

British journals opposed to the new policy reproach the Government with renouncing the "splendid isolation of Britain" and her "traditional mission" as "champion of the liberties of the world", "as protector of the weak nations against spoliations from powerful conquering peoples."

Sir Edward Grey and his colleagues do not seem to be deeply moved by such empty and pharisaic phrases; and they are right.

The policy of Great Britain, like that of all great powers, has always been dictated by her interest. Thanks to the continuity of her external action and the magnificent traditions of her Government and diplomacy, she knew, better than any other nation, how to conceal her game, choose her proper time, and cover her grabs and conquests with the invocation, sometimes sincere and always opportune, of the "rights of civilisation and liberty."

To those who charge him with abandoning, in China, "the traditions of civilisation and liberty", Sir Edward Grey has only to recall the odious opium wars, to the defenders of Persia and Tripoli, the history of South Africa.

That the Foreign Secretary should abandon also, and even denounce, the policy of isolation, is not altogether astonishing to those who have studied at close range the history and policy of England. That isolation, more or less forced, England was induced to find "splendid", rather by virtue of a very peculiar faculty of her people. That faculty is one of the characteristic features of the magnificent national temperament of the Anglo-Saxons; it constitutes one of the main elements of their strength. It has always given them the advantage of filling the minds of other peoples, and perhaps their own, with the delusion that they *want* and admire what they are forced to accept.

But, the humanitarian legend set aside, the British policy of isolation abandoned in regard to other European powers, there remains nevertheless a very material deduction to be drawn from Sir Edward Grey's declaration: the British Government have apparently renounced their umpireship in the great conflicts of the world, not only in Europe, but in Asia and in Africa as well.