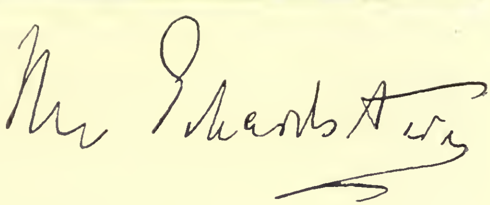
TEN YEARS AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'



TEN YEARS

AT THE

COURT OF ST. JAMES'

1895—1905

BY

BARON VON ECKARDSTEIN

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Contents

Editor's Preface

Those who remember the official functions of late Victorian and Edwardian London will have a memory picture of Baron von Eckardstein in his white Cuirassier uniform towering above the tall men and women of London Society. From his glittering helmet to his gleaming jackboots he seemed an embodiment of the military Empire he represented. That this grim and gigantic guardsman was an acting-Ambassador very much in the good graces of our Court and Cabinet was well known, but few suspected that he was an angel of peace from German Liberalism and the ally of those English Statesmen who were trying to re-establish the peace of Europe on the firm foundation of an Anglo-German Alliance. How and why they failed—when and where the rifts first began that ended finally in rupture and ruin—can be seen more clearly, I think, in these memoirs than in any elaborate analysis of pre-war politics.

For the student of politics these reminiscences represent a document of a different class altogether from the usual diplomatic autobiography. Von Eckardstein was by tradition a diplomatist, and a diarist by training. The amusing anecdote of Disraeli at the Congress of Berlin (page 19) shows his early experience of the tricks of the trade, and he tells us that from boyhood he noted every evening what had been said to him during the day. His baffled bewilderment when he tried to summarise the substance of a talk with, or rather by, Gladstone (p. 52) is as significant of his own method as of Gladstone's. Moreover, owing probably to his peculiar position in the Embassy, he seems to have been able to keep copies of secret official correspondence and of the still more secret and significant personal letters by which all diplomacy of real importance is conducted. As the German principals he represented are now dead or deposed, he has published these documents; and thrown thereby a searchlight on the dark places of pre-war diplomacy only second in interest and importance to the revelations of the Russian revolutionaries.

The general reader also will be well entertained by this diplomatist's snap-shots of the real personalities of personages whose caricatures are familiar to him; and by the diarist's "detectophone" records of intimate talks that proved to be the turning-point in the history of Europe. For as the reader follows the story he realises that he is watching from the wings the first scenes of the first act of the tragedy of modern civilisation. He sees the impending storm-cloud, dark with the doom of Empires and the death of millions, draw visibly nearer when the Kaiser calls King Edward "an old peacock" (p. 56) and his ministers "unmitigated noodles" (p. 217).

He sees the shadow recede again because the Duchess of Devonshire has met King Edward at Newmarket over the "*affaire Senden*" (p. 123), or because Lord Salisbury has gone to the Riviera. He will leave these tremendous trivialities with a real perception not only of what was rotten in the pre-war German Empire, but of what is still rotten in the international relations of European States.

"He is over six foot, can drink without getting drunk and is otherwise suitable, so we'll make a diplomat of him," said Bismarck of von Eckardstein. Born a member of the imperialist clique that ruled the German Empire and of the international class that still regulates the affairs of Europe, von Eckardstein under an aged and ailing ambassador became the representative of Berlin in London during those fateful years when Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Lansdowne were trying to associate Great Britain and Germany in arrangements that would have prevented the war. The record he now gives us of their negotiations is evidence that the failure of our Statesmen was not their fault. It was due, in von Eckardstein's opinion, to the waywardness of the Kaiser, the weakness of his Chancellors, and the tortuosities of Holstein.

Whether this goes deep enough or no, we shall after reading these rather artless reminiscences be disposed to acquit von Eckardstein of any large share of blame for the failure. He was apparently a more competent diplomatist than his contemporaries suspected, this being an appreciable asset in itself. As is shown by his encounter with Lord Salisbury over the "Swiss cheese ultimatum" (p. 157), and with Holstein over that spidery word-spinner's private spy service (pp. 63-4), he knew how to deal both with an English gentleman and with an "Empire Jesuit." He seems, however, to have suffered from the danger to which all diplomatists are exposed —that of becoming, or of being supposed to have become, rather an agent of the country where he was residing than of that which he officially represented. This is suggested when one compares his last conversations with the Kaiser and with King Edward (p. 244). It was no doubt the fault of Berlin not of the Baron that almost all his negotiations resulted very much more to the advantage of Great Britain than of Germany, but one must allow for this in condemning the buttings-in and breakings-off of Berlin that he denounces.

It is, however, no duty of an editor to try to correct the personal equation of an author. If it were, several variant versions might be appended to the events he recounts. As it is, the editor must apologise for the liberty he has allowed himself in abridging and arranging these volumes for English readers.

ZOFFANY HOUSE,
STRAND-ON-GREEN.

GEORGE YOUNG.

Author's Preface

WHEN the great English Minister, Walpole, lay dying his wife asked him if he would like to be read to. "Yes," answered the dying statesman, "but not history, because it can't be true."

Voltaire described history as a "*fable convenue*," and Goethe suggests that the best that history can give us is enthusiasm.

But on this point the bluntest, plainest saw is that of Bismarck: "When one reflects what lies are told about a political period of a few years ago only, and that, too, with success, it is difficult to believe anything that history tells us of olden time."

History has probably never, or hardly ever, seen such brazen lying as that in Germany in the period following the great Bismarckian epoch. This period, which ended in the fearful catastrophe of the world war and in the resultant revolution, was characterised by a persistent deception of public opinion through official organisations. Hence that fog of error in which the greater part of the German people is still to-day submerged.

The blame for this must be ascribed primarily to idiosyncrasies of Wilhelm II, and, with a few exceptions, to the responsible and irresponsible advisers chosen by him.

During the Wilhelminic Era the fate of the German people lay more or less in the hands of parvenus and prigs, whose one idea was to keep themselves in the good graces of the Sovereign and to keep him as far as possible in the dark. There could, therefore, never be any question of a policy consecutive in itself and consonant with the true interests of the German people. In its place we had a policy of self-deception and sentimentality, and one moreover continually exposed to erratic eccentricities.

Under such a rule public opinion was completely and continually bewildered and befooled. More than one of those behind the scenes has more than once been astonished at the things the German public was expected to believe, and at the things the official and officious Information Service shoved down its throat. And the really touching credulity with which the German Michael swallowed everything was perfectly astounding. Old Seneca said long ago, " A man will sooner believe another than bethink himself." It is indeed pleasanter to be credulous than to be critical, and it is less trying to the brain.

After all, every nation has the government it deserves; and the German people, especially its representatives in the old Reichstag, are to some extent accomplices in the monstrous political blunders of the Wilhelminic Era, and in their inevitable results—the " encirclement " and the world war. The German people let itself be bewitched for whole decades with phantasies and phantasms, until at last the crash came and opened the eyes of some, but even so not of all.

Those who raised a warning voice were not believed; they were indeed shouted down, laughed off, or hunted out.

The deficiencies of Germans in political discernment and sense of direction may perhaps be excused by the very small share in shaping their own destinies allowed them under the *ancien régime.* But only the future can tell us whether the unlimited political liberties they now enjoy will be sensibly used and will set their feet on the right road. If the German people is in future to fulfil its fate of itself and with success, it must learn political discretion and discernment. This can only come through a thorough appreciation of the past and thanks to a naked exposure of the real causes of the catastrophe. Truth alone can give us strength to see things as they are, to endure them to the end, and to rise from them to better things.

Apart from the Camarilla that controlled the im-

mediate entourage of the Kaiser, and the eccentric excursions into politics of certain Generals and Admirals, there were at times in the Foreign Office not only one but several sub-governments. The period after Bismarck's dismissal was one of the rule of Under-Secretaries running wild. But before and behind everything stood Geheimrat Fritz von Holstein, Director of the Political Section—the ruling factor in the Foreign Office and in the foreign policy of the German Empire. His official superiors, the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretaries, were, in so far as he was concerned, only a sub-government in hopeless opposition. "His Grey Eminence," or the "Empire Jesuit," as his enemies called him, ruled with a rod of iron, and often did not allow even his immediate superiors to see his secret reports and letters. Adroit, devoted to power and indifferent to its appurtenances, but crotchety, touchy, and suspicious, von Holstein was one of the most singular and secretive personalities that ever appeared on the stage or stood behind the scenes of German politics. No one who had seen how his activities worked could maintain that they were to the good of the German people. He died long before the war, but he shares with several others the chief responsibility for it.

While Holstein took no notice of the majority of our representatives abroad, there were some few chosen spirits with whom he maintained a private correspondence by letter and telegram. Most of the more important and delicate questions were dealt with and decided by this private and secret channel. And what a different picture this secret correspondence gives to that presented by the official records! May the historical student profit by this hint, and not take everything in official despatches at its face value because it is official.

A witty English judge once said, "The truth leaks out sometimes even in affidavits." And if we apply this to the Wilhelminic Era, we might say, the truth leaks out sometimes even in official documents.

Lord Beaconsfield tells us that—"History is mostly false. But in political memoirs at least the plain truth

sometimes comes out." Be it observed he puts in the saving word "sometimes." Even the memoirs of statesmen and diplomats must be read with reserves; for in most cases vanity and a natural inclination to dramatize and distort must be discounted. And in the letters of Holstein, hereafter reproduced, a large allowance must be made for his complex, crotchety and cantankerous mind. He was the kind of man who never can see what is under his nose. He saw everything through the periscope of a clear-sighted but unnaturally convoluted brain. The more natural and obvious a thing was, the more he suspected it. Consequently he often misjudged the leading statesmen and politicians of foreign countries, and as often misunderstood their actions and announcements. Further, those few foreign representatives who enjoyed his confidence and corresponded with him were never able to go straight to the point, but had to steer clear of his crotchets. Every line, nay every word had to be weighed as to whether it was adapted to Holstein's mind; or, before one knew where one was, one found oneself at odds with him and at a loss to get anything done. How often has it happened in important negotiations, which he had himself initiated and in which he was personally interested, that I have been instructed to break off as soon as it appeared that the other party was ready to meet his wishes. I found that as a rule I could reckon on Holstein being willing only so long as the other side were unwilling. Such considerations as these must be borne in mind when forming an opinion on Holstein's letters—letters as clear in thought as they are perfect in style.

As to my own personal equation—conscious of the many human weaknesses to which a writer of memoirs is exposed, I shall try to be as impersonal and impartial as possible. I would if I could eliminate my own individuality altogether, but that is unfortunately impracticable.

CHAPTER 1

CONGRESS OF BERLIN, BISMARCK, ETC.

I WAS born on the 5th July, 1864, at the family property in central Silesia, but spent the greater part of my childhood at my father's neighbouring estate in Ober-Lausitz. I was educated by a tutor, and during the winters which were spent by my parents in Berlin, I went to a day-school there, and afterwards to boarding schools at Liegnitz and Wernigerode.

My early youth was passed in the heroic age of the renaissance of the German Empire. I was still too young to have any recollection of the war with Austria in 1866, but I have often heard how all Silesia was panic-stricken at the prospect of an Austrian invasion. "The Croats are coming" was on the lips of every Silesian mother, and my father had his famous wines walled up in the cellar. He was much upset when the well-known cavalry general, Count Alex Wartensleben, then quartered in the house, betted that he would find them in five minutes—and did so.

Late one afternoon in July, 1870, I was sitting with my grandmother on the terrace of her country house near Königsberg when suddenly the old Landrat von Kalkstein appeared before us unannounced, calling to my grandmother as he came up, "Countess, it's war with France." "Good heavens, what will become of us?" wailed my grandmother—"I went through it all in the French times under Napoleon—I must go to Berlin at once for my deeds and securities before the French get there." "Don't be alarmed, Countess," said the Landrat, "this time things are better than in 1806." Four days later France declared war and we left for Berlin, my grandmother asking in great excitement at every station whether the French were yet over the Rhine. I still remember how at one station a typical Berlin sergeant replied, "Never fear, ma'am, we shan't let the old rowdies with the red breeches into Germany." But when

I asked him what a "rowdy" (klabaster-treter) was, my grandmother called me sharply to order, and made me sit a whole half-hour without saying a word.

My father met us at the station in full uniform and took me to watch the troops marching through the Pariser Platz. I shall never forget the sight of old Field-Marshal Wrangel, then eighty-six, riding at the head of his regiment, the Third Cuirassiers, which he had commanded as a major in 1815. At Ligny, after being badly wounded, he had led them three times against the French advance and covered Blücher's retreat. He thereby contributed to the victory of Waterloo, for without this relief Blücher would never have been able to come to Wellington's help. And whenever he came to see my parents I used to beg him, "Papa Wrangel, do tell me how your Cuirassiers hacked a way through for old Blücher." He died in 1877, but his original personality lives in the many stories still current about him.

My father also took me to see off his relative, Count Reinhold Finck von Finckenstein, who fell soon after at the head of his regiment at Mars-la-Tour. He is famous for his ride on the eve of Königgrätz from the Headquarters of the King to those of the Crown Prince. He had to take orders to the Crown Prince's army to march on Königgrätz, and he reached his destination at one in the morning, after evading enemy pickets and swimming his horse over flooded rivers. Two officers of the General Staff despatched at the same time only got in at about six in the morning. Had the Crown Prince not got his orders before six his army would have arrived too late at Königgrätz, and the battle would have been lost. Indeed, I remember later at a lunch with Bismarck the conversation coming on to Count Reinhold's ride, and Bismarck speaking most appreciatively of its strategic importance. He went on then to give us some account of the morning of the battle. "Early on the 3rd July," he told us, "matters were pretty ticklish, and Moltke was already considering whether he would not have to withdraw the infantry. About noon a staff officer

hurried up and reported to Moltke, who at once put up his glasses and stared persistently at a certain point, muttering something about 'Brown Hussars.' After a bit he turned with a satisfied smile to the Staff saying, 'Finckenstein or one of the others seems to have got there in time,' then sank again into silence. I did not dare ask him what was the matter, but handed him my cigar-case, and on seeing that he very deliberately picked out the best cigar, concluded that all was well. It only occurred to me later that the Brown Hussars belonged to the Crown Prince's army that was now at last coming up."

The winter of 1870 I spent in Berlin, and met various interesting people at the Palais Eckardstein, then belonging to my uncle and aunt. One of these was Count Heinrich von Lehndorff, who had been a close personal friend of Wilhelm I, and acted as intermediary between him and Bismarck. The Count used to say of himself that he was no politician. But in spite of this, or because of it, his tact and intelligence secured a solution such as Bismarck wanted in many awkward passages between the Chancellor and the Emperor. For that was the especial greatness of William I, that he chose the right people for his confidence. What a gulf there was between his admirers and those of his grandson—between the distinguished and dignified tone of his Court and the loud, vulgar advertising atmosphere round Wilhelm II!

I remember Count Lehndorff telling us a story of the year 1866, which showed what an influence he could exercise when necessary over Wilhelm I. Referring to the difficulties that Bismarck had in getting leave from Wilhelm I for the indispensable war with Austria, the Count told us that: "when in June the tension between Prussia and Austria was greatest, and the Austrian armies were already threatening Silesia, both Bismarck and Moltke were trying to extract a declaration of war from the King. Moltke lectured him on the strategic situation, and Bismarck painted the dangers of the political situation in lurid colours. But all in vain. It looked as though the anti-war opposition, and especially the

Bethmann* party, would after all get the best of it. Matters came to a head when Bismarck appeared one afternoon before the King with the fixed intention of getting the declaration of war. A heated altercation ended in the King showing his Prime Minister the door and forbidding him once for all to mention the subject again. I happened to be in the ante-room at the time when Bismarck suddenly burst in on me out of the audience chamber in a state of the highest excitement. At first he could scarcely speak, but having somewhat calmed down he explained what had happened. He then added that he was morally and physically shattered, that his whole lifework, the establishment of the German Empire, had that day been wrecked, and that he was going straight home to send in his resignation. The King could then send for Herr Bethmann and find out for himself how quickly that gentleman would send Prussia and the German Idea to the dogs. I did my best to soothe him, and finally offered to go to the King myself and make a last effort. He agreed and said he would wait in the ante-room. I found the King, too, in a state of great excitement, but after half an hour with him I succeeded in getting him to consent to see Bismarck again. I knew then that the game was half won, and fetching Bismarck, who had been waiting with great impatience, I left them alone together. In less than three minutes the door re-opened on the King and Bismarck both speaking excitedly at once. Bismarck then hurried into my room with the words, ' Thank you with all my heart—it's war.' Then he threw himself on the sofa and asked for brandy, as his nerves had completely given out. And after he had emptied a good half-bottle of cognac he hurried off to Moltke."

This story of the Count's I noted that same evening in my diary as it is here reproduced.

Another incident of the same nature told us by the Count is also not without interest.

* Moritz August von Bethmann Hollweg, one of Bismarck's bitterest opponents and uncle of the Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg.

"One day early in the 'seventies, when I was with the Kaiser at Wildbad Gastein, Bismarck came there about an important question of foreign policy. Kaiser and Chancellor could not agree, and after a lively argument parted in great irritation. The Kaiser, having had his afternoon nap and recovered his equanimity, went out for his usual constitutional accompanied by me. Going slowly along a street so narrow that it was difficult to make way for those going the other way, suddenly we saw bearing down on us the mighty form of Bismarck. The Kaiser, seeing him, stopped, and said to me in a nervous voice, 'Can't we get into a side street? Here's Bismarck coming, and I'm afraid he's so upset to-day that he will cut me.' There was, however, no side street, and Bismarck came steadily on. But full fifteen paces off he pulled off his broad black felt hat, and said in a most respectful voice, 'Has your Majesty any commands for me to-day?' Whereupon the Kaiser, giving him his hand, said in a voice trembling with emotion, 'No, my dear Bismarck, but it would be a very great pleasure if you would take me to your favourite bench by the river, from which we get that lovely view down the valley.' Thither then we went, and there they sat down side by side and enjoyed the beauties of nature; while I stood behind and enjoyed the beauty of the harmony again reigning between my gracious sovereign and his great servant."

In the summer of 1875 I paid a visit to my uncle at his country house in the Spreewald. One day there was a pistol-shooting competition between the guests, about which there was heavy betting. I helped the game-keepers to load the pistols. A Herr von Thielemann, a big broad-shouldered fellow with a bushy beard, was betting high and getting excited about it. He began abusing the loaders, including myself, for their slowness. This went on for a bit until at last he said to me, "I see you are as stupid as any other Silesian." Now, as I was very proud of being a Silesian, at this insult I saw red and was seized with a "furor teutonicus." I finished

loading the duelling pistol and then pointed it straight at his head, screaming, "Either you withdraw and apologise, Herr Thielemann, or I fire." There was a dead silence, but no one dared interfere for fear I might press the trigger. Herr von Thielemann went white as chalk, and at last stammered out: "There, there, my boy, I didn't mean it. I take it all back. You Silesians are clever, bold fellows." Upon that I laid down the pistol and said: "I accept your apology, but hope that in future you will behave better."

It was some time before the spectators of this little interlude recovered from their fright, and then my aunt fell upon me, gave me a couple of hearty clouts on the ear, and led me off by the hand to my room, where I got a good scolding, and was sent to bed supperless. But the next morning, as I came down to breakfast, I heard the company laughing over the episode, and found that Herr von Thielemann had already left.

Early in July, 1878, I was again visiting my uncle at his villa on the Havel. At this time the Berlin Congress had brought together in Berlin the leading statesmen of Europe for the resettlement of the Eastern question after the Russo-Turkish War. As there was then no telephone, my uncle sent me one day with an urgent message to Count Lehndorff. I found him in the hall of the Kaiserhof Hotel in earnest conversation with a tall distinguished-looking gentleman, to whom he introduced me. It was Count Peter Schuvaloff, the Russian statesman, and he, having finished his conversation with Count Lehndorff, asked me to lunch.

A long table was laid in the Kaiserhof every day for the younger members of the Congress. Count Schuvaloff, who liked young company, sat at the head of it, and I as his guest beside him. Lord Beaconsfield had the suite on the first floor at this hotel, and he was, that day, on his way to lunch with Bismarck; when hearing that the Count was in the hotel, he turned into the dining-room to have a few words with the Russian representative before seeing the Chancellor. He came in as usual

leaning on the arm of his secretary, Mr. Montague Corry, and as he came up to us Count Schuvaloff stood up, as did we all, until he had sat down beside the Count. I was introduced by the Count as "the son of an old friend of mine," and the two then began a lively conversation. I could understand every word said by the Count, who was speaking partly in English, partly in French, but not a single word said by Lord Beaconsfield. After about ten minutes' talk he got up and left, we all standing as before until he had left the room. I then timidly asked the Count what language Lord Beaconsfield had been speaking. He gave a shout of laughter, and turning to the whole company said, "My young friend has just asked me what language Lord Beaconsfield speaks in." I heard amid the peals of laughter an Austrian diplomat say, "Early practice makes the 'prentice a master"; while the Count asked me how old I was. I, blushing to the roots of my hair, and on the verge of tears, replied that I was just fourteen. But it was all a mystery to me, until my uncle later, hearing the story, explained that Lord Beaconsfield liked talking French, but spoke with so strong an English accent that the result was as comical as it was incomprehensible.

Later, in London, I came to know Mr. Corry, who had taken the title of Lord Rowton, and had distinguished it by his political and philanthropic activities. On one occasion he told me the following story: "One of my dear Chief's little weaknesses was speaking French in diplomatic circles, though he didn't know it well, and couldn't pronounce it at all. Thus he took it into his head that he would make his great speech at the Congress in French. We all, including Lady Ampthill, tried in vain to dissuade him. But at last, after a confidential conversation with the correspondent of a leading London paper, it occurred to me to have a paragraph published expressing the hope that the greatest English orator of the day would make his speech in English rather than in a foreign language. This was telegraphed back to Berlin, brought to my Chief's notice, and the thing was done."

How often have I sat gossiping with Lord Rowton in his study while he sorted his political papers or burnt some too confidential or compromising document. His literary material in the large tin boxes piled up in his study was so voluminous that he was often at a loss to find his way about in it. One day I found him looking through the correspondence between Lord Beaconsfield and Queen Victoria, and he showed me copies of some of the long letters written to the Queen during the Congress. They were more like "press stories" than State papers, including long detailed descriptions of life in Berlin, and character sketches of the leading personages he had met. And how telling was his characterization of Bismarck, how interesting those of Gortchakoff and Andrassy! As a master stylist and story-teller he could write letters of entrancing interest.

The Berlin Congress was also attended by Lord Salisbury, as the second English representative. He was a statesman of the first rank, and later, as Premier, quite dominated the majority of his contemporaries. Yet how often in England I have had to listen to the alleged saying of Bismarck that Lord Salisbury was "a lath painted to look like iron." As Lord Rowton used to say, it was out of the question that Bismarck could have said such a thing. He went on to add, once, that "it was an open secret during the Congress that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury thought very differently on many questions. And one day at dinner Andrassy asked Bismarck what he thought of Lord Salisbury. Bismarck replied that he had undoubtedly great qualities as a statesman, but that "the Jew beat him by several lengths." This was afterwards twisted by Bismarck's enemies into the other version. Both Herbert Bismarck and Holstein also told me the story as Lord Rowton told it.

Lord Rowton also told me how Count Peter Schuvaloff and his secretaries used to try to shift the pins marking the frontiers fixed by the Congress in Asia, Bessarabia, etc. Once when Lord Rowton caught him in the act he merely lit himself a cigarette with a friendly smile and the most innocent air in the world.

In August, 1884, I joined the Brandenburg Cuirassier Regiment No. 6; and in October of that year my career was very nearly cut short by an experience which I only survived thanks to a strong constitution.

Coming home one evening from the mess, which was then in the centre of the old town of Brandenburg, I was called on by a policeman to hurry to the Town Hall to take part in its defence against an armed mob. It appeared that a revolt had broken out among the workmen of Brandenburg and several thousands had determined to storm the Town Hall. I found accordingly a howling concourse besieging the Hall and its garrison of sixteen fusiliers. My white cuirassier's uniform was noticed at once, and several sturdy fellows rushed at me shouting, "Kill that long beggar of a cuirassier." Whereupon I drew my sabre and cut my way through to the fusiliers. As the crowd got more and more threatening I decided to take command of the garrison and lead a sortie. And when the rioters saw the bayonets charging down on them they fled tumultuously. But hardly had I begun to congratulate myself on the revolt being happily over when we were attacked by new bands that came pouring out of the side streets, and found ourselves fighting for our lives. This went on for hours. Several of the fusiliers were knocked senseless, and I was little better off. My sabre was broken in the middle, I had a fracture of the skull over my left eye, and several gashes from axes in the neck and back. I tried to get into one of the houses, but all the doors were bolted. At last, when I was nearly done, a door opened suddenly, I was pulled into a house by two men, and immediately fainted. It was two hours before I came to and weeks before I recovered.

During the manœuvres of 1886 my squadron was quartered at Potsdam. We were to be reviewed by the Kaiser, and, the day before, I was warned that I might be sent for by the Kaiser after the parade. Accordingly next day, after we had defiled three times past him, at a walk, at a trot, and at a gallop, an orderly galloped up

to my squadron and brought me the royal commands. Having already been told what to do, I galloped towards the Kaiser's carriage, pulled up short twenty paces away, dismounted, advanced, and with my hand to my helmet in the stiffest of attentions, reported myself. The old gentleman looked me up and down, and said in a low voice that gradually strengthened : " I have just thanked your Colonel for the excellent manner in which my Brandenburg Cuirassiers have marched past. I have much enjoyed seeing their beautiful bays again." Then after a little pause he went on : " I hear you are the eldest great grandchild of Field-Marshal Count Kleist von Nollendorf. I had the greatest liking and admiration for him. It was in taking to your great grandfather an order from the King that I had my baptism of fire in 1813 at the battle of—the battle of—I know the name of that French village quite well, but when one gets old names escape one." Whereupon he dismissed me with a friendly nod.

For the manœuvres of 1887 I was attached to the staff of our General of Division, Count Häseler. He was a most abstemious man, who went the whole day on an apple or so, and dined off two eggs and a morsel of cheese. He used to get very annoyed when officers ate or drank from their holsters on the march, as most did. And once, seeing two of my friends refreshing themselves, he congratulated me on abstaining from such effeminacies. I said I had no difficulty in going all day without food, as I could always make up for it at night, but that I much missed smoking, which was strictly prohibited. He then gave me leave to smoke, and, on my captain shouting to me to stop, shouted back, " I let him smoke because he isn't gobbling and guzzling all day like you others." I tell this to some extent in self-defence ; for in later life, when I was living in England, King Edward used often to say he really couldn't invite me again to a hunt breakfast. It cost too much, as I ate a whole ham each time.

In that same year I was invited to a ball at the Opera House, at which were present the old Kaiser, the Crown

Prince Friedrich and other royalties. The Crown Prince with Princess Albrecht of Prussia was making the round of the room on behalf of the Kaiser, when, as he was getting near me, I felt a stinging pain in my hand. I was standing under a gaselier which I found was melting, sending a trickle of molten metal down from the ceiling. All those near drew back hastily, but the Crown Prince, occupied with civilities, noticed nothing. He was just stepping into it when I threw myself in front of him shouting, "Halt, your Royal Highness!" I gave him indeed a regular fright, but at the next Court Ball he sent for me and thanked me, talking to me about my parents, whom he had visited in 1869.

The poor Prince was already at this time mortally ill; though it was in no way evident, and only a few knew how things stood. Later on the most absurd rumours were believed, and public opinion was so misinformed as to become very angry with the Empress Frederick for calling in the English throat specialist, Sir Morell Mackenzie. Whereas it was not the Empress who was responsible for this, but Professor von Bergmann, who expressly recommended it. What really happened was that when the Professor had decided he must operate, and all the preparations were already made, Bismarck suddenly appeared and said that as the life of the Heir to the Throne was concerned, it would be advisable to consult one or more foreign authorities. Professor von Bergmann then proposed the Viennese Professor Schröder, a Parisian doctor, or Sir Morell Mackenzie. And the Empress, who fully consented to the operation being performed by von Bergmann, on being given her choice naturally selected the Englishman; so that, if he later pronounced against an operation, she cannot be blamed for that.

In 1887 the Commandant of my regiment, Major von Podbielski, had the idea of sending officers on a long-distance ride through South Germany. The officers were all Hussars, with the exception of myself. We had to make the whole trip on the same horse and rode every day from four in the morning until five or six in the after-

noon. It was a severe test of endurance in more ways than one. For in all the garrison towns we passed our brother-officers did their best to make us overeat ourselves and to drink us under the table. This sounds as though all we German officers were sots. But we lived moderately on the whole, and only kicked over the traces on high days and holidays The German in general only drinks in jovial company. He is a toper, not a tippler.

One particularly hot day we rode into Wurzburg on the way home. At a great banquet that evening, the Bavarian officers, at least a hundred in number, tried to drink the twenty of us under the table. Our Hussars were already beginning to waver under the fusillade of toasts in Rhine wine and champagne, when the Bavarians suddenly opened fire with their heavy Wurzburger Steinwein. When Podbielski saw this he was panic-stricken lest our Hussars should be put out of action altogether, and he sent me round a note, "Drink a bumper of Steinwein to every one of our brothers in arms." It was a large order, but it was an order. I drank a bumper of Steinwein to every one of them, from the General in command down to the last-joined Ensign. Fortunately the glasses were small; and, anyway, I stayed sober.

The ride caused a good deal of public interest, and Bismarck was especially concerned to learn how a party of Prussian officers got on with the South German, and particularly with the Bavarian officers. He got Podbielski to report to him personally on this; and Podbielski, who was a great raconteur, gave him among other incidents a very lively account of my drinking feat at Wurzburg. Apparently, according to him, I was supposed to have drunk a hundred Bavarian officers under the table in their own Steinwein. As Herbert Bismarck told me later, his father was perfectly delighted with the story, and said he would like to meet me. I accordingly got one day a telegram from Herbert Bismarck telling me to go with him next day to supper with his father. We arrived there punctually with the other guests, and at last the old Prince appeared himself, and I was introduced to him.

He looked me up and down from the top of my helmet to the tip of my sabre, for, at Herbert Bismarck's advice, I was in full dress ; then he said he was glad to know me as he had heard much about me. And, pointing to my big sabre, he said I was right to wear it, as it was a much better furniture than the ordinary cavalry sword. He then asked me how tall I was. I said two metres less a quarter-inch. On this he turned to the company saying smilingly that, though he had had to bring in the decimal system, he himself could only reckon in the old measures. "How many feet is that?" he asked, and, on learning that it was about six foot five, he remarked, "Well, then, you are a bit taller than me."

At supper there was a lively general conversation, to which the Prince contributed many pointed and amusing experiences. Every now and then he fixed me with his great gimlet-like goggle eyes as though he were seeing if he could make me nervous ; and the talk dwelling on the Emperor Charles the Fifth he suddenly turned to me with the words, "Tell me what you know of Charles the Fifth and the Augsburg Religious Peace." For a moment I was panic-stricken, then I pulled myself together, recollecting something I had read in a periodical, and replied : "The period of the Augsburg Peace from 1555 to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War was the longest period in which Germany experienced unbroken peace. It was consequently the time of the greatest prosperity it has yet enjoyed." Bismarck stared at me for a moment, and then turned to talk to the Saxon Minister. Presently the Congress of Berlin was mentioned, and again he turned to me and asked, "What do you know of the Congress of Berlin?" I thought for a moment and said that the Congress had for object the resettlement of the Eastern question ; and went on to tell him the story of Lord Beaconsfield's French. He laughed heartily, and remarked that he had always had a great admiration for Lord Beaconsfield as a clever and far-seeing statesman, but that his pronunciation of French, and Latin, too, was something quite grotesque. "After all," he added,

" that is only another proof that one can be a statesman without being a linguist, and that great linguists are often great donkeys. All the same, such little things have sometimes serious consequences. I remember, for example, that, when the question of the fortification of Batoum came up at the Congress, Lord Beaconsfield began to mutter excitedly ' caysus bellei, caysus bellei.' But no one understood this pronunciation, and so they passed to the order of the day. I knew very well what he meant, but it suited me at the moment that no one else did."

After dinner we went into the study, where the Prince smoked first a cigar and then a long pipe. A side door being opened his two big dogs stalked in and lay down at his feet. We sat round smoking and drinking cognac while he told us stories of his life.

In this he was interrupted by having to read some official telegrams, and I heard him say in a low voice to Bucher as he showed him one of them : " If only one could drive it into the noddles of our diplomats that Egypt is of no political interest to us of itself, but only as a means of arranging our international relations as we desire."

Someone remarking that it might one day be possible to telephone from Paris to Berlin, the Prince observed that he never could understand such technical matters; but that he consoled himself with the reflection that great intellects like Frederick the Great and Napoleon had as little insight as foresight for such things. In this connection he told us a story he had heard from the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, about his visit to Napoleon in the Hofburg after the battle of Austerlitz. Metternich had been waiting for some time in the ante-room, when suddenly the door opened and a young man came flying out with Napoleon behind him abusing him in the worst possible language. After inviting Metternich into his study, Napoleon explained to him that Livingstone, the American Minister in Paris, had had the impudence to send him a lunatic with a letter of introduction. This

idiot had declared he had an invention which would enable the Emperor to transport troops over to England independently of wind and tide, and that by means of boiling water. And, Metternich added, this was none other than Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat.

A few days later, on joining the company in a small dining club in the Hupka restaurant, I was received with cheers and laughter. It appeared that Herbert had just been telling them what his father had said about me : " The fellow is over six foot high, can drink without getting drunk, and is otherwise suitable, so we'll make him a diplomat." Herbert Bismarck also said his father had been much pleased with my replies. The Russian Ambassador, Count Paul Schuvaloff, who had listened with interest, observed that it was really very instructive to learn on what principles the Prince selected the future generation of diplomats.

As a matter of fact I never did pass the regulation exam. When Attaché in London I was one day summoned to Berlin for the purpose, but my chief. Count Paul Hatzfeldt, protested against my removal, and that was the last I heard of it. When I was eventually appointed First Secretary of Embassy without having been examined, there was great searching of heart in the Wilhelmstrasse, where envious spirits asserted that I had failed three times, and so forth.

That same evening Herbert Bismarck proposed that I should get myself seconded to the Foreign Office ; but it was some months before I could make up my mind to abandon a military career. That autumn, however, after the manœuvres, I went to take leave of my General of Division, Count Häseler, afterwards Field-Marshal. I found him, dividers in hand, kneeling on a floor so entirely covered with maps that when I left I carried one off on my spur to the General's great disgust. On hearing me say, " Lieutenant von Eckardstein most respectfully reports himself for seconding to the Foreign Office," he peered up at me in astonishment, and then pulled himself slowly to his feet, saying : " Whatever do

you want with those scribblers? There's no doing anything with those fellows."

That was in the autumn of 1888. The next time I saw the Count was on the 24th September, 1914, at his Headquarters in the village of Romange-sous-Montfaucon. Field-Marshal Gottlieb von Häseler was then in his eightieth year; but as I came along I had heard a soldier singing:

> "Where's our Gottlieb, who has got him?
> Where is he? where is he not!
> For I bet you'll never spot him,
> Yet he's always on the spot."

I found the old Field-Marshal reading the paper by the light of a candle-end stuck in a bottle. The floor of the room was covered with maps just as it had been twenty-six years before. The old gentleman remembered me, and in the course of conversation said, pointing to an article in the paper, "I can't understand how our Press can talk such stuff as to declare that the offensive strength of the French has been finally broken." I said the Press only reported as a rule what the Supreme Command told it to. "Yes," he went on, "but it is inexcusable of the Supreme Command to feed the papers and public with such delusions. I am very anxious and pessimistic. How could they attempt to push our line forward with an open flank towards Paris without even being covered by échelonedreserves? How could they try to make a break through at the same time in the Nancy-Toul region? What would Moltke or Schlieffen have said? I fear Grand Headquarters has quite a wrong idea about the strength of the enemy." That was the first indication I got that all was not well, and that we had in fact got a fearful facer at the Marne owing to the incompetence of our Command. And I remembered the old Field-Marshal's remark, "There's no doing anything with those fellows." It was as true of the heirs of Moltke as of those of Bismarck.

CHAPTER II

WASHINGTON, PARIS, MADRID

I ENTERED the Diplomatic service in 1888. In that year both the old Kaiser and his son, Kaiser Friedrich, died, and the German Empire entered the Wilhelminic Era.

This was the political era of the "lesser live-stock," as my chief, Count Münster, used to call the Foreign Office officials. Only in such an era could such people, by pushing and posing, have got the responsible posts they held. Under this rule it became the unpardonable sin for a diplomat abroad to represent things as they were. Nothing was taken any notice of that could not be fitted into the fallacies governing the great Fools' Paradise in Berlin. No one had any use for the truth, or even, for the most part, knew what was truth.

Of course, there were in the Foreign Office people who knew what was what, who opposed the prevailing ostrich-like procedure, and who did their best to keep our foreign policy on sound lines. Among these were the late Freiherr von Richthofen; the Director of the Colonial Section, Dr. Stubel; and, above all, our present Minister at the Hague, Dr. Rosen.*

To-day we have paid a heavy reckoning for the rule of the "lesser live-stock"; but I sometimes wonder whether, even now, things will be at all different to-morrow.

In January, 1889, at the age of twenty-four, I was appointed attaché in Washington. My Chief, the witty *bon viveur* Count Louis Arco, did not bother me too much with Chancery work. He took the view that my business was to study the country; which I accordingly traversed in all directions. The summer was passed in social festivities at Newport, in which I took my full share.

I remember one July evening several of us were sitting after a dance in the Casino. Among the company were

* Now Foreign Minister—Editor's note.

Mr. Duncan Elliott, Mr. Courtney, nicknamed, on account of his smallness, "Little Minch," Mr. Havemayer, eldest son of the Sugar King, and Mr. Jack Astor, afterwards lost in the "Titanic." We were talking about sport, when "Little Minch," who was just about half my height, betted me that short as his legs were they would yet take him out into the street quicker than mine. A pool was at once organised, umpires appointed and so forth. Now I had noticed my "Little Minch" more than once sliding like lightning down the banisters, and felt sure he could in this way beat any use I could make of my long legs. And sure enough, at the word "go," down the banisters he went in a flash. But, on his reaching the hall door, there was I before him on the pavement. For it was a first-floor room, and I had dashed on to the balcony and vaulted over the railing into the street. My victory was celebrated without delay in floods of champagne, but after two hours' festivity I was forced to slip off home suffering considerable pain in my ribs and wrist. I had not noticed in the dark that there was a gas bracket over the door, and I had grazed it in falling, bruising myself badly and breaking my wrist in landing. Needless to say, the Press was full of the incident for weeks. And ever since I am known to my American friends as "Brody," after a man who the year before had jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge into the Hudson.

In the winter of 1889 I was in Berlin on leave, and I remember one interesting evening at the "Hupka" dining club. The Russian Ambassador, Count Paul Schuvaloff, was there, just back from a trip to Petersburg to consult the Tsar Alexander. We were a merry company, and well on in the small hours the Ambassador was in such high feather that he invited the whole lot of us to supper at the Embassy. Accordingly we all sallied forth, the Ambassador, who had begun the evening with an official dinner, being in full evening dress, with the White Eagle and rows of other decorations. He declared he would be Commander-in-Chief, so we buckled him into a Cuirassier's sabre, while Count Luttichau

stuck a Cuirassier's helmet on his head and a Hussar pelisse over his shoulders. Headed by him carrying the drawn sabre in his hand, and poking Herbert Bismarck with it when he got out of step, we marched in column through the deserted streets, the policemen saluting as we passed. Arrived at the Embassy, the household was got out of bed, and at four we sat down to a splendid cold supper and a sideboard loaded with drinks. Which proceedings had more considerable consequences than might have seemed likely. For, before we broke up, Schuvaloff had had a private talk with Herbert Bismarck about renewing the re-insurance treaty with Russia. They spoke in very low tones, but by straining my ears I caught the words "now or never," and gathered that this referred to a secret treaty.

On taking leave of Herbert Bismarck before returning to Washington I found him in a very depressed mood. He told me it was very doubtful whether I should ever again see him in the Foreign Office. And sure enough next month in New York the "specials" were shouting the dismissal of Bismarck.

Some days later I visited the well-known American Statesman, Karl Schurz. He had come to America in 1852, had fought as a General on the side of the North, and had held office from 1877 to 1881 as Secretary of the Interior. Speaking of Bismarck he said: "Bismarck was the man who materialised the visions of us 'forty-eighters.' He welded the German tribes together with blood and iron to a mighty Empire. And he kept that Empire at peace under the most trying conditions. But whether his work can last long is another question, for he has shaped the Constitution with the sole object of fitting himself. The German people has, under it, practically no say in its own destinies, and can therefore never get the political education it so badly requires. Here in America people judge his dismissal very summarily. The Emperor they say is a fine plucky young chap. He kicked out Bismarck as soon as he could, and he will kick out many other Chancellors, too. But I myself

think that is just the danger, that so young and impulsive a man should be able by a stroke of the pen to appoint or dismiss Ministers without in the least consulting the representatives of the people. I fear events will some day force the German people to take its fate into its own hands ; but probably only after an immense and irreparable disaster." I find this prophecy recorded in my diary, though I was then too young to realise its full significance.

When I next visited Berlin, in January, 1891, I found things greatly changed. Bismarck had been replaced by General von Caprivi, and the Foreign Office was under Freiherr von Marchall in place of Herbert Bismarck. But foreign policy was really conducted by Fritz von Holstein, who, though a creature of Bismarck, had had a hand undoubtedly in the intrigues against him.

With Holstein, quite a number of Bismarck's former protegés had deserted to the other side ; and the Prince, no doubt, went too far in his feelings against senior officials, who had done no more than adapt themselves to the new *régime*. He could not after all expect that former colleagues should in a body follow him into his retirement.

But the vulgar malice with which Wilhelm II and his myrmidons persecuted the great Chancellor was really too disgusting. "I draw a distinction between the Prince Bismarck of that day and this"—thus began most of the Imperial instructions circulated to the Missions abroad. If ever the third volume of Bismarck's Reminiscences is published unexpurgated, the versions of his dismissal put about by his opponents will be found to be untrue or at least tendentious. Herbert Bismarck gave me an idea of some of the contents of this third volume, and I was astonished to learn how brazenly the Press had distorted the facts under pressure from the highest quarters. Indeed, the German public should call for the publication of this third volume in the interest of truth.

In the Foreign Office I found myself working directly

under von Holstein. I was much struck by the way he penalised those diplomats abroad he did not like, by only sending them trivial and tedious reports. They were carefully kept informed of the course of events in Haiti or in Grand Popo.

I first came across Holstein intimately when one day he asked me to lunch with him in the dark little back room of a restaurant near the Foreign Office. We were alone and sat at least three hours over lunch, which was quite contrary to his usual habits. This was accounted for by a surprise visit paid to the Office that day by the Kaiser, accompanied by Count Waldersee, Chief of the Staff, and other enemies of the ex-Chancellor, in order to examine certain documents of the Bismarckian epoch. What the particular dirty intrigue was I never learnt, but I got the impression from Holstein's manner that he was at the bottom of it. Apparently, he wanted to establish an alibi for himself; for after our long drawn-out lunch he asked me to take a turn with him. Reaching "Unter den Linden" he asked a policeman if the Kaiser had driven past, and, hearing he had not, he then walked me up and down for at least an hour. At last, getting impatient, he sent me to the Office to find out if the Kaiser had left, while he stayed walking up and down until I came back to tell him the coast was clear.

Holstein always avoided meeting the Kaiser if he could; and, so far as I know, during the sixteen years he conducted our foreign affairs, he only once had a personal interview with him. I do not know whether this was a pose, policy, or pusillanimity.

I worked with Holstein for many years. When I was First Secretary in London to an ailing Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, I conducted a daily correspondence with him by telegram and letter. It was not before 1905 that I opposed him with all my strength in his suicidal Morocco policy, and he then contemplated having me arrested and tried for High Treason. He thought better of it, however; though, as Freiherr von Richthofen remarked, it was, perhaps, regrettable he

gave it up, as it would have finally unmasked this most dangerous man.

Holstein's advice to Caprivi to terminate the reinsurance treaty with Russia was undoubtedly a mistake. It should on no account have been abandoned before a treaty with England was assured; and England was no more ripe for alliance with us during Caprivi's Chancellorship than it was during Bismarck's.

Caprivi's foreign policy was, on the whole, sensible and sound in principle. Towards England it was indeed identical with that of Bismarck, namely a persistent pursuit of an alliance with Great Britain. Caprivi was, moreover, a declared enemy of an adventurous naval policy, and no friend of colonial expansion so long as Germany could not count on England as against its dangerous enemies, France and Russia. But to Wilhelm, he was far too much His Majesty's obedient humble servant, and his malice towards the founder of the German Empire proved him to be without any magnanimity.

As for his Secretary of State, Herbert Bismarck, though he was a pygmy compared to his father, yet he was still a head and shoulders above his successor, von Marschall. This Mannheim attorney, whose mind worked only in legal formulæ, whose political instinct was nonexistent, who was to blame for the fatal telegram to Kruger, who declared in the Reichstag that the independence of the Boer Republic was a vital matter to Germany, who blindly committed Germany to the building of the Bagdad Railway—this was the man who for years was acclaimed in Germany as one of the greatest statesmen of the world. The Foreign Missions in Berlin had, however, taken his measure rightly, when they referred to him as a *Ministre étranger aux affaires*.

One day, early in May, 1891, I was ordered to present myself before Caprivi. I was to go in full military uniform, for I was still only seconded to the Foreign Office. I found him at his writing table, where he asked me to sit down opposite him. He said he wanted to

make the acquaintance of the younger generation, especially of the seconded officers. "There's nothing an officer can't do, is there?" said he, with a friendly smile. Then he asked me to tell him about the colour question in America and the possibility of a union between Canada and the States. While I talked away, I noticed that my personal dossier lay before him. After about twenty minutes of this I was dismissed, and soon after Holstein told me I was transferred to Madrid, unless I preferred to stay in the Office. I chose Madrid, and started a few days later, stopping in Paris on the way.

