian Book, No. 30.
[3] French Book, No. 152.
[4] Blue Book, No. 153.

In the course of the day, two interesting telegrams were dispatched from Berlin. The first was from Herr von Jagow to Prince Lichnowsky.[1] The German Ambassador was requested to ' dispel any mistrust ' on the part of the British Government, by assuring them that, ' even in the case of armed conflict with Belgium,' Germany would under no pretence annex Belgian territory. In confirmation it was pointed out that Germany was ' solemnly pledged ' to respect the neutrality of Holland, and that there would be no use in annexing Belgium without a portion of Holland as well. ' According to absolutely unimpeachable information,' the French had planned an attack across Belgium ; wherefore ' Germany had to disregard Belgian neutrality, it being for her a question of life and death to prevent a French advance '. Herr von Jagow apparently did not ask himself why Germany's ' solemn pledge ' to Holland should be considered a good security at the moment when she was breaking her solemn pledge to Belgium.

The second telegram was from the Belgian Minister in Berlin to his Government,[2] and contained the following extract from a speech delivered in the Reichstag by the Imperial Chancellor :

> ' We are faced with the necessity of self-defence ; and necessity knows no law.
>
> Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and have perhaps already entered Belgium. This is contrary to the dictates of international law. France has, it is true, declared at Brussels that she was prepared to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as it was respected by her adversary. But we knew that France was ready to invade Belgium. France could wait ; we could not. A French attack upon our flank in the region of the Lower Rhine might have been fatal. We were, therefore, compelled to override the legitimate protests of the Governments of Luxemburg and Belgium. For the

[1] Blue Book, No. 157.

[2] Belgian Book, No. 35. The translation here given is rather more literal than that in the C.D.D.

wrong—I speak frankly—the wrong that we are thus doing, we will make reparation as soon as our military object is attained.

Any one in such grave danger as ourselves, and who is struggling for his supreme welfare, can have only one thought: how to hack his way through.'

It is well known that Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg has since tried to withdraw this frank confession of wrong-doing, on the childish ground that Belgium had sacrificed her neutrality by consulting as to how it should be defended if attacked! As though burglary became morally justified the moment it appeared that the victim had installed a burglar-alarm!

When the news of the German declaration of war against Belgium and the violation of Belgian territory reached London, Sir Edward Grey dispatched a second telegram to Sir Edward Goschen,[1] which concluded thus:

'In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Germany declined to give the same assurance respecting Belgium as France gave last week in reply to our request made simultaneously at Berlin and Paris, we must repeat that request, and ask that a satisfactory reply to it, and to my telegram of this morning, be received here by 12 o'clock to-night. If not, you are instructed to ask for your passports, and to say that His Majesty's Government feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany is as much a party as ourselves.'

It was after presenting this ultimatum that Sir Edward Goschen had his historic interview with the Imperial Chancellor:[2]

'I found the Chancellor very much agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue which lasted about twenty minutes. He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree; just for a word, "neutrality", —a word that in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper

[1] Blue Book, No. 159. [2] Blue Book, No. 160.

Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office, had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen. I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter " of life and death " for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could any one have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? '

Under the form of perfect politeness, this was a scathing *mot de la fin.* It was as much as to say, ' What confidence can any one have in engagements given by Germany in the future? '—a question which remains unanswered.

That night the mob broke the windows of the British Embassy; but otherwise Sir Edward Goschen and his staff escaped the puerile indignities to which M. Cambon was subjected in leaving the country. It is pleasant to record that Herr von Jagow, whom we have not hitherto seen reason to regard with much respect, conducted himself like a perfect gentleman—which is more than can be said of his Imperial Master.

CHAPTER XXII

PEACE PROPOSALS AND THEIR FATE

(In Tabular Form)

The Entente Powers[1]	The Germanic Powers
1. Sazonof, supported by Grey, proposes at Vienna extension of time-limit (R.B. 4; B.B. 26). Same proposal urged at Berlin by Grey (B.B. 18), and by Sazonof (F.B. 42).	Jagow 'informs Vienna telegraphically', and instructs Tschirscky to 'speak to Berchtold about it'; but 'fears that, in absence of Berchtold', his action may 'have no result', and 'has doubts as to the wisdom of Austria yielding' (R.B. 14; B.B. 18). In Vienna, Macchio 'predicts categorical refusal' (R.B. 11), and Berchtold 'cannot consent' (A.B. 20).
2. Grey proposes at Berlin that 'Germany, Italy, France, and England should work together simultaneously at Vienna and St. Petersburg in favour of moderation' (B.B. 11). Cambon, at Berlin, repeatedly supports the proposal.	Jagow, on July 25, is 'ready to fall in with the suggestion' (B.B. 18); while Bethmann-Hollweg is 'prepared to intercede' (G.B. 13). On July 27 Jagow is still 'disposed to join in' (F.B. 67). On same day (two days after receipt of proposal) Bethmann-Hollweg says, 'We have at once (!) started the media-

[1] There was throughout absolute unanimity among the Entente Powers. If any proposal made by one of them was not supported by the others at Berlin or Vienna, it was solely for lack of time or opportunity.

The Entente Powers	The Germanic Powers
	tion proposal in Vienna' (G.B. 15). Apparently it is merged in Vienna with the conference proposal (5), for no separate answer is made.
3. Grey to Berlin: 'Very desirable to get Austria not to precipitate military action' (B.B. 11). Bronewsky to Jagow: 'Action at least might be delayed so as to allow the Powers to exert themselves to avoid a conflict' (F.B. 43).	No notice taken in Berlin.
4. Grey 'hopes Germany will feel able to influence Austria to take a favourable view' of Serbian reply (B.B. 27).	Tschirscky instructed to 'pass on' (not to support) this hope. Zimmermann, however, thinks that in passing it on the German Government 'associate themselves to a certain extent with the hope'. They 'do not see their way to go beyond this' (B.B. 34); Berchtold declines (A.B. 29).
5. Grey's conference proposal: Ambassadors of France, Italy, and Germany to consult with him (Grey) 'for purpose of discovering an issue which would prevent complications' (B.B. 36).	Jagow rejects, because conference 'would amount to a court of arbitration' (B.B. 43), and Bethmann-Hollweg because 'it would have the appearance of an Areopagus' (B.B. 71). They do not even 'pass it on' to Vienna. It reaches Berchtold, however, through Mensdorff and Bunsen (A.B. 38 and 41). For his answer, see under 6.

The Entente Powers	The Germanic Powers
6. Grey suggests to Berlin that Serbian reply 'should at least be treated as basis for discussion and pause' (B.B. 46).	Bethmann-Hollweg 'communicates Grey's opinion', and is answered that 'events have marched too rapidly' (B.B. 75). Berchtold declines this proposal, along with 5 and, by implication, 2. He does not, however, raise the objection to the 'Areopagus', which is considered fatal in Berlin (A.B. 41).
7. Cambon suggested to Jagow, on July 27, that the Four Powers should advise Vienna 'to abstain from all action which might aggravate the existing situation' (R.B. 39).	'Jagow refused point-blank to accept this suggestion, in spite of the entreaties of the Ambassador' (R.B. 39).
8. 'Direct conversations' between Russia and Austria proposed by Sazonof on Pourtalès' advice (R.B. 25). Proposal energetically supported by France and England.	Jagow thought that conversations 'might as well go on', but 'could not advise Austria to give way'. (R.B. 38). Both Jagow and Bethmann-Hollweg several times expressed great faith in the conversations, when it was a question of sidetracking another proposal. Berchtold, on July 28, 'emphasized his inability to concur in such a proposal' (A.B. 40). On July 30, alleging that there had been a misunderstanding, he withdrew his veto (B.B. 96, A.B. 50). Possibly, but not probably, a telegram from Bethmann-Hollweg (p. 134) may have influenced him. Conversations finally 'over-

