

respect. Englishmen have always admired the elasticity of the French temperament and the idealism of French policy. Frenchmen, on their side, have not been slow to recognize the pacific and reasonable character of the English, their readiness to accept a compromise and to abide loyally by an agreement. In the colonial sphere it has often happened that English interests have clashed with those of France. But a way of settlement, honourable to both parties, has always been discovered; and France has never had occasion to complain that England regards the prosperity of a competitor as an insult or a menace.

(3) The third period, from 1904 to 1914, has been remarkable for the steady and deliberate preparations of France to face the German peril. For at least ten years her statesmen have not only feared invasion, but have been pretty well informed of the plan of campaign which the German General Staff would pursue. Indeed the more militant of German newspapers, and the leading exponents of German strategy, have not troubled to disguise the intentions of the German governing class. The only doubts in French minds have been as to the date at which the German plan would be put in execution, and the exact nature of the pretext which would be alleged. It was, however, reasonable to expect that the blow would be struck when German military and naval expenditure had reached the maximum permitted by the state of the public revenue; and that the occasion would be found in the Franco-Russian alliance which the Pan-German party have affected to treat as a crime against European civilization.

The Russian alliance was in fact projected and concluded during the years 1891-7, when France asked for nothing more than freedom from continental embarrass-