

That Germany has built new and powerful submarines there is, of course, no doubt. It was one of these submarines that appeared recently off Nantucket and sunk half a dozen ships, which fact alone supports the view that they were sent into service as fast as they were built. These submarines have a radius of about 5,000 miles and can remain at sea for about six weeks, and of course longer if they are able to reach a mother ship or a supply station. But they can not carry more than ten torpedoes, and usually only eight, and when these torpedoes have been fired they are harmless except for their guns. And a submarine without torpedoes is much inferior to an armed merchant ship, and nearly helpless before a gunboat or even a motor boat. The chance of a successful hit with a torpedo depends, of course, on a dozen factors which are at the discretion of the commander, who may be disposed either to take chances or to be very sparing of his projectiles. But a great many torpedoes sink harmlessly to the bottom of the ocean. It is easy to miscalculate the aim, and it is also easy for the merchant ship to shift her helm if she is fortunate enough to see the wake of the oncoming torpedo at a sufficient distance. It is therefore a mistake to regard the submarine as a wolf among sheep, and able to harry and destroy at will.

WE may therefore regard as wholly chimerical the idea that Germany can establish a blockade of England, France, and the Mediterranean by means of her U boats. She could not do so even if the wildest claims as to the number and capacity of these boats were confirmed. Without any question she can do a great deal of damage. She has been doing a great deal of damage all the way along, and probably she will now do more than she has done. But she can not expose Great Britain to the danger of starvation through a blockade. She can not do anything with her submarines that will have any substantial influence upon the main currents of the war. This seems to be recognized by Captain Persius, the naval editor of the Berliner Tageblatt, who warns his readers not to overestimate the results of the submarine campaign, nor to underestimate what the British authorities can do to resist it.

Writing last week, I suggested that the German naval chiefs were under no illusions as to the direct results that could be obtained from their submarines. They never supposed for a moment that they could establish a blockade, although they did suppose, and with reason, that they could embarrass the supply of coal and munitions to Italy, and France, and Russia. The inauguration of the submarine campaign was not intended as a direct military measure. Its first object was to solace the German people with the prospect of a new weapon to be used as a last resource. And its second object was to spur the American government to fresh efforts to secure a conference. The second object doubtless outranked the first. It is no undue stretching of the probabilities to assert that Germany must now have peace if it is in any way possible to secure it. She has practically said so herself. Dismayed by the discovery that America was disposed to accept the Allies' communication and to take no further immediate steps toward a conference, she cast about her for some new way to revive the pacifist energies at Washington. To this end she announced the horrors of an unrestricted submarine warfare. She believed that America would then set her hand once more to the peace plow. It was a quite legitimate bluff, but it happened to fail. The goad had lost its point. And so now at the moment of writing we have reports of a German disposition to parley, ostensibly in order to avoid a war with America, but actually as a new effort toward the promotion of a conference. From the diplomatic silence following upon the break

there was nothing to be expected. But almost anything might develop from any sort of negotiation. This view has been confirmed within the last few days by a dispatch from Amsterdam which says: "Political circles in Berlin are much upset by the reports of the indignation aroused in America by the announcement of Germany's submarine blockade, it having been believed that the United States, understanding Germany's desperate position, would start negotiations to bring about an early peace conference." Why America should thus be persuaded to serve German interests by a threat of the wholesale destruction of her lives and property is a question that we may properly ask ourselves, although its answer demands a knowledge of the German psychology that we are now beginning to acquire. One would have supposed that in such a case the velvet glove would be more efficacious than the iron hand. At least we know that the iron hand has failed.

It needs no particular military skill to see that

though the weather conditions there are not unfavourable to fighting. German resistance on the Ancre has obviously weakened to a great extent, although there has been a German success before Verdun. It is quite likely that Germany will strike out vigorously here and there in the gallant effort to propitiate the god of war. It is more than likely that she will send out her navy in the desperate intention to "win or lose it all." But we can not be blamed if we draw the inevitable deductions from her declaration of a submarine war that is doomed to failure and that she knows is doomed to failure, or if we interpret that step as a final bid for the victory that has passed beyond her reach along the lines of war that encircle Europe.

THE New York Commercial expresses the opinion of a good many people on this continent when it says: "The British Isles can be made self-supporting, or so nearly so that a blockade would not starve the people. . . .

"Even if the British Isles can not produce enough food, so much can be added to the present production that all that will be needed can come in through a single port. . . . Just what is wrong with the submarines is not known, but they do not, and presumably can not, attack battle-ships and cruisers. England has enough war-vessels to line a lane into Liverpool from the open ocean, and as long as she can do this Germany can not starve the people, though they may have to tighten their belts."

The New York Evening Post adds: "Much the safest method is to ask, 'What must the German submarines accomplish in order to reduce England to the condition in which Germany herself stands in the matter of food?' This paper goes on to say that before the war England imported two-thirds of her food, and three times as much per head of the population as did Germany. "The respective food-import needs of the two nations were 66 per cent. and 22 per cent. The Allied blockade has virtually cut off German imports," depriving the German people "of nearly 20 per cent. of its food requirements for more than two years. . . . For the English people to suffer the same percentage of deprivation, England must lose a little more than one-third of her food importations, or one-third of her available shipping tonnage. At the end of 1916, British merchant shipping was approximately what it was when the war began, a little over twenty million tons. So that Germany must sink something like five million tons of English ships before England is as near to "starvation" as Germany is to-day.

In concluding it is worth recalling what Captain Persius in the Berliner Tageblatt wrote:

"The increasing success of our submarines," he says, "has in the last few

months become surprising. Nevertheless, nothing would be more foolish than to build up hopes on this and think, for example, that our success must go on increasing at the same rate, so that in spring we might be sinking a million tons a month. The more the submarine war on commerce increases, the more serious become the difficulties it has to face. The number of ships daring to go to sea declines, the ships which still sail are more strongly armed, and the skill of their captains in repelling submarine attacks increases. Lastly, the number of enemy instruments for destroying submarines increases. . . . "If one underestimates the difficulty of the task, it is sheer ingratitude to our submarine crews."

The Germans themselves know that this new submarine campaign is a last desperate effort to forestall defeat on land as I have already said. They see it looming up like a terrible Nemesis, a figure out of a nightmare. We need not expect discretion on the part of the U-boat commanders. They are commissioned on one last desperate venture.



"Let us have peace."

—Fitzpatrick, in St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Germany's position on land is now of the gravest kind, and this has, of course, had its share in the production of the submarine campaign. Germany for over a year has been doing her utmost to produce spectacular effects under the impression that they will have a paralyzing influence upon her enemies in much the same way that the Chinese used to display frightful pictures of dragons and monsters in order to terrify their foes. She would have gained little or nothing from the taking of Verdun, and actually she has gained nothing from the conquest of Roumania. Indeed she has lengthened her line and increased her difficulties. Her line has been further lengthened by the battle of the Somme, a battle, by the way, that seems to have been resumed by a succession of small British victories. We have heard many stories of the collection of a new and colossal German army that is presently to be thrown at some selected point of the line, but it seems hard to believe that there is any such army. The campaign in Roumania has come to a standstill, al-