

not be forgotten that there is no proof, and in fact it is altogether unlikely that official Serbia was in any way implicated in this murder. The incentive to the crime came more likely from within Austria herself, from her intolerable misuse of the Magyars aggravated by Viennese connivance.

#### AUSTRIA'S WRONG.

But Austria chose to impose conditions of such extravagant humiliation as to render their acceptance impossible, and announced war within forty-eight hours if they were not accepted. When Serbia positively crawled in humiliation, Austria refused to modify her conditions by a syllable, and turned a deaf ear to the appeals of England, France, Russia and Italy.

Sir Edward Grey, the greatest living diplomat, says of the conditions demanded: "I have never before seen one State address another independent State a document of so formidable a character." Sir Edward also said of Serbia's reply: "It seemed to me that the Serbian reply already involved the greatest humiliation to Serbia I have ever seen a country undergo."

#### REASON OF AUSTRIA'S ACTION.

Why did Austria act as she did?

The Russian Ambassador said, with much reason for his remarks: "Austria's conduct was both provocative and immoral; she would never have taken such action unless Germany had first been consulted; some of her demands were quite impossible of acceptance." There seems to be no manner of doubt now that Germany knew the text of Austria's ultimatum before it was sent; that it was sent with the approval of Germany, Germany knowing that it would inevitably produce the most terrible war the world had ever seen. Austria would not have sent the note without Germany's approval, so that from first to last Germany has been the real cause of the war.

It was clear to everyone, and must have been clear to Austria, that war upon Serbia would bring Russia into the field, and that Russia's action would involve Germany; that Germany's action would involve France; and that France's action might probably involve England.

Austria was, therefore, prepared to plunge all Europe in war rather than suffer the slightest modification of terms to Serbia unprecedented in the history of European diplomacy. Thus Austria deprived herself of all claim to the sympathy that would have been hers of right had she acted reasonably.

#### RUSSIA'S ATTITUDE.

Russia's attitude throughout was fair and reasonable. She could not stand by and see Serbia's rights as a free State ignored, and her independence destroyed. As late as July 31st she offered, if Austria would check her advance, to refer the matter to the Great Powers; but within a few hours Germany had declared war.

#### BRITAIN'S POSITION.

During all this time Sir Edward Grey had never ceased to work for peace; he had proposed a conference of ambassadors in London and every other method for adjustment of the difficulty that could be devised. Russia, France and Italy were all agreeable. Germany and Austria alone stood out. As a last effort, Sir Edward Grey went so far as to promise Germany an understanding to safeguard her from an aggressive policy by France, Russia and England in the future. No greater offer was possible. Thenceforth Britain's hands were clean, and they are clean to-day of the blood that is drenching the fields of Europe. That blood rests on the head of Germany. This offer was made to Germany on Friday. On Saturday she declared war.

#### FRANCE'S ATTITUDE.

Although France, a proud nation, had been "nursing her wrath to keep it warm" for half a century, no objection could be taken to the course pursued by her. One naturally asks

#### WHY WAS GERMANY DETERMINED ON WAR AT THIS TIME?

Her readiness for war was at the highest point it could ever reach. She had available for war service as many men as she could ever hope to get. She had raised by a forced levy as much money for war purposes as she could ever hope to receive. The burden of militarism was beginning to produce dangerous results among her people. The deepening of the Kiel Canal had been completed. The time was, therefore, most favorable at home.

#### WHAT ABOUT HER FOES?

*Russia.*—The great danger and obstacle to Germany was Russia. The progress of Russia during the last few years has been remarkable in commerce, in finance, in military power, and she was never likely to be less strong than now.

*France.*—France was passing through a grave constitutional crisis, and was in no condition to act with unity and promptitude.

*England.*—Germany believed England would not fight, and that if she did, she was weakened by internal strife. Civil war was at her doors in Ireland. There was unrest in India. South Africa would welcome disaster to Britain at the hands of Germany, who had so sympathized with the Boers in their late war. The other Overseas Dominions were indifferent. Such were the German misconceptions of the British Empire.

So now was the time for Germany to strike and fulfil her destiny to dominate the world and enforce German culture and German civilization upon the world. Her foolish boast was: "France in six weeks, Russia in six months, England in one year." Such was Germany's thought as to conditions. What a rude awakening she received! Russia astonished the world in the speed with which she mobilized her troops and in the efficiency of these troops. France rose as one man and faced war with determination and divinity.

The Belgians, with a courage that has thrilled the world, met the German hosts and held them until the Allies could prepare for the fight. Not since the day that the heroic Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans checked the Persian hosts at Thermopylae, has greater valor been shown than that displayed by the Belgians in meeting and holding the countless hosts of the German army.

Internal discord in Britain ceased, and with a patriotism unparalleled in the world's history, every part and section of the far-flung Empire rallied to the help of the Homeland. And to-day we have the splendid spectacle of Britons, Indians, Canadians—men from every section of the Empire—going out side by side with heads high and hearts beating true to one King-Emperor, and one Empire, to battle with a common enemy, the enemy of civilization.

#### GERMANY'S PLAN.

Germany never counted on resistance worth the name from little Belgium, and she no doubt intended to hurl a mass of men through that kingdom, strike France to her knees in two or three great battles, spread ruin and destruction everywhere, then turn around and transport the bulk of her forces to her eastern frontier, before Russia had completed her mobilization and was ready to strike. And when she had disposed of Russia she would be ready to crush Britain in her forward march for the Sovereignty of the World. War with Germany, sooner or later, was inevitable, and had we failed to stand by France, the conditions under which that war would have been fought would have been more unfavorable than now.