

31, Sir Edward Grey—in view of existing treaties, asked both France and Germany "whether they were prepared to engage to respect neutrality of Belgium as long as no other Power violates it." On the same day he "assumed," in a communication to Belgium, "that the Belgian Government will maintain to the utmost of her power her neutrality." Belgium in reply "expects and desires that other Powers will observe and uphold her neutrality which she intends to maintain to the utmost of her power." France immediately gave Sir Edward Grey the desired assurance. Germany gave no answer.

On August 3 Germany addressed an ultimatum to Belgium saying that she would be treated as an enemy unless she consented to the violation of her territory. Belgium "categorically refused this as a flagrant violation of the law of nations," and the King of the Belgians appealed in the following terms to King George: "Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870 and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium."

On August 4 the British Government addressed an ultimatum to Germany saying that unless by midnight she gave a satisfactory reply to the question asked on July 31, "His Majesty's Government feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany is as much a party as ourselves." Germany gave no reply except by the forcible violation of Belgian territory, and Britain accordingly declared war.

#### *What We are Fighting For*

Thus, by an instructive coincidence, a crisis which began by the determination of Austria (backed by Germany) to apply brute force against the independence of a small State in South-eastern Europe came to a head, so far as Britain is concerned, by the determination of Germany (in alliance with Austria) to ride rough-shod over the neutrality of a small State in North-western Europe. "Gentlemen," said