In Paris, I saw, among others, the "Times" correspondent, M. de Blowitz, with whom I had made friends in Berlin. He was a Jew from Bohemia, whose real name was Heinrich Stephan Oppert, and he had won a position in the world such as is achieved by few correspondents. His attitude towards Germany varied; some of his sensational Paris letters being thoroughly anti-German, after which, for a change, he would be pro-German for a bit. His communications were sent to the "Times" in French, which he spoke and wrote excellently, but his English was very indifferent. I remember once at an evening party at the Walters' hearing him greet a lady with, "Good evening, Madam, how is your behaviour?" when he meant to ask after her health.

On this occasion he took me to a literary and artistic soirée, where he introduced me to many interesting personalities, among them being the famous, or rather infamous, *agent-provocateur*, Jules Hansen. This man was a Dane, who had made something of a name in Paris as a journalist, and had, by activity and adroitness, got himself taken on by the French Foreign Office as a spy and agitator. He was made a Councillor of Legation, principally to prevent us, who had long been keeping an eye on him, from arresting him on his way through Germany to Russia, Denmark or the Balkans. He was a special friend of the intriguing and ambitious Princess Waldemar of Denmark, née Orléans, who for years concerned herself with French interests at Copenhagen.

Jules Hansen was, moreover, generally reported to have been behind the great intrigue of the "Bulgarian Letters" directed against Bismarck. These were forged or, perhaps, only falsified letters, showing that Bismarck was carrying on an anti-Russian policy in the Balkans, contrary to the official policy concerted with Russia. They were allowed to come into the hands of Alexander III, who believed them and became excessively exasperated against Bismarck. In November, 1887, the old Kaiser succeeded in arranging an interview between Alexander and Bismarck on the former's visit to Berlin. At this interview, according to Bismarck's official announcement, he succeeded in convincing Alexander of his innocence and in restoring confidential relations with him. This, too, is the version given in nearly all the history books, but I doubt very much whether it is true. A few years ago, old Count Thiessenhausen, who was in close touch with the Russian Court, told me he had been at the Russian Embassy when Alexander came back there from his talk with Bismarck. As the Emperor went upstairs, the Count heard him say to Schuvaloff "I didn't believe a word Bismarck said. He is too clever by half." I much doubt whether Bismarck himself believed he had convinced the Emperor, for when the "Bulgarian Letters" were mentioned, even in his own family circle, he always took refuge in an iron silence, or hastily turned the conversation. Herbert Bismarck was less discreet, and one evening at the Hupka Club, when someone said that the forgery of the letters was a gross scandal, he only looked at the ceiling and whistled. We were quite thankful none of the Russians were there.

Certain it is, however, that it was through Jules Hansen and the Princess Waldemar, that the letters came into the hands of Alexander. That much I had from Blowitz, and I was somewhat annoyed with Hansen when, throughout a long conversation, he posed as an injured innocent. I accordingly took the first opportunity to congratulate him to his face on his success over the Bulgarian Letters.

At this, Blowitz, in the highest delight, and with a diabolical grin, broke in with: "*Mais non, mais non, il ne faut pas toucher des affaires tellement embarrassantes*"—while Jules blushed and bolted into the crowd. The next day, dining at the Embassy with Count Münster, I was introduced to the British Ambassador, Bulwer Lytton, who at once asked me if I was the German attaché who had put Jules Hansen out of countenance. On my admitting it he laughed heartily, and said, "You served him right, the damned fellow is a mischief maker all round."

I got on well with Lord Lytton, who asked me to a lunch to meet Zola, at which there were only the three of us and a young member of the Embassy. The conversation, which was in French, was pretty well confined to the two authors. Lord Lytton quoted many passages from the English classics which Zola seemed to understand quite well. He became quite enthusiastic over one quotation, "Life like a dome of many-coloured glass stains the white radiance of eternity," saying repeatedly, "*C'est magnifique, c'est magnifique cela.*"

When I went to say good-bye to Count Münster, I found him reading Foreign Office despatches. As we talked he picked one up, skimmed it through again, twisted it in his fingers and said: "Here's another masterpiece of your friend Holstein. I really don't know which he hates most, me or the French. But I don't let his eccentricities annoy me, and amuse myself with reflecting how angry he must get at having wasted his time drafting mordant and truculent despatches all for nothing."

Holstein was also hated by my new chief, Freiherr Ferdinand von Stumm, an ingrained Bismarckian of the old school. He once said to me, "If no one puts a stop to the goings-on of this damned fool, Holstein, he will some day get the Empire into regular hot water." And Holstein responded by sending him practically no information at all. He scarcely got even the Grand Popo correspondence. He treated me at first with the

greatest reserve, as he considered me a creature of Holstein's, until I convinced him to the contrary.

I remember well a journey that I made from Madrid to Tangier. Just as in roulette red or black runs in a series, so in the life of a man, or a nation, good or bad luck goes in runs. Take this journey for example. I was as nearly as possible drowned in landing at Tangier through falling into the sea between the Spanish steamer and the Sultan's launch. I was nearly killed by a kick from a camel in the Sokko. I was then nearly murdered by armed Moors on an excursion to Cape Spartel, when my companion, the German Minister von Ketteler, afterwards killed in Pekin, and I, were only saved, after a fight, by the intervention of our escort. On the way home the Governor of Gibraltar courteously gave me a passage to Malaga, on the "Goshawk," and I, in return, invited the genial Captain Chapman and his officers to dinner at a restaurant. On leaving the restaurant to go to a party at the British Consul's, the Captain got into a dispute with some Spaniards, who were celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of the liberation of Spain from the Moors. What the row was about I have no idea, but on coming out I found a riot raging, knives flashing, and shouts of "Kill the English!" Things looked very bad, until the innkeeper and waiters rushed out, shouting something in Spanish, and pushed us into a neighbouring yard and shut the gates on us. Feeling about in the dark I fell into a donkey stable, to the destruction of my white shirt front and evening coat. In which condition I had eventually to proceed to the Consul's party.

To get from Malaga to Madrid in those days one had to take a diligence drawn by eight mules over the mountains to Jaen from Grenada. The diligence left in the evening, and fortunately for me I chose a place outside behind the driver. At about one in the morning I was woke up by the galloping mules being pulled up in a lonely gorge. A number of ruffianly fellows armed to the teeth surrounded the diligence and roughly ordered those

inside to get out. A scene of the wildest confusion followed: some struggled, others screamed, while one well-dressed woman was bound hand and foot and lifted with her luggage onto a donkey cart. Suddenly there was a whistle, and in a moment the wild figures had vanished and everything was again quiet. The whole thing happened so quickly that I had scarcely made up my mind whether I was dreaming when I heard the clatter of hoofs approaching, and some Guardia Civile, or mounted constabulary, galloped up. Three dismounted and advanced carbine in hand, while the fourth held the horses. The driver, whom I suspected of being an accomplice, and I were questioned, and I reported the abduction of the lady, which was not at first believed, as it was not confirmed by the driver. But further enquiries established that a beautiful and wealthy Cuban lady was missing. We searched with lanterns everywhere without result, until the Guardias let loose a police dog they had with them. After circling about a bit he went off on a trail, and we following found the donkey-cart in a small clearing. The lady was still lying on it apparently lifeless. The donkey was gone, so we pulled the cart back to the diligence, while the Guardias went off on the track of the brigands. Our efforts to bring to the lady, including the prayers of a clerical fellow-passenger, were prolonged for some time before she opened her eyes, and even then she stayed speechless for hours. It was dawn before we resumed our journey, and reached in due course Jaen, where I learnt from the clergyman that the lady had recovered. She was the daughter of a Spanish General, and widow of a wealthy Cuban. The object of the ambush had been to rob her of the jewels she had with her to the value of over a million francs, and hold her to ransom. I afterwards made friends with her in Madrid, and learned to admire her beauty and charm.

On the last stage of this eventful journey the luck turned. In the train to Madrid, tired and hungry, I fell asleep, and I dreamed of German baked potatoes and pickled herrings. We stopped at a junction, and famished

I hurried into the refreshment room. A woman behind the counter said something to a girl in German. "Can I," said I in German, "have baked potatoes and pickled herring?" "Yes," said she, "we had it for supper, and there is some left." I have ever since believed in psychical presentiments.

I was very glad to have had an opportunity of seeing something at Gibraltar of English methods of colonial administration. What struck at once even an outsider like myself was the calm common-sense and the light hand with which everything was treated. There was never a trace of the drill sergeant or the Jack-in-office, whose brutality and bad manners are a feature of some colonial administrations. This may be partly accounted for by the careful selection and model education of English colonial officials. They are trained from the start to study the psychology of the populations they have to administer, and to take their peculiarities into account.

At the end of September, 1891, I received instructions that I was transferred to London, and should take up my duties there in November.

I broke the journey at San Sebastian, lying on the sand watching the little King building sand-castles. I also got badly poisoned with Passajes oysters. At Biarritz I found again the fair Cuban; and had interesting talks with Ludwig Bamberger, one of the leaders of the Free-thinking Party in the Reichstag. I went a walking tour with him, during which he freed me from some of the prejudices implanted in me by a strictly Conservative upbringing. As an old exile of the '48, he had a great admiration for my grandfather, Count Herrman Kleist von Nollendorf, who, he said, had spent considerable sums in supporting the exiles abroad in order that they might not be compelled by necessity to transfer their intellectual energies to other nationalities.

In Paris I found the Ambassador, Count Münster, greatly irritated by reports on the political situation in France from other German representatives, which the Foreign Office had sent to him for comment. It was, he

protested, sheer impudence of the "Central Cattle Market," as he called the Office, to expect him to express an opinion on the rubbish that our Minister—say in Bukarest—chose to write about the situation in France. It was bad enough, he said, that they should pay any attention to it in Berlin. This certainly was a great abuse. No Chief of a Mission would have dared to do such a thing under Bismarck. Diplomats were allowed to make a practice of writing about other countries than those to which they were accredited, which were, needless to say, generally the countries to which they wanted to be appointed. Equally needless to say, the line they took was generally that known to be followed by Wilhelm II; and he, never seeing that the whole thing was a flat-catcher's fraud, was invariably caught. He would then scribble on the margin of the despatch one of his so-called "ALL-HIGHEST MARGINALIA," in the style, as he fancied, of Frederick the Great. These comments were not only commonplace, but repeated so constantly as to become almost common form. For example: "This fellow has hit the nail on the head again," or "The Portuguese (or whoever it might be) must be made to toe the line." The despatches were then circulated with his red-ink comments, and were duly venerated as oracles. I was myself in later years to feel as irritated as Count Münster at having such stuff continuously forced down my throat.

From Paris I went to Berlin, where I saw Holstein, who tried to get me to say something compromising about his *bêtes-noires*, the Ambassadors at Paris and Madrid. But, as I reported nothing but good of them and showed clearly I was not disposed to be his agent, he changed his tone and became very reserved. After a short visit to my mother, in Silesia, I arrived in London in one of the usual black and yellow November fogs.

CHAPTER III

THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'.

My new chief was Count Paul von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg, who had been on Bismarck's personal staff during the war of 1870. From 1880 to 1885, he had been Foreign Secretary of State. He then went to London to replace Count Münster, transferred to Paris, and was himself replaced as Foreign Secretary by Herbert Bismarck. This was the most important re-arrangement of the personnel of German diplomacy during the whole Bismarckian epoch.

Hatzfeldt had possibly the highest genius of any of the gifted men selected by Bismarck to represent us abroad. Bismarck used to refer to him as "the best horse in his diplomatic stable." No one who ever had much to do with him could say that he was very hard-working; and the little people of the Wilhelmstrasse, who judged of a man's capacity by his place in the exams or by the hours he sat at his desk, called him "Paul the Lazy." It never seems to occur to officials of this type that without the guidance of a mind the whole official machine is merely threshing straw. And, though there were clever and competent officials in the Wilhelmstrasse, they were kept under by the favoured fools. For which we paid the bill at Versailles on the 29th June, 1919.

Count Hatzfeldt had remained loyal to Bismarck after his dismissal; but, as he also kept on good terms with Holstein, Herbert Bismarck distrusted, and, eventually, detested him. Yet it was fortunate for the German Empire that during the first half of the Wilhelminic Era, its diplomacy contained men like Hatzfeldt, who could correct, to some extent, the compassless course laid by Wilhelm II and the vagaries of Holstein.

Hatzfeldt was my chief for ten years, from November, 1891, until his death, in November, 1901. During his latter years he suffered greatly, and could scarcely live at all in the damp of London, spending his time mostly

at Wiesbaden or Brighton. So that, from my appointment as First Secretary in 1899, I practically conducted the affairs of the Embassy for him.

At this time London life was still that of the old-fashioned, easy-going, highly-coloured "Old England." The four-in-hand still reigned, unmenaced by the motor-car. The great Houses and historical Clubs were still the centres of social life; not, as at present, the public hotels and restaurants. Manners and customs were still Victorian; and this was especially evident in dress. What "gentleman" would have ventured into a West End street otherwise than in single-breasted morning-coat, striped trousers and top hat? Who would have ventured into a house or a club in the evening, whether as a guest or no, otherwise than in evening tail-coat and white tie? This is now all changed by the lounge coat and the evening jacket. We abroad call this latter, incorrectly, a "smoking"; for the smoking jacket is something quite different.

Moreover, in the Victorian Age, it was positively rude to smoke in the company of ladies, and unpardonable to smell of tobacco. After dinner the ladies left the room. The gentlemen sat on, drinking claret, port or sherry; but they did not smoke then, as a rule, so as not to bring the smell of tobacco into the drawing-room. If they were guests at a country house, then, after the ladies had gone to bed, the gentlemen assembled in the billiard room or smoking-room, having changed into a fancy smoking-jacket of some coloured silk or flannel.

King Edward was notoriously a great smoker, and it was he who first broke away from the old interdict; which was, however, kept up with the greatest strictness at the Court of Queen Victoria. No smoking at all was allowed in the Royal Palaces, not even in the guests' bedrooms. I remember, on a visit to Windsor, seeing Count Hatzfeldt, who could not live without a cigarette, lying in his pyjamas on his bedroom floor, blowing the smoke up the chimney. Even King Albert of Saxony, when visiting Windsor, was expressly warned against

smoking. He held out for two weary days, after which he was seen marching up the grand staircase smoking a long Virginia cigar. His conduct was condemned by the Court ladies as most shocking; but as he was, after all, a King himself, there was nothing to be done. King Edward, as Prince of Wales, was far too much in awe of his mother to break the rule. It was Prince Henry of Battenberg, living as he did with his wife and children all together at the Court, who, after prolonged efforts, at last got leave to smoke in the billiard room. I often went there with him after dinner, to smoke a hasty cigarette; but we always sucked lozenges to take away the smell before going back to the Queen, in the drawing-room.

London life was very pleasant and easy under the old Queen. It was the good old days, not only for England, but for all Europe. And, apart from excitements caused by the Kaiser, Anglo-German relations were very tolerably good. There was not the least ill-feeling against Germany, either in public or in the Government. On the other hand there was in the German Empire, from 1890 onwards, an absurd and quite artificial agitation against England and everything English; which in the end was to bring our credulous German Michael into an antagonism with England that was as unnatural as mischievous. And, if certain circles in Germany still persist in fishing out some article from the "Saturday Review" of 1895, and justify their present anti-English agitation by arguing that England had, out of commercial rivalry, been trying for years to pick a quarrel with us, this only shows that, in spite of the lesson they got at Versailles, these gentlemen have learnt nothing.

Even the venerable Queen Victoria herself did not escape the gossip servile or slanderous that circulates round royalties and public personages. And, though one wonders how the scandal can ever have started that the old Queen was given to drink, it may possibly be explained by the following story.

One day the Queen was driving near Balmoral when

the footman on the box fainted. No brandy could be got for him as all the inns in the neighbourhood were teetotal, so the Queen gave orders that a bottle of whiskey and a bottle of brandy should be put in the boot in future before starting. Many years later the Comptroller of the Household asked whether her Majesty was aware that bottles of whiskey and brandy were by special instruction given before every drive to the coachman. A stop was then put to the practice, but it was not so easy to correct its consequences.

In spite of Queen Victoria's small stature, she was a very imposing personage. She was a matron in the best sense of the word, and exercised a great moral influence over public opinion in England and throughout the Empire. Her family life had always been a model and her children had the highest veneration for her. More particularly, as I have said, was this the case with the Prince of Wales.

I remember an example of this during the Cowes Regatta of 1893. As was usual in the early 'nineties, the Kaiser was there, living on the "Hohenzollern" and racing the "Meteor." One day there was a match round the Isle of Wight between the "Meteor" and the Prince's "Britannia." When the yachts were off Sandown late in the afternoon, the wind suddenly dropped, and it did not seem likely they would get back before midnight. I was on the "Britannia" and heard the Prince say he must give up the race and go back to Cowes by the train, so as not to be late for the full-dress dinner in honour of the Kaiser. The Queen, he said, would be highly displeased if the Kaiser and he were late, or, still worse, failed altogether to appear. So after consulting his suite he decided to signal to the "Meteor": "Propose abandon race and return by train, so as to reach Osborne in time for dinner." To which the Kaiser replied: "I object. Race must be fought out. It doesn't matter when we reach Cowes." On getting this reply the Prince was much put out. "The Queen"—he said to me—"will not understand the Kaiser's behaviour. Besides, he seems

to have forgotten that she is giving this big dinner this evening in his honour." He then asked me whether I couldn't signal to the Kaiser's suite and get someone to point this out to him. Though I felt very dejected at the Kaiser's bad manners, yet I couldn't help smiling at this idea. The Prince understood at once, and said, also smiling, " I suppose if you did what I suggest you would wake up the day after to-morrow at latest in the Legation at Timbuctoo." I replied that I might do something if I were on the " Meteor," but that a signal from me to the suite would be useless. The Prince agreed, muttered some half-smothered curses into his beard, and went below. The breeze revived again later, but it was nine o'clock before we reached Cowes, and it was ten before I got to Osborne, arriving just as the Queen was coming from dinner into the principal reception room. As she took her seat there Prince Henry whispered to me, " The Queen is in a very bad temper." Soon after that the Kaiser appeared, followed by his suite, kissed hands and apologised for being so late. The Queen smiled graciously, but showed by her manner she was not pleased with her grandson.

A few minutes later the Prince hurried into the room in full uniform, but took cover for a moment behind a pillar, wiping the perspiration from his forehead before he could summon up courage enough to come forward and make his bow. The Queen only gave him a stiff nod, and he retreated at once behind the pillar again.

The Empress Frederick also when visiting her mother made no concealment of her respect and veneration. As a foreign Sovereign she took on formal occasions precedence of the Queen. And one could see how difficult she found this by the embarrassed way she edged herself sideways through the doors.

I was often a guest of the Queen, not only on formal occasions, but frequently in the family circle. I had known her son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, when he was in the Guards at Potsdam ; yet, on coming to London, I found him very cool in his manner towards

me. However, as he lived principally at Osborne, and came often to the Club-house of the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes, I soon succeeded in re-establishing friendly relations, and in discovering that he had nothing against me personally, but only as a member of the German Embassy. Sailing with him one day I learnt that he had felt himself much aggrieved on account of his treatment by Wilhelm II and his Court. Of the various *gaffes* committed in respect of him by the Kaiser he most resented the Imperial order allowing him only the title of " Princely Grace " ; though Queen Victoria had made him a " Royal Highness " in England, and the other European Courts had recognised him as such. Further, the Kaiser dug out a dusty old provision of the Congress of Vienna to the effect that the title of Royal Highness to be valid must be recognised by all the signatories to the Congress, of whom Germany was, of course, one. He did this just to annoy his cousin. For there had been ill-feeling between Wilhelm and the Battenbergs since Alexander of Battenberg, then Prince of Bulgaria, had wanted to marry Wilhelm's sister, Victoria. The Empress Frederick had favoured this marriage for her daughter, but Bismarck had opposed it on purely political grounds as likely to prejudice still more the relations between Germany and Russia. He knew that Russian intrigues would soon overthrow the Battenberg Dynasty in Bulgaria, and, believing that the " Balkans were not worth the bones of a Pomeranian Grenadier," he was not prepared to let Alexander's " interesting experience " drag the Empire into the maelstrom of the Near Eastern Question. To stop the marriage he had made use of Wilhelm, then Prince Wilhelm of Prussia ; who, tact not being his strong point, had, no doubt, intervened without much consideration for the feelings of the parties concerned.

When Prince Henry was in London we often dined together at a little dining club in Albemarle Street with a famous French cuisine, going on afterwards to the theatre. And when I was at Cowes we did a lot of sailing,

he afterwards taking me to dinner in the family circle at Osborne. In 1895 he volunteered for the Ashanti War, and dying there of fever his many friends had to mourn the untimely loss of this fine chivalrous figure. His only daughter, Princess Ena, married King Alfonso of Spain.

I first met the Prince of Wales at the house of the Duchess of Manchester, later Duchess of Devonshire, and *née* Countess Alten, of the old Hanoverian aristocracy. This was on my way to America in 1890, but it was not until August, 1892, that I became personally acquainted with him at a small supper party given by Prince Henry of Battenberg during the Cowes Regatta week. He was very friendly to me, and treated me as though we had known each other for years. He told me, in the course of conversation, how his private secretary, Sir Francis, afterwards Lord Knollys, was in despair as to what to do with his steadily growing German correspondence, and that it was incredible what numbers of people persecuted him with letters and petitions from Austria and Germany, mostly to do with the colonies. Some were sent on to the proper departments, some to the German private secretary of the Queen, Herr Muther; but quite a number he had to deal with. He was now going to Homburg for his cure, and was already dreading the avalanche of German correspondence. I said I also expected to be in Homburg shortly, and thereupon Prince Henry said in joke, "Well, then, Eckardstein can look after your German correspondence, especially all the silly letters from hysterical females." The Prince, however, took the suggestion up seriously, and said it was quite a good idea, and that if it did not spoil my stay at Homburg he would be very grateful if I could help his equerry with these hardy annuals—all the more so because he was only taking Stanley Clarke, who knew no word of German. Of course, I said I should be happy and honoured to make myself useful. Accordingly the day I got back I heard from Sir Francis saying that the Prince was leaving the following evening and hoped I would accompany him.

On the journey to Homburg there travelled with us also the City Recorder, Sir Charles Hall, a pleasant and popular figure in London Society. I had met him in Washington in 1889, when he was representing the Admiralty at a Naval Conference; and it was riding with me in the swampy lowlands of the Potomac that he contracted a malarial ague, which afflicted him for the rest of his life and caused his death, I believe, in 1901. He was always very good to me, and I felt deeply his too early death.

The Prince generally had a special carriage from Ostend, but this time we were given compartments in the ordinary sleeping-car. Early next morning, I heard the most fearful row going on and the voices of the conductor and the guard scolding someone, and threatening them with arrest. I went out and found them besieging the door of a dressing-room that I knew was Sir Charles Hall's. They said that some rough had locked himself in and was running off all the water and flooding out the neighbouring compartments. I knocked on the door and asked if Sir Charles was inside. "Yes," came a plaintive voice, "and I'm in the most awkward position, for my india-rubber bath has upset and I can't open the door." On my producing my special passes and explaining who we were, the officials became very obliging, and, forcing open the door, disclosed Sir Charles stark-naked, standing on the capsized bath. After this rescue they set to work to bail out the neighbouring compartments and liberate the flood-bound inhabitants. But Sir Charles never heard the last of it from the Prince.

The season was in full swing in Homburg, which had been patronised by the best English Society ever since the Prince first took to going there. Among these visitors that year, was Henry Labouchere, who had been publishing in "Truth," a whole series of the bitterest attacks on the Heir to the Throne. He was now engaged in observing closely what the Prince did, ate, wore, said or saw, and generally in collecting material for the campaign he was still carrying on in "Truth." Moreover,

he ostentatiously omitted to salute the Prince, a courtesy that both English and Germans scrupulously observed. Which proceedings greatly exasperated the Prince's friends, though, of course, no one referred to so unpleasant a subject before him. He raised it himself, however, one day, saying he couldn't understand why that viper, Labouchere, kept on at him; for he had never done the man any harm or even had anything to do with him at all. "That's just why," said Sir Charles, "it's all wounded vanity." "Perhaps you're right," said the Prince—"if we run across him we'll speak to him." Sure enough, one morning when I went to the Prince's villa to deal with the German correspondence, I could scarcely believe my eyes when I met Labouchere at the door, just coming away. My face must have betrayed my feelings, for Labouchere, who had known me in London, said, "I see you're surprised to see me here, and I'm not surprised at your surprise." With that he departed, but I got the whole story later from Sir Charles Hall. The Prince, he said, had consulted him whether he should accept an offer from the well-known London solicitor, George Lewis, generally supposed to be part-proprietor of "Truth," to mediate between the Prince and Labouchere, by arranging an interview. The Prince didn't like the idea, but Sir Charles had told him that though, as a man of the law, he might advise him to have a libel action, as a man of the world he advised him to accept the offer.

The same afternoon I met Labouchere in the Kurpark and strolled with him round the tennis courts. I was, of course, very curious about the whole affair, which he began to talk about at once, without any encouragement from me. He said: "I could see you were very surprised to see me this morning at the Prince's villa. I had a most interesting and satisfactory talk with him, and what interested me most was to get proof of what a scoundrel Gladstone is. When we Liberals won the elections a few weeks ago, and Gladstone began to form his Cabinet, he offered me a place in it. I replied that,

as he had long been aware, I did not want office. But that, as he seemed to make a point of having me in the Cabinet, I would, to oblige him, take, perhaps, the Home Office, the India Office or even the Local Government Board. He thanked me and said I had only to choose what I wanted. I said: 'Then, the Home Office.' 'It's done,' said he, and we parted. I waited and waited for the official notification, and at last, meeting him, asked him how matters were. Whereupon, he pulled a long face and whispered to me, 'I have done everything possible for you, but the Queen obstinately refuses to consent to your being taken into the Cabinet.' He gave me the impression that it was the Prince of Wales who had induced the Queen to refuse her consent. He then went off into all manner of circumlocutions, adding how deeply pained he was at having, against his will, to do without so much driving power for his Cabinet. But, when I told the Prince this morning what Gladstone had said, he was much astonished and agitated. He gave me his word that he had never in any way influenced the Queen against me; that, on principle, he never had meddled with Cabinet affairs, even behind the scenes. And he further told me, on the authority of Sir Henry Ponsonby, that, while Gladstone had mentioned my name to the Queen for the Cabinet, he had, at the same time, expressed the fear that I was not likely to make a good Cabinet Minister for long. I have long," Labouchere went on, "mistrusted that scoundrel, Gladstone, but now I have finally found him out. Well, he'll soon know what I think of him." Nor was it long before Labouchere started a press campaign against the Grand Old Man; but his attacks on the Prince died away.

In justice to Mr. Gladstone, I must, however, observe in this connection that Mr. Mundella, a member of Gladstone's Cabinet, told me that, to his knowledge, Gladstone never offered Henry Labouchere a seat in the Cabinet, but only the position of Postmaster-General.

I only twice came across Gladstone. Once, while he

was Premier, he came up to me at a political reception, and my old friend, Mr. Henry Oppenheim, principal shareholder of the "Daily News," introduced me to him. He shook hands cordially and began at once to talk to us about Austria's civilising mission in the Balkans. He went on to us for at least twenty minutes about this, without either of us being able to get in a word. And I was much impressed at the moment by the fire and the force of conviction with which he spoke. Now I have naturally a retentive memory and I had been trained from my seventh year to enter in a diary every evening the impressions and conversations of the day. But, when late that evening, I sat down to write up this conversation, I couldn't find anything to say. All I could remember was that he had talked about Austria's civilising mission in the Balkans. And why he should have talked to me about Austria's civilising mission, I couldn't think. I only learnt this later, when Mr. Oppenheim explained Gladstone had taken me for one of the Austrian Embassy and was intending to show that his much advertised aversion for the Austrian Empire had undergone an essential modification. However, when I passed this on to Count Deym, he only smiled, and said that it did not matter to Austria what Gladstone now thought of her, after abusing her grossly all his life, for he was at the end of his political career.

Lord Beaconsfield said of Gladstone that he was "a man intoxicated by the exuberance of his own verbosity." Forster, in a speech in the 'eighties, called him "a man who can persuade most men to most things and himself to anything": while Bismarck generally referred to him as "that big Utopian Babbler." So, while the spirit of Lord Beaconsfield still lives in the British people, that of Gladstone is already forgotten.

There also came to Homburg that year the young Duke of York, now George the Fifth. He was being educated for the responsibilities devolving on him through the death of his elder brother. His father particularly wanted him taught German and French, and asked the

Empress Frederick to recommend a tutor and travelling companion. She sent the old Heidelberg history professor, Wilhelm Ihne. He seemed to me far too pedantic a personage, and he obviously bored the Duke, who soon abandoned his personally conducted tour of Germany and went to stay with his cousins at Darmstadt.

In the course of the following years I made many journeys with King Edward, then Prince of Wales, on the continent, including trips to Baden-Baden, the Riviera, and once as far as Austria.

One of the richest men in Europe then was Baron Hirsch, known generally as "Turkish Hirsch"; because he had made most of his money building the Oriental Railways for the Sultan. He came originally from Munich, and his principal place of business was in Brussels. But he was generally to be found either at Bath House in Piccadilly, at his magnificent Hotel in Paris, or at his Castle on the Hungarian frontier. The Prince used to visit the Castle for the shooting, and though I was often invited, I could only accompany him once.

"Turkish Hirsch" used to do us very well. He was a product of three cultures, and, towards the end of his life, lapsed into an almost incomprehensible lingo in which he mixed up English, French and German. For example, at this Castle of St. Johann, there was a terrace commanding a magnificent view of the Carpathians. He would bring a new arrival out on this terrace and say, with a wave of his hand, "And those sind die Karpaths." One day, on a new English visitor arriving, I saw the Prince take him out on the terrace, and say, with a wave of the hand, "And those sind die Karpaths." Baron Hirsch was there, but seemed to have no idea why we laughed.

Hirsch was a queer mixture of generosity and greed. I found him once kept in the pouring rain outside a club by a squabble with a cabman over sixpence. "Why not pay him and come in out of the wet? you'll catch cold and be laid up for weeks," I said. "That's all very well," said Hirsch, "but I have my principles."

One evening, at Monte Carlo, he had given a dinner for the Prince, and we all of us afterwards went on to the Casino. He had reserved us a special roulette table at which he took a seat himself; but he generally staked only five-franc pieces and never more than a gold louis, which he did with such a trembling hand that no one could help noticing it. As I was on chaffing terms with him, I asked him, on leaving, why he got in such a stew over five francs. "It's not on account of the five francs," said he, "but for fear that playing might be the beginning of my going down hill. For no fortune, not even mine, is big enough to last if the devil of gambling once gets hold of one."

Nothing could be further from the truth than the conviction current in Germany that King Edward was from the first a sworn enemy of Germany. All those who knew him at this time would have been outspoken in their opinion that up to a certain point he always had the friendliest feelings towards Germany. To-day King Edward is often represented as having brought about the encirclement of the German Empire by his fanatical hatred of Germany. But nothing could be more mistaken than this view, and those who hold it confuse cause and effect.

King Edward had received from his Coburg father an education that was largely German; he was a complete master of the German language, and he had grown up in the old tradition of the Anglo-German comradeship-in-arms. For during the Victorian age the Waterloo tradition was dominant, not only at Court, but in public opinion. Moreover, his relations with his sister, the Empress Frederick, and her husband were thoroughly cordial. But, on the other hand, whole volumes might be written by those who were behind the scenes as to the tragedy of his relations with his nephew, the Kaiser.

Very soon after his accession the Kaiser began his continuous performance of talking, telegraphing and touring. After his cool, nay positively discourteous reception at Petersburg in 1889, when he had invited

himself there two years running and against Bismarck's advice, he began more and more to plague his grandmother with visits. These perpetual Imperial visits to England were politically injudicious; for they alarmed Russia and France, and made them combine in a close alliance instead of their previous loose agreement. Apart from this, the visits had also an unfortunate and eventually fatal effect on our relations with England. And this was no less the case with the other Courts honoured by visits from the Kaiser; for these journeys had almost always a contrary effect from what was intended. They were only another proof of the complete ignorance of Wilhelm and his advisers as to what was in the true interest of Germany.

There could indeed be no doubt that his continuous visits were not agreeable either to the Queen or to the Government; even though they did not let this appear. But it was the Prince of Wales who wanted them least, and suffered from them most; and it was the Kaiser's annual August appearance at the Cowes Regatta that seemed to get most on his nerves. For, during these stays at Cowes, which were made on the "Hohenzollern" with a numerous suite, the Kaiser behaved to the Prince less as an invited guest than—as I once heard the Prince himself say—as "the Boss of Cowes." On another occasion, in August, 1895, the Prince, speaking to confidential friends, said: "The regatta at Cowes was once a pleasant holiday for me, but, now that the Kaiser has taken command there, it is nothing but a nuisance. Perhaps I shan't come at all next year."

I myself went through the visits to Cowes of 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1895, after which they fortunately came to an end. And from what I have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears I must in fairness agree with the Prince. For there was endless friction and fuss. The Kaiser interfered in everything, even in the sailing handicaps, and he treated his uncle, who was, after all, twenty years older than himself, sometimes as a *quantité négligeable*, and sometimes as a subject for schoolboy jokes.

I can only mention a few of Wilhelm's solecisms in his rôle of "The Boss of Cowes." One occurred during the visit of 1895, signalised by the incident of the yacht race already described. Relations between France and England had at that moment become so strained over the Mekong question as to make Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Secretary, apprehensive for some days of an outbreak of hostilities. He reported the gravity of the situation to the Queen by special messenger, asking her at the same time to inform the Kaiser. His idea was probably that Wilhelm and his Government might help, if necessary, to prevent war between France and England. It happened that the Kaiser was that evening dining on his uncle's yacht, where Sir Henry Ponsonby found him. After Wilhelm had read the Queen's letter and listened to Sir Henry's report, he burst out laughing, slapped his uncle on the back, and said, "So, then, thou'lt soon be off to India to show what thou'rt good for as a soldier." One eye-witness even affirmed that the Prince was not slapped on the back but on—the front. However that may be, Wilhelm could scarcely have given greater offence to the Prince and his friends, and that, too, on an occasion of some gravity. Two days later we got the news that the Mekong question was settled.

It was indeed in this August of 1895 that the tension between uncle and nephew reached breaking point. The Prince, who had so far restrained himself except among intimate friends, now began to express his feelings to a wider circle. And Wilhelm was even less circumspect. I have myself heard him at dinner on the "Hohenzollern," with English present, call his uncle "an old peacock."

The day after this I was on a racing yacht with Prince Henry of Battenberg and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg. The latter had heard of this indiscretion, and was horror-stricken at the Kaiser's rashness and at his whole behaviour at Cowes. Prince Henry asked why the German Princes put up with so much from the Kaiser, who was, after all, only "primus inter pares." But the Grand Duke

replied with a shrug, " It's no use one kicking by himself ; they must all do it together, and to line them up and loose them off together against the Kaiser seems to me an impossibility."

That August the Kaiser, in addition to this senseless yet most serious friction with his uncle, also caused a deep and dangerous alienation of Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury had, in July, 1895, heavily defeated the Liberals under Lord Rosebery. On my meeting him soon after at a political party at Lord Cadogan's, and congratulating him on his large majority, he asked me when I expected the Kaiser at Cowes that year, and how long he would stay. He gave me to understand that he wanted to discuss the Eastern Question with him personally, and would come himself to Cowes for that purpose. He asked me to give his private secretary, Eric Barrington, the exact date ; which I duly did. I also reported the matter to my chief, Count Hatzfeldt, who, however, attached little importance to it at the time, as indeed no one could have foreseen how far Lord Salisbury's proposals would go.

The meeting was arranged for the eighth of August on the " Hohenzollern " at a certain hour. The Kaiser waited and waited, but no Lord Salisbury. It was an hour past the time, and the Kaiser had got very impatient, when at last a steam cutter came alongside and Lord Salisbury hurried panting up the accommodation ladder, apologising profusely for his involuntary delay. He was, as a matter of fact, in no way to blame, for the steam launch told off to bring him from East Cowes had broken down and another boat could not immediately be procured. But even if it had not been a case of *force majeure*, considerations of policy might well have induced the Kaiser to meet England's leading statesman with friendliness and to overlook the incident. Instead of which he showed his resentment markedly in his manner.

In the ensuing conversation, Lord Salisbury came forward with a proposal for the partition of the Ottoman Empire between Germany, Austria and England. Of

course, the acceptance of this bold and broad proposal must have resulted in the official accession of Great Britain to the Triple Alliance. And thus the goal that Bismarck had been pursuing since 1875, but had himself been unable to put through, because England was not ready for alliance, would have been pulled off at one stroke. What the great economists of Germany, above all Friedrich Liszt, had perpetually preached would then have been attained. But it was not to be.

The acceptance of this proposal would have solved at once one of Germany's most difficult problems. The surplus of its ever increasing population might have settled in the richest regions of the world, with a climate suitable for white settlers. Germany might easily have swelled to a people of over a hundred millions, instead of seeing the pick of its population continually passing over to foreign nationalities. But the opportunity of building up a greater Germany on a sound foundation was lost. German policy stayed in the rut in which it had stuck since Wilhelm's accession, a policy of pin-pricking the rest of the world and of pegging out claims in swampy and fever-stricken regions of Africa. And the last word of wisdom was still supposed to be the building a battle fleet to drive England into the arms of France and Russia, while grossly neglecting our land armaments.

When, ten years later, I told August Bebel of this move of Lord Salisbury's, which was, of course, quite unknown to him, he clasped his hands over his head, saying: "If that was really so, then Wilhelm and his advisers deserve to be hanged. And that as much on social as on national counts. . . . Because a clever consecutive following up of this opening would have solved two-thirds of the whole of the social question in Germany. For what is the cause of our social unrest, if not the simple fact that the soil of Germany can at most support forty millions, whereas we are now fifty-six?"

As it was, this momentous meeting between the Kaiser and the Premier ended in a heated altercation; and

its only consequence was a profound and protracted breach between the Kaiser and Lord Salisbury, which threw a shadow over the whole relationship between the two countries. In later years, Lord Salisbury repeatedly recurred to this fateful conversation. "Your Kaiser appears to forget," he said more than once, "that I don't work for the King of Prussia, but as Prime Minister of England."*

I subsequently conducted many difficult negotiations, with Lord Salisbury, in delicate questions, and always got on excellently well with him. He was a typical English *Grand Seigneur*, and one would get a very wrong idea of him judging him merely by his cynical sayings. One might describe him as a peculiar mixture of external cynicism and deep Anglican religious feeling. This latter, combined with unwillingness to back the Turk on all occasions, explains why he did not always see eye to eye with Lord Beaconsfield. His Balkan policy was indeed the same in principle as that of Bismarck, in that he always accentuated the *désintéressement* of England. Nor did he favour slap-dash colonial expansion.

A partition of the Near East between England, Germany and Austria, was, in his eyes, the principal problem of world policy. Once discussing with me this pet project he said that the plan had two great advantages. Firstly, the development of the most productive and profitable regions of the world; and, secondly, the guarantee that England and Germany would never seriously come to blows. For both would have enough to do for centuries, either separately or in association; and, while Germany and Great Britain held together, no other group could take the field against them.

Lord Salisbury had, it is true, stood for a policy of complete liberty of action while Bismarck was alive. He had, consequently, only played with the different feelers for an alliance thrown out by Bismarck, notably the pretty definite adumbration of an alliance advanced by Bismarck in a private letter of 22nd November, 1887.

* Editor's Note: "Travailles pour le Roi de Prusse" means to labour in vain.

But later he changed his views; and, in spite of all unpleasantness, he was not only ready to treat in 1895, but was so still in 1901, when the question even went as far as the Cabinet. I shall return to this crucial matter later on.

But what folly it is to keep on trotting out that worn-out over-worked old tag of "*perfide Albion.*" This French cliché of the eighteenth century was in its youth no more than a vent for French jealousy at the success of British *real-politik* over the French policy of self-hypnotism and sentimentality. England has been no more perfidious than any other State. What about Louis XIV and Napoleon? What about Austria, and, above all, Russia? And last, but not least, what about Prussia itself? The main difference is that England has for centuries followed a consecutive, a comprehensive and consequently a successful *real-politik*; whereas other States have had long lapses into hopeless sentimentality. But there has probably never been a national policy so laughable and so lamentable as that of the Wilhelminic Era. It was worse than perfidious, it was idiotic.

King Edward, who, as I have already said, was never the fanatical foe of Germany that he has been represented, was in 1901 quite favourable to an alliance. But the perpetual pin-pricks from Berlin—an expression he employed more than once in talking to me that year—had made him think differently and drove him into the encirclement policy. And when, in 1905, he heard, not officially, but through other channels in Petersburg, of the treaty of Bjorko between Wilhelm and Nicholas, he embarked definitely on encirclement. But as he explained to me himself, in May, 1905, the *rapprochement* with France and Russia was primarily a measure for the preservation of peace, and at the same time a hint to Wilhelm and von Tirpitz not to go too far. King Edward certainly never had any idea of working up a world war; just as Wilhelm never really wanted war, not even in July, 1914. And, had King Edward also been

alive in that critical year, in all probability the outbreak of war would have been avoided, in spite of the blunders of the ruling cliques of Germany and Austria.

After the outbreak of the Crimean war, Lord Beaconsfield, in a famous passage in Parliament, denounced the follies of the diplomatists of that day: "The assaults of brutality you may combat, the cunning of duplicity you may contravene, the wiles of diplomacy you may defeat, but there is one force which no human ingenuity can cope with—the unconscious machinations of stupidity."

CHAPTER IV

VARIOUS PERSONAGES

When I was in Berlin, on leave, in the late summer of 1893, a "Chancellor crisis" was already being talked about. Caprivi was said to have lost the confidence of the Kaiser, and to be on the point of being dismissed. The crisis passed, however, and Caprivi was not replaced by Prince Klodwig von Hohenlohe Schillingfurst until October, 1894. But I remember that all manner of people were already being gossiped about as successor to Caprivi, among them a worthy person who had risen through all the grades of Prussian officialdom.

One evening Herbert Bismarck, who had just arrived from Friedrichsruh, told us what his father had just been saying to him about this: "I have no reason to speak well of Caprivi, who behaved shamefully to me on my retirement and after it. But I should regret his leaving the Chancellorship. Though he has made some bad mistakes in foreign affairs, yet on the whole his policy makes for the safety of the Empire abroad. And, should it ever come about that a Prussian official brought up in the mill-horse round becomes Chancellor, we should probably very soon see the end of Germany. For such gentlemen think they know everything, and can do anything. Whereas they have no understanding for the psychology of their own people, to say nothing of that of any other race."

Sixteen years later a Prussian bureaucrat who had grown up in "the mill-horse round" was made Chancellor, in the person of Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg. To-day the consequences foreseen by Bismarck are only too conspicuous.

After Bismarck's dismissal the tension between Herbert Bismarck and Holstein got steadily worse, and ended eventually in such a mutual enmity as I have seldom come across. I often used to meet Herbert Bismarck in society, especially at small bachelors' dinners given weekly by Count Konrad Luttichau at the Kaiserhof. Herbert

Bismarck generally took advantage of this opportunity for giving full vent to his hatred of Holstein. And in most cases Holstein heard in the course of the next day whether Herbert had been at such a dinner and which of his other enemies had been there with him.

One day, going to Holstein on my departure for London to say good-bye and to get his private letters to Count Hatzfeldt, Holstein led the conversation to these dinners in the Kaiserhof. I at once guessed what he was after, and became very guarded in my answers. "I hear"—he said, with an obviously assumed air of indifference—"that Herbert Bismarck in these little dinners falls pretty foul of me. If I could only get an idea of what he has against me and why he bears me so great a grudge I could protect myself more easily against certain insinuations that he is systematically circulating against me." I replied that I wasn't aware that he had ever in my presence said anything against him—Holstein. But Holstein went on: "You have been at every one of these Kaiserhof dinners for the last three weeks, and you must know what he said, for example, to Count Hohenthal during one of them." And as a matter of fact I had heard Herbert say to the Count that "it was high time the German Princes stopped the Kaiser from keeping so hopeless a fool as Holstein in control of his foreign policy. Prince Hohenthal must see to it that King Albert of Saxony took the matter in hand and got the Princes to send a collective note to the Kaiser." I was told later by Prince Philip Eulenberg that some of the Princes had made a half-hearted sort of move with the Kaiser against the Holstein policy. But the Kaiser had simply ruled out all intervention in foreign policy, and that was an end of the matter.

I got on very well with Herbert Bismarck for some years more, though meeting him less and less; and, unfortunately, in the autumn of 1899, we fell out altogether. It was only about a year before his death in September, 1904, that a mutual friend brought us together again and effected a reconciliation.

For many years after Bismarck's dismissal there were in Berlin society two parties. The majority, of course, followed the Court, and joined in its persecution of the Bismarckians. Of the faithful Bismarckians one of the most prominent was the well-known Upper Silesian magnate, Count Guido Henckel von Donnersmarck. He had made his house a centre for the Bismarckians, and had defied the Kaiser's displeasure. I remember during this leave going on from his house to the Casino in the Pariser Platz, and being deliberately insulted by a number of Court hangers-on because I frequented the house of a "rebel."

Holstein was one of those who were most bitter against von Donnersmarck, and he suspected every Foreign Office or Diplomatic official who saw anything of him, as I found to my cost. He had organised a sort of private espionage system. Certain officials, anxious to curry favour and to further their careers, used to keep him supplied with the sort of delations they knew he liked. Thus one of my dear kind colleagues, of a type unfortunately so common in the diplomatic service, informed Holstein that I travelled all about Europe with Count Donnersmarck, was in regular correspondence with him, and kept him informed on various political questions. This was, of course, a malicious exaggeration of my relations with him, which consisted in my having met him in Paris and Baden-Baden, and when he visited London in the autumn of 1892. On the latter occasion he had written to me asking me to get rooms for him, "knowing that as a dyed-in-the-wool Silesian I would not be one of those who shyed off him for fear of giving offence in high quarters." He was touched when I met him and his nephew, Count Luxburg, at the station, and he then told me: "He was only beginning to learn how many cowardly and contemptible creatures there were in the world. Just because he was true to his old friendship and respect for the founder of the German Empire he was bullied by All-Highest authority and boycotted by all the vermin that crawled about the Court."

