

## THE PROBLEM OF MOROCCO

ON April 8, 1904, France and Great Britain signed an Agreement, by the first article of which the latter Power pledged herself not to alter the political status of Egypt, while the former undertook not to hamper the action of England in that country by asking her to fix a term to the British occupation, or in any other manner. By the second article France declared that she had no intention of changing the political status of Morocco, while the British Government on its side recognised that it devolved upon the Republic, as the Power marching with Morocco along an immense frontier, to watch over its tranquillity, and to carry out all necessary financial, administrative, and military reforms. On October 3 of the same year, France and Spain, the Powers respectively interested in Algeria and Morocco (Spain having formally expressed her adherence to the Anglo-French Agreement concerning Egypt and Morocco), declared themselves in favour of the integrity of the Moroccan Empire under the sovereignty of the Sultan.

There were several interpellations in the French Parliament that autumn upon these two international Agreements, as also upon the Convention concerning Newfoundland and French possessions in West and Central Africa. During these debates, and to some extent ever since, there has been a confusion of issues, and a legend has grown up that France was duped (*fit un marché de dupe*) in exchanging such valuable and solid assets as Egypt and Newfoundland for such a mere mirage as Morocco. Although it seems hardly worth while to confute such nonsense, it may be as well to clear up the doubts of those who sincerely desire to know the facts. In conceding full liberty of action to the British Government in Egypt, France surrendered absolutely nothing. We simply recognised a *fait accompli*, which neither we nor any other Power were in a position to alter. Our eviction from Egypt was admittedly one of the greatest misfortunes ever sustained by French diplomacy, but it dates from nearly thirty years before the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904. We

began to lose Egypt in 1875, when our Government refused to buy, and thus enabled the British to acquire, the 196,000 Suez Canal shares offered us by the Khedive; secondly, when Gambetta agreed to that partition of influence and administration with England known as the Condominium; thirdly, when later on, at the instigation of England, M. Waddington caused the Khedive Ismail to be deposed; and, finally, when, on July 11, 1882, France stood aside and allowed the English to land troops at Alexandria unaccompanied by our troops. Ever since those fateful blunders the British conquest of Egypt has progressed year by year until events had passed beyond our control, and all we could do was to remind Great Britain of her undertaking to evacuate that country at a given date. But even had this obligation been politically practicable, France would have gained nothing from its fulfilment, because, even had England evacuated Egypt, Europe would not have allowed us to resume our former privileged position. Egypt would have been neutralised, and in all likelihood Germany and Italy would have become its chief exploiters. Our traditional diplomatic claims, together with the rights pertaining to the *Caisse de la Dette*, were admittedly of appreciable value to England, upon whom they were an incubus, but they were of no value to France, and in relinquishing them we simply abandoned what was not worth preserving.

Newfoundland is another story. There undoubtedly we had definite and valuable privileges, dating from the Treaty of Utrecht, which we relinquished in 1904, not to England, however, but to the Newfoundlanders, simply because it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain them. When France signed the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Newfoundland contained some two or three thousand inhabitants, whose interests were in no way injured by the rights acquired by our fishermen on a vast shore where the scattered local population was scarcely visible. But during the last two hundred years the population of Newfoundland has risen to 250,000 people, who wish to be masters of their shores and their waters, just as we are masters of ours. There always comes a time when natural law replaces written law. In refusing to accede to the legitimate and urgent claims of the Newfoundlanders, France would inevitably have provoked a conflict, not only with England, but also with the United States, who would have invoked the Monroe Doctrine against us. Written law was on our side, but justice was on the side of Newfoundland, and we have no alternative but to approve a solution which satisfied

the Newfoundlanders without inflicting serious damage on the French cod-fishers.

What sacrifices, it may be asked, did England make in exchange for our sacrifices, and what advantages did France derive from the transaction? In the first place, England conceded to us a similar liberty of action in Morocco as we had conceded to her in Egypt, and though the sacrifice on either side was slight, there was both a distinction and a difference. As I have already explained, we surrendered nothing worth keeping in Egypt, whereas in Morocco England abandoned an assured position of considerable potentiality. At the moment she possessed greater influence than any other Power in Morocco. Her diplomacy dominated the Sultan and his Government, while Englishmen held the principal confidential posts in the military and civil administration, and England might have exploited the situation to our disadvantage. But under the Agreement of April 8, 1904, she withdrew in our favour, and has loyally accomplished her voluntary undertaking.

