

of reputation which for the moment outweighed the material gain to her navy.¹ We know to-day more of the inner diplomacy which caused Canning to take this step than was known to his contemporaries, and the circumstances surrounding the seizure of the Danish fleet and the violation of Denmark's neutrality by Great Britain are, I submit, far removed from comparison with the outbreak of the present war.

To-day, Great Britain, Germany, and Russia, at the very outset of the war, issued their respective cases to the world; they entered their pleadings before the court of the public opinion of the nations. It is, therefore, no question here of secret treaties, mutilated dispatches, and imperfect information. All the Powers concerned have made public the evidence on which they rely for a justification of their proceedings. If we accept Hall's statement of the law and apply it to the German invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium, Germany, to obtain exoneration on the ground of self-preservation, would have to prove that there was clear evidence of the intention of her prospective enemy, France, to march across the territory of Belgium in order to gain a strategic advantage in an attack upon her territory, and that Belgium's condition rendered her too weak to resist such a violation of her neutrality by France. On these points the evidence against the German contention is clear. Denmark, in 1807, had no strong Power to whom to turn for defence against Napoleon, she lay at his mercy; but Belgium was not dependent solely on her own strength. Germany had in 1870 received striking proof that England would under no circumstances tolerate a violation of Belgian neutrality, for at the outset of the Franco-German

¹ *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, vol. ix, p. 298.