I saw him daily while he was in London, introducing him at several clubs, and was seen more than once in his company by a certain diplomat of Holstein's "secret service." In consequence of this fellow's report, the next time I came to Berlin, on leave, Holstein refused to see me, and when, some time later, he saw my chief, Count Hatzfeldt, in Berlin, Holstein solemnly warned him to keep an eye on me, because I was strongly suspected of belonging to the gang under von Donnersmarck, who were conspiring against him, Holstein, and the Wilhelmstrasse. The clever Ambassador, who knew only too well Holstein's little peculiarities, only laughed at him, saying that I was a very harmless person whom no one need be afraid of. Thereafter, my relations with Holstein improved, and the next time I came to Berlin he received me. It was, moreover, about this time that the duel pending between Holstein and Donnersmarck, over the "Kladderadatsch" affair, was finally settled.

In 1895, there was a reconciliation between the Kaiser and Count von Donnersmarck. The Count was made a Prince and the Kaiser was thereafter frequently seen at his house and at the great pheasant-shoots at Castle Neudeck. Thereupon, all the little lick-spits and social-ladder-climbers of the Berlin Court were tumbling over each other to get asked to his house. Among them, of course, were the people who had insulted me at the Casino, two years before; and there, too, I met my friend who had done his best to cook my goose with Holstein. I went straight up to him and said I was very surprised to find him in the house of a "rebel." He lost colour, stammered and tried to make conversation, but I nailed him down to it, saying I was fully informed of the disgraceful low intrigue he had worked up against me. I then cut his excuses and explanations short, saying I forbade him once for all to salute or speak to me, lest worse befall him. Not long ago I met him again and he suddenly greeted me, grinning like a Cheshire cat, but I again turned my back on him.

While Count von Donnersmarck was in London we

made several excursions together, among them one to Farnborough, where the Empress Eugénie was living. As the Count had lived many years in Paris, where he had a charming little Palais on the Champs Elysée, and as he had frequented the Court of Napoleon he was anxious to meet her again. Accordingly, one Sunday afternoon found us walking up the avenue of her country house. And there we saw her coming towards us, apparently on her way to church, accompanied by a lady and the old secretary of Napoleon, M. Pietri. I was just hurrying forward to pay my respects when the Count held me back. He then hastily hid himself behind a large oak, beckoning to me to do the same. He peeped out watching her carefully till she had passed, and then, turning to me, said, "Now, let's go back to town." The explanation he gave me was that he had just remembered as she came up, that on the day of the outbreak of war the Paris police had by her express orders seized the whole of his papers in his Paris house. He had seen her for the last time a fortnight before the war, and he said she had changed very little in appearance.

When I met the Empress next year at Cowes, I told her the story, at which she was much amused, saying she hadn't seen us but could picture her corpulent Parisian friend skipping behind the tree. I was to tell him she was sorry to have missed him and hoped he would come to see her in the Riviera.

I had met the Empress first in 1891, in Madrid, and used frequently to see her on her fine steam yacht at Cowes. One day on the yacht she suddenly began to talk of the war of 1870. She maintained most emphatically that she had had nothing whatever to do with it. She had known from the first that such a war must turn out badly for France. As a proof of this she added that immediately on the outbreak of war she sent all the Crown Jewels over to the Police President for safe keeping. I should perhaps add however that this Police President, Count Keratry, whom I also knew in Paris, was of a different opinion and attributed the principal blame of the war to the Empress.

I often went over to Paris where I had many friends in French society and in the American colony. I generally stayed with my friend, the American, Rey Miller, whose bachelor flat, near the Arc de Triomphe, was the scene of many gay parties and in whose four-in-hand we made many joyous excursions. One of our companions on many of these occasions was old General Gallifet, the hero of Mexico and of the Chevauchée de la mort at Sédan. I remember how at one gay supper party the General rose and drank to the future friendship of France and Germany in a graceful little speech, to which I responded as best I could. On my concluding, the company, which included the leading ladies of the Parisian *demi-monde*, called in a high state of enthusiasm for the Marseillaise. And scarcely had the last note died away before the old General rose and called to the orchestra for the "*Wacht am Rhein.*" The conductor hesitated as he well might, but as the General repeated "*Jouez, vite, vite!*" he complied, and gave the tune to the applause of the company. When I recounted the incident a few days later to Count Münster at the Embassy, he remarked: "Since the honest, peaceable Sadi Carnot has been President of the Republic, things have much altered in our favour in France. Chauvinism is on the wane in the country as appears from Déroulede and his Patriotic League having lost all attraction. I think that in a few years Alsace-Lorraine will be as good as forgotten, and that there is an excellent chance that we shall again get on the best terms with France. But I assume in this that Berlin will not put its foot in it too much. So long as I am here I can do a good deal to prevent Holstein or others from doing mischief, but God knows who will be my successor, and I am very uneasy at the steady growth of Chauvinism in certain circles in Germany. They are already calling on England to cede us some of its colonies and coaling stations. And next thing they will be demanding Tunis and Algiers from France. If only someone could muzzle the idiots."

Our growing Chauvinism is perhaps to be explained,

in the first place, by the example set by Wilhelm ; but also by our rapidly growing prosperity, and by the popular misconception of Bismarck's "Cuirassier Boot," and of Nietsche's "Overman." This megalomania reached its maximum in 1905, and the Morocco crisis, the first consequence of which was our complete diplomatic discomfiture at the Algeciras Conference, and the next result the revival of the moribund Chauvinism of France.

One afternoon I met the Marquis de Gallifet in the Tuileries Gardens. He told me he had just come from the German Embassy, where he had been lunching with Count Münster. After lunch the Ambassador had taken him into the Throne Room of the Embassy, to show him a new life-size oil-painting of the Kaiser that had just arrived. When I asked him what he thought of this portrait, he said: "To tell you the truth, Comrade of the German Cuirassiers, that portrait is a declaration of war, and I said the same thing to the Ambassador." The tone in which he said this was half jest and half earnest; and when some days later I myself saw the new portrait I could not avoid privately agreeing with the General. For there, in such a pose as Louis XIV used to affect in his state portraits, Field-Marshal's baton in outstretched hand, moustaches waxed up to his eyes, and his best "War Lord" mien, stood Wilhelm, immortalised in oil-paint.

Later on I made the acquaintance of two interesting Parisian types, Armand Levy and Gaston Calmette. They were inseparable friends and met almost every day. Like true Parisians, they both disliked travelling and in any case one would never go without the other. All the same, they did once bring off a joint visit to me in the Isle of Wight.

Armand Levy was a leading financier and had a fine bachelor flat where almost every afternoon there assembled clever and agreeable people. There was a strong Bohemian element in these entertainments, at which there were often amusing conversational encounters.

For one found represented there the Faubourg, Finance, Politics, and the Stage, as well as the worlds of Art and Literature. The host himself was a wit and a connoisseur, a typical boulevardier, and perhaps, one might say, a typical decadent. But he was a good friend.

Gaston Calmette was director of the "Figaro." He fell a victim in March, 1914, to the revolver of Madame Caillaux.

Through Levy I got to know Maurice Rouvier, who, as President du Conseil, was head of the French Government during the Morocco crisis and the Algeciras Conference. I was much with him personally, and also went through a good deal with him politically. When the Morocco crisis began to take on dangerous dimensions in the spring of 1905, he telegraphed for me to come and discuss means of avoiding a conflict. This was the occasion on which I came finally into collision with Holstein, who was bent on provoking a war with France.

One of the more remarkable and interesting acquaintances that I made in Paris was that of M. Guillaume Betzold. He was a Jew from Dessau, who as a boy had entered the Vienna house of Rothschild. His wife, generally called "the Princess," belonged to the Roumanian family of Ghika. Early in the 'sixties he was commissioned, as representative of Rothschild and on behalf of the abdicated Emperor Ferdinand, to liquidate the enormous debts of the Archduke Maximilian, shot in Mexico in 1867. Betzold used to tell me that the Emperor had had to pay more than forty million gulden for his nephew. Later he was transferred to the Paris house, and while there, received a request from Bismarck to join him at Grand Headquarters, then Chateau Ferrières, the country seat of the Paris Rothschilds. He continued to act as financial adviser to Bismarck during the whole campaign.

One incident that he told me I had afterwards confirmed both by Count Hatzfeldt and by Count Lehndorff. It seems that the wine brought for the use of Headquarters, and more particularly the champagne, had

given out. Upon which Bismarck began to make a tremendous fuss, and to declare that he could not work without wine. The ill-famed chief of Bismarck's secret police, Stieber, thereupon offered to requisition any quantity. But the misdoings of the notorious Stieber had already strained relations between Bismarck and the Master of the King's Household, Count Perponcher; and the King had consequently ordered that nothing should be requisitioned from the Rothschild cellars. But, as Bismarck fumed and fussed more and more, Betzold proposed that he and the butler should take each bottle as it was required, putting in its place, by express command of the King, an envelope with the exact value of the wine taken; which was thereafter done.

Betzold with Rothschild took part in the negotiations between Bismarck and Thiers at Versailles, and he told me how, late one evening, the following telegram was received from Gambetta at Bordeaux: "M. Bismarck—Versailles. Tell M. Thiers that I have nothing to do with the capitulation of Paris—the traitors." So far as I know this telegram has as yet found no place in history.

Betzold took part in many of the great financial operations of the day, among others the founding of the Dresdener Bank and of the Rio Tinto Copper Company. He made several enormous fortunes in business and lost them again on the Bourse.

In September, 1898, he came to London with Adolf von Hansemann to negotiate for the Deutsch-Ost Asiatische Bank with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and an English group, as to a partition of China into spheres of economic interest for railway concessions, etc. As both Governments were interested in an agreement being reached, I was told off to attend the negotiations. These terminated with a great dinner in Baron Rothschild's house, at which several Cabinet Ministers were present, as also the Ambassador and myself. At this dinner next to our representative, Hansemann, sat a well-known English peer, who had then just been appointed Viceroy of India, and who still plays a leading

part in British politics. He, in discussing the agreement with Hansemann, maintained that the German Group had secured undue and undeserved advantages, and the general effect of his remarks on Hansemann was to reduce the latter to a condition of extreme exasperation. After dinner Betzold and I took poor Hansemann off to a club and entertained him with pale ale and gossip, but he remained silent and sullen. Suddenly he asked us, "Do you think this lord knows where Pasewalk is?" We said we doubted he did, and he went on, "Well, that's a good job anyway, or he would certainly have laid down as a principle that Pasewalk is British." This relieved his pent-up irritation, and he again became good company.

Betzold was a power, not only in high finance, but in high policy, as he was welcome everywhere. Among his patrons were the Chancellor, Prince von Hohenlohe, the Ambassador, Prince Münster, and Field-Marshal Count Waldersee. He was also in close relations with Holstein.

He was very small in size, and one of his peculiarities was wearing very high heels and very tight boots, so that he could only hobble. A conversation between him and old Prince Münster was a comical spectacle. For the Prince was very tall and thin, and had a trick of jerking his head to the right and saying, "Am I not right, am I not right?" While little Betzold had the habit of jerking his head to the left when he agreed, and of saying, "Without question, without question." "Am I not right, Betzold?" would say the long Ambassador, putting his head on one side. "Without question, Excellency, without question," would say little Betzold, with his head on the other side.

I shall have occasion to mention him again sometimes; for, as he trotted backwards and forwards between Paris and London once or twice a week, he was much used by us as a courier and confidential agent.

In the 'nineties I was much at the house of the parents of the present Queen of England, the Duke and Duchess of Teck. They lived at a very comfortable country

house, "White Lodge," in Richmond Park, belonging to Queen Victoria. Their house was a centre of hospitality, and they both were cheerful and kindly characters. "Princess Mary," as the Duchess was called, was especially popular with the public.

Early in the 'sixties King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, then a widower, had been determined to marry her. He came to England, stayed at Windsor, secured Queen Victoria's approval, and believed he had settled the whole affair, when he came up against the most obstinate opposition from the Princess herself. There was nothing to be done, however, and the King had to go home again, his departure, as old Court officials told me, being distinctly abrupt.

Towards the end of the 'seventies Princess Mary supported drastic action against Russia in the Eastern imbroglio. This was the time at which the term "Jingo" first became current, being taken from the chorus of a song sung with enormous success at the "Alhambra" Music Hall; and from her aggressive attitude during the Russo-Turkish War and the Eastern crisis Princess Mary became known for a time in England as the "Queen of the Jingoes."

Princess Mary was on terms of close friendship with Lord Beaconsfield, who as Premier held in his hands the fortunes of England. They used to chaff each other on all possible occasions, and I remember her telling us once the following episode:

"When the Russians were threatening Constantinople, at the end of the Russo-Turkish War, and our fleet was already at the Dardanelles, I asked Lord Beaconsfield one evening at dinner what more he was waiting for. He looked first all round the table with an air of anxiety, and then whispered, 'For the potatoes, Madam.'"

I once had the honour to sit next the Duchess of Teck at a little lunch given by Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, the old English Field-Marshal. On my remarking to the Duchess how excellent the Cumberland sauce was that was being served with the wild-boar's head, she said with

emphasis and some excitement: "In the first place the calling it 'Cumberland sauce' is all wrong. The fact is that my father invented this sauce, and my uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, was only passionately fond of it. Therefore by all right and title it ought to be called 'Cambridge sauce.' Besides, the sauce which we have here is wrongly made. A real Cambridge sauce, such as my father invented, is made of nothing more than red currant jelly, red wine and the hottest possible English mustard, which must all be stirred up together as long as possible. But this sauce is made up of raspberry jelly, port, orange peel and the mildest mustard. It not only tastes differently, but is quite different."

The Princess Mary's father was Viceroy of Hanover from 1831 to 1837, while there was still a personal union between Great Britain and Hanover. He proved himself a good ruler, and was much beloved by the Hanoverian people. His son, George, Duke of Cambridge, was Commander-in-Chief of the British forces for many years. I knew him well, and saw much of him right up to his death. He was a typical fine old Guelph Prince.

I was also on an intimate footing with the old Field-Marshal, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar. He had come to England as a child with his aunt, Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV, who was a Saxe-Weimar Princess. He entered the Grenadier Guards, went through the Crimean campaign, greatly distinguished himself at the Alma, and ended his career as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. He was a cousin of the old Empress Augusta, and was on very good terms with her and Kaiser Wilhelm, so that he knew all about many things not generally known to the public. He had, moreover, been the confidential friend and counsellor of Wilhelm I when the latter, as Prince of Prussia, had to leave Berlin during 1848, and live as an exile in England for a time. He had also seen much of Bismarck when the latter was acting as Prussian Minister to the Bundestag in Frankfort, during the 'fifties; and when Bismarck later visited London, he used to describe the sensation caused by

the Prince appearing at dinners and evening parties in his travelling clothes—he having lost all his luggage on the journey. In general, he had not much good to say of Bismarck, being apparently much infected with the strong dislike that the Empress Augusta had for the Chancellor. He had also been offended when Bismarck completely ignored him during a visit he paid to the Empress in Berlin. It was just at the time of the *Kultur-Kampf* in which the Empress had taken sides with Bismarck's enemies. Prince Bismarck used to tell us that she had been informed by the clerical interests that he had spoken very disrespectfully of the Kaiser in mixed company. He was supposed to have said that the Kaiser was "an old mule" and quite useless in politics. She had then gone off to the Kaiser with this; but the old man had said he would have nothing to do with such twaddle, as it was clearly only an intrigue against his Chancellor. Old Prince Edward was something of a raconteur and his dry humour was not without roguery.

Of all the capitals of Europe there was never, except ancient Rome, a metropolis where the pulse of the whole world beat so distinctly as in London. The business quarter of London, the City, has, at least up till now, been to a certain extent the digestive organ of the world's commerce. While the West End has been both in political and social respects, the world's centre of gravity. It would, therefore, take much too long even to mention all the foreign politicians and statesmen, Indian Princes, Arab Chiefs, Negro Kings, and such like, that I met in my twenty-three years in London. But one or two are perhaps worth notice.

In the spring of 1892, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria came on a visit to London, at a time when his position as Prince had been seriously shaken by Russian diplomacy, which had begun to find him an intractable tool for its Balkan schemes. And naturally the more he was driven into a corner by Russia the more he looked for backing to Austria, so with the help of the Austrian Ambassador, Count Deym, he tried, when in London, to

get the English to back him up against Russia. At about this time Lord Salisbury was much annoyed with Russia on account of its Central Asiatic policy. At the bottom of his heart he still held fast to his doctrine that England had nothing to do with the Balkans. But no doubt he thought it couldn't hurt if, by giving more support to Ferdinand, he gave Russia a hint not to push its pretensions in Central Asia and Persia too far, or England might, after all, develop its Balkan policy. Accordingly, he made use of the great political reception given every spring at the Foreign Office to make a demonstration in favour of the Prince of Bulgaria. Thus it came about that when Prince Ferdinand arrived in Downing Street the band struck up the Bulgarian national anthem, while Lord Salisbury and the Austrian Ambassador waited for him at the door and together led him up the grand staircase. I myself was talking to two Russian diplomats as Prince Ferdinand came marching up the stairs to the strains of the Bulgarian hymn. Seldom have I seen such flabbergasted faces as those of the two Russian diplomats. They at once hurried off to their Ambassador, Baron de Staal, and conferred with him. I heard one of the Russians say: "*Qu'elle insulte pour la Russie,*" and shortly afterwards they all ostentatiously trooped down the stairs, the Ambassador at their head, and so retired in good order. Later, at supper, I heard Lord Salisbury say to Count Deym, with a sly smile, "I hear Staal and his staff have disappeared." Nor was it difficult to see how thoroughly he enjoyed, for once, really annoying the Russians.

Some days later I met Prince Ferdinand at the Austrian Embassy, and had a long conversation with him. He told me much that was curious about the methods of the Russian diplomats in the Balkans. "I don't understand," said he, "what sense there is in talking about *perfide Albion*. For in perfidy, if one can call state-policy perfidious, Russia takes the first place. Nor do I understand why people in Germany don't see that the only real danger of war will come some day from Russia,

which is insatiable in its expansionist penetrations of the Near East and of the West."

King Milan of Serbia, who also came to London in the 'nineties, was a very different type of sovereign from his Bulgarian *confrère*. Prince Ferdinand as a Coburg and the son of Princess Clementine of Orleans, a daughter of Louis Philippe's, showed in everything that he was a product of the most refined culture. King Milan was little more than an unlicked barbarian. This was particularly obvious after he had had too much champagne, as was frequently the case. I saw a good deal of him both in London and Paris; and, as he kept a hold on the reins of government for many years after his nominal abdication in favour of the unfortunate Alexander, I heard from him much that was instructive about the under-side of Balkan affairs.

In 1894 the Tsar, then Tsarevitch, visited Queen Victoria at Cowes on the "Polar Star." I lunched with him more than once, and one day made an excursion in his company to Shanklin and Ventnor. He gave one the impression at first of being very bashful, one might say bullied. But towards the end of our outing he suddenly thawed and became quite natural and cheerful. There then appeared a strain of almost childish silliness, which however was rather likeable than otherwise. Alexander III had given him as tutor old Prince Galitzyn; and I, as well as other guests on the "Polar Star," were disagreeably impressed by the brusque way in which he treated the Tsarevitch. It looked as though the Heir Apparent couldn't venture to open his mouth without express permission of the bearish old general. Five months later the Tsarevitch was called to the throne.

I often met Leopold of Belgium in London and Paris, and whenever I was at Ostend he would invite me to dinner in his villa there. But in January, 1901, I broke altogether with this cunning old fox; for he began to try and fish in troubled waters in London and to poach in my preserves with respect to the Far East.

In 1896, the great Chinese statesman, Li Hung Chang,

made the tour of Europe. In Germany he had put himself under Bismarck's physician, Dr. Schweninger. The very drastic massage treatment that Schweninger gave him pleased him so much that he insisted on the professor accompanying him all over Germany. At all hours of the night the professor would be called out of his coupé-lit and be told: "Now give me a thorough trampling on the stomach; it does me so much good."

Fortified by this treatment, he came on to London in the best of tempers and was elaborately *fêted*. At one garden party he was asked to write his name and a motto in the visitors' book. He asked what a motto was, and his hostess explained that it was for example something like "penny wise and pound foolish." "Oh," said he, "we have one just like that in China," and he scribbled some Chinese characters in the book. These were afterwards translated as, "Saving tallow-dips may send twins."

He asked me to go and see him one morning at the house of a wealthy peer, which had been placed at his disposal by the British Government. I found him sitting alone at a table in the middle of a large drawing-room, eating his lunch. After we had greeted one another he said, through an interpreter, that he had liked Germany very much, and had a great respect for the Kaiser. The conversation then languished while he gave his attention to the consumption of various curious comestibles that he had brought from China—one being a long black eel or snake coiled up in a tin. After a bit he asked me what I weighed, whether I was married, how many children I had, and what my digestion was like. At this stage an elderly lady was shown in who was clearly a reporter, and who, without further ceremony, at once began her interview. One of her first questions was, "What are your Highness's views on the future relations between China and Japan?" To which Li Hung Chang replied, through the interpreter, "What is your age, Madam?" This settled the lady reporter, who left the room in high indignation.

She had hardly disappeared before the door opened again to admit two gentlemen, one of whom was my old friend, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace. But Li took not the least notice of him, and went on eating without looking up. Soon after we were joined by Lord Charles Beresford, and there sat the four of us watching the Chinese statesman consuming his tinned snake. When he had quite finished, Lord Charles and Sir Donald were allowed to ask him questions, which he almost invariably answered with another question; and after listening for a time to this war of wit I withdrew.

I twice came into personal contact in London with the Heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The first time in 1894, on his return from his transatlantic tour. The second time in January, 1901, when he was in London for the funeral of Queen Victoria. On this latter occasion there were some pretty polemics about precedence. It had been decided that the German Crown Prince should take precedence of all the other Crown Princes as great-grandson of the late Queen; and this although his father was present in person, and the Crown Prince was consequently not representative of his Sovereign as were the others. The evening before the ceremony the Chamberlain of the late Queen called on me and told me that the other Crown Princes, and especially the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, objected to the German Crown Prince being given precedence of them in their representative capacity. He accordingly asked me to induce the Kaiser to give the others precedence voluntarily over his son. It was, however, too late for me to do anything, as I was to have no opportunity of speaking to the Kaiser before the ceremony. And very glad I was that it was so, for there is nothing more ticklish and thankless than interfering in questions of precedence between Royalties. For myself, I attached no great importance to the matter; but Holstein on hearing of it got very uneasy, fearing that the Archduke might bear the Kaiser and Crown Prince a grudge over it. He instructed our Embassy in Vienna to make enquiries, and

was only reassured on hearing that the Kaiser was not held responsible for it, but only the English Court officials.

The Archduke was always very pleasant to me; but I could not help continually being struck with the wide difference between him and that buoyant but unhappy Bohemian, the Crown Prince Rudolf.

At Easter, 1892, I paid a visit to Lord Tennyson, at his idyllic little estate, near Freshwater. I was landed at Yarmouth from the yacht of a friend, with a letter of introduction that had been given me by Lord Lytton in Paris. I then set out on foot for the house, but on reaching it, was told it was not likely that I could see the poet as he had had a bad night and was not feeling well. However, after sending in my letter, I was asked to come back at tea-time that afternoon. When I got back I found him in an easy chair on the grass, under a copper beech. After I had introduced myself he made me sit down near him on a bench and taking a little hand-bell from a table stacked with books, rang for tea. Then, taking up Lord Lytton's letter and twisting it in his fingers, he said, "This letter from dear dead 'Owen Meredith' moves me like a message from another world." He paused for a moment, then he went on, "The worst of being so old as eighty-three, as I am now, is the difficulty of reading." On my remarking what a beautiful home he had, he replied: "Yes, nature is after all the greatest pleasure we old people can enjoy, and as I watch the sunrise and the sunset, the moon and the stars, there stir in me intuitions of immortality. For nothing better recalls to our soul the immortal life than the immutability of the recurrent phenomena of nature." The aged poet then leaned back in his chair to rest and there was a long silence, during which I sipped my tea and ate my cake. He then asked me whether I had occupied myself much with English literature. I said I was only a beginner, and he then asked whether I had read "Locksley Hall." I had to admit that I had only heard of it. "From that poem you may gather," said he, "what I think of the morale of the present generation.

You are still young and will yet see how all this present idealism will disappear and the world will relapse into a crass materialism. The great upheavals of the French revolution and of the Napoleonic era put the world in its right place; but now people seem to find it going too well for them, and, if materialism goes on growing at this pace, then, before long, the turn of an International Tribunal will come round again."

After saying this the old man leaned back and closed his eyes, whereupon a nurse appeared and motioned to me to go. So with a last long look at the venerable poet I slipped away. And about five months later the greatest poet of the Victorian age went to his last rest.

I made such study of English literature as I had time for under the auspices of Joseph Knight, the dramatic critic. We became the most intimate friends, though he was thirty years older than I. He was in every way a good fellow, a thorough Bohemian, with a most original mind. Many a night have I sat with him at the Beefsteak Club, which not only provided excellent beef-steaks but intellectual intercourse such as one could get scarcely anywhere else.

The more I read of English literature the better I liked it, thanks no doubt to my tutors, Joseph Knight and W. L. Courtney, an Oxford professor. The latter was one of the leading authorities on English literature.

Sir Arthur Sullivan was also a good friend to me. He was even more likeable as a man than as a musician. Often, when we were lunching or supping together, he would become suddenly silent and pay no more attention to what I was saying. Then he would take out a note-book, jot down an air that had just come into his head, and, with an apology, resume the conversation.

James Whistler, Alma Tadema, and Hubert Herkomer, were also friends of mine. I spent many days with the last at his art school, near Bushey Park. My old friend, the Vienna portrait painter, Henry von Angeli, also, often came to England to stay with Queen Victoria at Windsor. For the old Queen had a great affection for his unconventional and yet courtly character.

King Edward told me that when von Angeli was painting the Queen he was much bothered by Court ladies crowding round and chattering. At last he lost patience and said to the Queen in a German they were not likely to understand, "If these wenches keep on jostling and jabbering round me, I can't paint, Your Majesty." The Queen fortunately was amused, the ladies were in future kept away, and Angeli remained in favour. In which, as I pointed out to King Edward, he was more fortunate than a confrère of his, who asked Madame de Pompadour not to talk to the King while he was being painted, and paid for it with several months in the Bastille. He laughed and replied, "Under my ancestor Henry the Eighth, the good Angeli would probably have been hauled off to the Tower, but we live to-day in pleasanter times." Then, turning to his neighbour on the other side, he said, laughing heartily, "Can't you see old Angeli being hauled off to the Tower?"

Among my greatest friends were the three Rothschild brothers; and more especially "Mr. Alfred," who concerned himself particularly with foreign policy, though all three brothers had clear and correct views on the foreign situation. They worked for all they were worth at an understanding between England and Germany, because they saw in it the only security for the peace of the world. At last, however, they were obliged to recognise that the aimlessness of German policy and the agitation against England artificially kept up by certain circles in Germany, made all association impossible. Then, like King Edward, they finally turned their backs on Germany, and countenanced a *rapprochement* with France and Russia. Meantime it was largely through them and in their house that were carried on the secret negotiations for an agreement between England and Germany, which I shall shortly describe in detail.

CHAPTER V

KRUGER TELEGRAM, EGYPT, HELIGOLAND

I HAVE already described some of the personal incidents that both embittered the relations between the Kaiser and his uncle and embarrassed the relations between the two countries. I have now to deal with more serious political incidents.

In 1895, Wilhelm had had himself escorted to Cowes by the two new cruisers *Worth* and *Weissenburg*, in order to show them off to the Prince and the British Navy. On the anniversary of the Battle of Worth he made on that cruiser one of his usual provocative harangues, giving thereby great offence; for he offended not only France, then on the point of improving its relations with us, but also England, where it was considered tactless, to say the least, to have used English territorial waters as a platform for so extravagant an explosion. The Conservative press, notably the "Standard," told him in so many words to send his challenges in future from his own territory. This offended Wilhelm and von Marschall in their turn, and they complained to the British Government; and so it went on until in January of the following year the fat was fairly in the fire over the Kruger telegram.

There are the most contradictory stories as to the origin of this telegram, and as to who was the moving spirit in its drafting and despatch. It was generally believed in England that Wilhelm had personally drafted it while on the train, and had had it despatched by an aide-de-camp; but I had the following account of its origin from the then Secretary of the Navy, Admiral von Hollmann:

"The day following the news of the Jameson raid the Kaiser came in from Potsdam to Berlin. I was to have an audience of him that morning, and after I had finished my report he asked me to go with him to the Foreign Office, as the Foreign Secretary, von Marschall, and the Director of the Colonial Section, Kaiser, were expecting him there.

Certain important decisions had, he said, to be taken concerning the Jameson raid. He only referred very briefly to the incident, and gave me the impression that he did not attach any great importance to it. I went on ahead and awaited the Kaiser in the outer hall, together with Freiherr von Marschall. He presently arrived accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Admiral von Senden. After greeting the Kaiser, von Marschall at once informed him that he had drafted a telegram with the help of the Colonial Director, which he wished to submit to his Majesty for approval. On the Kaiser seeing the draft telegram he observed: 'If this telegram is sent, as drafted, what will happen to our relations with England? Is it really necessary at all that such a telegram be sent to President Kruger?' To which von Marschall replied: 'I am convinced that it is absolutely indispensable to show the world that the Imperial Government most severely condemns this outrageous raid of English filibusters, both from a moral and also from a juridical standpoint.' Thereupon Herr Kaiser chimed in with: 'In my capacity as Colonial Director I cannot but assent to the view of the Secretary of State. We must consider the psychology of the native population of our South African Colonies. We must show that Germany is the most powerful Empire in Europe, and that, in the interests of justice, we will not tolerate such flagrant violence.' Whereupon the Kaiser said: 'Very well, then, the telegram can go; only I should prefer that the passage in the middle, which is perhaps rather too strong, should be left out.' Freiherr von Marschall then struck a sentence out of the middle of the draft, gave leave for its despatch, and drove back to the Palace."

Such was the account as given me by an eye-witness, Admiral von Hollman, in June, 1898, on board the steam yacht of the late Friedrich Krupp, and in the presence of Admiral Schröder. I feel pretty certain that the Admiral in telling this story was not trying to throw the blame popularly attaching to the Kaiser on to the shoulders of the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Director; for

in his account of other incidents in which the Navy was concerned he criticised the Kaiser very severely. In any case, it may be taken now as an historical fact that the chief culprit in this foolish telegram was Freiherr von Marschall, and that the Kaiser was only to blame in letting himself be over-persuaded to this fatal step.

Few people realise by what a hair's-breadth we escaped a general conflagration in January, 1896, both on account of this telegram and of the subsequent military measures taken by Germany in Africa. It is also practically unknown to the public, both in Germany and in England, that the peace of the world lay in the hands of a single personality, who was none other than the Marquis de Soveral, then Foreign Minister in Portugal.

The Marquis de Soveral had for more than thirty years held a position at the English Court, with the Cabinet, and in London Society, such as a representative of his Government can seldom have acquired in a foreign country. When only nineteen he was, late in the 'seventies, attached to the Portuguese Legation in Berlin, where he became very popular. From the middle of the 'eighties he was almost uninterruptedly Portuguese Minister in London; and since the establishment of the Republic in 1908 he has lived there in retirement. He owed his remarkable position, including his close intimacy with King Edward, to considerable talent and tact and to unusual social gifts. In 1895 he was made Foreign Minister in Portugal, and he was holding this post during the troubled times that preceded the South African War.

The foolish telegram to Kruger had raised thunders of applause in Germany; while it had roused a storm of resentment in England. Without realising that Germany was drifting into a most dangerous position, Freiherr von Marschall drove us even nearer the breakers by declaring in the Reichstag that the independence of the South African Republic was a vital question for Germany. And, not content with that, an armed expedition to the Transvaal was actually planned and prepared. A force of several hundreds of the colonial troops in German

East Africa was to be shipped to Delagoa Bay, in Portuguese territory, and thence, with a naval detachment from the three German cruisers lying in the port, was to march up to the capital of the Transvaal Republic. The consent of the Portuguese Government was requested in a very perfunctory manner; as though it was quite a usual thing for German troops to march through Portuguese territory. But the Marquis de Soveral, who saw clearly the danger to the peace of the world in the passage of German troops in such circumstances, returned a firm and a flat refusal. This rebuff, the possibility of which had never entered the head of anyone in Berlin, caused much resentment there; no one apparently realising that the immediate result of his acquiescence would have been the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Great Britain.

When, three years later, I discussed this crisis with Lord Salisbury, he spoke of it as follows: "The Jameson raid was certainly a foolish business. It was a failure from the first and never had any prospect of success. But an even sillier business, at least from the point of view of German interests, was the Kruger telegram. And what your Government was thinking about in wanting to send a few hundred men through Portuguese territory to the Transvaal is a complete puzzle to me. What could and would your Government have done there? At any rate, it was great luck that this coup did not come off, owing to Soveral's determined attitude. War would have been inevitable from the moment that the first German soldier set foot on Transvaal soil. No Government in England could have withstood the pressure of public opinion; and, if it had come to a war between us, then a general European war must have developed. Courcelle had already told me on behalf of his Government that in the event of an Anglo-German war France would observe a most benevolent neutrality towards us, and would moreover probably in the end take an active part in the war. Further, Petersburg gave us to understand that, in the case of a war with

Germany, England would have nothing to fear from Russia in Central Asia or elsewhere. Anyone in his senses must have seen that Germany had everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a war."

How was the situation regarded in Berlin? Both the Wilhelmstrasse and public opinion, misled as usual by the Press, were firmly convinced that not only France and Russia but the whole world would in the case of war help our good German Michael in the cause of right. But of one, at least, of these illusions, the gentlemen of the Wilhelmstrasse were soon to be bereft. Prince Münster was instructed to sound Paris whether France would support Germany in a possible war with England; and, although the Prince knew perfectly well what would be the attitude of France in such a war, he none the less took very careful soundings and satisfied himself that it would certainly find itself on the side of our opponents.

I have never been quite clear as to the part played by Holstein in this regrettable episode. It was said in the Wilhelmstrasse that he and the Colonial Director were the real authors of the Kruger telegram and the measures consequent on it. But I doubt this, and still believe it was von Marschall. Moreover, in March, 1896, Holstein wrote in a private letter to Prince Hatzfeldt: "It was unfortunately impossible for me to stop the Kruger telegram. The Foreign Secretary stampeded by our colonial wild men had taken the bit in his teeth and I could not do anything." On the other hand, the influence that Holstein had exercised since the dismissal of Bismarck was so uncontested that he could certainly have prevented the mischief if he had wanted to. In later years, Holstein was very reticent in conversation with me as to the Kruger telegram; so that I got the impression he had had a finger in the pie though he was ashamed to admit it.

My chief, Count Hatzfeldt, tore his hair over the "incomprehensible insanity" that had overtaken the Wilhelmstrasse, and was on the point of resigning.

But it was all the more incumbent on him to stay, so as to make good as far as possible the harm done.

He lighted on a brilliant idea for restoring relations to a normal footing. He knew that the English Government were very anxious to settle finally and at the first opportunity with the domination of the Mahdi in the Soudan; so as to reincorporate this important province again in Egypt. But they feared to start a campaign against the Dervishes lest France, always jealous in Egyptian affairs, might possibly give trouble. For years one enquiry after another had been arriving from the French Government as to when Great Britain intended to give effect to its long-standing promise to evacuate Egypt.

Now it happened that just at that time Germany's Italian ally had got into a very difficult position in its Red Sea possessions. Italy had indeed just been heavily defeated by the Abyssinians at Adowa, and was, in addition, being hard pressed by the Dervishes on its Erythrean frontiers. So Count Hatzfeldt suggested to Berlin that we should ask Great Britain to send an expedition against the Dervishes in order to take the pressure off Italy; undertaking on our part to support Great Britain against any Power that might interfere during a Soudan campaign. Holstein got this proposal through in Berlin, and the Ambassador received instructions accordingly. Put forward by Hatzfeldt in a very plausible and adroit manner, the plan proved highly acceptable to Lord Salisbury and the Cabinet. And the campaign against the Dervishes, thus initiated for the relief of Italy, led on to the successful campaign by which in 1898 Kitchener crushed the Mahdi and recovered Khartoum; thereby adding a region of immense value to the British Empire.

In this manner we, on our side, successfully killed two birds with one stone. For we did a service to our Italian ally and we made good the mistakes that had previously prejudiced relations between London and Berlin. And, whoever may have claimed the credit of this in the Wil-

helmstrasse, the fact remains that it was due to the quick brain of Count Hatzfeldt. As for the Chancellor, Prince von Hohenlohe, the sole responsible head of the Government and a man of distinguished intellect, who had deserved well of the State both in the founding of the Empire and through the whole Bismarckian epoch—one can only say that, when he was forced against his will to take the Chancellorship in 1894, he was by many years too old to play any leading part.

With reference to this diplomatic coup of his, I told Count Hatzfeldt, one evening, what I had overheard Bismarck say after the dinner at which he put me through my paces: "If only one could drive it into the noddles of our diplomats that Egypt is of no political interest to us of itself, but only as a means of arranging our international relations to suit ourselves." He laughed and replied: "We have unfortunately too many diplomatic noddles now into which no one could drive anything; and among them the people at the head of things in Berlin. Whenever anything sensible is for once got through, one may reckon with almost mathematical accuracy on something so silly immediately following as to cancel completely all good effect." Which apprehension of the Count justified itself, as will be seen, with mathematical and melancholy precision.

It is indeed the irony of fate that it should have been England of all the Powers that Germany helped most in the pursuit of world dominion. For, besides the undisturbed conquest of the Soudan and all which that implies, Great Britain owes to Germany the Japanese Alliance of 1902, which was worked up by German diplomacy. But where were the profits that we might have realised on these transactions? By re-investing them in all manner of speculations instead of realising them for our own business, Wilhelm and his advisers ended by falling with them, not between two, but between twenty stools.

Count Hatzfeldt had restored relatively normal official relations and had conjured the danger of an encirclement; but it was long before British public opinion began to

recover from our provocative procedure. It was with the object of conciliating it that, in June, 1896, I was commissioned to take over to Ireland a wreath to be hung on the colours of the Royal Dragoons, as a present from the Kaiser, their Honorary Colonel, on the anniversary of Waterloo. In this way he hoped to give public proof that his telegram to Kruger had not been so ill-intentioned as had been generally supposed.

I was received with every possible courtesy and consideration by the Regiment; and was conducted out to the Curragh, where it was stationed. In my full-dress white uniform of the Brandenburg Cuirassiers, and mounted on a fine chestnut charger put at my disposal by the Dragoons, I proceeded to the parade ground, where the regiment was drawn up. The Colonel and I took our places in front of the line and he made a speech to which I replied. The peroration of my speech, which I had previously composed in collaboration with the Ambassador, was as follows: "May the day be far distant when the Regiment will be called on to march against a civilised nation; but one thing I am sure of, that it will never have to fight against the land whose Sovereign is its Honorary Colonel." Thereupon the band played the "Wacht am Rhein," and we proceeded with the ceremony of hanging the Kaiser's wreath on the Regimental Colours. A sergeant brought up to me the wreath on a lance, and as it looked heavy I let drop the reins, when my charger suddenly shied at the fluttering ribbons and fell, pinning me and the wreath under him. As he heaved himself up I crawled out, and, in spite of the concussion and the crushing I had had, managed to swing myself into the saddle again and go on with the ceremony. While two dragoons held the restive horse another picked up the wreath and it was at last successfully hung on the Colours. At the subsequent festivities my great pleasure in the cordial entertainment given me by the Dragoons was somewhat spoiled by the pain of my bruises, and by my dilapidated condition. For the green grass of the Emerald Isle had made its mark on my white tunic, my

helmet was knocked out of shape, and my accoutrements were generally in a bad way.

There had been reporters present at the ceremony of the wreath, and the next day justice was fully done to the incident; though on the whole very benevolently. I cannot say as much for the treatment it got in the French press, where it was represented as an evil omen for the future of Anglo-German relations.

Meeting the Prince of Wales at Newmarket Races some days after getting back, he looked me up and down, first from top to toe, then front and back, saying with a chuckle, " I hear the authorities are after you for carrying off so much turf from Ireland; but I can't say I see much green about you."

On the 15th April, 1896, I had married the daughter of Sir Blundell Maple. We spent the greater part of the year at our house, 13 Grosvenor Square, and later on were much at Busbridge Hall in Surrey. We often visited Sir Blundell at Childwickbury in Hertfordshire, where he kept his famous stud.

In 1908, after twelve years of married life, we separated. We had one daughter, born in 1898, who to my great grief died during the war; as I learned by chance from the newspapers. She was an extraordinarily gifted child and had a remarkable poetical gift. A little collection of her verses was published in London when she was no more than fifteen years old.

Sir Blundell Maple, who died at the age of sixty, in 1903, had not only a first-class business head but considerable political capacity. He had, however, above all, an immense talent for organisation. He sat in Parliament for almost twenty-five years as Conservative member for Dulwich. Several of the great London political clubs that started during his time owed much to his organising capacity.

Early in April, 1898, I handed in my resignation, as I intended to stand at the Reichstag elections in June. I could not bring myself at that time to join any particular party; and I tried to get elected as an Independent,

in which I did not succeed. It had been arranged that I was to stand for Homburg as a coalition candidate of the Centrum, the National Liberals, and the Free-thinkers. It was supposed that the National Liberal and the Social-Democrat would be left in the running for the final vote. And, as the Centrum would not in that case have voted for the National Liberal, he was to retire and I was to have been returned as a non-party candidate, and by the votes of all three middle-class parties. But, as it happened, it was the Centrum candidate, not the National Liberal, who survived for the final vote. So, at my invitation, my friends among the National Liberals and the Freethinkers decided to support him.

My experience behind the scenes in Foreign Politics had already, by then, convinced me that the Constitution in no way met the requirements of the Commonwealth. As Karl Schurz had prophesied to me in 1890, the régime was becoming more and more absolute under a young and impulsive Kaiser, and its risks were becoming more and more obvious to all politically minded people. I often discussed this point of view with others, among them the then editor of the Frankforter Zeitung, "old Stern." We decided to form a group for the promotion of parliamentary reform, recruited from among the Freethinkers and the left wing of the National Liberals. But the group, some twenty in number, only succeeded in meeting four times, and in agreeing that the absolutist reaction was leading to disaster both at home and abroad. No concrete proposals, even for propaganda, were ever framed; and they could indeed have had no prospect of success. The awe of absolutist authority was at that time far too great throughout Germany. "We are enthusiasts for Liberty" was the cry—"in so far, of course, as is approved by the Powers that Be."

In the elections of 1903, I stood as a National Liberal for Hersfeld, in Hessen, but finding I had no chance I withdrew. It was on this occasion that a story went through all the papers that I was intending to establish a "Kaiser Party." I used often to wonder how the

story started and what a "Kaiser Party" might be. Only some time later was the story traced to its source in an advertising hotel-proprietor of Frankfort, who had succeeded in getting the correspondent of the "New York Herald" to telegraph during the 1903 election that I was making his hotel the headquarters of the new party. From New York it came back into the English, French and German papers.

After my unsuccessful election of 1898, I came back to London and lived there, but without belonging to the Embassy or being in Government service. All the same, I continued to act as a sort of *liaison* between London and the Ambassador, whose health became steadily worse. I even took part in most of the negotiations he conducted with the British Government; including, for example, the secret Anglo-German Treaty of September, 1898, as to the Portuguese African Colonies.

At the end of 1899, on the request of Hatzfeldt supported by Holstein, I was appointed again a member of the Embassy, and after successfully negotiating the Samoan Agreement with Chamberlain, was made First Secretary. This was the official beginning of a period of very responsible diplomatic duties.

Thanks to Count Hatzfeldt the Egyptian question had been used as a means for patching up the breach between Great Britain and Germany, but the Far Eastern question was still a barrier between them.

Owing to Germany having joined Russia and France in 1895 in robbing Japan of the fruits of its victory over China, Russia had been able to advance, by a whole stage, its programme of making itself the dominant Power in the Far East. It had even succeeded by the most Machiavellian machinations in jockeying all the other Powers out of the loan to be made to China; and in itself advancing the whole sixteen millions, after borrowing them in Paris. This loan carried with it a whole series of valuable concessions. While the only thing Germany got in return for its servility to Russia was leave to annex Kiaou-Tchaou, England, in 1898,

acquired the harbour of Wei-Hai-Wei, a naval station of little value, and Russia got the lion's share with Port Arthur and Manchuria.

Both Japan and Great Britain were extremely dissatisfied with the state of things in the Far East. In the British Government it was especially Joseph Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire who concerned themselves with this question. I remember the Duke telling me one day he could never escape the petitions daily showered on him by the Lancashire cotton industry. In March, 1898, he wrote to me: "If the panic that has seized the Lancashire cotton industry as to its Chinese markets goes on in this way, we shall soon have the greater part of the mills stopped and their hands out of work."

The Rothschilds too were much exercised over the developments in China. At a little dinner given by Alfred Rothschild at the end of February, 1898, at which were present only the Duke of Devonshire, Joseph Chamberlain, Henry Chaplin and myself, the possible effect of the political situation in the Far East on European commerce with China was thoroughly discussed. As a result, the English Ministers asked me to arrange an interview between Count Hatzfeldt and Chamberlain as a preliminary to pourparlers between the two Governments. Nothing suited my chief better; and on the very next day the first secret meeting took place between him and Chamberlain at the house of Alfred Rothschild. After that they met two or three times a week there, or at my house. The pourparlers, which at first concerned only the situation in the Far East, eventually assumed the form of negotiations for a general alliance between Great Britain and Germany. But, though the prospects of a settlement were good, by the middle of April, 1898, the negotiations had been wrecked, through the want of any purposeful and practical policy in those conducting affairs in Berlin.