Many Frenchmen do not and will not understand French policy in Morocco, which they regard as an inaccessible, impenetrable, forbidding country, inhabited by an impossible people, whose energies are absorbed in domestic strife, save when they are united by their common hatred of the foreigner. Such critics regard it as an inconceivable folly on our part to have put our hand into such a hornet's nest. They should remember, however, that the Morocco problem has been with us ever since our conquest of Algeria made us the neighbours of that turbulent community along a frontier of 1200 kilometres, and forced upon France the double obligation of watching over the peace of Morocco and of seeing that it did not become the prey of any third party. Sixty years' experience has taught us the close similarity between these adjoining populations and their mutual interdependence. When Morocco is disturbed, Algeria is restless; and the chronic anarchy in which the Sherifian Empire has been plunged for many years, especially since the accession of the new Sultan, constitutes a daily danger to our Colony, which, be it remembered, contains about 360,000 Frenchmen to 4,000,000 natives, who are of the same race and the same religion as the Moroccan people, with the same tastes, the same customs, and the same gifts as neighbours whose happiness consists in perpetual insurrection. We might at any moment learn that under the impulse of a holy war, starting over the border and spreading over the border, the entire French population of

Algeria, as well as the work, sacrifices, and the progress of two generations, had been swept away.

These are contingencies to be guarded against at all costs, and it was, above all, to prevent them that France undertook, under the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, to become responsible for the peace of Morocco, which involved the right to police the common frontier; but it did not involve, as has been mischievously suggested, any military conquest, nor was it any usurpation of the sovereignty of the Sultan. In order to colour their suspicions, the Germans invented the notion that France intended to "Tunisify" Morocco. That was a gross misrepresentation. No Frenchman contemplates any such adventure, for the simple reason that the game would not be worth the candle.

But our maintenance of law and order necessarily promotes French credit and French commerce. It is not for nothing that we are the nearest neighbours of Morocco. According to the statistics recently given to the Chamber of Deputies by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 1905, out of the total trade of Morocco, 78,642,293 francs, France had 46 per cent., whereas Germany only held 9 per cent. In 1906 the total trade of Morocco had risen to 84,526,964 francs, French trade having risen to 50 per cent., while German trade had sunk to 8 per cent. These figures afford eloquent evidence of our preponderant and privileged position, which even Germany has not disputed. It is only logical and fair that the French Government should promote our moral and material interests by every legitimate endeavour. We undertook the police duties with this very object, which was epigrammatically described as "peaceful penetration," a consummation devoutly to be wished for; and be it remembered such pacification, under the auspices of France, would be equally advantageous to other nations, who enjoy equality of opportunity at the ports and on the railways. It is not less important for a German merchant in Morocco than for a French merchant to live in peace and security. Something more, however, was required than the defence of our Algerian dominions against the contagion of adjoining anarchy. It was equally necessary to uphold the territorial integrity of Morocco against the ambitions and usurpations of third parties. The Sherifian Empire is one of the most enviable countries in the world, owing to its incomparable geographical position and to its marvellous opulence. It is a hundred times more valuable than Egypt or Algeria, and it was a particularly desirable object, to which Great Britain, *e.g.*, might fairly entertain pretensions on

account of her acquired position. But, as we have seen, she abandoned them under her Agreement with us. Italy, who at one time cast longing eyes upon Morocco, had been induced to divert her ambitions towards Tripoli. German designs were more formidable, as she possesses the essential attributes of a great colonising Power, viz., overflowing industrial abundance, and a prolific people requiring outlets. But unfortunately for her, she started late in the colonial race, and found that the choicest places on the planet had been already appropriated.

One alone remained, viz., Morocco, and Morocco consequently became the objective of her intrigues, which, however, were in the first instance so discreet as to escape notice in France, in spite of the fact that a constant stream of geographers, travellers, bagmen, and professors had been strenuously educating their countrymen to look upon Morocco as a future German colony, while divers active associations urged the Imperial Government to embark on a forward policy. On this point we find significant evidence in the Yellow Book (*i.e.*, the French Blue Book) published in 1905, in two communications sent by the French Ambassador in Berlin, M. Bihourd, to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, which happened to synchronise with Anglo-French negotiations concerning Morocco. The first was an address from a Pan-German gathering held at Esslingen, appealing to the Imperial Government to turn the existing situation to the economic advantage of Germany in Morocco, which was described as not only a colonisable country, but also as affording "an invaluable *point d'appui* for our fleet on one of the greatest ocean highways"; the petitioners pleaded that their Government should create a German sphere of influence in Western Morocco, indicating, various places which might be profitably occupied, on the useful precedent of Kiao-chau in China. M. Bihourd also forwarded a report of a meeting of the German Colonial Society at Stettin, which called upon the Government *inter alia* to insist that, in the event of any change in the *status quo* in Morocco in favour of France, Germany should receive compensations at least equal to any increase of French power, "compensations corresponding at once to the importance of her [*i.e.*, Germany's] economic interests, to the needs of her fleet for coaling-stations, and to the necessity of her people to expand." At this gathering Count Pfeill declared that the German Empire had still an opportunity of laying hands on a country where the German settler could prosper, and he emphasised the desirability of diverting to Morocco the thirty-two thousand emigrants who now annually sought their fortunes

in the United States, while, like every other Colonial "stalwart," he dwelt on the importance of Morocco from the German maritime standpoint. A few days later there was a similar demonstration at Lübeck. Such addresses and exhortations were not lost upon the Berlin Government (if it had not prompted them), which had repeatedly endeavoured to extort a coaling-station from Morocco, unsuccessfully; however, as the Maghzen had steadily set its face against foreign encroachment. Germany would have been only too delighted to repeat the episode of Kiaochau by seizing what was denied her, had not the refusal of Morocco been backed by the support of England, for very intelligible reasons. What was not, however, feasible at the moment might become more feasible later on. If Germany could once succeed in securing a footing in Morocco, and in directing her emigrants to that country, she might hope in less than twenty years to create a formidable German colony alongside of Algeria.

