

A NEW OUTBREAK IS CERTAIN

WRITING in this column a few weeks ago, I expressed the conviction that the pacifist would find small comfort in an examination of such peace terms as it might be found possible to extract from the belligerent governments. That was at a time when sanguine minds had seized eagerly upon Germany's tacit promise to evacuate Belgium and France and to leave the Balkan question to the wisdom of a conference. Surely, said these hopeful ones, the main difficulties have now been removed and nothing remains but to apply the blessed principle of compromise. The invasion of Belgium was the main cause of war, and therefore the liberation of Belgium ought to be its cure, and with the liberation of Belgium goes, of course, the liberation of the occupied portions of France. It was the view of that order of intelligence that may be described politely as cursory, and that takes no note either of the great currents of expansive national ambitions or the patriotic sentiments that were always strong, but that have now been revived by opportunity.

Writing at that time, I ventured to say that even the broadest sketch of peace terms would aggravate the situation by the avowal of demands that would be considered as beyond the pale of discussion and that could be settled only at the point of the sword. Into the political wisdom that has virtually compelled such an avowal there is no need here to enter. The avowal has been made, at least partially, and the result is precisely as it seemed to me that it must be. Among the then unformulated demands that would certainly be considered by both sides as non-debatable, as outside the range of discussion, were the return to France of Alsace-Lorraine, and an interference with German control of the transcontinental railroad in the Balkans. The Alsace-Lorraine impasse seemed to be the graver of the two. France would not consider even the preliminaries of a peace that did not include the return to her of her lost provinces without argument or delay. Germany would not entertain a proposal that set upon her the ineffaceable seal of disastrous defeat. Nor would Germany, except under dire compulsion, enter a peace conference founded upon the wrecks of her commercial hopes in Persia and Asia Minor. To compel the disclosure, the avowal, of hopeless antagonisms can hardly be considered as a diplomatic triumph—not, at least, from the pacifist point of view.

This is precisely what has been done. Alsace-Lorraine has been dragged from the background and set in the forefront of the quarrel. It is true that the Allied note to the American Government contains no specific mention of the Rhine provinces, but we need not debate the meaning of the phrase, "the restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the Allies by force or against the will of their populations." This may mean a great deal more than Alsace-Lorraine, but certainly it means nothing less. Still more unequivocal is the demand for "the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself so radically alien to Western civilization." It is true that there is no mention of a Russian occupation of Constantinople, but we need not doubt the Allied intention to stand with a heavy foot upon some link of the Far Eastern railroad chain that Germany intends shall be wholly Teutonic. Nor need we doubt the attitude of the Turkish Government toward a peace conference which can be held only on the basis of its own expulsion from Europe. Turkey, at least, must now become irreconcilable. She, at least, has nothing to gain from peace. The effort of the President to discover some ground for compromise has disclosed the fact that there is no such ground.

BUT there is another fact that has now been amply demonstrated by the recent interchange of notes, and it is a fact that finally disposes of the pleasant and popular fallacy that all the belligerents are heartily sick of the war and anxious to find some gently coercive way out of it. For there is not the slightest suggestion in the Allied note to Washington of a desire to compromise, not the least indication of a willingness to veil those demands that make compromise impossible. We can imagine nothing more resolute than the terms of that note, a note to which all of the Allies have appended their names, and with a rapidity that precludes the idea of dissension and even of discussion. It is perfectly evident, moreover, that the Allies expect

*Nothing is more Dangerous than Desperation.
Germany is Desperate. Her new energies will
be measured only by her disappointment*

By SIDNEY CORYN

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to win, that they are not in the least discouraged by their reverses, and that they have the utmost confidence that their vastly superior forces, combined with the economic distresses of their enemies, must presently prevail. We may believe, if we wish, that such confidence is not justified, that it is due, as one important German newspaper remarks, to the stupid obstinacy of the British mind, but that is not the question and it has no bearing upon the situation. The obvious fact remains that the Allies believe confidently that they can win and that they intend resolutely to continue the struggle until they have won or until they can fight no more. We may delude ourselves by the effort to discern the element of bluff in the Allied note, but that delusion is likely to be dissipated by the events that are now pending.

Some mention has already been made in this col-

EDITOR'S NOTE.

IN this article Mr. Coryn assembles in a masterly fashion all the factors in diplomacy, world politics and strategy that explain the present situation and the immediate prospects of war—except the rumoured invasion of Switzerland by Germany in order to turn the Anglo-French flank on the west front. He reiterates his former views that there is no symptom of any back-down on the part of the Allies in their conditions for a world peace. He shows clearly that Germany, met by an uncompromising front will be forced into more desperate measures in a last offensive. This prediction is suggested by the rumoured violation of Swiss neutrality and by the despatches this week indicating a fresh outbreak of super-submarines.

