

## VII. AUSTRIA AND ENGLAND.

ON Wednesday, August 12, the British Foreign Office announced that a state of war existed between Austro-Hungary and Britain as from midnight of that day, and that official arrangements had been made for the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to leave London on the day following. The Foreign Office stated that diplomatic relations between France and Austria being broken off, the French Government had requested His Majesty's Government to communicate to the Austro-Hun-

garian Ambassador at London a declaration outlining the steps which preceded the rupture with France. The Foreign Office statement continued:

“Communicating this declaration accordingly to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, His Majesty's Government have declared to His Excellency that the rupture with France having been brought about in this way, they feel themselves obliged to announce that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Austro-Hungary as from midnight.”

### PART III.

## ALLIANCES, NEUTRALS AND THE BRITISH DOMINIONS

### The Triple Alliance and the Entente Cordiale.

FEAR of Russia was the cause of the Triple Alliance the formation of which was announced in 1882 and which was formally renewed in 1887, and has existed since. Strong as Germany had proved herself to be in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, Europe still looked upon Russia as the greatest land power and feared Russian aggression.

France was supposed to be nourishing intentions of attacking the Germans as soon as she dared in order to get back Alsace-Lorraine, and Germany in order to protect herself against the possible onslaught from Russia and France combined, sought an alliance with Austria and Italy.

Austria's reasons for meeting Germany half way were obviously fear of Russia, on the one hand, and a desire on the other to strengthen herself in the policy of aggression in the direction of the Balkans, which she has been pursuing. Italy's reason for joining the Alliance is not so clear. It is thought that she feared Russian conquest of Constantinople, which might mean the appearance of Russian fleets in the Mediterranean, with a menace to Italian interests there.

The formation of the Triple Alliance alarmed Russia and France, and though they had little in common save Germany as a common enemy, each concluded that its safety called for mutual help. No absolute alliance was declared, but they made it felt that they would act together if either were attacked. This understanding came to be known as the *entente cordiale*. Britain at first was not concerned.

The weakening of Russia from the defeat by Japan in 1904 and the tremendous effort inaugurated by Germany to build up in addition to the greatest army in the world, a navy able to cope with that of Great Britain, drove Britain inevitably into closer relations with France and Russia.

The position was simply that if the Triple Alliance displayed an arrogant and aggressive temper and overpowered France and Russia, an assault upon Great Britain was certain to follow. Accordingly Great Britain had to indicate that her sympathy would be with France and Russia should either or both be attacked.

### Bearing on Present War.

From the speech made by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on August 3, it will be seen that while there was between France and Russia an agreement, the terms of which were not even known to Britain, there existed, so far as Great Britain was concerned, no binding engagement of any kind—simply an understanding in the nature of mutual good-will, and an obligation implying nothing more than the phrase “*entente cordiale*” expressed. It will be seen also from Sir Edward Grey's speech that when England took the position that she could not allow a foreign foe to attack the unprotected coasts of France on the north, it was not less from a realization of the necessity of safe-guarding British interests and ensuring British safety than from honorable obligations to France, that this attitude was taken by Britain. In withdrawing her fleet to the Mediterranean, France had relied on a security arising out of her friendship with Britain, just as in withdrawing some of her ships from the Mediterranean, the better to protect her own coasts, Britain had based the security of her ships and trade in those waters on her friendship with France. It will be observed, too, from the official statement given out by the British Foreign Office that it was not the obligation imposed by the *entente cordiale* so much as treaty obligations arising out of the guaranteed neutrality of Belgium and Germany's ruthless disregard of this neutrality, to respect which she was also pledged by treaty, that was the occasion of Britain's declaration of war against Germany. Self-preservation, not less than treaty obligation, would have necessitated Britain's course, for were Germany, by the violation of Belgian neutrality, to gain a foothold in Belgium or in France, the coasts of Britain across the Channel would immediately become exposed to the possible aggression of a Power which has shown itself so wanting in a sense of international duty as to threaten to destroy by force of arms a small nation whose neutrality it was pledged to guarantee.

### The Position of Italy.

From the commencement of the war between Russia and Germany, the position of Italy as a member of the Triple Alliance became a subject of very special interest to all the Powers of Europe. By