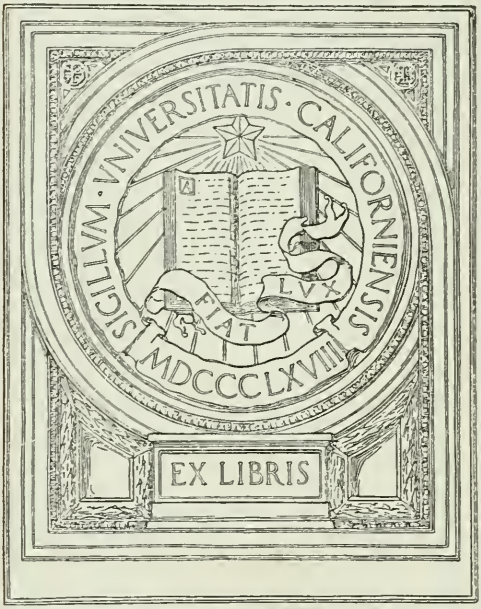
# My Mission to London, 1912-1914

By

Karl Max Lichnowsky



EVELATIONS OF THE LAST GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN ENGLAND

# MY MISSION TO LONDON

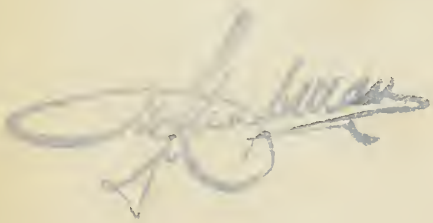
## 1912-1914

*By*

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY

*With a Preface by*

PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY



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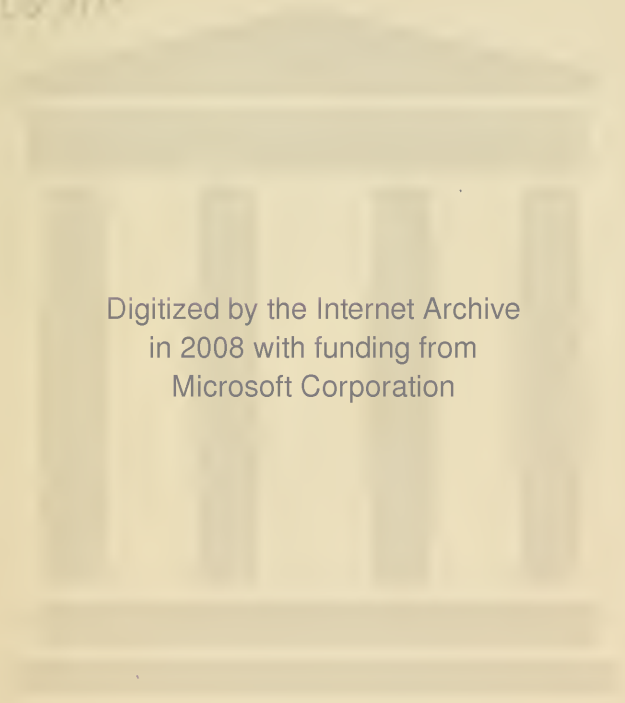

# MY MISSION TO LONDON

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY

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## 1912-1914

BY

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY

*Late German Ambassador in England*

WITH A PREFACE BY

PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY

*Author of "The Policy of Sir Edward Grey," etc.*

NEW YORK

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# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The author of the following pages, Karl Max, Prince Lichnowsky, is a member of a family which holds estates both in German and Austrian Silesia, and has an hereditary seat in the Upper House of the Prussian Diet. The father of the present Prince and his predecessor in the title was a Prussian cavalry general, who, at the end of his life, sat for some years in the Reichstag as a member of the Free Conservative Party.

His uncle, Prince Felix, was elected in 1848 to represent Ratibor in the German National Assembly at Frankfort-on-Main; he was an active member of the Conservative wing, and during the September rising, while riding with General Auerswald in the neighbourhood of the city, was attacked and murdered by the mob.

The present Prince, after serving in the Prussian army, in which he holds the rank of Major, entered the diplomatic service. He was in 1885 for a short time attached to the German Embassy in London, and afterwards became Councillor of Embassy in Vienna. From 1899 to 1904 he was employed in the German Foreign Office, and received the rank and title of Minister Plenipotentiary.

In 1904 he retired to his Silesian estates, and, as he states, lived for eight years the life of a country gentleman, but read industriously and published occasional political articles. He himself recounts the circumstances in which he was appointed Ambassador in London on the death of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein.

Baron Marschall, who had been Secretary for For-

eign Affairs under the Chancellorships of Count Caprivi and for a time under Prince Hohenlohe, had achieved great success as Ambassador at Constantinople, and also, from the German point of view, as chief German Plenipotentiary at the Second Hague Conference in 1907. Baron Marschall was, to use an expression of Bismarck's, "the best horse in Germany's diplomatic stable." And great things were expected of him in London. But he lived only a few months after his appointment.

Prince Lichnowsky's high social rank, his agreeable manners, and the generous hospitality which he showed in Carlton House Terrace gave him a position in English society which facilitated the negotiations between England and Germany, and did much to diminish the friction that had arisen during the time that Prince Bülow held the post of German Chancellor.

The pamphlet which is here translated gives an account of his London mission; after his return to Germany he has lived in retirement in the country, but has contributed occasional articles to the Press. The pamphlet, which was written in August, 1916, was not intended for publication, but was distributed confidentially to a few friends. The existence of it had long been known, but it was only in March of this year that for the first time extracts from it were published in the Swedish paper *Politiken*. Longer extracts have since appeared in the London Press; for the first time a complete translation made from the German original is now placed before the public.

# PREFACE

Never perhaps in history has the world seen so great an exhibition, as at the outbreak of this war, of the murderous and corrupting power of the organised lie. All Germany outside the governmental circles was induced to believe that the war was a treacherous attack, plotted in the dark by "revengeful France, barbaric Russia, and envious England," against the innocent and peace-loving Fatherland. And the centre of the plot was the Machiavellian Grey, who for long years had been encircling and strangling Germany in order at the chosen moment to deal her a death-blow from behind. The Emperor, the princes, the ministers, the bishops and chaplains, the historians and theologians, in part consciously and in part innocently, vied with one another in solemn attestations and ingenious forgeries of evidence; and the people, docile by training and long indoctrinated to the hatred of England, inevitably believed and passionately exaggerated what they were told. From this belief, in large part, came the strange brutalities and ferocities of the common people of Germany at the opening of the war, whether towards persons who had a right to courtesy, like the Ambassadors, or a claim on common human sympathy, like the wounded and the prisoners. The German masses could show no mercy towards people guilty of so hideous a world-crime.

And now comes evidence, which in normal times would convince even the German nation, that the whole basis of their belief was a structure of deliberate falsehood; which shows that it was the Kaiser and his Ministers

who plotted the war; while it was England, and especially Sir Edward Grey, who strove hardest for the preservation of peace.

It is the evidence of the German Ambassador in London during the years 1912-1914, Prince Lichnowsky, corroborated rather than confuted by the comments of Herr von Jagow, who was Foreign Minister at the time, and carried further by the recently published Memoranda of Herr Mühlon, one of the directors of the Krupp armament factory at Essen. One could hardly imagine more convincing testimony. Will the German people believe it? Would they believe now if one rose from the dead?

We cannot yet guess at the answer. Indeed, there is another question which must be answered first: For what motive, and with what possible change of policy in view, has the German Government permitted the publication of these papers and the circulation of Lichnowsky's Memorandum as a pamphlet at 30 pfennig? Do the militarists think their triumph is safe, and the time come for them to throw off the mask? Or have the opponents of militarism, who seemed so crushed, succeeded in asserting their power? Is it a plan to induce the ever docile German populace to hate England less?

It must be a startling story for the Germans, but for us it contains little that is new. It is an absolute confirmation, in spirit and in letter, of the British Blue Book and of English books such as Mr. Headlam's "History of Twelve Days" and Mr. Archer's "Thirteen Days." Prince Lichnowsky's summing-up agrees exactly with the British conclusions: The Germans encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, well knowing the consequences to expect; between the 23rd and 30th July they rejected all forms of mediation; and on the 30th July, when Austria wished to withdraw, they hastily sent an

ultimatum to Russia so as to make withdrawal impossible (pp. 39-40). A ghastly story of blindness and crime; but we knew it all before.

Equally interesting is Prince Lichnowsky's account of the policy of Germany and England before the war. He confirms our knowledge of the "sinister vagueness" of German policy in Morocco, the steady desire of England to come to an understanding and of Germany to elude an understanding. As for our alleged envy of German trade, it was in English commercial circles that the desire for an understanding with Germany was strongest. As for our "policy of encirclement," it was the deliberate aim of our policy, continuing the line of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain, to facilitate rather than hinder the legitimate and peaceful expansion of a great force, which would become dangerous if suppressed and confined.

