

ANGLO-GERMAN POLITICAL RELATIONS

1897 - 1903

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A Thesis submitted to the University
of Manitoba in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the M.A. Degree.

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1. THE SETTING

During the years between 1897 and 1903 there was carried on a series of efforts to secure better relations between Germany and England, which, had they been successful, might have changed the course of history and postponed, if not prevented, the catastrophe of 1914-1918.

In the following pages an attempt is made to describe these attempts to form an alliance, to examine concurrent Anglo-German negotiations of these years, and to show the effect of the latter upon the main negotiations. An attempt will also be made to study the personal prejudices and divergent interests which made a satisfactory settlement impossible.

The full scope of these negotiations was first revealed in the memoirs of Eckardstein, Secretary at the German Embassy in London, who treated them as an unofficial request for an alliance from the British Government. With the publication of the British Foreign Office papers, edited by Messrs. Gooch and Temperley, we are now in a position to revise Eckardstein's version. It will appear from the following pages that the whole negotiation was distinctly more unofficial in origin and nebulous in form than was originally believed.

At the opening of our period there was in evidence in Germany a spirit of mistrust towards England. Furthermore, she had assumed a hectoring manner and had made use of questionable methods which were becoming more and more distasteful to English statesmen. In order to understand the atmosphere which then prevailed, it is necessary to consider changes which had taken place in the policy of Germany, together with certain incidents which had occurred in the relations between the two countries, from the fall of Bismarck in 1890 to 1897.

Bismarck regarded Germany as a satiated power. His aims in Central Europe had been achieved and his policy in the twenty years which followed 1870 was directed towards the consolidation of the work then completed. To this end his diplomacy aimed at isolating France and it was in the pursuit of this aim that he entered into alliances with Austria and Italy and at the same time cultivated friendly relations with Russia and England. To remain on good terms with England was a policy made easier by the fact that Bismarck remained to the end a continentalist whose aims

were essentially bounded by the limits of Europe. Even before the fall of Bismarck, however, the pressure of the colonial groups in Germany was causing him to modify his attitude and attempt to secure colonies. Unfortunately even these first steps in the direction of colonial empire were not taken without some friction with England, and, as in the case of Walfisch Bay, the dubious honesty of the German approach and the apparent lack of sympathy and settled policy on the part of the English Government led to a certain ruffling of the Anglo-German calm.

With the accession of William II, instead of engaging in a "European policy", Germany was now to pursue a "World policy" which was soon to bring her into collision with her neighbours, and was finally to lead to the catastrophe of 1918. The young Emperor, with his vivid imagination, was only too eager to listen to the demand for colonial expansion and with this accentuated desire for expansion there came renewed friction with England. This German pursuit of colonial expansion was more offensive to England by reason of its methods than by its aims. England, herself satiated, looked with distaste on the pushing methods of the younger empire, as exemplified by her conduct in regard to West Africa. In June 1893 Germany declined the proposal for a joint commission to divide the neutral zone which lay to the rear of the Gold Coast and Togoland Colonies, saying that she had sufficient treaties already, although, as a matter of fact, she had no proper treaties. The German Government agreed to an English Commissioner being sent to make treaties but they gave constant trouble by complaints of his proceedings and persuaded Her Majesty's Government to amend the treaties when made, on the ground that they were not explicit and that they prejudiced German rights. In addition the local Togoland authorities sent an agent to make treaties on their own account and this agent carried on an anti-British policy. The Germans also gave great trouble by claiming a territory which they described as Tschantoland, but which had no geographical limits, and they used this claim against France and Great Britain alternately. On all points Her Majesty's Government gave way and it was not any uncomprising attitude on England's part which gave rise to ill-feeling between the two countries in regard to West Africa. Germany was also unfortunate in her choice of men for the colonial office, e.g. Dr. Kayser, the key of whose policy was that there were but three Powers in Africa; England, France and Germany, that two of these must inevitably combine against the third, and that Germany must keep a free hand for combination.

Particular offence was given by Germany's continual interference in the affairs of the Transvaal which certain parties in Germany would have liked to have seen made a

German Protectorate. Germany made a great show of friendship for the Transvaal Government. In 1895, at a banquet given in honor of the Kaiser's birthday, there was an exchange of speeches between President Kruger and the German Consul which was of such a nature that the British Government protested. The German Consul encouraged President Kruger in his resistance to England by leading him to believe that Germany would give active assistance in any open conflict with England. Germany also backed the Transvaal in her attempt to buy the Delagoa Bay Railway, a British concern which had been illegally confiscated by Portugal and which was then the subject of international arbitration. All this caused irritation in England and the culminating point came in the explosion over the Kruger telegram in which the Kaiser's sympathy with, and encouragement of, the Boers was openly expressed. This aroused such a deep feeling of resentment in England that German statesmen were astonished and drew back, realizing their impotency when it came to helping the Boers with more than words.

In Egypt, Germany usually supported England but she regarded that support as a commodity in return for which she could extract from England a compliance with her wishes in other parts of the world. In 1893, when the English Ambassador in Constantinople did not support the German Ambassador in his negotiations for railway concessions, Baron von Holstein, a German Foreign Office official, immediately instructed the German representative in Egypt to cease his support of England. London was forced to give way and Germany's abrupt and brusque methods left a bitter impression on English statesmen.¹

Moreover, as the nineties drew to a close, the sharp divergence of opinion over the Cretan incident of 1897, and the sharp practice of German diplomacy in the matter of the annexation of Kiao-chau, still further emphasized the passing of the old Anglo-German harmony.

1 Sir H. Grey, who was then Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, has described the English need of German support in Egypt as a rope around England's neck which could be, and was, roughly jerked by Germany whenever England failed to give way to Germany in Eastern questions. (Grey - Twenty-five Years Vol. I p).

2. PERSONALITIES

In order better to understand the factors affecting the relations between England and Germany, it is necessary to know something with regard to the men who directed Germany's policy, and their relations, particularly those of the Emperor, with England.

Under the constitution set up by Bismarck the largest part of power, particularly in foreign affairs, was reserved to the Emperor. It is evident that Bismarck felt that, with his control of the Emperor, he himself would hold the reins and thus could drive the nation in the direction which he desired. But such a constitution gave to the head of the state the power of dismissing by a stroke of the pen any or all of his Ministers who happened to cross his desires or who did not see eye to eye with him.

This is what happened at the fall of Bismarck. The young Emperor, tired of Bismarck's masterful ways, and realizing that there could be but one master and determined to be that master, took advantage of his power under the constitution to get rid of the great statesman. Bismarck was thus ousted by an instrument which he himself had forged, and which he probably little thought would have been turned to such a purpose. Had the Emperor been a strong character and had he been surrounded by the proper influences no great harm would have resulted, but such was not the case.