The Entente Powers	The Germanic Powers
	taken' by German Ultimatum and war.
9. Grey proposes to Berlin that since German Government object to the form of his conference proposal, they should themselves suggest a workable form (B.B. 84). This common-sense proposal is several times repeated by England and France.	Proposal evaded by Jagow on the plea that 'to gain time' he has 'asked Austria to tell him the ground on which conversations might be opened with her' (F.B. 109). No answer is ever given to this question, nor does Germany ever make the slightest attempt to draw up a formula of her own.
10. Sazonof's formula dictated to Pourtalès at 2 a.m. July 30: Russia will stop all military preparations if Austria will 'eliminate from Ultimatum clauses damaging to sovereignty of Serbia' (F.B. 103).	Jagow does not even pass it on to Vienna, but simply 'declares that he considers it impossible for Austria to accept it' (R.B. 63).
11. Sazonof's formula modified by Grey and remodelled by Sazonof: If Austria will check her advance and allow Powers to determine whether Serbia can satisfy Austria without impairing her sovereignty, Russia 'will maintain her waiting attitude'. Sent from St. Petersburg to Vienna (R.B. 67; B.B. 120). This merges with an independent but almost identical proposal made by Grey to Lichnowsky (B.B. 88) and warmly supported by King	Grey's proposal to Lichnowsky forwarded by Berlin to Tschirscky in the form that Austria should 'dictate her conditions in Serbia' (G.B., C.D.D., p. 410). Conveyed in still more garbled form to Berchtold. Nominally accepted by him, though essential condition—namely, that Austria should check her advance—is refused (A.B. 51). Berchtold's reply never forwarded by Berlin to England.

The Entente Powers	The Germanic Powers
George in telegram to Prince Henry (C.D.D. p. 538).	
12. Tsar's proposal to Kaiser that dispute should be referred to Hague Conference (p. 125).	No notice taken in Berlin.
13. Grey proposes to Berlin formula for Four-Power mediation: Powers shall undertake to Austria that she shall have full satisfaction, and to Russia that Serbian sovereignty shall not be impaired (B.B. 111).	Jagow 'expressed himself very sympathetically', but said it was 'impossible to consider any proposal' till Russia's reply to the Ultimatum arrived (B.B. 121).
14. Grey's final offer: If Germany will put forward 'any reasonable proposal' which Russia and France shall unreasonably reject, Britain will withdraw from them her support (B.B. 111).	No notice taken in Berlin.

This list does not include a proposal by Sazonof for joint intervention by England and Italy (B.B. 44), which seems never to have been quite clearly formulated. Nor does it include certain more or less vague proposals emanating from Italy (B.B. 64 and 90). Nor does it include ideas thrown out in conversation, such as Jules Cambon's admirable suggestion to von Jagow that an International Commission might be appointed to see that Austria's just demands upon Serbia were satisfied (F.B. 92).

In sum, then, we have fourteen definite and clearly distinguishable proposals. Of these not one emanates in the first instance from Berlin. One (8) may have been strongly supported by Bethmann-Hollweg, but the

evidence is doubtful. Five (1, 2, 4, 6, 11) are passed on by Berlin as a postman passes on a letter, with complete indifference as to its contents.[1] Three (5, 7, 10) are definitely rejected, without consultation with Vienna. Two (9, 13) are evaded, and lead to nothing. Of three (3, 12, 14) no notice is taken.

Now listen to the protestations:

Von Jagow: 'The last thing Germany wanted was a general war, and he would do all in his power to prevent such a calamity' (B.B. 18).

Von Jagow is 'desirous to co-operate for the maintenance of peace' (B.B. 43). Assurance repeated to all the Ambassadors (B.B. 60).

Bethmann-Hollweg: 'Most anxious that Germany should work together with England for maintenance of general peace. . . . He was doing his very best both at Vienna and St. Petersburg. . . . A war between the great powers must be avoided (B.B. 71).

Bethmann-Hollweg: 'Hoped Grey would realize that he was sincerely doing all in his power to prevent danger of European complications' (B.B. 75).

Bethmann-Hollweg: He was 'pressing the button' as hard as he could, and was 'not sure whether he had not gone too far in urging moderation at Vienna' (B.B. 107).

Bethmann-Hollweg: He has done everything possible to preach peace and moderation at Vienna, 'perhaps more than was altogether palatable at the Ballplatz' (B.B. 108).

Von Schoen: 'Germany feels herself identified with France in the ardent desire that peace may be maintained' (F.B. 56).

German Book: 'Shoulder to shoulder with England we laboured incessantly, and supported every proposal in Vienna from which we hoped to gain the

[1] The illustration is from *J'Accuse*.

possibility of a peaceable solution of the conflict' (C.D.D., p. 410).

THE KAISER: 'I have gone to the extreme limit of the possible in my efforts for the preservation of the peace of the world' (C.D.D., p. 412).

GERMAN GOVERNMENT (in declaration of war against Russia): 'The Imperial German Government have used every effort since the beginning of the crisis to bring about a peaceful settlement' (R.B. 76).

Was there ever so crying a disparity between word and deed?

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SUMMING-UP

'Neither ridiculous shriekings for revenge by French chauvinists, nor the Englishmen's gnashing of teeth, nor the wild gestures of the Slavs, will turn us from our aim of protecting and extending Deutschtum all the world over.'—*Memorandum on the strengthening of the German Army*, 1913.

THERE is such a thing as having too good a case. Common experience tells us that the right is seldom all on one side, and he who has to contend that any given instance offers an exception to this rule awakens scepticism at the outset. That difficulty must here be faced. I would gladly, if I could, admit faults here or there on the side of the Triple Entente, saying, 'Here England erred', or 'There Russia put herself in the wrong'. I should thus win credit for impartiality, and yet have, on the balance, an enormously strong case. But I am forced to renounce this advantage. A minute study of the documents has convinced me, not only of the general sincerity of the Triple Entente statesmen and the general justice of their cause, but of the amazing success with which they avoided anything that can be called a tangible, obvious blunder.

I do not mean that in a large view of international relations, extending over many years, justification might not be found for some of the sentiments and actions of the Germanic Powers. With that I am not concerned. I believe that even such a survey would show that an unwarrantable and fallaciously-inspired aggressiveness on the part of these Powers was at the root of the whole trouble; but that is no part of my case. What I do contend is that, from the delivery of the Austrian

Ultimatum onwards, every action of the Germanic Powers showed, if not a deliberate design to provoke a European war, at any rate a criminal recklessness in face of the manifest danger of such a catastrophe. Or, to put it more accurately, the diplomatists showed from the first a criminal recklessness, which, in the course of a few days, enabled the soldiers to take the upper hand, and carry through their deliberate design of forcing a war.

When we penetrate the mist of words that has been raised around it, the problem is really a simple one. The main issues are three:

1. Were Germany and Austria bent on war from the beginning? Or with what other designs did they embark upon their adventure?

2. Ought Russia to have stood by, and let Austria work her will upon the Serbs?

3. If it be admitted that Russia did right to intervene, must we nevertheless hold that, by undue haste to mobilize, she precipitated the war?