Against this alarming possibility a solid bulwark was erected by the Anglo-French and Franco-Spanish Agreements of 1904, which were negotiated between the three Powers without reference to other Governments. The Yellow Book barely mentions the conversation between the German Ambassador in Paris, Prince Radolin, and M. Delcassé. The Agreement of April 8 was published a few days later in the *Journal Officiel*, without formal notification to other Powers, a proceeding for which there was no necessity, as it exclusively concerned the interests and rights of the high contracting parties; but, as we shall see, Germany made this omission a pretext for ignoring the whole transaction, and for reopening the problems disposed of in the two Agreements. At the moment, however, she did nothing. On April 12, 1904, four days after the signature of the Agreement, our Ambassador in Berlin wrote: "The principal organs of the German Press are favourable towards the recently concluded Anglo-French Agreement." On the same day the German Chancellor, Count Bülow, in reply to Count Reventlow, declared: "We have no reason to suppose that this Agreement is directed against any other Power whatsoever, and from the German standpoint we have no objections to offer." Two days later Count Reventlow returned to the charge, declaring that the Agreement had been received in Germany with a feeling of bewilderment and discouragement, to which the Chancellor replied: "Count Reventlow thinks that we ought to have prevented other Powers from acquiring a greater position in Morocco than ourselves. That can only mean that we ought to have insisted on securing a slice of Morocco, upon which I would ask

the Count one simple question, What would he have advised if a demand of that nature had been resisted? Would he have urged me to draw the sword?"

This was a highly significant dialogue, showing as it did that Germany did not deem the moment opportune for an adventurous policy; and she would doubtless have maintained this attitude had the existing balance of European power been maintained. Nearly a year passed without any exchange of views concerning Morocco between Paris and Berlin. On February 4, 1905, our Foreign Minister learnt that the German *chargé d'affaires* at Tangier had been told by Count Bülow that the Imperial Government had no cognisance of the Anglo-French or the Franco-Spanish Agreements. M. Delcassé was amazed. He instructed the French Ambassador in Berlin to recall his conversation with Prince Radolin, the German Ambassador in Paris, his communication to the Imperial Chancery, as also the trouble that he had taken to acquaint the German Government with the terms of the Anglo-French Agreement before publication, and the satisfactory assurances he had then received. M. Bihourd replied in a long telegram containing an accurate conspectus of the diplomatic position. Germany intended to ignore the Agreement because it had not been formally notified. She would not take the trouble either to contest or to discuss it. It was more convenient to ignore French views of Morocco in order to give effect to her own. Already the German Emperor had resolved on his journey to Tangier. Let me quote M. Bihourd, who fully appreciated the position:

It appears to me beyond all doubt that the Imperial Government intends to take advantage of present circumstances in order to further the interests and to gratify the *amour propre* of Germany. Circumstances are especially favourable to her. For about a year public opinion has been aroused on the subject of Morocco. German merchants have set forth their grievances in highly coloured terms, and the Chancellor has been reproached by various political parties with the effacement of Germany; the difficulties and reverses of Russia have stimulated German aspirations, as the Press openly declares that the Dual Alliance has received a deep wound during the Manchurian campaign. . . . In such circumstances German diplomacy may hope to secure some advantages in the Moroccan question.

Our Ambassador spoke to the point. The defeat of Russia gave wings to German diplomacy. A year before, our ally, although already involved in her terrible war with Japan, was still a Power to be reckoned with. Now she was little better than a battered ruin, and Wilhelm II. could beat the big drum at Tangier without any fear of the Tsar's veto. As all the world knows, he went there, and France remained stupefied during several months.