The Emperor's personality is described by Bülow, his Secretary of State and later Chancellor, as charming, touching, irresistible, adorable. No doubt Bülow's impression was prejudiced by the favors which the Emperor had shown him, but there is a modicum of truth in the statement. Bülow deplures the fact that "as a ruler Wilhelm, by reason of his temperament, lack of discrimination and sometimes even of common judgment, his tendency to let his 'will' (in Schopenhauer's sense) prevail over calm and sober reflection (in the Sophoclean sense), will stand in the greatest danger unless he is surrounded by prudent and, more especially, entirely loyal and trustworthy servants".¹ Undoubtedly the Emperor was eccentric² and this was the more

1 J. Haller, Philip Eulenburg. The Kaiser's Friend, Vol. II p 36.

2 In 1899 Eulenburg told the Emperor that he was the bearer of a message from the dying Cardinal Hohenlohe warning the Emperor that the idea of declaring him (the Emperor) irresponsible for his actions had been widely discussed. (Haller, Eulenburg Vol. II p 61.)

dangerous because he tended more and more to absolutism.

The Emperor was surrounded by military influences in the persons of aides-de-camp, and many of these were prone to dabble in political matters and to sway the ever susceptible Emperor to their interests. With his military education, the Emperor placed far too much value on the advice of these flatterers. But "aide-de-camp" politics were bound up with the Prussian tradition, though it seems a curious fact that the nation did not believe in the existence of aide-de-camp politics. In the words of Eulenburg, "The Emperor William II sucked in the tradition that every Prussian officer is not only the quintessence of honour, but of all good breeding, all culture and all intellectual endowment We will call it a combination of Military Hohenzollernism and self-hypnotism." 1

Count von Eulenburg, who was for many years the Emperor's friend, had been permitted to say things to the Emperor which no one else dare say. Repeatedly he would point out that a certain course of conduct would end disastrously and would persuade the Emperor into a more constitutional course. Eulenburg had indeed to fill a unique role. He was German Ambassador to the German Emperor. He himself defined his function as he saw it in these words, "To keep the Emperor's connection with his Government going as far as I could." 2 This role lasted until the advent into office of Bülow.

The years after 1890 have been described as the regime of the Foreign Office. This was controlled largely by Baron Friedrich von Holstein, Assistant Under-Secretary and Privy Councillor, one of the most mysterious personages who ever influenced international politics. He was undoubtedly a person of eminent intellect and knew the Foreign Office Archives thoroughly. His aim was to keep the direction of foreign policy in his own hands. There is no doubt that he was eccentric, indeed one writer goes so far as to call him a "subject for the pathologist - a criminal type." 3 He carried on a system of his own, corresponding with those representatives abroad who would humour him and

1 Hallen, Eulenburg Vol. II p 44.
Eulenburg tells us that the Emperor attached more importance to communications from Military Attaches at the various German Embassies than to those of his Ambassadors. (Eulenburg Vol. II p 45.)

2 Haller, Eulenburg Vol. I p 124.

3 Ibid Vol. I p XXXI.

ignoring the others. His nature too was decidedly vindictive and he frequently allowed personal spite to warp his judgment. He was, moreover, suspicious of the motives of others and directly they fell in with his wishes he broke off negotiations.

This peculiar personage was surrounded by a group of councillors, chief of whom was the energetic Kiderlen-Wächter. These men planned to get all the power into their own hands and to thrust the Emperor into the background. Indeed at a meeting with Eulenburg in 1897 they expressed the opinion that "His Majesty must be treated as the child or the fool he is."¹ The Emperor himself regarded Holstein as a "rare fool",² and until Bülow took charge of the Foreign Office and entered upon a direct correspondence with the Emperor, Eulenburg was the only intermediary between William and his officials.

Count Bernhard von Bülow had been Ambassador at Rome and possessed a keen intellect. Largely owing to the influence of Eulenburg, he was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He gained for a considerable period the affection and support of the Emperor, subsequently being made Chancellor and created Prince. But he was at heart ambitious, selfish, and ungrateful, as his treatment of Eulenburg, to whom he had sworn eternal friendship, showed.

Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst was Imperial Chancellor at the opening of our period, but it is doubtful whether he had much power or even wished for power. He was the Emperor's relative, and, although respected throughout the Empire for his eminent services, he seems rather to have bored the Emperor. He was too old for such a position.

On the English side mention must first be made of Lord Salisbury who held the premiership from June 1895 to July 1902 and who combined with it the office of Foreign Secretary from June 1895 to November 1900. He was a type of the old English "grand seigneur" whose ancestors had been advisers to Queen Elizabeth. He was at this time the first statesman in Europe, a firm believer in England's greatness, one who was not easily shaken by the storms and stresses of international politics.

Joseph Chamberlain was a keen business man from Birmingham, and was prone to bring business methods to bear

1 Ibid Vol. II p 23.

2 Ibid Vol. II p 18.

on politics. He would insist upon "laying the cards upon the table",¹ often to the disgust of the men trained in the methods of the old diplomacy. Hatzfeldt, German Ambassador in London, indeed termed him an "ignorant novice". He it was, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, who first thought that the policy of isolation, so long carried out by England, was dangerous and that England should look around for alliances. He was Colonial Secretary in Lord Salisbury's government and was a staunch imperialist.

At first the Emperor's personal relations with England were pleasant, but his overbearing manner soon irritated English statesmen, and he was particularly wanting in tact in his dealing with his uncle, the Prince of Wales. It must have been excessively galling to the Prince that his nephew was so much in the limelight through the circumstances which had called him to the throne at such an early age, while he, the Prince, although so much older, was thrust into the background. There was nothing that gave more pleasure to the Emperor than his annual visit to the Cowes Regatta but his domineering manner soon made even this social event a source of personal friction with the Prince of Wales.² In 1895 the tension reached the breaking point. The Prince began to express his feelings on the subject to a wider circle and the Emperor went so far, at a dinner on board the Hohenzollern, as to call his uncle "an old peacock".³ This ended the Emperor's visits to Cowes for some years.

The relations between the Emperor and Lord Salisbury, England's leading statesman, were scarcely more satisfactory. Lord Salisbury had for some time feared that the collapse of the Turkish Empire was only a matter of time. He wished therefore to obtain the views of the German Government with regard to the lines which the eventual partition should take. The proposal was not liked by the German Government and was looked upon as an attempt to weaken the Triple Alliance and to bring on a general European War from which England would reap advantages.⁴

1 Brandenburg, "From Bismarck to the World War", pp 106-7.

2 The Prince once styled the Emperor "the Boss of Cowes" and threatened not to go another year if the Emperor continued his distasteful ways. (Eckardstein p 55.)

3 Eckardstein p 56, "Ten Years at the Court of St. James".

4 Dugdale, German Diplomatic Documents 1871-1914, Vol. II p 331. Baron von Rotenhan to Count Hatzfeldt, August 1st, 1895.