The writer makes no attempt to bolster up a case for the Allies or to draw an unduly dark picture of Germany's condition. He does not take the confident assertions of commanders on either side as meaning anything—since commanders cannot afford to express anything else but confidence in their own cause. He makes no pretence of estimating Germany's present military resources. But he makes it quite clear that Germany has undoubted economic troubles which explain the necessity for mighty quick action on her part. A statement from Vienna intimates that the food supply in Austria will be exhausted two months before next harvest. The Munich Post says that Bavaria is tired "playing Cinderella among the German tribes" and complains that Prussia is seizing Bavarian food. Other reliable German newspapers eloquently depict the growing discontent in Germany. These cannot be discounted. They are absolutely reliable and sincere. The rumour that Austria may seek a separate peace is equally significant. Mr. Coryn's allusion to this is enlightening.

umn of the causes that must have led to the German proposals, proposals that were hopelessly doomed from their inception by the accompanying demand for an admission of German victory. Among those causes were the inevitable waning of Germany's military resources, and particularly in the matter of men, the economic distresses of the German people, the exhaustion of Austria, and the probable disposition of the young Emperor to save as much from the wreck as possible and to inaugurate his reign by the establishment of peace. We may as well leave Germany's military resources out of the question, since we know little of them except from vague calculations that rest upon no very certain basis of fact. We do not know the number of Turks that Germany can call upon nor their disposition. She may be enlisting numbers of Poles, while the Belgian deportations must have released

from home duties a considerable amount of fighting material. But when it comes to the distress in Germany and Austria we are upon much surer ground. To recount the evidence of this that comes from Teutonic sources would demand more space than the whole of this article. It comes in the form of innumerable official statements and regulations and from

the many personal letters that are published from day to day by the responsible New York press. An official statement emanating from Vienna says plainly that the food supply will be entirely exhausted two months before the new harvest is available. The Munich Post says bitterly that the Bavarian people are "tired of playing the part of Cinderella among the German tribes" and complains that the Prussians are seizing the food that is so terribly needed by the Bavarians and that the Bavarians have actually paid for. Speaking of the egg supply, the Post says: "Are the Prussians about to seize these eggs for their own consumption or will they allow them to rot rather than feed them to the Bavarian riffraff, as we have more than once heard the northern officials call us? Urgent prayers that have been addressed to the Prussian bureaucrats by our business men and importers have not until now received a moment's attention. Are they blind in Berlin? Can not they see that things can not continue thus? Must it come to a catastrophe?" The Mulhausen Volkszeitung complains that the working people are being fed upon offal and that the country is falling into anarchy. The Tageblatt speaks in similar vein, and of course the Vorwaerts (Socialist) is unceasing in its denunciations of existing conditions. Reports from neutral countries we may well discount as unreliable and sensational, but we can not discount the utterances of German newspapers that are increasingly numerous and increasingly portentous.

IN this connection it may be well to mention a rumour circulating among well-informed quarters in the east and that cannot be dismissed as wholly improbable. It is to the effect that Austria will speedily seek a separate peace, and may even now be doing so, and that this will be done not in defiance of Germany but with her concurrence. Germany, says the rumour in question, is actuated by the realization that Austria would probably get favourable terms and would be saved from the dismemberment that might be her fate as the result of a conclusive military defeat, and that her value as an ally would thus continue to be a factor in the policies of the Teutonic world. But the immediate advantage of a move like this on the part of Austria would be still greater, for the defection of such an ally would be a sufficient explanation to the German people of peace proposals that are certainly born of necessity and that are likely to become more emergent in the near future.

But these things do not indicate an immediate ending to the war. Far from it. They indicate a new outbreak that will probably be more tremendous than anything that has preceded it, since nothing is more dangerous than desperation. Incredible as it may seem, it is yet certainly true that Germany confidently believed that her proposals would be accepted and that the Allies would admit their defeat. This is shown by the frequent references in the highest quarters to the almost immediate end of the war and to the good news that would come with Christmas. Germany believed that no more than some great victory would be needed, and as she could not find that victory at Verdun she sought it in Roumania. Her new energies will now be proportionate to her disappointment. She will be now disposed to take magnificent chances because nothing but magnificent chances can avail her. Whatever she is able to do must be done before Austria actually breaks, before Turkey finally succumbs to pressure from the sea and from the south, and before Bulgaria decides that she has sufficiently played the part demanded by her self-interest. And in this connection we may note the significant speech just made by the Bulgarian Premier, in which he defended himself from the charge of military adventure, asserted that Bulgaria had now achieved her ambitions, and declared that she was ready to make peace. Whatever Germany intends to do she must do quickly.

The new campaign will begin early. Germany must begin it early for the aforementioned reasons, and the Allies will begin it early for the sake of