The test cases were the Bagdad Railway and the Portuguese Colonies. We agreed to make no objection to Germany's buying them when Portugal was willing to sell; we agreed in the meantime to treat them as a German sphere of interest and not to compete for influence there. We agreed, subject to the conservation of existing British rights and to certain other safeguards, to the completion of the great railway from the Bosphorus to Basra, and to the recognition of the whole district tapped by the railway as a German sphere of interest. The two treaties, though completed, were never signed; why? Because Grey would sign no secret treaty. He insisted that they must be published. And the German Government would not allow them to be published! To Lichnowsky this seemed like mere spite on the part of rivals who grudged his success, but we see now that it was a deliberate policy. The war-makers could not afford to let their people know the proof of England's goodwill.

Lichnowsky was a friend of England, but he was no pacifist or "little German." His policy was to favour the peaceful expansion of Germany, in good understanding with England and France, on the seas and in the colonies. He aimed at "imperial development" on British lines; he abhorred the "Triple Alliance policy" of espousing Austria's quarrels, backing Turkey against the Balkan States, intriguing against Russia, and seeing all politics in the terms of European rivalries with a background of war. His own policy was one which, if followed loyally by the German Government, would have avoided the war and saved Europe.

There are one or two traits in Lichnowsky's language which show that, with all his liberality of thought, he is still a German. He accepts at once, on the report of a German secret agent, the false statement that Grey had concluded a secret treaty with France. He mentions, as if it were a natural thing, the strange opinion that the *Standard* was "apparently bought by Austria." He describes Mr. Asquith as a pacifist and Sir Edward Grey as both a pacifist and, ideally and practically, a Socialist. One must remember the sort of views he was accustomed to at Potsdam.

There can be no doubt that Lichnowsky was deliberately deceived by his Government, and not much that he was chosen for his post in London with a view to deceiving us. These things are all in gospel according to Bernhardi. Lichnowsky himself was both an honest and an able diplomatist, and there is the ring of sincerity in his words of self-reproach: "I had to support in London a policy the heresy of which I recognised. That brought down vengeance on me, for it was a sin against the Holy Ghost."

If Grey, in the tangle of terrific problems that surrounded him, ever erred, his sin was not against the Holy Ghost. The attack made on him at the ouset of

the war by Radical idealists was easy to confute. If ever a statesman strove, with due prudence, for peace, for friendship between nations, for a transformation of armed rivalries into cordial and democratic understandings, our great English Minister was that man. He was accused as a maker of secret treaties; and we find him all through the times of peace, and through all times when choice was still possible, a steady refuser of secret treaties. He was accused as a seeker for territory; and we find him, both in war and peace, steadily opposing all territorial aggrandisement. Such was the policy approved by the leaders of both English parties before the war.

It is an attack from the other side that now reaches him. If the war had been short and successful, this would not have occurred. But a long and bitter and dangerous war of necessity creates its own atmosphere, and the policy that was wisdom in 1913, when the world was at peace and our relations with Germany were improving, strikes us now perhaps as strangely trustful and generous. Yet, if we try to recover that mental calm without which the nations will never till the end of time be able to restore their wasted wealth and rebuild the shattered hopes of civilisation, I think most Englishmen will agree that Grey's policy was, as we all thought it at the time, the right and the wise policy. To let all the world know that we would never join in any attack on Germany, but would never permit any attack on France; to seek to remove all causes of friction between England and Germany, as they had been removed between England and France and between England and Russia; to extend the "Entente Cordiale" by gradual steps to all nations who would come into it, and to "bring the two groups of Europe nearer." This was the right policy, whether it succeeded or failed;

and it will, in spirit at least, some day be the right policy again.

No Englishman, I think, will regret the generous courtesy which sent off the German Ambassador with a guard of honour, "like a departing sovereign." No one will regret our Prime Minister's silent tears when the war became inevitable, or Grey's conviction that it would be "the greatest catastrophe in history"—not even if mad German militarists drew the conclusion that the only motive for such grief must be the fear of defeat. For my own part I am glad that, at the last interview with Lichnowsky, Grey assured him that, if ever a chance came of mediation between the combatants, he would take it, and that "we have never wished to crush Germany."

Surely, even now in the crisis of the war, it is well to remember these things. The cleaner our national conscience the keener surely will be our will to victory. The slower we were to give up the traditions of generosity and trustfulness that came from our long security the firmer will be our resolution to hold out, through whatever martyrdom may be yet in store for us, until we or our children can afford once more to live generously and to trust our neighbours. In the long run no other life is worth living.

G. M.

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# MY MISSION TO LONDON

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## 1912–14

### My Appointment

In September, 1912, Baron Marschall died after he had only been at his post in London for a few months. His appointment, which no doubt was principally due to his age and the desire of his junior officer to go to London, was one of the many mistakes of our policy.

In spite of his striking personality and great reputation, he was too old and too tired to adjust himself to the Anglo-Saxon world, which was completely alien to him; he was rather an official and a lawyer than a diplomat and statesman. From the very beginning he was at great pains to convince the English of the harmlessness of our fleet, and naturally this only produced the contrary effect.

Much to my surprise, I was offered the post in October. I had retired to the country as a "Personalreferent" after many years of activity, there being then no suitable post available for me. I passed my time between flax and turnips, among horses and meadows, read extensively, and occasionally published political essays.

Thus I had spent eight years, and it was thirteen since I had left the Embassy at Vienna with the rank of Envoy. That had been my last real sphere of political activity, as in those days such activity was impossible unless one was prepared to help a half-crazy

chief in drafting his crotchety orders with their crabbed instructions.

I do not know who was responsible for my being appointed to London. It was certainly not due to H.M. alone—I was not one of his intimates, though he was at all times gracious to me. I also know by experience that his nominees generally met with successful opposition. Herr von Kiderlen had really wanted to send Herr von Stumm to London! He immediately manifested unmistakable ill-will towards me, and endeavoured to intimidate me by his incivility. Herr von Bethmann Hollweg was at that time kindly disposed towards me, and had paid me a visit at Grätz only a short time before. I am therefore inclined to think that they all agreed on me because no other candidate was available at the moment. But for Baron Marschall's unexpected death, I should no more have been called out of retirement then than at any other time during all those previous years.

## Morocco Policy

It was certainly the right moment for a new effort to establish better relations with England. Our enigmatic Morocco policy had repeatedly shaken confidence in our pacific intentions. At the very least, it had given rise to the suspicion that we did not quite know what we wanted, or that it was our object to keep Europe on the *qui vive,* and, when opportunity offered, to humiliate France. An Austrian colleague, who had been in Paris for a long time, said to me: "Whenever the French begin to forget about *revanche,* you always remind them of it with a jack-boot."

After we had repulsed M. Delcassé's efforts to arrive at an understanding with us about Morocco, and prior to that had formally declared that we had no political

interests there—which conformed to the traditions of the Bismarckian policy—we suddenly discovered a second Krüger in Abdul Aziz. We assured him also, like the Boers, of the protection of the mighty German Empire, with the same display and the same result; both demonstrations terminated with our retreat, as they were bound to do, if we had not already made up our minds to embark on the world-war. The distressing congress at Algeçiras could not change this in any way, still less the fall of M. Delcassé.

Our attitude promoted the Russo-Japanese and later the Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*. In face of "the German Peril" all other differences faded into the background. The possibility of a new Franco-German war had become apparent, and such a war could not, as in 1870, leave either Russia or England unaffected.

The uselessness of the Triple Alliance had been shown at Algeçiras, while that of the agreements arrived at there was demonstrated shortly afterwards by the collapse of the Sultanate, which, of course, could not be prevented. Among the German people, however, the belief gained ground that our foreign policy was feeble and was giving way before the "Encirclement"—that high-sounding phrases were succeeded by pusillanimous surrender.

It is to the credit of Herr von Kiderlen, who is otherwise overrated as a statesman, that he wound up our Moroccan inheritance and accepted as they were the facts that could no longer be altered. Whether, indeed, it was necessary to alarm the world by the Agadir incident I will leave others to say. It was jubilantly acclaimed in Germany, but it had caused all the more disquiet in England because the Government were kept waiting for three weeks for an explanation of our intentions. Lloyd George's speech, which was meant as a warning to us, was the consequence. Before Del-

cassé's fall, and before Algeçiras, we might have had a harbour and territory on the West Coast, but after those events it was impossible.

### Sir Edward Grey's Programme

When I came to London in November, 1912, the excitement over Morocco had subsided, as an agreement with France had been reached in Berlin. It is true that Haldane's mission had failed, as we had required the assurance of neutrality, instead of being content with a treaty securing us against British attacks and attacks with British support. Yet Sir Edward Grey had not relinquished the idea of arriving at an agreement with us, and in the first place tried to do this in colonial and economic questions. Conversations were in progress with the capable and business-like Envoy von Kühlmann concerning the renewal of the Portuguese colonial agreement and Mesopotamia (Badgad Railway), the unavowed object of which was to divide both the colonies and Asia Minor into spheres of influence.

The British statesman, after having settled all outstanding points of difference with France and Russia, wished to make similar agreements with us. It was not his object to isolate us, but to the best of his power to make us partners in the existing association. As he had succeeded in overcoming Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian differences, so he also wished to do his best to eliminate the Anglo-German, and by a network of treaties, which would in the end no doubt have led to an agreement about the troublesome question of naval armaments, to ensure the peace of the world, after our previous policy had led to an association—the Entente—which represented a mutual insurance against the risk of war.