Salisbury had already discussed the matter confidentially with Hatzfeldt, the German representative in London, and wished to bring the matter before the Emperor. A meeting took place in August 1895 but the Emperor, acting on the advice of Holstein, refused to consider any possible break up of the Turkish Empire. Unfortunately Salisbury was late in keeping the appointment and the Emperor showed his resentment in a marked manner.¹ According to the editor of the German Documents,² the Emperor requested a second interview, but Salisbury left London without seeing him. The incident created a feeling of mutual dislike. Salisbury afterwards referred to it with the words, "Your Kaiser appears to forget that I don't work for the King of Prussia but as Prime Minister of England".³ Eckardstein says that, "the only consequence of this momentous meeting was a profound and protracted breach between the Kaiser and Lord Salisbury which threw a shadow over the whole relationship between the two countries".⁴

So far as Holstein and Salisbury were concerned, the former disliked Salisbury with all the force of his twisted nature. This dislike showed itself continually in his letters and despatches and seemed to warp his judgment. Every proposal that Salisbury made had to him some ulterior motive, some design to create trouble in the Balkans which would involve Germany in a continental war.⁵ He never took into account the fact that Salisbury was hampered by the more popular forms of English government. "Moreover Holstein never recognized that Salisbury, in consequence of great and repeated provocation from the Emperor, was himself influenced by personal feeling".⁶ Holstein and the Emperor both continually harped upon the idea that nothing could be done in the way of an alliance whilst Salisbury was in power.

On the part of English statesmen there was distrust of the German personalities in power, for they could see no stability in a policy which to the English mind seemed trivial and without real aim - a policy so often directed by mere personal prejudice.

1 Eckardstein, "Ten Years at the Court of St. James".

2 Dugdale, Vol. II p 339.

3 Eckardstein p 59.

4 Eckardstein p 59.

5 Dugdale, Vol. II p 335, Holstein to Kiderlen, Aug. 3rd, 1895.

6 Eckardstein p 105 and Brandenburg pp 160, 161.

3. BIDS FOR FRIENDSHIP

From Waterloo to the end of the nineteenth century, English policy had generally avoided anything in the nature of continental commitments. Accordingly the tentative approach to Germany in 1898 and 1899 marked a real departure from the practice of almost a hundred years.

During 1897, Bülow had advised Hatzfeldt to make enquiry as to a gradual improvement in Anglo-German relations. Hatzfeldt reported a conversation which he had had with Salisbury in December 1897 in the course of which he had observed that friendliness was not shown by England. This was admitted by Salisbury who, however, pointed out the difficulties represented by the unfriendly tone of the English Press and the disquietude felt by British public opinion on account of Germany's commercial rivalry. Under these circumstances he felt that any attempt to force the pace would be prejudicial to the course which they were pursuing and he begged Hatzfeldt to be patient. Hatzfeldt pointed out that there would hardly be an improvement until the British Government did something to explain to the country the advantage which it would derive from the friendly relations with the German Empire. When Hatzfeldt further stated that he believed the British Cabinet was divided on this question, Salisbury did not attempt to deny the truth of this assumption.¹ On another occasion Salisbury reminded Hatzfeldt of the Kruger telegram. Thus we see that although Germany had been angling for an alliance, England was impervious.

Then suddenly England made an offer of alliance. Brandenburg thinks that the idea did not originate with Salisbury but with a group in the Cabinet led by Chamberlain. This writer continues, "Chamberlain was not in general friendly to Germany, in fact he resented Germany's intervention on behalf of the Boers (1895) but possibly his aggressive policy in South Africa induced him to make overture to Germany. Chamberlain was then aware of the likelihood of a final breach with the Boer States".² Eckardstein says that Cecil Rhodes with Chamberlain first

1 Dugdale, Vol. II p 493. Hatzfeldt Despatch to Hohenlohe Dec. 18th, 1897.

2 Brandenburg p 105.

arranged and encouraged an association by Treaty of England and Germany for all purposes.¹

During February 1898, several confidential interviews took place between Chamberlain and Hatzfeldt. Chamberlain informed Hatzfeldt that a turn had come in the political situation which no longer permitted England to continue her traditional policy of isolation. In his view the British Government would soon be faced with the necessity of making far-reaching decisions, and he believed that it would be able to rely upon the support of public opinion in seeking for alliances which would assist it in maintaining peace.

Very little can be found concerning this negotiation in the official papers but Brandenburg states that Chamberlain brought forward concrete proposals authorized by the Government, that Balfour took part in the negotiation, and that the English proposals were based upon decisions of the Cabinet.² Hammann, Director of the Press Section of the German Foreign Office, concurs.³

The gist of the English proposals was that England could not continue isolation but wanted allies, and that there were no widely divergent interests between the two nations. Germany could support England and England could be ready to support Germany if she were attacked, anything more definite would have to be formulated by treaty. Concessions were to be made to Russia to remove the suspicion of trying to drive Germany into conflict with Russia. Until a general agreement was reached the best thing to do would be to improve relations and prepare public opinion.

Chamberlain, as was characteristic of the man, laid all his cards upon the table and acted like a shrewd business man. The treaty, he admitted, would have to be passed by Parliament, but he had no doubt of its ready acceptance. Balfour seems to have been more sceptical on this point. Chamberlain declared that if this natural alliance between England and Germany were not attained, an understanding with France and Russia was not impossible. But as German statesmen in 1903 at the time of the Anglo-French rapprochement were blind to the real danger, so now

1 Eckardstein p 103.

2 Brandenburg p 105, et. seq.

3 Hammann, German World Policy 1890-1912 p 7, et. seq.

in 1898 they were unable to measure the true purport of these negotiations. They felt that no visible danger was threatening and preferred to listen to the rumbling of their own public opinion which at the moment was hostile to Britain.

It may be true that in Berlin they realized how serious was the decision to be taken. Unfortunately they were strongly impressed, partly by the fear that German public opinion would resent an English alliance¹ and partly by the fear that such an alliance would compromise them with Russia. Bülow felt this would be the case if the British Parliament rejected the treaty. Had not Russia warned Berlin that "the only danger to peace (would be) if we were forced to the conviction that Germany had come to a defensive agreement with England threatening the balance of Power, Russia might feel herself obliged to join with France and strike rapidly at Germany".²

The Emperor appears to have been somewhat sceptical and considered that England's value as an ally was less because of her absorbing interest in Asiatic and African questions to the exclusion of interest in Europe. He thought, however, that the offer of alliance should not be declined outright for fear a rapprochement with France might ensue.

Holstein was afraid of the effect of the adoption of an English policy upon the Triple Alliance. His personal view was that possibility of alliance should only be considered, (1) if Russia threatened Germany, (2) if England showed herself less overbearing.³ No doubt Holstein was prejudiced by his dislike of Lord Salisbury. Salisbury on his part does not appear to have been much in love with the idea of alliance. His past experience led him to believe that Germany's friendship would have to be bought at a high price. The outcome was Bülow's advice to England to renew the old Mediterranean Treaty with Austria and Italy. Chamberlain, however, pointed out the aversion of public opinion in England to Austria's wish to guarantee the maintenance of Turkey.

1 Eckardstein, who was friendly to England and wished the negotiations to succeed, was alive to this difficulty and advised Berlin that public opinion should be re-orientated. (Eckardstein p 105.)

