

## NO TRADING WITH GERMANY

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THERE is an Italian proverb to the effect that the lids of the devil's cook-pots do not fit. They are "apt" (i.e., fitted) only in a perverse and contrary manner—apt, not to stay on, but to fall off untimely, and the noxious vapours which then make their escape reveal the malignant nature of the pottage.

Before the war broke out the rulers and people of Germany had political cook-pots simmering in many countries. The shock of war caused the lids to fall off, and the inhabitants of those countries are now holding their noses in mingled amazement and disgust. The Russian Empire, for example, was, to use the vigorous description given by a leading authority on international politics, "positively weevilled with Germans." The military representative associated with Count Pourtales, the nominal German ambassador at Petrograd, was better informed of the plans of the Russian government than some Russian secretaries of state. Most of the foreign trade of Russia was carried on through German agencies. There was a great number of Germans in the railway service. Most of the private banks were practically Russian branches of German banks. The Russian press was largely under German influence. Every German in Russia was made use of, in one way or another, by the German government for the purpose of collecting information which, when "the Day" came, might facilitate the invasion of the Russian Empire and the cutting short of its borders. It would hardly be possible, indeed, to mention a European country which was not more or less "weevilled with Germans" at the time when the war broke out. Belgium was certainly in that condition. Antwerp had practically become a German port. The Germans resident in Antwerp had gained a "controlling interest" in municipal affairs, so numerous, so well-organized, and withal so wealthy, were they. In Belgium now there are more weevils than biscuit.