This was Sir E. Grey's plan. In his own words: With-

out interfering with our existing friendship with France and Russia, which has no aggressive aims and does not entail any binding obligations on England, to arrive at a friendly *rapprochement* and understanding with Germany, "to bring the two groups nearer."

As with us, there were two parties in England at that time—the Optimists, who believed in an understanding, and the Pessimists, who thought that sooner or later war was inevitable.

The former embraced Messrs. Asquith, Grey, Lord Haldane, and most of the Ministers in the Radical Cabinet; also the leading Liberal papers, such as the *Westminster Gazette, Manchester Guardian, Daily Chronicle.* The Pessimists were mainly Conservative politicians like Mr. Balfour, who repeatedly made this clear to me; also leading Army men, like Lord Roberts, who pointed out the necessity of universal military service ("The Writing on the Wall"); further, the Northcliffe Press and the eminent English journalist Mr. Garvin, of *The Observer.* During my period of office, however, they abstained from all attacks, and maintained both personally and politically a friendly attitude. But our naval policy and our attitude in 1905, 1908, and 1911 had aroused in them the conviction that after all it would some day come to war. Just as it is with us, the former are now being accused in England of short-sightedness and simplicity, whereas the latter are looked on as the true prophets.

## The Albanian Question

The first Balkan War had led to the collapse of Turkey and thus to a defeat for our policy, which had been identified with Turkey for a number of years. Since Turkey in Europe could no longer be saved, there were two ways in which we could deal with the inheritance:

either we could declare our complete disinterestedness with regard to the frontier delimitations and leave the Balkan Powers to settle them, or we could support our "Allies" and carry on a Triple Alliance policy in the Near East, thus giving up the rôle of mediator.

From the very beginning I advocated the former course, but the Foreign Office emphatically favoured the latter.

The vital point was the Albanian question. Our Allies desired the establishment of an independent Albanian state, as the Austrians did not want the Serbs to obtain access to the Adriatic, and the Italians did not want the Greeks to get to Valona or even to the north of Corfu. As opposed to this, Russia, as is known, was backing Serbia's wishes and France those of Greece.

My advice was to treat this question as outside the scope of the Alliance, and to support neither the Austrian nor the Italian claims. Without our aid it would have been impossible to set up an independent Albania, which, as anyone could foresee, had no prospect of surviving; Serbia would have extended to the sea, and the present world-war would have been avoided. France and Italy would have quarrelled over Greece, and if the Italians had not wanted to fight France unaided they would have been compelled to acquiesce in Greece's expansion to the north of Durazzo. The greater part of Albania is Hellenic. The towns in the south are entirely so; and during the Conference of Ambassadors delegations from principal towns arrived in London to obtain annexation to Greece. Even in present-day Greece there are Albanian elements and the so-called Greek national dress is of Albanian origin. The inclusion of the Albanians, who are principally Orthodox and Moslem, in the body of the Greek state was therefore the best and most natural solution, if you left Scutari and the north to the Serbs and Montenegrins. For dynastic reasons H.M.

was also in favour of this solution. When I supported this view in a letter to the monarch I received agitated reproaches from the Chancellor; he said that I had the reputation of being "an opponent of Austria," and I was to abstain from such interference and direct correspondence.

### The Near East and the Policy of the Triple Alliance

We ought at last to have broken with the fatal tradition of pursuing a Triple Alliance policy in the Near East also, and have recognised our mistake, which lay in identifying ourselves in the south with the Turks and in the north with the Austro-Magyars. For the continuance of this policy, upon which we had entered at the Berlin Congress, and which we had actively pursued ever since, was bound to lead in time to a conflict with Russia and to the world-war, more especially if the requisite cleverness were lacking in high places. Instead of coming to terms with Russia on a basis of the independence of the Sultan, whom even Petrograd did not wish to eject from Constantinople, and of confining ourselves to our economic interests in the Near East and to the partitioning of Asia Minor into spheres of influence while renouncing any intention of military or political interference, it was our political ambition to dominate on the Bosphorus. In Russia they began to think that the road to Constantinople and the Mediterranean lay *via* Berlin. Instead of supporting the active development of the Balkan States—which, once liberated, are anything rather than Russian, and with which our experiences had been very satisfactory—we took sides with the Turkish and Magyar oppressors.

The fatal mistake of our Triple Alliance and Near East policy—which had forced Russia, our natural best

friend and neighbour, into the arms of France and England and away from its policy of Asiatic expansion—was the more apparent, as a Franco-Russian attack, which was the *sole* hypothesis that justified a Triple Alliance policy, could be left out of our calculations.

The value of the Italian alliance needs no further reference. Italy will want our money and our tourists even after the war, with or without an alliance. That this latter would fail us in case of war was patent beforehand. Hence the alliance had *no value*. Austria needs our protection in war, as in peace, and has no other support. Her dependence on us is based on political, national, and economic considerations, and is the greater the more intimate our relations with Russia are. The Bosnian crisis taught us this. Since the days of Count Beust no Vienna Minister has adopted such a self-confident attitude towards us as Count Aehrenthal during the later years of his life. If German policy is conducted on right lines, cultivating relations with Russia, Austria-Hungary is our vassal and dependent on us, even without an alliance or recompense; if it is wrongly conducted, then we are dependent on Austria. Hence there was *no reason* for the alliance.

I knew Austria too well not to be aware that a return to the policy of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg or Count Moritz Esterhazy was inconceivable there. Little as the Slavs there love us, just as little do they wish to return into a German Empire even with a Habsburg-Lorraine emperor at its head. They are striving for a federation in Austria on national lines, a state of things which would have even less chance of being realised within the German Empire than under the Double Eagle. The Germans of Austria, however, acknowledge Berlin as the centre of German Might and Culture, and are well aware that Austria can never again be the leading Power. They wish for as intimate a connection with the Ger-

man Empire as possible, not for an anti-German policy.

Since the 'seventies the position has fundamentally changed in Austria, as in Bavaria. As, in the latter, a return to Great German separatism and old Bavarian policy is not to be feared, so with the former a resuscitation of the policy of Prince Kaunitz and Schwarzenberg was not to be expected. By a federation with Austria, however, which resembles a big Belgium, since its population, even without Galicia and Dalmatia, is only about half Germanic, our interests would suffer as much as if we subordinated our policy to the views of Vienna or Budapest—thus espousing Austria's quarrels (*"d'épouser les querelles d'Autriche"*).

Hence we were not obliged to take any notice of the desires of our ally; they were not only unnecessary but also dangerous, as they would lead to a conflict with Russia if we looked at Oriental questions through Austrian spectacles.

The development of the alliance, from a union formed on a single hypothesis for a single specific purpose, into a general and unlimited association, a pooling of interests in all spheres, was the best way of producing that which diplomacy was designed to prevent—war. Such an "alliance policy" was also calculated to alienate from us the sympathies of the strong, young, rising communities in the Balkans, who were prepared to turn to us and to open their markets to us.

The difference between the power of a Ruling House and a National State, between dynastic and democratic ideas of government, had to be decided, and as usual we were on the wrong side.

King Carol told one of our representatives that he had entered into the alliance with us on the assumption that *we* retained the leadership; but if this passed to Austria, that would alter the foundations of the relationship, and

under such circumstances he would not be able to go on with it.

Things were similar in Serbia, where, contrary to our own economic interests, we were supporting the Austrian policy of strangulation.

Every time we have backed the wrong horse, whose breakdown could have been foreseen: Krüger, Abdul Aziz, Abdul Hamid, Wilhelm of Wied, ending—the most fatal of all mistakes—with the great plunge on the Berchtold stable.

## The Conference of Ambassadors

Shortly after my arrival in London, at the end of 1912, Sir E. Grey proposed an informal conversation to prevent the Balkan War developing into a European one, after we had unfortunately refused, on the outbreak of the war, to agree to the French proposal of a declaration of disinterestedness. The British statesman from the very beginning took up the position that England had no interest in Albania, and had no intention of going to war over this question. He merely wished to mediate between the two groups as an "honest broker" and smooth over difficulties. He therefore by no means took sides with the Entente, and during the eight months or so of the negotiations his goodwill and his authoritative influence contributed in no small degree to the attainment of an agreement. We, instead of adopting an attitude similar to the English one, invariably took up the position which was prescribed for us by Vienna. Count Mensdorff was the leader of the Triple Alliance in London; I was his "second." It was my duty to support his proposals. That clever and experienced man Count Szögyenyi was conducting affairs in Berlin. His refrain was "Then the *casus fœderis* will arise," and when I once ventured to doubt the truth of this conclu-

sion I was severely reprimanded for "Austrophobia." It was also said that I had an "hereditary weakness"—the allusion being to my father.

On all questions we took sides with Austria and Italy —about Albania, a Serbian port on the Adriatic, Scutari, and also about the delimitation of the frontiers of Albania—while Sir E. Grey hardly ever supported the French or Russian claims. He mostly supported our group in order not to give a pretext like the one a dead Archduke was to furnish later on. Thus with his assistance it was possible to coax King Nikita out of Scutari again. Otherwise this question would already have led to a world-war, as we should certainly not have ventured to induce "our ally" to give way.

Sir E. Grey conducted the negotiations with circumspection, calm, and tact. When a question threatened to become involved, he sketched a formula for agreement which was to the point and was always accepted. His personality inspired equal confidence in all the participants.