2 Brandenburg p 107.

3 Remarks on Hatzfeldt Despatch Apl. 26th, 1898, quoted by Brandenburg p 108.

On May 18th, 1898, Chamberlain, provoked by the Russian aggressions at Port Arthur, made a speech in which he advocated a German alliance. In the meantime, however, Hatzfeldt could not induce England to come to a definite offer in colonial matters and things came to a standstill. On May 30th the Emperor wrote to the Czar telling him of England's offer and asking what the Czar would offer Germany if he refused. On June 3rd the Czar, glad to foment distrust between Germany and England, replied that he too had received from the latter a written offer of understanding. To German statesmen this seemed to justify their distrust of England and to make them think that they had done wisely. Moreover Salisbury, who in an earlier conversation with Hatzfeldt had treated Chamberlain's speech as a ballon d'essai, now suggested that no treaty be made until necessity arose. He agreed that the task of both governments was to prepare public opinion.¹

In Germany they considered the two alliances and decided in the end that neither was advisable. They considered that in a war in which they would be allied with England against the Dual Alliance, the chief military burden would fall on Germany, whereas if they kept on friendly terms with both England and Russia, Germany would be arbiter.²

Chamberlain, on December 8th, 1898, made a speech at Wakefield in which he summed up the desirability of alliance with Germany, i.e. the alliance of the greatest seapower with the greatest military power. By this he desired to prepare public opinion.

Throughout the negotiations, German statesmen had not responded to Chamberlain's eagerness, and, by the time that the Emperor had at last been brought to give a favourable response to the last proposal from London, the English Government had apparently become doubtful of the possibility of any real success.³ German statesmen failed to grasp the opportunity. Together with the Emperor, they still looked towards a Russian alliance, or more probably as Brandenburg believes, to a position in which they would stand unfettered between the two groups and play the part of arbiter of the

1 Hammann p 97.

2 Brandenburg points out that this policy, which Bulow regarded as retaining for Germany a free hand, in reality harmonized only too well with the Kaiser's already exaggerated idea of Germany's self-sufficiency.
(Brandenburg p 116.)

3 Brandenburg p 120.

world. At least they would wait and see if England would make better offers.¹

In the summer of 1898 Portugal got into financial difficulties and applied to England for help. When Germany got wind that such arrangement might be made she immediately suggested an agreement under which Germany and England should co-operate to the exclusion of the other Powers to make loans to Portugal. Such loans should be secured on the customs of the Portuguese African colonies.

Salisbury did not eye the proposition with approval. He stated bluntly in a despatch that he thought financial arrangements between England and Portugal should concern England only.² Hatzfeldt informed his Foreign Office that the only consideration which Germany would receive would be an intimation from Salisbury that the agreement was complete, a report which evoked from the Emperor the usual marginal tirade against Salisbury.

Not only was Germany working for a share of the loan in England, but she was using all her influence through the German Minister at Lisbon to urge the Portuguese Government not to come to a permanent understanding with England without consent of Germany. After much haggling and threats by the Emperor that he would withdraw his ambassador and seek an understanding with Russia, an agreement was drawn up and signed on August 30th, 1898.

The attitude of Germany is well expressed in a telegram from Bülow to Hatzfeldt on June 22nd, 1898, in which he says in part "For us as well as for England in this matter as in all colonial matters in general, it is an affair not so much of provable rights, but of interests and the power available for establishing these interests if need be But no proof is needed to show that the attitude of Russia and France would change at once if Germany proposed setting in order all African questions including that of Egypt".³

The English attitude is best described in a memorandum. "Germany is pressing us to come to an immediate

1 Brandenburg P 122.

2 Gooch and Temperley, "British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914", Vol. II p 49 No. 67, Salisbury to Gough, June 21st, 1898.

3 Dugdale III p 32.

arrangement with her about Portugal, and she makes the usual more or less covert threats that if we do not do so she will join Russia or France or both of them to our detriment all the world over. The advantages to be secured to Germany by our co-operation are obvious but what are we to obtain that we could not get without her assistance or even in spite of her opposition?"¹

On October 14th, 1899, the (so called) Windsor Treaty was signed by Salisbury and Soveral by which the old Anglo-Portuguese Treaties were confirmed. By these treaties England guaranteed the colonial possessions of Portugal.

Clearly the two Powers held widely diverging aims in the matter of the Portuguese colonies. Great Britain wished to bring Portugal back to a sound financial basis without loss of territory but Germany hoped that Portugal would become further financially embarrassed and that she would be able to foreclose on her share of the colonies. Indeed she went so far as to propose to England that Portugal be informed that the intervention of a "third power" would not be admitted. This would stop Portugal from applying to France. Lord Salisbury called this a wish on the part of Germany "to force the pace of destiny".²

Another cause of friction between Germany and England was Samoa. The islands had been under the joint control of Germany, England and the United States. Troubles over the native succession resulted in a cleavage between the Europeans and the Americans. Germany took one side while England and America sided with the other. The American and English battleships fired on the insurgents, an action which Germany strongly deprecated. It was evident that the three power rule could not continue. Germany wished to gain Samoa for sentimental reasons, but unfortunately the Australian colonies were strongly against cession to Germany. Little progress was made in the negotiations and the Emperor complained bitterly as usual of the treatment which Germany was receiving. In particular he alleged that England was taking the part of the United States authorities in their conflict with the Germans. Hatzfeldt was full of complaints to Salisbury mingled with covered threats of impaired relations. The Emperor yielded to Bülow's suggestion that the German representatives be withdrawn from England if

1 Mem. by Mr. Bertie G. and T. I p 60, Aug. 10th, 1898.

2 G. and T. Vol. I p 74. Balfour to Lascelles, Sept. 1st, 1898, with minute by Lord Salisbury.

England broke the Berlin Treaty with regard to Samoa. After much arguing, and threats on the part of Germany, Salisbury declared himself ready to appoint a commission.

The Emperor was offended by the manner in which Salisbury had conducted the negotiations and took a still deeper dislike to him. This feeling was intensified by his pique at not being invited to London for the eightieth birthday of Queen Victoria, May 24th, 1899. In consequence, the Emperor wrote the Queen a letter of bitter complaint containing various accusations against Lord Salisbury. The Queen replied that the accusations were undeserved, and Salisbury also justified his own conduct in a memorandum which Queen Victoria forwarded to her grandson.¹

In the meantime, Chamberlain and Von Eckardstein had agreed to a compromise by which Germany renounced her share in Samoa in return for compensations elsewhere. Von Tirpitz of the Admiralty section violently opposed this and persuaded the Emperor also to oppose it. The Emperor refused to go to England until the matter was concluded in a manner favourable to Germany.

