

TALK OF EUROPE

SONG OF WHITEHALL

(Sung in Prospect of Demobilization)

I FULLY admit that our staff is too large —
That Smithers (for instance) might have
his discharge,

And half of the typists who frivol at tea —
But what would the country do if they
sacked me?

When things in the trenches were going
amiss,

I stuck to my job like a hero — and this
Is how they reward one for winning the war:
By showing one, very politely, the door!

I don't mean to say that they've sacked
me as yet;

And I cannot believe that they'd ever forget
All the minutes I've written, the forms
that I've signed —

But a rumor has reached me and troubled
my mind.

And must my experience be all thrown
away?

Will they empty my chair, and my pockets
of pay?

I don't think they will. But I tremble with
fear,

For I don't like the tone of the rumor I
hear.

I'll stick to my job while I can, in the hope
That they'll make me Controller of Black-
ing or Soap.

If they told me to go, then oh, where would
I be?

And what would the country do if they
sacked me?

Theodore Maynard

A REMARKABLE social phenomenon, which may have far-reaching results, has been initiated recently in Italy. The matter is surrounded a little with mystery, and it is hard to get at the precise facts, especially as the printers of the Rome daily papers were at last accounts still on strike, and the capital had been without its usual newspapers for six weeks.

Everyone knows that Rome is surrounded by what is largely a kind of wilderness, great uncultivated plains of once highly fertile land, now belonging to a few landed owners. The peasants of the Campagna have often threatened to invade these territories and put them under cultivation, and they have in many places carried out their threat. A day was appointed for the initiation of the great movement, and on that day and during all the week bands of peasants, armed only with the implements of husbandry, descended upon many of the uncultivated estates of the Campagna and staked out claims for themselves. These large estates belong chiefly to Roman princes, who preserve them for game or leave them neglected.

The physical occupation of the territories by the peasants has been tried before, but never on such a scale as during the present movement.

The procedure in nearly all cases seems to have been the same. At dawn, headed by bands playing music and in procession, the peasants of Albano, Castelgandolfo, Frascati, Zagarolo, and other communes, all within twenty miles of Rome, set out for the uncultivated lands. Here it is a little difficult to know exactly what happened. In a few cases there were collisions with the police or the keepers of the owners, but in the majority of cases, and notably at Albano and Castelgandolfo, no opposition at all was made. The peasants took possession of the land, and are now beginning to work it and to build themselves rough huts on it wherein to live. At Sutri, a village to the north of Rome, there were conflicts with the police, and some peasants were arrested.

Speaking to a landowner who has property at Zagarolo, where these happenings also took place, a correspondent asked him how the matter was going to work out.

'The trouble may begin when it comes to the harvest time, to reaping the benefits of the new labor,' he said. 'The proprietors will wake up then.' And such seems to be

the explanation of the generally peaceful way in which 'the invasion' has passed off. The owners have no very strong objection to peasants coming and working their land. When it comes to a division of the fruits of the labor it may be a different thing.

In the meanwhile, *ci penserà il governo*, the government will see to it, they say. There is a typically Southern philosophy in this attitude.

NOISES AT NIGHT

WHEN I wake up in the night time,
 And the moon is shining bright,
 And the little mice are busy
 In the cupboards out of sight,
 And the boards creak in the ceiling,
 And the chairs begin to groan —
 Then the world's a bogey dungeon, and
Oh! I feel so dreadfully alone.
 Then I hear such funny noises
 In the garden down below,
 Just like mighty armies marching
 Forth to fight a silent foe,
 And the branches in the tree-tops
 Shriek out loud an awful threat —
 All the world seems angry, somehow, and
Oh! I feel so dreadfully upset.
 Then the sun comes shyly peeping
 In behind the yellow blind,
 And the shadows break and vanish
 Till not one is left behind,
 And the birds begin their music;
 So I must have been deceived —
 For the world's one huge glad Morning, and
Oh! I feel so dreadfully relieved.

A. S.

ONE of the minor results of the war is likely to be a redistribution of many of the precious and historic things long treasured by the royal houses of the defeated countries. So far no tidings have reached us as to what the new German Republic proposes doing with the crown and other state jewels of the ex-Kaiser, which were presumably left behind in Berlin when the fight to Holland took place, but when the Bolsheviki were in power in Hungary there was a widely current report that the famous Iron Crown was to be sold, and for only £4000, as far as we remember. As the crown, in spite of the vulgar nature of its metal, was set thickly with jewels, always

supposed to be real, the price seemed very moderate; even if the jewels had been spirited from their settings the historic associations would be cheap at the price to any American collector. The latest rumored treasure for the market is of a much more imposing character, at any rate from the point of view of intrinsic value. The bankrupt Turkish Government is said to be about to sell a number of pieces from the state treasury, among which the most important is the celebrated Peacock Throne, brought from Delhi in 1739 by the conquering Persian invader, Nadir Shah, when he returned to his own country, and later taken by the Turks to Constantinople. The throne, which takes its name from two golden peacocks wrought behind it, their tails being inlaid in natural colors with a profusion of gems, is in the shape of a bed (somewhat wider than an ordinary single bed), and among the stones decorating it are 108 large rubies and 116 emeralds. Perhaps we should say 'were' rather than 'are,' since the most recent detailed description appears to be that given by the French jeweler, Tavernier, who saw it in 1665. He particularly praised the pearls with which the 12 columns supporting the canopy were adorned, but as in the East stones are usually left uncut, the full beauty of the transparent stones was probably hard to appreciate. The value of the throne must be enormous, but it is difficult to be precise about it, since while some authorities think £750,000 an exaggerated price, others put the figure at about £6,000,000!

WE venture to advise America to adopt the principle of self-determination in Hawaii.

America ought to give complete independence to the Philippines, if it is impossible to return that territory to Spain, which formerly owned it. The American Government has already expressed its willingness to make the Philippines independent, and independence is most earnestly wanted by the majority of the Filipinos. The American Government should, therefore, carry out the plan for independence without any further loss of time. This would fit in with President Wilson's prin-