

Apparently alarmed by the hint of Sir Edward Grey that British public feeling would be aroused by the invasion of Belgium, the German ambassador at London inquired on August 1st whether Britain would remain neutral, if Belgium were left inviolate. Sir Edward Grey naturally refused to tie the hands of Britain, as that was not the only vital question. That the ambassador was reckoning without his home government was proven on August 3rd, when he had to ask that Britain should withdraw the neutrality of Belgium as one of the conditions of British neutrality. Meanwhile on August 2nd Germany had invaded Luxemburg. Still Britain did not declare war. But when on August 4th they swept into Belgium, the British government presented an ultimatum requiring their withdrawal, which Germany accepted as a declaration of war.

There can be no question in any impartial mind as to whether Britain waited long enough; the only question is whether the British Government did not wait too long. It has been said that, had Britain sooner declared her "solidarity" with France and Russia, Germany might have taken a different attitude. Sir Edward Grey was of the opinion that such a course would have interfered with the influence of Britain as a mediator, would not have been justified by public opinion, and would not have mattered in any case, as Germany could not have expected our neutrality. From a study of the deeper causes of the war and the past policy of Germany, one is led to conclude that, at the most, it could only have postponed the inevitable day.

It is true the British declaration of war was received in Germany with a frenzy of resentment, beginning with the Chancellor, who railed at Sir Edward Goschen about the preposterous idea that Britain should go to war for "a scrap of paper" like the treaty of 1839. The storm of fury that swept over Germany appears never since to have abated, and has found expression in the "Hymn of Hate", for which a grateful sovereign decorated the author. We may well be excused for suspecting that the German wrath has lost none of its edge because they feel that Britain has not patiently awaited her turn.

*(To be continued).*

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She—"This be a terrible war, doctor."

He—"It is, indeed."

She—"It's a pity someone don't catch that there old Kruger."

He—"Ah, you mean the Kaiser."

She—"Aw—changed his name, has he—deceitful old varmint?"

*Punch.*