The British Government accepted a proposal for arbitration by the King of Sweden and Norway for the islands of Upolu and Savaii (part of the Samoa group under dispute) but in the end Germany would only agree on condition that the main points at issue were settled beforehand. Salisbury thought that Germany wanted too much. Hatzfeldt intimated that the friendship of Germany could only be obtained at that price. Salisbury said that he could not judge what measures were to constitute exhibition of friendship or the reverse. He refused to be rushed and insisted upon time for reflection.² Holstein sent an unofficial notification that the Emperor would break with England if no settlement of the Samoa question favourable to Germany was soon made, a threat which only elicited from Salisbury a remark to the Duke of Devonshire that "Germany will have a splendid opportunity of getting rid of all her colonies".³

However the British were by this time expecting a crisis in South Africa and they wished to clear up matters so that the contemplated autumnal visit of the Emperor,

1 Brandenburg p 127.

2 G. and T. Vol I p 125, Salisbury to Lascelles, Oct. 6th, 1899.

3 Eckardstein p 106.

upon which they laid great stress, should take place, so consequently on November 14th, 1899, a treaty was signed by which England renounced her rights in Samoa. United States received the island of Tutuila, Germany received Upolu and Savaii, while England got in exchange the Tongo Islands, part of the Solomon Group, rectification of the boundary of Togo hinterland and the renunciation by Germany of her extra-territorial rights in Zanzibar. There was universal expression of satisfaction in Germany over a settlement which left Upolu and Savaii to Germany.¹

In reviewing these negotiations there is much to support Chamberlain's complaints in conversation with Eckardstein that Germany wanted to make capital of England's embarrassments in South Africa.² The following, written by the German statesman Bülow to the German Foreign Office, sums up the attitude at Berlin: "In view of the ever increasing pressure of the Transvaal crisis, we must not let it appear as though we desire to exploit for ourselves the difficulties of the British whether actual or presumed. As a matter of fact, however, we should be blamed for lack of diplomatic skill if we did not now obtain a satisfactory settlement of the questions outstanding between ourselves and England, especially that of Samoa.³ There is no doubt but that in the future English statesmen remembered these little incidents and that Germany paid a heavy reckoning for the harvest of distrust and suspicion which her policy had created.

A long period of friction as to the political standing of the Uitlanders led in 1899 to an outbreak of war between the English and the Dutch of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Public opinion all over the continent, with scarcely an exception, was against England and she was shocked when she awoke to find herself isolated. In Germany, no less than in France and Russia, public opinion was strongly pro-Boer. In the words of Hatzfeldt, "public opinion here (England) holds Germany responsible for President Kruger's present unwillingness to fall in with England's requirements. Irritation against Germany is for this reason generally prevalent here and is shown even today on every

1 G. and T. I p 130, Gough to Salisbury, Nov. 11th, 1899.

2 Dugdale III p 68 XIV 637, Hatzfeldt to G.F.O., Sept. 20th, 1899.

3 Dugdale III p 69 XV 395, Bülow to G.F.O., Sept. 21st, 1899.

occasion and particularly in the Press whenever this question is discussed."¹ The Emperor in his usual marginal notes before the outbreak of war showed sympathy with the Boers and distrust of Salisbury.² When, however, Hatzfeldt informed the German Foreign Office that the Boers wished to secure the presence of Russian, French, and German consuls on the proposed commission to settle the point at issue between the Boers and England in the Transvaal, the Emperor remarked in a foot note, "We keep out of it. Let the Hague Peace Conference step in".³ By his visit at the outbreak of hostilities he left the authorities in London in no doubt as to the benevolent attitude of official Germany. There was some difficulty over the inclusion in the Emperor's suite of Admiral Senden who was disliked by the Prince of Wales and it is significant of the tenseness of the situation that this incident nearly sufficed to prevent the visit. The matter, however, was smoothed over by Eckardstein.

Throughout the war the German Press attacked England and particularly the conduct of the English soldiers. The German officials did little to stop this. Great excitement was caused in Germany by the stoppage of German mail steamers, particularly of the Bundesrath which was taken to a prize court at Durban. Very strong representations were made in London and a demand was issued for a guarantee against repetition of such seizure. The tone of the demands offended Salisbury but finally he set the liner at liberty and gave the required guarantee. Eckardstein says that the two Powers were within a hairsbreadth of a rupture. The sending of an ultimatum was at one time considered in Berlin.⁴ Bülow expressed himself in harsh terms in the Reichstag with regard to the stopping of the steamers.

During the progress of the war there were several attempts to bring about European intervention. Germany, however refused to act upon the Russian suggestion of intervention unless "a settlement in which all contracting Powers mutually guaranteed their European states for a long term of years"⁵ were agreed upon. This naturally at once blocked

1 Dugdale Vol. II p 475, Hatzfeldt despatch to Chancellor Hohenlohe, April 22nd, 1897.

2 Dugdale Vol. III p 89.

3 Dugdale Vol. III p 91.

4 Eckardstein was informed by the British Foreign Office that a German Admiral with an ultimatum was expected. Eckardstein considered the incident one of Holstein's bluffs. (Eckardstein, page 160.)

5 Brandenburg p 148.

the negotiations for France would never agree to such a guarantee. Russia again was always trying to make trouble by suggesting to England that Berlin was making efforts to get Russia and France to intervene in favor of the Boers.

On November 29th, 1899, the Emperor, accompanied by Bülow, visited England, the visit lasting eight days. During this time Chamberlain explained his scheme for an alliance with Germany which was to include the U.S.A. Balfour discussed with Bülow the future of Austria Hungary. Undoubtedly the Emperor was influenced by Chamberlain but he had been advised by his diplomatists to hold back and wait. In an interview with Bülow, Chamberlain frankly said that England wanted Germany and that Germany might come to want England. In a lengthy communication Bülow describes the conversations. He gives an interesting characterization of the English people considered socially as well as politically. But Bülow failed to grasp the significance of the occasion and concluded with the reflection that "Germany's future task will be, whilst possessing a strong fleet and maintaining good relations on the side of Russia as well as of England, to await the further development of events patiently and collectedly".¹

As a result of his conversations with Bülow, Chamberlain was encouraged to air his views in public. In a speech at Leicester on November 29th, 1899, he took the opportunity of developing his programme of an alliance, or at least an understanding with Germany and America. His speech was received with considerable hostility in Germany, so much so that when Bülow spoke in the Reichstag on the naval laws of December 11th, he spoke with marked coldness of Germany's relations with England.² He advised Chamberlain through Eckardstein that this was merely a matter of tactics and that his desire for an understanding remained as before. This was the first of two occasions on which Bülow was to offend the English statesman and eventually force him to the idea of a French alliance. In his letter of December 28th Chamberlain observes, "I will say no more of Bülow's treatment, but in any case I think we must drop all further negotiations in the question of an alliance".³

The question arises: What was the extent of Chamberlain's support in England in his attempts to form an

1 Dugdale Vol. III p 108 XV 413, Nov. 24th, 1899.

2 Brandenburg p 139.

3 Eckardstein p 151.

understanding? The British State papers give little guidance as to the answer. Bülow quotes Chamberlain as saying that "Lord Salisbury did not wish for an alliance with Germany, because he did not want to bind himself at all. Lord Salisbury wished for an alliance with Germany no more than with France or Russia; he was a very cautious statesman, and believed it best to keep his hands free. Mr. Balfour was more inclined to the view that a general understanding with Germany would suit British interests".¹ Hatzfeldt, German Ambassador, thought that Chamberlain's expression of his views in public, showed his belief that he had most of the cabinet behind him in the matter, and also that he considered that the moment had come to accustom the British public to the novel idea of a Continental alliance. There is no evidence that Chamberlain was trying to turn Lord Salisbury out of office or even that he would succeed. Salisbury should the latter be forced to retire. "With all this in consideration I am not disinclined to assume that when Mr. Chamberlain made his speech about the alliance, he already had Lord Salisbury's consent to it in principle in his pocket, or else was convinced that - as in the Samoan question - with the help of a majority of his colleagues he would succeed in persuading the Prime Minister to accede to his wishes".²