His actual speech at Tangier, of which there is no official text, is of small importance. He proclaimed commercial liberty, the independence of the Sultan, and the territorial integrity of Morocco—superfluous declarations, as all these principles were already categorically assured by the Anglo-French Agreement. The real significance of the demonstration lay in the demeanour of the Emperor, who wished the world to know that Germany paid no attention to what had been done by other Powers, and that she intended to deal directly with a Sultan completely emancipated from foreign tutelage, without regard to any anterior arrangements, which were all the more negligible from her standpoint as they had not been formally brought to her notice. Such was the meaning of this demonstration, the success of which must have exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Great Britain was seriously perturbed, and British newspapers published indignant articles. But the Jupiter of Tangier was not considering the susceptibilities of British public opinion so much as the wishes of his own people, upon whom his "pilgrimage of passion" produced, as might have been expected, an explosive and electrifying effect. The German, as a general rule, lacks both moderation and tact. The Imperial adventure opened the floodgates of jeers, insults, and provocation. France was flabbergasted. For thirty years our politics had run in the narrowest Parliamentary, provincial, and parochial grooves. Scarcely one Frenchman in a hundred knew that there was a Morocco question, while to the majority of our people Morocco was an unknown land which they could hardly have located on the map. They were amazed to learn that the German Emperor was threatening us because we had not dealt with the Moroccan question according to his views. The Chamber of Deputies was no less startled, and public agitation found expression in the vehement and reproachful inquiries addressed to the Foreign Minister. M. Delcassé might have said that had he invited Germany to discuss the subject of our recent agreement with Great Britain he would thereby have invited her to claim her share, and it was the intrusion of Germany into Morocco which was above all things desirable to avoid. His prescience may have been at fault, as he had not foreseen the annihilation of Russia by Japan. But who had had an inkling of it? And if Russia had preserved her strength who would have reproached him? He abstained from saying this because it was impossible to say it. The Prime Minister, M. Rouvier, it is true, hazarded a reference to Mukden, which was almost as soon withdrawn. M. Delcassé was content to point out that



he had given in Paris, and had caused to be given in Berlin, all the explanations required on the Moroccan Agreement, and if in spite of these precautions any misunderstandings existed he was prepared to dissipate them, and he left the tribune with this sentence, "I can add nothing useful to these explanations. A Foreign Minister has not the privilege of speaking unreservedly in Parliament," without evoking a single cheer. He was obviously condemned by a panic-stricken House. It was only, however, two months later that M. Delcassé was executed. In the interval the Moroccan controversy had assumed, especially in Germany, a menacing bitterness. German diplomacy, which in 1904 had found nothing to complain of in the Agreement of April 8, devoted itself to discovering grievances which had not been previously perceived, and which were thus summarised by Count Bülow in the Reichstag :

(1) The Anglo-French Agreement had injured or menaced the rights recognised by the International Conference of Madrid in 1880, and the treaty between Germany and Morocco of July 2, 1891.

(2) France had never communicated the Agreement "in a serious or sufficient manner."

(3) That France desired to lay hands on Morocco surreptitiously was proved by the language of the French Minister, who had represented to the Sultan that France had a mandate from Europe.

These accusations will not bear scrutiny. There was no connection whatsoever between the questions dealt with at the International Conference of Madrid in 1880 and the Agreements of 1904. Every guarantee, collective or individual, sanctioned at this Conference remained unaffected by the Agreement, as did all treaties between Morocco and other countries. Germany retained every right and interest unimpaired, in exactly the same way as France and England retained their rights, neither more nor less.

It is true that France did not communicate the Agreements of 1904 to the German Government, any more than England or Spain did, against whom Germany made no complaint. Why should she ? France, England, and Spain had special local rights in Morocco, long-standing, and of a definite character. They were fully justified in concluding a mutual arrangement with regard to those rights among themselves and for themselves ; and so long as the rights of Germany were unaffected there were no reasons to inform Germany. If France desired to make an agreement, *e.g.*, with the Negus of Abyssinia, would she be obliged to inform

Germany first? The case of Morocco is similar. France's agreements with England and Spain were notified to none of the Great Powers (although the latter had commercial interests in Morocco), neither to Russia, Austria, Italy, nor the United States, not one of whom complained of this neglect. France had, however, made one single exception, and that was in Germany's favour. In a conversation with the German Ambassador on the subject of Morocco M. Delcassé had described the general course of the negotiations and of their object, and the French Ambassador at Berlin had been instructed to communicate the substance of this conversation direct to the German Chancellor. Alone of all the Powers Germany had been informed by France of the scope of the agreements, and Germany was the only one to complain! If ever the expression *querelle d'Allemand* was justifiable it was in this case.

I will now deal with the third complaint, based on an invention of the Moroccan Sultan, and perfidiously exploited by German diplomacy. M. Saint-René Taillandier, the representative of France, had been sent to Fez in order to elaborate, in concert with the Mahkzen, the reforms referred to in Article 2 of the Agreement of April 8. The Sultan entered into these negotiations with the greatest reluctance. After the demonstration at Tangier he threw himself into the arms of Germany, and cynically accused the French Minister of having stated that France was the *mandataire* of Europe, and that it was in that capacity that she proposed certain reforms. The French Government immediately published a categorical denial. But the Sultan's accusation was too useful to the German Government to be cast aside, and the German White-Book mentions it in a highly characteristic manner. The Chancellor informed Prince Radolin of the German point of view, and had the effrontery to say :

M. Delcassé denies having given such instructions, or that these instructions were carried out by the Minister. The contrary allegation, viz., that M. Saint-René Taillandier had openly and expressly declared himself to be the *mandataire* of the European Powers, seems, however, to rest on such a solid foundation that it is impossible to "pass to the order of the day" without further remarks.

It is unusual to publish a despatch containing a direct insult to the French Government. It is as inexcusable as it is unexampled.