As a matter of fact we had again successfully emerged from one of those trials of strength which characterise our policy. Russia had been obliged to give way to us on all points, as she was never in a position to procure success for the Serbian aims. Albania was established as a vassal state of Austria and Serbia was pressed back from the sea. Hence this conference resulted in a fresh humiliation for Russian self-esteem. As in 1878 and in 1908, we had opposed the Russian plans although no *German* interests were involved. Bismarck was clever enough to mitigate the mistake of the Congress by the secret treaty and by his attitude in the Battenberg question; but we continued to pursue in London the dangerous path, upon which we had once more entered in the Bosnian question, nor did we leave it in time when it led to the precipice.

The ill-humour which prevailed in Russia at that time was shown during the conference by attacks in the Russian Press against my Russian colleague and Russian diplomacy. The dissatisfied circles made capital of his German descent and Roman Catholicism, his reputation as a friend of Germany, and the accident that he was related both to Count Mensdorff and to me. Without possessing a very distinguished personality, Count Benckendorff is endowed with a number of qualifications that distinguish a good diplomat—tact, polished manners, experience, courtesy, and a natural eye for men and matters. He was always at pains to avoid a brusque attitude, and was supported in this by England and France.

Later I once remarked to him: "I presume that Russian feeling is very anti-German." He replied: "There are also very strong and influential pro-German circles, but in general people are anti-Austrian."

It is hardly necessary to add that our "Austrophilie à outrance" (friendship for Austria through thick and thin) was hardly calculated to loosen the Entente and to direct Russia towards her Asiatic interests!

## The Balkan Conference

At the same time the Balkan Conference was sitting in London and I had occasion to come into contact with the leaders of the Balkan States. M. Venizelos was certainly the most distinguished personality. At that time he was anything rather than anti-German, and visited me several times; he was especially fond of wearing the ribbon of the Order of the Red Eagle—he even wore it at the French Embassy His prepossessing charm and ways of a man of the world secured him much sympathy. Next to him M. Daneff, at that time Bulgarian Premier and confidant of Count Berchtold, played a great part. He gave the impression of a subtle and energetic man,

and it is probably only due to the influence of his Vienna and Budapest friends, of whose homage he often made fun, that he was induced to commit the folly of entering upon the second Balkan War and of refusing Russian arbitration.

M. Take Jonescu was also frequently in London and then visited me regularly. I knew him from the time when I was Secretary at Bucharest. He was also one of Herr von Kiderlen's friends. In London he was endeavouring to obtain concessions to Rumania from M. Daneff by means of negotiations, in which he was assisted by the very able Rumanian Ambassador Misu. It is known that Bulgarian opposition brought about the failure of these negotiations. Count Berchtold (and we of course with him) was entirely on Bulgaria's side, otherwise by putting pressure on M. Daneff we might have secured the desired satisfaction for Rumania and placed her under an obligation to us; she was finally estranged from the Central Powers by Austria's attitude during and after the second Balkan War.

## The Second Balkan War

The defeat of Bulgaria in the second Balkan War and the victory of Serbia, with the Rumanian invasion, naturally constituted a humiliation for Austria. The plan to rectify this by an expedition against Serbia seems to have been evolved in Vienna soon after. The Italian revelations prove this, and it may be assumed that Marquis San Giuliano, who described the plan—most aptly—as a *pericolosissima aventura,* saved us from being involved in a world-war as early as the summer of 1913.

Owing to the intimacy of Russo-Italian relations, the Vienna plan was doubtless known in Petrograd. In any case, M. Sazonow openly declared at Constanza, as M. Take Jonescu told me, that an Austrian attack on Serbia would be a *casus belli* for Russia.

When one of my staff returned from leave in Vienna in the spring of 1914 he said that Herr von Tschirschky had declared that there would soon be war. As I, however, was always left in ignorance about important events I considered this pessimism to be unfounded.

As a matter of fact it would appear that, ever since the peace of Bucharest, Vienna was bent on securing a revision of the treaty by her own effort and was apparently only waiting for a favourable pretext. Vienna statesmen could, of course, depend on our support. They were aware of that, as they had been repeatedly accused of lack of firmness. In fact, Berlin was pressing for a "rehabilitation of Austria."

## Liman Von Sanders

When I returned to London in December, 1913, from a lengthy leave, the Liman von Sanders question had led to a fresh crisis in our relations with Russia. Sir E. Grey, not without concern, pointed out to me the excitement there was in Petrograd over it: "I have never seen them so excited."

I received instructions from Berlin to request the Minister to exert a restraining influence in Petrograd, and to assist us in settling the dispute. Sir Edward gladly did this, and his intervention contributed in no small degree to smooth the matter over. My good relations with Sir Edward and his great influence in Petrograd were repeatedly made use of in similar manner when we wished to attain anything there, as our representative proved himself quite useless for such a purpose.

During the fateful days of July, 1914, Sir Edward said to me: "When you want to obtain anything in Petrograd you always apply to me, but if I appeal to you for your influence in Vienna you fail me."

## The Colonial Treaty

The good and confidential relations which I had succeeded in establishing, not only with society and the most influential people like Sir E. Grey and Mr. Asquith, but also with the great public at public dinners, produced a marked improvement in the relations of the two countries. Sir Edward honestly tried to confirm this *rapprochement,* and his intentions were most apparent on two questions—the Colonial and the Bagdad Railway Treaties.

In 1898 Count Hatzfeld and Mr. Balfour had signed a secret agreement dividing the Portuguese colonies into economic spheres of influence between us and England. As the Government of Portugal had neither the power nor the means to open up her extended possessions or to administer them properly, she had already thought of selling them before and thus relieving her financial burdens. An agreement had been come to between us and England which defined the interests of both parties, and which was of the greater value because Portugal is entirely dependent on England, as is generally known.

On the face of it this agreement was to safeguard the integrity and independence of the Portuguese State, and merely declared the intention of being of financial and economic assistance to the Portuguese. Literally, therefore, it did not contravene the ancient Anglo-Portuguese Alliance of the fifteenth century, which was last renewed under Charles II. and gave a reciprocal territorial guarantee.

In spite of this, owing to the endeavours of Marquis Soveral, who was presumably aware of the Anglo-German agreement, a new treaty—the so-called Treaty of Windsor—was concluded between England and Portugal in 1899, confirming the old agreements, which had always remained in force.

The object of negotiations between us and England, which had commenced before my arrival, was to amend and improve our agreement of 1898, as it had proved unsatisfactory on several points as regards geographical delimitation. Thanks to the accommodating attitude of the British Government I succeeded in making the new agreement fully accord with our wishes and interests. The whole of Angola up to the 20th degree of longitude was assigned to us, so that we stretched up to the Congo State from the south; we also acquired the valuable islands of San Thomé and Principe, which are north of the Equator and therefore really in the French sphere of influence, a fact which caused my French colleague to enter strong but unavailing protests.

Further, we obtained the northern part of Mozambique; the Licango formed the border.

The British Government showed the greatest consideration for our interests and wishes. Sir E. Grey intended to demonstrate his goodwill towards us, but he also wished to assist our colonial development as a whole, as England hoped to divert the German development of strength from the North Sea and Western Europe to the Ocean and to Africa. "We don't want to grudge Germany her colonial development," a member of the Cabinet said to me.

The British Government originally intended to include the Congo State in the agreement, which would have given us the right of pre-emption and enabled us to penetrate it economically. We refused this offer nominally in view of Belgian susceptibilities. Perhaps we wished to be economical of successes? With regard also to the practical realisation of its real though unexpressed intention—the later actual partition of the Portuguese colonies—the treaty in its new form showed marked improvements and advantages as compared with the old one. Cases had been specified which empowered us to

take steps to guard our interests in the districts assigned to us. These were couched in such a manner that it was really left to us to decide when "vital" interests arose, so that, with Portugal entirely dependent on England, it was only necessary to cultivate further good relations with England in order to carry out our joint intentions at a later date with English assent.

Sir E. Grey showed the sincerity of the British Government's desire to respect our rights by referring to us Englishmen who wished to invest capital and asked for the support of the British Government in the districts assigned to us by the new agreement, even before this was completed and signed, and by informing them that their enterprise belonged to our sphere of influence.

The agreement was practically completed at the time of the King's visit to Berlin in May, 1913. At that time a conference took place in Berlin under the presidency of the Imperial Chancellor; in this conference I also took part, and certain further wishes of ours were defined. On my return to London I succeeded, with the assistance of Councillor of Legation von Kühlmann, who was working at the agreement with Mr. Parker, in having our last proposals incorporated, so that the whole agreement could be paragraphed by Sir E. Grey and by me in August, 1913, before I went on leave.

But now fresh difficulties arose which prevented its being signed, and I did not obtain the authorisation to conclude it till a year later—that is, shortly before the outbreak of the war. It was, however, never signed.

Sir E. Grey was only willing to sign *if the agreement were published together with those of* 1898 *and* 1899. England had, as he said, no other secret treaties besides these, and it was contrary to established principles to keep binding agreements secret. Therefore he could not make any agreement without publishing it. He was, however, willing to accede to our wishes with regard to

the time and manner of publication, provided that such publication took place within one year from the date of signature.