It is doubtful whether Chamberlain had the backing which Hatzfeldt assumes to have been his. It is not likely that Salisbury would have been very much enamoured of the project. We know from his later opinion that he did not believe an alliance between the two countries was possible. He had been annoyed by the German attitude and unofficial threats during the various negotiations over Samoa, the Portuguese colonies, and during the Bundesrath incident. Moreover he still believed that isolation for Britain was not so bad as it appeared. Nor does he appear to have been really afraid of a rupture with Germany. That he gave way more for the sake of peace than for fear of the consequences, is proved by the following remarks which he made to Eckardstein, "If there had been a rupture of relations between us last January (over the Bundesrath incident) 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".³

1 Dugdale Vol. III p 108 XV 413.

2 Dugdale Vol. III p 114 XV 424, Count Hatzfeldt to Hohenlohe, Dec. 2nd, 1899.

3 Eckardstein p 161.

Germany had long desired a footing in China and in 1897 she seized the harbour of Kiao-chau, on the excuse that two German missionaries having been murdered, it was necessary to protect the Christians. The event was advertised by the Emperor in a speech about the "mailed fist". Russia grudgingly gave her consent. Salisbury had no objection to a German occupation of Kiao-chau if it were not in the English sphere, but he complained of the manner in which it had been carried out. As a result of the German action Russia seized Port Arthur, forcing England to form a base at Wei-hai-wei. In 1900 the Boxer Riots broke out. A combined force was sent by the Great Powers for its suppression. The Emperor greatly desired to see his favourite Field Marshall Count Waldersee in command of this force and his desire was fulfilled by means of the usual questionable strategy. In this way he hoped to see realized the imperial words which he had spoken on July 4th, 1900, "The sea is indispensable for Germany's greatness. But the sea proves also that no longer can important decisions upon it or far beyond it be made without the German Emperor".¹ It was by speeches such as this that he succeeded in alarming public opinion in England and in making more difficult those negotiations which were shortly to occupy the political stage.

¹ Hammann p 96.

4. THE ATTEMPTED AGREEMENT OF 1901

On November 12th, 1900, Lord Lansdowne succeeded Lord Salisbury as British Foreign Secretary. Lord Salisbury retained the Premiership and a decisive influence in the direction of foreign policy. Lord Lansdowne, during his first years as Foreign Secretary, was friendly towards Germany. One of his first acts was to write to Sir F. Lascelles, Ambassador at Berlin, and state, "we should use every effort to maintain and, if we can, to strengthen the good relations which at present exist between the Queen's Government and that of the Emperor".¹

In January Eckardstein was invited by the Duchess of Devonshire to Chatsworth to discuss political questions with the Duke and Chamberlain. The English statesmen stated that England could no longer continue her splendid isolation but must look around for allies. They preferred Germany, but if an alliance with Germany was not possible then they must turn to the Dual alliance. Hatzfeldt, to whom the matter was communicated, reported to Berlin but there the overture was received with the same distrust as its predecessors. The Emperor, who visited England in January 1901 and who was informed by Eckardstein of the Chatsworth conversation, took a more favourable view, but he was advised by Bülow not to be too premature. The Emperor took advantage of the opportunity to have conversations on important political matters with King Edward and Lord Lansdowne but he left without committing himself. Moreover, when he returned to Berlin he soon fell under the influence of the Anglophobes in his entourage.

In March Eckardstein, who was acting Ambassador during the illness of Hatzfeldt, approached Lansdowne on the subject of an Anglo-German defensive alliance.² Lansdowne himself was not very optimistic. "I doubt whether much will come of this It would oblige us to adopt in all our foreign relations a policy which would be no longer British but Anglo-German".³ To Berlin Eckardstein reported the

1 Newton - Lord Lansdowne - A Biography, p 197.

2 G. and T. Vol. II p 60 No. 77, Lansdowne to Lascelles, March 18th, 1901. c.f. Brandenburg who says Lansdowne asked definite question whether it would be possible to draw up a defensive alliance for a long term between England and Germany (Brandenburg p 160.)

Eckardstein however admits that he gave Lansdowne a hint. (Eckardstein p 207.)

3 Lansdowne p 200, Lansdowne to Lascelles, March 18th, 1901.

approach as coming from Lansdowne. Holstein and Bülow considered that there should be two groups, the Triple Alliance and England with her colonies, and that each should engage to defend the other if attacked by more than one power. Holstein wanted to transfer the negotiations to Vienna and pressed Eckardstein to bring forward this point of view, but the latter was reluctant to do so because he felt that the British Government would take it as a sign that Berlin was not taking the alliance seriously. When Eckardstein, yielding to pressure, at last made this proposal to Lansdowne he was informed that this was a much more serious matter. Until then Lansdowne had understood that the arrangement was to be between Germany and England alone, and this new proposal would be decidedly more difficult of realization. In May, Count Hatzfeldt again put forward the views of Berlin, emphasizing the necessity of England joining the Triple Alliance.

Lansdowne wished to obtain a written statement from Eckardstein, and also proposed that both Hatzfeldt and he should commit to paper the draft of a treaty which would provide a solid basis for discussion, but Hatzfeldt had been forbidden to put anything in writing. However in May 1901 a Draft convention was drawn up by Sir T. H. Sanderson of the British Foreign Office and submitted to Lord Salisbury. Salisbury still held to his policy of isolation and pointed out that the practical effects of the proposals were that England should join the Triple Alliance and he thought that the liability of having to defend the German and Austrian frontiers against Russia was heavier than that of having to defend the British Isles against France. But the weightiest objection in his opinion was that neither the English nor the Germans were competent to make the suggested promises. As regards England he stated, "The British Government cannot undertake to declare war for any purpose unless it is a purpose of which the electors of this country would approve. If the Government promised to declare war for an object which did not commend itself to public opinion, the promise would be repudiated and the Government would be turned out". As regards Germany, "A promise of defensive alliance with England would excite bitter murmurs in every rank of German society, if we may trust the indications of German sentiment, which we have had an opportunity of witnessing during the last two years".¹

During a discussion with Hatzfeldt, Lansdowne remarked that Salisbury no longer had any objection to a defensive alliance with Germany but that he objected to the

¹ G. and T. Vol. II p 68.

inclusion of Austria and Italy. In Berlin, however, they still held that an alliance could only be thought of on condition that the Triple Alliance should be liable for service in the defence of the entire colonial Empire of Britain against two attacking powers and England be liable to defend any one member of the Triple Alliance attacked by two great powers. Consequently in June Chamberlain wrote to Alfred Rothschild, "If they are so shortsighted and cannot see that it is a question of the rise of a new constellation in the world they are beyond help".¹

On October 25th Chamberlain, whose resentment had been aroused by the tone of the German Press, made a speech at Edinburgh in which he replied to the aspersions cast upon the conduct of the British troops in South Africa by saying that the deeds of the English could be favourably compared with the deeds of other nations, among them those of the Germans in 1870. This aroused a storm of fury in Germany and Bülow sarcastically took Chamberlain to task in the Reichstag, "Let him alone, he is only biting granite".² Count Metternich, the new German Ambassador in London even made an unsuccessful attempt to get Chamberlain to make a public apology. In spite of Metternich's non-success, Bülow had the assurance to state that he had received full satisfaction with regard to Mr. Chamberlain's Edinburgh speech. Whereupon Lansdowne threatened if pressed upon the subject to submit the despatches to Parliament.