But Germany despised all precautions. Her demands became more pressing as France retreated. In order to defend himself against the reproach of intentional omission which Germany was using against him, M. Delcassé instructed the French Ambassador

in Berlin to communicate a note of his conversation with Prince Radolin ; but the German Under-Secretary of State, Herr von Mühlberg, refused to receive it. Negotiations were practically broken off. M. Bihourd became alarmed by this persistent silence, and wrote as follows to his Government on April 28, 1905 :

The Imperial Government shows no anxiety to answer the question which your Excellency at Paris and I at Berlin have both clearly presented to him. This silence is in complete accord with the policy proclaimed by the Chancellor to the Reichstag and by the Emperor at Tangier. The object of adopting this attitude is to afford complete satisfaction to the national *amour propre*, and to meet the complaints of German merchants and manufacturers, who declare that their interests have been sacrificed. . . . The *entourage* of the Sovereign contains warlike elements, who point out that the Dual Alliance has received a severe blow in Manchuria. Under these circumstances it is not difficult to show that the present moment is propitious for an armed attack upon France.

As the Ambassador said in another despatch, direct negotiations were rendered impossible by Germany's refusal to listen. The French Government had asked the German Government what they desired and what they complained of. The German Government made no reply ; but this enigmatic silence served its purpose. Germany desired a Conference, and in order to have a Conference it was necessary to expel M. Delcassé, who held firm to his position, and showed no intention of yielding. Six weeks after the Imperial tour to Tangier he sent the following instructions to the French Minister at Fez :

You will make a categorical declaration to Ben Sliman [the Foreign Minister of the Mahkzen] that there can no more be a Power intermediary between the French and the Moroccan Government than there is a district intermediary between Morocco and the French dominion of Algeria. France is the only country which has a common frontier with Morocco. The Moorish Government knows the obligations imposed upon it by this fact—obligations which it has not fulfilled.

This language does honour to its author under circumstances so unfavourable to a heroic attitude. But he stood alone. His colleagues, depressed by the dread of "an adventurous policy," lived in a state of moral trepidation, which disposed them to make every conceivable concession.

Germany did her best to foment this panic. A distinguished emissary, Prince Henckel of Donnersmarck, a former intimate of Bismarck, and a depositary of the Bismarckian tradition, arrived in Paris, and went from *salon* to *salon*, from newspaper to newspaper, saying everywhere, "Take care ; the situation is horribly critical. You have not a moment to lose. Germany has decided on war. If you resist her demands, German troops

will cross the frontier before you receive the slightest warning." It was untrue. Germany had no more intention of making war than we had, and, as we shall see, she had excellent reasons for avoiding war. But it paid her to bluff us out of the game.

Our panic-stricken Cabinet resolved to sacrifice M. Delcassé to the German Moloch. This surrender of a French Minister on the demand of a foreign Government is a fact unprecedented in our history, and of all our mortifications it is perhaps the most disgraceful. France has suffered more terrible disasters, but we must distinguish between misfortune and disgrace. The expulsion of M. Delcassé was a base and degrading action of which France will never think without a blush.

In Germany the episode was hailed as a triumph. The Emperor, to mark his delight at this diplomatic victory, raised the Chancellor (Count Bülow) to the rank of prince. The Emperor's grandfather had given the same reward to Bismarck for creating the German Empire! In France the humiliation was forgotten in the ensuing crisis. Most people believed in the imminence of war, and for several days the corridors of the Chamber were the scene of much emotion. Frenchmen were misinformed as to the intentions of Germany. She had no intention of attacking us. But the expulsion of M. Delcassé had enabled her to gauge the lengths to which she might go. Instead of resting satisfied with her victory, she increased her demands and raised her tone. She had suggested to the Sultan of Morocco the idea of an international Conference, and the Sultan, who was then entirely devoted to her, at once issued the invitation. M. Rouvier, who was Foreign Minister as well as Premier, objected. He told the German Ambassador, "I gather from all your declarations that you wish to oppose all our proposals. How can we go to the Conference knowing that all our proposals will be opposed by Germany? Therefore before going further I should like to know what are Germany's views as to the reforms;" to which the Ambassador replied, without a further word of explanation, "We insist on the Conference. If it does not take place, things remain *in statu quo*, and please understand that we stand behind Morocco." M. Rouvier defended himself as well as he could. Before assenting to the Conference he asked for the programme. Germany refused to listen. "You must first agree to the Conference, and we will discuss the programme afterwards." This was the only answer vouchsafed to our Foreign Office. The communications which the Chancellor made to the German Ambassador at Paris are more explicit. At this point the German White-book becomes more instructive than

the French Yellow-book. Here, for example, is a truly astonishing passage taken from a despatch of Count Bülow to Prince Radolin, June 12, 1905 :

This task, the organisation of the police, so far as concerns the districts on the Algerian boundary, would naturally be confided to France alone. On the other hand, there is no reason why France alone should be entrusted with the task in distant districts, especially in territories on the Atlantic coast. In these regions it would seem more natural that the police reforms considered necessary should be confided to several Powers.

