

commensurate with the sacrifices of sentiment and ambition which Italy has made, it is for Italy to judge. On the whole she has been a sleeping partner in the Alliance; its prestige has served almost exclusively for the promotion of Austrian and German aims; and one of its results has been to make Austria a formidable rival of Italy in the Adriatic.

Meanwhile the remaining Great Powers of Europe had continued, as Prince Bismarck hoped, to pursue their separate paths, though England was on friendly terms with France and had, equally with Russia, laboured to avert a second Franco-German War in 1875. After 1882 the English occupation of Egypt constituted for some years a standing grievance in the eyes of France. The persistent advance of Russia in Asia had in like manner been a source of growing apprehension to England since 1868; and, for a long time after the Treaty of Berlin, English statesmen were on the watch to check the growth of Russian influence in the Balkans. But common interests of very different kinds were tending to unite these three Powers, not in any stable alliance, even for mutual defence, but in a string of compacts concluded for particular objects.

One of these interests was connected with a feeling that the policy of the principal partners in the Triple Alliance, particularly that of Germany, had become incalculable and was only consistent in periodic outbursts of self-assertiveness, behind which could be discerned a steady determination to accumulate armaments which should be strong enough to intimidate any possible competitor. The growth of this feeling dates from the dismissal of Prince Bismarck by the present Kaiser. Bismarck had sedulously courted the friendship of Russia, even after 1882. He entered in fact into a defensive agreement with Russia against Austria. While he increased the war strength of the army, he openly announced that Germany would always stand on the defensive; and he addressed