

# DOWN *with* DEMOCRACY at HOME !

A CLEARER view of the situation in Italy should dispel many of the forebodings evoked by the early bulletins of misfortune. It is true that Italy is no longer fighting on the soil of her enemies. On the contrary her own territory is invaded, and she is fighting defensively instead of offensively. She has lost heavily in men and guns, although we may believe with some confidence that in this respect the German bulletins have exaggerated. Austria has doubtless been encouraged to continue her nominal participation in the war, and Germany herself has been enabled to indulge in a renewed spasm of hope. A twist has been given to the war situation as a whole, and we may suppose that neutral nations, and the pacifists of all nations, have been properly impressed with this new evidence of German vigor and resourcefulness.

But if we put on one side the blandishments that will have no effect, and the terror that does not exist, and look directly at the military facts, we shall find that there is no present cause for dismay, and still less for the expectation that Italy will be bludgeoned out of the war. We know now that the Italian armies retreated in good order, and that Cadorna was able to extricate his third army on his right flank from a position that for a time was perilous in the extreme. The latest reports show that the Italians made some tentative effort to defend the western bank of the Tagliamento, but that Teuton pressure compelled them to abandon these lines and to move backward still farther toward the Piava River. The Teutons have crossed the Tagliamento and are in pursuit, but the Italian army is in good order, its morale is unbroken, and it is proceeding to meet its reinforcements from France and England. The threat of a Teuton invasion from the north remains, and we need not doubt that such an invasion will be attempted from the Trentino. If it should succeed—and it ought not to succeed, seeing that it has often failed before—the situation of the Italians would be much worsened. But in the meantime it may be said that the renewed retreat of Cadorna's forces does not imply any additional misfortune. So far, it means no more than a deliberated change of ground.

From the purely military point of view it does not seem that Germany has advantaged herself in the least from this latest parade on the Isonzo. Indeed, we may doubt if she actually had any purely military advantage in view. If she could compel Italy to sue for peace she could of course put her armies in Italy to effective use elsewhere, but her hopes could hardly have risen quite so high as this. The reputation of the Italians is not of that kind. She did not expect that Italy would sue for peace, but she did expect that she could goad Italy into revolution. For months past we have been reading of discontent among the Italian people, and of the severe priva-

## *Hoist the Red Flag Abroad, get Italy to Revolt Along With Russia*

THIS is the plain policy of the Kaiser, but it's only the same stage play that has won successes on all the weak spots in the ring around the Central Empires. Like a rat in a trap he is running around in the desperate hope that somewhere he can squeeze through.

By SIDNEY CORYN

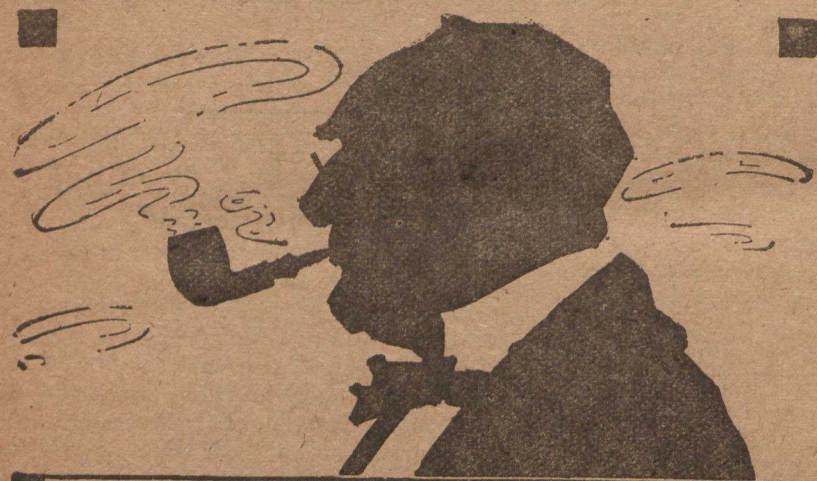
tions to which the poorer classes were subjected. These stories probably originated in German publicity bureaus. Certainly they were promulgated through these agencies. We may attribute to the same source the current reports that the French army has been "bled white," and can do no more than hold on until the arrival of a sufficient American force. German agencies have not only circulated stories of an imminent Italian revolution, but they have done their best to secure the fulfilment of their own prediction. Italy has been flooded with revolutionary literature, and permeated by revolutionary advocates, and the special pleaders for a sentimental pacifism. If revolution could paralyze the Russian armies, why might it not do the same in Italy? Germany believed that Italy would go the way of Russia, and that an Italian defeat would supply the necessary impetus. Now an Italian revolution would not necessarily liberate the German army that had provoked it, at least not for a long time, but none the less the spectacle of Russia and Italy, torn by revolution and impotent from internal discords, would be a most impressive one. No better basis could be found for the peace offer that should be redolent of the magnanimity so becoming to a conqueror.