Prince Bülow had the year before taken over the Chancellorship, Freiherr von Marschall having been transferred to the Embassy at Constantinople. Meantime the

irresistible spell that the Muscovite has always been able to cast over Berlin by the charm of a carrot under the nose, and a Cossack whip behind, was at this juncture more invincible than ever. That Bismarck as early as 1875 had recognised the great danger to the German Empire of the steadily swelling flood of Russian Imperialism and Pan-Slavism, and had consequently laboured indefatigably for an alliance with Great Britain, was either unknown to or ignored by the gentry of the Wilhelmstrasse.

Early in April, 1898, I gave a small dinner at my house for the Ambassador; to which Alfred Rothschild, the Duke of Devonshire, Joseph Chamberlain, Harry Chaplin and Admiral Lord Charles Beresford were invited. News had just arrived from China about fresh encroachments of the Russians, which had much disquieted the minds of the members of the British Government. All through dinner, and for long after, the situation in the Far East and the state of the negotiations with Germany was discussed by Hatzfeldt and Chamberlain. As Chamberlain reported very unfavourably on the progress that was being made, and said he feared that Russian diplomacy must have got wind of the negotiations, Alfred Rothschild proposed that I should go over to Homburg to give them a stimulus. Lord Charles Beresford, who was intending to visit China that summer, offered to come too, in order to inform the Kaiser as to the danger that threatened European commerce in the Far East. It was finally arranged that I should go and that the Admiral should follow if necessary. On my reporting the matter to my Ambassador he quite agreed as to my going but deprecated Lord Charles being included, as certain fanatical Anglophobes in the Kaiser's entourage might make capital out of it and bring undue pressure on the Kaiser. Since I was standing as an Independent in Homburg at the impending elections, he advised me to make this the official pretext for my journey.

I accordingly travelled over to Homburg, wrote my name at the Palace and was asked to dinner the following day.

After dinner the Kaiser took me out with him on the terrace of the Castle. We walked up and down together for more than an hour, while I put him *au courant* as to the course of the negotiations, as well as in other London news. The Kaiser fully agreed with Count Hatzfeldt in his general estimate of the situation ; moreover, he showed himself excellently well informed on many other questions. So that when I left him late that evening I was very well satisfied with the result of my mission ; and I felt almost certain that the London negotiations for an Anglo-German understanding in China and for an eventual alliance would lead to a favourable result.

But scarcely a week had passed after my return when my Chief told me in a despairing voice that it was no good going on with the negotiations, as the Wilhelmstrasse and above all Wilhelm seemed to be definitely against an understanding with England. And I have never succeeded in learning what the new influence was that had got the upper hand with the Kaiser. But I had learnt my lesson that Wilhelm's policy was the point of view of the last comer.

Immediately on my return from Homburg I had reported to my Chief, to Alfred Rothschild and to Prince Münster in Paris. I make the following extract from Münster's reply :

Paris, 14*th April*, 1898.

DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN,

Thank you for your interesting news from Homburg. I am well aware that Bismarck always desired an alliance with England, and, because he couldn't get it, his choleric temperament made him often very anti-British. This was evident in his Hamburg utterances of latter years. But, when Lothar Bucher appeared suddenly in London on a secret mission from Bismarck to discuss with me the possibility of an alliance, I strongly advised him to

take no step in this direction because I knew that England was not then ready for it. All the same such steps were taken and Bucher got a severe snub. This however did not deter Bismarck from trying again and again. Possibly England is now ripening for alliance. It would anyhow be a blessing for the whole world if Germany and England could get together and seal a firm alliance. It would above all be in the interests of both nations. Lord Spencer, whom I have just seen, believes the British Government is ready to make us the most extensive concessions; but he is in the Opposition and could give me no details. It was very right of you to inform me on broad lines of what is going on between London and Berlin. Now at least I know what line to take here. Of late Holstein has again cut off my communications and he now gives me no information about anything but what strictly concerns Paris. Until I got your letter I was groping in the dark, with no idea on what general lines our policy was now moving. Holstein must settle with his own conscience, if he has such a thing, as to how he can justify leaving me at this important post without information, to gratify his personal spite. It's lucky that Hatzfeldt, at least, can keep up personal intercourse with this inscrutable oddity. By doing so he has succeeded in preventing much mischief, and in correcting many blunders of the "Central Cattle Market." But I don't envy him the way he has to trim his course at every turn in order to make any way at all. And what I most fear is that our megalomaniac naval authorities, with their usual want of judgment and common sense, will try to profit by the Spanish-American War to make some dangerous hash or other in the Pacific. One of our rabid naval heroes was here the other day and dined with me. It was heartrending to have to listen to his arrogant ravings. I did give him one or two for himself; but I fear it will do him no good and he will in return

poison the Kaiser against me—not that I care about that! *

I am not sure whether you are right in standing for a seat in the Reichstag. There is much to be said for it; but, with the wretched village-pump politics carried on by those gentlemen, it is no enviable job to play the prophet. So think twice about it, and either stay where you are or come to me in Paris. In my time there were in the Reichstag quite a number of independent characters; but the old lot have died off and the younger generation is very second-rate and soft.

Your letter was handed to me personally by your German-American friend, and you need not be afraid of personal letters to me being opened by anyone else. My staff are at present quite reliable, but one of them might gossip in Berlin, so I talk of your letters to none of them. It is quite indifferent to me what Holstein might hear, but it is very important for you not to make an enemy of him. I send this through little Betzold, who is trotting over to London this week, and he will give it to your wife, if you are not yet back, so that it can't come into wrong hands.

Give my respects to your beautiful and charming wife. Tell her to come and lunch with me when she is on her next shopping expedition to Paris. And do you come with her if you can. Keep me informed as to how things go in London.

Yours very sincerely,

MÜNSTER.

At the end of April, 1898, there broke out the Spanish-American war about Cuba, which thus coincided with the storm and stress period of German colonial policy. The mania for acquiring new colonies at any price, no matter whether they had any value in themselves or

* I afterwards learnt that this was Admiral von Senden, naval aide-de-camp to the Kaiser, to whom I have occasion to refer later.

what international complications they might entail, was growing from day to day. And the Berlin authorities were outrivalling one another in pandering to the protagonists of this lust of territory—the naval and colonial cliques. Everyone wanted to play the Empire-builder and no one considered the possible danger to the Empire.

The fact that Germany possessed no Colonies was, of course, due to the Empire having been founded after the most desirable regions had been already bespoken. There were still available territories capable of economic exploitation; but, although Germans contributed to the opening up of unknown regions, especially in Africa, there was for long in Germany little realisation of the value of colonial possessions. When the Colonial Association was founded in 1882, Bismarck gave it little encouragement. Later he made concessions to pressure from this quarter; but, whatever views he may occasionally have expressed in public, he remained at the bottom of his heart an enemy to colonial expansion. "I am against it but I give way to it," was his usual way of referring to colonial expansion. Another favourite expression of his was, "I value Lord Salisbury's friendship more than twenty swamp colonies in Africa." Which did not mean that the great Chancellor underestimated the importance to the Empire of colonial possessions, but only that he put the safety of the Empire before them. For, after the war crisis of 1875, forced on him by the militarist faction, had clearly shown him the standing menace to the Empire from a coalition of Europe against it, he was determined to avoid everything that might lead to this. And the reference to Lord Salisbury's friendship meant that he knew well Russia would never help in German colonial expansion; and that a world policy outside Europe was only possible in amity and association with Great Britain. His various overtures for an alliance were therefore largely with a view to a methodical policy of colonial and commercial expansion in agreement with Great Britain; and this without endangering the Empire. After these overtures, and

especially Bucher's mission in 1875 had failed, there was nothing left for him but to abandon any planned and purposeful expansion and keep on terms with Russia. It was not until after his time that Great Britain was ready to combine with Germany and contribute to its systematic expansion. But by that time the purblindness of Bismarck's successors and the poisoning of German public opinion by Anglophobe propaganda had made the Bismarckian policy practically impossible. Indeed the helpless and hysterical expansionism of Wilhelm II had begun some months after Bismarck's dismissal and as early as the spring of 1890.

The first development of this new policy was the Heligoland agreement of July 1st, 1890. In this it was evident that Germany had got Heligoland at the cost of disproportionately important concessions in East Africa. We gave up Zanzibar, Witu, Uganda, and the other regions acquired by Karl Peters; and restricted ourselves to the littoral opposite Zanzibar For which most unfavourable bargain for us naval and colonial circles held Count Hatzfeldt responsible. And to this day the German public have not heard who was really to blame.

What happened was this. Count Hatzfeldt had originally been negotiating with Lord Salisbury on the basis of an exchange of Heligoland for German claims to Zanzibar. At first all went well; then Lord Salisbury suddenly drew back and could not be budged. The Ambassador was quite at a loss to understand this; when by chance he learnt that the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Malet, had reported a conversation with the Kaiser in which the latter had said that he didn't care what concessions he made in East Africa so long as he got Heligoland. Our Ambassador got the negotiations going again after this indiscretion, on lines that were relatively reasonable; when he suddenly got a telegram from Berlin that he must come to an immediate agreement no matter on what terms, because it suited the Kaiser's plans to attend the hoisting of the German flag

over Heligoland on a certain date, and the Court Chamberlain had already made the necessary arrangements.

In vain did the Ambassador, in great indignation, appeal to Holstein and the Chancellor to keep the Kaiser from butting in. Both Caprivi and von Marschall were too much afraid of losing their jobs to do anything.

It was not therefore surprising that the outbreak of the Spanish-American War was made the occasion of just such an ill-conceived and ill-considered intervention as Count Münster had apprehended after his conversation with the "rabid naval hero," Admiral von Senden. Here indeed was the "dangerous hash" that he had expected the naval and colonial fanatics to cook up for us in the Pacific. It brought us in sight of a German-American war, it alienated American public opinion for years, it suspended the secular feud between the United States and the United Kingdom, and it associated these two Powers in a common action against Germany in Samoa.

Then, to cap it all, the political authorities in Berlin gave way to the pressure of the naval and colonial cliques, and sent a German squadron to Manilla during the blockade of the Philippines by Admiral Dewey.

The excuse, and it was a poor one, advanced for this was that the American Minister in Berlin, Mr. Andrew White, had told the Wilhelmstrasse as his private opinion that America had no intention of annexing the Philippines and that Germany had an opening there. Though he afterwards denied this, there is no doubt he did say so. Indeed his own first secretary Mr. Jackson some years ago told me the story was authentic. But even so a diplomat of any capacity at all must have seen that the sudden appearance of a German fleet while the American fleet were bombarding Manilla must have aroused the deepest disquiet in the United States; and it is of very secondary importance whether Admiral Diederichs or Admiral Dewey had the best of their very sharp controversy in Manilla Roads. The main point is that nothing but sheer luck prevented this rash proceeding from ending

in a German-American war. When I was in New York in 1911 an American naval officer, who had been on the General Staff in Cuba, showed me a copy in his diary of a telegram from President McKinley to the Admiral commanding in Cuban waters. It was: "Don't risk a single ship. War with Germany imminent."

Besides, quite apart from the danger of war, the acquisition of the Philippines would have been a most impolitic and precarious enterprise. Invidious complications, illimitable expenditure and interminable native wars would have been the least of it. Above all, Germany would have come between two fires in the rivalry for the supremacy of the Pacific between America and Japan.

CHAPTER VI

BOER WAR, SAMOA, ETC.

THE Kruger telegram and other meddlings in the South African muddle had excited against Germany the bitter enmity of Cecil Rhodes, the powerful and impetuous President of the Chartered Company.

This remarkable man had gone out to South Africa as a boy, made a fortune, and become successively Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of Cape Colony. From that time on he was the moving spirit of British Imperialism in South Africa. He was a man of real imaginative genius, unscrupulous in action, but true to his ideals, and with an urgent desire for the progress of humanity.

As he had been implicated in the Jameson Raid in January, 1896, he had had to resign his official post; but he had remained the wire-puller of British South African policy. His relations with the Press gave him considerable control of public opinion, of which he made full use to prevent further German intervention in South African affairs. It was therefore of the greatest importance to Anglo-German relations that this influential personage should be reconciled. An opportunity for this presented itself in March, 1899, when Herr von Buchka, Director of the Colonial Section, met a certain Mr. Davis, a business associate of Cecil Rhodes, known in the city as "Napoleon" Davis, and got him to undertake to invite Cecil Rhodes to Berlin. Herr von Buchka undertook, for his part, that if Rhodes came he should be personally received by the Kaiser and other leading personages. Rhodes accordingly came to Berlin at the end of March, 1899, was duly received by the Kaiser and the more important members of the Government and returned to London in the best of good humours.

Herr von Buchka undoubtedly deserved great credit for his diplomacy. Though very generally and most unjustly

attacked he was anything but the worst Director the Colonial Section has had. His views were very sensible and based on a sound realisation of our position. They caused him indeed to fall a victim to the irresponsible ignorance of our colonial and naval wild-men.

After Cecil Rhodes had returned to London I visited him at the suggestion of Herr von Buchka and eventually made firm friends with him. From a sworn hater of Germany he became one of Germany's surest friends ; and he used his very great influence and his still greater energy for the bringing together of Great Britain and Germany in their political and economic relationships. It was he who, with Joseph Chamberlain, first envisaged and encouraged an association by treaty of England and Germany for all purposes. Unfortunately the realisation of such a programme required as a condition precedent a sound political instinct and an insight into British psychology on the part of the leading statesmen of Germany.

The great British Minister, Joseph Chamberlain, resembled Cecil Rhodes in many respects, especially in imagination and initiative ; and as Chamberlain had been at the Colonial Office since 1895 they had had much to say to one another. Both men especially detested the procedures and poses of the old traditional diplomacy with its finessing and bluffing. " Let us lay the cards on the table " might have been the motto for all the negotiations they conducted. And on this account they could not get on at all with the diplomats of the old school.

I first met Chamberlain in August, 1889, at the American watering place, Newport ; and after coming to London soon found myself on the most friendly footing with him. He was unquestionably the most energetic and enterprising personality of the Salisbury government that came into power in 1895 ; and in the autumn of 1899 he and Cecil Rhodes together were carrying Great Britain to war with the Boers.

If ever there was a war that can be described as a historical necessity it was the South African War that

dragged on from October, 1899, to June, 1902. But the Boers, by a large expenditure on propaganda, conducted by the clever but quite unscrupulous Dr. Leyds, had succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of the undiscerning masses of Europe. Few of those who came under the spell of Dr. Leyds and his agents could see that Great Britain had to choose between coercing the independent Boer Republic or being itself evicted from South Africa. Great Britain was indeed faced by a long-standing and wide-spread conspiracy to unite all the Afrikanders of South Africa for the establishment of an independent Afrikander State under Boer leadership, and for the expulsion of the English from their possessions. The large sums acquired by the Boers through the alienation and exploitation of their gold mines and diamond fields were used for military armaments and political agitation. The Jameson Raid, in which Cecil Rhodes was prompter and Chamberlain producer, was certainly a badly bungled business ; but does not deserve the severe moral censure that it has generally incurred. The conspiracy of Kruger and his followers was already notorious and, had the raid succeeded, a South African war with all its toll of death and disaster could probably have been avoided.

In April, 1899, soon after his return from Berlin, we gave a dinner and reception in honour of Cecil Rhodes. Among the Ministers present was Chamberlain and, after dinner, a long conversation ensued between him and Rhodes. In the course of it Chamberlain asked Rhodes what he thought of the prospects of the negotiations then proceeding in Bloemfontein, which it was generally supposed the Boers were only prolonging in order to complete their military preparations. I overheard Rhodes reply, " Nothing but the sword can save the situation in South Africa, and if we delay much longer we are done for." " That is my view too," said Chamberlain, " but will it be possible at such short notice to convince our public opinion of the danger we are in ? " To which Rhodes rejoined, " Whether we

want to or not, we must strike as soon as possible, or we shall not only lose South Africa but also our prestige with our other colonies."

From that moment I knew that the outbreak of the South African War was only a question of time. I reported in this sense to Berlin, and recommended that the Imperial Government should at once come to a decision as to its attitude with regard to a war in South Africa. I suggested that public opinion in Germany, misled by the Kruger telegram and the Boer propaganda, should be re-orientated; so that in case of war the German people should not be swept by an orgy of sentiment into hostility to England. But I got no answer. The German Government did not believe in the probability of war; and, when finally the Wilhelmstrasse was forced to try and change the direction of public opinion, it was of course too late. We then realised fully the pernicious effect of the Kruger telegram. The German people had been given a violent impetus in the wrong direction, a sound policy in regard to the war had been seriously prejudiced and the excellent opportunities of exploiting the situation in favour of Germany could no longer be properly made use of.

I have already indicated to what an extent Anglo-German relations depended on the peculiar mentality of Holstein. If he once conceived a suspicion of any foreign Statesman it was a troublesome and a tedious business to overcome it. But the strangest as well as the strongest of his cranky prejudices was his dislike for Lord Salisbury. An unjust and ill-judged opinion of the English leader runs like a red thread through all his correspondence. Moreover he never would recognise that Lord Salisbury, in consequence of great and repeated provocation from Wilhelm, was himself influenced by personal feeling. It was indeed positively absurd the way Holstein made a point of representing every proposal from Lord Salisbury as a devilishly planned trap to involve Germany in difficulties or otherwise damage us. Whereas the fact was that Lord Salisbury originally had

had nothing but the friendliest feelings for Germany and only latterly had been brought into an irritated frame of mind by the incalculable and ill-contriven antics of the Kaiser and his advisers. I have already reported Lord Salisbury's *mot*, "That he did not work for the King of Prussia." Another phrase he used to me was, "That he wouldn't be dictated to by Berlin with a stop-watch," Thus did Wilhelm and Holstein do everything they could to antagonise and annoy the British Premier and his colleagues.

And the worst of it was that this in the end affected the confidential relationship between Count Hatzfeldt and the English Statesman. Nor was it to be wondered at that the Ambassador, whose health was beginning to fail, sometimes lost his nerve under the perpetual hysterical tirades daily telegraphed him from Berlin. So that in the summer of 1900 during the Samoa crisis, in which Great Britain and the United States combined against Germany, whole weeks passed in which the Premier and the Ambassador saw nothing of each other.

What most annoyed Lord Salisbury were the threats that Berlin more than once conveyed through unofficial channels. Holstein, for example, notified Lord Salisbury through intermediaries, who of course took their historic mission pretty seriously, that the Kaiser was contemplating breaking with England, unless a settlement of the Samoa question favourable to Germany was concluded in short order. This was looked on by Holstein and his henchmen as a great statesmanlike "coup." But what was the real result? Lord Salisbury simply declined at once to treat any more with the German Government. As the Duke of Devonshire told me, Lord Salisbury had said to him at this time with a sarcastic smile: "I am waiting daily for Berlin's threatened ultimatum about Samoa. Unfortunately, it has not as yet arrived. For Germany, if it don't send the ultimatum, will miss a splendid opportunity for getting rid respectably, not only of Samoa, but of all the colonies that have cost it so much. We English would then be in the position to come to a

permanent understanding with France by means of satisfactory colonial concessions."

It was at this time, when the members of both Governments were mutually exasperated with one another, that the ailing Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, asked me to try to relieve the steadily increasing tension about Samoa by getting into direct touch with Chamberlain. It is to be remembered that from April, 1898, to December, 1899, I was no longer attached to the Embassy, nor was I even in government service ; but at the Count's wish I arranged to go to Berlin in September, 1899, to point out to the Wilhelmstrasse the gravity of the situation, and to ask for instructions as to re-opening negotiations about Samoa with Chamberlain and thus restoring relations with Lord Salisbury.

A few days before my departure for Berlin I got a letter from Chamberlain asking me to come and see him about an important colonial question between Great Britain and Germany. This I at once submitted to Count Hatzfeldt and got in reply a request to inform Mr. Chamberlain that the Ambassador would be glad to re-enter into direct communication with him. On my meeting Chamberlain at his room in the House he told me that the matter in question was certainly not one of great political importance, but that the way in which it was being handled by us might very easily have a bad effect on Anglo-German relations in general. The trouble was that in the International Conference on the African Liquor Traffic sitting at Brussels the German representative, Dr. Göhring, had repeatedly fallen foul of the British delegate, with the result that the whole proceedings had come to a standstill. Chamberlain accordingly asked for my good offices, either in getting the German Government to recall their delegate, or to induce him to modify his aggressive attitude towards his British colleague. I said I would do what I could, and reported to the Ambassador. He said he was not surprised at the difficulties in Brussels; as Dr. Göhring was not a suitable delegate, being a good statistician without any knowledge of affairs. He himself had often

had difficulties with him when in the Foreign Office. He accordingly sent a telegram to Holstein asking that he be recalled, or that the diplomatic business of the delegation be put in other hands. He also asked me to move in the same sense when I got to Berlin.

On reaching Berlin I went to see Holstein. I first of all reported on the situation in South Africa and conveyed to him my absolute conviction that a war there was imminent. To which he only replied that my views were "naive." He used this same expression on various subsequent occasions. It was "naive" for example when in January, 1904, I sent in a memorandum predicting the imminent outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. And when in May, 1903, I reported the secret negotiations between Great Britain and France as to Egypt and Morocco, Holstein minuted my memorandum, "It is naive to think that an arrangement is possible between England and France as to Morocco." Finally, when I predicted the Anglo-Russian agreement over Persia, Holstein wrote on the despatch, "This is naive beyond all bounds." It was indeed these *idées fixés* of Holstein that made official relations with him so difficult, and unfortunately Prince Bülow always took his view.

But in the matter of Dr. Göhring Holstein declared himself ready to come to the rescue as proposed by Count Hatzfeldt. It was accordingly decided the following day to put the charge of the diplomatic affairs of the Brussels delegation into my hands; leaving only the technical details to Dr. Göhring. And, as I had reason to know that the British delegate at the conference felt himself personally insulted by Dr. Göhring, I proposed that I should try to settle all the contentious points personally with Chamberlain, which was approved.

When I later was discussing the matter with Chamberlain he told me that the English delegate had in the meantime expressed himself very freely about Dr. Göhring. What had given most irritation had been the sudden raising by Dr. Göhring of the Indian opium question, and his severe strictures and statistical attacks on the opium

trade. Now what in the world had we to do with the opium trade in India, where we had neither political nor economic interests? And what in the universe had it to do with the African Liquor Traffic? The whole thing was a typical example of an undiplomatic direction of affairs by a Senior Clerk of the Commercial Department of the Wilhelmstrasse.

After calming down Chamberlain by treating the whole thing as a joke we got to business; and in less than half an hour all the contentious points were cleared off. The next day I took Dr. Göhring with me, and a protocol was drawn up. The morning after that I heard from Chamberlain that he had telegraphed to the British delegate at Brussels to support there the terms we had agreed on; and, as Berlin was more than content with the settlement, there was an end of the matter.

At the same time—August, 1899—that I brought this little matter up in Berlin, I also asked for instructions in case the Samoa negotiations could be resumed with Chamberlain. I found opinion in the Wilhelmstrasse very pessimistic. But Holstein did not even yet appear to have any clear idea how dangerous a situation he had created by threatening Lord Salisbury through unofficial intermediaries with a rupture of diplomatic relations.

There ensued a series of conferences in the Foreign Office presided over by Holstein and attended by me. I myself took the line that we should renounce our third share in Samoa and receive from England, in return, colonial concessions in other quarters. In doing this I had especially in mind the private cipher telegram sent by Prince Bismarck to my chief in Washington, Count Louis Arco-Valley, during the Samoa trouble of 1889. It contained the following passage: "I personally should be in favour of getting out of Samoa altogether, if it can be in any way done decently. For it will never have any real practical value for us; and it can only serve to prejudice our relations with America and perhaps also later those with Australia, and consequently with England." Unfortunately this good advice of the old

Prince had not been followed, through the fault of Herbert Bismarck, then Foreign Secretary; and a triple administration by America, England and Germany had been established. But I now succeeded on the strength of this telegram of Bismarck's in carrying through the conference that Germany should declare itself ready to renounce its third share in Samoa; in return for some such compensation as the British Solomon Islands and the fertile delta of the Volta, the latter being of value to Togoland.

On returning to London early in September I at once wrote to Chamberlain that I was happy to be able to report to him that Berlin fully understood the great difficulty with which England was faced in South Africa; and that, in the case of a South African war, I was of the opinion that London might rely confidently on the benevolent neutrality of the German Government. But that, as he was well aware, there were certain colonial questions which, if it were at all possible, should now be settled in the interest of Anglo-German relations. I then asked him for an appointment to discuss them. But had I drafted this letter to Chamberlain on the lines laid down for me in Berlin, all bristling with clumsy menaces, he would no doubt have refused to reopen relations with me. Berlin certainly understood very little of the psychology of British Statesmen. If only our German Michael could some day grasp the fact that diplomacy is chess and not skittles.

A few days later I got an answer from Chamberlain, then in his country house at Birmingham, which contained the following passage: "I shall be very glad to see you and to hear how things are going in Berlin. The trouble with the Transvaal is really a good opportunity of showing some sympathy and thereby removing all the remains of former irritation." The ensuing interview with him, on September 20th, was the beginning of a negotiation in which I met him two or three times weekly, receiving my instructions through the Ambassador from Berlin; and this led towards the middle of November to a satis-

factory settlement in the shape of the Anglo-German-American Treaty as to Samoa. But again and again these negotiations were so impeded and imperilled by Berlin that both Chamberlain and myself were more than once on the point of breaking them off. I shall however report here only one or two of the more important incidents; such as have a bearing on the general political situation of the day. But it is to be observed that my negotiations with Chamberlain on the affairs of Samoa led to a consideration of the advisability of a general Anglo-German Alliance.

Early in October an agreement was reached between Chamberlain and myself on the basis of Germany renouncing its third share in Samoa and receiving in return important colonial concessions, among which were the Solomon Islands and the Volta Delta. This agreement was embodied in a memorandum to which Chamberlain had appended the following observations: that the British concessions were of British territories actually in British possession, whereas the German concession was only of a share of joint rights in neutral territories; and that the trade of the Volta Delta was worth more than that of the whole of Togoland. In another communication Mr. Chamberlain indicated the concessions that would be required of Germany should we prefer to obtain sole control of islands in the Samoa group.

Count Hatzfeldt telegraphed this to Berlin and I was sent for to discuss it. I found the Wilhelmstrasse strongly for accepting it and Holstein especially in favour of it. But, on the Secretary of the Navy, Admiral von Tirpitz, hearing of it, he at once sat down and wrote off an urgent memorandum to the Kaiser, condemning the whole convention and insisting on the acquisition of Samoa by Germany. The Kaiser, who had already agreed to the convention in principle, thereupon changed his mind. Holstein, on seeing von Tirpitz's memorandum, described it in a telegram to Count Hatzfeldt as "a document of frothy flummery, sauced with bloody tears to suit the Kaiser's taste." And, as the Colonial Section

of the Foreign Office was very well satisfied with the British concessions and the whole Wilhelmstrasse was extremely anxious to have the wretched Samoa question finally done with, I was sent to Admiral von Tirpitz to get him to withdraw from the position he had taken up with the Kaiser.

I certainly couldn't say that my reception by the Admiral was over and above courteous. He lectured me in a dictatorial tone on the foreign policy that Germany must adopt; referring at one moment to "energetic action against England and America," and at another to "the shadow dance that was to be performed by German diplomacy until our naval arrangements were completed." I was never allowed to get in a word. And the Admiral finally declared categorically that there could be no question of surrendering our third share in Samoa; but that we must either have Samoa itself or at least Zanzibar and some other naval station. And, as I saw that there could be no discussion on any practicable and reasonable basis, I took my leave; without having even attempted to argue with this Lord High Admiral.

In a session of the Colonial Council on October 16th, it was decided by a majority, after a long debate, to approve the basis of the agreement concluded by Chamberlain and myself. But although the Secretary of State, Count Bülow, had presided at this Council and supported the agreement, he eventually decided for its rejection; finding himself in regard to it in a very difficult position, not only in respect of the Kaiser but in respect of the whole public opinion of Germany. For even though the great majority of our pothouse politicians did not know whether Samoa was a fish or a fowl or a foreign queen, they were so worked on by the colonial and naval fanatics of the Tirpitz Press that they shouted all the more loudly that, whatever else it was, it was German and must for ever remain German.

Moreover, as the Chancellor, Prince von Hohlenlohe, had long been ripe for retirement, there was already hot competition for his post. The next in succession was

naturally the Foreign Secretary, Count Bülow; but he had two dangerous rivals, one of them the Secretary of the Admiralty, Admiral von Tirpitz, and the other Herbert Bismarck. The latter, since the death of his father the year before, had re-established normal relations with the Kaiser; and I found Holstein in the greatest perturbation on account of Herbert's good prospect of securing the Chancellorship. Because, as Holstein assured me, if Herbert Bismarck became Chancellor, he, Holstein, Hatzfeldt, and several others, would certainly lose their jobs. Consequently the course of the Samoa question might easily decide whether there would be a radical change of *personnel* in the Government or no.

There followed a variety of conferences in the Wilhelmstrasse, in which the new political developments were discussed; and I was instructed to let Chamberlain know that I should shortly return to London in order to negotiate with him on a new basis. But in the meantime the South African War, that Holstein had refused to believe in, had broken out, and the British Government got in consequence an acute attack of nerves. Indeed it was already being considered in London whether, in the case of a failure to agree with Germany as to localisation of the war, an attempt should not be made to get into touch with France and Russia by conceding them whatever might be necessary. Chamberlain was however not disposed to make further concessions to Germany in the Samoa question beyond those agreed on with me; as I was informed by a telegram from Alfred Rothschild, dated October 16th, 1899. But, under the pressure of the artificial agitation in the Press and in public opinion, the Wilhelmstrasse decided to proceed with negotiations on the basis that Germany should acquire the greater part of the Samoa group; having naturally to make considerable concessions in return elsewhere.

While I was in Berlin there appeared there suddenly the notorious French *agent-provocateur*, Jules Hansen, who tried to get speech with the Foreign Secretary.

Fortunately Count Bülow refused to receive him. His object was to ascertain whether the German Government might possibly be prepared to participate in an intervention with respect to the South African War; and although he was not received by the Secretary of State or by anyone else in authority he shortly afterwards tried to convey the impression to the British Government that the German Government had made to France a definite proposal for intervention, which had been indignantly rejected. I had however already anticipated M. Jules Hansen by informing Chamberlain and others of his unsuccessful intrigue in Berlin. Consequently his subsequent attempts of the same nature were equally unsuccessful. But what the cleverness of this French agent was unable to effect was brought about by the clumsiness of Wilhelm II.

On October 17th I was to report to the Kaiser at Potsdam before returning to London. I was received in the ante-room by General von Plessen, the General Adjutant. He was in a very excited state of mind and told me I must without fail advise the Kaiser to postpone his journey to England that had been arranged for the middle of November. Because, now that England had got involved in war with the Boers, Germany must seize the opportunity to declare war itself. I said to the General, in reply, that I should advise the Kaiser as the interests of my country in my opinion required; and that I must decline to allow anyone to dictate to me what I was to say to His Majesty. Just then the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral von Bendermann, came in. General von Plessen at once turned to him with the words, "Now is the time for us to let fly at England." And when the Admiral replied, "Well, I don't quite see how your Excellency can think that, seeing that we haven't got any ships," General von Plessen broke out with, "That doesn't matter, we have only to throw a division across to settle England." And the Admiral saying, in some astonishment, that he didn't quite understand what the General meant, the latter went on, "Well, then, if

that's no good, we shall join with Russia and march against Egypt and India." But the further developments of the General's strategy cannot be reported, as I was called in to the Kaiser's study.

The Kaiser invited me to take a walk with him in the Park, and we had hardly begun to speak of Samoa before I clearly saw that it would be hopeless to get him to change his mind about the Chamberlain proposals. The Admiral's "frothy flummery" had made too deep an impression on him; and any such attempt would not have had the smallest chance of success. I therefore concentrated on making it clear to him that in view of the prevailing conditions he must at all costs carry out his visit to England. For he had already threatened more than once, under Anglophobe pressure, that he would not come to England until the Samoa question had been settled in a manner satisfactory to Germany: and he was now contemplating giving up his visit altogether under the importunities of General von Plessen and his like. Had he done so it would undoubtedly have been looked on by England as a direct affront.

Fortunately, the Kaiser was, at the bottom of his heart, very anxious to carry out his English visit and only intimidated by the anglophobia prevailing in Germany. He had moreover in his entourage some prudent and perspicacious advisers; among them Count August von Eulenburg, Court Chamberlain and Minister of the Royal Household, who was strongly in favour of the visit to England.

On my return to London I found it by no means easy to set going the negotiations by which Germany was to be given the greater part of the Samoan group. Chamberlain was overwhelmed with business, owing to the war; and was, in addition, much exasperated by the attitude of a large part of the German Press. For leading German papers were being supplied by Dr. Leyds and the other Boer agents with tendentious and untruthful telegrams, and were taking sides markedly against England. By the middle of November, however,

I succeeded in bringing the negotiation to an agreement. Germany received the principal Samoa Islands together with Apia. America got the two smaller islands, and England, Tonga. But on the other hand, Germany had, among other concessions, to cede to England all its Solomon Islands, with the exception of Bougainville.

CHAPTER VII

THE KAISER, COWES AND WINDSOR

SINCE that fatal August of 1895, in which the Kaiser had offended the Prince of Wales and Lord Salisbury, Wilhelm had been unable to pay his annual visit to Cowes. Just think what that meant! For four whole years, the "travelling Emperor" had not even once crossed the Channel. This dire deprivation had so got on Wilhelm's nerves that in the summer of 1899 he had Count Hatzfeldt surreptitiously sounded to find out whether Queen Victoria could be induced to send him an official invitation to England. The Ambassador thereupon sent for me to consult with me what could be done; and when we met we could scarcely refrain from both bursting out laughing. We finally decided that I should on the next opportunity find out, with all proper precautions, what the feeling of the Prince of Wales was towards his nephew.

I happened to meet the Prince that same evening at the Marlborough Club and we began to talk about things in general. Remembering what the Prince had said to me in 1895 about Wilhelm II having made himself "Boss of Cowes," I led the conversation to the Regatta, and remarked what a pleasure it had been to me to see how much the Prince had enjoyed his stay at Cowes during the last few years. He at once saw what I was aiming at and said: "Yes. The last few years have been quite tolerable at Cowes. At least, there was no more of that perpetual firing of salutes, cheering and other tiresome disturbances." When I laughingly observed that it was now fully four years since the Kaiser had been allowed to cross the Channel, he chuckled heartily. Thereupon I went on to the effect that public opinion seemed now to have quieted down over the Kruger telegram, and that it might be possible perhaps for the Kaiser to visit the Queen, even if he did not come to Cowes. "Let him come," said the Prince, "so far

as I am concerned. But don't let him make any more bombastic speeches, because the public over here won't have it at any price."

I reported this to Count Hatzfeldt. Encouraged by the Prince's observations to me, the Ambassador approached him directly and received in a few days an official invitation of the Kaiser to Windsor, for the middle of November of that year. "Well, there he has his invitation at last," said the Count to me, "but the middle of November is a long way off and much can happen before then." Indeed the Kaiser had only had his invitation a few weeks before he began to threaten that he wouldn't go unless the Samoan question was settled as Germany wanted.

My wife and I had taken Solent Lodge for the Cowes week of 1899. The Prince of Wales arrived, established himself as usual on board the "Osborne" and invited me to dinner that same evening. He then told me there had been talk of the Kaiser coming to Cowes that year but that the plan had been abandoned and he would not come before November, as originally planned. As he told me this it was not difficult to see from his expression how pleased he was that the Cowes week was to be spared the visit of his nephew.

As it had been a long-standing arrangement that he and the Duke of York were to dine with us one evening at Solent Lodge, he asked me whether he and the Duke, with their respective suites, should dine with us the following evening. The list I got from the Equerry made up sixteen, and when I got home my wife was at first horrified, for our household had only just arrived from London and we had already a house-party of ten. However she managed to deal not only with this but with another difficulty that presented itself. One of our house-party was the well-known Admiral, Lord Charles Beresford. Between him and the Prince of Wales there had been since 1891 a deadly feud, as they had fallen out over the favours of one of the best-known Society beauties of that day. On the morning of the day on

which the Prince was to dine with us, the Marquis de Soveral appeared, and said he came on a very delicate mission. The Prince had heard that Lord Charles was one of my house-party and he was very unwilling to meet him. So he, Soveral, had accordingly come to see whether this difficulty could not be diplomatically dealt with. But what was I to do? I couldn't after all tell my friend the Admiral that as the Prince of Wales was coming to dinner he must dine upstairs. So Soveral and I walked up and down the Esplanade and racked our brains in vain. While still so engaged we saw a well-known London hostess hurrying up to us. Said she: "I hear that dear old Charles Beresford is staying with you. I have just written and asked him to dine with us to-night on our yacht. I hope that you and the Baroness can spare him for this night." To which I replied: "It is of course a very great sacrifice to let you have Charlie Beresford this evening, but to please you we will spare him." The dinner eventually went off well, the Prince, the Duke, and the other guests were all in the best of humours and none of them left Solent Lodge before three in the morning.

Although the Kaiser was not present in person he had sent the "Meteor" to take part in the races. The "Meteor" had won the Queen's Cup; and the Prince of Wales had let me know that he would congratulate the Kaiser in his speech at the banquet of the Royal Yacht Squadron on the evening of the race for the King's Cup. He also told me that I was to reply. Accordingly, after congratulating the Kaiser, the Prince expressed his regret that the latter had been unable to accept the Queen's invitation to Osborne for the Cowes week. Nor was this speech without a certain political purpose. For after dinner the Prince said to me when we were alone, "Whatever I may think personally about my nephew, I wanted to say something publicly to show that the relations between the two Governments had again been put upon a normal and friendly basis."

Indeed that August evening it really looked as though

the old difference between the Prince and the Kaiser were as good as forgotten, and as though a new epoch of peace and friendship was beginning between the rulers and the peoples of Great Britain and Germany. But these rosy dreams fled with the dawn. For the very next morning there was posted up in the hall of the Yacht Club a long telegram from the Kaiser to the Committee of the Royal Yacht Squadron in which he roundly abused the Race Committee. One passage of this telegram ran thus: "Your handicaps are perfectly appalling." This was a cruel blow, for I knew what effect it would have on British psychology. That same afternoon the Prince of Wales sent asking me to come to him on the "Osborne." When he saw me he shook his head and said: "It is really enough to make one despair. Here am I taking the greatest trouble to put the Kaiser straight to some extent with the British public after all that has happened of late years—and here he is beginning again to throw mud at us." Then he went on: "You know very well yourself what will be the effect on the British of such complaints as the Kaiser has made to the Committee of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and how sensitive we are about our national reputation for fair play in Sport. Besides, I really don't know what he means. The best proof that our handicaps are fair is that his 'Meteor' won the Queen's Cup yesterday." I told the Prince that I quite agreed with him, and begged him to see that the telegram was not communicated to the Press; upon which he said that he would at once go on shore and do his best. Meeting me that evening he told me he thought he had succeeded, and he added, "I don't envy you that Sisyphus job that you have with the Kaiser."

The visit of Wilhelm II in November, 1899, was perhaps the only one that was on political grounds really welcome to the British Government. For the simple fact that the Kaiser should have made an official visit to England with his Foreign Secretary, after the outbreak of the South African War, was enough to make it clear to the world that the alleged European Coalition in favour of the Boers

had no real existence. But before we could finally bring off this visit one more serious difficulty had to be dealt with.

On the list of the numerous suite that was to accompany the Kaiser being submitted to the Court, the Prince of Wales discovered that it contained the name of an Imperial aide-de-camp, Admiral Freiherr von Senden. For this man the Prince had a quite peculiar aversion. Von Senden had been sent on many occasions to England; and, returning from one such mission not long after the Kruger telegram, he had reported to the Kaiser as to the strong feeling against him, not only in public opinion, but above all in the Royal family. Among other gossip he repeated were remarks alleged to have been made in mixed company by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York about Wilhelm II, which were certainly by no means of a flattering character. Of course it was quite proper of the Admiral to report fully everything he heard and honestly believed; but perhaps he went somewhat too far; and he might have abstained from reporting private matters that could only aggravate the acute tension between the Kaiser and his English relations. For the result was that Wilhelm, in a state of great excitement, at once wrote off to his uncle and took him severely to task. To this the Prince of Wales retorted that the stories told about him by Admiral von Senden had no basis whatever in fact.

Immediately on seeing the list the Prince of Wales telephoned for me to go and see him at Marlborough House. He said that, after what had happened, the Kaiser could not possibly be accompanied on his visit to England by this person; and that he, the Prince, would absolutely decline to receive such a "*polin*" as the Admiral had shown himself to be. He asked me to do quietly what I could to prevent his coming. I could only reply that I would not fail to do so during my visit to Berlin.

At Berlin I mentioned the matter to the Foreign Secretary, who took it up with the High Court Chamber-

lain; and I also spoke to the Kaiser myself about it. The Kaiser was then very much in two minds about his English visit, and answered me very shortly, "If I go to England at all this autumn I shall take who I like with me."

On returning to London I went at once to Sir Francis Knollys and told him that I had encountered the greatest difficulties with the Kaiser in the Senden affair. I begged him to get the Prince of Wales to withdraw his veto. He replied by asking me to go and see the Prince.

I found him very anxious to hear what I thought was the official view in Berlin concerning England. He said that certain political circles in England were afraid that the German Government might give way to public opinion and eventually commit the folly of officially taking sides with the Boers. He had at first been unwilling to believe this, but had the day before got news from Petersburg that made him think there might be something in it.

This statement of the Prince of Wales confirmed the suspicion I had long held that the Russians were intriguing strenuously in London to bring Germany under suspicion, and that the British Royal Family itself was being used by Petersburg as an instrument for the prevention, or at least for the prejudicing, of the Kaiser's visit to England. And they were working just as hard in Berlin as in London. I accordingly replied to the Prince that all rumours circulated by Petersburg were pure inventions with this object. I could moreover assure him that not only the Russians but the French were doing all they could in Berlin to ensure the complete isolation of England. I also told him about the visit of the *agent-provocateur*, Jules Hansen, to Berlin—of his overtures for a joint intervention—as also of Berlin's refusal to have anything to do with him. This last in particular seemed to make an impression on the Prince, and he broke out excitedly: "I am delighted that we have had a good talk about this. I no longer have any doubt at all that everything that comes from Petersburg and Paris is only a low intrigue to set England and Germany against one another."

When I at last brought the conversation to the *affaire* Senden the Prince said: "I should be awfully glad to give way in this matter; but you can have no idea how I should dislike having to meet the Admiral. Do try once more to get the Kaiser to leave him at home." I said I would try, though I did not think I should succeed.

That same day I was at a small luncheon party at Devonshire House. The Duchess was one of the cleverest and most capable women that I ever met in my life. And she consequently had not only a social but a political position such as few women have enjoyed in modern times. After lunch the Devonshires took me to a small room where there was no one but ourselves and began to ask me about my visit to Berlin. They put the same questions that the Prince had asked me in the morning, and referred to the same rumours. I told them not only what I had told the Prince, but also what passed between myself and him, including the *affaire* Senden. Thereupon the Duke said to the Duchess that she must do everything she could to get the Prince to give up his insistence on this point. She said she was going to meet the Prince shortly at Newmarket and would then try to persuade him. I said that in the meantime I would take no further steps. Three days later I got the following letter from her:*

> DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN,
>
> The Prince of Wales was charming and only wants to do everything he can to make the Kaiser's visit pleasant; but, as to the gentleman in question, he wants if possible to have an apology from him. He suggests that you should see Sir Francis Knollys.
>
> LOUISE DEVONSHIRE.

I found Sir Francis already had his instructions, which were: That the Prince would withdraw his veto as to the Admiral being included in the Kaiser's suite on condition—that he apologised—that he remained at Bucking-

* Translated from the German.

ham Palace—that he only came to Windsor to attend the official dinner in honour of the Kaiser—and that under no condition should he accompany the Kaiser to Sandringham. On these Heads of Treaty the interminable negotiations proceeded; concurrently with those as to the new Samoa Treaty with Chamberlain. Once more, early in November, I was sent for by the Prince of Wales who protested against the Kaiser's insistence on having the Admiral at Windsor. It was not until shortly before the visit that I was able to forward to the British Ambassador at Berlin the treaty concluded between the Prince and myself, under which Admiral von Senden was to be allowed to visit Windsor. I have given overmuch space to this incident; but it came very near stopping the Kaiser's visit at the last moment, with all the political consequences that would have been entailed.

The Kaiser and the Kaiserin, each accompanied by a large suite, arrived at Portsmouth on the "Hohenzollern" on November 19th, 1899. The Foreign Secretary, Count Bülow, and, of course, Admiral von Senden, were of the party.

The Imperial visitors were most heartily welcomed by the Royal Family, the Ministry, the Press and public opinion in general. Their official visit was regarded as a testimony of good feeling and friendship in the trial of strength with which the British Empire was faced in South Africa. The Kruger telegram and the other Imperial impetuosities were for the moment forgotten.

The ceremonial banquet in St. George's Hall at Windsor was attended by the whole Cabinet, and by many of the leading personages of the Empire. After a few days' stay at Windsor there followed a visit to the Prince and Princess of Wales at Sandringham. During the whole of both visits the relations between the Kaiser and his uncle the Prince were of the friendliest character, and not one single incident occurred to mar the complete harmony of the proceedings. On November 28th the Kaiser and Kaiserin left by special train to board the "Hohenzollern," at Port Victoria; and at the Kaiser's

request I remained with him until he sailed. The Ambassador's health had prevented him from attending on the Kaiser during his visit, and I had consequently represented the Embassy at Windsor and Sandringham.

On the first day of the visit I had received the following from Count Bülow:

Windsor, 20 *Nov.*, 1899.

