

## MY MISSION TO LONDON 1912-1914.

of Berlin, played the strong man, decided to come round, we replied to the Russian mobilisation, after Russia had negotiated and waited for a whole week in vain, with the ultimatum and the declaration of war.

## THE ENGLISH DECLARATION OF WAR.

Sir Edward was still looking for new ways of avoiding the catastrophe. Sir W. Tyrrell called on me on the morning of the 1st August to tell me that his chief still hoped to find a way out. Would we remain neutral if France did? I understood that we should then agree to spare France, but he had meant that we should remain altogether neutral—towards Russia also. That was the well-known "misunderstanding." Sir Edward had asked me to call in the afternoon. As he was at a meeting of the Cabinet, he called me up on the telephone, Sir W. Tyrrell having hurried to him at once. In the afternoon, however, he talked only about Belgian neutrality and the possibility that we and France might face one another in arms without attacking.

Thus this was not a proposal at all, but a question without any guarantee, as our interview, which I have mentioned before, was to take place soon afterwards. Berlin, however, without waiting for the interview, made this report the foundation for far-reaching measures. Then there came M. Poincaré's letter, Bonar Law's letter, King Albert's telegram. The waverers in the Cabinet—excepting three members who resigned—were converted.

Till the very last moment I had hoped that England would adopt a waiting attitude. Nor did my French colleague feel at all confident, as I heard from a private source. Even on the 1st August the King had given the President an evasive reply. But England was already mentioned as an opponent in the telegram from Berlin announcing the