But there are fundamental differences between Italians and Russians. The level of education is immeasurably higher in Italy than it is in Russia. Italy is not to be tempted by the lure of democracy, seeing that she already possesses it in no small measure. Moreover Italy has behind her a great and glowing tradition of liberty, and therefore of hatred of Austria and all her works. That Italy could be forced by hunger to ask peace of Austria, to submit to Austrian domination, to facilitate Austrian ambitions by disaffection or rebellion, is as unthinkable as that the sun should move eastward. That German efforts to corrode the Italian character were not wholly fruitless may be true enough. The Italian cabinet fell with the first news of reverses, and there were stories of willing retreat on the part of some small portions of the army on the Isonzo. But there was nothing like revolution. Quite the contrary. We are told now of a new national solidarity, of an unprecedented enthusiasm for the war, and of innumerable volunteers for military service. Political discords have disappeared, and there is an unbroken resolution to repel the invader and to defend the country. It is precisely what might have been expected from patriotism and intelligence. That Germany expected to break the national spirit by an invasion of the national territory, and a blow at the national sovereignty, is in full keeping with that obliquity of political vision that has done more injury to the German cause than the innumerable defeats of her armies in the field.

THERE were, of course, other prospective advantages that tempted Germany to launch her blow against Italy. It was absolutely necessary to stimulate the waning hopes of her people at home. It was no less necessary to strengthen the hands of the Junkers in their struggle against democracy. And it was highly desirable to provide some spectacle that should divert the attention of the public from the general military situation in the west, and from the retreat that had already become inevitable, and that has just been accomplished. To explain the retreat from the Aisne as one more example of an astute strategy would be comparatively easy so long as it was possible to show that German arms elsewhere were still invincible. The spectacle of a conquering army sweeping over the plains of Italy would so dazzle the eyes as to obliterate the far more significant fact that German forces had been literally blasted from the positions that they had held ever since the battle of the Marne. That the German army in Italy had practically interned itself, and was likely to become a liability instead of an asset, would naturally not be apparent to minds unused to move without official direction. Germany hoped to win a great moral advantage by forcing Italy into revolution, and she finds instead that she must now win a military advantage, or else accept a situation that leaves her much worse off than she was before. It is, of course, within the bounds of possibility that she will crush the Italian armies but it is not probable. And her failure to crush the Italian armies will in itself be a reverse of the first magnitude. Germany has shown by her furious assault upon Italy that she has been outfought in the west, where a German victory would outweigh all possible successes elsewhere. Like a rat in a trap, she is running around in the desperate hope that somewhere she can squeeze through the bars.

Because the western field is so vastly more important than the Italian we may attribute a special significance to the French success on the Chemin des Dames, and the retreat of the German forces to the north bank of the Ailette River. The gain is a small one, measured by the yardstick. Strategically, it is a large gain. It means that the Germans have been forced from a strip of ground selected by themselves as the scene of long-continued and furious

(Concluded on page 22.)





## OLD CHUM TOBACCO

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smokers, than any other  
tobacco smoked  
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"OLD CHUM"**