

the way prepared for the mightiest conflict of contending forces the world has known.

Too much significance cannot be attached to the invasion of Belgium and the Duchy of Luxemburg by the German troops since both involved the direct violation of treaty obligations and the ruthless disregard of national guarantees. Both were a direct violation of the rights of neutrals and doubly criminal in that resting its security in the honor of other nations, Belgium was devoid of means of defence, which but for the guarantees given by the great Powers of Europe, she would have found it prudent and necessary to provide.

By the Treaties of 1839 and 1870, the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium were guaranteed, Germany, France and Great Britain being the chief Powers parties to the guarantee. Hostile action against Belgium by any foe would have compelled one and all of these countries to have stood by Belgium in the defence of her nationality. The violation of this neutrality by one of the Powers by which it was guaranteed is so flagrant a violation of all honor and international obligation that no excuse can be invented in mitigation of it. Germany, it is alleged, declared that the occupation of Luxemburg railways, which were a part of the Prussian State system, was not a hostile act, but merely a measure of precaution. She found it impossible, however, to make any explanation of her violation of Belgian neutrality other than that it was a course demanded by military necessity. As a matter of fact, as all the nations of the world now know, it was an act of war determined upon without regard to honor or any consideration, other than that it afforded the least difficult means of invading the territory of France.

V. GERMANY AND ENGLAND.

BRITAIN'S policy as respects the European situation has long been one of endeavoring by every possible means to maintain friendly relations between the different powers, and where not possible to prevent actual hostilities, to localize their area, insofar as a wise diplomacy could attain this end. In her Foreign Office, Great Britain has been fortunate in having had a line of illustrious statesmen who in matters of foreign policy have been splendidly disinterested and actuated only by the highest and noblest motives. No man in British history has more deservedly won the respect of political opponents, as well as friends, or, to a greater degree, commanded the confidence of other countries than Sir Edward Grey, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Ministries of Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith. Few Cabinets have ever existed of which the members were more genuinely devoted to the cause of social reform and to international peace than the one constituting the Asquith Government. If, under the guiding control of Sir Edward Grey and Premier Asquith and their colleagues, Britain has been drawn into war, it is safe to say that no Ministry conceivable could have spared the United Kingdom and the British Empire this terrible fate. How true this is will be apparent the moment thought is given to the sagacious and earnest en-

deavors of Sir Edward Grey to avert hostilities in the first instance, and to localize its area once the conflict had commenced, and to the forbearance and caution evident in the course pursued by the Asquith Ministry at every stage of its momentous proceedings.

Sir Edward Grey's Efforts At Mediation.

Diplomacy is carried on in secret, but it is an open secret that long before the relations between Austria and Servia had reached the point of a threatened declaration of war, the British Foreign Office was exercising its influence to the utmost to compose the tempers of these nations and avert an open rupture. When the Austrian ultimatum was presented to Servia, and Servia's reply became known, Sir Edward Grey, recognizing in this exchange of notes, the latent possibilities of an European conflict, openly proposed to the Powers of Europe a scheme for joint mediation. In the House of Commons, on July 27, he explained to the members the plan he had proposed, which was that the Powers—Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy—should co-operate in an endeavor to arrange the dispute between Austria and Servia on the basis of Servia's reply to the Austrian ultimatum. This reply Sir Edward regarded as a foundation on which friendly and impartial Powers should be able to arrange an acceptable settlement. France and Italy accepted this proposal, but Germany's reply was evasive. It was suggested that the cause of peace would be better advanced if "mediatory negotiations which have been already commenced with the best of success were continued between different European Governments."

It added: "This Government is of the opinion that if the efforts of the Powers are concentrated at the points of chief importance, the end desired will be attained in the quickest possible manner."

On Wednesday, July 29, Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, made the following statement in the House of Commons:—

"As the House is aware a formal declaration of war was issued yesterday by Austria against Servia. The situation at this moment is one of extreme gravity, and I can only say—only usefully say—that **His Majesty's Government are not relaxing their efforts to do everything in their power to circumscribe the area of possible conflict.**"

Speaking again in Parliament on Thursday, July 30, two days after war had been declared by Austria upon Servia, but two days before war had been declared by Germany on Russia, Sir Edward Grey in reply to a question from the Leader of the Opposition.

"There is little I can say. I regret that I cannot say that the situation is less grave than it was yesterday. The outstanding features are much the same. Austria has begun war against Servia; Russia has ordered a partial mobilization. This has not hitherto led to any corresponding steps by other Powers so far as our information goes. We continue to pursue the one great object of preserving European peace, and for this purpose we are keeping closely in touch with other powers. In thus keeping in touch we have, I am glad to say, found