

CAMOUFLAGE OF GERMAN MIGHT

A WEEK ago we confidently believed that a devastating flood of Germans was about to break upon the western lines. There was no reason for such a belief except a sudden outburst of hectorings from the clique of the German newspapers. There was every reason against such a belief, but none the less it produced a feeling of general despondency and foreboding, which was precisely the intention of those who originated it. Doubtless we shall presently learn to recognize the methods of the German propagandist, but we have not learned it yet. Those methods are multiform, unceasing, and ubiquitous. Sometimes the propaganda takes what may be called the axiomatic form. We are told that "of course" the French army is bled white, and can do no more than struggle desperately and almost despairingly to hold its own. That the French have just sent a large and well-equipped army into Italy at a few hours' notice, that they recently drove the Germans from the Chemin des Dames, and that they have not yet called out so young a class as has Germany herself, count not at all against the German myth garbed as an axiom. There are other minor forms of the propaganda, and among them the "patriotic" one. America, we are told, must now bear the whole brunt of the war, and hasten to step into the place occupied by the paralyzed armies of France, Italy, and Great Britain. Von Tirpitz, it is true, has a different opinion, if we may judge from the speech that he has just delivered before the Hamburg branch of the Fatherland party, and in which he said that "up to the present in this war Great Britain has won rather than lost." None the less the desired feeling of despondency is produced. And now we are treated to the vision of vast new hordes of German soldiery hurrying to the western front that they may overwhelm the Allied lines by sheer weight of numbers. It is true that nothing has yet happened, and that the German newspapers have now been ordered to talk of something else, but it is to be feared that our capacity for being apprehensive and unhappy is undiminished. We are still willing to dance to the German tune.

THAT Germany will strike hard at any point that she believes to be vulnerable goes without saying, and doubtless when she does so it will be acclaimed as the predicted German offensive. But Germany has been striking hard ever since the war began. There will be nothing new about that. She made titanic efforts to reach Calais and Verdun, and at a time when her men were far less war weary than they are now. She failed disastrously, and she would still have failed even if her forces had been much larger than they were. We can hardly suppose that she intends to repeat those calamitous experiments, no matter how great the volume of her reinforcements from the east. With the possible exception of the Champagne district, there is no spot on the western line that offers to her any great hope of success, or that is not already marked by failure after failure. It is to be remembered that a numerical superiority of men is but one out of many of the factors of victory. The largest of armies must fail in the absence of artillery support that is superior in power not only to the guns opposed to it, but to the fortifications that it must overcome. It is the superiority of the French and British artillery that has so far enabled the Allies on the western front not only to hold their own, but to make a steady progress against the invaders. No possible number of men that Germany could transfer from the east to the west would give her a guaranty of success there, perhaps not even the possibility of it. As has been said, she had an immense superiority of men at the battle of Calais, but none the less she lost that battle to the nearly raw recruits drawn from the shops and warehouses of England and from the plains of Canada. It is nearly certain that she was similarly advantaged at the siege of Verdun, but once more she failed. Even if all the fairy tales of German reinforcements from Russia were true, there would still be no cause for despondency. She

BY the skilful use of verbal camouflage, Germany gives the other belligerents the idea that she has the power to hurl vast masses of armed humanity upon any point she chooses in a minimum of time. We are led to believe that the French are "bled white," that England is in her last reserves, that Italy is "all in" and that now nothing but the instant weight of the American army on the west front can keep the German armies from breaking through. But what are the facts? This article is the convincing answer.

By SIDNEY CORYN

might be able to bend back the opposing lines, but she would not be able to break them without a loss of life that would leave her victory a barren one. An attack that is continuously pressed with sufficient reserves can always penetrate an enemy's lines, but there comes a point when the gains cease to be worth the price paid for them. Germany reached this point at Verdun. Indeed, she passed it, and she discontinued the attack. If Germany were to bring a great offensive in the west to-day it is quite likely that she might gain a little ground by sheer pressure, but she would gain nothing more than this. She could not end the war in any such way. And it is extremely unlikely that she is even contemplating such an effort. If she were actually doing so she would hardly announce her intention in her newspapers.

