

# The School

*"Recti cultus pectora roborant"*

## The Causes of the War

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[In preparing the following summary much use has been made of the presentation of Britain's case by the members of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History in the book entitled "Why we are at War". The book is commended to teachers, who will find it dispassionate and comprehensive.]

### TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND TRIPLE ENTENTE.

TO follow intelligently the sequence of events between June 28th and August 4th, 1914, one must hark back to history. The growth of alliances among the powers of Europe since the formation of the German union in 1871 has produced the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy on the one hand, and the Triple Entente on the other. The Triple Entente consists of an understanding between Britain, France, and Russia, the two latter being more closely united in the Dual Alliance. After the defeat of France in 1870, Germany made rapid strides in population and wealth, while her military strength, under the controlling influence of Prussia, grew even faster than her industry and science. Thus she presently became a force in the councils of European nations. For a time Germany and Russia were in close touch, but soon divergent interests began to estrange them. The sentiment of the Russian people had been always anti-German and the Balkan policy of Russia had brought that country into opposition with Austria, a neighbour whom Germany was now interested in supporting. Hence, in 1879, a secret treaty was made between Germany and Austria, and in this union we discern the beginning of trouble. To the dual combination Italy was added three years later, and the Triple Alliance has continued ever since.

On the part of the other three nations, not till after 1890 was there concerted movement to offset the Triple Alliance. The cautious Bismarck had even courted the friendship of Russia, and there had been causes of contention between Britain and each of the other two countries. After the fall of Bismarck, however, the policy of Germany under Kaiser William II became so much more aggressive as to occasion

