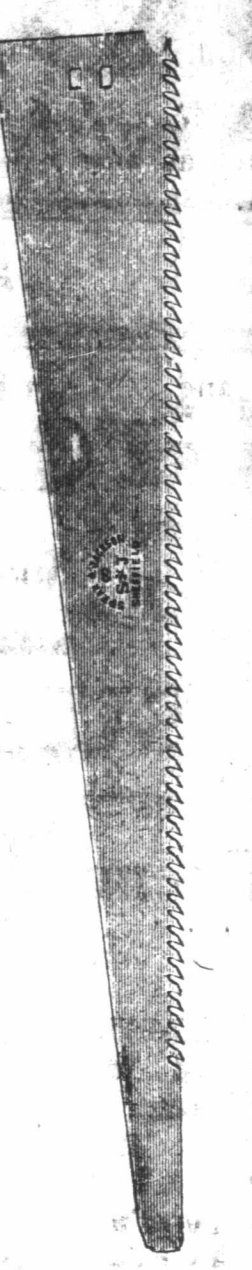


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**THE GERMANS HAVE FAILED  
IN THEIR DRIVE ON RIGA**

**A Graphic Description of the Country in Which the Germans Have Been Laboring so Unsuccessfully the Past Two Months--With Equal Stores of Munitions the Russians Have Proved Themselves a Match for the Invaders.**

A military expert, reviewing the situation in the region of Riga, which the Germans have been making desperate efforts to capture, writes as follows in the New York Times:—

On the Russian front, the week has been characterized by great activity on both ends of the line. On the Russian right, the Dvinsk-Riga railroad has still remained the main German objective, first Riga and then Dvinsk being the centre of attack. Against both points the attacks so far have been failures, and as the Germans have been thrown back at one they have shifted the attack to the other—and so it has gone on for weeks with practically no change in the general situation.

The topographical features of the Riga section in so far as they have any military bearing have already been pretty thoroughly discussed in these reviews. With the accompanying detailed map, however, it will be possible to get a more thorough grasp of what the country is like, where the German lines run and what they are trying to accomplish.

Although the operations in front of Dvinsk have for their object the city of Riga, and to that extent are a part of the Riga operations, viewed as battles Riga and Dvinsk are entirely different in their main features, and will therefore be treated separately.

The attack on Riga itself really began from the southwest along the line of railroad leading to Riga from Mitau, the latter town being used as a base for the operations. This was the natural and logical plan because of the many railroads centering in Mitau. First there is the main line running north from Szawle, an excellent broad gauge double track. In addition single track, but broad gauge roads, also run in from Libau, and Windau. These roads are also all connected with a number of high-ways, many of which are broad, metalled or well macadamized. It therefore offered every advantage as a base for an attack in force against the Riga line.

For weeks the Germans clung to this line of advance and succeeded in advancing up the Mitau-Riga railroad as far as the village of Olai, about half-way between. Here, however, the great Tirul marsh interposed and they were brought to a halt. On one side, and directly in their front, was the forest marsh, on the other side dense forests, which are themselves cut up here and there with smaller marshes. Every available resource of the Teutons in this section of the field were concentrated for the drive, but the Russians, greatly assisted by the topographical features, were equal to the demand and threw the Teuton armies back as fast as they came up, inflicting terrible losses in each fight.

As for the reason of the Russian success, the map is almost of itself sufficient explanation. In interpreting it, the German methods in attacking the Russian line must be remembered. The keystone of the German attack has been their heavy guns. By a concentration of these at selected points of attack, the Russians, who had no competitive arm, were driven back and the line at these points bent. The result was the inevitable salient. The most striking example of this was at Vilna, and all those who have followed the eastern campaign at all closely will remember the creation of the Vilna salient and the very narrow escape this part of the Russian line had from the trap so carefully prepared by the Teutons.

In the offensive against Riga, however, no such methods were possible, principally because the Germans were restricted by the marshes to an attack over a comparatively narrow front and also because their big guns could not be brought forward much beyond the village of Peterhof, about three miles southwest of Olai, where the marshes begin. This limited the German attack to guns which could be matched by the Russians; in fact, limited it almost entirely to infantry actions, and the individual Russian soldier well armed is the equal of the individual German. Once on an equal footing with their adversary the Russians held their own.

Seeing the futility of their attacks along the Mitau-Riga line the German offensive shifted further south to the Vilna-Lida-Viteks triangle. In this triangle it seemed that the Russians were trapped beyond the possibility of a successful withdrawal. But at the

last minute they opened the way to retreat, so that the trap was sprung too late.

The German attention was then turned to Dvinsk and at the same time an intermittent revival of the fighting along the Mitau-Riga road was noticed. Now, the attack everywhere else being unsuccessful, the Germans have again shifted and are attacking from the west along the line of the Windau-Riga road, west of Schlok. Here the attacks are being pressed as vigorously as they were from the southwest some weeks ago. But the result is the same—the Teutons have been unable to advance.

The German Army in this sector extends generally east and west to Jacobstaadt, where it turns and runs south. From a point on the railroad about five miles north-east of Tukum, the German line generally parallels the banks of the River Olai. Here is another excellent defensive screen, and firmly entrenched behind it, they forced the Germans to turn south along the border of the Tirul Swamps. Although it is not known as a fact, the probabilities are that at this point the German Army is divided, one section of it operating west of the marsh, just south of Schlok, the other east of the marsh along the road from Mitau. The line continues east from Olai to Jacobstaadt, where it turns south in front of the Lutsk-Dvinsk railroad.

It is the Tukum-Jacobstaadt section of this line that has been particularly active this past week. But the Russian defensive is still stronger than the German attack. At no point along this line have the Russians given ground but have held their own, seizing the initiative and striking back as occasion offers.