At our Foreign Office, where my London successes had caused increasing dissatisfaction, and where an influential personage, who acted the part of Herr von Holstein, wanted the London post for himself, I was informed that the publication would endanger our interests in the colonies, as the Portuguese would then not give us any more concessions.

The futility of this objection is apparent from the consideration that the Portuguese, in view of the closeness of Anglo-Portuguese relations, were most probably just as well aware of the old agreement as of our new arrangements, and that the influence which England possesses at Lisbon renders their Government completely impotent in face of an Anglo-German agreement.

Another pretext had therefore to be found for wrecking the treaty. It was suggested that the publication of the Treaty of Windsor, which had been concluded during the time of Prince Hohenlohe—though it was only a renewal of the Treaty of Charles II., which had always remained in force—might endanger the position of Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, as a proof of British hypocrisy and perfidy!

I pointed out that the preamble of our agreement expressed the same thing as the Treaty of Windsor and as other similar treaties, namely, that we would protect the sovereign rights of Portugal and the inviolability of its possessions. In vain! In spite of repeated discussions with Sir E. Grey, at which he made many fresh suggestions for the publication, the Foreign Office persisted in its attitude, and finally arranged with Sir E. Goschen that matters should be left as they were!

The treaty, which offered us extraordinary advantages,

the result of more than a year's work, was thus dropped because it would have been a public success for me.

When I mentioned the subject to Mr. Harcourt at a dinner at the Embassy in the spring of 1914, the Minister for the Colonies told me that he was placed in a difficult position, and did not know how to act. The present position was intolerable—he wished to safeguard our interests, but was in doubt whether he should proceed on the terms of the old or the new treaty. It was therefore urgently desirable to clear up the situation and to settle the matter, which had dragged on for such a long time.

In reply to a dispatch in this sense I received instructions couched in terms which showed more emotion than civility, telling me to abstain from any further interference in the matter.

I now regret that I did not immediately travel to Berlin and place my post at the disposal of the monarch, and that I had not lost faith in the possibility of arriving at an understanding with those in authority, a sinister mistake which was to take its revenge a few months later in such a tragical way.

However little I even then enjoyed the goodwill of the highest official of the Empire, as he feared that I was aspiring to his post, yet I must in justice to him say that during our last interview before the outbreak of war, at the end of June, 1914, to which I will refer later, he gave me his assent for the signature and publication of the treaty. In spite of this it required repeated applications on my part, which were supported by Herr Dr. Solf in Berlin, before sanction was finally obtained at the end of July, 1914. As the Serbian crisis at that time already imperilled the peace of Europe, the completion of the treaty had to be postponed. It also is one of the sacrifices of this war.

### The Bagdad Treaty

At the same time I was negotiating in London, with the able support of Herr von Kühlmann, about the so-called Bagdad Treaty. The real object of this was to divide up Asia Minor into spheres of influence, although this term was anxiously avoided in view of the rights of the Sultan. Sir E. Grey also repeatedly stated that there were in existence no agreements with France and Russia about the partition of Asia Minor.

In consultation with a Turkish representative, Hakki Pasha, all economic questions concerning German undertakings were settled in the main according to the wishes of the Deutsche Bank. The most important concession Sir E. Grey made to me personally was the continuation of the railway as far as Basra. We had dropped this point in favour of the connection to Alexandretta; up to that time Bagdad had been the terminal point of the railway. An international commission was to regulate navigation on the Shatt-el-Arab. We were also to have a share in the harbour works at Basra, and received rights for the navigation of the Tigris, which hitherto had been a monopoly of the firm of Lynch.

By this treaty the whole of Mesopotamia as far as Basra was included within our sphere of influence (without prejudice to already existing British navigation rights on the Tigris and the rights of the Wilcox irrigation works), as well as the whole district of the Bagdad and Anatolian railway.

The coast of the Persian Gulf and the Smyrna-Aidin railway were recognised as the British economic sphere, Syria as the French, and Armenia as the Russian. If both treaties were executed and published, an agreement with England would be reached which would preclude all doubts about the possibility of an "Anglo-German co-operation."

## The Question of the Navy

The Naval question was and is the most delicate of all. It is not always regarded rightly.

The creation of a powerful fleet on the other side of the North Sea—the development of the greatest military power of the Continent into the greatest naval power as well—was bound to be felt in England as at least "inconvenient." There can be no doubt about this in any reasonable view. In order to maintain her advantage and not to become dependent, in order to secure the rule over the seas which is necessary for her if she is not to starve, she was compelled to undertake armaments and expenditure which weighed heavily on the taxpayer. England's international position would be threatened, however, if our policy created the belief that warlike developments might ensue—a state of affairs which had almost been reached during the time of the Morocco crises and the Bosnian problem.

Great Britain had become reconciled to our fleet *within its then appointed limits,* but it was certainly not welcome, and was one of the causes—though not the only cause and perhaps not the most important—of her adhesion to France and Russia; but on account of the fleet *alone* England would not have drawn the sword any more than on account of our trade, which has been alleged to have produced jealousy and finally war.

From the very beginning I maintained that, *notwithstanding* the fleet, it would be possible to arrive at a friendly understanding and *rapprochement* if we did not introduce a new Navy Bill and *our policy were indubitably pacific.* I also avoided mention of the fleet and the word never passed between Sir E. Grey and me. On one occasion Sir E. Grey said at a meeting of the Cabinet, "The present German Ambassador has never mentioned the fleet to me."

During my tenure of office Mr. Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, proposed, as is known, the so-called "Naval holiday" and suggested for financial reasons, and probably also to meet the pacific wishes of his party, a year's pause in armaments. Officially Sir E. Grey did not support the proposal; he never mentioned it to me, but Mr. Churchill repeatedly spoke to me about it.

I am convinced that his suggestion was honest, as prevarication is altogether foreign to English nature. It would have been a great success for Mr. Churchill if he could have come before the country with reductions of expenditure and freed it from the nightmare of armaments that weighed on the people.

I replied that for technical reasons it would be difficult to agree to his plan. What was to become of the workmen who were engaged for this purpose, and what of the technical staff? Our Naval programme had been decided on, and it would be difficult to alter it in any way. On the other hand we had no intention of exceeding it. But he reverted to it again and pointed out that the sums used for enormous armaments might better be employed for other and useful purposes. I replied that this expenditure too benefited our home industries.

Through interviews with Sir W. Tyrrell, Sir E. Grey's principal private secretary, I managed to have the question removed from the agenda without causing any ill-feeling, although it was again referred to in Parliament, and to prevent any official proposal being made. It was, however, a pet idea of Mr. Churchill's and the Government's, and I think that by entering upon his plan and the formula 16:10 for battleships we might have given tangible proof of our goodwill, and strengthened and encouraged the tendency (which already prevailed in the Government) to enter into closer relations with us.

But, as I have said, it was possible to arrive at an un-

derstanding *in spite of the fleet* and without a "Naval holiday." I had always regarded my mission from this point of view, and I had also succeeded in realising my plans when the outbreak of war destroyed everything I had achieved.

## Commercial Jealousy

The "commercial jealousy," about which we hear so much, is based on a wrong conception of the circumstances. Certainly Germany's rise as a commercial power after the war of 1870 and during the following decades was a menace to British commercial circles which, with their industries and export-houses, had held a virtual monopoly of trade. The increasing commerce with Germany, which was the leading country in Europe as regards British exports—a fact to which I invariably referred in my public speeches—had, however, given rise to the wish to maintain friendly relations with their best customer and business friend, and had driven all other considerations into the background.

The Briton is matter-of-fact—he takes things as they are and does not tilt against windmills. Notably in commercial circles I encountered the most friendly spirit and the endeavour to further our common economic interests. As a matter of fact nobody in them took any interest in the Russian, Italian, Austrian, or even in the French representative, in spite of his striking personality and his political successes. Only the German and American Ambassadors attracted public attention.

In order to get into touch with important commercial circles, I accepted invitations from the United Chambers of Commerce, and from the London and Bradford Chamber, and was the guest of the cities of Newcastle and Liverpool. I was well received everywhere; Manchester,

Glasgow, and Edinburgh had also invited me, and I intended to go there later.

People who did not understand British conditions and did not realise the importance of "public dinners," also people to whom my successes were unwelcome, reproached me with having done harm with my speeches. I believe on the contrary that by appearing in public and emphasising common commercial interests I contributed in no small measure to the improvement of relations, quite apart from the fact that it would have been clumsy and churlish to refuse all invitations.

In all other circles I also met with the most friendly reception and hearty co-operation—at Court, in society, and from the Government.

## The Court and Society

The King, although not a genius, is a simple and well-meaning man with sound common sense; he demonstrated his goodwill towards me and was frankly desirous of furthering my task. Although the British Constitution leaves only very limited powers to the Crown, yet the monarch, in virtue of his position, can exercise a considerable influence on opinion both in society and in the Government. The Crown is the apex of the social pyramid; it sets the fashion. Society, which is principally Unionist (Conservative), has always taken an active interest in politics, a habit which the ladies share. It is represented in the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and hence also in the Cabinet. An Englishman either is a member of society, or he would like to be one. It is his constant endeavour to be a "Gentleman," and even people of undistinguished origin, like Mr. Asquith, delight to mingle in society and the company of beautiful and fashionable women.