Germany desired the Conference in order to secure her double object, viz., to establish herself on the Atlantic coast of Morocco and to oblige France to break her agreement with England. The latter goal is clearly revealed in M. Bihourd's account of his interview with the Chancellor.

Prince Bülow has long expressed his desire to re-establish the best relations with France. He has explained to me how the Conference would promote this object. Without wishing to make any personal attack, he declared to me that Germany could not do to-day what she might certainly have done a year ago, and, he added, smiling, what she might do perhaps in a year.

That meant, in other words, "As long as you go hand in hand with England, expect nothing from us, but the moment you leave them we are prepared to be your best friends." The French Government accepted some of Germany's demands, but refused to abandon the *entente* with England, for which our Government deserves some credit.

We could no doubt have prevented the Conference. England had at the outset returned a dry refusal to the Sultan's invitation. If we had wished it, Russia, the United States, Italy, Spain, and several other Powers would likewise have refused, and the Conference would never have met, but in that event we should have resumed our *tête-à-tête* with Germany, irritated, disappointed, vindictive, and rendered all the more formidable by having captured the Moroccan Government. At that juncture it appeared wiser to assent to the Conference (which we agreed to with all the more confidence as we were assured of the support of a considerable majority of the Powers), after coming to a previous agreement with Germany as to a preparatory programme, which gave rise to no objection in principle, but was destined to give rise to many difficulties on points of detail.

It might have been expected that the relations between the two Governments would now become less strained, and that they would act cordially together. Nothing of the kind. The German is naturally immoderate in success. The more you yield to him the more insolent he becomes. In the communication which

followed hard upon the Agreement of September 28, 1905, Prince Bülow made this statement :

There are two aspects to the Moroccan question—first, Morocco ; second, general politics. We have considerable commercial interests in Morocco. We have always insisted, and still insist, on their maintenance. In the domain of general politics we have been confronted by a policy working for our isolation of a distinctly hostile character. The Moroccan affair was the most recent and most characteristic manifestation of this policy, and it has given us an occasion for making the proper reply.

This very clear avowal meant that Germany went to the Algeiras Conference with intentions frankly hostile to France, with the object of securing a double revenge, viz., her own intrusion in Morocco and the confusion of France before the great Powers. This hostility was still more pronounced in the inspired German Press—*vide* Dr. Schiemann, the confidant of the Emperor William, in the *Kreuz Zeitung* :

The French imagine that everything is settled by Delcassé's departure. They think it very tactless of us to harp on old grievances, and consider that they have made us a great concession in consenting to the Algeiras Conference. On the contrary, it is we who have afforded them a means of escape. We could have obtained as many concessions as we wished direct from the Sultan of Morocco without French assistance. But we preferred not to accept them, and adhere to our former programme.

Herr Delbrück, on the other hand, threatened us with instant war if the Conference did not give Germany what she wanted.

In a few weeks [he wrote] we shall know if the Western Powers are firmly determined to act independently of Germany. If they are, then the decision rests with the sword. They may in the end concede to Germany what is due alike to her might and her right. If they do not the German people will understand that the struggle is no longer over Morocco, but for the future of Germany.

It was under such auspices that the Conference opened on January 16, 1906. Germany had appointed two of her most arrogant and violent diplomatists, viz., Herr von Radowitz, German Ambassador at Madrid, and Count Tattenbach. But although, like their foreign colleagues, invested with full powers, they were mere interpreters and mouthpieces of the Emperor, who was, in fact, the real representative of Germany. His presence was felt at every deliberation. As the Conference originated in a German plot, he wished to lead it along the path which he had prescribed. But his hopes were cruelly disappointed.

He had counted on attracting into his orbit Russia, Italy, Spain, Austria, and the United States, who, together with Belgium, Holland, and Sweden, on whom he thought he could rely,

would have constituted a large German majority producing the most satisfactory results. It was a wonderful piece of self-deception. The Tangier explosion had been very severely condemned by every State in Europe, as was shown by the selection of delegates, Russia, Italy, and the United States, *inter alia*, being represented at the Conference by avowed opponents of the German pretensions. It is needless to say that England was from the beginning pledged to support the views of France. Sir Arthur Nicolson made so little concealment of his instructions that he told the German delegate, Herr von Radowitz, who had asked for his support, "My policy is too closely bound up with that of France to enable me to act as the mouthpiece of your proposals to her." As for Spain, she was linked to the cause of France by the community of interests in Morocco, and by previous agreements. Austria-Hungary was the solitary supporter of Germany, and even she was so conciliatory as to irritate Germany.

