

PSYCHOLOGY of NEW OFFENSIVES

When looking for a reason why Germany is making such a noise now, remember that fear and terrorization are the stock-in-trade of German War Methods.

By SIDNEY CORYN

HOW important Germany thinks the Cambrai offensive really is may be inferred from the desperate efforts to retrieve the lost positions. The actual formation of the British salient at Cambrai is very similar to that of the Ypres salient, but its potential effects upon the German positions are much greater. The Ypres salient promises a British control of the submarine bases and the compulsory evacuation of the northern section of the German lines. These, of course, are large advantages, and in no way to be under-rated, but the advantages of a successful offensive at Cambrai are still larger. Cambrai is near the centre of the Hindenburg Line and one of its main buttresses. It is the railroad ganglion through which that line is munitioned. It can not be maintained without the possession of Cambrai. The British forces in the Ypres salient can not reap the full fruits of their successes without a further advance that shall bring Zeebrugge and Bruges directly under the observation of their artillery officers.

But the British at Cambrai need do no more than hold their own, and they have won their objective. Indeed they can do a good deal less than hold their own, and still win their objective. Cambrai is now directly under observation and within artillery range, and it is therefore useless to the Germans. Its railroad lines are cut. In the Ypres salient the Germans need do no more than maintain their present positions and so deprive the British from the final and full results of their victories.

But the Germans at Cambrai have a heavier burden than this. If they are going to save the Hindenburg Line they must do much more than maintain their present positions. They must recover their old ones. They must rescue Cambrai and its railroad lines from the British fire. They must efface the salient created by General Byng in his assault of two weeks ago. Here, at least, there can be no such thing as a deadlock. The British need do no more than make good their hold upon the semi-circle from Queant to Gonnelleu and the whole of the Hindenburg Line must retire. Indeed, the British can afford to give a little, as they have already done under the German counter attacks, without losing their dominance over Cambrai. The German efforts, therefore, are not directed to resisting the British advance, but to driving the British back to their previous positions. If they can do no more than resist the British advance they are lost. Nothing will avail them short of a practical flattening out of the British salient.

THE base of the British salient—that is to say, the old British line—runs from Croiselles, northwest of Queant, to Gonnelleu, a distance of about fourteen miles. The salient itself is in the form of a half circle with its most easterly point about three miles from Cambrai. Now, a salient has great advantages for the attackers. It is a spear point plunged into the breast of the enemy. But at the same time a salient is one of the most vulnerable of all military formations. It is obvious that it can be attacked from three directions, and it may therefore become an object of weakness rather than of strength, unless it can be adequately fortified and defended. It needs a very much stronger defence than a straight line that is liable only to a frontal attack. It is usually much easier to create a salient than to sustain it against the assaults that are nearly sure to come from three different directions.

The British salient in front of Cambrai has been attacked in just this way, that is to say, from three different directions. The attack on the northern arc of the semi-circle in the

vicinity of Bourlon Wood was a failure, but the Germans gained a little ground in the vicinity of Fontaine and Anneux, they recovered Masnieres, and they advanced nearly three miles at Gonnelleu and Gouzeaucourt, besides taking about one hundred guns. Now, Gonnelleu is not actually contained in the new British salient. It is just to the south of the junction point between the old and the new lines. The Germans swept past Gonnelleu, and we are told that the present fighting is in the neighborhood of Gouzeaucourt, about three

GERMANY believes that the mainspring of all national character is fear. The courage that rises upon defeat to heroism is something that Germany does not understand. Mr. Carl Ackerman knows this well when he says that German resistance will crumble away as soon as she meets a defeat that she can not hide. Arrogance, cruelty, and fear go always hand in hand. This characteristic has been displayed uniformly in the German bulletins from the beginning of the war. No single frank admission of reverse will be found in any one of them. Even the battle of the Marne was a strategical success, and the retreat to the Hindenburg Line was positively a victory. The present battle at Cambrai has involved, so we are told, a slight loss of territory, and since the first British assaults we have been furnished by Germany with a daily list of victories. The Chancellor and Von Kuehlmann are now singing paeans of praise over the Italian successes, although their shadowy nature must be unmistakable even to them. Germany has probably had no expectation of a military victory for over two years, but she is still wedded to the conviction that she can terrify her enemies into submission, just as she is wedded to the other conviction that if the worst should come to the worst her foes can always be bought off with offers of territory, and that they have no other thought in their minds than the fluctuations of a balance sheet. Germany knows that she herself would have surrendered long ago if the positions had been reversed. She is still "pointing with pride" to her fruitless and meaningless successes, and demanding their practical recognition. Her tactics are those of the old Chinese army that was wont to display colossal pictures of dragons and fabled monsters in order that its enemies might take warning and submit in time.

