

ried away to Galicia the moment they received the unwelcome news, which must also have been unexpected news. We can hardly doubt that they will be followed by large bodies of their men who have been resisting Haig in the north and attacking Petain in the south. We know that the German lines in the east have been depleted in the belief that nothing was to be feared from that quarter, and that this is actually the fact is evidenced by the instant Russian success. It may be noted that the Russian activity in Galicia was presaged by renewed Russian vitality in Mesopotamia whence came news of a Russian advance over a week ago. It was the Russian inactivity, now broken, that tied up the British army to the north of Bagdad, that should have joined hands with the Russians coming south many weeks ago. Indeed it would be hard to over-estimate the embarrassment caused by the temporary defection of Russia, just as it would be hard to over-estimate the effect of the mighty blow that has now been struck by her armies. The misguided efforts of her pacifists have probably lengthened the war and added thousands to the casualty lists. And this, it may be said, has been the usual result of the efforts of pacifists everywhere.

THERE has been delay and embarrassment, but there has been no disaster. In spite of the efforts of the British to take upon themselves the brunt of the fighting in the west the Germans have risked a great battle with the French and they have been signally worsted. Not a single French prisoner was taken. Not a yard of French soil was lost. The French threat upon Laon is as great as ever it was geographically, and very much greater morally. It may be pointed out once more that Leon represents the southern junction point between the new Hindenburg Line and the old established lines to the east, just as Monchy and Roeux and Croiselle represent the northern junction point. A decided advance at either of these points, a marked bending back of the German lines, means the withdrawal of the whole German army. Whether the French will now be able to advance upon Laon remains to be seen, but at least it is evident that they cannot be driven back.

The German armies have once more shown that they have lost their morale, once more they have the discouragement of a signal reverse. And we may draw a very real encouragement from the falsity of the German bulletins that represent the battle to have been a French attack that was repulsed. That the Germans intended to bring this attack as soon as a lull in the northern fighting would enable them to do so has been evident for weeks. They have good cause to be seriously uneasy about Laon, and they also believed that the French army was more vulnerable than the British. Their disappointment is shown by their bulletins, which also show their apprehensions of public opinion in Germany. The Germans never admit the failure of an attack. They never admit any reverse unless it is disclosed by geographical references that cannot be hidden, such as the new positions into which they were forced at Messines.

The lull in the northern fighting is very far from being an actual cessation. At the moment of writing, on July 6, comes the news of a considerable success near Ypres. The British advanced along a six hundred yard line, although we are not told to what depth. This may have been intended mainly as a rectifying operation, but we may remember that the main object of General Haig's efforts is to compel the Germans to fight continuously, and at such points as he himself selects. This not only serves the purpose of attrition, but it acts also as a veil over the preparations for a major attack elsewhere.

Believing very firmly that we are now about to witness the last act in the great war drama, I have some curiosity as to whether its scene will be laid in the east or in the west. The two fields are now in close rivalry. In the western field we have a record that speaks for itself and that it would be hard to misinterpret. It is a record of several months, a record of almost unvarying Allied victory and of German defeat. In the east—and by the east I mean Greece and the Balkans—the record has yet to be made, but then on the other hand the east is actually the gauge of the whole struggle. Here is the one vulnerable point where even a slight wound may be fatal. Germany is waging her war in the west, not in order that she may conquer the west, but in order that she may conquer the east. Her armies in the west are fighting for the domination of Serbia just as actually as though they were in Serbia. Indeed we may say that they are fighting for nothing else, if we confine our vision for the moment to the first link in the chain that was to be forged for the captivity of the world. Germany was compelled to crush Serbia because an independent Serbia meant the nullification of all the military advantages that were to accrue to Germany from the international railroad to Egypt and the Persian Gulf. Austria was similarly compelled, or impelled, by the threat to

her own empire implied by the presence within her frontiers of some twenty millions of southern Slavs—that is to say Serbians—who looked toward Serbia for leadership and unification and nationality. These two lines of policy, German and Austrian, converged upon Serbia, thus doubly doomed by the colossal ambitions of her imperial enemies. The restoration of Serbian integrity thus means a definite and final foil to those ambitions, just as Serbian extinction means their triumph. In a very real sense we may say that the war is being waged for, and against, the liberation of Serbia, and that this little Balkan state must either be the bulwark against Teutonic world domination, or else the open road over which that domination will speedily accomplish itself.

THAT the Central Empires know precisely where the prize is to be sought we need not doubt at all. Within the last few days we have had two semi-official peace suggestions, one from Austria, and the other from Bulgaria. Both voices—and of course they are actually the same voice—assure us of the moderate and magnanimous peace terms upon which the war may be ended. Neither Austria nor Bulgaria is anxious for territorial gains. They will be satisfied with the status quo, but with one trifling exception, and this is added as a sort of insignificant afterthought. Northern Serbia and the city of Nish, we are told, must not be allowed to revert to Slav possession. Quite so. But then Nish happens to be the city through which the international railroad runs, and Northern Serbia happens to adjoin Hungary. In other words, Austria and Bulgaria—or rather Germany writ small—are willing to end the war on condition that they are allowed to win the war, and to make their exit from the battlefield with the plunder in their pockets.

We see now the vital nature of the intervention of Greece, and our vision is still further cleared by the piteous cry for help that Bulgaria has addressed to Germany, and that ill agrees with the arrogant declamations with which she endeavours to comfort her own forebodings. This does not necessarily mean that the Bulgarians have any particular fear of the Greek army, but it implies a recognition on their part that the Greek army is henceforth an enemy, and not a friend. It means that the Greek army can no longer be relied upon to give that stab in the back Constantine would certainly have administered to the Allied forces as soon as they began their move forward into Serbia. Consternation, we are told, was caused in Sofia by Constantine's abdication, and there was good cause for the consternation, which we may suppose was vividly reflected in Berlin. For it means the reconquest of Serbia. It means that Serail's army need now have no apprehensions for its rear, and that it can proceed in overwhelming force against the Bulgarians to the north of Monastir. The Bulgarians can not be in very great strength. They have very few Germans with them, and they have certainly been called upon to do a large share in the garrisoning of Roumania, where a Russian offensive is by no means an impossibility. The road up the Vardar Valley into Serbia is a dif-

(Concluded on page 23.)

SHALL WE COUNTER-STRAFE GERMANY?



AN open show of hands on Tower Hill, London, voted almost unanimously in favour of air-reprisals on Germany. Opinions differ. A delegation of bishops in the House of Lords protested against reprisals. The Manchester Guardian thinks reprisals would be useless because "in a competition of horrors Germany will beat us every time," and in any case Germany is boomeranged by the hostility of the world at large arising out of her campaign of horrors. The Dean of Manchester favours giving Germany Roland for Oliver. The real question, he says, is whether acts of reprisal do or do not possess a sufficient military value. In his opinion the responsibility rests with the nation that makes savage reprisals necessary. Arthur Ritson in The Clarion says in answer to the statement that we can never hope to beat the Germans at their own game: "The Germans have been beaten every time, whenever they have been subjected to reprisals, so long as they believed that the reprisals were made in earnest. For instance, Paris has never been subjected to a raid since the French devastated Karlsruhe."