The British gentlemen of both parties have the same

education, go to the same colleges and universities, have the same recreations—golf, cricket, lawn-tennis, or polo. All have played cricket and football in their youth; they have the same habits of life, and spend the week-end in the country. There is no social cleavage between the parties, but only a political one; in recent years it has so far developed into a social cleavage that the politicians of the two camps avoid social intercourse with one another. Even on the neutral territory of an Embassy one did not venture to mingle the two parties, as since the Veto and Home Rule Bills the Unionists have ostracised the Radicals. When the King and Queen dined with us a few months after my arrival, Lord Londonderry left the house after dinner, as he did not wish to remain together with Sir E. Grey. But it is not a difference of caste or education as in France; they are not two separate worlds, but the same world, and the opinion about a foreigner is a common one, and not without influence on his political position, whether Mr. Asquith be governing or Lord Lansdowne.

There has been no difference of caste in England since the time of the Stuarts, and since the Guelphs and Whig oligarchy, in contrast to the Tory landed gentry encouraged the rise of an urban middle-class. It is rather a difference of political opinions about questions of constitutional law and taxation. Especially aristocrats like Grey, Churchill, Harcourt, Crewe, who joined the people's party—the Radicals—were most hated by the Unionist aristocracy; one never met any of these gentlemen at any of the great aristocratic houses, except at those of a few party friends.

We were received in London with open arms and both parties rivalled one another in courtesy towards us. In view of the close relationship between politics and society in England, it would be wrong to undervalue

social relations, even when the majority of the upper ten thousand are in opposition to the Government.

There is not the same unbridgable gulf between Mr. Asquith and the Duke of Devonshire that there is between, say, M. Briand and the Duc de Doudeauville. Certainly they do not consort together in times of great tension; they belong to two separate social groups, but these are parts of the *same* society, though of different grades, the centre of which is the Court. They have common friends and habits of life; mostly they have known each other from their youth up and also are frequently related to one another either by blood or marriage.

Phenomena like Mr. Lloyd George—the man of the people, petty attorney, and self-made man—are the exception. Even Mr. Burns, the Socialist Labour leader, and self-educated man, sought contact with society. In view of the prevailing attempt to rank as a gentleman, whose unattained prototype is still the great aristocrat, the value of the verdict of society and its attitude must not be underestimated.

Hence the social adaptability of a representative nowhere plays a greater rôle than in England. A hospitable house with pleasant hosts is worth more than the most profound scientific knowledge; a savant with provincial manners and small means would gain no influence, in spite of all his learning.

The Briton loathes a bore, a schemer, and a prig; he likes a good fellow.

## Sir Edward Grey

Sir Edward Grey's influence in all matters of foreign policy was almost unlimited. On important occasions he used indeed to say, "I must first bring it before the Cabinet"; but this always agreed to his views. His authority

was undisputed. Although he does not know foreign countries at all, and had never left England except for a short visit to Paris, he was fully conversant with all the important questions owing to his long parliamentary experience and his natural insight. He understands French, but does not speak it. He was returned to Parliament as a young man, and soon began to interest himself in foreign affairs. Under Lord Rosebery he was Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and became Secretary of State in 1906, under Mr. Campbell-Bannerman; he has now held the post for some ten years.

The scion of an old north country family, which had already furnished Grey, the well-known statesman, he joined the left wing of his party and sympathised with Socialists and pacifists. You may call him a Socialist in the ideal sense, as he carries the theory into his private life and lives very simply and unpretentiously, although he has extensive means. Ostentation is foreign to him. In London he only had a small house, and never gave dinners, except the one official dinner at the Foreign Office on the King's Birthday. On the few occasions when he entertained guests it was at a simple dinner or lunch with maidservants to wait. Also he avoided large functions and banquets.

Like his colleagues, he regularly spends his week-ends in the country, but not with large or fashionable parties. He is mostly by himself in his cottage in the New Forest, where he takes long walks to study birds and their ways, as he is a passionate lover of nature and an ornithologist. Or sometimes he goes to his estate in the north, where he feeds the squirrels that come in at the windows, and breeds different species of waterfowl.

He was very fond of going to the Norfolk marshes

to watch in their breeding season the rare kinds of herons, which nest only there.

In his youth he was a well-known cricket and racquet player; now his favourite pastime is salmon and trout-fishing in Scottish rivers in company with his friend Lord Glenconner, Mr. Asquith's brother-in-law. "All the rest of the year I am looking forward to it." He has published a book on fishing.

On one occasion, when we spent a week-end with him alone at Lord Glenconner's, near Salisbury, he arrived on a bicycle and returned to his cottage about thirty miles distant in the same way.

The simplicity and honesty of his ways secured him the esteem even of his opponents, who were to be found rather in the sphere of home affairs than of foreign policy. Lies and intrigue are equally repugnant to him.

His wife, to whom he was devotedly attached and from whom he was inseparable, died in consequence of being thrown from a trap she was driving. As is generally known, one of his brothers was killed by a lion.

Wordsworth is his favourite poet, and he could quote much of his poetry.

The calm quiet of his British nature is not lacking in a sense of humour. Once when he was lunching with us and the children, and heard them talking German, he said, "I can't help thinking how clever these children are to talk German so well," and was pleased with his joke.

This is a true picture of the man who is decried as "Liar-Grey" and instigator of the world-war.

### Mr. Asquith

Mr. Asquith is a man of an entirely different stamp. A jovial *bon-vivant,* fond of the ladies, especially the young and pretty ones, he is partial to cheerful society

and good cooking; and his zest for enjoyment is shared by his wife. Formerly a well-known barrister with a large income, and for a number of years in Parliament, then a Minister under Mr. Gladstone, a pacifist like his friend Grey, and favouring an understanding with Germany, he treated all questions with the cheery calm and assurance of an experienced man of business, whose good health and excellent nerves were steeled by devotion to the game of golf.

His daughters were at school in Germany and spoke German fluently. In a short time we got on friendly terms with him and his family, and were his guests in his small country house on the Thames.

Only on rare occasions did he concern himself with foreign politics, when important questions arose; then of course his decision was final. During the critical days of July Mrs. Asquith repeatedly came to us to warn us, and in the end she was quite distraught at the tragic turn of events. Mr. Asquith also, when I called on him on the 2nd August to make a last effort in the direction of expectant neutrality, was quite broken, though absolutely calm. Tears were coursing down his cheeks.

### Nicolson

Sir A. Nicolson and Sir W. Tyrrell were the two most influential men at the Foreign Office after the Minister. The former was no friend of ours, but his attitude towards me was absolutely correct and courteous. Our personal relations were excellent. He too did not want war; but when we advanced against France, he no doubt worked in the direction of an immediate intervention. He was the confidant of my French colleague, with whom he was in constant touch; also he wished to relieve Lord Bertie in Paris.

Sir Arthur, who had been Ambassador at Petrograd, had concluded the treaty of 1907, which had enabled Russia again to turn her attention to the West and to the Near East.

### Tyrrell

Sir W. Tyrrell, Sir Edward's private secretary, possessed far greater influence than the Permanent Under-Secretary. This highly intelligent man had been at school in Germany, and had then turned to diplomacy, but had only been abroad for a short time. At first he favoured the anti-German policy, which was then in fashion amongst the younger British diplomatists, but later he became a convinced advocate of an understanding. He influenced Sir E. Grey, with whom he was very intimate, in this direction. Since the outbreak of war he has left the Office and found a place in the Home Office, probably because of the criticisms passed on him for his Germanophil tendency.

### Attitude of the German Foreign Office

Nothing can describe the rage of certain gentlemen at my London successes and the position which I had managed to make for myself in a short time. They devised vexatious instructions to render my office more difficult. I was left in complete ignorance of the most important matters, and was restricted to the communication of dull and unimportant reports. Secret agents' reports, on matters about which I could not learn without espionage and the necessary funds, were never available to me; and it was not till the last days of July, 1914, that I learnt, quite by chance, from the Naval Attaché of the secret Anglo-French agreement concerning the co-operation of the two fleets in case of war. The knowledge

of other important events which had been known to the Office for a long time, like the correspondence between Grey and Cambon, was kept from me.

## In Case of War

Soon after my arrival I obtained the conviction that under *no* circumstances had we to fear a British attack or British support for any foreign attack, but that *under any circumstances England would protect the French.* I expressed this view in repeated dispatches, with minute proof and great emphasis, but did not obtain any credence, although Lord Haldane's refusal to assent to the neutrality formula and England's attitude during the Morocco crisis had been pretty obvious indications. In addition there were the secret agreements which I have referred to, and which were known to the Office.

I always pointed out that in the event of a war between European Powers, England as a commercial state would suffer enormously, and would therefore do her best to prevent a conflict; but, on the other hand, she would never tolerate a weakening or annihilation of France; because of the necessity of maintaining the European balance of power and of preventing a German superiority of force. Lord Haldane had told me this shortly after my arrival, and all the leading people had expressed themselves in the same sense.

## The Serbian Crisis

At the end of June I went to Kiel by command of the Emperor. A few weeks prior to this I had been made an honorary D.C.L. of Oxford, an honour which had not been conferred on any German Ambassador since Herr von Bunsen. On board the *Meteor* we learned of the death of the Archduke. H.M. regretted that his

efforts to win him over to his way of thinking had thus been rendered vain. I do not know whether the plan of an active policy against Serbia had already been decided on at Konopischt.