The answer to the first question is, I think, clearly this: No, Germany and Austria—that is to say, the authorities who actually controlled the drafting and launching of the Ultimatum—did not deliberately set forth to provoke a European war. What they aimed at was a cheap and yet brilliant military-diplomatic triumph. They wanted to gratify, by a 'punitive' expedition, the Austrian thirst for vengeance upon Serbia, and at the same time to deal a deadly blow at Russian influence in the Balkans. While resentment was the immediate motive of Austria, the immediate motive of Germany was a desire to rehabilitate her prestige—felt to be somewhat impaired in her Morocco adventures—by a resplendent repetition, on a much larger scale, of the diplomatic victory of 1908–9. It was evident that an Austrian conquest of Serbia would be a far more bitter humiliation to Russia than the peaceable annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When the Kaiser

telegraphed to the Tsar: 'I am of opinion that it is perfectly possible for Russia to remain a spectator in the Austro-Serbian war', and when Austrian and German statesmen professed surprise that Russia should think this 'local' quarrel any business of hers, they were using phrases so manifestly 'diplomatic' that they scarcely deserve to be called hypocritical. Nobody knew better than they did that, even if Austria's assurances as to Serbian integrity and sovereignty had any substantial value—and I think I have shown that they had none—a military 'chastisement' of little Serbia by her huge neighbour must be a cruel blow to Russian feeling and an incurable wound to Russian prestige. Ultimately, it would have shown the impotence of the Triple Entente; for if Russia had pocketed such an insult, it could only have been because she and France together did not feel strong enough to take up the gauntlet. That was precisely the point at which German diplomacy aimed; to have flouted the Entente, without any expenditure of German money or blood (Serbian blood, and a little Austro-Hungarian, were of no account) would have been just such a triumph of *Machtpolitik* as German statesmanship extols in theory and hungers-for in practice. Everything goes to show that this was what Bethmann-Hollweg, von Jagow and Co.—and possibly the Kaiser to boot—had at first in view. We may, if we please, imagine the Great General Staff standing behind them and chuckling to think how slight was the chance of their bringing off the *coup*—how certain the ultimate resort to arms. But of this we have no evidence. We are bound to say, on the evidence before us, that Germany, as represented by the men who actually controlled her policy, did not at first mean war, but hoped merely to defy with impunity, and thereby to weaken, the Triple Entente.

It may seem that in answering the first question, we have assumed the answer to the second: ought Russia

to have stood by and let Austria work her will upon the Serbs? But this is not precisely the case. We have assumed that Russia would, as a matter of fact, deeply resent an Austrian assault upon Serbia, but we have not assumed that she would be right in doing so. It is conceivable that abstract justice was on the Austrian side, and that Russia ought, even at some cost to racial and religious sympathies, to have left Serbia to her fate. If this theory were tenable, we should have to admit that France perhaps, and Britain certainly, ought to have refused Russia their diplomatic and military support. But is the theory tenable?

Let us first of all note that questions arising from the murder of the Archduke and his consort are really extraneous to the argument. We have incontrovertible evidence in Signor Giolitti's revelations, that in August 1913, almost a year before the Serajevo crime, Austria was on the verge of making a similar attack on Serbia, and abandoned it only on the remonstrance of one, and perhaps both, of her allies. The murder of the Archduke was, then, only a pretext for her action of July 1914. It might, and perhaps did (though the evidence offered is far from conclusive) strengthen her case against Serbia, but her will to crush her inconvenient neighbour existed quite independently of it. Was this will, then, justified?

It is not denied that Austria had a good deal to complain of. She had given Serbia great provocation, both in deed and in word. She had twice thrown herself imperiously across the path of very natural Serbian ambitions, and she governed large populations of Serbian race and religion in such a way as to cause bitter discontent. Serbian hatred, then, was no groundless or wanton emotion; but for that Austria could not be expected to make allowance. The plain fact was that Serbian hatred existed, and took forms very inconvenient for Austria, upon which she naturally desired to place a check. It was also a fact that Russian influence had

in some degree fomented anti-Austrian feeling in Serbia. Had Austria, then, taken reasonable measures to abate this nuisance—to see that the Serbian Government exercised its power, and if necessary took new powers, to quell anti-Austrian agitation within its territory—no one would have objected. The aim was legitimate, and the Russian Government was prepared to admit it. But Austria's whole proceedings proved that it was not this legitimate aim that she had in view. She wanted, in the first place, to take a bloody revenge upon a whole people for the acts and expressions of a few individuals, and the alleged neglect of the Government to keep these individuals in control; and in the second place she wanted to prove to the Balkan peoples, by a conspicuous example, that they could not rely upon the protection of Russia against the encroachments of the Central-European Powers. Her assertions that she merely wanted security for the future good behaviour of Serbia were manifestly hollow. She was out after vengeance and domination, and the insolence of her demands was in fact directed, not against Serbia, but against Russia.

In order to see things in their true proportions, let us imagine the case reversed—let us imagine Austria acting reasonably and Russia unreasonably. Let us suppose the Note to have been such that impartial judges —Sir Edward Grey, M. Viviani, the Marchese di San Giuliano—should have said, on seeing it, 'This is severe, but, considering the circumstances, not excessive. Serbia would do well to submit.' Let us suppose that Austria had shown herself willing to explain, both to Serbia and to the Powers, any points that seemed to infringe upon Serbian sovereignty. Let us suppose that no time-limit had, in the first instance, been fixed, and that only after Serbia had shown a disposition to vexatious delay had Austria threatened the breaking-off of diplomatic relations. Let us suppose, finally, that Russia had encouraged Serbia in evasive recalcitrancy, professing,

perhaps, an attitude of impartiality, but industriously screening Belgrade, as Germany, in fact, screened Vienna. If this, or something like this, had been the course of events, the world might still conceivably have been at war, for France might have been unwillingly dragged in by her obligations to Russia, and, if Germany had violated Belgian neutrality, we, too, should have had to take up arms. But how different would have been the spirit of the Triple Entente! Instead of feeling that we were resisting two monstrously unjust aggressions of strength upon weakness, we should have had to own that the initial fault was pretty evenly divided between Teuton and Slav, and that only a deplorable concatenation of circumstances had forced France and England into a struggle which their honour demanded, but in which their conscience was ill at ease.

Now contrast with this the actual course of events! Austria hurls at Serbia, with calculated brutality, a set of demands unprecedented in diplomatic history. She has the effrontery to pretend to impartial Powers that 'her requirements contain nothing which is not a matter of course in the intercourse between States which are to live in peace and friendship'.[1] She attaches to them a time-limit which gives Serbia no chance of taking counsel with her friends, and the Powers no chance of acquainting themselves with the alleged grounds for this violent procedure. She chooses her time so as to take everybody, except her ally, off their guard, and contributes to this effect by giving obviously insincere assurances as to the nature of her demands. The intention to place Russia 'in presence of a *fait accompli*' is cynically evident, and when Russia begs for an extension of the time-limit, Austria curtly refuses.

[1] Austrian Book, No. 9. A dispatch from Count Berchtold to Count Mensdorff on the day of the delivery of the Ultimatum. It was to Sir Edward Grey that this amazing impertinence was to be addressed.

Nevertheless, Russia urges Serbia to reply with moderation, and Serbia acts upon the advice with a completeness which surprises everybody, and most of all, we may be sure, Austria herself. Serbia, with scarcely a wry face, eats almost the whole of the huge slice of humble-pie handed out to her. She promises public apology for any misdeeds of which she may have been guilty, engages to gag her press, to break up her patriotic societies, to alter the spirit of her education, consents to dismiss from her service any officials who can be shown to have offended against Austria, and even agrees to accept Austrian interference in her internal administration, so far as it may be consistent with her rights as a sovereign State. She goes, in short, to such an extreme of self-abasement, that had Austria simply accepted the reply as it stood, she would have scored an unexampled diplomatic victory. But a diplomatic victory is not enough for her—she must have blood. Therefore, without taking a moment to consider the Reply—just thirty-two minutes, on his own showing, after it is handed to him—her Minister leaves Belgrade. Three days later war is declared, and Belgrade bombarded. Can any reasonable person pretend that if Russia had looked on passively at this ferocious bludgeoning of a kindred people which had implored her aid, she could have retained either her self-respect or the respect of any other nation in the world?