It has been Germany's invariable plan to strike at the weak points and not at the strong ones, and perhaps it would have been better for the Allies if they had followed her example and brought a concentration of force against Austria. The Teutons over-ran Serbia and Roumania, not so much because any strategic values were involved, as because the task was comparatively easy, and it gave them the moral effects that they prize so highly. The recent attack upon Riga had the same motive, and now we find that once more they seek the weak spot and assail Italy. The Italian offensive was also designed, so far as Germany was concerned, as a reminder to Austria of her complete dependence upon her more powerful ally. Austria asked for help at the time when Cadorna was forcing his way eastward from the Isonzo, and it was refused to her. It was only when the situation became critical for Austria that a German army appeared on the scene and at once arrested the tide of Austrian defeat. With Russia eliminated, Italy became the weakest of the Allies, and we need not doubt that the attack upon Italy absorbed, and perhaps is still absorbing, most of the men that have been withdrawn from the eastern front.

Let us suppose for a moment that Germany has either conquered Italy or has abandoned her efforts in that particular field of war, but always with the recollection that she can not withdraw her armies from Italy so long as the Italian forces are intact. Let us suppose that Germany has an available army as a result of withdrawals from elsewhere. What would she do with it? At what point in the great circle of her enemies would she discern some prospect of success? For the reasons already stated I do not believe that she would launch that army against either the British or the French, although this by no means implies that there will not be heavy fighting on the western field. To win a few miles of line, to bend back an opposing army, is of no use to Germany except to bring out the fluttering flags in Berlin, and even these have been a little reluctant lately to appear in public. The abiding need of Germany is for some decisive action that shall forever dispose of one of her enemies, that shall enable her to strike the name of that enemy from her list. She has done this in the case of Serbia. She has almost

done it in the case of Roumania and Belgium. And for the moment at least she has done it in the case of Russia. She has made an immense effort to eliminate Italy, but here she seems to have failed, although it is still too soon to speak with certainty. But with Italy disposed of, either through success or failure, where may we expect that the next blow will fall?

IT seems to me that the question almost answers itself, while making full allowance for unknown and unknowable facts. There is only one vulnerable point left—if it is vulnerable—and that one point is Greece. But for the necessities of Austria we may believe that Greece would already have been attacked. Greece is now at war with Germany, and we may regretfully suppose that she is not very wholeheartedly at war with Germany. The Emperor's brother-in-law has been expelled from the throne of Greece and is an exile. But the conquest of Greece offers military advantages that are by no means inconsiderable. Greece under German domination means the eastern Mediterranean also under German domination. It means that Greek waters would at once swarm with German submarines that could make their way down the Levant and so become a serious nuisance to the British operations in Palestine. German submarines were using the Greek islands with the connivance of Constantine before his deposition, and in spite of the watchful eyes of Allied representatives. But with Greece conquered there would hardly be a limit to the facilities then available to them. Germany has never yet turned her serious attention to Greece. She has left Greece to the Bulgarians and Turks. She has been too busy with the other small fry that were not so well defended. But the supply of small fry is running short. What more likely than that Germany should be looking in the direction of Greece, which is comparatively close to her eastern lines and where popular disharmonies may perhaps be counted on to aid her?

The inactivity of the Saloniki army has been one of the mysteries of the war. While Constantine was on the throne it was easy to understand that his contemplated treacheries constituted a danger to the successful advance northward of an army that must necessarily be based on Saloniki. But Constantine has disappeared and yet the Allied quiescence in Macedonia continues. Is Venizelos distrustful of the Greek people and of the loyalty of the Greek army? Perhaps so. At least it has been so stated. None the less the Allied army in Macedonia is likely to be called upon, not perhaps to undertake an advance, but to maintain the positions that it now holds. If the Greek army is unreliable it may have to meet a danger from the south as well as from the north.

BUT the Saloniki army has been by no means useless, even though it has seemed to do no more than to mark time. But for that army Greece would have been over-run by the Bulgarians and Turks long ago. Indeed, Constantine would definitely have ranged his country on the Teuton side if he had dared to do so, which he did not. Here once more we have an example of the nervelessness and political vacillation that have done so much to injure the Allied cause, and particularly in its dealings with the Balkan peoples. Greece had definitely pledged herself by treaty to come to the aid of Serbia whenever her aid was needed. That treaty was impudently broken by Constantine, and the Allies should either have deposed him at once, or declared war upon Greece. They did neither. They asked permission to make use of Saloniki, and they then advanced into Macedonia, knowing that they were leaving in their rear a crafty and unscrupulous enemy who would certainly stab them in the back if he could. Constantine was probably saved by the intervention of the Czar, who naturally did not wish that the deposition of monarchs should become a habit. It is at least significant that the disappearance of Constantine should follow at once on the disappearance of the Czar.