

prize of victory which they value so much as the consciousness that their country is honourably distinguished in the competition.

Once we have grasped the French point of view, we have surmounted the chief difficulty under which an Englishman labours when he tries to understand French policy. There are other difficulties, and they are not to be underrated. The materials upon which to found a thorough judgement are not yet available. It is probable that France is bound by secret treaties, the nature of which we can only guess. The published treaties to which she is a party will not be fully intelligible until we know much more about her aims in subscribing to them, and her share in framing their provisions. These, however, are difficulties which beset us equally when we turn from France to the consideration of the foreign policy of any other modern state. The peculiar difficulty, in studying French diplomacy, is to apprehend and to keep in mind the French point of view; it is so different from that of the Englishman, whose insular position leads him to think of foreign relations as a regrettable necessity, and to demand of his statesmen that they shall only intervene in foreign complications when some very obvious and very pressing interest is at stake. For England, perhaps, this is the wiser rule of action. But the course which is safest for an island power may be highly dangerous for a continental power; and a theory of the mission of the State which suits the Anglo-Saxon temperament may be altogether unsuitable to Latin peoples. We should not only endeavour to understand how a Frenchman thinks about foreign policy; we should also do our best to appreciate the reasons which make him differ so widely from ourselves upon this topic.