As I was not instructed about views and events in Vienna, I did not attach very great importance to this occurrence. Later on I could only remark that amongst Austrian aristocrats a feeling of relief outweighed other sentiments. On board the *Meteor* there was also an Austrian guest of the Emperor's, Count Felix Thun. He had remained in his cabin all the time suffering from seasickness, in spite of the splendid weather; but on receiving the news he was well. The fright or joy had cured him.

On my arrival in Berlin I saw the Chancellor and told him that I considered the state of our foreign relations very satisfaetory, as we were on better terms with England than we had been for a long time, whilst in France also the government was in the hands of a pacifist Ministry.

Herr von Bethmann Hollweg did not appear to share my optimism, and complained about Russian armaments. I sought to reassure him, emphasising the fact that Russia had no interest in attacking us, and that such an attack would never receive Anglo-French support, as both countries wanted peace. Thereupon I went to Dr. Zimmermann, who was acting for Herr von Jagow, and he told me that Russia was about to raise 900,000 additional troops. His language betrayed unmistakable annoyance with Russia, which was "everywhere in our way." There were also difficulties in economic policy. Of course, I was not told that General von Moltke was pressing for war; but I learned that Herr von Tschirschky had been reprimanded because he reported that he had counselled moderation towards Serbia in Vienna.

On my return from Silesia to London I stopped only

a few hours in Berlin, where I heard that Austria intended to take steps against Serbia in order to put an end to an impossible situation.

I regret that at the moment I underestimated the importance of the news. I thought that nothing would come of it this time either, and that matters could easily be settled, even if Russia became threatening. I now regret that I did not stay in Berlin and at once declare that I would not co-operate in a policy of this kind.

Subsequently I ascertained that, at the decisive conference at Potsdam on the 5th July, the Vienna enquiry received the unqualified assent of all the leading people, and with the rider that no harm would be done if a war with Russia should result. Thus it was expressed, at any rate, in the Austrian protocol which Count Mensdorff received in London. Soon afterwards Herr von Jagow was in Vienna to consult Count Berchtold about all these matters.

At that time I received instructions to induce the British Press to adopt a friendly attitude should Austria administer the *coup de grâce* to the "Great Serbia" movement, and to exert my personal influence to prevent public opinion from becoming inimical to Austria. If one remembered England's attitude during the annexation crisis, when public opinion showed sympathy for the Serbian rights in Bosnia, as well as her benevolent furtherance of national movements in the days of Lord Byron and Garibaldi, the probability that she would support the intended punitive expedition against the murderers of the prince happened so remote, that I found myself obliged to give an urgent warning. But I also warned them against the whole plan, which I characterised as adventurous and dangerous, and advised them to counsel the Austrians to *moderation,* as I did not believe that the conflict could be localised.

Herr von Jagow replied to me that Russia was not

ready; there would probably be some fuss, but the more firmly we took sides with Austria the more would Russia give way. As it was, Austria was accusing us of weakness and therefore we dare not leave her in the lurch. Public opinion in Russia, on the other hand, was becoming more and more anti-German, so we must just risk it.

In view of this attitude, which, as I found later, was based on reports from Count Pourtalès that Russia would not move under any circumstances, and which caused us to spur Count Berchtold on to the utmost energy, I hoped for salvation through British mediation, as I knew that Sir E. Grey's great influence in Petrograd could be used in the direction of peace. I therefore availed myself of my friendly relations with the Minister to request him in confidence to advise moderation in Russia in case Austria, as seemed likely, demanded satisfaction from Serbia.

At first the English Press preserved calm and was friendly to Austria, because the murder was generally condemned. But gradually more and more voices were heard insisting emphatically that, however much the crime merited punishment, its exploitation for political purposes could not be justified. Austria was strongly exhorted to use moderation.

When the ultimatum was published, all the papers with the exception of the *Standard*—the ever-necessitous, which had apparently been bought by Austria—were unanimous in condemnation. The whole world, excepting Berlin and Vienna, realised that it meant war—indeed, "the world-war." The British Fleet, which happened to have assembled for a naval review, was not demobilised.

My efforts were in the first place directed towards obtaining as conciliatory a reply from Serbia as was possible, since the attitude of the Russian Government

left room for no doubts about the gravity of the situation.

Serbia responded favourably to the British efforts, as M. Pasitch had really agreed to everything, excepting two points, about which, however, he declared his willingness to negotiate. If Russia and England had wanted the war, in order to attack us, a hint to Belgrade would have been enough, and the unprecedented Note would not have been answered.

Sir E. Grey went through the Serbian reply with me, and pointed out the conciliatory attitude of the Government of Belgrade. Thereupon we discussed his proposal of mediation, which was to include a formula acceptable to both parties for clearing up the two points. His proposal was that a committee, consisting of M. Cambon, the Marquis Imperiali, and myself, should assemble under his presidency, and it would have been an easy matter for us to find an acceptable formula for the points at issue, which mainly concerned the collaboration of Austrian Imperial officials at the investigations in Belgrade. Given goodwill, everything could have been settled at one or two sittings, and the mere acceptance of the British proposal would have brought about a relaxation of the tension, and would have further improved our relations with England. I therefore strongly backed the proposal, on the ground that otherwise there was danger of the world-war, through which we stood to gain nothing and lose all; but in vain. It was derogatory to the dignity of Austria—we did not intend to interfere in Serbian matters—we left these to our ally. I was to work for "the localisation of the conflict."

Needless to say a mere hint from Berlin would have decided Count Berchtold to content himself with a diplomatic success, and to accept the Serbian reply. This hint was not given; on the contrary they urged in the

direction of war. It would have been such a splendid success.

After our refusal Sir Edward requested us to submit a proposal. We insisted on war. I could not obtain any reply but that Austria had shown an exceedingly "accommodating spirit" by not demanding an extension of territory.

Sir Edward rightly pointed out that even without an extension of territory it is possible to reduce a state to a condition of vassalage, and that Russia would see a humiliation in this, and would not suffer it.

The impression grew stronger and stronger that we wanted war under any circumstances. It was impossible to interpret our attitude, on a question which did not directly concern us, in any other way. The urgent requests and definite assurances of M. Sazonow, followed by the Czar's positively humble telegrams, the repeated proposals of Sir E. Grey, the warnings of the Marquis San Giuliano and Signor Bollati, my urgent counsels, all were of no avail. Berlin persisted; Serbia must be massacred.

The more I pressed the less were they inclined to come round, if only that I might not have the success of averting war in conjunction with Sir Edward Grey.

Finally, on the 29th, the latter decided on the famous warning. I replied that I had invariably reported that we should have to reckon with English opposition if it came to a war with France. Repeatedly the Minister said to me: "If war breaks out, it will be the greatest catastrophe the world has ever seen."

After that, events followed each other rapidly. When at last Count Berchtold, who up till then had, at the behest of Berlin, played the strong man, decided to come round, we replied to the Russian mobilisation, after Russia had negotiated and waited for a whole week in vain, with the ultimatum and the declaration of war.

## The English Declaration of War

Sir Edward was still looking for new ways of avoiding the catastrophe. Sir W. Tyrrell called on me on the morning of the 1st August to tell me that his chief still hoped to find a way out. Would we remain neutral if France did? I understood that we should then agree to spare France, but he had meant that we should remain altogether neutral—towards Russia also. That was the well-known "misunderstanding." Sir Edward had asked me to call in the afternoon. As he was at a meeting of the Cabinet, he called me up on the telephone, Sir W. Tyrrell having hurried to him at once. In the afternoon, however, he talked only about Belgian neutrality and the possibility that we and France might face one another in arms without attacking.

Thus this was not a proposal at all, but a question without any guarantee, as our interview, which I have mentioned before, was to take place soon afterwards. Berlin, however, without waiting for the interview, made this report the foundation for far-reaching measures. Then there came M. Poincaré's letter, Bonar Law's letter, King Albert's telegram. The waverers in the Cabinet—excepting three members who resigned—were converted.

Till the very last moment I had hoped that England would adopt a waiting attitude. Nor did my French colleague feel at all confident, as I heard from a private source. Even on the 1st August the King had given the President an evasive reply. But England was already mentioned as an opponent in the telegram from Berlin announcing the imminent danger of war. Berlin was therefore already reckoning on war with England.

Before my departure Sir E. Grey received me, on the 5th, at his house. I had called at his request. He was deeply moved. He told me he would always be prepared

to mediate. "We don't want to crush Germany." Unfortunately this confidential interview was made public, and Herr von Bethmann Hollweg thus destroyed the last chance of gaining peace through England.

The arrangements for our departure were perfectly dignified and calm. The King had previously sent his equerry, Sir E. Ponsonby, to express his regrets at my departure and that he could not see me himself. Princess Louise wrote to me that the whole family were sorry we were leaving. Mrs. Asquith and other friends came to the Embassy to take leave.

A special train took us to Harwich, where a guard of honour was drawn up for me. I was treated like a departing Sovereign. Such was the end of my London mission. It was wrecked, not by the wiles of the British, but by the wiles of our policy.