This incident was a serious blow to the negotiations which had dragged on until the autumn. In November, Lansdowne, in a memorandum, whilst not quite agreeing with Lord Salisbury, indicates some of the difficulties which he saw in the way of a full blown defensive alliance with Germany. They were in brief: the impossibility of arriving at a definition of the *casus foederis*; the certainty of alienating France and Russia; possible complications with the colonies; risk of England entangling herself in a policy which might be hostile to America (a most formidable obstacle); the difficulty of carrying Parliament. "In these circumstances," he goes on to say, "I regard it as out of the question that we should entertain the German overture in the form in which it was presented by Count Hatzfeldt".³

1 Brandenburg p 172.

2 Hammann p 144.

3 G. and T. Vol. II p 76, Mem. by Lansdowne, November 11th, 1901.

On December 19th Metternich and Lansdowne discussed the matter of alliance again. Lord Lansdowne reviewed the negotiations and stated the conclusions at which the British Government had arrived. These were to the effect that it would be difficult to persuade Parliament to pass such an agreement, and that the temper of the two countries was not in a favorable state. Consequently English statesmen could not see their way to assent to the German proposal but they were willing to arrive at an understanding with regard to particular questions or particular parts of the world. Metternich unhesitatingly stated that with his government it was a case of the whole or none. Lansdowne closed by saying that, "if for the moment we regarded the object which the German Government had in view as unattainable, we had come to this conclusion, not because we regarded the offer with indifference but on account of practical difficulties..."¹

On December 27th, Lascelles announced in Berlin that King Edward still desired close co-operation with Germany but a formal treaty of alliance would undoubtedly meet with opposition in Parliament."² At an unofficial dinner at Marlborough House on February 8th, 1902, Chamberlain, referring to Bülow's speech, said "Now I have had enough of such treatment and there can be no more question of an association between Great Britain and Germany".³ It was at the same dinner that Eckardstein overheard a conversation between Chamberlain and Cambon, the French Ambassador, in which the words "Morocco" and "Egypt" were used. He knew then that Chamberlain had definitely gone over to the idea of an arrangement with the Dual Alliance.

As to whether the Emperor was fully informed during the progress of the negotiations, there seems to be some divergence of opinion. Eckardstein, who had an interview with the Emperor on February 26th, 1902, says that the Kaiser declared he knew nothing of negotiations for alliance in the spring of 1901.⁴ Brandenburg thinks this statement rests on defective knowledge and that the Emperor was informed in a general way.⁵ Hammann, while stating that it

1 G. and T. Vol. II p 80 No. 94, Draft of despatch to Lascelles, Dec. 19th, 1901.

2 Brandenburg p 173.

3 Eckardstein p 229.

4 Eckardstein p 231.

5 Brandenburg p 171.

appeared from the German documents that few papers had been submitted to the Emperor by the German Foreign Office, maintains that the Emperor was informed verbally and by letter.¹

Another incident must be related which occurred during the negotiations for an alliance. This incident illustrates the difficulties with which those who were trying to further the negotiations had to contend. On October 16th, 1900, the Yangtse Treaty was signed between England and Germany by which the two Powers agreed to the principles of free trade for all the Chinese territory so far as they were able to exercise influence. Unfortunately Manchuria was omitted by the express wish of Bülow. In March 1901, owing to Russian aggression in Manchuria there arose a difference of opinion as to the interpretation of this treaty. The English interpretation was that the treaty included all China. Bülow, however, in a speech in the Reichstag, declared that Manchuria was not included in the agreement. Obviously Germany was determined not to come into conflict with Russia over Eastern affairs, and the words "as far as they can exercise influence", were inserted for the purpose of excluding Manchuria. Brandenburg considers this a sign that no real confidence existed between the two nations. They viewed each other with suspicion and attributed evil motives to every small difference.

This habit on the part of Bismarck's successors of over-rating Russia and under-rating England, partly accounts for the fact that German foreign policy was never consistent but was subject to baffling changes. German statesmen were constantly oppressed by the fear of a war on two fronts. They forgot that any alliance or understanding with England would have at least kept the Island Empire from siding with France and Russia. In reality Bülow never seems to have favoured an alliance with England. He still clung to the idea of a League of the Three Emperors, and, as the Manchuria incident shows, was determined not to offend Russia. Both he and the Emperor seemed to have overlooked the ultimate difficulty of being on really good terms both with Russia and with Austria. Moreover, Bülow held to the opinion that England was not free in her choice of allies and that she would be forced to turn again to Germany, in which case the latter could exact higher terms. This fundamental mistake accounts for the coolness with which German statesmen viewed the negotiations and the insistence upon conditions which could never be accepted by England. Partly

¹ Hammann p 113.

again, the inconsistency must be put down to the idiosyncrasies of Holstein. This official, who undoubtedly exercised a strong influence over German foreign policy, at heart probably thought that an alliance with England was natural for Germany but he was strongly influenced by his prejudices, most particularly by his dislike for Lord Salisbury. Repeatedly he expressed the opinion that no alliance was possible whilst Salisbury remained in power. When news of the Second Portuguese Treaty (the so called Windsor Treaty) came to the ears of German statesmen Holstein was furious. He felt that he had been tricked and was determined never to be so tricked again. "With these people," he exclaimed to one of his secretaries, "it is impossible to enter into any engagement".¹ Such incidents caused him to favor the policy of "two irons", i.e. friendly relations with both Russia and England.

As for the Emperor, he was constantly in communication with Czar Nicholas of Russia and he still toyed with his ideal of a Continental alliance, of which Germany should be the leading partner, an alliance impossible of realization unless Germany were prepared to restore to France her lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Moreover, Germany was committed to Russia more than she realized. The Emperor had promised the Czar, when the latter unfolded his "Far Eastern" plans, to cover his rear. Brandenburg says, "Since 1895, our whole policy was dependent on the stability of Russia's position in the Far East. We (Germany) were bound to Russia by an invisible chain. An alliance with England might easily have brought us into violent conflict with the Kaiser's commitments."² Frequently the Emperor was encouraged by his advisers to take the attractive view that Germany held the balance of power. In any conflict between the Dual Alliance and England, Germany would be the arbiter. It was not the British fleet but the twenty-two German Army Corps that were the balance of power, the Emperor told the wondering Lansdowne, who confessed later to Eckardstein that he had not understood what the Emperor had meant.³

Part of the hesitation and oscillation in Berlin was due to the fact that British policy or lack of policy was not understood by German statesmen. When Hatzfeldt complained to Sanderson, British Under-Secretary of State,

1 Nicolson - Lord Carnock, p 128.

2 Brandenburg p 175.

3 Eckardstein p 194.

that after a talk with Salisbury he could not understand the policy of the British Government, Sanderson replied "that he ought to know that we had not got a policy, and worked from hand to mouth". Salisbury, to whom one of these outbursts of Hatzfeldt's was reported, said, "I had no idea that our conversation had such far-reaching objects, yet you might tell Hatzfeldt that with a parliamentary regime like ours, it is impossible to pledge the Government as to the course it will take in case of some future emergency".¹ This only made the German Government suspicious and gave grounds for Bülow's favourite theory that England always made other nations pull the chestnuts out of the fire for her. It caused the Germans to doubt the sincerity of English statesmen.