I cannot enter upon a detailed account of the Algeciras Conference. It is enough to say that German diplomacy, grievously disconcerted by the unsuspected disposition of the delegates, fell much below expectations. It had counted on a diplomatic court of justice before which France and her policy would be brought up for judgment. It might have been expected that Germany would take the initiative and propose subjects for discussion. She did nothing of the kind. For two months she prompted other Powers to bring forward propositions, but produced nothing on her own account. On the other hand, she was continually raising objections to other people's suggestions. Her attitude was evasive, negative, and artificial. She made free use of false news and of insidious proposals. The German official Wolff Agency was guilty of such an impudent falsification of the account of one of the sittings as to revolt the diplomatic body for a whole week. She sought to detach Spain from France by offering her the preponderant *rôle* in Morocco, but Spain would not listen. With us she made use alternately of intimidation and deceit. She tried to induce the French plenipotentiaries to come to a previous agreement as to the agenda. Our plenipotentiaries were somewhat too ready to countenance this dangerous manoeuvre, although they steadily sustained our interests and our rights. It is only just to say that MM. Revoil and Regnault presented and maintained the French point of view with admirable tact, firmness, and skill. There are grounds for asserting that had France wished to take advantage of the favourable disposition of England, Russia, Italy, Spain, and the United

States, she could easily have induced the Conference to ratify purely and simply the Agreements of 1904. But this diplomatic victory would have been more dangerous than a defeat. The decisions of a Congress or a Conference are only valuable so far as they are accepted unanimously by all the conferring States. Germany would have dissented, and her dissent would have *ipso facto* broken up the Conference, and a most dangerous situation would have ensued. It was therefore necessary to find a solution which, while granting nothing to Germany, "saved her face" by affording her the appearance of obtaining satisfaction, and thus enabled her to affix her signature to the Agreement known as the Act of Algeciras. It gave Germany no share in Morocco, no zone of influence, nor the sphere which she had reserved for herself on the Atlantic. It did not even accord her a place in the organisation of the police; but, on the other hand, it "internationalised" Morocco and deprived France of her previous preponderant and privileged situation. Neither side could congratulate themselves on the result.

As we have seen, German policy in Morocco was not only inspired by a desire to secure a sphere of influence in Morocco, as the main object of her campaign was the destruction of the Anglo-French *entente*. The *rapprochement* between these two nations was admittedly the severest check sustained by the German Emperor since he came to the throne. For many years he had openly and ostentatiously overwhelmed France with courtesies of all kinds. He was interested in our art and in our industry, and when any eminent Frenchman died he hastened to share the general grief. He was undoubtedly seeking a *rapprochement* with France which at the opportune moment could be transformed into an alliance—a policy which was all the more plausible because we were in acute antagonism with England in almost every part of the globe, and Anglophobia was so widespread as to justify the German Emperor's belief in his ability to organise a European coalition against England.

Wilhelm II. had inherited a mighty empire founded on "methods of barbarism," or, in the Bismarckian phrase, on blood and iron. He desired to enlarge its destiny, and while maintaining his great military machine at concert pitch, he did everything to stimulate the economic activity of Germany, and under his inspiration her trade and industry gradually spread over the world. He was in a sense the second founder of the German Empire, and he embodied his policy in the famous phrase "world-policy." If the French democracy, which has exhausted itself in miserable squabbles during thirty years, were capable of



observation, it would learn a great lesson by contrasting the fruitfulness of this great Imperialist with its own sterility. Millions and millions of German workmen live and thrive on the viaticum provided by the Emperor, whose historic *mot*, "Our future lies upon the water," gave birth to the German mercantile marine and the German navy, whose marvellous growth has been among the wonders of the world. It encourages Germans to dream already of the day when their battleships will dispute the Empire of the Seas with the British.

There is some risk in giving such hostages to fortune. The simultaneous industrial and maritime development of Germany must inevitably lead to a conflict with England, because Germany has grown at the expense of England, and British trade has paid the piper. The difference in wages enables German industry to produce more cheaply and to sell more cheaply than their British rivals, and thus German commerce is steadily encroaching on British commerce in all the markets of the world, and the hated and ubiquitous trade-mark "Made in Germany" arouses the commercial and patriotic indignation of Englishmen. The two Powers have been frequently on the verge of rupture during recent years, and then for a time the clouds have been dissipated and the horizon has cleared. But these are only temporary phases in a problem which can hardly be solved peacefully. Superficial observers regard the recent visit of the German Emperor to England and the cordial reception which he received as opening an era of better feeling between the two countries, while simpletons have gone so far as to speak of an Anglo-German alliance, without, however, specifying its objects. Such fancies are not worth considering. It is an inflexible law that every nation is governed by its interests. Powers cannot be turned from those interests either by gushing newspaper articles, the personal friendship of Sovereigns, or the superficial amiabilities of politicians. If England does not crush Germany she will be devoured by Germany. This "irrepressible conflict" explains Wilhelm II.'s desperate efforts to provide Germany with a formidable fleet which in ten years will be the equal of the British Navy. But in order to succeed in his gigantic enterprise he must range against England something beyond the strength of Germany, and that something is the support of French arms by land and sea. Consequently the Anglo-French Agreement was a very bitter pill. But it is as well to bear in mind that the Kaiser's irritation did not change his policy towards France, but only his tactics. He had tried unsuccessfully to win our

country by excessive amiability. He now endeavoured to intimidate us, and it was with this object that he threatened us at Tangier, and that German diplomacy and the German Press took the offensive. That he succeeded in some measure is proved by the enforced resignation of M. Delcassé and subsequent concessions. But to the reiterated demand that we should break with England our Prime Minister, M. Rouvier, offered a resolute resistance. For the moment Franco-German relations wore a critical complexion, and it has been freely stated that we were within an ace of war during the Morocco crisis. I do not believe this, though I understand those who do believe it, as it is *vraisemblable*.