miles to the rear, but we are not told that the latter place was actually occupied by the Germans. The Germans claim, also, to have taken La Vacquerie, about two miles to the north of Gonnelleu, but this is not conceded in the British bulletins. The effect of this German gain is the creation of a small and sharply-pointed salient with its westerly extremity at Gouzeaucourt, and if the Germans can maintain this position it will involve a slight falling back in order to straighten the British lines to the north. Indeed, we are told that this retirement is already effected. But unless the Germans meet with a much more substantial success than this they will have gained nothing in return for their enormous expenditure of life, an expenditure that seems momentarily to have staggered them. The British will still dominate Cambrai and its railroad lines, and the result must almost immediately show itself in the evacuation of the German fortifications. We need not, therefore, attach any undue emphasis upon such British withdrawals as may be recorded during the next few days

salient and a general withdrawal of the British lines now before Cambrai. Nothing short of this will serve the German purpose. If the Germans fail to secure this result the position of the Hindenburg Line is a desperate one.

General Maurice, of the British Intelligence Department, is willing to go upon record as saying that the crisis in Italy has passed, and that the German offensive is practically at an end. Those less well informed might hesitate at a judgment so definite, and even fear that it may be premature, but there need be no doubt that the situation has immensely improved, and that the balance of military advantage is now inclining in favor of the Italians. Thus we may already notice that the German bulletins are proudly announcing, not German advances, but the repulse of Italian attacks. The Germans succeeded in crossing the northern Piave in the neighborhood of Feltre, and in establishing themselves upon the western bank. But the Italians were able to hold them there, and to prevent them from moving southward, and also to prevent the crossing of reinforcements. The Italians were also successful in stemming the tide from the north, and as they were able to do this before French and British aid had reached them, it seems fairly certain that they can continue their successful resistance now that men and heavy guns have arrived from France and England. But the most effective help probably came to them from the weather. The Germans must have been very sure of success, or very anxious for a semblance of success, or they would never have ventured upon an invasion of Italy through mountain passes about to be rendered nearly impassable by snow. Once more we have the distinct note of desperation in this offensive against Italy. It would never have been undertaken except as a gambler's chance, and we may be sure that Germany now regrets it. Not only has it failed of the moral effects expected from it, but it has practically interned and thrown out of action a great German army.

The Italian offensive is one more example of Germany's capacity to begin offensives and her incapacity to end them. She could do nothing against the Russian armies after the battle of Dunajec. She set forth with a mighty flourish of trumpets to complete the conquest of Roumania, but her advance rapidly dwindled away into paralysis. She fought against the Russian fleet in the Gulf of Riga, and announced that it was blockaded behind the Island of Oisel, but the Russian fleet was able to sail away without interruption. She captured Riga and threatened Petrograd, but nothing came of it. And now she strikes the hardest of all her blows at Italy, wins a spectacular victory, and is speedily reduced to something very much like a defensive. The explanation of these abortions is visible enough to those who understand the German character.

Christmas Shopping

A STORY is told in the national capital of a diminutive young thing, with snow-white furs around her neck, who impatiently waited her turn in the line before the stamp clerk's window. When her turn came she stepped up with a thoughtful air. "Have you any two-cent stamps?" This sweetly. An answer in the affirmative brought this request: "Will you let me see some?" Here the clerk gasped, but he was obliging. Picking up a sheet of the red stamps he laid it before her. A moment of intense thinking. She made her selection. She was blocking progress, but the impatient, squirming of those back of her didn't seem to molest the fair purchaser. "I think I'll take three out of this row, please."