But if the apparent lack of policy on the part of England was irritating to Germany, equally disagreeable to England was the system of compensations followed by Holstein. For each friendly act performed by Germany, adequate compensations were to be secured. Often the price was out of all proportion to the service rendered. "You want too much for your friendship",² was the complaint of Salisbury. Coupled with this were the interminable threats with which Germany accompanied any negotiations. In settling the matters of Samoa, China, and the Portuguese colonies, England was paying not for German support, but for the privilege that the German threats were not pushed. It is possible that Germany's success in those years was fatal later on because she came to feel that the policy of limited threats was yielding the profits of war without risk. German statesmen failed to realize the magnitude of the negotiations for an alliance. They persisted in ruining the efforts of their representatives in England and in discouraging English statesmen by introducing matters which were of no great importance. They insisted, to the usual accompaniment of threats, on the settlement of these small matters often when the claims were unreasonable.³ Naturally this had the effect of stopping for the time the main negotiations for an alliance and of increasing the distrust felt by English statesmen. This distrust is clearly shown in a memorandum

1 G. and T. Vol. II p 87, No. 98.

2 Brandenburg p 109.

3 During the negotiations of 1901 Berlin demanded immediate settlement of claims for compensation made by Germans who had suffered loss in South Africa owing to the war. Many of these claims were extravagant. (Eckardstein p 212 et. seq.)

written by Mr. Bertie of the British Foreign Office on November 9th, 1901, in which he says, "in considering offers of alliance from Germany it is necessary to remember the history of Prussia as regards alliance and the conduct of the Bismarck Government in making a treaty with Russia concerning and behind the back of Austria, an ally of Germany".¹ In the same memorandum he shows that British statesmen were well aware that Germany was in a dangerous position and was doing all in her power by intrigues to increase the antagonism between England and the Dual Alliance.

How far was the failure due to the personal equation and how far was it due to representative tendencies in the two countries outside of the statesmen concerned? We have already seen the dislike and the distrust with which the Emperor and Holstein viewed Lord Salisbury and that Lord Salisbury himself did not consider an alliance possible. But would the alliance have matured in the absence of the prejudice with which certain of the statesmen viewed each other? In the first place public opinion in Germany, as before stated, was decidedly anti-British. The German press showered abuse on the English during the Boer War, and, as no effort seems to have been made by the Government to control it, the Press doubtless reflected the spirit of the people. In the opinion of one German writer, "The failure of arriving at such a solution (Anglo-German understanding) was probably caused - apart from personal motives - by the fact that in Germany the spirit of compromise was not a predominant one, but that its place was taken by an exaggerated opinion of the country's own strength, combined with a certain ignorance regarding foreign countries".²

While the question of the German navy played no part in the negotiations, yet the introduction by Admiral Tirpitz in 1897 of his first Navy Bill which created the German High Sea Fleet, and the proclamation less than a year later by the Emperor that the future of Germany lay upon the water, alarmed public opinion in England. "The British Press from that moment, behaved with constant irresponsibility."³ Probably the absence of any first class well-defined problem in Anglo-German relations partly accounts for the difficulty of deflecting this atmosphere of distrust created by the expanding German navy. In the case of the

1 G. and T. Vol. II p 73.

2 Hulderman's Ballin p 134.

3 Nicolson - Lord Carnock, p 126.

Anglo-French Entente, there were definite problems to solve, and solved problems react in friendliness.

Furthermore, there was the fundamental divergences as to the form of the proposed alliance. The Germans wanted an agreement drawn up which would provide for all eventualities. Professor Brandenburg says, "This rigid adherence to the written word blocked our (German) outlook into the world of facts".¹ Germany also demanded that England should join the Triple Alliance, and that the agreement should be sanctioned by Parliament, which latter proviso would have been exceedingly difficult to bring about. On the other hand the English wished a general understanding by which all outstanding difficulties would be cleared up, and public opinion educated to the idea of an alliance so that each nation would come to look upon the other as a natural ally upon whom they could depend in an emergency. It was an agreement of this kind which was eventually formulated between England and France, and afterwards with Russia. Paper alliances do not count so much as the attitudes of peoples. But in Berlin they could not see this, partly because they were afraid that England would leave them in the lurch as soon as her interests were served, and partly because they thought that in the end England would be forced to turn to them again. Even when King Edward visited Paris in 1903, Bülow still held to the opinion that they could hardly take things too coolly, and Holstein still described the possibility of an understanding between France and England as humbug - a figment of the imagination.

A further factor against an alliance was the feeling prevalent among English statesmen that England and Germany would not be able to work together. It was felt in England that should she have a formal alliance with Germany, she would be obliged to subordinate her policy to that of Germany. Should England act independently she might be told that she was creating a situation likely to lead to an attack by France and Russia which would necessitate Germany, without sufficient cause, taking up arms in the defense of England. Germany on the other hand might bring on a war in which England was not greatly interested. Discussion on these questions would doubtless cause endless bickerings and possibly end in open quarrel. Moreover, Germany's unconcealed ambition to be a strong seapower, and her desire for coaling stations which could only be taken from other Powers, would doubtless soon have caused uneasiness in England. It is also doubtful whether Germany, with the personalities at her head, would have abandoned the tortuous policy which she had followed

1 Brandenburg p 181.

during the later years. In any case the Emperor would have been intolerable as an ally.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that it was against the traditional policy of England to support the strongest military power on the continent. Her instinct of self preservation had caused her to put forth every effort in order to bring about the downfall of Napoleon. She felt that should any power gain the hegemony in Europe and be able to bring about a Continental Alliance, her own position would become intolerable. In order to prevent this she must ever come to the aid of the weakest Powers, and it was undoubtedly this policy that was largely responsible for her entry into the World War. Obviously such reasoning would have its due weight with English statesmen when considering an Anglo-German Alliance.

The non-success of these negotiations led to a change in the direction of English policy, the founding of the Entente, and to the World War. Looking back we see but slight chance that the issue could have been otherwise. There was too great a clash of personalities and too many divergent tendencies and interests in the two countries for an alliance to materialize. English and German policy failed to harmonize. German policy lacked vision and was too unstable, too bureaucratic, and too full of the sharp practices which alarmed English statesmen. English policy was broad and placid and was influenced greatly by the tradition so well expressed by Salisbury in his proud remark to Metternich, "England's security depends not so much on alliances as on her chalk cliffs and her navy".¹

1 Hammann p 113.

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