It is with particular satisfaction that I have to inform you that His Imperial Majesty has deigned to confer on you the Cross of a Knight Commander of the Family Order of Hohenzollern.

I had previously received the following from Holstein:

Berlin, 22 *Sept.*, 1899.

I have been very pleased to learn from Hatzfeldt's reports how useful you are to him and how unassuming in respect of yourself. I can assure you now, and I am saying no more than I can make good, that much depends for you personally on the issue of the negotiations now proceeding.

I heard no more until Count Bülow suddenly announced to me after the ceremonial banquet at Windsor that it had been decided to appoint me First Secretary to the Embassy.

In spite of Holstein's letter this came as a complete surprise. I had never taken any steps to get re-appointed to the Government service, as my independent position suited me very well, and did not preclude me from helping my former Chief and serving my country as best I could. I had intended to remain in London until Anglo-German relations were again on a sound footing and then to travel. But after due reflection, and on my wife's advice, I decided to accept the post. And when my appointment was in due course officially announced there was a howl of indignation from the " Central Cattle

Market." My contemporaries in the Service, who were of course ignorant of what had led up to the appointment, raised a storm of protest, which had its reflection in the German Press, especially of course in the Anglophobe organs.

After the ceremonial banquet at Windsor I had had a long conversation with the Kaiser, in which we discussed the Samoan agreement, just concluded by me, the Franco-Russian intrigue in England against Germany, and the Morocco question. On my telling the Kaiser that Chamberlain had lately brought up the possibility of an Anglo-German agreement about Morocco, the Kaiser replied that he himself had never taken any particular interest in this question. When, as Prince of Prussia, he had been attached to the Foreign Office for instruction, he had heard a lot of talk about Morocco; but he had never understood why so much importance was assigned to it in German official quarters. I mention this here as evidence that the Kaiser was not directly to blame either for the disastrous Morocco policy of Holstein in 1905, or for the dangerous and idiotic action of von Bethmann-Hollweg and Kiderlen Wächter, at Agadir, in 1911. He was involved in both of these by his official advisers against his will, and without seeing what fatal effects these aberrations of German diplomacy must have on the peace of the world.

After the initialling of the Samoan agreement by Chamberlain and myself—it was not signed by Lord Salisbury and Count Hatzfeldt until some time later—I was asked to thank Chamberlain on behalf of Count Bülow for his good offices. The following correspondence then passed between us:

German Embassy, 9 *Nov.*, 1899.

DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN,

Count Bülow and Count Hatzfeldt have commissioned me to convey to you their thanks for your friendly attitude and for the great assistance you have been good enough to give in arriving at an

agreement between England and Germany as to Samoa. As a matter of fact this agreement does not only settle the wretched Samoa question but clears out of the way other acute antagonisms between the two countries in colonial questions.

Both Count Bülow and Count Hatzfeldt are fully aware that without your intervention the settlement of these questions would have been impossible, and they are consequently especially grateful to you.

Moreover, the conclusion of this agreement has considerably strengthened the position of Count Bülow, who, as you know, is well disposed towards England, as against less well-disposed quarters.

Count Bülow hopes that on his arrival in England with the Kaiser he may have the pleasure of making your acquaintance and of personally expressing to you his thanks.

Yours sincerely,

ECKARDSTEIN.

P.S.—I was much amused that the Anglo-German agreement should have been published on the very day Count Mouravieff arrived in Berlin.

Count Mouravieff, Russian Foreign Minister, had gone to Berlin from Paris to join the Tsar, then visiting the Kaiser, and to see what he could pick up; but got such a slap in the face from our Samoa agreement that he went straight on to Petersburg.

Here follows Chamberlain's reply to the above:

Highbury, 10 *Nov.*, 1899.

DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN,

Many thanks for your note. I appreciate highly the kind words of Count Hatzfeldt and Count Bülow and hope that I may have the pleasure of meeting the latter when he is in England.

Meantime I heartily congratulate you on the completion of the arrangement which will I hope do

much to fulfil your anticipations and link our two countries in closer bonds of friendship.

I know how sincerely you have laboured in this cause and I hope that your efforts will be properly appreciated The task of removing difficulties and of bringing the two countries together was not an easy one and I again congratulate you on the result.

Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

During my negotiations with Chamberlain over the Samoan question we had exchanged views over the future of Anglo-German relations in general. The threads of the negotiations between Chamberlain and Hatzfeldt, that had been broken in 1898 by the Wilhelmstrasse, had again been picked up and put together. I had of course kept the Ambassador fully informed of these discussions which were as yet of a purely academic character. He had considered it best not to inform the Wilhelmstrasse of them until the Samoa agreement was safe in port. For, as I have already indicated, the course of the Samoan negotiations had been more than once disturbed by Berlin. Chamberlain had even declared on one such occasion that, if it proved impossible to negotiate with the German Government, he would himself initiate an association with France and with Russia.

It was on one such crisis that I got from Holstein a memorandum of his own composition of which an extract follows :

" If Mr. Chamberlain threatens to come to an understanding with Russia by sacrificing the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, thus rendering an understanding with Germany superfluous, it only shows that Mr. Chamberlain has not yet got any grasp of foreign policy.

" Bismarck in his time not only permitted the Russians to seize the Dardanelles, but was ready to promote this as far as he could ; yet the Russians made no use of the opportunity. Not because they were afraid of England, then governed on Gladstonian principles; but because

they did not wish to risk their friendship with France. And the same applies to-day. When, some years ago, the Armenian and Cretan troubles had strained the relations of several Great Powers, especially those of Russia with Turkey, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hanotaux, said: 'I hope that Russia will not re-open the question of the Straits—*parceque cela serait trop gros pour nous.*' Russia accordingly kept off the Straits question and will keep off it, even if Mr. Chamberlain gives it leave to go forward.

"On the other hand, it would be of great value to Russia to get an authorisation, in black and white, to seize the Straits, so as to be able to exploit the document in Stamboul and in Paris, and to be in a position to say, 'There, see how England throws you over for the sake of Russia.'

"The effect of such a communication in France would be so multifarious that it would take too long to examine it here. The effect on the Sultan would be very simple. The Sultan still believes firmly to-day that, even if Lord Salisbury is his personal enemy, English policy still runs on the old Turcophil lines. But once he has written proof that he has been sacrificed for Russia he will realise that he has to reckon only with Russia, and he will therefore reckon only with Russia — that being his character. But Russia would then say to him, 'We leave you your territory and your throne on the condition that you raise the Mahommedans of Asia and Africa against England.'

"The consequences of Mr. Chamberlain's Eastern policy would thus have been that British relations to France and Turkey would have become worse, without relations with Russia being made any better. The only means of achieving the latter would be considerable concessions to Russia in the Persian Gulf, and whether Samoa is worth that is best known to Mr. Chamberlain."

This typical elucubration of Holstein's sounds very plausible; though I question whether it really represents any facts or forces of the day. But, as on this so on all

other occasions, whenever the British Government declared it would, if necessary, come to terms with France and Russia, Holstein waved the possibility aside as bluff.

During the Imperial visit to Windsor there was a meeting between the Kaiser, accompanied by Count Bülow, and Chamberlain. On this occasion Chamberlain raised the question of an alliance, and got the distinct impression that both the Kaiser and Count Bülow were very favourable to the idea. So on November 30th, a few days after the Kaiser had left England, Chamberlain made a speech in Leicester, in which the following passage occurred: "Every far-sighted Statesman has long been anxious that we should not permanently remain isolated on the Continent, and I think that the most natural alliance is that between ourselves and the German Empire." The next day I got the following letter from Chamberlain:

Highbury, *Dec.* 1*st*, 1899.

My dear Baron Eckardstein,

I am glad to congratulate you on the distinction conferred on you by the Kaiser during his recent visit. It was well deserved for the services you have rendered to the good relations of the two countries.

I had two lengthy conversations with the Emperor which confirmed my previous impressions of his extraordinary ability and grasp of European politics. I hope that in all respects his visit was a great success.

Count Bülow, whose acquaintance I was delighted to make, also greatly impressed me. He expressed a wish that I might be able at some time to say something as to the mutual interests which bound the United States to a triple understanding with Germany, as well as to Great Britain. Hence my speech yesterday which I hope will be not unsatisfactory to him

Yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

On my return from seeing the Kaiser off at Port Victoria I went to visit the invalid Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt. I found him very well content with the way things had gone since the acute and alarming tension of the previous months. He said: "We may both of us be proud of what we have accomplished in the face of great difficulties. And now there must be no slacking off yet. We mustn't let things stay as they are, but must work at them harder than ever. Take a short rest after your exertions of the last few weeks and then we will take up the question of the Alliance and also Morocco and China, and push them through."

CHAPTER VIII

ATTEMPTED ANGLO-GERMAN AGREEMENT

After the Imperial visit of November, 1899, the relations between the British and German Governments were as friendly and confidential as could be desired. But none the less there was reason to suppose that political authorities in England even before the outbreak of the Boer War had not lost sight of the possibility of an arrangement with France and Russia. It was therefore doubly advisable for German diplomacy to take advantage of the opportunities of the moment and to anticipate the menace of the future by associating Great Britain in a firm alliance with Germany.

No one recognised this more clearly than Count Hatzfeldt. He had always made a point that I should use my constant personal intercourse with Chamberlain during the Samoan negotiations for academic discussions of an Anglo-German alliance, so as to keep the idea steadily before the mind of the influential British Statesman. And in these discussions Mr. Chamberlain and I had reached a complete agreement as to how the question was to be dealt with. We also finally decided that the Ambassador was right in not wanting to raise the question until the Samoan agreement was finally settled.

During these conversations with Chamberlain I told him all I knew of the successive steps taken by Bismarck to bring about an Anglo-German Alliance. For example how, in the spring of 1875, Bismarck himself had fallen for a time under the influence of German militarists and was not disinclined for a preventive war against France, then beginning to revive. Certain articles published by him, especially one in the "Kölnische Zeitung" of April 5th, 1875, and one headed, "Is War in Sight," in the "Post" of April 8th, produced a profound impression abroad. But on May 10th, Prince Gortschakoff, then in Berlin in the company of the Tsar Alexander, visited Bismarck, together with the British Ambassador, Lord Ampthill.

They informed him that, in case of a German attack on France, England and Russia would make common cause against Germany.

Thereupon Bismarck changed his policy. He saw that the immature German Empire was threatened with a general European Coalition; and that in the future no war could remain localised between two Great European Powers. He also recognised that the greatest danger for Germany lay in the steadily rising tide of Russian Imperialism and Pan-Slavism in combination with the French desire for *revanche*; and that, as the so-called "Three Emperors' League" of 1872 had already proved itself to be unreliable, Germany needed a new ally. That was the origin of the secret mission of Lothair Bucher in December, 1875, to London, the failure of which I have already mentioned. In the following years, 1876 and 1877, Bismarck discussed an alliance with Lord Salisbury, then Minister for the Colonies, and with the Foreign Minister, Lord Derby. During the Berlin Congress of 1878 he entered into secret negotiations with Lord Beaconsfield as to an Anglo-German-Austrian Alliance. Throughout the 'eighties Herbert Bismarck, then Counsellor of Embassy in London, made on behalf of his father continuous confidential approaches to British political leaders as to an Alliance. In February, 1887, Bismarck and the then British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Malet, had long conversations on this subject. On November 22nd, in the same year, Bismarck addressed to Lord Salisbury a private letter, in which he raised in unambiguous terms his desire for an alliance between Great Britain and Germany. This last move was referred to by Holstein, in a cypher telegram of March, 1901, as follows: "I know of no other case in which Bismarck addressed himself to a foreign Premier in this direct form; and that he should have taken this most unusual step when at the height of his power shows what crucial importance he attached to Lord Salisbury's response."

All these overtures on the part of Bismarck were un-

successful, and only one of them fell on sufficiently favourable soil to take any root at all. This occasion was the proposal to Lord Beaconsfield during the Berlin Congress of 1878. And, if most of these advances of Bismarck in the direction of an Anglo-German Alliance are known in their main features to historical writers, little if anything is known as to the mission of Lothair Bucher in 1875, or as to this negotiation of Bismarck with Beaconsfield in 1878.

It was from my long political conversations with Lord Rowton, who as Mr. Montagu Corry had been private secretary and right-hand man of Lord Beaconsfield at the Congress, that I learnt what had then taken place between Bismarck and Lord Beaconsfield. And the following account given me by Lord Rowton is confirmed by what was known of the negotiations to Herbert Bismarck and to Holstein.

Bismarck, at a moment when Russia had assumed a very aggressive attitude at the Congress, suddenly after dinner one evening in the Chancellor's Palace, made Lord Beaconsfield a formal proposal of an Anglo-German Alliance. Lord Beaconsfield was for the moment quite taken aback, and answered that he must think it well over before he could say anything about it. Later that same evening he discussed Bismarck's proposals fully with Lord Rowton, and eventually decided to proceed further with the matter. The very next day there was a secret meeting between the two statesmen, in which Lord Beaconsfield declared that he appreciated the great advantages that would accrue from such an alliance to both parties, as well as to the peace of the world. He himself was quite willing to proceed further with the proposal, but he would have to be given a considerable time in which to carry it out, as he could only bring his Parliament and public opinion over to it very gradually. Thereupon Bismarck asked him whether he had any objection to Count Andrassy being associated with any further secret discussions on the subject. Lord Beaconsfield agreed to this, and Count Andrassy was present at

all subsequent meetings. From this Beaconsfield got the impression that Bismarck and Andrassy had already discussed the desirability of an Austro-German Alliance, and that the idea of associating Great Britain in such an alliance had first originated with Andrassy.

After returning to London, Lord Beaconsfield laboured assiduously at familiarising Parliament and public opinion in England little by little with the idea of an alliance with Germany. Shortly before the fall of his Cabinet at the elections of April, 1880, he had had drawn up a draft treaty, which Lord Rowton was to submit secretly to Bismarck when the time came. Lord Rowton still kept this draft, and on one occasion let me have a look at it. Unfortunately in the few minutes it was in my hands I could not study it thoroughly enough to print on my memory the leading points of what seemed to be a complicated and comprehensive document. I only know that it was a defensive treaty guarded with all manner of clauses. He also told me that Lord Beaconsfield had asked Bismarck and Andrassy to say nothing for the time being to Lord Salisbury, who, as Foreign Minister, was attending the Congress.

To return now to my conversation with Chamberlain in 1899. On the latter hearing of my account of these negotiations between Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Bismarck, he at once got into touch with Lord Rowton for such further information as he could obtain from him. The evidence that so great an English Statesman as Lord Beaconsfield had made energetic efforts towards an Anglo-German Alliance confirmed Chamberlain in the policy he was then disposed to adopt.

I have already mentioned the conversation between Chamberlain, on the one side, and the Kaiser and Count Bülow on the other, during the Imperial visit to Windsor; from which Chamberlain got the distinct impression that both the Kaiser and the Foreign Secretary were very favourable to the idea of an alliance. Unfortunately, while public opinion in England had welcomed the Imperial visit with a sense of relief and recognition, the

anti-English agitation in Germany had been plunging nto wilder and wilder excesses. People in Berlin seemed never to reflect that Petersburg and Paris were only waiting for an opportunity to come to an understanding with Great Britain over the head of Germany, and to sell their neutrality during the South African War at as high a price as possible.

Every public expression of recognition in England for the sympathy shown to the British Empire by the Imperial visit was met with scorn in Germany. For example, my father-in-law, Sir John Blundell Maple, made a speech to a large Unionist meeting at Brighton just before the Kaiser's arrival, in which he said that England must never forget that the Kaiser paid a visit to Queen Victoria at a time when the British Empire was in great difficulties, and must be grateful for all time for the sympathy he had thus shown ; and at this there was a regular howl of rage in Germany.

Holstein wrote to me about it as follows :

Berlin, *November 16th*, 1899.

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

Your father-in-law's speech was no doubt well meant, but the effect of it has been very bad for you, as you will already have seen from the Press. I hope there will be no more speeches of this sort.

Yours very truly,

HOLSTEIN

I regret to say that Herbert Bismarck took a very ctive part in these Anglophobe tirades. He was indeed during the Boer War one of the worst agitators against England, both in Parliament and in his own Party Press. It was really amazing that he, who was so well informed of his father's policy, and who had himself been engaged since 1875 in the realisation of an Anglo-German Alliance, should have embarked on this slippery slope, on which the whole security of the Empire was being imperilled. But he was undoubtedly influenced in this anti-English

attitude by the desire to make difficulties for the Foreign Secretary, Count Bülow, who was the natural successor to the Chancellor, then ready at any moment to resign. For Herbert Bismarck was bent on securing for himself the nomination to the Chancellorship.

Moreover in the latter years of his life his judgment as to the position of Great Britain was gravely at fault. This appears from what he said to two friends of mine some six months before his death. I give the words literally, as reported to me: "The South African question which is daily getting more acute will in my opinion give the British Empire its death-blow; for I believe that England is being smothered in its own fat and is no longer capable of any severe exertion." This was moreover a view held by many distinguished political personages on the Continent.

These anti-English activities of Herbert Bismarck were one cause of my breaking with him completely in the course of 1899. Another cause of rupture was that I was continually getting confidential communications from reliable quarters that he was making use of every opportunity to intrigue violently against my chief and myself. We were only brought together again in the summer of 1903, about a year before his death. When I then told him about the various safe opportunities for concluding an alliance with England in 1895, 1898 and 1901, he was highly astonished and said: "If only one single opportunity of that kind had presented itself while my father was Chancellor, the German Empire would to-day be very differently situated, both as to its colonial possessions and as to its position in the world." Words that reminded me strongly of the very similar utterance of a very different sort of man, August Bebel, that I have already reported.

But the general effect of his anti-English agitation on his chances for the Chancellorship was just the opposite of what he had intended. And I have no hesitation in admitting that I myself did my very best in every way to frustrate his ambitions.

This ignorance of so important a matter as the alliance negotiations on the part of two such influential political leaders as Herbert Bismarck and August Bebel is striking proof of the danger to the State of the exaggeratedly secret diplomacy of the old authoritarian régime. How can the parliamentarians and the pressmen who inspire public opinion conceive or convey a correct picture of foreign relations when they only learn the most important developments by pure chance years and years later or perhaps never at all? Nothing would more improve the sense of responsibility of the Press in dealing with foreign affairs—a sense hitherto seriously defective in Germany—than a system of keeping the leading journals of all parties accurately informed of what is passing behind the scenes. Though of course there are phases in foreign policy of so delicate a character that they may have to be kept severely secret for the time being.

The attitude of the English Press towards Germany was followed with the greatest interest by Holstein. He often became wildly excited not only by statements in the leading daily papers but by any chance remark in the most unimportant periodical; and he generally overlooked the fact that the Anglophobe offensive of a large part of the German Press had as a rule given the first provocation. He would then vent his annoyance on me by private telegrams and letters of the most acid virulence. He even went so far sometimes as to treat me as personally responsible for articles that had especially annoyed him.

But what folly it was to believe that the British Press would allow itself to be influenced, even in the slightest degree, by those methods which were used by the Press section of the Wilhelmstrasse. Almost all the attempts of Berlin to affect the tone of the Foreign Press were the most miserable failures. The clumsiness and tactlessness moreover with which these attempts were made generally produced the opposite from what was intended. It was left for the world war to convince us finally that stage-management and propaganda are neither of them our

strong points. But long before the war the naive experiments of German representatives abroad to influence the Press had done much to bring about the general coalition against Germany. The editor of one of the leading London dailies said to me once: "The leading dailies of England can be convinced by argument but cannot be influenced. Any attempt at influence produces a contrary result." This was said *apropos* of the continual and clumsy efforts of a German diplomat to influence the London Press in 1904.

Holstein, as I have said, never maintained personal relations with foreign diplomats and in general he had no direct relations with the Press, either at home or abroad. The Berlin correspondent of the "Kölnische Zeitung" was the only press representative with whom he was in constant touch. After the latter's death, Professor Schiemann, a writer in the "Kreuz Zeitung," was the only German journalist who saw anything of him. Of the foreign correspondents Mr. Valentine Chirol, who represented the "Times" in Berlin during the 'nineties, was an exception; in that he was for many years on a footing of close personal friendship with that queerest of creatures, Holstein.

Mr. Chirol (now Sir Valentine) had been in the British diplomatic service, and, after taking up journalism, represented the "Times" in various foreign capitals. Finally, as foreign editor, he became one of the most influential collaborators on the staff of the great English daily. Throughout the early 'nineties he was thoroughly Germanophile, but he changed his tone after the Kruger telegram in January, 1896. This brought him into collision with Holstein and gradually their former friendship was converted into the most bitter feud.

From the British point of view Mr. Chirol was probably perfectly justified in taking offence at the aggressive attitude of the German Government and the incessant insults that many of the German papers hurled at England. He was moreover a man of a great political experience, a sound judgment, and a thoroughly fair mind. But,

just as Holstein had become obsessed by an unjustifiable yet ineradicable hatred for Lord Salisbury, in the same way his feelings for Mr. Chirol degenerated into a morbid and irremovable aversion. In many of his semi-hysterical and hypercritical communications to me he gave free rein to his prejudice against Mr. Chirol, generally coupling his name with that of Lord Salisbury.

Here for example is a letter from me dating from this period, with his reply:

> Memo. for Baron Holstein. *January*, 1900.
>
> I had yesterday a long interview with Mr. Chirol of the "Times." He is still of opinion that, with very few exceptions, the tone of the German Press towards England is more violent and virulent than that of the French and Russian papers, and that the caricatures of the Queen and Prince of Wales in the German comics are worse than the French.
>
> I pointed out as evidence to the contrary that only a few German papers were violent, and that the "Kölnische Zeitung," the "Post" and many others were quite friendly; also that German public opinion was by no means so hostile as might be thought. I made a particular point of the friendly attitude of the German Government, to which England owed the localisation of the war in South Africa. This last point appeared to surprise him, for he said that so far as he could see the German Government had been very cool and unfriendly to England, as was suggested by the speeches of the Foreign Secretary. I tried to controvert him in this also, but he insisted that both the official policy and the public opinion of Germany were thoroughly unfriendly. In doing so he made the following remark: "The British public never expected very much from France and Russia, but, after the Imperial visit and the hearty reception given the Kaiser, we expected better things of Germany. It is a question whether it would not be preferable to join with open enemies like France and

Russia, even at the greatest sacrifice, than with a double-faced friend like Germany."

I enclose herewith a letter from Chirol.

Would it not be possible to circulate in the German Press, through Wolff, a strongly worded *démenti* as to the reported behaviour of British troops in Natal. Mr. Chirol seemed to be very excited about the repeated calumnies in the German Press as to the excesses of the British troops. I think it would be of use.

ECKARDSTEIN.

Here follows his answer:

Berlin, *March 3rd*, 1900

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

Many thanks for your interesting letters. Chirol seems to me so arrogant that I think it is not consonant with our dignity to go on running after him. It will be quite enough if you can keep touch with such papers as are less supercilious towards Germany. The English will need us more than we do them for some time to come; for, even if they succeed in holding the Boer Republics as conquered territory, our attitude will mean a good deal to them.

Yours,

HOLSTEIN.

During my official activity in London I made many communications to the English Press at the request of the Berlin Foreign Office. But I always refused to adopt the methods affected by the Wilhelmstrasse. I never attempted any influencing of the Press by underground channels because I knew perfectly well that in the end this could only have the opposite effect to what was intended. I have on the other hand more than once succeeded in convincing those in control of the Press by laying my cards on the table.

There were in Germany during the Boer War sensible persons who watched the growth of this Anglophobia

with anxiety and apprehension, but their warnings went unheeded.

Of the German Princes, King Albert of Saxony was most concerned at the possible consequences of the anti-English press campaign. When I was on leave in Berlin in the spring of 1900 the Saxon Minister, Count Hohenthal, visited me and asked me for a confidential and candid report on the real causes of the South African War, and the probable consequences of the German press campaign on British public opinion. The King, he said, could scarcely sleep for thinking of the effect of this press campaign on Germany's position.

When in the autumn of the same year I was again in Berlin, in order to do what I could to prevent the Kaiser yielding to the clamour and receiving President Kruger, who had taken refuge in Europe, I got a message from King Albert to go and see him at Dresden. So I went through Dresden on my way back to London and talked to him for more than an hour and a half.

The aged monarch complained bitterly of the insufficient information on foreign affairs that the Imperial Government doled out to the States of the Empire. "No one," he said, "could get any idea of what is going on from what we see of the correspondence with foreign countries. Do you think it possible that Bavaria is better treated than we are?" But I had to confess that I knew nothing about the relations between Berlin and the States of the Empire in foreign affairs. The King took notes of the information I gave him, and was especially interested in all that concerned Anglo-German relations. He spoke with much satisfaction of the Kaiser's refusal to receive President Kruger. He said there had been much clamour for this in Dresden also. "I love my Saxons," said he, "but their political stupidity is bottomless. If only the good people who agitate against England could see what they are brewing for Germany and for themselves." On my referring to Bismarck's desire for an alliance with England, he shook his head, saying, "I have it from his own lips that he looked on England's

accession to the Austro-German Alliance as not only desirable but necessary." And as I left he added sadly: "I see the future very black. God knows what we are steering into."

The Grand Duke of Baden was another of the German Princes who realised the danger. When the Hereditary Grand Duke was at the funeral of Queen Victoria, in 1901, he told me that both he and his father were much concerned at the situation, and asked me for a report to take back with him. Soon after that the Grand Duke made a speech on a ceremonial occasion, in which he earnestly warned the Empire against the dangers of the press campaign.

The Press Section of the Wilhelmstrasse undoubtedly did everything it could during the South African War to damp down the violent explosions of feeling against England. The director of it, Dr. Hamman, said to me at this time, with much justice: "A large section of our Press and of Parliament is entirely occupied these days in playing the game, as well as it could be played, of our worst enemies, the Russians and the French." But work as hard as our officials might, in order to check the worst extravagances against England, the efforts of the Press Section remained on the whole ineffective.

Count Bülow found it equally impossible in spite of his uninterrupted exertions to get the parties of the Right in the Reichstag to see reason in respect of England. The German Government was in fact paying the full penalty for their gross neglect in not keeping public opinion properly informed at a previous stage.

When the speech made by Chamberlain, at Leicester, on November 30th, 1899, advocating an Anglo-German alliance was reported in Germany, there broke out a storm of indignation both in the Press and in Parliament at the very idea of such an association. The position of Count Bülow thereafter became one of very great difficulty. But all the same it was a great blunder and one that later was to cost us dear, that he should thereupon have knuckled under to the Anglophobes

by throwing over Chamberlain in a speech in the Reichstag, and by practically repudiating further relations with him. For, after all, he had distinctly encouraged Chamberlain to give public expression to the exchange of views they had had together at Windsor, as appears from what I have already reported.

The first impression made on England by Count Bülow's speech in the Reichstag was not so very unfavourable. At least, I succeeded in reassuring the Prince of Wales, most of the leading political personages, and even Chamberlain himself, by laying stress on the extreme difficulty of Count Bülow's position in the Reichstag, as well as on his firm friendship for England. From Berlin itself, moreover, every possible step was taken to explain the speech away. Thus, I had the following instructions sent to me by the German Embassy in London on behalf of Count Bülow:

German Embassy, *December 16th*, 1899.

(*Extract*).

This strictly confidential communication is to be conveyed by Eckardstein to Mr. Chamberlain. If the latter is not in London, or expected there in the next few days, it would be worth while for Eckardstein to go to Birmingham to see him. It is of the greatest political importance that we should leave nothing untried to prevent a further extension of the bad feeling on this side. If Eckardstein has a conversation with Chamberlain I should be glad to have it reported to me as soon as possible.

HATZFELDT.

Strictly Confidential Instructions.

Count Bülow attaches the greatest importance to his attitude not being misunderstood and to the maintenance of a good understanding between the two Governments. He has therefore empowered the Ambassador to convey herewith a strictly confidential assurance that His Majesty's Government will abstain from every realignment of the

Continental Powers against England, as well as from every joint action that might cause England embarrassment; of course on the assumption that German interests will be taken due account of by Great Britain. Count Bülow attaches especial importance to the maintenance of full and frank communication between the two Governments, at a juncture when England's position in South Africa is one of extreme difficulty.

In this connection it is also to be taken into consideration that the position of Count Bülow himself is one of extreme difficulty. The Ambassador has already explained this more than once to Lord Salisbury; and Mr. Chamberlain will no doubt have gathered it for himself from proceedings in the Reichstag. The weapon, of which the Opposition make much use against us, is the reiterated insinuation that the Government is carrying on secret political deals with England and sacrificing to that country the true interests of Germany. The attack in the Reichstag on these lines has been so violent that Count Bülow has had to take it into account, and compose his speech with reference to it. We no longer live in the days when Prince Bismarck was all-powerful in foreign policy, and had nothing to fear even when he took no account of public opinion. The present Chancellor cannot do this and still less can Count Bülow; so the latter has to let the storm blow over, but without—and that is, after all, the important point—in any way abandoning the prosecution of the policy that he has recognised as being sound. Proof of which is the assurance given above. And that this assurance really means what it says and will be acted upon in every respect by Count Bülow is personally guaranteed by the Ambassador. The point is now to prevent tendentious and thoroughly untrustworthy interpretations of the Bülow speech in the Franco-Russian press from causing misunderstanding. People in England may rest assured

that Count Bülow will hold fast to his policy and that the time will come when he will be able to stand for it publicly without thereby arousing a dangerous opposition in the Reichstag or in the country.

HATZFELDT.

The following letter from Holstein and my reply to it also throw light on the situation at this time:

Berlin, *December 7th*, 1899.

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

I submitted your full and interesting letter to Count Bülow. Its contents, and especially the letter from Chamberlain enclosed, show clearly the line of thought followed by Chamberlain in his (Leicester) speech. I can understand all this speech very well; but it was an incomprehensible blunder for so experienced a politician to say that he wished to come to an understanding with the German people, not with the German press; and so give the latter provocation to attack him. As an old parliamentary hand he could have expected as much. The "Kölnische Zeitung" had from the first been quite proper in its attitude, and had stood up for Chamberlain and for the sincerity of his pro-German sentiments. Which reminds me that I must send you some of the articles if I have not already done so.

The South African War is becoming a really serious business for the English, and I assume that unless results are soon achieved it will not fail to react upon public opinion. After the way in which Chamberlain has given practical proof of his good feeling for Germany, I cannot of course regard his retirement from office as any advantage for us. But we must be ready to take things as we find them. I have gathered from certain observations of yours that your relations with Rosebery are only distant. If you could get into touch with him socially without exciting remark it would be in the public interest.

You should so regulate your social position as to make impossible any interpretation of it to the effect that the German Government were indicating, even socially, that they stood nearer to the party at present in power than to the party at whose head Lord Rosebery is, or soon may be.

I should also observe that the Kaiser takes a lively interest in the concession of a site for the landing of a cable. I much hope that you will take the opportunity to make yourself useful in this respect.

Wishing you a pleasant holiday after these trying months,

I am, yours truly,

HOLSTEIN.

Here follows my reply:

London, *December 21st*, 1899.

I received your Excellency's friendly letter of the 7th, and at once took steps to revive quietly my social relations with the Liberal party. I have for a long time been on a very good footing with Rosebery, and my present relations to him are such that I could go to see him at any moment, either in town or in the country. But I also have now got into touch with some other members of the Liberal party.

I have read with great interest the letter from Prince Münster in Paris, communicated to the Embassy, in which the Prince treats of English politics, and predicts the fall of the present Ministry at an early date. With all due respect for the great experience of Prince Münster, I regret that I cannot share his view. In spite of recent severe set-backs in the South African campaign, I consider that there can be no question of any fall of the present Ministry during the war or the subsequent negotiations. When Parliament reassembles, Liberals will try, it is true, to convict the present Ministry of neglect in army administration; but the Ministry will anticipate this by coming forward immediately on the opening

of Parliament with a scheme for the reorganisation and reinforcement of the territorial army. And they will, in this connection, remind the Liberals that Gladstone, Harcourt, Campbell-Bannerman and Morley and Company have from the first resisted every such reinforcement and reorganisation.

Should the Salisbury Government fall at a later date, it is not so likely to come as a result of colonial matters as on some internal question, such as the Church, Temperance, or such like. Moreover, the Liberal party is still in a most deplorable condition. Its official leader, Campbell-Bannerman, is uninspiring to the last degree, and the really capable party leaders, like Sir Edward Grey, Asquith, etc., are either followers of Rosebery or of Sir William Harcourt. These two latter personages, who are for the moment officially outside the party, are keeping a sharp eye on one another, and whenever one makes a move towards putting himself at the head of the party the other one at once pushes in to prevent it. Probably in the end Rosebery will win, because he pays court to Imperialism; whereas Harcourt is a Little Englander, which is distasteful to the great mass of the people.

I know various friends of Prince Münster on this side who correspond with him. There was a time when their judgment may have been right. But they have not marched with the times and cannot understand at all that the new and Imperialist England of late years believes in a policy of deeds, not words, in foreign affairs.

As to the South African question, I have laboured for years at forming a judgment on it, which should be as impartial as possible. With this object I have cultivated relations, not only with Cecil Rhodes and his party, but also with the pro-Boers. I mention this now so that your Excellency may not think that I am judging the question from a purely British standpoint. I have long felt convinced myself that

the mines and Uitlanders were not the real cause of trouble; but that the question was really whether England should remain the predominant power in South Africa or should simply be evicted by the Afrikanders, and an Afrikander Republic established. I have therefore always believed in the inevitability of a war, and I am of opinion that England began it at the eleventh hour. I am further firmly convinced that England will, in spite of all difficulties, in the end remain master of the situation; but that if it had postponed the war for one year more it would simply have been turned out of South Africa. In this latter case we should have had to deal in South Africa with an Afrikander Republic, which would have been far more democratic than the United States, which would have set up over the South African Continent a sort of Monroe Doctrine, and to which both our own and the Portuguese possessions in South Africa would have inevitably reverted. I feel quite certain that Germany would thus have lost its best colony, South-West Africa, very quickly without being able to make the very least resistance. Moreover, our Conventions with Great Britain as to the Portuguese Colonies would in that case have been simply waste paper. I know for a fact that Hofmeyer, Schrein and Co. have long been looking at Walfisch Bay and Delagoa Bay as the future ports of the Afrikander Republics; and have even said so openly in Afrikander circles. So if England were to be finally defeated, which I do not think at all probable, Germany would have to reckon with the situation above outlined. If, on the other hand, England wins, the danger will be that the annexation of the South African Republic will cause a large section of the irreconcilable Boers to emigrate to German South-West Africa, with the approval of German public opinion. Thence they will pursue their intrigues against England; and in view of the pro-Boer tone of public opinion in Germany it will

probably be very difficult for the Government to prevent this.

The speech of Count Bülow would be understood by any man who realises the difficulty of his position in the face of present public feeling of Germany. As yet the great mass of the people in England have not seen in it anything hostile or even cool towards England. On the other hand I have for some days been exposed to attacks from politicians, Cabinet Ministers, the Rothschilds and the Royal Family. Happily I have succeeded to some extent in appeasing them ; including Chamberlain himself, who seemed inclined to understand the speech as intended for a cold douche directed at him.

Your Excellency will already have heard from the Ambassador, whom I have just visited at Brighton, of the danger threatening us if the question of Delagoa Bay is raised. The Government here is itself afraid of this question, but it looks as though it might be driven by public opinion to take it up against its will. I can already imagine the storm of indignation that it would raise in Germany, and still hope that we may keep off this rock.

What at present is making bad blood more than anything in public opinion here is the report systematically spread by the Russians as well as by agents of Dr. Leyds that the Boers are being led by officers of the German General Staff. Chamberlain showed me lately two telegrams from Milner as to German officers in the Boer camp. I pacified him by referring to the Imperial instructions, and by saying that the officers in question no doubt came from Austria, not from Germany. Probably Germany and Austria would be much the same to a British official. But I shall write to Chamberlain again about this.

Yours truly,

ECKARDSTEIN.

But all these efforts were useless, for the violent cam-

paign in the German press kept on and on. The French and Russian press naturally exploited this for all it was worth in order to set Great Britain and Germany at variance; and finally the British Liberal press took the opportunity of attacking Chamberlain. He and his powerful following became more and more exasperated, and at last I got the following letter from him :*

Highbury, *28th December*, 1899.

DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN,

I duly received the letter in which you again assure me that the Kaiser has given the strictest orders against any German officer taking part in the war on the side of the Boers, for which please accept my thanks. It is only to be hoped that this order will be carried out in practice; but for the present authentic reports are still coming in from South Africa according to which quite a number of Boer troops are being led by German, perhaps also Austrian, officers.

Of course I was much interested in reading what you said in your letter about the Morocco question and the Far East, as well as about the Alliance; but you know what has happened! I will say no more here about the way in which Bülow has treated me! But in any case I think we must drop all further negotiations in the question of the Alliance. Whether it will be possible to return to them after the end of the South African War that has raised so much dust —must be left for further consideration.

I am really sorry that all your hard work should seem to have been in vain; but I am also sorry for myself. Everything was going so well, and even Lord Salisbury had become quite favourable and in entire agreement with us as to the future developments of Anglo-German relations. But alas it was not to be.

Wishing you a happy New Year,

Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

* Retranslated from the German translation.

CHAPTER IX

THE ULTIMATUM AND ALTONA MEETING

ANGLO-GERMAN relations were at this time gravely imperilled through the pressure exercised by British public opinion in general and by the British militarists in particular for the occupation of Delagoa Bay : the object of course being to stop the importation of contraband of war by this route and to attack the Boers eventually from this side. The effect that such a move would certainly have in Germany caused great anxiety in the Wilhelmstrasse, and early in 1900 matters came to a crisis in this quarter.

The Hamburg mail-steamers of the Woermann Line, *Bundesrat*, *General*, and *Hertzog* were stopped by British cruisers and searched for contraband. The *General* and *Hertzog* were released after a perfunctory search ; but the *Bundesrat* was brought in to Durban and sent before a Prize Court.

There are few in all probability who realise how serious was the crisis in Anglo-German relations during the three weeks that we were negotiating for the release of this steamer. We were all the time within a hair's-breadth of a rupture.

The whole negotiation was from the first heavily handicapped by a note which the German Government addressed to Lord Salisbury ; which note for sheer offensiveness is probably unique in all the history of modern diplomacy. Lord Salisbury, in his reply, expressed somewhat sharply his surprise at a document that was in all respects a departure from diplomatic usage.

My Ambassador was at the time seriously ill at Brighton, and unable to come to town ; so that I found myself solely responsible for the settlement of this awkward affair. Lord Salisbury, as on previous occasions, when he considered himself insulted by the Kaiser's methods, went into the sulks, and became almost unapproachable. I only succeeded by the most cautious advances in getting

him to exchange views at all with me on the subject; and scarcely had I got negotiations going than Berlin ran them off the rails again by trying to force the pace.

Admiral von Tirpitz had of course at once exploited the incident, and his Naval Association had begun a clamorous campaign for the doubling of the building programme of 1898. The tide of excitement was consequently soon running so high that the Government could hardly keep its head above water. In consequence, the Wilhelmstrasse lost its head altogether, and to save itself was ready to make the German Empire commit suicide. By the middle of January we were in fact ready to break with England.

On the evening of the 14th January I got this following cypher telegram from Holstein:

Berlin, 14*th January*, 1900.

Private for BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

Your telegram No. 40 made a most unfavourable impression here. The Kaiser is considering whether someone should not be sent from here within forty-eight hours to get a definite answer by Thursday as to whether we may expect to come to an understanding with England; or whether we are to be obliged to take action under the constraint which the incomprehensible apathy of the British Government has imposed upon us.

Please say nothing about this to the sick Ambassador, but report to me whether we may expect the British to make good their promises and meet our requirements as to not interfering further with our mail steamers.

HOLSTEIN.

This letter put me in a position of extreme difficulty, and the least mistake on my part, either in the handling of Lord Salisbury or of Holstein, would have knocked the bottom out of the whole business.

First as to Holstein I annex herewith two telegrams sent to him at the turning point of the crisis:

London, *January 15th*, 1900.

Cipher Telegram. Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

Your private telegram received. My conversations with Lord Salisbury give me the strong impression that he is sincerely desirous of bringing about a settlement in conformity with our wishes. I am equally convinced that the Cabinet here has set all the proper machinery in motion to prevent the repetition of such incidents. On the other hand, they have not the courage to make any statement that, in the event of its being made use of by the German Government in the Reichstag, would suggest to public opinion here that this Government had created a precedent for the renunciation of the right of search. I believe, moreover, that the British proceedings were not taken with a view of embarrassing our trade; but that they had recourse to the right of search against our ships as a means of pacifying British public opinion, when they saw that any forward move in the Delagoa Bay question would be impossible without incurring the most serious complications. I should observe also in this connection that the Under-Secretary recently told me in confidence that British agents had of late been receiving constant hints as to the shipping of war material on German steamers, both from Paris and from Brussels; and that the steamers *Hertzog*, *General*, and *Bundesrat* were especially indicated as carrying guns, rifles and German officers for the Transvaal. This information was conveyed in telegrams, the origin of which has not yet been fully cleared up. There is indeed the very strongest suspicion that Dr. Leyds, who probably knew perfectly well that there was nothing of the sort on these ships, had this information conveyed to British agents through paid intermediaries, in order to sow dissension between Germany and England. The Under-Secretary asked me, however, to consider this information as quite confidential, and not to report it officially, as there

was not yet sufficient evidence. I shall between now and Thursday do my best to get our wishes carried out. I am sure there is no feeling against us here.

ECKARDSTEIN.

London, *January 15th*, 1900.

Cipher Telegram. Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

I have just spoken as plainly as the conventions will allow to the Under-Secretary and to Lord Salisbury's private secretary. The Foreign Office in no way ignores the gravity of the situation, nor the political consequences that a rupture of the friendly relations between Germany and England would entail. They renew the assurances of their desire to meet our wishes and to maintain friendly relations. On the other hand, they point out the difficult position in which the Government has been placed by the impending debate on the 30th inst.

Lord Salisbury was too unwell to come to London to-day and is not expected for several days. His private secretary has just sent him a cipher telegram to Hatfield reporting my representations and the necessity for his seeing me. I shall therefore probably go to Hatfield to-morrow. The Foreign Office are also communicating with the Admiralty and the Colonial Office.

The private secretary informs me privately and unofficially that the investigation of the *Bundesrat* cargo has been completed, and that nothing has been found. On the other hand, Durban officials have received numerous letters insinuating that contraband will be found under the coal. He too is convinced that the British agents and the Durban authorities have fallen into a clever trap set for them by Dr. Leyds. But no proof is yet to hand, and it will be difficult to get to the bottom of the matter in view of the methods of corruption followed by Dr. Leyds. Rothschild, who has heard from Schwabach that there is great dissatisfaction on our side, is in despair.

He is writing to various friends in the Cabinet, and will show me the letters before sending them.

ECKARDSTEIN.

And now for Lord Salisbury, who had hurried back to London in response to the urgent telegram of his private secretary. I had a long interview with him on his return, on the strength of which I sent further reassuring telegrams to Berlin to the effect that a satisfactory settlement was in sight. But two days later, on going to the Foreign Office to find out how things stood, the Assistant Secretary, Sir Francis Bertie, received me as follows: "I am sorry to have to tell you that, according to our latest information, there is very little hope left that the question of the ships will be settled in a friendly manner. Lord Salisbury will see you to-morrow afternoon at five o'clock to receive any communication you may have to make to him. And what may happen after that heaven only knows."

In the highest degree astonished by what Sir Francis had said, I asked him what he meant, as I could not understand him in the least. "I thought you knew about it already," replied Sir Francis. "Berlin has notified us unofficially that a German Admiral is on his way to London to give us a forty-eight hours' ultimatum. Lord Salisbury has of course got his answer ready, and we thought you were going to notify us of the arrival of the Admiral and ask Lord Salisbury to receive him." And when I asked where this news came from, whether it was from Sir Frank Lascelles, he went on: "Frank Lascelles has sent us very serious information, but this reached us from the same source that threatened us on behalf of your Government in August last year with an ultimatum on the Samoan question." For a moment I felt quite dizzy, for I saw that Holstein had again started working one of his fatal unofficial bluffs. I was in such despair that I could not even ask for further details; and after showing the Assistant Secretary that I knew nothing whatever about the matter I took my departure.

Whatever was to be done now? I was myself so

indignant at this fresh upset of my promising negotiations that I thought for a moment of immediately telegraphing my resignation, but then I reflected that this could only lead at once to the action threatened by Holstein in his telegram of January 14th, and an open breach with England. Finally, I decided to do nothing, and to wait for my interview with Lord Salisbury.

Just before I started to go to the Foreign Office next day I had a visit from the Swiss Minister in London, Herr Burkhart, who told me that his Government had telegraphed to him that the British authorities in South Africa had seized eighteen large boxes of Swiss cheese on the German barque *Hans Wagner*, because they were supposed to be for the Boers. He asked me to support his representations for their release. I promised him I would do what I could, though I was at first somewhat irritated that, at a moment when I was faced with a rupture of diplomatic relations and over my ears in work, I should be bothered about some boxes of Swiss cheese. But as I went along to the Foreign Office I thought I might find a use for that cheese.

On arriving I was given to understand by the private secretary that his chief was in a great state of exasperation against the German Government, and would not be easy to deal with. And, when I was received by Lord Salisbury, I found that he certainly was quite unlike his usual amiable self and very stiff and distant in manner.

"Well what news have you got?" he asked me very abruptly. "No good news, I regret to say," I replied. "I am afraid we are faced by the most serious trouble." "Indeed, and what is that?" said he, more brusquely than ever. "Yes," I went on, "it is a very serious matter indeed; and if something isn't done at once, you will have to be prepared for an ultimatum from—the Swiss Government." He looked up in astonishment and asked: "From the Swiss Government? Whatever do you mean?" "Yes," I replied, "the Swiss Minister came to see me to-day and told me that eighteen boxes of cheese had been seized as contraband in South

Africa; and that if they are not released you may expect a forty-eight hours' ultimatum from Switzerland; and if you then don't give way you will have to take the consequences." Thereupon Lord Salisbury's face cleared, he began to laugh, and after a bit he said: "Tell your friend, the Swiss Minister, that His Britannic Majesty's Government would prefer to go into the matter in a friendly way."

