



These doves, photographed on the front, are ready for messages of peace any day.

PEACE DOVES MUCH PERPLEXED

A CORRESPONDENT who professes to be interested only in the military aspect of the war writes a courteous protest against the assertion that the Central Powers have gained no strategic advantage from the conquest of Roumania. On the contrary, he says, they have cut the projected Allied line that was intended to connect the Russians in the north with the forces at Saloniki. Moreover, they have now put themselves in a position to move southward into Macedonia and to bar the road to Sarail should he be intending to move onward from Monastir.

Now all that is true enough, but it in no way invalidates the contention that it assails. It was not said that the Teutons had gained no military advantages, but rather that they were outweighed by the disadvantages. The contention that was made in this column may be summarized by the suggestion that it would have been better for Germany, in spite of her victories, had Roumania remained neutral, and that German difficulties are now actually greater than they were before Roumania declared war. To make the contention still clearer it may be said that if Germany could now restore the status quo before the Roumanian intervention it would be much to her advantage to do so. Roumania now takes her place with Serbia and Montenegro, and just as these principalities—however important from a political point of view—have added immensely to Germany's military difficulties, so Roumania is likely to do the same. If Roumania's long and straggling frontier was easy to attack it will be just as difficult to defend. A considerable German army must now be locked up in Roumania, not only to watch the remains of the Roumanian forces, but also to guard the country against Russian aggression. So long as Roumania was neutral her territory was barred alike to Teutons and to the Allies. It now becomes a road connecting Russia with Bulgaria, and that road will be occupied by the strongest armies. Russian forces from Bessarabia will be a constant menace, while the whole Roumanian coast line is open to Russian attack from the water. If Germany had large reserves of men upon which to call, the situation would be a quite different one. But we know that she has not. She is obviously unable to hold her lines in the west, as witness the repeated French victories around Verdun. She can only barely hold her lines against the Russians in the north. How, then, can she be advantaged from the military point of view by a victory that brings with it a new field of war and the constant occupation of new armies?

BUT from the political point of view the story is quite different, and here, of course, is the key to the whole situation. Germany conquered Roumania, not that she might go on fighting, but that she might stop fighting. She was not looking for military advantages at all. She was looking for peace. She wanted to be in actual possession of the territory that it was essential to her to retain, in order that she might gracefully relinquish the territory that she knew she would be unable to retain. She did not believe that she would be called upon to face the purely military disadvantages of her Roumanian conquest. She expected to be able to point to the total of her territorial gains, and then, as the price of peace, to hand back the western portion of them. It was quite easy to foresee that she would propose peace as soon as she had conquered Roumania or was certain to do so, and it was so stated definitely in this column over a week before

Roumania really weakens Germany. Political advantages in Peace Programme offset by Military Disadvantages; also by the fact that "the temper of the Allies is too obvious to suppose that there will be any toleration or even discussion of a peace that is to be founded on the basis of a draw."

B Y S I D N E Y C O R Y N

Copyrighted in the United States by the San Francisco Argonaut. Canadian rights held by the Canadian Courier.

the event. Without in any way impugning her sincerity it was quite obviously the only thing that she could do, just as it was obviously the psychological moment at which to do it. She had won a political advantage at the cost of a military disadvantage. The political advantage was immediate, while the military disadvantage was prospective, and she sought to preserve the one and to avoid the other. She would not have proposed peace if her military position had been so much improved by her Roumanian successes. She waited for high-water mark, and until the military genius of her commanders had given her all that it could possibly be expected to give her. She tried to interpose between the action and the reaction, so as to retain the fruits of action and to escape the consequent reaction. It was the sagacious course to follow, but at the same time we may usefully remember that peace proposals do not usually emanate from a conviction of ultimate victory, but rather from the prevision of failure.