The German losses on this front have been appalling. What the numbers are no one but the Germans themselves know, but from the nature of the fighting and the character of the terrain the casualty list must be almost beyond comprehension. The fighting is still continuing, its intensity unabated, but unless the Germans are strongly reinforced it is doubtful if they can do more than they have already done. On the whole, indeed, the campaign based on Mitau seemed to offer greater chances of success than that based on Tukum, as the distances are shorter and the railroad communications better, while the character of the country is practically the same. If the German could not succeed, then, in the drive from the southwest the chances seemed none too rosy for success in their operations from the west.

In the battles for Dvinsk the German efforts have been if anything more violent than in the fight for Riga, but the failure before Dvinsk has been if anything more definite and more plainly indicated. The situation, indeed, has been prolonged by the Russians until it does not seem as if the Germans can succeed unless they are able to add strong reinforcements, drawn from some of the other fields. This would practically mean the abandonment of activity in that section from which the reinforcements come, for on no front can the Germans now draw men without considerable danger that their line will be forced at the weakened point. The loss in men in front of Dvinsk has been great and is being felt.

The battle is still going on as vigorously as ever, but the fact that the Russians are not only holding their own but have engineered successfully counter-attacks, which during the last week alone enabled them to capture nearly 10,000 of the enemy, would indicate that the Germans are certainly not strong enough to carry through their programme.

The country around Dvinsk, while much better adapted to military operations than the Riga country, is nevertheless far from ideal. It is known as the lake country, and west and south of the town are numberless lakes both large and small, between which, in some cases, heavy woodland, in others the marshes.

The Germans are nearest the town on the west and northwest. Their only means of attack, however, from either of these directions is absolutely frontal. No opportunity is offered to turn the Russian line and flank it out of position. The screen of the Dvina River, which is for the most part in Russian hands, has proved sufficiently strong in the north-west. Lake Swenter, with its surrounding

woodland and marsh, has been the serious obstacle in the west.

Two long persistent attacks were made along the Schlossberg-Chikovo line, but both broke down completely. The more recent attacks have been over the somewhat wider front, from Illukst to a point about eight miles south-west of Dvinsk along the Novo Alexandrovsk road. It has resulted in some small advantages in the vicinity of Illukst, where a part at least of the town seems to be now in German hands. Somewhat to the south, in the vicinity of the Dryswiaty Lake the advantage seems to be all with the Russians.

Summed up, the situation in this entire section seems to be a stand-off. The Germans have spent two months in attacks that have produced nothing except a great loss in effectiveness which they could ill afford. The Russians have clung tenaciously to their lines, also losing heavily, which is not a serious matter with them, and taking such opportunities as are afforded to strike back.

The Germans, of course, may yet succeed. They are undoubtedly constructing some means of crossing the marshes, either bridges or roads or both, in preparation for further offensive operations. But they are suffering a handicap they have not before been laboring under in the east—the Russian munitionment in size and quality is equal to theirs.

South of Dvinsk there has been but little activity until Volhynia and Galicia are reached. This is an entirely logical condition. The Russians some months ago retreated behind the Pripet Marshes west of the Vilna-Rovno system of railroads. Here the front on which either side can operate is small, and while it is true the Russians have only to guard certain passages across the marshes, the same holds true with the Teutons. With comparatively small numbers, therefore, the Russians can be held in position while the balance of the Teuton army can be used in other operations.

It is from this front, in all probability, that von Hindenburg has drawn his reinforcements. The front in the Pinsk region has, therefore, been very quiet. This operates in favor of the Russians, who thus have a needed opportunity to reorganize their forces which had been more or less shattered by the long retreat from the Dunajec and to build up their depleted store of shell and other forms of ammunition.

In Volhynia, a section of the line held by the Austrians, there has been severe fighting of a strictly local character. Its only result has been a heavy casualty list. Of much greater importance, at least from a political standpoint, are the series of battles along the Strypa in Galicia. This has been the weak spot in the Teuton line for the past two months. Against it the Russians have been constantly attacking, usually with success, and in prisoners and casualties have taken an exceptionally toll. This section of the line has probably been drawn on heavily to supply the men needed for Mackensen's operation in Serbia, thus giving Russia an additional advantage.

While the Russians have advanced from the east bank of the Serut to the west bank of the Strypa, their successes have not yet reached the point where they have brought any military danger to the Teuton front. The Teuton line will be in danger only when its supply lines are threatened, and not until the Russian offensive imperils Lemberg will the Teutons feel any alarm.

The political aspect is, however, entirely a different matter. Our sense of proportion is invariably blunted by proximity, and events that occur near to us always assume undue importance because of the fact that they are near. The right of the Russian line rests on the Rumanian frontier. Rumania is seething and, if we may judge from reports, but little influence is needed to produce a declaration of war in favor of the Entente. Any Russian success so near the frontier will necessarily find its reflection in Bucharest, if not to the extent of stiffening the Rumanian attitude toward Germany.

The relations between these nations have been somewhat strained, anyhow, first by the refusal of Rumania to permit the passage of troops and supplies to Turkey, and within the past few days by the Rumanian attitude toward Russia in regard to the passage of the Danube. Both these decisions Germany resents, although not daring to do so openly. If Russia through successes in Galicia can convince Rumania of her ability fully to occupy Teutons now in Galicia so that Rumania need not have an invasion a long step will have been taken toward inducing Rumania to enter the war.

A Hun Rip Van Winkle.

Baron Mumm von Schwarzenstein solemnly declares that the German Foreign Office maintains no secret service department. Baron Mumm's sense of humor is evidently not of the "extra dry" sort.—N. Y. World.

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