From that moment the Premier was in the best of tempers and in the course of our conversation mentioned Dr. Leyds and his myrmidons. On my observing that this gentleman seemed to me to be the biggest liar that I had ever met, Lord Salisbury said that the biggest liar he had come across in his political experience was the Russian diplomat, Count Ignatieff. He said he had had to fight many a battle in Far Eastern questions with this worst of all liars, who had always been his *bête noir*. From Ignatieff we got on to Russo-German relations and Bismarck's reinsurance treaty with Russia. Lord Salisbury who was now becoming every moment more sociable spoke about this as fellows: "We first heard of this secret reinsurance treaty from Ignatieff himself. But, as we knew him to be such a phenomenal liar, neither Morier nor I believed it. But, as it happened, he had for once told the truth. As for the reinsurance treaty itself, I have never personally attached much importance to it. In spite of it a war of Germany against France and Russia more than once hung by a thread in the 'eighties, especially in the summer and autumn of 1887. Alexander III, then staying at Copenhagen, enquired of me through a high personage what price England would take for its benevolent neutrality towards France and Russia, in case they went to war with Germany. Since in England we were then still keeping strictly to the policy of having our hands untied, I put him off." Then with a sly smile he went on: "But I also put off Bismarck when soon after that he proposed to me in a long personal letter that England should ally itself with Germany and Austria for the preservation of the

world's peace. Probably both Alexander III and Bismarck went to their graves without either knowing anything of the other's move. But what I have told you may serve to show you that this famous secret treaty between Germany and Russia in no way excluded a Russo-German war."

Lord Salisbury and I had been chatting in this way for a full hour when the private secretary came in to tell him that several other diplomats had long been waiting to see him. I at once stood up, thanked Lord Salisbury for his great kindness in letting me have such an interesting little talk at a time when he was overwhelmed with work, and made as if to go. I was, in fact, determined to make him be the first of us to raise the question of the crisis; and when he saw I was really going he told me in a very friendly tone that I must sit down again as we hadn't yet spoken about our own business. "From what I have heard from Berlin," said he, "I had expected something very different from a Swiss ultimatum. Sanderson will have told you what has happened. I must confess that I cannot understand in the least your Government's methods. Whether this perpetual threatening from Berlin is bluff or earnest, they must, after all, have learnt by now that they only bring about the opposite of what they are after. On no account can I allow my policy to be dictated by Berlin with a stop-watch." In reply to my rejoinder that the tide of excitement was running very high in Germany, and that perhaps the Wilhelmstrasse had somewhat lost its nerve, Lord Salisbury said: "We often have great excitement over here too, both in Parliament and in the Press, and if we Ministers always went into hysterics at the same time I don't know what would happen."

I then said to him that, as he could imagine, I myself was at the moment in a very difficult position in regard to my Government. I would ask him, as a personal favour, to give me if possible an answer that would pacify Berlin. After thinking a little he replied: "The Admiralty has not as yet received the official report of

the Prize Court at Durban; but it seems clear to me that there was no contraband found on the *Bundesrat*. I shall therefore not wait for the Admiralty's report, but authorise you at once to telegraph to your Government that I am prepared to meet their wishes in the matter: namely—the immediate release of the *Bundesrat*, adequate compensation, the amount to be agreed on later, for the Woermann Line, and an assurance that German mail steamers will not be troubled any more."

Seldom in my life have I felt such relief as I did at this statement of Lord Salisbury's. I thanked him heartily for his communication and hurried away to get my telegram off to Berlin as soon as possible. As I left Lord Salisbury's room I found in the corridor the Austrian Ambassador, Count Deym, talking to the Russian and French Chargé d'Affaires. On seeing me they stopped talking and the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, Lessare, who was quite a friend of mine, came up to me and asked whether I had any news. I said I knew of nothing particular and, hurrying away as soon as I could, I found Count Deym waiting for me at the main entrance.

He told me that in the Foreign Office ante-room there had been the wildest rumours among the waiting diplomats as to a rupture of relations between Germany and Great Britain. The Russian and the Frenchman could scarcely restrain their impatience to get the first authentic news of it from me on my leaving Lord Salisbury. He himself hadn't believed in it, but he begged me as an ally to give him the straight tip, as Vienna was very anxious about the situation. On hearing the result of my interview he at once went off beaming with joy. So that Vienna heard of the *détente* in the crisis as soon as Berlin. I myself at once telegraphed to Holstein very shortly that the whole matter was settled and that I was sending a long official telegram to the Chancellor. The very next afternoon Count Bülow communicated to the Reichstag the contents of my official telegram. That same evening I received a long telegram from him in which he cordially congratulated me, and gave me an

account of how the final solution had been received in the Reichstag.

On my arriving in Berlin some weeks later, the Under-Secretary, Freiherr von Richthofen, told me that the despatch of an Admiral for the conveyance to Lord Salisbury of an ultimatum from the Kaiser had already been decided on, and only the choice of a suitable person was still under discussion. The Under-Secretary expressed great disgust at Holstein's method of sending threats to foreign governments through unofficial intermediaries, who took their duties too seriously. An official rupture with England had indeed hung by a thread, for, had news of the satisfactory settlement arrived in Berlin even twenty-four hours later, irreparable steps would already have been taken. The Kaiser, at the time of the incident, had been completely under the influence of the military and naval fighting men.

In a conversation I had some months later with Lord Salisbury, he gave me his views on the incident, as follows: "If there had been a rupture of relations between us last January, it would certainly have been very awkward for us at that moment. We should then have been obliged to pay a pretty high price in colonial political matters (Persia, Morocco, etc.) to France and Russia, which were both waiting for a breach between Great Britain and Germany. But in no case could such an outcome have been of any advantage to Germany."

There you have the distressing, the disastrous illusion of Berlin that the French and Russians would take our side against England for love of us. Germany could offer them nothing of real value, while Great Britain could bait its lines with Persia, Morocco, and lots more, including a partition of the German Colonies in case of war.

The only person to gain anything from this whole business was Admiral von Tirpitz.

The raging propaganda for doubling the naval building programme of 1898 had brought into the Admiral's net many political personalities who had been previously

too pacific and perspicacious to be caught. The German Conservative Party had up till then taken a sensible line consonant with the true interests of the Empire, and until late in the 'nineties the party continued to repudiate a costly and adventurous naval policy. In 1897 Dieterich Hahn of the Landowners' Association had said to me: "My party in no way agrees with the Kaiser's idea that the future of Germany is on the sea. Such a policy can only bring us into collision with England, thereby driving that country into the arms of our arch-enemies, France and Russia. Moreover nothing would more promote Socialism in Germany than the high taxes that must be imposed on all classes if we are to try and compete with England in naval armaments." But this point of view was later abandoned in favour of a disreputable deal, by which the Conservatives supported the Kaiser's naval policy in return for a higher duty on wheat. Count Kanitz marched his party over into the camp of Admiral von Tirpitz to the tune of *Kein Kanitz, keine kähne.** By the end of 1900 the whole Conservative Party had been enrolled under the standard of the megalomaniac Admiral.

Even more unfortunately, Prince Bülow, then in control of affairs, allowed himself to be diverted by the Kaiser from the sound and sensible line that he had originally taken. In his book "Deutsche Politik" he admits that he based his whole foreign policy on the building of a fleet, and he thereby makes the most damaging confession of weakness that any statesman could bring against himself. For armies and navies have never been considered by real statesmen as anything more than instruments of a policy. The subordination of policy to impolitic generals and admirals by Prince Bülow and his successors led us straight to Versailles.

Count Hatzfeldt, on the other hand, was for ever writing and reminding Berlin: "If people in Germany will only sit still, then the time will come when the sucking-pigs will run ready-roasted into our mouths. But these perpetual high-faluting hysterics of the Kaiser,

* No Kanitz, no cruisers.

and these naval adventures of Admiral von Tirpitz will do for us all."

Unfortunately the state of health of Count Hatzfeldt was getting worse and worse. He had been at Brighton since the beginning of December, and unable to come to London. Towards the end of January, 1900, he took three months' leave in Germany for reasons of health, and it was believed in the Foreign Office that he would never recover sufficiently to return to London. Steps were accordingly taken to find his successor, and, at the Kaiser's express command, Count Paul Metternich, who had previously been attached to the Embassy, was appointed Chargé d'Affaires, with a view to his subsequently succeeding Count Hatzfeldt. Fortunately Count Hatzfeldt recovered sufficiently to return after his leave, but, during the three months of this Metternich interregnum, all independent activity on my part was naturally much impeded, if not made altogether impossible. All the same, Holstein took it out of me whenever things went wrong, and insisted on my maintaining a direct personal correspondence by letter and telegram with him. Now, whatever opinion might be held about the judgment and ability of Count Metternich, Holstein could not properly expect me to carry on his personal policy for him behind the back of the responsible Chargé d'Affaires. And when, in 1900, I went to Berlin on leave, I came into pretty violent conflict with Holstein about this, and about his trying to make me correspond with English Ministers on political questions without the knowledge of Count Metternich.

At a dinner given in the middle of April in honour of the Kaiser by the British Embassy in Berlin, the Kaiser took me aside and told me he had heard that his uncle, the Prince of Wales, was passing through Altona on the next day on his way from Copenhagen to London. He then asked me if I thought that the Prince would be pleased if he should pay him a surprise visit on the way through Altona to congratulate him on his recent escape from assassination. For, on the journey out to Copen-

hagen through Brussels, a certain Sipido had fired several shots at him with a revolver. I replied that, as far as I could judge, the Prince would highly appreciate such a courtesy on the part of His Majesty. Thereupon he turned to the British Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, and said he had decided to go to Altona the following day to see the Prince of Wales and he hoped the Ambassador would accompany him. He also told me that I was to go with him too. Accordingly the next day the Kaiser, with a large suite including the British Ambassador and myself, travelled down to Altona; and there we awaited the arrival of the Prince of Wales.

The Prince was obviously much touched by the Kaiser's attention, and there was a long and very cordial conversation between them. When the Kaiser had passed on to speak to the Prince's suite, the Prince took me on one side and asked me when I expected to be in London. I said I should be there in about three days and the Prince then went on in a whisper: "What a pity that I have no opportunity of talking to you alone here, for I have something on my mind that makes me very uneasy. Come and see me as soon as ever you get back to London."

On the way back to Berlin the Kaiser had a long conversation with the British Ambassador in my presence in which he repeatedly assured Sir Frank of his firm friendship for England and his determination never to be drawn into intervention in the South African War. And this is the man, I thought to myself, who a few weeks ago, for no reason at all, was about to send some Admiral or General or other, to give Lord Salisbury an ultimatum. Here he is now, throwing himself again into the Englishman's arms.

As a matter of fact, towards the end of February, that is to say some six weeks before this conversation, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin had sent in a note on behalf of the Tsar and Count Mouravieff, calling on Germany to intervene in concert with Russia and France for the termination of the South African War. The German Government had replied early in March, through

their Ambassador in Petersburg, that Germany could not entertain such a proposal so long as it had to reckon with the hostility of its French neighbour. And a similar enquiry, made on behalf of Count Lamsdorff, eighteen months later, in October, 1901, was also negatived.

As soon as I had heard of this move of Count Mouravieff's, which I did in the course of March, I at once knew that it was nothing more or less than a trap for Germany. The motive of the whole move was merely to bring such pressure on the British Cabinet as would enable Russia to get as much as could be got in Central Asia and Persia, and both Count Bülow and Holstein had, as I learnt later, seen through the Russian game. Unfortunately the form given to the official refusal was not well chosen; since the passage as to our being unable to entertain the proposal "so long as we had to reckon with the hostility of our French neighbours" could be twisted by the Russians into something very different from what was meant.

I knew very well that attempts would be made from Petersburg, just as they were made in October, 1899, to give London the impression that Germany had been trying to make a coalition against England, but that Russia and France had refused. I at once therefore, on my own responsibility and through Alfred Rothschild, informed the British Cabinet that such a proposal had been made to the German Government which the latter had roundly rejected. It was scarcely a fortnight later that, dining one night at Devonshire House, the Duke took me aside and told me with much amusement, that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, Lessare, had informed the Foreign Office in the strictest confidence that Berlin had made repeated efforts to get Russia and France to intervene in favour of the Boers; but that all these approaches had been declined by the Russian Government —as yet. The Duke, who had been informed, like the other Ministers, through Alfred Rothschild, of Mouravieff's manœuvre in Berlin, ended with the observation: "That's what the Russians call truth, turning everything upside down."

The day I got back to London I telephoned to the Prince of Wales' secretary and was received the same afternoon at Marlborough House. After a few cordial words of appreciation about the Kaiser's journey to Altona, he began at once to talk about the Mouravieff manœuvre. He said: "I must ask you to make no official use of what I am going to tell you. Everything that I say now is in the strictest confidence. I have long known from the Kaiser's own letters of the Russo-French intervention proposals at Berlin, and Ministers have also heard of it. Since then, Petersburg has repeatedly told us that Germany was perpetually trying to bring about intervention. No one at first believed these hints; but as to this I have unfortunately been a good deal shaken during my short stay at Copenhagen. I have even had sent to me a written memorandum on the question of intervention. Here is the document which I must ask you to read." He than handed me a paper and I read it through. It was a memorandum in French, unsigned and undated, and to the following effect: "Even before the Boer War the German Government had repeatedly sounded Petersburg and Paris as to whether they would take sides with Berlin in case of war, with a view to rearranging the partition of Africa, India and the Pacific. Neither Petersburg nor Paris have been seduced by these perfidious temptations of German diplomacy. Quite recently there has been a fresh effort in this direction made by Berlin. Berlin has indeed approached Petersburg and proposed that it should induce France to abandon for the future all hostility against Germany. Since, if Russia and France join Germany, Russia could then obtain great extensions in Asia and France in Africa by means of an eventual re-partition of the British Empire. Of course this perfidious temptation has also been indignantly rejected; but it is time for the British Government to recognise the great services that Russia and France have done to the British Empire by their loyalty to it."

After I had read through this composition the Prince

asked me what I thought of it. Thereupon I burst out laughing, and replied that it was certainly from the pen of Jules Hansen, and only a fresh proof of the industry that was being employed to divide Great Britain and Germany. On this the Prince said: "I do not know who the original author of the memorandum is, but it was given me by a highly placed personage in the Danish Court, with the remark that it came direct from the Foreign Office in Petersburg. What most makes me anxious is the suspicion that sometimes forces itself upon me that the Kaiser, in whose word I have complete confidence, is circumvented by his own Ministers and advisers. For example, I was told in Copenhagen how German generals are already occupied with working out a plan of campaign for marching, in company with a Russian army, on Egypt and India."

I answered the Prince that I could give him the most definite assurance that his suspicions were groundless; that I had only just come from conversations with almost all the leading persons in foreign policy in Berlin, and had convinced myself that our attitude in foreign affairs was entirely consonant with the Kaiser's aims. There could be no question of any duplicity towards England, and no importance should be attached to the silly chatter of Court Generals and Admirals. I said that of course all the idiotic statements of irresponsible persons in Berlin were fully exploited in Russian quarters in order to render suspect in England the responsible and reliable rulers of the Empire. The Prince replied he was glad to be so categorically assured that his suspicions were groundless, and should any more such insinuations reach him he would put them where they belonged—in the waste-paper basket.

As a matter of fact many other such attempts were made in the following years. But they were all unsuccessful up to that turning point in history in 1902, when the futile vacillations of German policy finally convinced the British Government and the Prince of Wales, who had in the meantime come to the throne as Edward VII, that all co-operation with Germany was impracticable.

CHAPTER X

BAGDAD, CHINA, RUSSIA, PORTUGAL

WHILE I was acting as Chargé d'Affaires in London I would often receive a sudden summons to take part in a conference at Berlin. I got such a summons in the middle of June, 1900, and on getting to Berlin found that I had been brought over to take part in a conference on the Russian foreign loan, the Bagdad railway question, and the Boxer rising in China.

These conferences generally took place either in the room of the Under-Secretary, von Richthofen, or of Holstein, the heads of the various departments concerned being called in.

The Bagdad Railway question was that which caused the most heated discussion. The line taken by the Foreign Office was that of the responsible official in the Commercial Section, von Mühlberg, who afterwards became Under-Secretary. This point of view may be summarised in a phrase of von Mühlberg's: "With a bow to the British Lion and a courtesy to the Russian Bear, we will worm our way little by little down to the Persian Gulf." But I took a very decided line against this view, being convinced that it would only mean that our Bagdad policy would fall between two stools. I maintained that such a policy would only result in our having to pull the chestnuts out of the Russian fire for England, or out of the English fire for Russia; and that probably, sooner or later, the British Lion and the Russian Bear would join hands behind our backs. We should then be shot out of Asia Minor head over heels, and all the money sunk by the Deutsche Bank in the railway would be lost. The only possibility of carrying out the Bagdad project, without danger to the Empire, was, in my view, a firm understanding with England in this and in all other questions outside Europe.

Holstein, while making sarcastic fun of my fears that England and Russia might unite against us, on the whole supported my contention that the Bagdad scheme must

be carried out in concert with England. His authority was enough to secure the acceptance of this policy; and I was empowered to ascertain, with all proper precautions, how far the English Government would be prepared to participate in a German Bagdad scheme reconstructed on this basis. Accordingly, the director of the Deutsche Bank, George von Siemens, was sent by the Foreign Office to London in January, 1900, to discuss co-operation with England. He duly appeared with lots of large portfolios full of documents, and I invited him to dinner to meet Alfred Rothschild and other city magnates. The whole scheme was thoroughly discussed, and I was going to approach the British Government about it when Herr von Siemens, portfolios and all, suddenly vanished back to Berlin. This, as I learnt later, was the result of the obstinate opposition of our Ambassador in Constantinople, Freiherr von Marschall, to any co-operation with England.

In spite of the efforts of Holstein and myself, this fresh attempt at co-operation with England in the summer of 1900 was as fruitless as that of the previous winter. Under the guidance of Freiherr von Marschall the political side of the Bagdad scheme was so erratically conducted that it soon became inextricably entangled. Finally, the solution arrived at by Sir Edward Grey and Prince Lichnowsky was first nullified by the folly and jealousy of those in control of the Foreign Office at the time, and then was finally annihilated by the outbreak of war. And where to-day is the Bagdad Railway of Freiherr von Marschall and the many hundreds of millions of German money buried in it?

When the question of the Russian loan came up at this conference of June, 1900, I called attention to the interdict of Bismarck of November, 1887, which put an end to the perpetual draining of German money into the Russian war-chest. Bismarck had also feared lest Germany might become politically dependent on Russia, owing to the increasing indebtedness of Russia to German finance, as has often been the case.

This prudent policy of Bismarck's had however gradually fallen into disuse; and, during the 'nineties, one great Russian loan after another was floated in Germany, on the ground that it was necessary to finance Russia in order to stimulate the Russian market for German manufactures. Finally the Muscovite succeeded in playing off the Berlin and Paris money market against each other. High finance in both capitals competed for the favours of the all-powerful Russian Finance Minister, Count Witte, who treated it as a favour when he allowed a French or German syndicate to swell the Russian war fund by bringing out another loan.

He had made more than one attempt to secure the London money market for his loans, but these had all failed, principally on account of the obstinate opposition of the Rothschilds. Alfred Rothschild had a particular dislike for Russia and everything Russian. Count Witte and his active and astute agent, a certain Rothstein, were to him like red rags to a bull. This aversion was partly due to the barbarities perpetrated against the Jews, and partly to the conviction that the wave of Russian Imperialism and Panslavism must eventually carry the world into danger of war. Consequently Alfred Rothschild and his great influence were always on hand to countermine the continual subterranean activities of Russian diplomacy.

I remember once, in the spring of 1906, I was lunching with Alfred Rothschild, in New Court, his city office, when the Russian agent, Rothstein, was suddenly announced. The servant had hardly said the name Rothstein when Alfred Rothschild cried out excitedly: "I won't see this *chuzpe ponem*" (Yiddish for "impudent fellow").

The servant was sent to say that he couldn't see Herr Rothstein, but brought back a message that Mr. Rothstein had come to London on behalf of Count Witte about a most important business matter with the Rothschild firm, and that he had to deliver a personal letter from the Russian Minister of Finance. Whereupon my mild and amiable friend, Alfred, flew into a regular passion. He sent for his secretary, and told him to say to Mr. Rothstein

in so many words that he wouldn't see him even if he brought twenty personal letters from the Tsar of Russia. But even this wasn't enough to get rid of Mr. Rothstein. He simply sat on in the waiting-room, borrowed a newspaper from the servant, and said he would wait till Mr. Alfred went out, and then catch him for a moment on his way. When Alfred Rothschild heard this he fairly shouted: "Such *chuspe* I have never seen in my life." Then, looking at his watch: "Let the fellow wait then, but he won't see me." Whereupon he sent for his hat and stick, gave orders to the coachman to pick him up at the corner of Cannon Street, and took me out by a back way. As he got into the brougham, he said to me with great satisfaction: "That is one for the impudent puppy anyway."

The other two partners, Lord Rothschild and Leopold, were away that day at Epsom Races, but the next day Rothstein succeeded, after much trouble, in seeing Lord Rothschild. I afterwards heard that Rothstein began the interview with a glowing account of Russia's financial situation, but after Lord Rothschild had several times interrupted him, telling him to be brief and come to business, he at last said no more than that Russia's financial situation was so good that for the moment it had no need of a new loan. But he never produced that private and particular letter from Count Witte.

In spite of the Rothschild opposition Count Witte and Mr. Rothstein did not abandon their attempts to get an access to the London money market for their loans, but they had no success until the folly of German diplomacy had brought about a political *rapprochement* between Great Britain and Russia.

The question at the Foreign Office Conference of June, 1900, was more especially as to whether a bar was to be raised against the further flotations of Russian loans in Berlin. Holstein declared in favour of this, but only presupposing there was no likelihood that Russia would be able to substitute London for Berlin. And, when I observed that I considered the Russians would never

succeed in floating loans in England on any large scale until there was a political *rapprochement* between the two countries, Holstein retorted: "It is simply naive to suppose that there could ever be a political *rapprochement* between Russia and England. But a purely economic *rapprochement* might be possible. We must therefore do everything to prevent England being bound to Russia by any large-scale loan." But in the end everything stayed as it was, for there were influences in Berlin far stronger than any interests of state. The Russians continued to get as much money from Germany as they wanted, while the English money market remained for many years completely closed to them.

While these conferences were discussing the Boxer rising there came the melancholy news of the murder of our Minister in Peking, Freiherr von Ketteler. This event naturally gave the Chinese trouble a much more serious aspect for Germany.

The situation in China had been becoming daily more dangerous; and the agitation against foreigners conducted under the ægis of the Dowager Empress, who had imprisoned their protector the Emperor, became more acute. The Powers interested in the Far East were accordingly compelled to send contingents of troops to China. For, soon after the murder of the German Minister, the foreign legations were blockaded and besieged by the Chinese mob. And, as communications between Pekin and the coast were cut, it was not known for some time whether the foreigners in the Legation quarter were still alive. An expedition sent to the relief of the Legations, under Admiral Seymour, was surrounded on the way up by superior Chinese forces, and only got back to the coast with difficulty.

By the end of July the combined forces in China, of which the Russians had the largest contingent, were estimated at about 116,000 men, with nearly 300 guns. The question then came up what Power was to have the supreme command. The English and Japanese did not want a Russian command, while the Russians would

not hear of it going to the English or Japanese. On its merits, Germany was probably the Power indicated for the command; but the way the Kaiser proceeded to secure it for Count Waldersee, whom he had already selected for this post, made us a laughing-stock.

The Embassy in London duly received instructions to get Lord Salisbury to propose officially to the Concert that the Supreme Command in China should be entrusted to Field-Marshal Count Waldersee. I accordingly at once approached Lord Salisbury, but found that he had already heard from Berlin that the Kaiser was at that moment treating the appointment of his nominee as a *fait accompli*, and was making all the consequent arrangements. In telling me this with some amusement, the Premier remarked that he could not understand why the Kaiser made such a point of getting the command in China for a German general. Any Power taking over the military conduct of affairs in China, under then existing conditions, incurred a serious military and political risk. For his part he would have declined with thanks even a unanimous offer of it to England by all the Powers. He himself could not see why a supreme command was wanted. He would however meet the Kaiser's wishes in the matter after consultation with the War Office. He would give me a definite answer later.

This conversation gave me the distinct impression that a quiet and correct handling of the question, without too much *empressement*, would secure a realisation of the Kaiser's wishes. But as usual Berlin could not let things take their proper course. The Kaiser had got it into his head that his nominee had only to take over the command, and, without waiting for any answer from Lord Salisbury, he proceeded to ship off the Field-Marshal and his grotesque suite to an accompaniment of resounding harangues.

Whereupon, the Berlin Foreign Office, being severely bustled by the Kaiser, began to bombard the Embassy with urgent telegrams. Both Count Hatzfeldt, who had just returned from sick leave and was still far from well,

and I myself, were fairly pestered by Holstein. Under this telegraphic barrage the Ambassador to some extent lost his nerve, and kept me under a constant fire of communications from his country house at Hanwell.

While the negotiations with Lord Salisbury were still in full swing, the Kaiser suddenly announced to the world in bombastic language that his friend the Tsar had requested him to let Field-Marshal von Waldersee take over the command of the foreign contingents.* But hardly had the trumpets and drums and orations announcing the departure of Count Waldersee died away than the Great Powers interested in China were called on by a collective note of the Russian Government to withdraw their troops from Pekin and the neighbouring provinces, as the Legations had already been freed and foreigners were no longer in any danger. This collective note coming on top of all the Kaiser's speechifyings was perhaps the worst diplomatic humiliation that a great Power has ever suffered in a time of peace. The whole Continent shook with laughter. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London, my friend Lessare, was giving everyone who would listen to him the raciest accounts of this last harlequinade of Wilhelm's. The English Ministers shrugged their shoulders, and my friend Alfred Rothschild, deeply grieved at all the mockery of Germany, said to me: "Germany has lost heavily in prestige, for *c'est le ridicule qui tue.*"

On the appearance of the Russian circular note, calling for the withdrawal of the contingents to the coast, the position of Count Waldersee became absurd, and Berlin altogether lost its head.

* In the spring of 1901, a controversy arose in the Press as to how the assnmption of the supreme command by Germany was initiated. Prince Bülow declared in the Reichstag that the China command had been entrusted to Germany by the Tsar, but that he could say no more. Small wonder that he could say no more, because the facts, as told by Prince Radolin, our Ambassador in Petersburg, were as follows: "Towards the end of July, 1900, I got express instructions from the Kaiser to get the Tsar and the Russian Government to give us the China command. On my seeing Count Lamsdorff he said it was a matter for the Tsar, and when I saw the Tsar he said he took no interest in it, and that was all I could get out of him. This I reported to Berlin. And I could not believe my eyes when I saw the Kaiser's official declaration that the Tsar had asked him to appoint Field-Marshal Waldersee to the supreme command in China. Moreover I was in a very difficult position, for both the Tsar and Lamsdorff believed I had sent a false report to Berlin. On the next meeting with the Tsar he expressed his surprise, adding that I must admit that no word of what the Kaiser had said was true. Lamsdorff he said had wanted to have an official *démenti* published, but his consideration for the Kaiser as a colleague made him stop this."
ECKARDSTEIN.

The only instruction that I got from Holstein was: "Keep the English at all costs in Pekin." But that wasn't so easy a matter as Holstein may have supposed. Russian diplomacy was working at high pressure in London and elsewhere, and it looked for a time as though Russia would get its policy accepted by the Great Powers.

One evening my friend Lessare was telling me in a high state of delight that it had just been decided that the British troops should be withdrawn from Pekin. I told him that in that case, and in view of his severe exertions of the past weeks, he ought to come and pay us a visit at Solent Lodge in the Isle of Wight. He at once accepted the invitation and we went off together to Cowes. Getting him down there was something to start with, as he could not for the time being go on intriguing in London. But two days later, starting very early in the morning, without saying anything to him, I travelled back to London and had long conversations with Lord Salisbury, Mr. Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire. I pointed out to these Ministers that Russia was only making trouble for its own purposes. I declared that my information was to the effect that Berlin intended to recall Field-Marshal Waldersee and to re-embark all the German troops in China; being disgusted with the whole Chinese business and determined to have nothing more to do with the Far Eastern question. England could then see how it could get on alone with Russia in China.

To be strictly accurate, I had received no instruction or information from Berlin other than the short telegram from Holstein above mentioned. But while I got nothing out of Lord Salisbury, who had been for some time badly put out again by the Kaiser and Holstein, I could see that Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire were distinctly upset by my assertions. They even promised that they would do all they could to see that the next Cabinet Meeting decided to keep the British troops in Pekin. They also deprecated Berlin taking any precipitate action in withdrawing the German troops. The

Duke of Devonshire, China having been for a long time his hobby, became quite excited, and I gathered that he would move heaven and earth to keep the British troops in Pekin.

That same evening I went back to the Isle of Wight, and, when Lessare enquired with much interest why I had gone so suddenly to London, I said that I had had important private business there. But I shall never forget the moment, a few mornings later, when my friend Lessare opened his paper at breakfast and read the official *communiqué* that the Government had decided to decline the Russian proposal and to keep the British troops in Pekin. He almost fell off his chair, had his things packed at once, and said he must take the next boat for Southampton and London—on important private business. But he was too late. The decision was taken and the Ministers had gone off on their holidays.

In spite of the presence of the other contingents in China, the Russians began to boss the whole business more and more, while what they were really after became daily more obvious. The British Cabinet consequently became more and more anxious as to future developments in the Far East.

Count Hatzfeldt, employing his usual acumen and enjoying for the moment better health than usual, took advantage of this attack of nerves for another attempt to bring Great Britain and Germany together. His negotiations with Lord Salisbury led eventually to the conclusion of the Yangtse Agreement of 18th October, 1900. The fundamental principle of this agreement was of course the maintenance of the territorial integrity of China, and it was in the first place directed against the expansionist policy of Russia. But unfortunately Manchuria was omitted at the express desire of Count Bülow, and consequently as is generally the case with half-measures in politics the agreement resulted in the opposite of what was intended.

The Duke of Devonshire wrote to me a few days after signature of the agreement pointing out that Russia

would not be deterred by this agreement from extending its encroachments in China. But if this went on, he asked, what would happen to the Lancashire cotton industry or for the matter of that to German industrial interests. In another passage of this letter which mostly dealt with private matters, the Duke said: "I do not understand how Lord Salisbury came to give way to Bülow's wish to exclude Manchuria. In consequence of this restriction the whole agreement is not worth the paper it is written on." And in this the Duke proved to be right; for Russia continued its aggressive expansionism without paying any attention to the principle of the territorial integrity of China and the "open door."

Lord Salisbury was in fact at this time beginning to age very much, and he no longer retained the intense intellectual energy that had been a marked characteristic. His memory began to fail. For example he entirely forgot that he had arranged in conversation with Count Hatzfeldt that the Yangtse Agreement should be published, simultaneously, in Berlin and in the "Times," on a certain date. He had said nothing either to his private secretary or to the Under-Secretary about this; and on the evening before the day of publication, meeting Sir Francis Bertie at dinner and asking him what view he thought the public would take of the agreement next day, I found he was under the impression it was to remain a profound secret. On hearing that Wolff would publish it in the morning, he was consternated and hurried off to communicate with Lord Salisbury, but found he was at Hatfield. The authority for publication was however got by telephone, and a troublesome *contretemps* avoided by a happy chance.

Very soon after this there was a change at the Foreign Office. Lord Salisbury remained Premier until July, 1902, but was succeeded as Foreign Secretary by Lord Lansdowne.

Like Lord Salisbury, Lord Lansdowne was a type of the English *Grand Seigneur*. He had a very pleasant natural manner, but a strong will that went straight

to the point. He had been Governor General of Canada, Viceroy of India, and Secretary for War in the Salisbury Government. He is generally regarded in Germany as the principal accomplice of King Edward in the policy of encirclement. This ignores the fact completely that Lord Lansdowne, during his first years as Foreign Secretary, was thoroughly friendly to Germany; and as sincerely engaged in trying to bring about an understanding with Germany as were Mr. Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire. This is moreover shown in the memoirs of the Japanese statesman, Count Hayashi, published in London in 1915.

There was at the same time a somewhat similar change in ruling circles in Berlin. Count Bülow became Chancellor in the place of the aged Prince Hohenlohe. The Under-Secretary, Freiherr von Richthofen, became Foreign Secretary and von Mühlberg took his place. Both the latter were pleasant personalities and their policy on the whole both sound and sensible, but they could do little to neutralise the all-powerful and eccentric Holstein and the morbid megalomania of Wilhelm II.

In the autumn of 1900 negotiations had begun as to the peace conditions to be imposed on the Chinese Government. In conducting these negotiations in London I had great difficulty with Holstein, because no measures seemed to him too severe, and he looked on the other Powers as too weak-kneed. He also went into a quite unnecessary temper over the question as to whether foreigners should be deported from the Transvaal in consequence of the increasing scarcity caused there by the war. I append some of Holstein's telegrams of this character.

Berlin, *9th December*, 1900.

> If only on account of expense Germany desires all possible acceleration of Chinese negotiations, without large military undertakings, but applying a hunger blockade to Chinese Court to make it compliant. If without blockade so much the better. No definite demand as to indemnity and security has been

advanced to which anyone could in the circumstances take exception. What are the difficulties? Can there be any other reason than Lord Salisbury's wish to play schoolmaster once again?

HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *December 17th*, 1900.

Please note that, in order to counteract the detrimental effect on the Chinese of the Russian proposal for mitigating the wording of the document, the blockade of the Yangtse should be seriously considered. If the English do not like this idea, then you should insist on the conditions proposed by Lord Salisbury, which will probably be enough to make the Chinese Court weaken. The screw must be put on somehow and somewhere. If we do nothing but give way, we shall only be laughed at.

HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *December 18th*, 1900.

Referring to official telegrams. Point out politely but very plainly how much the position of the German Government will be prejudiced in the pending Kruger question, if the Soudanese methods of Kitchener in starving foreigners out of Johannesburg are, contrary to anticipation, followed and approved by the British Government.

HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *19th December*, 1900.

If the incredible notion of starving the foreigners out of Johannesburg is carried out there will be an end of meeting attacks on England with the argument that foreigners are better off under British rule than elsewhere, especially in the Transvaal.

HOLSTEIN.

Nor was Holstein's mentality my only difficulty at this time. Lord Lansdowne told me one day towards the end

of November that he was uneasy about news that he had just got from Shanghai. The German Admiral commanding there had, it appeared, announced that a German flotilla of small craft were about to make an expedition as far as possible up the Yangtse to look for suitable sites for important German settlements. He had added that he would bombard the Wusung Forts. Lord Lansdowne said he could scarcely believe the Admiral was in earnest in view of the position of the German Government under the recent Yangtse agreement.

I telegraphed this to Holstein, and got in reply a snub to the effect that the British authorities in Shanghai must have been dreaming. I accordingly told Lord Lansdowne that the Admiral must have been joking.

But a few days later I got an official telegram from Berlin, that the Imperial Navy considered it very desirable to make a demonstration up the Yangtse, and that I was to prepare Lord Lansdowne for it as best I could. I did not however act on this instruction but sent in reply a long telegram to Berlin, exposing pretty sharply the absurdity of this affair, and declaring categorically that I could not carry out the instructions.

I heard no more of the business, but on my next visit to Berlin the Foreign Secretary told me that the Office had been very pleased at my curt refusal. The Admiralty had used the Kaiser against the Wilhelmstrasse, and had prepared and were pushing through the whole business without paying any attention either to them or to the Yangtse agreement. My refusal had at once been referred to the Kaiser, and thereafter the matter had dropped. The Foreign Secretary had asked one of the Admiralty authorities what was in the mind of the Navy in wanting to bombard Wusung and sail up the Yangtse. This gentleman replied: "It was not a proper position for the Imperial German Navy to lie for whole weeks before Shanghai without doing anything serious."

The negotiations between the Powers as to conditions of peace with China continued to raise difficulties that were by no means easy to deal with. Serious differences

of opinion arose between the Powers, especially as to the place where peace was finally to be concluded. America insisted on Washington, and was supported by France and Russia. Germany insisted on Pekin, and on the strength of an agreement to this effect between Great Britain and Germany, Pekin was finally selected. This time there was a pronounced *rapprochement*, both political and economic, between Russia and America, and Count Witte was already planning a Russian Government loan on a large scale from the United States.

Here are specimens of the correspondence :

Berlin, *5th January*, 1901.

Private for BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

If the Conference is held in Washington, Russia, America, Japan and France will probably join hands. Conger and Pichon (American and French Ministers in Pekin) were the two stumbling-blocks to any combination. It would be incredibly short-sighted for the British Government to give way.

HOLSTEIN.

London, *10th January*, 1901.

Private for BARON HOLSTEIN.

I am convinced that they did not intend here to accept the American proposal, but to stick to Pekin as the only possible place for the Conference. If Lord Lansdowne only gave the American Ambassador a procrastinating answer yesterday, it was probably because last Friday Mr. Choate had caught him when he was in a hurry to get away to the country, and in order to get rid of him quickly he had let him hope the American proposal would be accepted. The American seems to have telegraphed that England would agree, and Lord Lansdowne has had now to procrastinate so as to get safely on to the other tack. Mr. Choate, who has long been accustomed to play the part of a paternal councillor at the Foreign Office and to have his own way there, is getting daily more

annoyed with Lord Lansdowne. He seems to have been quite truculent at the Office.

ECKARDSTEIN.

On the whole I succeeded in holding together Great Britain and Germany on the China question, though serious difficulties between the two countries arose in regard to the Tientsin affair, in which the Russians were guilty of direct breaches of treaty. As also in the question of the Chinese War indemnity and the unreasonable demands of the Kaiser and the Wilhelmstrasse as to the compensation for German subjects in the South African War.

But in spite of all frictions and misunderstandings whether old or new, the relations between the two countries at this stage were again thoroughly cordial and confidential. This appeared in respect to the agreement concluded in October, 1898, as to the Portuguese Colonies. The motive of this agreement, which in the absence of Lord Salisbury was negotiated by Mr. Balfour with Count Hatzfeldt, had been a growing apprehension lest Portugal, in its anxiety to get foreign loans, might mortgage elsewhere its colonial possessions in Africa. Both Alfred Rothschild and I took part in the preliminary preparation of this strictly secret Anglo-German treaty; and consequently I became well acquainted with the details of it. It was of a distinctly hypothetical character, as the agreement, which contemplated a partition of the Portuguese colonies in Africa and in the Sunda archipelago between Great Britain and Germany, only came into force under certain conditions. Both contracting parties at that time believed that Portugal would have to apply to England or Germany for financial assistance in the near future. It was, then, to be explained to the Portuguese Government that Great Britain and Germany had agreed together that Portugal was only to be financed jointly, and on the security of the cession or reversion of her African and colonial possessions. This agreement was intended to put a stop to the mortgaging of the colonies

to France. But under no circumstances was Portugal to be coerced into ceding or pledging its colonies.

There had also been a sort of alliance between England and Portugal, dating from the 17th century, under which the two States had mutually guaranteed each other's possessions. This ancient alliance had been re-affirmed in 1899 by the so-called Treaty of Windsor, thanks to the activity and ability of the Marquis de Soveral; and the King of Portugal in a speech made in December, 1900, on the occasion of the visit of the British squadron to Lisbon, had made public reference to this Treaty. In a conversation that I had soon afterwards with Lord Lansdowne at the Foreign Office I took occasion to ask what this Anglo-Portuguese Treaty was that the King had referred to. He said it was no more than a "re-assertion of the ancient alliance," which was a matter of common knowledge; and that the secret Treaty between Great Britain and Germany was in no way affected by it.

I telegraphed this at once to Berlin and also sent a copy of his letter to the above effect. It is consequently incomprehensible to me how the Berlin Foreign Office came to believe that the expression "reassertion of the alliance" referred to the Anglo-Portuguese boundary agreement of 1892, that gave Great Britain a right of pre-emption over Delagoa Bay, and why 13 years later they were so surprised when the British Government again brought up the Windsor Treaty in the negotiations between Sir Edward Grey and Prince Lichnowsky. For they had before them the text of Lord Lansdowne's letter, in which the reaffirmation of the ancient alliance is expressly mentioned, and both the English and Portuguese papers explained that the King's speech at Lisbon had referred to the recent revival of the 17th century alliance.

CHAPTER XI

ANGLO-GERMAN AGREEMENT AGAIN ATTEMPTED

On the 9th January, 1901, I got a letter in German from the Duchess of Devonshire, which among other matters contained the following invitation:* "We have sent your wife an invitation to come with you to Chatsworth from about the 12th or 13th until the 17th or 18th. Pray come without fail as the Duke has several urgent political questions to discuss with you. You will also find here Joseph Chamberlain. As we shall have a house-party of fifty or so for the theatricals you will easily get an opportunity of a quiet talk with the Duke and Jos. It is true Asquith and some other leading members of the Opposition will be with us too, but that will not matter, for there are in the 'Schloss' plenty of rooms where you will be able to talk without anyone noticing it. The Duke makes a great point of your coming as he is again much worried about the Eastern Question and it is so good for him to have someone to talk to about it. Many thanks for the wonderful Brunswick sausages and 'Spick-Gänse' you sent me at Christmas. As there is no one in England with a taste for such delicacies I had some all by myself for breakfast every morning. It quite reminded me of my childhood in Hanover."

During this visit the Duke, Chamberlain and myself discussed all outstanding international questions of importance and the future of Anglo-German relations. In a conversation after dinner in the Chatsworth library on the 16th January the two Ministers definitely formulated their position. Their statement was embodied by me in an official despatch after consultation with Count Hatzfeldt.

The Count was delighted with the Ministers' declaration, and advised that the telegram to Holstein should be so drafted as to make it appear that my meeting Chamberlain at Chatsworth was purely social and in no way pre-

* Translated from the German.

arranged. This was in his opinion so important, in view of Holstein's suspicious nature, that it would be better to leave out all mention of the Duke and report the statement as being by Chamberlain only. For the same reason he finally decided to make my telegram an official communication to the Chancellor ; while he himself sent one to Holstein, composed entirely for the latter's particular consumption.

Here are the two documents :

London, *January* 18*th*, 1901.

No. 51. *Secret.* To His Excellency
The Chancellor.

At a recent meeting of Freiherr von Eckardstein with Mr. Chamberlain at the country house of the Duke of Devonshire, the Colonial Minister made among other statements the following important declaration:

He and his friends in the Cabinet had made up their minds that the day of a policy of " splendid isolation " was over for England. England must look about for allies for the future. The choice was either Russia and France or the Triple Alliance. Both in the Cabinet and in the public there were those who wished for and eagerly worked for an understanding with Russia ; and who were moreover ready to pay a very high price to obtain this object. He himself did not belong to those who wished for an association with Russia ; he was rather convinced that a combination with Germany and an association with the Triple Alliance was preferable He himself would do everything to bring about a gradual advance in this direction. For the present he was in favour of arranging a secret agreement between Great Britain and Germany with reference to Morocco on the basis that had already been put forward. His advice was that the matter should be taken up as soon as Lord Salisbury left for the South, and that the details should be negotiated

with Lord Lansdowne and himself. So long as he, Mr. Chamberlain, was convinced that a permanent partnership with Germany was possible he would absolutely oppose any idea of an arrangement with Russia. But should a permanent partnership with Germany prove unrealisable, he would then support an association with Russia in spite of the excessive price that England would probably have to pay for it in China and the Persian Gulf. He wished these remarks of his, except in so far as they bore on the Morocco question, to be considered for the present not as an overture but only as an academic subject for discussion. Detailed report follows by messenger.

HATZFELDT.

London, *January* 18*th*, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN. *Reference telegram No.* 51.

Chamberlain's important statement seems to confirm the assumption that I have often advanced that they will over here come towards us, as soon as they feel that they want some backing, and so long as we maintain an expectant attitude. But that they will turn to the possibility of a settlement with Russia, even one that would cost them dear, as soon as any agreement with Germany and the Triple Alliance proves to be unrealisable.

You and I will probably agree that the idea of an alliance is for the present premature, but Chamberlain seems to share this view and to be anxious to lead up to a subsequent definite understanding through a special agreement as to Morocco. That might suit us very well. In the meantime we may hope that the coolness between England and America, owing to the latter's increasing intimacy with Russia, may develop still more; so that England may become still more dependent on us.

It is particularly noteworthy that Chamberlain almost undisguisedly expresses the hope that he

will soon be rid of Salisbury, and thereby become master of the situation. It seems certain that Salisbury is leaving for the South for several months, and that then Chamberlain and his friends, of whom Lansdowne is very much one, will be in control here.

HATZFELDT.

The following reply may suggest that our precautions were not unnecessary :

Berlin, *January 21st*, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

The whole threat of disarming Russian and French hostilities by withdrawing from China and the Persian Gulf is just rubbish and humbug. In the first place France would not get enough out of it. France would never be induced by this, or by any other concession, to surrender Tangier and the Straits of Gibraltar to England. If England makes large concessions in spheres of influence to Russia and France, it will only whet the appetite of its two opponents and make a struggle for life all the more inevitable—a reduced England against reinforced enemies.

Hardly any general treaty with England is conceivable for Germany that would not involve a certain danger of war. And Germany could only expect compensation comparable to the immense risks it was taking if England had a more accurate that is a more modest, opinion of its own performances. England still holds to what Lord Salisbury said to Count Hatzfeldt, "You ask too much for your friendship." This and the ill-treatment of Germany, that has become a habit under Lord Salisbury, must first be forgotten and forgiven before we can "start fresh." At present Kitchener is treating Germans in South Africa on Salisburian lines.

HOLSTEIN.

While I was on a few days' holiday at Cowes early in 1901 rumours were already current as to the serious

illness of the old Queen who, as usual, had been spending Christmas at Osborne. I accordingly called there one day to enquire; and although her physician, Sir James Reid, told me her illness was by no means alarming, I learnt from various Court officials that her condition was extremely serious. I did not dare report this to Berlin; for the Kaiser would at once have begun telegraphing to various royal relations, quoting me as his authority. All the same he did hear the alarming reports; but on telegraphing to his relations received reassuring replies.