To say that Russia made her stand upon the point of prestige is to do her injustice. She was willing to sacrifice a certain measure of prestige for the sake of peace. So evident was the intention to flout and defy her, that if she had come to any accommodation with Austria, especially after the bombardment of Belgrade had actually begun, her prestige could not but have suffered. Yet she was willing to endure this if the world-catastrophe could thereby have been averted. Only she was not willing to stand by and see Serbia first devastated by

war and then reduced to abject subserviency to the Austro-Magyar Empire.

The answer to the third question—the question of Russian mobilization—follows almost of necessity from the answer to the second. If Russia was justified in intervening at all on behalf of Serbia, she was also justified in taking the only measures which could make her intervention effective. To have proffered verbal remonstrances unsupported by any military measures would have been a gratuitous confession of impotence. If she was not prepared to mobilize, her wisest course would have been to make no protest at all, and simply look the other way while Austria strangled Serbia. Russia was bound either to mobilize or to renounce all claim to influence the course of events—in other words, to submit to that 'localization' of the quarrel which would have meant the handing over of all the Southern Slavs to Teuton domination. She had either to mobilize or to abandon her whole position in the Balkans.

If this be admitted, there still remains the question whether her mobilization was over-hasty, and justified Germany's headlong rush into the fray. But how can this possibly be maintained? Austria's every action proclaimed her purpose of relying on her old and tried manœuvre of the *fait accompli*. She had openly mobilized half her army against Serbia, and though she tried to keep further preparations dark, it is admitted by the German Chancellor that she had mobilized two army corps 'in the north'. It is also certain that she had made preparations in Galicia. So long as there was any hope of her refraining from actual hostilities against Serbia, Russia confined herself to measures of precaution, and did not actually mobilize. When war was declared and fighting had begun, Russia mobilized in four southern circumscriptions, and loyally informed Germany of the fact. Thirty-six hours later, Germany, without even

consulting Austria, flatly refused the extremely moderate conditions on which Russia offered to 'stop all military preparations'. At the same time, Austria proceeded to meet Russia's partial mobilization by mobilizing at all points. Can any one wonder that Russia, seeing no signs of an honest will for conciliation in either of her two neighbours, felt compelled to follow suit, and begin the notoriously slow process of mobilizing all her forces?

In this she would have been justified even if Germany had, as Germany pretended, taken no steps of the same nature. But there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the intelligence received by Russia as to Germany's extensive preparations was correct. So early as July 21, two days before the delivery of the Austrian Ultimatum, M. Jules Cambon reported [1] from Berlin that preliminary notices of mobilization had been sent out—a recognized means of calling reservists to 'attention', to which the Government could have recourse 'without indiscretion and without exciting the people'. The testimonies to great military activity in Germany, from the moment the crisis declared itself, are numerous and circumstantial. M. Viviani thus sums up the intelligence received by the French Government as to preparations on the western frontier: [2]

> 'From the morning of the 25th July, that is to say even before the expiration of the time-limit given to Serbia by Austria, she had confined to barracks the garrisons of Alsace-Lorraine. The same day she had placed the frontier-works in a complete state of defence. On the 26th, she had indicated to the railways the measures preparatory for concentration. On the 27th, she had completed requisitions and placed her covering troops in position. On the 28th, the summons of individual reservists had begun, and units which were distant from the frontier had been brought up to it.'

[1] French Book, No. 15. [2] French Book, No. 159.

Can we doubt that similar measures were being taken on the eastern frontier as well? We know that at midday on Thursday the 30th, more than twelve hours before Russia ordered general mobilization, a Berlin official paper published the news of general mobilization in Germany; and although it was quickly withdrawn, it affords unquestionable evidence that Germany was at that moment trembling on the verge of a decision—at the very time, by the way, when von Jagow was refusing the conditions on which Russia offered to stop all military measures. In sum, there is every reason to believe that Germany's pretended quiescence was entirely unreal, and that M. Schebeko was right when he said on August 1 that 'the so-called mobilization of Russia amounted to nothing more than that Russia had taken military measures corresponding to those taken by Germany'.

It is a notorious and unquestioned fact that Germany could and did mobilize ten times more rapidly than Russia. Her argument that Russian mobilization drove her to war would have had some justification if the rapidity had been on the other side, and Prussia had had to face an enemy as nimble in attack as he was formidable in bulk. As matters really stood, it was absurd to pretend that Germany could not afford, even for a day, to confine herself to mere counter-mobilization, but must hurry out her Ultimatum and rush into war. Such an argument can only proceed either from conscious hypocrisy or unreasoning panic. To be quite fair, however, one must own that what would be hypocrisy in another nation cannot always, in the case of Germany, be rightly called by that name. She seems to be absolutely sincere in asserting a prescriptive right to have all the advantages always on her side, and regarding it as morally indefensible on the part of her neighbours to contest this claim. Therefore, measures which, in any other Power, would be wanton aggression, are, in Germany, imperative self-defence, and it was her sacred duty to plunge the world

into war rather than face, for the chance of peace, the possibility that, if that chance failed, Russia might prove to be slightly less unprepared than the interests of Germany demanded.

Nor is there any ground, as we have already seen, for Germany's reiterated assertion that Russia's mobilization rendered her pacific exertions 'illusory', and finally 'spoiled everything'. It spoiled nothing but the Austro-German scheme for 'localizing' the conflict, which meant, in other words, humiliating Russia. Austria, as a matter of fact, took Russia's mobilization quite calmly.[1] Twice before, in recent years, Austria and Russia had mobilized against each other without coming to blows. There is not the slightest evidence that Germany either originated or 'passed on' any proposal which Austria might have accepted if Russia had not mobilized, but declined because she had. We know that nothing of the sort took place. On the contrary, any little disposition towards compromise that Austria actually showed, followed on Russian mobilization, and was certainly due to it. Nothing can be emptier than the assertion in the German Book that Russian mobilization 'destroyed the laborious measures of pacification undertaken by the European Cabinets, just as they were on the point of succeeding'. If Germany thought they were on the point of succeeding (and by lifting a finger she could have made them succeed), she had all the less excuse for hurrying into war. She knew very well that Russia did not want war. That had been the general opinion both at Berlin and Vienna at the beginning of the crisis, and Sazonof's patient efforts at conciliation had shown the opinion to be true [2]

[1] She did not even declare war upon Russia until August 6.

[2] A superficial criticism may object that I have myself called this 'Germany's great illusion'. That is not so. Germany's illusion was that Russia could not and would not under any circumstances take the field. A country may not want war, may be sincerely unwilling to make war except in the last resort,

The Tsar had admitted that Germany's own mobilization was a justified measure of security, and had promised not to make it a reason for provocative action on the part of the Russian forces. The sincerity of this promise was beyond all doubt, if only because it was to Russia's manifest interest that, even if war must come, it should be delayed as long as possible. Under these circumstances, if Germany really thought that the Serbian difficulty was on the point of settlement, her action in declaring war upon Russia was simply insane—there is no other term for it. We are bound, then, to accept the less violent hypothesis in accounting for her proceedings, and conclude, not that she was insane in making war, but that she was insincere in pretending that she believed a peaceful settlement to be at hand. She knew it was not at hand, because she did not choose that it should be. Those who now controlled her actions saw that they had missed the propitious moment for a peaceful victory. Had they bidden Austria hold her hand five days, or even three days, earlier, the confederates would still have scored a diplomatic success of no mean importance, though not quite the shining-armour triumph they had set out for. But it was now too late. A peaceful settlement at this point might still have looked like a mild success for Austria, but for Germany it would have meant a distinct 'climb down'. The choice lay between war and fiasco, and Germany deliberately chose war. This may have been moral insanity, but it was not the intellectual aberration we usually designate by that word. It was not insane—it was only wicked.

