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In fact, the situation was not irretrievable, if Germany had not rendered it so by issuing her ultimatum to Russia. Once again we may ask, was this crime or folly?

II

Germany's attitude to France

We must now turn our eyes to the West of Europe, and observe the diplomacy of Germany with regard to France and Great Britain. On the 27th of July we are told that the German Government received 'the first intimation concerning the preparatory measures taken by France: the 14th Corps discontinued the manœuvres and returned to its garrison'.¹ Will it be believed that, except for the assertion 'of rapidly progressing preparations of France, both on water and on land',² this is the only shred of evidence that the Germans have produced to prove the aggressive intentions of France? And it may be worth while to point out that on July 29, when the German White Book says that Berlin heard of the 'rapidly progressing preparations of France', the French Ambassador at Berlin informed the Secretary of State that 'they had done nothing more than the German Government had done, namely, recalled the officers on leave'.³

The very next day the French Government had 'reliable information that the German troops are concentrated round Thionville and Metz ready for war',⁴ and before July 30th German patrols twice penetrated

to discuss the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Servia. M. Sazonof replied by expressing his satisfaction, and said it was desirable that the discussions should take place in London with the participation of the Great Powers.'

¹ German White Book, p. 8.

² *Ibid.* p. 9, Exhibit No. 17.

³ *Correspondence*, No. 76. Sir E. Goschen to Sir E. Grey, July 29: 'His Excellency denied German Government had done this. Nevertheless it is true.'

⁴ *Ibid.* No. 99. Sir F. Bertie to Sir E. Grey, July 30.