

But no one pretends that our maritime cities on the Pacific and the Atlantic are free from the possibility, of assault by an audacious corsair, who, descending suddenly upon our shores, might subject us to indignity and insult, and decamp with his booty before punishment could reach him. This is not an unfounded dread of danger; this is no mere illusion; it is a real and indeed a proximate danger, since it is a matter of notoriety that both on the Pacific and on the Atlantic there are German cruisers whose mission is to inflict all the injury they can upon our commerce, and even to make a descent upon our cities should they find our harbours unguarded. We are aware that the Government has already taken measures, and very appropriately, to guard against this danger. We know that one of our battleships on the Pacific has been seeking the enemy to protect our commerce and our cities, and if she has not yet engaged the enemy it is because the enemy has eluded her pursuit.

"We have had another and more striking evidence that when Great Britain is at war we are at war, in this—that our commerce has been interrupted, and perhaps the expression would not be too strong if I were to say that it has been to some extent dislocated. From the day war was declared—nay, from the day the possibility of war was first mooted—our shipping to Great Britain and to Europe has been interrupted. Ships were lying at the docks fully loaded and ready to put to sea, but unable to do so because of the fact that when England is at war Canadian property on the high seas is liable to capture. Our ships therefore had to remain in port so long as precautions had not been taken to clear the way and to ensure their safe passage across the ocean. What measures have been taken in regard to that we have not yet been told, but I have no doubt that we shall have that information in due time. The correspondence brought down yesterday, however, has informed us that the Canadian Government has already taken steps to send a contingent of twenty thousand men or thereabouts to take their place in the firing line.

Canada's Duty to Assist the Motherland.

"Upon this occasion I owe it to the House and to myself to speak with absolute frankness and candour. This is a subject which has often been an occasion of debate in this House. I have always said, and I repeat it on this occasion, that there is but one mind and one heart in Canada. At other times we may have had different views as to the methods by which we are to serve our country and our empire. More than once I have declared that if England were ever in danger—nay, not only in danger, but if she were ever engaged in such a contest as would put her strength to the test—then it would be the duty of Canada to assist the motherland to the utmost of Canada's ability. England to-day is not engaged in a ordinary contest. The war in which she is engaged will in all probability—nay, in absolute certainty—stagger the world with its magnitude and its horror. But that war is for as noble a cause as ever impelled a nation to risk her all upon the arbitrament of the sword. That question is no longer at issue; the judgment of the world has already pronounced upon it. I speak not only of those nations which are engaged in this war,

but of the neutral nations. The testimony of the ablest men of these nations, without dissenting voice, is that to-day the allied nations are fighting for freedom against oppression, for democracy against autocracy, for civilization against reversion to that state of barbarism in which the supreme law is the law of might.

"It is an additional source of pride to us that England did not seek this war. It is a matter of history—one of the noblest pages of the history of England—that she never drew the sword until every means had been exhausted to secure and to keep an honourable peace. For a time it was hoped that Sir Edward Grey, who on more than one occasion has saved Europe from such a calamity, would again avert the awful scourge of war. Sir, it will go down on a still nobler page of history that England could have averted this war if she had been willing to forego the position which she has maintained for many centuries as the head of European civilization;—if she had been willing to desert her allies, to sacrifice her obligations to allow the German Emperor to trample upon heroic Belgium, to infringe upon the rights of isolated France, and to put down his booted heel upon continental Europe. At that price England would have secured peace; but her answer to the German Emperor was: Your proposals are infamous. And, rather than accept them, England has entered into this war; and there is not to-day all over the universe a British subject, there is not outside the British Empire a single man whose admiration for England is not greater by reason of this firm and noble attitude.

A Double Responsibility and a Double Honour.

"So to-day England is at war. Her fleets are maintaining the freedom of the ocean. Her armies have already crossed the channel towards plains made famous more than once by British valour, this time to maintain the independence of Belgium by taking a place in the fighting line beside the small and heroic Belgian army, and to render assistance to France, whose forces are concentrated in an effort to repel an invader and to maintain and to save intact that which to a proud nation makes life worth living.

"I am well aware that the small contingent of some 20,000 men which we are going to send will have to show double courage and double steadiness if they are to give any account of themselves among the millions of men who are now converging towards the frontier of France, where the battle of giants is to be decided. But, Sir, it is the opinion of the British Government, as disclosed by the correspondence which was brought down to us yesterday, that the assistance of our troops, humble as it may be, will be appreciated, either for its material value or for the greater moral help which will be rendered. It will be seen by the world that Canada, a daughter of old England, intends to stand by her in this great conflict. When the call comes our answer goes at once, and it goes in the classical language of the British answer to the call to duty: 'Ready, aye, ready.'

"If my words can be heard beyond the walls of this House in the province from which I come, among the men whose blood flows in my own veins, I should like them to remember that in taking their place to-day in the ranks of the Canadian army to fight for the cause of the allied nations, a double honour rests upon