But although there may have been no serious danger of war, French policy in Morocco has throughout been pursued by the preconceived and systematic hostility of Germany. The Sultan did not realise the mortifications sustained by Teutonic diplomacy. He had grasped but one fact, viz., that the German Emperor had proclaimed himself the protector of his independence, and from that moment he and his Government regarded themselves as absolved from any restraint towards us. After the Imperial pilgrimage to Tangier, and still more after the Algeciras Conference, which in the eyes of the Moorish Government had destroyed the Anglo-French and Franco-Spanish Agreements, Morocco, feeling that Germany stood by her side, adopted a callous indifference towards France, whom there was no further necessity to consider, as she was *ex hypothesi* bridled by her German neighbour. Needless to say, the insolence of the central Government was reflected in the attitude of the local Governors, and in that of the tribal chiefs, who one and all treated France as an enemy to be insulted and defied with impunity. Then ensued the lamentable series of aggressions and outrages, finally culminating in the massacre of Casablanca. There have been few more painful incidents than M. Pichon's narration in the Chamber of Deputies of the circumstances attending the murder of Dr. Mauchamp, and the many insolent and humiliating refusals of the Moorish authorities to make reparation, while on the attempted assassination of another French subject, M. Lassalles, our demand for the dismissal of the responsible officials was contemptuously refused in the most public manner. This constant and growing hostility coincided with clandestine appeals for the assistance of Germany, and German inspiration may be detected in many of the most hostile acts from which we have suffered. In this connection there is a very interesting document in the official Yellow Book, viz., a letter from a Sheik summoning one of the

more tranquil tribes to rise, saying "*l'habitude au Maroc est que l'Empereur charge toujours une nation de ses affaires. . . . Le Sultan a comme amis depuis l'année dernière les Allemands, qui sont très puissants.*" (It is the custom of the Sultan to entrust his affairs to some other Power. . . . For the last year the Sultan has enjoyed the friendship of the Germans, who are very powerful.) It was a certain sinister German who excited the local fanatics against Dr. Mauchamp at Marakesh, and it was another German, called Oppenheim,\* who made it his business to distribute incendiary appeals among the Algerian tribes. Had Germany been reproached with these occurrences, she would doubtless have answered, It is nothing to do with me—a statement which might have been technically correct, though fundamentally false.

Our painful experiences have not proved an unmixed evil, because they finally compelled the French Government to take the necessary measures to open the eyes of the Moors to the truth. Hitherto we had met provocation and outrage by diplomatic representations and derisory demonstrations, such as the despatch of two or three cruisers to Tangier and the occupation of Oudja—inoffensive measures which merely excited the ridicule of the tribes, who only understand one argument—*i.e.*, force. Every injury should be followed by a sharp, strong blow. Although our punitive expeditions to Casablanca and across the Algerian frontier cannot be regarded as miracles of military energy, they have nevertheless served to dissipate the mirage which has cost us so many insults. The hostility of the Maghzen reposed on its faith in external assistance, which has been found wanting. The anticipated support of Germany was not forthcoming. Germany has made no sign. Moreover, in reply to our notification of our military movements, Germany said, "So be it." Her attitude has been a bitter and illuminating disappointment to the Sultan. It has cured the Moroccans of their illusions, and has given them a juster appreciation of actualities.

I do not propose to consider the claims and prospects of the competing Sultans now engaged in a fraternal fight for the sovereignty, because our course of action will be determined by subsequent events. But in any case we shall continue the work of pacification. Critics of our policy affirm and reaffirm that we shall never be able to do anything with an irreconcilable and fanatical people. This may be so as regards the minority, who abhor all

\* It would be interesting to know whether this individual is the same as the agent employed by the German Consul-General at Cairo on similar work in Egypt, or whether it is only a namesake.—EDITOR *N. R.*

foreigners ; but it is not extrayagant to hope that as the majority realise that they have far more to gain from the establishment of a reasonable amount of peace and order, they will ultimately regard the policy of pacific penetration with different eyes to what they do at present. We have one great asset on our side in the shape of native avarice, and the development of desires of all kinds, which can only be satisfied by foreign trade.

Morocco will eventually become what nature has always intended that she should become—an extension of Algeria. French trade, which, in spite of our lamentable position of recent years, equals and even surpasses the total trade of all foreign Powers, may anticipate continual expansion. Is this, it may be asked, the only benefit we shall derive from all our sacrifices ? Other advantages will no doubt come in time, but it may be wiser to allow time to accomplish its purpose before discussing them.

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