

the radical difference between the German and the English political systems blinded the astute agents. In England nothing really important is a secret, and the amount of privileged political information to be gleaned in barters' shops, even when they are patronized by Civil servants, is distressingly small. Two hours of sympathetic conversation with an ordinary Englishman would have told the German Chancellor more about English politics than ever he heard in his life. For some reason or other he was unable to make use of this source of intelligence, so that he remained in complete ignorance of what every one in England knew and said.

Here is another instance. The programme of German ambition has been voluminously published for the benefit of the world. France was first to be crushed; then Russia; then, by means of the indemnities procured from these conquests, after some years of recuperation and effort, the naval power of England was to be challenged and destroyed. This programme was set forth by high authorities, and was generally accepted; there was no criticism, and no demur. The crime against the civilization of the world foreshadowed in the horrible words 'France is to be crushed' is before a high tribunal; it would be idle to condemn it here. What happened is this. The French and Russian part of the programme was put into action last July. England, who had been told that her turn was not yet, that Germany would be ready for her in a matter of five or ten years, very naturally refused to wait her turn. She crowded up on to the scaffold, which even now is in peril of breaking down under the weight of its victims, and of burying the executioner in its ruins. But because England would not wait her turn, she is overwhelmed