On my return however from Chatsworth to London on the evening of January 17th, 1901, I met an old Court official in the club who told me in confidence that the end might be expected at any moment; and, as I knew him to be a most reliable authority, I immediately telegraphed to Berlin so that the news reached the Kaiser the following morning. He at once decided to postpone all his engagements, and to go to London by the direct route through Holland. Accordingly, on January 20th, he arrived with his suite on the Dutch mail-boat at Port Victoria, where I met him with the Embassy staff. With him came the Duke of Connaught who had been on a visit to Berlin.

When I met the Kaiser on board he thanked me for enabling him to arrive in time at the sick-bed of his grandmother. He said he would go on the very next morning to Osborne, and hoped to God he would still find the Queen alive. He had been bombarded all through his journey with telegrams from his aunts at Osborne telling him to go back. But he would not take the risk of doing this as he should never have forgiven himself while he lived, if the end had come and he had not arrived in time.

He took me with him in his saloon-carriage to London, as he wished to learn from me what had been happening. I reported to him fully my conversations with the Duke of Devonshire and Chamberlain at Chatsworth, and he expressed himself as highly delighted with the pronouncement of the two Ministers as to an Anglo-German alliance.

He said he was completely in agreement with the idea of an alliance between the two Powers, for the protection of their mutual interests and for the preservation of the peace of the world. But just before leaving London I had received from Holstein pressing recommendations not to let the Kaiser discuss with the British Ministers the Alliance or any other question of the moment, for fear his ideas might crystallise in some particular form. I accordingly told the Kaiser I thought it would be best not to discuss the Alliance, and even to act as though he had no knowledge of what the Duke of Devonshire and Chamberlain had said. He replied that he quite understood, and would only discuss Anglo-German relations generally.

The Prince of Wales, in the uniform of the First Prussian Dragoon Guards, was waiting for the arrival of the Kaiser's special train at Victoria station. The greetings that passed between the Kaiser and his uncle were of the most cordial nature, and they drove off together to Buckingham Palace, where the Kaiser and his suite were accommodated. As he left he told me to come and see him that evening, as there were various things he had to discuss with me. The Ambassador had again fallen seriously ill and could not leave his bed during the whole imperial visit.

The following morning the Kaiser, with the Prince of Wales, went on to Osborne, where he found his grandmother still alive. But two days later, on January 22nd, the aged Queen closed her eyes for ever. An eyewitness, who had been present in the room, told me that the Queen had been only half-conscious, and that she had taken the Kaiser, when he came to her bedside, for her son-in-law, the dead Kaiser Frederick.

During the whole long stay of the Kaiser in England, which lasted till February 5th, his relations with his uncle and other relatives were of the most cordial character.

Here however is Holstein on the subject, together with my reply:

Berlin, *January 21st*, 1901.

Private. To BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

I hope urgently that the Royal Family will not get on the wrong side of the Kaiser with their usual lack of consideration. Do your best with the British Ministers, or anyhow see that something is at once done to make them insist on courteous treatment for the Kaiser. The Chancellor has just said to me that he thought the news very ominous that the Kaiser had not been allowed to come to Osborne. I suggest that if our representations to the British Ministers produce good results you should let His Majesty know it in some way that will not be directly derogatory to his relatives.

HOLSTEIN.

The spontaneous hastening of the Kaiser to the death-bed of his grandmother had made a deep impression, not only upon the Royal Family, but on the whole public opinion of England. For a time certainly, Wilhelm II was, in the eyes of almost every Englishman, a most popular personage. How little those people know England who accept the almost universal view that the Englishman has no susceptibility and is a cold and calculating egoist. Anyone who really knows Englishmen will agree that there is scarcely a race that is so profoundly sentimental as the English. Nor is this affected by a very strong strain of hypocrisy that prevails in certain British religious sects. Just as little is it affected by the strongly developed and deeply rooted public spirit of the English, who pursue a policy in respect of other countries and in the interests of their own Commonwealth that is calculated, consecutive and sometimes callous.

The Crown Prince also came to Osborne while the Kaiser was there. King Edward gave him the Garter and at the investiture made such a warm-hearted speech as I never heard from him on any other occasion Unfortunately this speech was either mutilated or quite

misreported by the greater part of the Continental press—particularly the German. I did my best however to keep official quarters properly informed.

London, *January 28th*, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

I have just returned from Osborne. The most cordial relations conceivable prevail, not only between the Kaiser and the King, but also with the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. At the investiture of the Crown Prince with the Garter to-day, the King made an address in the most moving language ; referring to the close family ties between himself and the House of Hohenzollern, and expressing the hope that this relationship might extend itself to both the great nations that had been called together to work for the preservation of peace and the progress of civilisation. He ended by pointing out that the Kaiser by hastening to the bedside of the Queen, and by staying in England until the funeral, had aroused a profound and permanent sentiment of gratitude and respect, not only in the family circle but throughout the whole British race.

The Kaiser told me that he had had long political conversations with the King and that they were both of the same opinion. The King had a strong dislike both for Russia and France and had expressed himself in correspondingly strong language about them. When the Kaiser called the King's attention to the symptoms of a *rapprochement* between the United States and Russia, King Edward became very grave and said he looked on such a coalition as a great danger for the whole of Europe. The King said further, with reference to Lord Lansdowne's arrival, that the latter, in spite of his French mother, had no sympathies at all for France. Such sympathies were more in Lord Salisbury's line. The Kaiser, in his conversation with Lord Lansdowne,

had only treated political questions from the same academic standpoint that he had taken with King Edward. Lord Lansdowne had at first referred to the old doctrine of the Balance of Power between the European States treating it as still being in the hands of England. To this the Kaiser had replied that the Balance of Power rested at present with the twenty-two German Army Corps; adding that England was no longer in a position to keep apart from the rest of Europe, but must combine with the Continent.

Lord Lansdowne eventually agreed, though not without hesitation, both as to this point of view and as to the peril for Europe of a Russo-American entente. The Kaiser had throughout made no mention of Germany, but referred always to the Continent as a whole. When Lord Lansdowne touched on the last British *démarche* in Berlin as to the Russian proceedings in Tientsin, the Kaiser replied that he was not sufficiently well informed on the question to give an opinion.

King Edward expressed himself yesterday very strongly as to the attitude of the English Roman Catholic clergy, who had refused to hold memorial services on the day of the Queen's funeral because she had not belonged to the one true Church.

He also spoke with resentment of the behaviour of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. The Prince had offered to come over for the funeral ceremony; but had made it a condition that he should be better treated than at the last Jubilee, when he had not been given proper precedence. After an exchange of telegrams the Prince had said that he regretted he could not come to London, as he inferred from the British Government's communication that he would not be given the precedence to which he was entitled.

ECKARDSTEIN.

And here is Holstein's characteristic reply:

Berlin, *January 30th*, 1901.

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

I sent on your interesting report through the usual channels. As to Bulgaria, Ferdinand's howl of rage at being warned off London had already reached us from Sofia. I doubt whether people in England, where the Battenberg legend is still cultivated, have any lively affection for the Prince's personality. I cannot however help asking myself whether pious sentiment for the memory of the handsome Sandio (Alexander of Battenberg) was the only reason for the cool treatment of his successor. Or whether Prince Ferdinand was not intentionally ill-treated, because it was considered that, the worse humour he was in, the more likely would he be to throw himself into the Macedonian adventure. Perhaps you will remember that in the summer of 1895 Salisbury planned a partition of Turkey, i.e., a great continental war, and that the alienation between him and the Kaiser dates from His Majesty having treated this idea as a pitfall, brusquely turning it down. Is England now furthering the Macedonian movement with the idea that its developments might divert the attention of the Powers from South Africa? It has been remarked in Sofia that the British representative has not joined the others in urging the Prince to keep the Macedonian Committee curbed. This is a highly important question for Germany, as for all the other Continental Powers. So do your best to find out how the British Government stands towards it, and whether they are not quietly fermenting the Macedonian movement.

It is very reassuring from the point of view of the Kaiser's personal safety that it looks as though he would not stay in London. The dangers of such a stay are so obvious that I suppose either the Royal Family or the Government will have found some reason or other against it.

If the Royalties at Osborne are really reconciled

again we can only rejoice; it will probably save us much worry later and much thankless work, but matters would have a different aspect if some English politician or other, for example Salisbury (of whom I shall always have a lively recollection on account of Samoa, the mail steamers, etc.), if it occurred to Salisbury for example, to exploit the candour and compliance of His Majesty in order to secure some binding promise. It is your business, dear friend, to watch *carefully* for *every* indication of this in London official circles in order that proper precautions may be taken in time. I can scarcely suppose that such an attempt will be made by the Royal Family after what you have said of the academic character of the discussions at Osborne. But what the British Ministers may be concocting, if we can't see—you probably can.

See that you don't catch cold at the funeral.

Yours sincerely,

HOLSTEIN

After our return to London Lord Lansdowne said he had been very well satisfied by his conversation with the Kaiser; though he had not understood what the Kaiser meant by his assertion that "It was not the British fleet but the twenty-two German Army Corps that were the Balance of Power."

Among the many foreign Sovereigns who attended the funeral of Queen Victoria was the Belgian Royal Bagman, Leopold II. He had for long been trying to muddy the waters in England for the benefit of his own fishing. He had himself large holdings in Belgian syndicates which wanted to do business in the Far East. He had also financial relations with big Russian and French concerns in China; and he acted in London as financial agent for these Franco-Russo-Belgian interests. He wanted to get a confidential conversation with the Kaiser about China, and asked me to arrange a meeting. I however, for good reasons, did just the opposite by earnestly

warning the Kaiser against this sly old fox. The Kaiser took my advice and carefully avoided his importunate *confrère*. I also succeeded in putting a spoke in Leopold's wheel with King Edward. Leopold then proposed himself for a visit to Chatsworth in order to discuss China with the Duke of Devonshire. But the Duchess, acting on the Duke's wishes, put him off with the excuse that the house would be so full that she feared she could not find a suitable set of rooms for him.

The Imperial yacht, "Hohenzollern," had been brought over to Cowes, but the Kaiser did not move on board, and stayed on at Osborne until he went to the funeral at Windsor.

After the funeral ceremony the Kaiser sent for me and made me report very fully on all current questions. His own criticisms and conclusions showed much clearness of mind, concentration and common sense.

The following extract from a telegram to Holstein reports his attitude of mind at this time:

London, 1901.

The Kaiser is at present exceedingly bitter against Russia. He said that Russia's treacherous treatment of himself and of Germany had broken down all bridges for a return to an understanding with Germany. He had much in mind the negotiation of an accession of Great Britain to the Triple Alliance, the separation of France altogether from Russia, and its association as far as possible with the new combination. On my pointing out to His Majesty that we could only commit ourselves to a combination with England after getting requisite compensations and guarantees, and that this could not be done in a moment but only methodically, the Kaiser replied that he entirely agreed, that we must keep quiet for the present and let the English come further to meet us. For that reason he had said nothing to either the King, Lord Landsowne, or Mr. Brodrick about an Anglo-German Alliance; but

had only laid stress on the necessity for England of combining with the Continent against the Russo-American danger.

The Kaiser further told me that King Edward had been much disturbed by rumours of the conclusion of a Russian loan in America and had said it was a fresh sign of the unreliability of the Americans.

The French Ambassador and the French delegation were singled out by the Kaiser for a long conversation at to-day's official reception. On the other hand, he took hardly any notice of the Russians.

ECKARDSTEIN.

Ruling political circles in France and Russia were indeed intensely annoyed at the hearty reception accorded to the Kaiser in England. Both Russian and French diplomacy set to work again however with redoubled energy to restore the situation by intrigue, and in this they were ably seconded by the German Reichstag and by part of the German press.

I can still remember one of the Caran d'Ache cartoons published on this occasion. The Kaiser was represented, frizzed moustaches and all, striding the deck of the "Hohenzollern," and saying, "J'ai foutu l'Angleterre dans ma poche." King Edward was depicted in his dressing gown, smoking a cigar and chuckling to himself, "L'Allemagne est dans le sac." But we were soon to learn how extraordinarily quickly the Kaiser could be seduced, once he was back in Berlin, from the sensible policy he had pursued in England.

On the day of the Kaiser's departure, February 5th, the King gave an official lunch at Marlborough House. Almost the whole Cabinet were present and many other prominent personages, including Lord Roberts. After lunch the Kaiser gave Lord Roberts the Order of the Black Eagle. *Apropos* of this King Edward said to me: "I am of course delighted at the high distinction that the Kaiser has accorded to my Field-Marshal. But I very much fear that this act of courtesy will be taken ad-

vantage of by a large section of the German press to renew the attacks on England." And this as a matter of fact was just what did happen.

On my informing the Kaiser that the Lord Mayor and a number of deputations were assembled at Charing Cross station to pay their respects to him on his departure, he told me to hurry on ahead and draw up the deputations in such order that he might have time before the train started to speak to each one of them in turn. As the Kaiser drove up to Charing Cross, accompanied by King Edward, he found waiting for him there a crowd of many thousands who received him with enthusiastic cheers.

CHAPTER XII

ANGLO-GERMAN AGREEMENT, FOURTH ATTEMPT

I NOW come to that culmination of the efforts to bring about an Anglo-German Alliance and to the crisis from which the course of events led necessarily to the world war. There had been already at least three occasions during the Wilhelminic era in which Berlin had the opportunity of realising the Bismarckian policy of alliance with Great Britain. The overtures of Lord Salisbury to the Kaiser in the summer of 1895—those of Chamberlain to Count Hatzfeldt in the spring of 1898—and those of Chamberlain to myself in the autumn of 1899. While the fourth and most promising opportunity, from the middle of March to the end of May, 1901, can be taken as the turning point in the history of the world.

It would be an almost impossible undertaking to give a detailed and documental description of each phase of this last period. The various threads that have to be followed are so inextricably intertwined—the various parts played by those on the stage and those behind the scenes are so difficult to distinguish, the documents published require to be so carefully discounted owing to their being generally drafted with a view to individual prejudices and preconceived ideas—that such a description would be of little use to a reader. For example, it will be observed in the following documents that, out of consideration for Holstein's temperament, the word "alliance" has been replaced as far as possible by the term "defensive arrangement"; and that the further negotiations advance towards a settlement the more careful I am to suggest that they are still at an initial stage.

The first point to note is that no sooner had the Kaiser arrived in Berlin, after his three weeks' stay in England, than his perfervid frendliness for England began to flag. He at once fell under the influence again of the fanatical Anglophobes of his entourage, and of those financiers who made a profitable business of the exploitation of

Anglophobia Finally he came also under the sway of Field-Marshal Count Waldersee, who succeeded in setting the Kaiser strongly against the British Government.

Among those who used Anglophobia to fill their pockets were financial interests concerned in South Africa, whose object it was to use the German Government for extorting from the British Government the most exorbitant compensation for actual or alleged losses. Representatives of these groups had succeeded in getting access to the Kaiser. And as it was one of his peculiarities to plunge headlong into anything that was made sufficiently plausible, they succeeded by their misrepresentations in inducing him to decree summarily that the British Government must immediately make good all losses to German subjects in the South African War. It never occurred to him, or apparently to the Wilhelmstrasse, that the war was still proceeding and that the British Government had no means of enquiring into these claims. But as soon as ever any claim was presented to our Foreign Office I was at once instructed, often on the following day, to demand an immediate and final settlement.

Many of these claims, even if excessive, were no doubt on the whole justified. But there were quite a number of them which had no real basis at all and were simply swindles. Take for example only one case. A Berlin firm had the majority of the shares in an electrical works in Johannesburg which was damaged by Boer shell-fire. I was accordingly instructed to demand an immense indemnity from the British Government because the British troops had not sufficiently protected it against the Boer artillery. All the time it was common talk in Berlin business circles that the Boers had bought a large quantity of guns and shells during the war through this firm. Of course I refused positively to submit such a demand to the British Government.

Meantime Field-Marshal Count Waldersee was setting the Kaiser against England over the Chinese question, in which he was most foolishly encouraged both by the Chancellor and Holstein. This was all the easier because

of the necessity of getting the war indemnity from China without delay so that the four-and-twenty thousand German troops still in China might be brought home. Both the Kaiser and the Chancellor were afraid of attacks in the Reichstag if the return of the troops was delayed, and if Germany did not secure a large indemnity.

They accordingly decided, without at all taking into account the other Powers concerned, that the Chinese customs should be doubled in order that the receipts might be mortgaged as security for the indemnity. The British Cabinet was requested to support this proposal without further discussion, and, when they declined to have so foolish a step dictated to them from Berlin, both the Kaiser and Holstein became excessively indignant.

As unreasonable and as ridiculous was the irritation of the Kaiser and Holstein because the British Government would not challenge Russia for breaches of Treaty as to Tientsin, while the South African War was still unfinished. I include here correspondence on this point, as it was one of primary importance.

London, *February 28th*, 1901.

Private. For Baron Holstein.

When I explained to the Under-Secretary that it was scarcely in the German interest to go further than the Imperial Government had of late gone, purely out of consideration for England, he said he understood my point of view. He said he could quite see that German interests in the Chinese question were not sufficient to make Germany face a conflict with Russia. He also agreed that Great Britain and Japan were primarily affected by the Russian encroachments, and Germany only to a lesser degree. He also believed that Japan was prepared for an energetic policy against Russia. As for England, it was regrettable that 200,000 men had still to be kept in the field in South Africa. Otherwise England would long ago have struck a different note as to the Russian encroachments. There was reason

to hope however that it would soon be possible to divert considerable forces from South Africa to China. Unluckily, matters in China were getting so acute that possibly only immediate intervention would be effective. Although the majority of the Government favoured a determined attitude towards Russia, he thought that the disadvantage in which England was at the moment would certainly affect the decision at the Cabinet meeting next day.

I myself believe that Devonshire, Chamberlain, Balfour and also Lansdowne, who always reflects his Under-Secretary's views, will in to-morrow's Cabinet favour an attempt to put forward Japan, subject to a guarantee of practical support in case of necessity. But I think it improbable that Salisbury will agree. He, so far as I know, still holds that British interests in North China are not so vital as to be worth risking a war. He would see in the surrender of North China to the Russians, not only a way out of the difficulties of the moment, but a way of approach to an understanding with Russia. I know with absolute certainty that Lord Salisbury was negotiating in this sense in Petersburg in July of last year. Though I think that Lord Salisbury will soon be succeeded by the Duke of Devonshire or Balfour, so long as he is in control we must reckon with the possibility of an evacuation of North China by Great Britain and of a *rapprochement* with Russia.

ECKARDSTEIN.

Berlin, *Saturday evening, March*, 1901.

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

Salisbury is the wicked mother-in-law who is working to break off the engagement. All that he says is tendentious stuff. When I read how he holds out to the English a prospect of a Russo-German conflict in Asia Minor, I am almost sorry that I prevented an agreement in that region that the Russians pressed on us in the summer and autumn

of 1899. Well, we must wait and see. What isn't now may well yet be.

Yours sincerely,
HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *March 7th*, 1901.

Private. To BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

The Kaiser has declared that he is unreservedly in agreement with the language used by you, and the following are his own words : " My neutrality would have kept the French from flying at the throats of the British in the case of war, though Russia would certainly not let it come to war. So, if the English knuckle under, it is only because that is Lord Salisbury's way. The Transvaal is only an excuse."

I assume that the Ambassador, not being fit for work, has passed you on my telegram of March 1st.

We must be prepared for Lord Salisbury's raising any and every objection. If he doubts German neutrality, suggest to Lord Lansdowne, privately and confidentially, that Lascelles should get a direct declaration from the Kaiser. The word of the Kaiser should be enough for the British. But you must not make the suggestion officially, as such a declaration is unconstitutional. HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *March 9th*, 1901.

Private. FOR BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

Everything from London of late makes an impression of the most hopeless sloppiness, as though Lord Salisbury's spirit breathed through it all. The Russians know who they have to deal with, hence their impudence. HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *March 9th*, 1901.

Private. FOR BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

I don't know what will be the official answer to your telegram but my view is that we should refuse both proposals. I have already told you I was against

every special agreement such as you first proposed, because the danger was greater than the advantage. By such a treaty we take sides against Russia in facilitating a Japanese offensive. Whereas German action against Russia that would be a breach of neutrality is impossible, so long as we can get no guarantee from the British. For that reason we shall make our declaration of neutrality separately, and not, as in your second proposal, jointly with England.

England is obviously trying to make use of us without binding itself to anything—which it won't succeed in doing. HOLSTEIN.

Berlin, *March 9th*, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

I share your view about Chamberlain. You may point out to him that we can't go beyond benevolent neutrality, as the very restricted agreement of Oct. 16th provides no Anglo-German solidarity in case the Russians and the French both attack us in Europe on account of our proceedings in Eastern Asia.

I may observe for your personal information that the position would be very different if there were a defensive alliance between Great Britain and Germany. This might be to the effect that each contracting party should fight one adversary on its own account, the treaty to come into force as soon as there were two or more adversaries. If in that case, England, probably with Japan, fought Russia alone, we should be neutral unless and until France joined in, which in that case it would certainly not do. Indeed, England and Japan would be so superior to Russia that the latter would give way without fighting when it came to the point.

But, meantime, you must *on no account* raise this idea. It must come from them, and of this there is no prospect so long as Lord Salisbury is involved. My personal view is that Germany could more easily accede to such a general defensive agreement

than to a special agreement, concerning, say, Morocco, in which the danger would be the same and the advantage less. But I repeat, you must NOT raise this now, if only because I don't trust Lord Salisbury not to make use of a German overture in Petersburg.

If only we could pacify our public opinion with one single real material advantage that we have got from association with Great Britain. The Zanzibar agreement, where England got the lion's share, has left a bad impression, so has the Portuguese agreement which is still unrealised. Freiherr von Richthofen has just been in to show me the savage attacks of the whole *fronde* against Count von Bülow, who is accused of too great compliance with the English proclivities of the Kaiser. For this reason too I EARNESTLY hope England will meet us in the Chinese indemnity and customs question. Work for it all you can. HOLSTEIN.

While the Kaiser and Holstein, in Berlin, were doing their best to alienate the British Government, Russo-French diplomacy was working at high pressure in London and in Berlin in order to sow suspicion between Great Britain and Germany.

First as to London. The following correspondence as to Chamberlain's attitude shows how successful the Russian agents in London had been—first in persuading Chamberlain that all proceedings with Berlin were at once passed on to Petersburg; and, secondly, in conveying at Berlin the impression that Lord Salisbury, who was certainly much annoyed at this time with Germany, was seriously contemplating acceding to the Russian proposals for a partition of China:

London, *March* 18, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

Russia is trying to buy off England by getting it to evacuate North China and concentrate on the Yangtse. I infer, from what the Russian Chargé d'Affaires and British politicians tell me, that Russia

has of late been systematically affecting to treat the Yangtse region as an exclusively British sphere of influence, without of course really meaning it. The papers have also of late, apparently at Russian instigation, shown a tendency to represent the acquisition of the Yangtse valley as the natural goal of British policy in China. Russia has of late been so active, both in official interventions and in obscure intrigues against us, that our position here becomes daily worse. My friends are of course hard at work fighting its insinuations, and have succeeded in heading off a certain number. The efforts that are being made in Russian official quarters are shown by what Chamberlain said to me to-day: "We would gladly approach Germany with far-reaching proposals which would assure it as great advantages as, or even greater advantages than ourselves. But as we know for a fact that everything that Berlin hears is at once passed on to Petersburg, no one can wonder if in future we maintain the greatest reserve towards Germany."

In the further course of conversation, Chamberlain said that he held in principle the same views about Germany that he had expressed to the Kaiser and Count Bülow at Windsor the year before; but that he was not particularly anxious to burn his fingers a second time over the same business.

ECKARDSTEIN.

Berlin, *March* 19, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

Who or what do you think Chamberlain had in view in what he said about leakages to Petersburg? It looks like tendentious Russian misrepresentations.

HOLSTEIN.

London, *March* 20, 1901.

Private. To BARON HOLSTEIN.

Until two or three years ago Chamberlain was entirely in Russo-French leading strings. He not

only saw much of Madame Novikoff, Madame Beer and other members of the Slav Committee, but even creatures like M. Wesselitzky have access to him. The latter was in direct touch with him as late as the Samoan negotiations in November, '99, and I remember what difficulty I had in opening Chamberlain's eyes as to his character and career. He has since then dropped Wesselitzky and Co. but, although he keeps Russian official and unofficial agents at a distance, they haven't given up trying to get at him. Madame Novikoff is back in London and working full steam in political circles and in the Press. I think she may have been trying to set Chamberlain against us. Moreover Count Lamsdorff's communications to Sir Charles Scott about Count Osten-Sacken's reports from the Embassy in Berlin are so highly and falsely coloured that they would account for anything. The Under-Secretary, Mr. Bertie, who is luckily now our friend, has often told me that he has to see that the Ambassador's reports from Petersburg are properly annotated before they go to the Cabinet, as they would otherwise cause great misunderstanding.

ECKARDSTEIN.

At the same time I was getting from Berlin such characteristic communications as the following:

Berlin, *March* 17, 1901.

DEAR ECKARDSTEIN,

It seems to me very significant that the British Government, while trying to push us forward, says nothing about any alliance. Salisbury is more than ever the ruler of England.

I forbid you EXPRESSLY, my dear friend, even to breathe a word about alliance. The proper moment, if it ever comes, is certainly not now.

If the British are driven by Salisbury and Chirol into going with Russia, let them try it. It is the treaty of the wolf and the lamb.

I am sorry we should have had so much labour in vain. Yours sincerely,

HOLSTEIN.

But, before I got this letter from Holstein, I had already had an opportunity of raising the question of an alliance in the manner described below:

London, *March* 19, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

Lord Lansdowne, with whom I dined the day before yesterday, asked me in the strictest confidence whether I thought there was any hope of a joint Anglo-German action for localising a possible Russo-Japanese war by influencing France. I replied, that I did not think there was the least prospect of such a proposal being accepted by the Imperial Government, as Germany would thereby commit itself without getting any assurance of backing from England.

Yesterday afternoon Lord Lansdowne again raised this question, and said that he had been contemplating the possibility of bringing about a defensive arrangement between Great Britain and Germany which should be concluded for a considerable period. He believed that several of his most influential colleagues would favour the idea. England was now at a turning point and must make up its mind as to what line it would take in future. But, should such an idea be put into concrete form by the Cabinet, no official proposal would be made to Germany until there was some certainty that Germany would be disposed in principle to accept it.

I replied that I was not in a position to tell him whether and to what extent the Imperial Government would favour such a proposal when made. If he would put forward a definite idea I would not fail to report it to Berlin.

I shall of course sit still and see whether Lord Lansdowne comes forward with anything in the

next few days. I should however be grateful for precise instructions as to my reply as soon as possible.

My impression is that the Cabinet here, including Salisbury, are really now at a parting of the ways as to their future policy in general and as to China in particular, and that in the course of the next few days we shall know definitely.

ECKARDSTEIN.

The fact was that, when dining with Lord Lansdowne on March 16th, I had given him a strong hint to approach us with an offer of alliance, for I had said to him: "If there were a defensive alliance between Great Britain and Germany, covering all possibilities, it would be obvious that Germany could at once agree to localise a war between Russia and Japan by influencing France." But if I had put this into my telegram to Holstein he would have fallen upon me for going too far. Holstein's motto always was: "Make me an omelette but break me no eggs."

Here accordingly is his reply:

Berlin, *March* 20.

Secret. To BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

Anyone can see that the present moment is decisive. Both Great Britain and Germany are at a parting of the ways. The Chancellor told me to-day that Herbert Bismarck and his somewhat scattered following favour an understanding with Russia on the basis of the Hoangho line and the Turkish East up to the Indian Ocean. Russia is hard at work in the Press here, as in London. Such an understanding between Great Britain and Germany as I desire is made difficult by mutual distrust. The English have of late become distrustful, but Germany has for long had occasion to be so. [*Holstein then gives at great length his own version of events from the first overtures of Bismarck onwards*].

In order to facilitate an exchange of views and to

conciliate public opinion, it would be more practical to give the *rapprochement* the character of an accession by England to the Triple Alliance rather than of an Anglo-German Alliance. Count Goluchowsky as a Pole will be altogether in favour of this. Though the present policy of Austro-Hungary is not concerned with enterprises outside Europe and would be opposed to undertaking obligations in those regions, yet as Russia threatens the Galician as well as the Indian frontier, Goluchowsky can hardly treat a defensive alliance against Russia as an enterprise outside Europe. But Lord Lansdowne must say nothing to Rome about it, if he doesn't want it known in Petersburg.

What Mr. Chamberlain has said about leakages over here is probably only to cover the fact that he has been prevented by Lord Salisbury from making us proposals. If, contrary to anticipation, Lord Salisbury makes up his mind to allow positive proposals for an alliance I really believe we may reach something useful and lasting by going round through Vienna. I see moreover no reason why Japan should not also be brought into such a defensive alliance. This would make such a combination in some ways easier, for Japan is popular in Germany. Japan, being only out for what it can get, would probably attach no great value to a mere insurance treaty. But all the same its general position would be improved by a treaty which would bring it into good company.

To sum up—Germany's good will has been shown in its attitude over the Tientsin question, which has pleasantly surprised a follower of Salisbury like Frank Lascelles. As for English mistrust, it cannot be anything like as great as that which we are entitled to entertain against Salisbury. Nevertheless, we won't give up hope of a satisfactory result in the end I believe the right way is via Vienna.

HOLSTEIN.

O

As a matter of fact my negotiations with Lord Lansdowne had by then already gone so far that a successful issue seemed assured. I had of course not even mentioned to Lord Lansdowne Holstein's impracticable indeed impossible idea of transferring the negotiations to Vienna, because I knew that the British Government would only see in it evidence that Berlin was not taking the alliance seriously. I confined myself consequently to keeping Count Deym, and through him Count Goluchowsky, in Vienna confidentially informed. The Austrian Foreign Minister thanked me heartily through the Ambassador for this information and said he could wish for nothing better than an Anglo-German alliance, in which Austria was greatly interested.

At a later stage, in response to Holstein's importunities, I put forward a proposal to Lord Lansdowne for the transfer of the negotiations to Vienna. But he gave me very dryly to understand that what the British Government was concerned with was clearing up matters with Germany. As to Austria, he would be grateful if I would let him know the purport of the Austro-German Alliance of 1879, and of any later developments of it. There could however be no question of a transfer of negotiations to Vienna.

With respect to Japan, I had long been in touch upon all Far Eastern questions with the Japanese Minister, Baron Hayashi, afterwards Count Hayashi and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the "Secret Memoirs" of this Japanese statesman, published in London in 1915, there is an account of the early history of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. He there relates how in March, 1901, I visited him and made him a proposal for an Anglo-German-Japanese Alliance. He says that both he and his Government at once took up the idea, and that there ensued repeated discussions of the Alliance between Lord Lansdowne, me and himself. And he notes as very unsatisfactory that I should have suddenly withdrawn myself from these negotiations, apparently on the instructions of my Government, and that I should have never again

referred to the idea, although the original initiative came from me. He repeatedly observes moreover that Japan earnestly desired an inclusion of Germany in the Alliance, and that Lord Lansdowne had favoured it throughout the negotiation.

I had indeed suggested an Anglo-German-Japanese Alliance for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of China and of the open door in China to Count Hayashi as early as March 18th. This was a purely personal suggestion, before receiving Holstein's telegram. The reason why I had lost no time in doing this was partly that I was afraid Japan might suddenly come to terms with Russia along the whole line, and partly because I wanted to get the alliance question going with Lord Lansdowne as soon as possible. Count Hayashi had already more than once expressed his anxiety at the possible effect of the Russian encroachments in China. They might he feared at any moment face Japan with a choice between fighting Russia or treating with that Power on the whole Eastern question. And the *démarche* that Count Hayashi made with Lord Lansdowne at my instigation helped more than anything else in starting and stimulating the negotiations for an Anglo-German Alliance.

As a result of my conversation with Lord Lansdowne, the main points had already been decided on, and an agreement reached on the leading questions. The Alliance was to come into force as soon as one of the two contracting parties was attacked by two or more opponents. A special treaty was to be concluded by both contracting parties with Japan, which was however only to have reference to the Far East. For the moment the Treaties were to be kept strictly secret, but it was contemplated that after a sufficient education of public opinion in both countries the Parliaments concerned should be consulted. Special clauses were to be introduced into the treaty concerning America which were to be the subject of more mature consideration. I had reported these conversations in a series of official telegrams to the Chancellor and in many private telegrams to Holstein.

But on March 25th, returning from a conversation with Lord Lansdowne to the Embassy to draft my telegram to Berlin, I found the following from Holstein on the table :

Berlin, *March 25th*, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

The Kaiser's irritation at England's shilly-shallying about the Chinese indemnity has been aggravated by the Field-Marshal who is pressing for sending home the troops. Consequently the question has been considered whether a more senior diplomat should not at once be sent to London. I have however succeeded in getting Director Stubel sent instead. He starts this evening and he is to have charge only of the Chinese indemnity and customs, and South African claims. Political affairs remain in your hands. He is not informed about them, and only knows that there is a tendency in England towards a *rapprochement* with Germany. If Herr Stubel gets no satisfaction an early change in the staff of the Embassy is to be feared. Do your utmost to support him. As he is a well-known Chinese specialist there is nothing slighting to you in his mission. He will only stay a few days.

HOLSTEIN.

So there we were again. On the one side, an alliance trembling in the balance on which the fate of the world turned, and on the other these twopenny-halfpenny little money matters.

I was so outraged by Holstein's telegram that I decided to resign, and so relieve myself of all further responsibility in respect of the ever-growing danger of encirclement. I drafted a telegram of resignation, and took it home with me to discuss it with Dr. Hans Esser, correspondent of the "Kölnische Zeitung" in London, who was dining with me. Dr. Esser was also highly indignant at the incurable folly of Berlin, and persuaded me to sleep on it. The next morning however I decided

to send it in, on the ground of my intended candidature for the Reichstag. Upon the same day I travelled down to Brighton to report to my bedridden Ambassador. He was much agitated but said he could not blame me for having had enough of a hopeless struggle against "the great Fools' Paradise" in Berlin.

Meantime Dr. Stubel arrived. In him the Wilhelmstrasse had fortunately lit upon a thoroughly sensible and tactful man. I put him in touch with the Foreign Office and the City and he soon realised the situation and the impracticability of the demand put forward by Berlin as to the Chinese Customs and the South African claims. The Foreign Office had already received the news of his appointment from their Embassy in Berlin with little sympathy and much surprise. Sir Francis Bertie had at once told me that Lord Lansdowne was determined to decline all the demands of the Kaiser and the Wilhelmstrasse, as being not only unreasonable but unrealisable.

The convincing reports of Dr. Stubel, and also possibly my resignation, produced their effect on Berlin, and I got the following from Holstein:

Berlin, *April* 1*st*, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

If Lord Lansdowne really wishes to come to terms with us about the Chinese indemnity, I should suppose that our despatch of March 30th would provide a sufficiently elastic basis for an agreement. It will of course take time, as there are a multitude of details. You will have to conduct the negotiations yourself because we want Stubel back here. There is at present no question of anyone else being sent to London. I have arranged with the Chancellor that your resignation is to be suspended. Don't be in too great a hurry. It is easy to get out and not so easy to get in again. Your going would involve that of Count Hatzfeldt as things are. Apart from that I should personally regret your going now.

So just go on quietly negotiating about the Chinese indemnity to which the Kaiser and the Chancellor attach the greatest importance. HOLSTEIN.

The negotiations for an alliance which had been going on swiftly and smoothly had been brought for a time to a complete standstill by this sudden side-wind from Berlin. I succeeded however with great trouble in getting them more or less under way again.

London, *April 9th*, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

I had yesterday afternoon a long conversation with Lord Lansdowne as to which I shall report officially to-morrow. I got a distinct impression that distrust of us is in his case rapidly disappearing. A proof of this is that he again mentioned to-day the question of a defensive arrangement.

ECKARDSTEIN.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN. *April 10th*, 1901.

Lord Lansdowne went yesterday to Scotland for two days. In our yesterday's conversation we discussed in general terms an accession of England to the Triple Alliance. Lord Lansdowne told me that he had been studying the files of earlier pourparlers on the subject, e.g., the correspondence between Prince Bismarck and Lord Salisbury in 1887. He had also noticed the report from Lascelles of 1898, reporting a conversation with the Kaiser on this matter. Lascelles had reported the Kaiser as saying that if England would meet his wishes respecting Russia he would be ready to enter an alliance with England within twenty-four hours.

Lord Lansdowne asked me whether I knew anything about this conversation and I said I did not. I expect that when I see him on Friday he will revert to the alliance question, and will perhaps be more communicative. I shall report officially on Friday. ECKARDSTEIN.

But hardly were the negotiations going again before there was another contretemps. The diplomacy of the Wilhelmstrasse had considerably disgusted members of the British Government, and had made them again susceptible to the intrigues and insinuations of Franco-Russian diplomacy. Thus Alfred Rothschild and his brother, Lord Rothschild, had told me, a little before this, that some of the Ministers, and among them Arthur Balfour, had said that no dependence could be placed on the Kaiser and Bülow, because they kept on falling back again into their old flirtations with Russia. I reported this privately to Holstein, who replied that he thought these suspicions might probably be ascribed to expressions used by the Kaiser at a banquet of the Alexander Grenadiers. He instructed me to report the information in an official telegram, suitable for submission to the Kaiser.

The Kaiser, after reading my telegram, took the opportunity at the next court function to convey the contents of it to Sir Frank Lascelles in the presence of the Foreign Secretary. There ensued a somewhat heated discussion which ended in the Kaiser again assuring the Ambassador of his friendship for England. Soon after I received this short reference to the conversation from Holstein :

Berlin, *April* 10, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

The Kaiser referred generally to persons who gave credence to unjustifiable suspicions as "unmitigated noodles." The Foreign Secretary said it was his personal impression that the Kaiser had spoken sharply but well and had struck the right note.

HOLSTEIN.

And the following from von Richthofen :

Berlin, *April* 12, 1901.

Private. For BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

Sir Frank Lascelles told me that Sir Thomas Sanderson had telegraphed, in reply to his report of the conversation with the Kaiser on Tuesday evening,

that His Majesty's utterances were not unexpected by the Foreign Office as they had already known on Tuesday that a conversation on these lines was impending. The Foreign Office believed on the strength of your indications that the Minister referred to by the Kaiser was Mr. Arthur Balfour. They did not know to whom Mr. Balfour had made the statement reported to Berlin.

RICHTHOFEN.

I had as a precaution prepared Sir Thomas Sanderson for the conversation between the Kaiser and Sir Frank, as had I not done so the latter's report would certainly have been misunderstood. As it was, the first effect of the Kaiser's statement on the Foreign Office was good, and their view was shared by King Edward, who had only been shown a very brief report of the conversation.

Dining with King Edward at Marlborough House on April 16th, the only others present being Alfred Rothschild and two equerries, I found him indeed in unusually good form. He told us, most amusingly, stories of his varied experiences, many of them very much at his own expense. Before I left he touched on politics, giving me a lively description of Lord Salisbury's devices for escaping interviews with foreign Sovereigns and Statesmen on the Riviera. He said that, in evading the pursuit of King Leopold, Lord Salisbury had shown himself a regular de Wet. He only casually referred to the Kaiser's conversation with Lascelles and made no particular comment on it.

But three days later I was suddenly telephoned for to go and see King Edward. I found him sitting in his study with two papers before him. The one was a letter from the Kaiser and the other a long despatch from Sir Frank Lascelles. He received me by saying, in a tone that was only half-jest, "Well, whatever have you been about now?" He then read me some passages from the Ambassador's despatch and after that a great part of the Kaiser's letter. At one place where it was dealing

with Germany and Russia he interjected, "*Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*" He commented on the Kaiser's assurances of friendship for England with a sarcastic, "I hope that is so." And when he came to where the Kaiser referred to British Ministers as "unmitigated noodles" he laid the letter down on the table and said to me, "There, what do you think of that?"

After thinking a bit, I said, "Wouldn't it be best if Your Majesty treated the whole thing as a joke?" He laughed at that and replied: "Yes, you are quite right. I must treat the thing as a joke. But unluckily I have already had to put up with many of these jokes of the Kaiser's, and even worse than this one too, and I suppose I shall have to put up with many more." Then he went on: "Whatever would the Kaiser say if I allowed myself to call his Ministers such nice names! As you know I have for years had the greatest sympathy for Germany, and I am still to-day of opinion that Great Britain and Germany are natural allies. Together they could police the world and secure a lasting peace. Of course Germany wants colonies and commercial developments. And it can, after all, have as much as it wants of both. There is room in the world for both Great Britain and Germany. Only we can't keep pace with these perpetual vagaries of the Kaiser. Moreover, as you know, some of my Ministers have the greatest distrust for the Kaiser and Bülow, especially Lord Salisbury. I have always tried to dissipate this distrust, but after all one can't go on for ever. And the abuse and threats that the German 'Flottenverein' and its organs are perpetually pouring on us are not exactly calculated to get rid of this distrust."

Throughout the conversation the King was more irritated than I had ever seen him before. I couldn't help getting the impression that there was something else that had put him out with the Kaiser. I never learnt what it was, but probably Wilhelm had offended him in some personal or family matter.

I had already heard from Holstein that the Kaiser had used the expression "unmitigated noodles" quite

generally during the conversation with the Ambassador. Sir Frank appears not to have mentioned it in his despatch at all, presumably so as not to make unnecessary trouble in London; and so of course the Kaiser must go and put it into his private letter to the King.

King Edward's annoyance did not last long, but from this time on I felt that he and his Ministers were beginning to ask themselves whether Germany under the régime that it then had, was really a possible ally. All the same the negotiations were renewed and followed quite a satisfactory course as the correspondence here annexed suggests:

London, *April* 18*th*, 1901.

Private. For Baron Holstein.

Lord Lansdowne quite recognises that an Anglo-German-Japanese special convention about the Far East is impossible for Germany until there is a general defensive arrangement between Great Britain and the Triple Alliance. I infer from something he said that he intends to deal with the two matters quite separately. So far as concerns Hayashi I have only encouraged him to keep in touch with the Government here so as to prevent him thinking that there can be no possible future alliance. He yesterday approached Lord Lansdowne on the following lines: that there was much to be done in China in the next few years; that Japan must now make up its mind what its future policy was to be, and that Japan could not stand alone but must join with one or other of the two groups. Finally that he was not authorised to make any proposals but only wanted to ascertain whether there were any prospects of an association with Japan.

Lord Lansdowne replied to the Minister that he was personally in favour of an association with Japan, but that he could give him no official reply as he must first confer with his colleagues. He would further advise him to move his Government to make direct proposals which could then be con-

sidered by the Cabinet. Japan could rely on there being every desire to join hands with it in Far Eastern questions as far as circumstances allowed. . . .

As Lord Lansdowne did not raise the question of the accession of Germany to the Triple Alliance I did not myself of course bring it up. But I know from other quarters that the discussions of it will be resumed now that Devonshire and Chamberlain have come back from the Easter holidays.

ECKARDSTEIN,

Berlin, *April 18th*, 1901.

Private. To be personally deciphered.

Be careful with the Japanese. The Anglo-German-Japanese special Eastern Asia agreement that both they and the English desire would be quite against our interests because there would then be no inducement for England to join Germany and the Triple Alliance in a general agreement. Until we are so joined, England and Japan must be satisfied with our neutrality. HOLSTEIN.

London, *May 23rd*, 1901.

Private letter for HOLSTEIN.

The constant conversations between the Kaiser and Lascelles, which the latter at once reports to London, are doing much damage and have given the Cabinet here a quite incorrect and often self-contradictory picture of German policy.

These and other erroneous ideas having been cleared up the Alliance is again moving. Lansdowne, Devonshire and Chamberlain are fully determined to carry through their idea. They quite recognise that it is only possible if the Alliance is based on complete reciprocity. Salisbury, who no longer has the same animus against us, still raises small objections now and then, as is his way; but is, as I learn from Devonshire and Lansdowne, quite satisfied that the policy of "Splendid Isolation" is over and that something must be done. Anyway

these Ministers hold so fast to their point of view that Salisbury cannot help himself. Lansdowne seems to manage him very cleverly. In order to carry important points he gives way to him on minor matters, which accounts for some apparent contradictions in this attitude.

Lansdowne is by no means a weak and insignificant personality. He knows quite well what he wants, though he manœuvres at times in order to get it. In the indemnity question for example, he had made up his mind to maintain the demand of 456 million taels and still does so; but he had to shift his ground on account of Salisbury and the American. I have no doubt whatever of his friendly feelings towards us. ECKARDSTEIN.

London, *May 23rd*, 1901.

Private. For BARON HOLSTEIN.

Lord Lansdowne again raised the question of an alliance yesterday. I explained the situation in the sense of your last telegram and he appeared to understand. He is really working hard to bring matters to a head and I gather from him and from a long conversation with the Duke of Devonshire that Lord Salisbury, in spite of his old inclination to make trouble, is now willing to accede to the policy of Lansdowne and Chamberlain and to agree to a defensive alliance on a basis of absolute reciprocity.

I yesterday arranged an interview between Lord Lansdowne and the Ambassador which has just taken place at the Embassy. I do not yet know what passed. ECKARDSTEIN.

The invalid Count Hatzfeldt had come to London in May and had had various interviews with Lord Lansdowne. But his long illness had not left this distinguished statesman and diplomat the necessary mental vigour. He still sent well-written and well-argued telegrams to Berlin, but his conversations with Lord Lansdowne did more harm than good. Holstein more-

over had again entrenched himself in his old plans of transferring the negotiations to Vienna, and when finally the Wilhelmstrasse took over the negotiations themselves so as to conduct them with the British Ambassador in Berlin, all prospects of success began very rapidly to disappear.

