

Nor is it necessary to dwell on Germany's activities along other lines, such as the construction of strategical railways converging on the Dutch and Belgian frontiers, the provision of increased facilities for transports at ports of embarkation, the building in foreign territory of concrete emplacements for heavy siege-guns, the amazing volume of war-literature that issues every year from her publishing houses, culminating in Bernhardt's book "Germany and the Next War," the institution of a far-reaching system of espionage by which she sought to pry into the naval and military secrets of other nations, and read them like an open book. She turned a deaf ear, as the Liberal party, under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, learned to its cost, to all suggestions for a reduction of armaments. She showed herself no friend to any of the proposals, especially in regard to mine-laying and bomb-throwing, by which it was sought at the Hague conferences to mitigate in advance the actual horrors of war. And Mr. Asquith has told us quite recently that when, in 1912, his Cabinet thought it wise to approach her with an assurance that we would neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon her, declaring that "aggression upon Germany is not the subject, and forms no part of any treaty, understanding, or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object," she had the audacity to turn round and ask the British Government to abandon the Triple Entente altogether and give her a pledge of absolute neutrality should she become engaged in any war. She asked us, in fact—as Mr. Asquith put it—to give her "a free hand" when she should choose her own time "to overbear and dominate the European world!" And when Mr. Asquith made this disclosure (2nd October, 1914), the *North-German Gazette*, with true German logic, drew the inference that "the English Government was already in 1912 determined under all circumstances to take part in a European war on the side of Germany's enemies!"

This record is hardly calculated, as has been said above, to inspire confidence. It does not predispose us to accept