

BELGIUM AND GREECE

civilised and barbarian. Had Grotius and Puffendorf and Bluntschli never lived, the issue would not be changed, and it would be much clearer. A definite and formal promise had been made by the five great Powers in Europe that Belgium should be permanently neutral. This meant, first, that they were debarred from going to war against Belgium, and, secondly, that in case of war against other States, they were debarred from using an alliance with Belgium, or using the resources of the country, or the territory of the country in support of their armies. On this there has in fact never been the slightest shadow of doubt.

The promise might have been wise or foolish; it was open to any State to represent that it was one which under modern conditions should not be maintained, to declare that she wished to be freed from it, and to summon a conference of the guaranteeing Powers in order to arrange for an abrogation of the treaty. But if this was to be done it must be done in time of peace. For it was characteristic of the engagement that it only became operative when the state of war had in fact arisen; then it was too late to disown it. If two men fight a duel on the agreed conventions; it is open to them before the actual struggle begins to ask that the conditions and conventions should be changed. It is not open to them without warning, when faced with the adversary, to start the duel by a treacherous and false stroke.

So much for Belgium, but what of Greece? Here first, we note that there was no engagement on the part of any Power to respect the neutrality of