It is true, of course—it is implied in what has just been said—that Russian mobilization caused the war,

and may yet be resolute to take up arms rather than wholly fail in her duty to others and to herself. That was Russia's position. Germany was right in thinking that she did not want war, but wrong in supposing that she could not be goaded into it.

in the sense that it came between Germany and the peaceful triumph she had planned. If everything is morally wrong that interferes with German designs, then Russia, no doubt, was greatly to blame. But this plea, in its naked unreason, would scarcely satisfy even the German conscience. Hence all the elaborate sophistries that have to be devised in order to throw dust in the eyes of the German people, and persuade them that inoffensive, peaceful Germany was ambushed by a gang of bravos.

No one who reads the diplomatic documents attentively can fail to be struck by an all-pervading difference of tone. On the side of the Triple Entente, everything is frank, straightforward, above-board; on the side of the Germanic Powers everything is crafty, evasive, underhand. Austria strikes the keynote in her pretence to the Ambassadors in Vienna, and even to Sir Edward Grey, that her Note to Serbia would contain no unusual or disquieting demands. No human being can believe that this was her sincere opinion. It was the first move in a preconcerted scheme for rushing through a spirited act of vengeance, and of moral, if not territorial, aggrandizement, before bewildered Europe had time to collect herself and intervene. And so the carefully-planned razzia went on. This suggestion is 'belated', that is 'outstripped by events'—as though the 'events' were anything else than the deliberate acts of the party putting forward the plea. It is impossible that Austria can have been under any illusion: she must have known very well that these were simply the ironic impertinences of one who, thinking himself master of the situation, professes a polite regret for setting every one else at defiance. And presently Germany, with characteristic clumsiness, proceeds to give the trick away. She is sadly afraid that, in her ardent devotion to peace, she may have imprudently put too much pressure on her headstrong ally, and hurried him into adopting the policy of the *fait accompli*. At many other points in

her campaign of obstruction, her proceedings may conceivably be attributable to stupidity. Indeed, it is only fair to make generous allowances on this score. But here it is not stupidity that is at work—or rather it is stupidity coupled with deliberate, purposeful bad faith. The Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary simply cannot have been sincere in concerting—for they obviously did concert—this ridiculous manœuvre. It is said that Dickens is (or was) popular in Germany, but had Bethmann-Hollweg and von Jagow read their *David Copperfield* they would have known that, in England at any rate, the trick was exposed in advance. It carries us back to Doctors' Commons in the eighteen-forties to hear Herr von Spenlow protesting: 'Certainly I am all for peace and conciliation. If it had been my lot to have my hands unfettered—if I had not a partner—Graf Jorkins—! But Graf Jorkins is *not* a man to respond to a pacific proposition. We must handle Graf Jorkins tenderly, or, before we know where we are, he may confront us with a *fait accompli*!' The comedy is exquisite, if one only had the heart to laugh.

To speak of stupidity as a prevailing characteristic of the German proceedings may seem like a piece of mere rudeness, and one would fain not fail in civility even to German statesmen. But I am really not indulging in random vituperation: I am stating quite soberly an impression that has been irresistibly borne in upon me. Here I distinguish between Germany and Austria. Vienna is insolent, but not stupid. Berlin, on the other hand, seems incapable of grasping an idea clearly or stating it accurately. It is notable that the proposals 'passed on' from Berlin are generally more or less blurred or distorted in the process—not, as a rule, purposely, but because every thought seems to lose its sharp edges in the German mind. Sometimes, no doubt, it is wilfully altered. When Sir Edward Grey's proposal that Austria, being 'in occupation of some Serbian territory', should

hold it 'pending an effort of the Powers to mediate', reappears in the form that Austria should 'dictate her conditions' in Serbia (*dort seine Bedingungen diktieren*), the phraseology is evidently 'dictated' by a desire to place the dear ally in a conquering attitude, which should reflect some of its glory upon the other member of the firm. It might even be charitably interpreted as an endeavour to put the proposal in the form most likely to prove palatable to Graf Jorkins. As a rule, however, one sees no clear motive of cunning in Berlin's inaccuracies. They seem rather to be the result of a natural and unaffected muddiness of mind.

I am quite serious in saying that it is only fair to make allowance for this characteristic in studying—as I propose to do in a few final words—one or two noteworthy passages in the exculpatory utterances of the Imperial Chancellor: the opening narrative of the German Book, the Reichstag speeches of August 4 and December 2, and the circular letter of December 24.

In the German Book it is written:

> 'In answer to our declaration that the German Government desired and aimed at a localization of the conflict, both the French and the English Governments promised action in the same direction. But these endeavours did not succeed in preventing the interposition of Russia in the Austro-Serbian disagreement.'

In the speech of August 4 the same assertion is repeated: 'All the Cabinets, especially England, take up the same standpoint. Russia alone declares that she must have a say in the settlement of this conflict.' If the speaker were a clear-minded man, one would have to attribute these statements to deliberate duplicity. Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, however, may possibly not have realized that he was perverting the truth. It is perfectly simple. England and France were of course quite willing that the quarrel should be 'localized', if Russia did not

feel bound to move in it; but from the first neither of them doubted that she *would* feel bound to take the part of Serbia, and both, admitting her right to do so, emphatically declined any attempt to influence her to the contrary. But why, it may be asked, did the Chancellor, wittingly or unwittingly, pervert the truth in this particular? Because, at the time of these utterances, England had not yet declared war, and it was his cue to heap upon Russia the sole responsibility for a wanton attack on her peace-loving neighbour. Was not the very title of the German Book: *Wie Russland Deutschland hinterging und den Europäischen Krieg entfesselte*—'How Russia betrayed Germany and unchained the European War'?

It was to this refrain that the first German millions were marched off to the frontiers, in accordance with the freely-expressed German principle that Germany must always seem to be attacked, else her people will not put their heart into the great German industry of war. But when England also 'betrayed' Germany by declining to betray Belgium, the tune was changed. In his speech of December 2, the Chancellor said:

> 'The responsibility for this greatest of all wars lies clear before us. The outward responsibility rests upon Russia, . . . but the inner responsibility must be borne by the British Government. The London Cabinet could have made this war impossible, had it unmistakably declared in St. Petersburg that England would not suffer a European war to grow out of the Austro-Serbian conflict. In that case France, too, would have been forced energetically to warn Russia against all warlike measures. *Then the way would have been clear for our mediatory action.* But England did not take this course. . . . In spite of all pacific professions, London gave St. Petersburg to understand that it placed itself at the side of France and Russia. This is incontrovertibly proved by the publications of the different Cabinets, and especially by the English Blue Book itself.'

Can one conceive any able and clear-headed man,

however unscrupulous, standing up, with the knowledge that his words would be scrutinized by history, and talking like this? In the first place, he contradicts his own previous statement. On August 4 he tried to convey the impression that England and France strove in vain to hold Russia back; on December 2 he says exactly the opposite. The contradiction is not to be explained by the publication of documents in the interval; for unless all the German Ambassadors were hopeless incompetents, they must have kept the Chancellor fully informed of the line taken by France and England. Indeed, the Chancellor does not pretend to be correcting his former statement. He seems simply to have forgotten all about it.

