

Germany's intentions as they unfolded themselves in the course of the negotiations, involved such a danger to France, to Belgium, to international law and to the existing order in Europe that Great Britain could not in the interest of her honour and her safety allow them to go unchallenged. When the challenge should be given was the question for Sir Edward Grey to decide. It is now said in some quarters that he should have joined Russia and France at the outset in meeting the threat of Germany by a stiff defiance, and that had he done so the war might have been averted. It is certainly possible that, confronted by the three Powers of the Entente, Germany and Austria would have retired from their first position. Yet the probability is, to judge from Germany's official memorandum and her instructions to her Ambassadors, that even then she would have held her ground. In any case a joint demonstration by the Entente might easily have taken the appearance of aggression. Many of those who are now criticizing Sir Edward Grey for supineness would then have condemned him for thwarting Germany. He had to win the support of his own people and of Parliament. His own constitutional responsibilities and his love of peace led him to employ every possible means with the object of keeping the controversy in the diplomatic field and of securing a settlement by diplomatic negotiations. He consulted his friends—he was not bound to do more. He informed them of all his plans. He urged moderation upon them, so that they would not give their opponents a pretext for the use of violence. At the same time he did not fail to remonstrate against the proceedings of Austria and