

matter but it turned out to be the match which put Europe in flames. Those are the days we need to be acquainted with to get replies to the "Why" and "Where for". The record of those days is clear. The conduct of Sir Edward Grey, viewed in the lurid light of 18 months of red ruin, was all that could be desired. It was the struggle of a great strong man for the peace of the world. The boy killed the heir to the Austrian Throne, Austria made her great demands on Serbia, which did not err on the side of moderation. Serbia complied with nine out of ten, and was open to discuss the tenth. Sir Edward Grey pleaded with Austria for time so that Russia could speak more clearly and she was ready to speak clearly. That being rejected, he pleaded with Germany for a conference of the Powers, so that the appeal to the dread arbitrement of War might be avoided, and the World saved from the greatest tragedy in its long history. Germany with a word could have held back the dogs of War, but this also she deliberately refused to do. So far there was no reason why England should take a part in the war, but other things happened.

(Facts) We cannot see all quite clearly yet, but at least two things emerge quite clearly; first, that for long years Germany had resolved on the destruction of her neighbours, East and West; secondly, that she would halt at no atrocity to realise her fiendish purpose, it is in connection with this second clear thing that we British get involved, for the first atrocity she committed to realise her diabolical ends was the violation of Belgian neutrality, the thing that Germany had pledged herself, and sworn in treaty obligations, to protect. That Oath of Germany was regarded as a mere scrap of paper, and ceased to be binding on her when it challenged her lust for power, and what she thought was a short and quick cut to Paris. The only way she was entitled to go was through Verdun at which barred way she has hurled herself in vain up to the present hour. In that same treaty we also were pledged; we also had sworn to protect the neutrality of Belgium to the last penny of our money, and the last drop of our blood. Could we then keep out of the War? Would we keep out of it? Germany thought we would. For long years she has thought of us as a decadent people, living on the reputation of our heroic fathers, who had given us a Place in the Sun. She also reasoned that our hands were full, that Ireland was on the eve of revolution, that South Africa would use the emergency to break away, that India would follow her lead, and that Australia and Canada would forsake their Mother in the hour of her trial. Germany thought that for some subtle diplomatic reason England would back out.

Britain might have stood out, but at what cost? At the cost of her honour. Her name would have stunk in the nostrils of all free