

of Sir Edward, the warnings of San Giuliano (Italian Foreign Minister) and of Bolla (Italian Ambassador in Berlin), my urgent advice—all were of no use, for Berlin went on insisting that Serbia must be massacred.

The more I pressed, the less willing they were to alter their course, if only because I was not to have the success of saving peace in the company of Sir Edward Grey.

So Grey on July 29 resolved upon his well-known warning. I replied that I had always reported that we should have to reckon upon English hostility if it came to war with France. The Minister said to me repeatedly: "If war breaks out it will be the greatest catastrophe the world has ever seen."

GREY STILL SOUGHT PEACE.

After that events moved rapidly. When Count Berchtold, who hitherto had played the strong man on instructions from Berlin, at last decided to change his course, we answered the Russian mobilization—after Russia had for a whole week negotiated and waited in vain—with our ultimatum and declaration of war.

Sir Edward Grey still looked for new ways of escape. In the morning of August 1, Sir W. Tyrrell came to me to say that his chief still hoped to find a way out. Should we remain neutral if France did the same? I understood him to mean that we should then be ready to spare France, but his meaning was that we should remain absolutely neutral—neutral therefore even toward Russia. That was the well-known misunderstanding. Sir Edward had given me an appointment for the afternoon, but as he was then at a meeting of the Cabinet, he called me up on the telephone, after Sir W. Tyrrell had hurried straight to him. But in the afternoon he spoke no longer of anything but Belgian neutrality, and of the possibility that we and France should face one another armed, without attacking one another.

Thus there was no proposal whatever, but a question without any obligation, because our conversation, as I have already explained, was to take place soon afterward. In Berlin, however—without waiting for the conversation—this news was used as the foundation for a far-reaching act. Then came Poincaré's letter, Bonar Law's letter, and the telegram from the King of the Belgians. The hesitating members of the Cabinet were converted, with the exception of three members, who resigned.

PEACE HOPES DESTROYED.

Up to the last moment I had hoped for a waiting attitude on the part of England. My French colleague also felt himself by no means secure, as I learned from a private source. As late as August 1 the King replied evasively to the French President. But in the telegram from Berlin, which announced the threatening danger of war, England was already mentioned as an opponent. In Berlin, therefore, one already reckoned upon war with England.

Before my departure Sir Edward Grey received me on August 5 at his house. I had gone there at his desire. He was deeply moved. He said to me that he would always be ready to mediate, and, "We don't want to crush Germany." Unfortunately, this confidential conversation was published. Thereby Herr von Bethmann Hollweg destroyed the last possibility of reaching peace via England.

Our departure was thoroughly dignified and calm. Before we left, the King had sent his equerry, Sir E. Ponsonby, to me, to express his regret at my departure and that he could not see me personally. Princess Louise lamented our going. Mrs. Asquith and other friends came to the embassy to say good-bye.

A special train took us to Harwich, where a guard of honour was drawn up for me. I was treated like a departing sovereign. Thus ended my London mission. It was wrecked, not by the perfidy of the British, but by the perfidy of our policy.

At the railway station in London Count Mensdorff (Austrian Ambassador) appeared with his staff. He was cheerful, and gave me to understand that perhaps he would remain in London. But to the English he said that it was not Austria, but we, who had wanted the war.

A BITTER RETROSPECT.

When now, after two years, I realize everything in retrospect, I say to myself that I realized too late that there was no place for me in a system which for years has lived only on tradition and routine, and which tolerates only representatives who report what one wants to read. Absence of prejudice and an independent judgment are combated, want of ability and of character are extolled and esteemed, but successes arouse hostility and uneasiness.

I had abandoned opposition to our mad Triple Alliance policy, because I saw that