Now let us look at the delightful sentence which I have ventured to italicize. If England had only acted as Germany's unofficial ally, and bullied Russia into quiescence, Germany would have been able to devote herself to the congenial task of mediation! To mediate? Between whom? She had over and over again laid it down as an axiom that there must be no mediation between Austria and Serbia; and if Russia was rendered powerless to interfere, it was absurd to talk about mediation between her and Austria. The artless remark simply throws into relief Germany's general conception of her duty as a peacemaker. 'Mediation', in her mind, means saying to Austria, 'Go ahead, and God bless you!' and to Russia, 'Stir a finger at your peril!'

Finally there arises the question whether it is stupidity or effrontery that asserts that the Blue Book proves England to have encouraged Russia and France by placing herself definitely at their side. The Blue Book, as we know, proves exactly the reverse: namely, that Sir Edward Grey steadfastly resisted all entreaties to take such a step, and only after Germany had declared war on Russia gave his first limited promise of naval support to France. The Chancellor must also have

known—at least, it was his business to know—that Sir Edward Grey had been bitterly criticized for *not* declaring 'solidarity' with the other Entente Powers, and so stopping the war by bullying, not Russia, but Germany. Apparently the one thing clear to all critics of England's action is that she ought to have bullied somebody. If only Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg and Mr. Bernard Shaw could agree as to who that somebody was, we should at last know what to think.

After asserting that the Blue Book 'incontrovertibly' proved his statement, the Chancellor omitted to produce any of these proofs. That is readily explicable, seeing that they did not exist. What he did produce was a sentence from an intercepted letter from the Belgian Minister to Russia, dated July 30, to the effect that people in St. Petersburg were at that date convinced that England would stand by France, and that the conviction greatly strengthened the war party. The fact that this conjecture proved eventually to be right cannot possibly entitle it to rank as evidence against Sir Edward Grey's repeated and explicit refusals to commit England to the support of either Russia or France. Even so late as Saturday, August 1, King George's telegram to the French President was a polite evasion of a direct appeal.

It would be an endless task to follow the Chancellor through all his absurdities, whether of statement or of reasoning. Again and again one asks oneself, '*Can* he be stupid enough to believe this?' or 'to see any force in that?' I have already commented sufficiently on the solemn foolishness of pretending that Russia and France, whose vital interest lay in the longest possible delay, committed the first acts of war, and of arguing that Belgium had forfeited her neutrality because she had discussed measures for defending it in case it should be violated. I shall conclude by instancing one confusion of thought, and two false statements, from the circular dispatch of December 24.

'From the beginning', says the Chancellor, 'Germany had taken up the position that the Austro-Serbian conflict was a matter that concerned only the States immediately involved. This standpoint Sir Edward Grey himself later recognized.' Obviously the Chancellor has in mind the fact that Sir Edward Grey once or twice remarked that if Russia did not feel called upon to interfere, no one else need do so; and he cannot distinguish between this common-sense remark and adherence to the German dogma that Russia had no right to interfere. Sir Edward Grey's attitude was, in fact, as clear as daylight. He said: 'If the presentation of this Ultimatum to Serbia did not lead to trouble between Austria and Russia, we need not concern ourselves about it; but, if Russia took the view of the Austrian Ultimatum *which it seemed to me that any Power interested in Serbia would take,* I should be quite powerless, in face of the terms of the Ultimatum, to exercise any moderating influence.'[1]

A wholly erroneous statement is the following: 'Russia mobilized against Austria, though Sazonof fully realized that any direct understanding with Austria was thereby rendered impossible.' This may arise from a confused recollection of the fact that Sazonof, when he learnt of Austria's declaration of war upon Serbia, at first thought that it 'clearly put an end to the idea of direct communications between Austria and Russia'.[2] If this be not what the Chancellor had in mind, there is no foundation at all for his statement.[3]

Lastly, let us consider this assertion:

> 'It appears from the dispatch of the French Ambassador in London (French Book, No. 66) that already

[1] Blue Book, No. 10. [2] Blue Book, No. 70.

[3] He himself gives a reference to Blue Book, No. 78, which only shows that Austria had broken off conversations before Russia mobilized.

on the 24th of July the First Lord of the Admiralty had quietly taken measures for the assembling of the British Fleet at Portland. Thus Britain mobilized earlier than even Serbia.'

What really appears from French Book, No. 66, is that Mr. Winston Churchill countermanded the dispersal of the fleet, which had been assembled for a review[1] on July 18–20, and, but for the delivery of the Austrian Ultimatum, would have been scattered on the 24th. To any reasonable mind, there is a fundamental distinction between 'assembling' a fleet and postponing its dispersal. The one is an act which may fairly be regarded as menacing, the other is the mildest possible measure of prudence. But as that great national asset, the hatred of England, must be maintained at any cost, the German Chancellor, in support of the ridiculous assertion that England was the first to mobilize, deliberately misquotes a document which he apparently has before his eyes, and actually gives the reference, in the serene faith that no one not already in the conspiracy will verify it. This is a case in which the plea of stupidity breaks down.

It is presumptuous to 'anticipate the verdict of history', but I fail to imagine a time when the shifty crookedness of Count Berchtold, Herr von Jagow, and Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg will not be regarded by impartial students of the Great War as an extraordinarily effective foil to the straightforward intelligence of Viviani, the patient moderation of Sazonof, and the tact, the resourcefulness, the transparent rectitude of Grey.

[1] The review had been arranged and announced as far back as the middle of May—at least five weeks before the Serajevo murders.

APPENDIX

ON MR. M. P. PRICE'S *DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF THE WAR*

DOMESTIC controversy, if one may call it so, has been almost entirely excluded from the foregoing pages. A campaign on two fronts would have been merely confusing. But there are certain English writers who exhibit a muddiness of mind, and a determination to misread the facts of the case, worthy of any Prussian statesman. Chief among these, as regards the volume of his work, at any rate, is Mr. M. P. Price. His *Diplomatic History of the War* is such an elaborate effort, so imposing in its bulk and in its appearance of profound study—even, let me add, so useful in virtue of its assemblage of documents—that it is perhaps worth while to show, by chapter and verse, that Mr. Price's treatment of his documents is exceedingly confused and misleading.

Mr. Price's formula for impartiality is brief, if not entirely adequate. It is simply 'Blame every one!' 'The more the evidence is sifted', he says, 'the stronger becomes the conviction that the responsibility for the failure of diplomacy to save the civilization of Europe must be laid at the door of all the European Chancelleries without distinction.' I need not here discuss this verdict: the foregoing pages have been written in vain if the reader has any doubt of its worthlessness. What I propose to do is to show that the inaccuracy and slovenliness of Mr. Price's mental processes are such as to render it impossible to place confidence in any of his judgements.

First let me note some minor slips, of small intrinsic importance, but exhibiting a curious propensity to error. Most of these slips occur in the first edition, and remain uncorrected in the second, revised and largely rewritten, issue—thus showing a really incorrigible laxity of mind.

P. 59. 'The Minister asked if the Austrian Government had definite information about the origin of the murder in Belgrade. Count Szapary said they knew it was the result

of the Serbian Government's instigation.' Neither Szapary nor his superiors ever made this terrible charge, which, if proved, would have altered the whole complexion of the case, and justified Austria in refusing to negotiate with a gang of criminals. What Szapary said was that the crime 'sprang from Serbian instigation'. Mr. Price presumably sees no difference between the two statements.