THERE can not be much doubt of its nature. It will be an unequivocal and categorical rejection, and it will be accompanied with a definite counter statement of the Allied demands. The claim of Germany to be the victor will be met with an equally definite denial of that claim, and the denial is not likely to lose any of its force from the current news of French victories at Verdun. There will not be the slightest admission of failure, nor the least abatement of confidence in ultimate Allied victory, nor the smallest expression of disinclination to continue the struggle. And it may be said here that it is at least unfortunate that the representative men of the warring countries were not persuaded into silence during the interval between the receipt of the proposals and the reply. Perhaps it is inevitable that there should be expressions of determination from the leaders of the various European countries, and for the most part those expressions have been free from arrogance. But it certainly can not tend to lubricate the wheels of debate that free circulation and publicity should be given to such haughtily insolent defiance as those emanating, for example, from General von Hindenburg and from others still higher, or that peace proposals should be accompanied with whirling threats of what will happen in case of their rejection, threats that are repeated and emphasized with the passing of the days. Even if such overbearing menaces are the natural expressions of human feeling, even if they are demanded by the exigencies of a domestic situation or the encouragement of armies, they can at least be excluded from general publicity. What could we expect from a conciliatory meeting between two individuals that was preceded by grossly offensive shoutings and trumpelings of ultimate vengeance? That such a stricture is not unjustified, that it finds responsible utterances in Germany, is shown by the article contributed recently by Dr. Dernburg to the Berliner

Tageblatt. Dr. Dernburg says: "With the utmost conviction I declare that the German nation wants with all its power to avoid such terrible happenings as the present world-war, and it wants all means to be brought into action which can help in this matter. We have never cut a good figure at The Hague Conference, not, perhaps, because we were not in the right, but because we shouted our own opinions of the proposals made there with such brutal coolness that the other side, which consisted of the leading men of the other nations of the world, was deeply offended. That was certainly nothing to boast about, and certainly not diplomacy."

But the question that we are all asking ourselves is whether these overtures can have any useful result. It is true that at the moment we do not know precisely what the overtures are except that they include the restoration of the status quo in the west and the submission to discussion of the whole Balkan problem. But there seems to be a wider chasm even than these, and these are wide enough in all conscience. The speech of the chancellor is based on the postulate, announced, one might say, vociferously, that Germany is the victor and that the Allies must accede to that fact. It is because Germany is the victor, so we are told, that these proposals have been made, and attention to them would therefore involve an admission of that claim. We are told of Germany's "gigantic advantages" and of the ease and willingness with which she can prosecute the struggle. Now the temper of the Reichstag may have demanded that these assertions be made. But was it the part of diplomatic wisdom to proclaim them to the world? Was it the kind of thing that would strike with a conciliatory or ingratiating sound upon the ears of Germany's enemies? Was it not likely to close the door with a bang before it had been fairly opened?

For what are the facts? The most obvious fact is that every one of the Allied nations is now inaugurating new plans for the prosecution of the war and that not a syllable of discouragement has been whispered anywhere on the outer circle of Europe. England has just appointed a practical dictator and she has named the one man who of all others is the most effective and the most resolute. France has reconstructed her cabinet and appointed as commander-in-chief of her armies the soldier to whom she ascribes her victories at Verdun. The Russian Duma has not only insisted upon a pro-Slav reconstruction of the ministry, but has placed itself upon record both before and since the peace proposals as insisting in the name of the Russian people upon a vigorous continuation of the war. It is an undisputed fact that neither England nor Russia has yet reached a maximum strength. How, then, can it be expected that either should enter a peace conclave with a tacit admission of defeat? Would it not have been wiser, more diplomatic, if the chancellor had been less declamatory, a little less wounding, or if those portions of his speech that must necessarily be considered as an affront had been veiled by the omnipotent censor? It must be regarded as a lamentable result of such indiscretions that public opinion in France and England is said to have perceptibly hardened since these proposals were made, and that whatever peace sentiment may have been aroused during the first few hours has nearly wholly disappeared as the setting and form of the chancellor's speech has been better appreciated.

The Allies will, of course, make their counter proposals, however hopeless such a procedure may (Concluded on page 27.)