

BELGIUM AND GREECE

of Greece was violated by the armies of the Allies, who claimed to use the territory in order to transfer their armies to the seat of warfare between Serbia and Bulgaria. What more could be required? Is it not evident that the Allies are guilty of that very crime which they charge against the Germans?

The argument may seem conclusive, and it would be conclusive were it not that it omits the cardinal elements on both sides. A promise, a treaty, a word of honour solemnly pledged. And, in truth, those who maintain that the conditions are similar, in the very fact that they do this, assent to the proposition that in international relations promises are empty words, treaties are scraps of paper, pledged honour is as a breath of air which flows hither and thither, purposeless, on the face of the earth. Belgium was neutral and Greece was neutral, but the neutrality of the two States was as different as black and white. For the neutrality of Belgium was the fulfilment of a solemn engagement, the neutrality of Greece was the violation of an engagement equally binding; if the one was a virtue, the other was a crime.

There has been much talk of the neutrality of Belgium. Men have written long books about it. The whole question has been encumbered by learned disquisitions on international law and The Hague Conference. The pages of the most voluminous and the most worthless of professors have been ransacked to find arguments on one side or the other. All this is beside the point. To judge the question we require nothing but a firm grasp of those simple and universal rules of conduct which bind together old and young, learned and simple,