All those who had for years been working to bring about the Alliance such as Chamberlain, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and Alfred Rothschild, saw this new turn of events with profound melancholy and misgiving. Alfred Rothschild, in a long letter to me, dated June 14th, 1901, described the futility of the Berlin negotiations, thus: "Your negotiations in March and April were *tacheles* (Yiddish for business); but what is going on now is only *schabheshmus* (Yiddish for blethers). Nobody here in England has any more use for the fine empty phrases of Bülow. Frank Lascelles laughs at the clumsiness with which Berlin is handling the business. Moreover your Government seems no longer to know what it wants." Further on in the same letter he says: "Joe, who dined with me, is quite disheartened. He will have nothing more to do with the people in Berlin. If they are so short-sighted, says he, as not to be able to see that the whole new world system depends upon it, then there is nothing to be done for them."

In a letter from the Duchess of Devonshire of June 20th, the following passage is worth noting: "Frank Lascelles has told the Duke that, from the first, Bülow asked him to say nothing to the Emperor about the pending negotiations, and he accordingly had not done so. So the Kaiser seems to have known nothing at all of the matter. What does it all mean? It is really too ridiculous. The Duke thinks that it can only mean that Bülow from the beginning meant nothing serious."

Thus the negotiations that had begun so well ended in nothing. Or rather they ended in the beginning of encirclement and the end of encirclement was the beginning of war.

CHAPTER XIII

ANGLO-JAPANESE AND ANGLO-FRENCH AGREEMENTS

COUNT HATZFELDT, whose health had got steadily worse, went on leave to Germany in July, 1901, and spent the summer at his country house near Wiesbaden. He returned to London in November but soon after succumbed to his long and severe sufferings, at the age of 71. In his place was appointed the Prussian Minister in Hamburg, Count Paul Metternich.

Another possibility of a *rapprochement* between Great Britain and Germany was to present itself in July, 1901. The aggressive policy of expansion pursued by Russia in China had, as we have seen, given the motive for the Anglo-German negotiations of the spring. It was now the French policy of expansion in Morocco that moved the British Government to seek a closer association with Germany.

In my discussions as to the Moroccan question, in 1889, with Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes, as also in those of January, 1901, with Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, we had laid down the broad outline of a solution. This was to the effect that Great Britain was to occupy Tangier and assume control of the whole Mediterranean coast of Morocco, with the exception of the Spanish possessions. Germany was to have coaling and trading stations on the Atlantic coast such as Casa Blanca, Mogador and Rabat. A joint peaceable penetration of Morocco was then to be begun, and, if necessary, military operations to be undertaken. Eventually the country was to be finally partitioned between Great Britain and Germany. I understood from Chamberlain and the Duke that in 1899 Lord Salisbury was quite ready to agree to this solution of the Morocco question. It was only later that he began to consider Morocco as a suitable *quid pro quo* in a possible deal with France.

Simultaneously with the arrival in Paris of a Moroccan

Mission to determine the boundaries of Morocco, after the latest French encroachments, another mission was sent to London and Berlin, under the influential Minister of War, Kaid Menebhi. Soon after the arrival of this Mission in London, the active and able British Minister in Tangier, Sir Arthur Nicolson, later one of the most zealous promoters of the encirclement of Germany, came to see me at the Embassy. He told me of the perpetual intrigues and encroachments of the French in Morocco with the object of bringing about a French protectorate over the whole country. On behalf of Lord Lansdowne, he then proposed to me an agreement between Great Britain and Germany for the maintenance of the *status quo*. He also suggested a joint Anglo-German peaceful penetration of Morocco. This plan was to be initiated by a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Germany. A Convention was to be concluded between the two Governments, defining exactly the commercial concessions that Great Britain and Germany were respectively to receive. Among many other concessions to be assigned to Germany was the supply of all material for future railway construction, and of all electrical enterprises, including telegraphs and telephones. In general all necessary measures, whether political, commercial or financial, were to be carried out in combination between Great Britain and Germany.

I at once reported all this in long official telegrams to Berlin, but I never even got an answer. Nor did I get an answer when I pointed out that the opportunity was exceptionally favourable for reviving Anglo-German negotiations. Holstein only bombarded me with private telegrams in which he expressed his fears lest Japan should make terms with Russia and instructed me to do all I could with Lord Lansdowne to secure financial and other support for the Japanese. He merely referred incidentally in his telegrams to the Moroccan question though it was now in the forefront of affairs. Once again it was the morbid nightmares of Holstein that lost us an opportunity for alliance with England.

Berlin, *July* 8, 1901.

Private. To Baron Eckardstein.

Your private telegram of the 5th. The Kaiser yesterday cordially assured the Moroccan Envoy of his wish for maintenance of the integrity of Morocco. We shall give effect to this wish in preventing or postponing any forward movement planned by others by maintaining an attitude of reticence and reserve. But so long as the present grouping of the Great Powers continues unchanged, we shall not abandon this attitude even if France should advance south of the Atlas as far as Cape Juby. Nor do we urge England to take action. England knows what it has to do. If you think it advisable for us to communicate to Lord Lansdowne the statements of the French Colonial Director reported in the despatch from Paris, No. 226, we shall do it in a form that will not suggest that we are trying to set England against France or in any way urge it to active steps.

Holstein.

London, *July 29th*, 1901.

Private. To Baron Holstein.

Reference telegram 537. Should the Morocco question become acute, I think it is quite possible that Lord Lansdowne may again raise the question of an alliance. On the other hand I am convinced that, without some such stimulus, he is not likely for the present to return to it. Referring to a previous conversation on this question, he suggested incidentally that a clause might be inserted in any possible Treaty with the Triple Alliance to cover the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, including Morocco. Should he therefore again raise the question of an Alliance with reference to the Morocco question I expect he will again revive this idea.

The grounds he has given for not as yet raising the alliance question have been that the Cabinet has been

overburdened with Parliamentary work but the real reason is that he does not dare to bring the matter up with Lord Salisbury without some valid excuse. Barrington lately told me that Lord Lansdowne had lost heart to some extent in the matter, owing to a promising negotiation having twice been disturbed, once in March and again later. He added that Lord Salisbury had, at both these times, been quite ready to conclude the matter; but that he had since receded again from this, especially as there was now no external inducement.

Lascelles lately raised the question in conversation, and mentioned that Lord Salisbury saw no necessity for the present in resuming negotiations. He, Lascelles, personally, did not think an accession of Great Britain to the Triple Alliance was possible but at most an association between Great Britain and Germany. I replied that we had much less reason for concluding an alliance with England than the latter with us, and that I believed, myself, that the idea, which had only been raised academically, had now been abandoned in Berlin. He then observed, "But the Kaiser has heard of it and wants to have the matter put through." I did what I could to convince Lascelles that there was no antagonism between Germany and Russia, as was generally assumed here. Whereupon he observed that he heard that the Kaiser also insisted on the Bagdad Railway being carried out.

Lascelles has done his best during his stay here to bring about a satisfactory settlement of pending questions. ECKARDSTEIN.

Sir Frank had inferred from something the Kaiser had said that the latter knew of the negotiations for an Alliance; but, as we shall see later, this was not so. And, as we have already seen, the British Ambassador, at the express wish of Count Bülow, had not himself mentioned the matter to the Kaiser.

In December, 1901, Marquis Ito, who has sometimes been called the Japanese Bismarck, came to London. He had on his way made a long stay in Petersburg; but he was only a few days in Berlin.

Soon after the arrival of Marquis Ito in London, Count Hayashi told me that there had been long conversations between Ito and Count Witte and that the latter had made an offer of alliance to Japan. Marquis Ito had for the time being procrastinated as to the proposal. He, Count Hayashi, hoped that it would never come to a Russo-Japanese Alliance, as he did not trust the Russians to stand by their treaty. But there was a strong party in Tokio in favour of an alliance with Russia. He himself, and, on the whole, Marquis Ito also, favoured an alliance with England, should it prove realisable. But the latter feared that under the British parliamentary system the Liberal Party, on coming to power, would not recognise the obligations undertaken by a Conservative Government. The point was now to convince Marquis Ito that his fears were groundless.

It was not until later that I learnt that Marquis Ito had himself proposed in Petersburg a Russo-Japanese agreement on the basis of Korea for the Japanese and Manchuria for the Russians. Placed as I was at the time, I could only reply to his direct question whether I still believed that an Anglo-German-Japanese Alliance was the only peaceable solution of the Far Eastern question by saying that my own personal views were no longer of any importance, and that I could not tell him what my Government now thought about it.

During the short stay that I made in Berlin just before this in November, the Foreign Secretary, Freiherr von Richthofen, had described to me the prospects of an Anglo-German-Japanese Alliance as follows: "The Kaiser knows nothing at all of the whole matter. All that we know is that the Kaiser is more than ever possessed with a pronounced personal dislike for the whole yellow race, and that he will not under any conditions whatever ally himself with Japan. As for the prospects of an

Alliance with England, they seem to be all going off in smoke; for Holstein doesn't seem now to know what he does want, and the Chancellor has been at the bottom of his heart against it from the very beginning." What more then could I say to the Japanese Minister in reply to his direct question at this decisive moment?

I had given Count Hayashi an assurance that I would continue to do my best to further an Anglo-Japanese alliance. On December 30th I gave the Marquis Ito and Count Hayashi a lunch, to which I also invited two under-secretaries of the Foreign Office. I avoided any exhaustive discussion with the Japanese statesman, but, on drinking his health, I whispered to him in English, "Don't accept the Russian proposals, but make an alliance with England; you won't repent it." I also did what I could at the Foreign Office to warn them there, as well as the Duke of Devonshire and Chamberlain, of the imminent danger of a Russo-Japanese agreement.

Four weeks later Lord Lansdowne and Count Hayashi signed the Anglo-Japanese treaty.

The conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance gave an entirely new turn to affairs in the Far East. The treaty caused much bitterness against Great Britain in Petersburg, which accordingly began to make energetic efforts to exploit Germany in Far Eastern questions against England and Japan. And, while pursuing its Far Eastern expansion with no less persistence, Petersburg did so with somewhat greater precautions. While Germany, after missing this best and last opportunity of a firm friendship with Great Britain and Japan, vacillated and oscillated like a straw in the wind.

The French press had imposed on itself a great restraint in respect of its Anglophobe and pro-Boer tendencies. It had already been doing this for some time under governmental influence, at the instigation of the new French Ambassador in London, Paul Cambon. But the greater part of the German press still raged furiously against England. The abuse of the British authorities, and of the British army, became more and more offensive,

until at last even the protagonist of the German alliance, Chamberlain, was compelled to make a very sharp reply in defence of the army. In his Edinburgh speech of October 25th, 1901, his resentment against these unfair attacks carried him perhaps too far in leading him to make counter-attacks on other armies, and among others on the behaviour of the Germans in 1870. These observations were at once seized on indignantly by many German papers, and for months the abuse of England went on, and was of course answered in the same tone by the British press. Indignation at Chamberlain's remarks also found expression in the Reichstag, and Count Bülow so far gave way to the Anglophobes as to criticise Mr. Chamberlain in the very strongest terms. Whereupon Mr. Balfour retorted in equally strong language.

But the other Continental countries, such as Russia and France, which had been no less included in Chamberlain's attack, showed a very much greater restraint in their press and left it to Germany to do all the abusing of England.

On February 8th, 1902, there was a big official dinner at Marlborough House, where King Edward was still living, which was attended by all the British Ministers and the Foreign Ambassadors. As my Ambassador was at the moment ill in the country I was invited as representative of the German Embassy by the express command of King Edward. While we were smoking and drinking coffee, after dinner, I suddenly saw Chamberlain and Cambon go off into the billiard room. I watched them there and noted that they talked together for exactly 28 minutes in the most animated manner. I could not of course catch what they said and only heard two words "Morocco" and "Egypt."

As soon as the French Ambassador had left Chamberlain I entered into conversation with the latter. He complained very much of the bad behaviour of the German press towards England and himself. He also referred to the Chancellor's speech in the Reichstag, and said: "It is not the first time that Count Bülow has

thrown me over in the Reichstag" (referring to Bülow's public repudiation of the offer of alliance made in Chamberlain's Leicester speech of November 30th, 1899). "Now I have had enough of such treatment and there can be no more question of an association between Great Britain and Germany."

From that moment I knew that Chamberlain was ready to adopt the alternative of an accession to the Dual Alliance, which he had announced in our conversation of January, 1901, at Chatsworth, as being the consequence of a failure of an Anglo-German negotiation. It was however to be some time before this plan could be carried out; for Chamberlain and Cambon were of essentially alien temperaments and they could not come to any agreement. It was not until a year later that the negotiations for an entente between England and France were given a positive form, and, being thereafter conducted by Lord Landsowne, they culminated, in April, 1904, in the Anglo-French Colonial Convention.

Just as I was leaving Marlborough House I was intercepted by an equerry, who told me that the King wanted to see me later, in his study. After all the company had left, I was conducted there. In about a quarter of an hour the King came in, having changed into more comfortable clothes. He shook hands and said he had sent for me to his study as he had had no opportunity of talking to me at the dinner party. He was in a very good humour and offered me a cigar, saying that I should certainly find it a good one. It was the last box of a large consignment of 1888 Uppmanns, that our common friend, Reuben Sassoon, had once sent him as a Christmas present. He lit up, and at once began: "I was very glad to hear from Lansdowne how much you had helped to bring about the *rapprochement* between England and Japan in the Far East by your personal good relations to Baron Hayashi and Marquis Ito. The result of the negotiations that you set on foot between us and Japan is known to you. I can now face the future confidently in all Far Eastern questions." He then poured himself

out some soda water that stood on the small table near him, offered me a whiskey and soda, and went on: "Unfortunately, I can't face the future with the same confidence as regards Anglo-German relations. You know of course what has happened of late. If the Kaiser now writes me long letters assuring me of his friendship for England, I cannot, I am sorry to say, give much weight to what he says. The renewed abuse of England in the German press and the unfriendly and sarcastic remarks of Count Bülow in the Reichstag have aroused so much resentment among my Ministers and in public opinion that for a long time at least there can be no more any question of Great Britain and Germany working together in any conceivable matter. We are being urged more strongly than ever by France to come to an agreement with her in all Colonial disputes, and it will probably be best in the end to make such a settlement, because England only wants peace and quiet and to live on friendly footing with all other countries. As you very well know both I and the majority of my Ministers would very gladly have gone with Germany in all colonial and other questions, but it can't be done. In any arrangement that we may make with other countries in future, it would of course be our principle to avoid any menace against Germany. We only want, as I say, peace and quiet for ourselves and for the world."

The King however said nothing to me about his having himself declared against Germany being invited to take part as a third party in the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, as Japan had wished. I only learnt this some months later from Count Hayashi, who told me in the strictest confidence that King Edward in March and April of 1901 had been decidedly in favour of the participation of Germany, but that he had later declared that he was convinced that nothing could be done with the Kaiser and his Ministers, and that therefore it would be better to keep out Germany.

About a fortnight later I went to Berlin. Alfred

Rothschild who had been getting more and more anxious about Anglo-German relations gave me a long letter which I was to read to Count Bülow, and, if possible, to the Kaiser. He generally wrote to me in English, but he had, with great labour, composed this letter in German. I accordingly read the letter to Count Bülow and gave him a full account of the state of feeling in England. I also reported to him the remarks of King Edward. Count Bülow, who was, as always, amiability itself, paid very little attention to what I said and seemed to have no real appreciation of the gravity of the situation.

On February 26th, 1902, I was commanded to a dinner at the Imperial Palace, at which there were only six other persons besides the Kaiser and the Kaiserin. As soon as dinner was over the Kaiser took me into a window recess and made me report to him for more than an hour on the situation in England. I depicted to him the state of opinion in political circles and in the public very candidly, and without glossing anything over. In the course of it I referred to the negotiations for an alliance between Great Britain and Japan in the spring of 1901. At this the Kaiser looked at me in great surprise and said: "But I know nothing of that at all. The only thing that I heard then about the possibility of an alliance with England was what you told me of the declarations of the Duke of Devonshire and Chamberlain at Chatsworth on my arrival in England in January, 1901. What you are telling me now is to me quite incomprehensible. I shall go to-morrow morning to the Chancellor and ask for an explanation." And very early the following morning he went off to the Chancellor. As I afterwards heard from eye-witnesses, the Kaiser and Count Bülow had walked up and down for a whole hour in the gardens of the Chancellor's palace, and the conversation between them had been exceedingly animated.

At ten that evening I got a summons from the Under-Secretary, von Mühlberg, to go and see him at once at the Wilhelmstrasse. He received me with the words, "Now you have done it nicely." He told me that the Kaiser

had been in a great state of excitement and had demanded explanations from the Chancellor as to the alliance negotiations in the spring of 1901. At this moment there came in the Colonial Director, Dr. Stubel, whom the Chancellor had summoned for information about his mission to London of the previous spring. Count Bülow received him first, then myself. The Chancellor was as amiable as usual, but seemed a good deal put out by the whole business. He said it would have been better if I had not told the Kaiser so much, for no good ever came of it. I got the impression that his exceptional tact had already succeeded in tranquilising the Kaiser. The whole incident eventually ended as a storm in a tea-cup.

The Coronation of King Edward was to have taken place in Westminster Abbey in June, 1902, but the King fell suddenly ill and was told he must undergo a severe operation. His physician himself told me that he had had the very greatest difficulty in persuading King Edward to comply with the positive orders of all his medical advisers as to an immediate operation and as to postponing the Coronation. When he, Sir Francis Laking, told the King in so many words that he must accept the inevitable he found himself ordered out of the room. Later, however, the King sent for him again, apologised, and accepted the advice of his doctors.

Field-Marshal Count Waldersee was one of the German Mission sent to the Coronation, which took place eventually on August 9th. At a dinner given in his honour by Lord Roberts the Count made a speech, composed for him by the Military Attaché of the German Embassy, Count von der Schulenburg. Particular stress was laid in it on the great humanity with which the British troops and authorities had behaved to the population during the South African War. The publication of this semi-official declaration did much to mitigate the irritation caused by the attacks on the British Army in the Reichstag and the German press. Count Schulenburg, the author of this successful speech, was a man of great diplomatic talents, who had attained a position in London such as few of his

predecessors had acquired. He was one of the very few who from the first saw the danger of the great catastrophe, and he worked hard to dispel the illusions of Berlin. But he produced no impression on the Great General Staff or on the " Central Cattle Market."

The next day I had invited various prominent naval and military personages to meet Count Waldersee at dinner. Among them was Lord Charles Beresford, who began to discuss with Count Waldersee his speech of the day before. In the course of this discussion the German Field-Marshal said: " It went much against the grain with me to praise the humane conduct of the British troops as an especial excellence on their part. I personally hold that the most humane way of carrying on war in an enemy country is to force the enemy to make peace as soon as possible, by ruthlessness. This too has always been the policy of the French. It was also that of the American generals in the Civil War. Sheridan's report to Sherman, ' All quiet in Virginia,' meant that he had laid waste the country. We Germans find such ruthlessness just as hard as you Englishmen. We only apply it where it is absolutely required by military necessity."

To this Lord Charles enthusiastically assented. But the Liberal politician, Lord Carrington, most energetically dissented from the views of the German soldier and the British sailor. The argument which became more and more heated was continued after dinner, and later arrivals were canvassed by either party. One late arrival the kindly and philanthropic Alfred Rothschild was fairly horrified at the position the military party assumed. And yet the German Field-Marshal and the British Admiral were actuated by humanity of a sort.

After the Coronation, the new Ambassador, Count Metternich, went to Germany on a long leave, and I found myself again in charge of the Embassy.

I have already said that I had succeeded in making a friend of Germany out of the energetic and influential South African statesman, Cecil Rhodes. When he was in England we saw each other almost daily, either in my

house or in his quarters at the old Burlington Hotel in Cork Street. He was a very peculiar person in every way, and you had to understand him if you were going to get on with him. But once you had won his confidence he was the truest and most trustworthy friend in the world.

How often have I sat with Rhodes and Chamberlain at the round table in the Burlington Hotel, drinking old port, for which they both had a particular weakness. At these times we roughed out plan after plan for possible partitions of the world, in which Germany was certainly given a very fair share. Unfortunately this great Imperialist, who was also in many ways an idealist, died too soon. Had he lived, and had Germany found a leader with real business capacity, things would have fallen out very differently.

At this time Rhodes was much interested in a scheme for a Cape to Cairo telegraph line across German East Africa. From Cairo it was to run through Syria and Asia Minor to Constantinople, where it would connect with the German telegraph system. This would have diverted through Berlin practically the whole telegraphic correspondence between South and Central Africa and London. It would on the other hand have enabled Rhodes, according to his estimate, to reduce the rate from the Cape to London to one shilling instead of five shillings. The project was put before the German Government by me, at his request, and I also took it up personally with the Secretary of the Post Office and other competent authorities in Berlin. It was a very ingenious idea, but it was wrecked by the want of political insight and shortsighted fussiness of Berlin.

This I mention as evidence of Rhodes's practical capacity. As for his idealism, it appears in his leaving almost his whole immense fortune to charitable and educational purposes. He had often discussed with me his intention of instituting a number of scholarships which should permit of poor German students being able to go to Oxford. His idea in this was that nothing could be more beneficial in bringing the German and British

people together than some mutual comprehension of the respective cultures of the two countries. Yet, when his will was published in September, 1902, establishing such scholarships with the most generous endowments, a part both of the press and of public opinion in Germany adopted an attitude of the most arrogant aloofness, which naturally was not particularly appreciated in England.

On the South African War coming to an end in the summer of 1902, the Boer generals, Botha, Delarey and De Wet, came to London to try and obtain alleviations of the peace conditions. From London they went on to Amsterdam, and thence to Berlin. In an appeal addressed to the civilised world, asking for relief for distressed Boers, they had greatly irritated the political circles and public opinion of England. But the Berlin Boer Relief Association proceeded to get up a press campaign for their reception by the Kaiser; and the German Anglophobes generally did their best to convert the visit of the Boer generals to Berlin into a great anti-English demonstration. In this Herbert Bismarck took a leading part, and did everything conceivable likely to provoke the English.

As for the Kaiser, he was burning with curiosity to make the acquaintance of the Boer generals, and for a long time obstinately insisted on receiving them. In this he evidently had not the slightest idea of the serious consequences such a proceeding would have entailed. He would, for one thing only, have been obliged to give up the official visit to England that he had planned for November, as the whole public opinion of England had already pronounced itself on this point.

King Edward was already shuddering at the thought of his unpleasant position in having to put off the Kaiser after all the arrangements had been made. Both his private secretary, Sir Francis Knollys, and the acting Court Chamberlain, Sir Arthur Ellis, came to me on his behalf to beg me to warn Berlin of the inevitable consequence of receiving the Boer generals. I wrote and telegraphed to Berlin and did everything I could think of

to get the Wilhelmstrasse to open the Kaiser's eyes; but nothing seemed to be any use. The Kaiser had got it into his head that it was right and proper for him to see the generals.

Luckily a hitch arose from the fact that the generals had now become British subjects; and Court etiquette consequently required that they must apply for an audience through the British Ambassador.

At first they agreed to this; but afterwards changed their minds, and asked that they should have a summons from the Kaiser before they applied to the British Ambassador. At this critical moment, when the Kaiser was on the point of giving way on the instance of various Court generals, I got the following letter from Mr. Moberly Bell (Manager of the "Times"):

Very Private and Confidential. 1902, *October* 1st.

MY DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN,

I know that you must be anxious to do whatever can be done to restore so far as it is now possible the good feeling between England and Germany—and I feel that you will not misunderstand my motives.

May I beg you to use whatever influence you may possess *either* to prevent the Boer generals being received by your Emperor *or* to prevent the latter coming to England.

I am not an alarmist, but I cannot speak too emphatically when I say that if *both* these events occur there will be absolute disaster. I have never in the whole course of my experience known feeling so strong and—what is to me more serious—more restrained in the firm belief that it *cannot* be true. Nor is this, as generally, among the lower classes only. There was language used to-day by elderly opulent city men, that, at the time of the raid, was only used by the lower classes—and some idea of

what people are feeling may be gathered from the fact that some of us are concerting serious measures to prevent disturbance.

Remember please that *I defended*—and still defend—the Emperor's telegram to Kruger. I think, of course, it was injudicious, but I saw then no other harm in it. I am not therefore prejudiced nor alarmist, but if the *two* things happen, believe me you will not be long without regretting it for the sake of both countries.

Yours very truly,

C. F. Moberly Bell.

On getting this letter I at once went round to the Foreign Office to discuss the matter with my friend Sir Thomas Sanderson, the Permanent Secretary. I showed him the letter, and we agreed that it in no way exaggerated the situation. He added that according to his last report the Kaiser persisted in his intention of seeing the generals; and he observed that British Government circles could not understand why the Kaiser failed to see that it was improper for a Sovereign to interfere continually in the internal affairs of a foreign State. For there could be no question that, under existing conditions, the reception of the Boer generals was an interference in the internal affairs of the British Empire. On my asking what the British Ambassador would do if the Boer generals applied to him for an audience with the Kaiser, he said that nothing had as yet been decided. Then I suggested that it might be best to instruct the Ambassador that he should in such case avoid giving any direct refusal that might offend the Kaiser; but simply do nothing. He said that that would perhaps be the best way out of it; and he would at once see Lord Lansdowne and propose that the Ambassador be instructed "not to move."

I reported all this to Berlin, first by telegraph with an extract from Mr. Moberly Bell's letter, and then by post with a copy of the letter itself. Soon after, I got a telegram from Berlin that these had both been submitted to

the Kaiser, who had finally decided not to see the generals. When I was in Berlin some weeks later the Foreign Secretary told me, with some amusement, that what had decided the Kaiser was the fear that he would have to give up his pleasure trip to England. But subsequent tirades of Wilhelm, in which he represented his refusal to see the Boer generals as a spontaneous and calculated expression of friendship for England, were particularly interesting to the initiated.

This solution was an immense relief to King Edward. I had of course at once informed him of it, and on his return from Scotland he invited me to lunch. I found him in a very good humour, and, for a change, somewhat softened towards Wilhelm.

Subsequently I reported the substance of our conversation as follows :

London, *October 13th*, 1902.

Secret. Private. For the FOREIGN SECRETARY.

At luncheon to-day the King discussed various political questions. He assured me of his great satisfaction, in the interests of the maintenance of friendly relations, on hearing that the reception of the Boer generals had been abandoned. He said he thought it would be best, in view of this decision, to refer as little as possible to this question. He said he had been much pleased with the Kaiser's last letter on the subject.

There was lying on his table a copy of Lord Lansdowne's reply to our note on the evacuation of Shanghai. Pointing to it the King said he had just been studying the question. He hoped the Imperial Government would accept the proposed alterations of the last clause of the conditions of the evacuation. Then, pointing to our last note, he said half in joke, " I wrote in the margin of your last note, with all those conditions and clauses—' sounds like a Russian Ukase.' " I may observe in this connection that I heard in the Foreign Office to-day that the tone and tenor of our note had not given any offence there.

Finally he spoke about the American Circular Note as to the Jews in Roumania. He fairly shook with laughter when he told me how Count Lamsdorff said to Sir Charles Scott that he knew nothing about any such Circular Note and did not remember having seen one. From the way in which he spoke about the Roumanian Jews I got the impression that he himself took much more interest in them than the Cabinet did.

The King looked very well, though somewhat older. He was in the most cheerful humour and spoke throughout with great cordiality of the Kaiser, repeatedly expressing the hope that the relations between the two countries might go on improving and be as friendly as possible.

ECKARDSTEIN.

During September I had visited Chamberlain at Highbury. I found him in a very bad temper with the German Government in general and with Count Bülow in particular. Sitting alone with him over some old port after dinner, he fairly let himself go. He said that he had learnt by bitter experience again and again that it was a "bad job" to try to do business with Berlin. They didn't know what they wanted, and they couldn't be trusted. So long as Bülow was in power he wouldn't move another finger for an understanding with Germany.

On my asking whether England now really meant to join with France and Russia, he replied that nothing was as yet settled, but anything of that sort might happen at any moment. I further gathered that the conversation with Cambon had not as yet led to anything, because the French asked too much. Thus he admitted that the Government did not dare for the moment to advocate an agreement with France, except in case of extreme necessity, because it might be regarded as imperilling Gibraltar and the whole British position in the Mediterranean. But, as he had said before, anything might happen. Besides Morocco, to which he had of course been referring, he also spoke of the Far East. The

Anglo-Japanese Alliance had for the time being provided for that difficulty and there was no longer any advantage in associating Germany in the arrangements as to China. He gave me a few words of hearty thanks for my help in initiating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

But where in all this does my poor Germany come in ? I was saying to myself, as I listened to Chamberlain. And this talk with him so depressed and discouraged me that I decided then and there to resign my post as Councillor at the Embassy. I saw that in the past I had only been a Don Quixote tilting against windmills, while as to the future I saw that even these activities would no longer be possible. For Count Hatzfeldt's successor was a sworn enemy of initiative in any form and believed in letting things take their course.

It only remained therefore to make the best use I could of my term as Chargé d'Affaires. So, on returning to London, I drew up a long official report on the basis of my conversation with Chamberlain. In this I described without any disguise the false position into which the German Empire had already got itself. This report, adorned with profuse marginal notes in the Kaiser's own hand, was in due course sent on to the Great General Staff.

When in the following month I was in Berlin on leave I met one evening the Chief of the General Staff, Count von Schlieffen. On seeing me he came up and said: "I have read your report with great interest. It does not give a very rosy picture of the position of the Empire. If what you assume as to the future attitude of England is correct I should have to alter my whole plan of campaign. But I cannot possibly believe that you are right. I think you are much too pessimistic." I said I hoped that I was wrong, but did not think so. I then raised the Belgian question, and said that, if we really had the intention of marching through Belgium in case of war, then, as things were going, we should at once have Great Britain on our backs. To this observation the Chief of the Staff made no reply, but broke off the conversation.

When I raised this question of the violation of Belgium in the Wilhelmstrasse, I got a very distinct impression that the ruling powers had not gone into the matter at all, and that they took no interest in any possible plans of this sort of the General Staff.

About this time Berlin awoke to the possibility of an Anglo-French agreement as to Morocco, as a consequence of their rejection of the overtures from London. I had accordingly received the following from the Foreign Secretary:

Berlin, 25th *September*, 1902.

Strictly Confidential.

DEAR BARON ECKARDSTEIN.

I should like to have the advantage of your personal opinion and great experience of English conditions on the following matter before taking it up officially.

We lately got the news here through a circuitous channel that England was treating with France about Morocco. The whole of Morocco with the exception of a small coast strip at Tangier to be a French Protectorate—England to be compensated in the Siamese Peninsula.

The source of this information is such that we can get no confirmation of it here. It is however consonant with the fact that, some months ago, Lord Lansdowne—or was it Cranborne?—tried to put off Count Metternich by professing complete ignorance as to Siam. Also that we are met in Paris with a certain relieved reticence.

Do you really think that the British Government could put a treaty before the British public that would bring Tangier itself under French influence? For I do not see how England either could or would occupy the narrow coast strip with the French just at the back of them. Do you also think it possible that Chamberlain's present feeling for us—or against us—could go so far as to abandon entirely the attitude hitherto adopted by England and surrender

Tangier to the French, thereby enabling them to bar the entry of the Mediterranean against England?

I should be very grateful for your private and personal opinion on these points which you can give me quite freely.

Best greetings. Yours truly,

RICHTHOFEN

London, *4th October*, 1902

DEAR FREIHERR VON RICHTHOFEN,

I got your letter on returning from visiting Lord Lansdowne in Ireland. As I have already telegraphed to Your Excellency I discussed the Morocco question with him. I have had for some time certain indications that the French Ambassador was working to bring about an arrangement with England on the Morocco question.

Lord Lansdowne was very careful as to what he said to me, and I was not able to find out the basis of the proposals that M. Cambon has made to the Government here; but I got the distinct impression that French proposals had been made about Morocco, and that the British Government does not for the moment intend to accept them.

My personal opinion is that the Government here would scarcely venture to make any such an agreement with France or any other Power concerning Morocco as would endanger Gibraltar. But the case would be different if England were involved in a war and found itself obliged to gain allies on any terms. I was then and am now convinced that Lord Lansdowne was, at the critical moment of the South African War, ready to avert the menace of a coalition by very large concessions to France or Russia. But except in such an emergency England will never enter into any arrangement that might endanger its strategic position in the Mediterranean, and allow France to put the key-stone on its North-African position Yours truly,

ECKARDSTEIN

But such an emergency as that which I contemplated in this letter did in fact arise soon after, on the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war. Great Britain had then to come to an understanding with France on any terms in order to localise the war

I was by this time conducting my private correspondence on official matters with the Foreign Secretary, Freiherr von Richthofen, as my relations with his exact opposite in every respect—Holstein—had already become very chilly. What had particularly annoyed Holstein had been a despatch from me that had reported very frankly a conversation I had had with my Austrian colleague, Count Mensdorff, then Councillor and later Ambassador. The Count had told me that the old Emperor Franz Joseph, and the leading political personages in Vienna, were watching the growing estrangement between Great Britain and Germany with much anxiety, and with many apprehensions for the future. In this I had touched the tenderest spot in Holstein's complex mentality, for nothing was more distasteful to him than the least indication of disapprobation of our policy towards England on the part of our Austrian ally. He at once had my report sent on to our Embassy in Vienna with instructions to make a direct enquiry at the Foreign Office there as to whether they disapproved Germany's policy towards England. This was one of the many so-called "counter-checks" which the Wilhelmstrasse practised; generally in the clumsiest manner. The reply was of course promptly returned that the Austrian Government had not the least inclination to criticise in any way German policy.

But in diplomacy it is of course the things that are not said, and that are only read between the lines, that matter.

My experiences while Chargé d'Affaires had only strengthened me in the decision I had come to after my last conversation with Chamberlain, that it was time for me to resign from the London Embassy, and withdraw from the hopeless diplomatic muddle. I had already sent in my resignation; and had been begged by the

Foreign Secretary to withdraw it when I was in Berlin in October. He said that the Kaiser had spoken with much displeasure about my decision, and could not understand why I insisted on leaving the diplomatic service. I had however held to my decision.

I was just starting for the station on my return to London when a messenger from the Wilhelmstrasse brought me the following invitation:

"His Majesty the Kaiser and King has the All-highest condescension to anticipate your acceptance.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Freiherr von Richthofen, has the honour to invite Freiherr von Eckardstein, Councillor of Embassy, for to-day, the thirteenth October, at a quarter before seven."

So there was no help for it, I had to put off my journey and go.

After dinner the Kaiser came up to me and said pretty brusquely he couldn't understand why I insisted on leaving the Service; I had better think it over again. On my answering that I was tired, that the future of the Empire seemed to me very black, and that under existing conditions I did not see how I could do any really useful work, he made no reply, but abruptly broke off the conversation.

It was eventually settled through the Foreign Secretary that I was to remain in the Service, *en disponsibilité*; and I stayed attached to the Embassy on this footing until 1907, when I finally retired.

I had hardly arrived in London before I got a note from Sir Stanley Clarke, that the King had heard I was leaving the Embassy and would be glad to see me the following day at Buckingham Palace to say good-bye. As I was shown into the King's study, he got up from the writing table where he was sitting, and came towards me holding out his hand. He then said to me in the warmest manner: "I have heard with great regret that you are resigning your post. I am really sorry you have decided on this step, but I can quite feel that you must have got tired and lost heart, especially now that

your hands are so much tied in every way." Then he took two small leather cases from his writing table and gave them to me. "Here," he said, "is the Star of the Victorian Order—you already have the Cross of it. And here is a cigarette case. When you look at the Star—think of Queen Victoria, and when you take a cigarette—think of me." Then he went on, "I can assure you that my Ministers, especially Lansdowne, greatly regret your leaving the Embassy." Later he said, "We shall never forget that it was you who were the real originator of the alliance with Japan." But as to Anglo-German relations, he said not a word. He only remarked when I was leaving that he was glad that I was going to live a large part of the year in England, as he could then send for me, if at any time an awkward question should arise.

Although my resignation had already taken effect when the Kaiser arrived on a visit to England in November, 1902, in compliance with special instructions from the Foreign Secretary, I went with the Embassy staff to meet him at Port Victoria. At breakfast, on board the "Hohenzollern," the atmosphere was one of extreme depression, as the Kaiser was very hard hit by the icy, indeed positively unfriendly reception given him in the English press. His visit went off with correctitude and according to plan, and that was the most that could be said for it. And, as he again disappeared on board the yacht, King Edward was heard to breathe, "Thank God he's gone."

CHAPTER XIV

ENTENTE AND ENCIRCLEMENT

ALTHOUGH I had intended to take no further part in politics after leaving the Embassy I did not for long succeed in keeping clear of them. When politics has once got into your blood it will out.

Moreover when one heard the silly unsuspecting chatter of the so-called politicians in Berlin, and when I saw how utterly wrongly the Wilhelmstrasse estimated the foreign situation, I succumbed again and again to the temptation to warn them of danger. And of course all I achieved was a general irritation in official quarters against myself. To this there were a few exceptions, like the Foreign Secretary, Freiherr von Richthofen and some other Wilhelmstrasse officials. But my worst enemy was Holstein; all the more that I continued to take every opportunity of thwarting his policy of illusion and *idées fixes*.

If I were to give here a full account of the further development of the encirclement from 1902 on, together with the necessary documents, I should have to add another volume to these memoirs. But I think the time has not yet come for turning the full light of publicity on to proceedings, which even the confidential archives of the Wilhelmstrasse would not reveal to the most expert historian. For to return to one of my first remarks—most official documents of the Wilhelmstrasse and of the Wilhelminic Era are little more than a "*fable convenue*."

When King Edward paid his visit to Paris in 1903, I went over too in order to get an idea of the political atmosphere as between France and England. I had already satisfied myself in London that negotiations were proceeding with France for an agreement along the whole line, and this was confirmed by what I saw and heard in Paris.

But, when I got to Berlin, I soon found that they had

been left completely in the dark by Count Metternich, who had succeeded Count Hatzfeldt in London, and by Prince Radolin who had, in 1901, succeeded Prince Münster in Paris. I accordingly sat down and composed the following memorandum for the Chancellor:

Berlin, *May*, 1903.

To H.E. the Chancellor Count Bülow.

Conversations I have had recently with British Ministers and with leading personages in Paris convince me that negotiations are again proceeding between the two governments for a general settlement of all impending questions; and, as I have more than once had the honour to report to Your Excellency, Mr. Chamberlain and M. Cambon have frequently discussed an agreement on colonial questions as well as a political *rapprochement*.

This at first concerned a settlement of the so-called "little colonial questions," e.g., Newfoundland, the New Hebrides, the Madagascar commercial treaty, extra-territoriality in Zanzibar, frontiers in South Africa, etc.

The excitement of public opinion on both sides over Fashoda and the Boer War can probably account for these negotiations having more than once broken down. Both governments feared the attacks to which a settlement of any sort would certainly have exposed them.

To-day things are very different. The fact that it was at all possible for King Edward to go officially to Paris, and the friendly, if not altogether enthusiastic reception given him by the Paris public, proves that the previous passionate bitterness has given way to a friendly feeling. Mr. Chamberlain moreover, observed to me, just before the King started, "Here in England the King's visit is very popular; and if Paris gives him a good reception then everything will go well between us in future."

From all that I hear I am therefore convinced that

the previous Anglo-French negotiations have been resumed; and this time with every prospect of success. There is now on both sides a firm wish for a general political *rapprochement*. Now that the Egyptian question has practically vanished from the scene for France, it is proposed to proceed by a settlement of the "little colonial questions" and an agreement on Morocco.

Paris high finance is, through its London connections, playing a part in these negotiations that should not be underestimated. It knows that Russia will have in the next few years to obtain further large loans. On the one hand Paris is unwilling to tie itself up still more in Russian loans and on the other hand it fears an acute financial crisis in Russia should such prove unobtainable. French high finance therefore wants a partner. Only two countries could possibly provide the large sums required by Russia, Great Britain and the United States. America has in consequence of recent inflation all it can do at home, and would not moreover invest permanently in any European State. Only England remains. The financial depression there due to the Boer War is now gradually disappearing, and it will soon be in a position to take part in the financing of Russia.

This has caused French finance to move M. Delcassé to work for an Anglo-Russian as well as for an Anglo-French *rapprochement*, and not without success.

The view taken of late by the German press that an Anglo-French *rapprochement* would drive a wedge into the Franco-Russian Alliance is for this reason fallacious, quite apart from the fact that France still regards the Russian Alliance as the keystone of her foreign policy. On the contrary there is now a new Triple Alliance in course of formation which, even if it is not put in writing, is calculated to cause us, to say the least, political and economic trouble throughout the world. This alliance would

suit France financially as well as, in other respects, it would suit Russia, because it would mean more loans; and it would suit England, because now after the Boer War, just as after the Crimean War, it is longing for perfect peace. And to get that, England will close its eyes to the real facts and conclude all manner of provisional arrangements, even about the Persian Gulf.

London finance will moreover go in for Russian loans up to a certain point. Even the London Rothschilds, who were at one time quite anti-Russian, have been converted. The hard work of the new Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorf, and of M. Proklewsky in Government circles, in high finance, and in the press, are also having their effect.

ECKARDSTEIN.

The Chancellor was much upset by this memorandum which, as he himself told me, he found convincing. The Wilhelmstrasse also, as a whole, accepted my view. But Holstein maintained that a real *rapprochement* between England and France was impossible; and that the idea of an Anglo-French agreement about Morocco was *naive*. As usual, the Chancellor eventually adopted Holstein's views. The memorandum was then sent to be counter-checked by the Ambassadors in London and Paris; and as they reported that they knew nothing of any negotiations it was pigeon-holed. And the Wilhelmstrasse again slept the sleep of the just.

In spite of Holstein's conviction that it was naive to believe that an agreement between France and England about Morocco could ever be a possibility, the negotiations continued much on the lines reported in my memorandum; and, after various vicissitudes, reached their conclusion in the Anglo-French Colonial Agreement of 1904. And, as I had anticipated in my memorandum, this agreement disposed not only of the "little colonial questions," but of the old controversies of Egypt and Morocco that had more than once been the cause of acute friction. As

Chamberlain said to me after the conclusion of the agreement, " The way is now clear for the further development of our friendly relations with France and with Russia."

The conclusion of the negotiations was accelerated by the outbreak in February, 1904, of the Russo-Japanese War. For both England as well as France were anxious to avoid being involved in the war, and for this purpose worked together on a friendly footing.

I had, in March, gathered from what the British Ministers told me that such a settlement was already initialled, and I had at once communicated this to Herr von Schwabach, the head of the firm of Bleichröder in Berlin, asking him to tell the Wilhelmstrasse. For he was one of the few personages of Berlin high finance with any political judgment and knowledge of foreign affairs. He was also in touch with Holstein, and as I by that time had no relations at all with the Wilhelmstrasse I used to communicate with them through a private cipher and Herr von Schwabach.

Among other information I sent them through this channel was their first news of the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan. But as our Ambassadors, both in Paris and in Petersburg, telegraphed at the same time to the effect that there could be no question of a Russo-Japanese war no attention was paid to my information, though my authority was Count Hayashi himself. Two days later Berlin learnt that a Japanese fleet was engaged in bombarding Port Arthur.

With King Edward I remained in personal touch until January, 1907, after which I never saw him again. During the Morocco crisis of 1905, I was in constant communication with him in combating the danger of a war between Germany and France, that had been conjured up by the boundless folly of German policy under Holstein. But I have decided to postpone to a later date any attempt to deal with the Morocco crisis.

I shall confine myself here to saying that it was the Morocco policy of Holstein, the Bjorko agreement between

Wilhelm and Nicholas in the same year, 1905, and the Agadir coup of Bethmann-Hollweg and Kiderlen-Wächter, that I regard as having started the catastrophe.

The correspondence between Wilhelm and Nicholas has been published since I completed these memoirs. I have however quite sufficiently indicated in them the repeated Russian attempts to exploit the incredible indiscretions of the Kaiser, with a view to discrediting Germany in England. I had of course known that Wilhelm gave away many secrets to the Russians, but I confess that, though for years I have been behind the scenes, I had no idea that the Kaiser could have written such letters without the knowledge of the Wilhelmstrasse.

It was with reference to this Russo-German agreement that King Edward referred to the Kaiser as the "most brilliant failure in history." And, in a letter from the Duchess of Devonshire that I received at this time, I find the following passage: "The King says, 'people can talk if they like of perfidious Albion. But can there really be anything more perfidious and more stupid than the present policy of the Kaiser?'" And from this time on the encirclement policy of King Edward entered an acuter phase, one that was more directly aimed against the foolish and double-faced policy of Wilhelm II.

England has only once in the whole course of its long and successful history allowed itself to make a really bad blunder. This was in the reign of George III under the government that to-day we can best appreciate in the anonymous attacks of Junius. The results of the shallow and short-sighted policy of that day was the final loss of its best imperial possession and the temporary loss of its international position. If England, now that it has obtained all its war ambitions, should really seriously attempt to strangle the life of the German people it would be making a mistake that would only be different in degree to that it made in the 18th century. An industrious and intelligent people of seventy millions,

such as the Germans are, cannot for any length of time be enslaved or even exploited. Any attempt by the present rulers of England in this direction can only implant in Germany a hatred of England, that has hitherto been a purely ephemeral and artificial sentiment. History shows that the German people is temperamentally pacific and that it can only be drifted into war as the result of such misdirection as that of the Wilhelminic era, or driven into it by foreign persecution.

Before ending these memoirs I would wish once more to lay stress on the pains I have taken that they should present an impartial picture of the events and personalities described. But of course it has probably been impossible for me to discount altogether my own personal point of view. At least I have not published them for the purpose of putting forward any personal claims to public recognition. In the political world achievement alone is recognised. And, in the end, I achieved nothing. Nor can I console myself with the recollection that I at least meant well. *In magnis voluisse sat est* has never been my view. On the other hand, I do not think that I have been either embittered or aggrieved that my aims have not resulted in any achievement. In the fearful fate that has befallen the German Empire and the German people, and in the dark days that lie before us, I am content to believe in the true greatness, and to live for the resurrection, of my German Fatherland.

INDEX

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