Count Mensdorff and his staff had come to the station in London. He was cheerful, and gave me to understand that perhaps he would remain there, but he told the English that we, and not Austria, had wanted the war.

## Retrospect

Looking back after two years, I come to the conclusion that I realised too late that there was no room for me in a system that for years had lived on routine and traditions alone, and that only tolerated representatives who reported what their superiors wished to read. Absence of prejudice and an independent judgment are resented. Lack of ability and want of character are praised and esteemed, while successes meet with disfavour and excite alarm.

I had given up my opposition to the insane Triple Alliance policy, as I realised that it was useless, and that my warnings were attributed to "Austrophobia," to my *idée fixe*. In politics, which are neither acrobatics nor a

game, but the main business of the firm, there is no "phil" or "phobe," but only the interest of the community. A policy, however, that is based only on Austrians, Magyars, and Turks must come into conflict with Russia, and finally lead to a catastrophe.

In spite of former mistakes, all might still have been put right in July, 1914. An agreement with England had been arrived at. We ought to have sent a representative to Petrograd who was at least of average political capacity, and to have convinced Russia that we wished neither to control the straits nor to strangle Serbia. *"Lâchez l'Autriche et nous lâcherons les Français"* ("Drop Austria and we will drop the French"), M. Sazonow said to us. And M. Cambon told Herr von Jagow, *"Vous n'avez pas besoin de suivre l'Autriche partout"* ("You need not follow Austria everywhere").

We wanted *neither wars nor alliances;* we wanted only treaties that would safeguard us and others, and secure our economic development, which was without its like in history. If Russia had been freed in the West, she could again turn to the East, and the Anglo-Russian rivalry would have been re-established automatically and without our intervention, and not less certainly also the Russo-Japanese.

We could also have considered the question of the reduction of armaments, and need no longer have troubled ourselves about Austrian complications. Then Austria would have become the vassal of the German Empire, without any alliance—and especially without our seeking her good graces, a proceeding ultimately leading to war for the liberation of Poland and the destruction of Serbia, although German interest demanded the exact contrary.

I had to support in London a policy the heresy of which I recognised. That brought down vengeance on me, because it was a sin against the Holy Ghost.

## My Return

As soon as I arrived in Berlin I saw that I was to be made the scapegoat for the catastrophe for which our Government had made itself responsible against my advice and warnings.

The report was deliberately circulated in official quarters that I had allowed myself to be deceived by Sir E. Grey, because, if he had not wanted war, Russia would not have mobilised. Count Pourtalès, whose reports could be relied on, was to be protected, not least on account of his relationship. He had conducted himself "magnificently," he was praised enthusiastically, and I was blamed the more severely.

"What does Serbia matter to Russia?" this statesman said to mé after eight years in office at Petrograd. The whole thing was a British trick that I had not noticed. At the Foreign Office they told me that war would in any case have come in 1916. Then Russia would have been ready; therefore it was better now.

## The Question of Responsibility

As is evident from all official publications—and this is not refuted by our White Book, which, owing to the poverty of its contents and to its omissions, is a gravely self-accusing document—

1. We encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, although German interests were not involved and the danger of a world-war must have been known to us. Whether we were aware of the wording of the Ultimatum is completely immaterial.

2. During the time between the 23rd and 30th July, 1914, when M. Sazonow emphatically declared that he would not tolerate any attack on Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under

Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole of the Ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points at issue could easily have been reached, and Count Berchtold was even prepared to content himself with the Serbian reply.

3. On the 30th July, when Count Berchtold wanted to come to terms, we sent an ultimatum to Petrograd merely because of the Russian mobilisation, although Austria had not been attacked; and on the 31st July we declared war on Russia, although the Czar pledged his word that he would not order a man to march as long as negotiations were proceeding—thus deliberately destroying the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

In view of the above undeniable facts it is no wonder that the whole of the civilised world outside Germany places the entire responsibility for the world-war upon our shoulders.

## The Enemy Point of View

Is it not intelligible that our enemies should declare that they will not rest before a system is destroyed which is a constant menace to our neighbours? Must they not otherwise fear that in a few years' time they will again have to take up arms and again see their provinces overrun and their towns and villages destroyed? Have not they proved to be right who declared that the spirit of Treitschke and Bernhardi governed the German people, that spirit which glorified war as such, and did not loathe it as an evil, that with us the feudal knight and Junker, the warrior caste, still rule and form ideals and values, not the civilian gentleman; that the love of the duel which animates our academic youth still persists in those who control the destinies of the people? Did not the Zabern incident and the parliamentary discussions about it clearly demonstrate to foreign countries the value we place

on the rights and liberties of the citizen if these collide with questions of military power?

That intelligent historian Cramb, who has since died, an admirer of Germany, clothed the German conception in the words of Euphorion:

> Dream ye of peace?*
> Dream he that will—
> War is the rallying cry!
> Victory is the refrain.

Militarism, which by rights is an education for the people and an instrument of policy, turns policy into the instrument of military power when the patriarchal absolutism of the soldier-kingdom makes possible an attitude which a democracy, remote from military Junker influence, would never have permitted.

So think our enemies, and so they must think when they see that, in spite of capitalistic industrialisation and in spite of socialist organisation, "the living are still ruled by the dead," as Friedrich Nietzsche says. The principal war aim of our enemies, the democratisation of Germany, will be realised!

### Bismarck

Bismarck, like Napoleon, loved conflict for itself. As a statesman he avoided fresh wars, the folly of which he recognised. He was content with bloodless battles. After he had, in rapid succession, vanquished Christian, Francis Joseph, and Napoleon, it was the turn of Arnim, Pius, and Augusta. That did not suffice him. Gortschakow, who thought himself the greater, had repeatedly annoyed him. The conflict was carried almost to the point of war—even by depriving him of his railway

* The original has "war," presumably owing to a misprint. —Translator.

saloon. This gave rise to the miserable Triple Alliance. At last came the conflict with William, in which the mighty one was vanquished, as Napoleon was vanquished by Alexander.

Political life-and-death unions only prosper if founded on a constitutional basis and not on an international one. They are all the more questionable if the partner is feeble. Bismarck never meant the Alliance to take this form.

He always treated the English with forbearance; he knew that this was wiser. He always paid marked respect to the old Queen Victoria, despite his hatred of her daughter and of political Anglomania; the learned Beaconsfield and the worldly-wise Salisbury he courted; and even that strange Gladstone, whom he did not like, really had nothing to complain about.

The Ultimatum to Serbia was the culminating point of the policy of the Berlin Congress, the Bosnian crisis, the Conference of London: but there was yet time to turn back.

We were completely successful in achieving that which above all other things should have been avoided—the breach with Russia and England.

## Our Future

After two years' fighting it is obvious that we dare not hope for an unconditional victory over the Russians, English, French, Italians, Rumanians, and Americans, or reckon on being able to wear our enemies down. But we can obtain a peace by compromise only by evacuating the occupied territory, the retention of which would in any event be a burden and cause of weakness to us, and would involve the menace of further wars. Therefore everything should be avoided which would make it more difficult for those enemy groups who might pos-

sibly still be won over to the idea of a peace by compromise to come to terms, viz., the British Radicals and the Russian Reactionaries. From this point of view alone the Polish scheme is to be condemned, as is also any infringement of Belgian rights, or the execution of British citizens—to say nothing of the insane U-boat plan.

"Our future lies on the water." Quite right; therefore it is not in Poland and Belgium, in France and Serbia. This is a return to the days of the Holy Roman Empire and the mistakes of the Hohenstaufens and Habsburgs. It is the policy of the Plantagenets, not that of Drake and Raleigh, Nelson and Rhodes. The policy of the Triple Alliance is a return to the past, a turning aside from the future, from imperialism and a world-policy. "Middle Europe" belongs to the Middle Ages, Berlin-Bagdad is a blind alley and not the way into the open country, to unlimited possibilities, to the world-mission of the German nation.

I am no enemy of Austria, or Hungary, or Italy, or Serbia, or any other state, but only of the Triple Alliance policy, which was bound to divert us from our aims and bring us onto the inclined plane of a Continental policy. It was not the German policy, but that of the Austrian Imperial House. The Austrians had come to regard the Alliance as an umbrella under the shelter of which they could make excursions to the Near East when they thought fit.

And what must we expect as the result of this war of nations? The United States of Africa will be British, like those of America, Australia and Oceania. And the Latin states of Europe, as I predicted years ago, will enter into the same relations with the United Kingdom that their Latin sisters in America maintain with the United States. The Anglo-Saxon will dominate them. France, exhausted by the war, will only attach herself

still more closely to Great Britain. Nor will Spain continue to resist for long.

And in Asia the Russians and the Japanese will spread and will carry their customs with their frontiers, and the South will remain to the British.

The world will belong to the Anglo-Saxons, Russians, and Japanese, and the German will remain alone with Austria and Hungary. His rule will be that of thought and of commerce, not that of the bureaucrat and the soldier. He made his appearance too late, and his last chance of making good the past, that of founding a Colonial Empire, was annihilated by the world-war.

For we shall not supplant the sons of Ichwe. Then will be realised the plan of the great Rhodes, who saw the salvation of humanity in the expansion of Britondom —in British Imperialism.

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.
> Hae tibi erunt artes: pacisque imponere morem,
> Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

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