P. 72. 'Count Berchtold said that as Austria had not accepted the most important point in the Note . . . negotiations had to be broken off.' For 'Austria' read 'Serbia'. It is also characteristic that the ridiculous phrase 'negotiations had to be broken off', is placed in Count Berchtold's mouth. No one knew better than he that there had been no negotiations. In the telegram cited he did not actually make use of any similar phrase, but what he meant was that diplomatic relations were broken off.

P. 72. 'The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Herr Jagow.' The Under Secretary was Herr von Zimmermann, and it is he who is here in question. On p. 77, where Herr von Jagow is actually in question, he is again called 'Under Secretary'. Mr. Price might really have ascertained the true status of his principal dramatis personae.

P. 76. 'Sir Maurice de Bunsen said in a talk with some of his diplomatic colleagues that Austria appeared to him to be determined on war.' This should read: 'Sir Maurice de Bunsen said *to Sir Edward Grey, after* a talk with some of his colleagues'—a not unimportant distinction.

P. 81. The Tsar is represented as saying to the Serbian Crown Prince that 'he hoped Serbia would do nothing to impair her integrity'. What he said was that he hoped the Serbian Government would neglect no step that might 'safeguard the dignity of Serbia'.

P. 82. 'Early in the morning [of July 27] the British Admiralty issued orders that the fleet at Portland should not be dispersed. This step was taken on the sole initiative of . . . Mr. Winston Churchill.' Had Mr. Price read the document he cites with the smallest attention, he would have seen that Mr. Churchill took this step, not on the 27th, but on the 24th.

P. 86. Bethmann-Hollweg 'repeated that he could not accept the Four-Power mediation scheme *if it were* like an

Areopagus '. There was nothing conditional about his remark. He said 'it would have the appearance of an Areopagus', and was therefore inacceptable. This may seem a trifle, but when a writer's thought is honeycombed with such small inaccuracies (to say nothing of greater ones) what reliance is to be placed on the results at which he arrives?

P. 87. 'The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Berlin also says that Sir Edward Grey's proposal is "determined only by fear that it is unworkable".' This, as it stands, is obvious nonsense, yet it appears in both editions. No doubt we should read that '*the refusal of* Sir Edward Grey's proposal is determined', &c.

P. 94. 'Count Szapary did not seem to hold that Russia's interests were in the least affected, and that the affair concerned only Austria and Serbia.' Mr. Price evidently means 'but held that the affair', &c.

P. 95. 'Indeed, M. Sazonof added that Russia intended to hasten military preparations and regarded war as inevitable.' Sazonof is represented as saying this to the German Ambassador. He did nothing so foolish. He said it to the Russian Ambassador at Paris, after giving a summary of his conversation with Pourtalès.

P. 99. 'Sir Maurice de Bunsen met the Russian Ambassador and expressed the hope that Austria would understand the meaning of Russia's mobilization.' For *and* read *who*.

P. 113. 'Sir Edward Grey then asked the Chancellor if he could still put pressure on Austria.' For *Grey* read *Goschen*.

P. 127. 'A zone of 10 kilometres was left by the French *and German* troops on the frontier.' This is inexcusable. There is nowhere the slightest suggestion that the German troops were kept back from the frontier.

P. 132. 'Sir Edward Grey replied . . . that they were personal suggestions made by the German Chancellor on August 1.' For *Chancellor* read *Ambassador*.

P. 138. 'To-day Germany issued an official declaration of war on France, giving as reasons certain hostile acts said to have been committed by France, including, amongst others, the dropping of bombs by French aviators on the railway near Nuremberg, and also *marching troops across Belgium to attack Germany*.' No such ridiculous allegation was ever made, even by Germany. She alleged (though not

in the declaration of war) that the French were *planning* to march troops through Belgium. What she said in the declaration of war was that French aviators had ' violated the neutrality of Belgium by flying over the territory of that country '. Mr. Price apparently mixed up the two pretexts, and thus produced a third, even more flagrantly false than either of them.

These blunders I have picked out from among many others because they can be comparatively briefly exposed. They convey a very inadequate notion of Mr. Price's habitual inaccuracy of mind. It is not too much to say that he is more often wrong than right : that almost every fact or idea suffers some small—if not some great—distortion in passing through his mind. It seems as though he studied his material through a knotty and uneven pane of glass.

Passing to more important matters, let me say that this curious mental slovenliness is Mr. Price's best excuse for what, in a more competent thinker, we could not but put down to a rather violent bias against M. Sazonof, and more particularly against Sir Edward Grey. The great principle of ' Blame every one ! ' saves him from actually whitewashing Berlin ; but he accepts the protestations of the German statesmen with a childlike credulity. It never occurs to him that there is next to no direct evidence in favour of their alleged pacific action, and a good deal of indirect evidence against it. He accepts as evidence the statements of newspaper correspondents that Germany is ' working for peace ' and ' putting pressure upon Austria ', not reflecting that the correspondents can know nothing but what the statesmen (directly or indirectly) tell them, and that it is precisely the assertions of the statesmen that require—and lack—proof. The upshot is that he constantly does more than justice to Berlin and Vienna, and a great deal less than justice to St. Petersburg and London.

Fully to prove these statements would demand a long dissertation. I can only endeavour to exhibit Mr. Price's methods of interpretation in a few characteristic instances.

On p. 86, under date July 28, we read that Austria ' claimed a free hand with Serbia ' and ' would no longer discuss the terms of the Note with a view to their modification.... Unfortunately her speedy march into Serbian territory

aroused the suspicion of certain Powers and gave them the excuse they wanted.' The ' no longer ' is wholly out of place. Austria had never at any time been willing to discuss the terms of the Note. But what are we to say of the passage italicized ? If it has any meaning at all, it means that the Entente Powers were bent on war and only awaited an opportunity. It is impossible to believe that Mr. Price really means this. He might conceivably (in the face of all the evidence) hold such an opinion of Russia ; but then why does he speak of ' Powers ' in the plural ? The truth seems to be that he does not in the least realize what he is saying, or think of the harm that may be done by such random talk.

P. 95, under date July 29 (Wednesday) : ' M. Sazonof thanked the French Government " for the assurances given to him by the French Ambassador that Russia can rely in full measure on the support of her ally France ". This shows that up till this time Russia was not certain of France's support in the event of war.' On this basis Mr. Price builds up a complex argument apparently designed to prove (though its intent is far from clear) that Sir Edward Grey encouraged France to encourage Russia to press home her demands on Austria. The whole theory is baseless, for there is nothing in Sazonof's telegram to suggest that only that day, or only recently, had Russia felt secure of the support of France. So early as July 24 M. Paléologue had told Sir George Buchanan, apparently in Sazonof's presence, that ' France would fulfil all the obligations entailed by her alliance with Russia '. Isvolsky telegraphed to Sazonof on the 29th (Russian Book, No. 55) : ' Viviani has just *confirmed* to me the French Government's firm determination to act in concert with Russia ', thus showing that the assurance was no new thing. Sazonof may conceivably refer to some fresh assurance given by Paléologue ; but his words, in the official translation—he speaks of ' the declaration which the French Ambassador made to me ', not ' has made '—imply that he has not in mind a quite recent utterance. Thus the whole construction, vaguely tending to make Sir Edward Grey responsible for a supposed stiffening of Russia's attitude, crumbles to pieces.

