

expansion—along the line of least resistance—in the only sphere where world-expansion was, till now, most easily possible. Both countries are balked of their ambitions and deprived of certain necessities essential to their national development by Britain and Japan. Because, just those things which—in Asia—are in the interests of Russia and Germany, are prejudicial to the interests of Britain and Japan. Therefore, as the latter Powers have united their strength in defence of their common interests, it seems natural that Russia and Germany should make common cause against them with respect to their mutual desires and ambitions. Happily for mankind, such a combination is not a probable contingency of practical politics under the present conditions of world-polity. It is only necessary to recall—without considering in detail—some of these many factors of world-force that militate against this possibility, to recognise the difficulties which confront the statesmen who attempt its consummation. In the first place, the essential principle of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty is the maintenance of the integrity of China, their adherence to which both Russia and Germany have openly confirmed. Consequently, the only object of a Russo-German alliance against the Island Powers would be that of an unprovoked war, shamelessly prosecuted for objects of self-interest and spoliation, in regard to territories now declared neutral and reserved equally for the commerce of all nations. It is certain that any attempt at annexation or commercial monopoly in regard to these territories would bring the whole civilised world in moral support—and draw the United States of America in active support—to the side of the Powers who maintain, for all nations, the rights of common and of open market with respect to them. Apart from this irresistible and automatic shift in the balance of world-power against a Russo-German policy of adventure in Asia, caused by the reaction of a force of community of interest among the other Powers, there are considerations equally serious and equally important in regard to the balance of power in Europe which militate, no less decidedly, against this combination. It