

8 DOES INTERNATIONAL LAW STILL EXIST ?

of the number of the forces engaged, because of the range of hostilities, stretching as they do over every quarter of the globe, and because of the extent to which it has affected the commerce and the finance of the whole world. And that Great Britain has become involved in this war is due to the fact that her enemy has declined to be bound by International Law, and has asserted a claim to disregard legal principles, if it be advantageous to do so for military purposes. It is not too much to say that the action of Germany challenges the very existence of any law between nations. In particular it challenges the position of neutral States and the rights of small States to equality of treatment. Let us examine the effect of the war from this point of view.

We are discussing to-night the legal aspect of the matter ; it is not, therefore, necessary for me to dwell on the point which has been so much in controversy as to the responsibility for the war. The papers are before the public and you can judge. I would only suggest, in passing, that one good test by which to discover the originators is the state of military preparation in which the outbreak of war found the respective parties, for no sane government provokes hostilities unless it is prepared for them. The German Army was ready to march, and did march, over the frontiers of France and Belgium on the day on which war was declared, if not before : the British Army is not yet ready, and one has only to observe the feverish haste with which our recruits have been learning the most elementary movements of drill in every open space since war began, to satisfy oneself that the British Government, at any rate, could never have contemplated immediate hostilities.

Now the reason why this country has entered into the war is stated in the ultimatum delivered to Germany.