

old serving man, and carried off all her jewels. When her daughter reached the place she had to go and find the rebels and give them clothes in return for food. In the town there was no more food to be had.

These are examples of the miserable and absurd barbarism which has taken hold of Europe. A daughter of a German Serb buys foods from rebels encamped round Sarajevo! But what else was she to do, it may well be asked. Denmark received the fighters returning from the Eastern Front with revolver shots, but it provides butter, and its Government and its formal sovereign have to be tolerated. Why? What else is to be done? In Occupied Russia, Vlassov's army is created, but since then has never solidified, and if it were to take any solid form there is no doubt that it would go over to a man to the Communist ranks. Still, creating it is a card which the Germans have to play. What else could they do if they didn't? The sad thing is that in reality they can't do anything other than what they are doing.

All these events have occurred and have come before the eyes of the German people as the war has followed its course. They did not appear all at once, but little by little. The German thought that, perhaps the persecution of the Jews was becoming excessive. Next day it occurred to him that the "National" religion, though Rosenberg might defend it, was an absurdity. A little time passed, and he began to conclude that a whole continent cannot be subjugated by violence. The defeats in Russia helped him to indulge in these considerations, to which in happier days he paid no special attention, the German in this not being very different from other human individuals. The German is anti-Russian for two reasons, first of all he has heard a lot of clever preachment against Communist barbarism, and secondly and above all he is a German. That is to say, he does not conceive any formula for general salvation except his own.

He thought Russia could be easily conquered. That at least is the popular opinion. If the General Staff had other ideas, their thoughts never reached the masses. The first advance of the army confirmed this popular belief, so when the retreat of the first winter occurred, Germany did not know what had come to her. Much has been said of Stalingrad and of the retreat going on at present. But very little is known of the retreat of the first winter. Officers and soldiers who took part in it have told me details. There was a general panic, and into the bargain arms themselves, and all means of transport broke down through lack of preparation for the cold. A soldier belonging to the motor transport who, as long as his car had petrol in it, drove his superior officer during the flight, told me that the latter never said a word for hours and hours, but remained doubled up on his seat, incessantly shaking his head from side to side. The wounded had to be abandoned at the corners of the roads. Lorries passed by them, and the wounded stretched out their hands crying "Kamerad! Kamerad!" But the lorries never stopped for fear that the motors would freeze, and continued on their way leaving behind them the despairing wounded, who knew that there was no hope of salvation for them.

The panic grew and grew. On one occasion a number of columns broke, and men ran madly in all directions, simply because a couple of mares suddenly appeared between the trunks of trees. There was a shout of "the Cossacks! the Cossacks!" and hundreds of Germans took to their heels.

People began to talk of Russia, and of the peril from there, after Stalingrad. However, much earlier than that, the German army had already suffered considerable damage. The retirement of Timochenko to the Caucasus in the previous spring and summer had been considered in Germany as a model of strategy. Stalingrad, therefore, much as it signified, did not mean as much as has been said. All the same the importance it had was that it marked the beginning of a new period. It was the first time that the Reich had publicly acknowledged a catastrophe.

The Present Situation.

All that I have related has gradually settled down to form a state of opinion amongst the Germans. The result is that to-day there is a position and a condition of things in Germany which, hard as it may be, is endured because it came gradually. If it had come all in a heap it would have been altogether unbearable. For example, under the rationing system clothes coupons were recently suppressed, but in point of fact for some while nobody had been able to buy any, even if he had coupons. The recent general mobilisation did, indeed, send to the factories a few remaining women who still enjoyed a life of leisure.