But worse remains behind. On the next page, still harping on the idea that Russia's resolve ' to make Austria deal with her in her dispute with Serbia ' requires, at this point,

some special explanation, Mr. Price quotes Reuter's correspondent at St. Petersburg as saying: 'Confident of England's support, about which doubts have mostly disappeared, the Russian public is prepared to accept war.' On this he remarks: 'It is possible that Russia decided upon her military step on the 29th, *after being privately assured of this support.*' And again, on p. 98, he says: 'Sir Edward Grey's attitude to-day appears obscure. . . . He would not say openly whether he would support Russia in the ensuing quarrel, although the Reuter's message from St. Petersburg on this day *suggests that Russia had received an intimation privately of what England would really do.*' The smallest objection to this remark is that Reuter's message suggests nothing of the sort, but shows quite clearly that the confidence attributed to the Russian public is founded on mere conjecture. But even if Reuter's correspondent had really pointed to any such secret assurance, would it not have been merely reasonable to believe him mistaken, rather than to suspect Sir Edward Grey of the elaborate double-dealing, the purposeless dishonesty, attributed to him in the passages italicized? What are we to think of a writer who thus wantonly casts aspersions on a statesman's character, not only without evidence, but without any tinge of probability?

Mr. Price is obsessed by the idea that there is some profound mystery about the Russian mobilization. He says on p. 106: 'The cause of the Russian general mobilization is therefore inexplicable from the published official documents.' Far from being inexplicable, it is quite fully explained. Pourtalès begged Sazonof to propose a formula which should afford a last hope of peace. Sazonof dictated such a formula. Jagow instantly, and without consulting Austria, rejected it, thus giving very good reason for the belief that Germany was bent on war. At the same time reports reached Russia of Germany's extensive military preparations on her eastern frontier, and Berchtold warned Schebeko that Austria would have to 'extend her mobilization'. When we remember that Belgrade was all the while being diligently bombarded, and remember, moreover (*what Mr. Price never for a moment takes into account*),[1] that Germany

[1] On p. 118 Mr. Price says that Germany's ultimatum to Russia was 'almost as rash as Russia's determination to mobilize, *although*

could mobilize in a few days more completely than Russia in as many weeks, can we find the slightest mystery in Russia's mobilization, or discern any need to trace it back to occult influences proceeding from France or England?

On Sir Edward Grey's answer to the Imperial Chancellor's bid for British neutrality, Mr. Price makes the astounding comment (p. 110): 'According to Sir Edward Grey, the refusal of the German Chancellor to unconditionally guarantee *the integrity of the whole French Empire under all circumstances, even on the supposition that France might be the aggressor*, was to be regarded as a disgraceful attempt to bribe the British Empire to stand aside.' Is monstrous too strong a word for this ineptitude? Sir Edward Grey answers a definite offer made him under a given set of circumstances, and Mr. Price, without the faintest warrant, reads into his answer a demand for an absolute guarantee that France shall be for ever inviolable under all circumstances whatsoever! The force of unreason can no further go. After this, one need not enlarge on the mere impertinence ('Sir Edward Grey on this occasion, at any rate, had conceived an idea') with which Mr. Price comments on Sir Edward's nobly-inspired offer of a larger reconcilement, conveyed in the same dispatch.

On p. 120 Mr. Price runs into one Sir Edward Grey's two perfectly distinct proposals—or rather a proposal and an offer—stated in Blue Book, No. 111 (see p. 157). This does not greatly matter. I merely note it as a conspicuous example of Mr. Price's tendency to misread the plainest English.

On the next page we come upon a statement which cannot be excused on the plea of mere carelessness: 'Sir Edward Grey told M. Cambon to "wait for the situation to develop" and added that he was making inquiries from France and Germany about Belgian neutrality. *It was evidently hoped that here the pretext would be found, and that this would enable the British support for France, upon which the French were counting and upon which they had been allowed, along with Russia, to base all their actions for the previous two days, to be openly forthcoming.*' It is hard to speak in measured terms of such mischievous nonsense as this. To any one who reads

it certainly had the justification of military exigencies to defend it'. But the 'military exigencies' were all on the side of the slow-moving Power.

with ordinary understanding, Sir Edward Grey's position is crystal-clear, and it needs something worse than mere density to represent him as 'hoping' that Germany would violate Belgian neutrality, in order to relieve him from some (purely imaginary) embarrassment. Mr. Price quotes with emphasis a remark of M. Cambon's that 'it would be well that England should consider the conditions upon which she would give the support *on which France relied*', as though this proved the existence of a definite engagement. To any one who understands the meaning of language it proves exactly the opposite—namely, that there was no engagement, and that France was hoping, without any certainty, that her reliance was justified. Who does not know—except, apparently, Mr. Price—that when people say, 'I rely,' 'I trust,' 'I am confident,' they are, nine times out of ten, expressing, not certainty, but only a strong hope? This is the obvious sense of M. Cambon's words: if Mr. Price still doubts that it is the true sense, let him turn to M. Poincaré's letter to King George, of the same date (July 31), and there read, 'It is true that our military and naval arrangements leave complete liberty to your Majesty's Government'. But it is idle to cite proofs to a mind which either cannot or will not apprehend them.

'During August 1st', says Mr. Price (p. 134), 'Count Mensdorff had an interview with Sir Edward Grey, in which he informed him that Austria would respect the integrity and sovereignty of Serbia. This confirmed what took place in St. Petersburg and Vienna on this day, namely the virtual settlement of the Austro-Serbian quarrel.' And on the next page we read, 'By irony of fate, the countries over whom all the trouble had originally started had by this time settled their grievances'. Though it is of small practical moment, one cannot pass unnoticed such a strange misreading of the facts. Even if we believe in the perfect sincerity of Austria's apparently more reasonable attitude, it merely meant that a settlement was possible, not that it had been reached. I am wholly unconvinced that Austria meant to abate a jot of her pretensions, but here I may do her an injustice. What is certain is that, even if she really intended to listen to reason, she had not actually begun to do so, far less consented to any definite terms that could possibly satisfy

Russia. Mr. Price cites as a confirmation of his statement the fact that Count Mensdorff told Sir Edward Grey on August 1 that 'Austria would respect the integrity and sovereignty of Serbia'. But she and her partner had been saying and swearing the same thing every day for more than a week. All the telegraph-wires of Europe had been humming with 'integrity and sovereignty' assurances. How, then, could Count Mensdorff's belated repetition of this catch-word 'confirm' the 'virtual settlement of the Austro-Serbian quarrel'?

Though Mr. Price's second edition is in some respects more faulty than his first, at least he has eliminated one of his most amazing misstatements. Determined to make out that Belgian neutrality was to Sir Edward Grey a mere pretext, about which he really cared very little, Mr. Price, referring to Sir Edward's speech in the House of Commons on August 3, actually said in his first edition: 'Towards the end only did he mention the question of Belgian neutrality'; and again, 'He referred in his speech almost entirely to France and the naval understanding, and said *practically nothing* about Belgian neutrality'. As a matter of fact, at least a third of the speech was devoted entirely to Belgium, and the speaker pointed out in no uncertain terms the disgrace that would accrue to us if we 'ran away from the obligations of honour' imposed on us by the neutrality treaty. Some one seems to have pointed out to Mr. Price that this can scarcely be called saying 'practically nothing' about Belgium, and the remark disappears from his second edition. But he still declares, in the teeth of the clearest and most abundant evidence, that 'the commitment to France was unconditional', and rendered it 'impossible for England to keep out of war, in spite of a German guarantee to respect Belgian neutrality or not to attack the French coast'. It is because such judgements play into the hands of England's enemies, and do grave wrong to a statesman who has earned the gratitude of all intelligent men, that I have thought it worth while to examine into the quality of Mr. Price's mind, and to enable the reader to estimate the value of judgements proceeding from so turbid a source.

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