

THE GAME NOT WORTH THE CANDLE

THERE is no need further to insist upon the vital character of the struggle in Roumania. It is now receiving everywhere the precedence that it deserves, but there is still no evidence that a crisis has been reached or that the combatants have developed their main strength. Roumania's attempt to invade Transylvania has come to an end in failure, but by no means in disaster. In spite of the usual flamboyant assurances of rout and dispersal, it seems that the Roumanians were able to turn upon their pursuers and to hold them back from the Roumanian frontier. Falkenhayn's effort to invade Roumania, an effort that was partially and momentarily successful, has been checked. The crushing of Roumania, as was said last week, is still unaccomplished. None the less the situation of Roumania is a serious one if the attack should continue, since we do not know what obstacles the Teutons may be able to place in the way of Russian reinforcements from the north. Roumania undoubtedly made a grave mistake when she invaded Transylvania, and so began a movement that she had not men enough to carry through. When the war is over it will be interesting to know what Russia thought of this, and whether she assented to the improvident effort at territorial gains at the expense of what should have been a concerted effort. Roumania would have been comparatively safe behind her Transylvania frontiers, which are mountainous and easily defended. By invading Transylvania she threw away these defences and exposed herself to the attacks of a foe who was stronger than herself. None the less there is something to her credit. She compelled a great extension of the Teuton front, and she occupied the attention of Falkenhayn, who would otherwise have busied himself against the Russians in Galicia. And the Russians in Galicia have quite enough to do as it is.

As a direct result of Roumanian impetuosity in Transylvania, we now have a Teuton success in the Dobrudja, which is much the more important field of the two. It is quite easy to see what happened. The critical nature of events in Transylvania compelled the Roumanians to withdraw every available man from the defence of Constanza in the Dobrudja, and Mackensen naturally seized his opportunity and brought an attack that has forced back the Roumanian left wing that was resting on the Black Sea. Now the Dobrudja is a long and narrow corridor that connects Bulgaria with Russia. That corridor was closed so long as Roumania remained neutral, but, once opened, it becomes a highway for a Teuton advance into Russia or for a Russian advance into Bulgaria. It also provides an entrance into Roumania proper over the Danube railroad at Constanza. Its strategic importance is so vital that one would have supposed that its defence would have been the first consideration, and that the whole of Roumania's efforts would have been directed to it. But Mackensen seems to have had no particular difficulty in forcing his way up that corridor nearly as far as Constanza before any effective force was brought against him. It is true that he was eventually stopped before he had reached the railroad bridge, and that he was even forced back at certain points, but it is now evident that the defending line has been weakened for the purpose of resisting Falkenhayn to the west.

AT the moment of writing comes a Berlin report that Mackensen has taken Constanza, and if this should be confirmed it would be hard to exaggerate the gravity of such a victory so far as Roumania is concerned. If the Roumanians have lost Constanza they may not only be invaded from across the river, but they may have to surrender the control of both sides of the Danube, and the Russians in Bukowina will be exposed to an attack from their rear. The Danube, running north and south, constitutes the western frontier of the Dobrudja, separating it from Roumania proper. At Reni the Danube turns to the east and forms the Dobrudja's northern frontier, separating it from Bessarabia. Reni is also the junction point between the Danube and the Pruth, and the Pruth River runs up to the east of Bukowina and Czernowitz. Every consideration of strategy should have urged the Roumanians to the defence of the Dobrudja before all other considerations. The corridor could have been kept open if Roumania had concentrated her strength upon it. Why she

Germany Not Likely to Besiege Roumania or to Put up a Long Campaign in That Country

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neglected to do so remains to be seen.

The plight of Roumania is a serious one if Constanza has actually fallen, but it is not necessarily desperate. It might still be possible to prevent the crossing of the Danube, a feat that Mackensen will not attempt unless he is sure that his rear is secure from a Russian attack from the north. His army cannot be a very large one, and the crossing of the Danube in the face of opposition would be a difficult feat. None the less, Mackensen is a man who performs difficult feats, and if he can force his way across the river he will probably take Bucarest. We must wait for coming bulletins in order to know the exact situation, but at the moment it looks as though Roumania had received a heavy blow, and a blow that might have serious consequences upon the Russian forces in the north.

But if Roumania is to be saved it will not be due wholly to her own powers of resistance. It will be due also to Germany's clear vision of the main chance. It is of course a matter of some importance to Germany to crush a new and small enemy and so to provide an object lesson in her own power, not only for home consumption, but also for the consideration of Greece. But Germany is by no means

The philosophy of the Roumanian campaign is to cripple Roumania, impress the Germans and make Greece take notice. But Germany knows that even though she should crush Roumania, her main business in the Balkans is to stop Russia if possible from invading Bulgaria.

blind to the fact that Russia, and not Roumania, is the real enemy, and that even though she can crush Roumania she must still meet the northern colossus and hold him back from the invasion of Bulgaria. Now she can intercept that flood either in Roumania, or nearer to its source, and it would obviously pay her far better to beat Russia in Galicia than further south. It would be the difference between striking at the body of an octopus and cutting off one of its tentacles. We may be sure that Germany does not view without concern the lengthening of her line necessitated by her campaigns in the Balkans. She would much like to use the Balkan armies for service in the north, where they are so badly needed. If she should crush Roumania quickly and so turn her forces elsewhere, it would, of course, be a great gain, morally and in every other way. But she is not likely to lay siege to Roumania or to enter on a long and tedious campaign there. The game is not worth the candle. She can not afford to lock up her forces in the south while the war in the north is so evenly balanced. Whatever she does in Roumania must be done quickly or it had better be left undone. She will not waste time in Roumania if there is a chance to strike a damaging blow at Brussiloff, which would cut off the southward moving waters at their source. Probably Germany bitterly regrets her intrusion into the Balkans, which has locked up so many men that might be employed against her more formidable enemies, and she would much like to release them. If she can hold back the Roumanians from the invasion of Bulgaria she would probably be content to do that and no more, and so to throw every available man into the scales against Brussiloff. If she could but drive back the Russians in Galicia, if she could repeat her performance of last year and possibly reach the Black Sea, she would not only have saved Bulgaria, at least

from northern attacks, but she would have isolated Roumania. And so we are likely to find either that her attacks on Roumania are decisively successful within the next few days, or else that she is withdrawing her forces for a sledge-hammer blow against the Russians in the north while continuing to hold the Dobrudja corridor against incursions from Bessarabia.

Roumania stands at the point of intersection of two straight lines of military effort, one running north and south from Riga to Saloniki and the other running northwest to southeast from Berlin to Bagdad. Whoever wins, Roumania will have cut across the line of his opponent. The effort of Russia, moving southward from Galicia, is to join hands with her allies who are moving northward from Greece, and so to create a continuous front, fifteen hundred miles long, from Riga to the Aegean Sea. The Teutons, on the other hand, are concerned with their line, now actually existing, from Berlin eastward through the Balkans to Constantinople and to Asia Minor. Roumania is a link in the great north and south line, a line not quite complete even with Roumania, and a line that it will be difficult to complete without her.

At the present moment, Germany is making two great efforts in the east and the success of either of them would be fatal to Roumania. She is actively engaging the Roumanian armies in the south, and she is also making a tremendous effort to turn the Russian left wing in the Carpathians to the north. Her efforts against the Roumanians now speak for themselves, but it is evident that any success that she can win against the Russian left wing to the north would have the effect of cutting the communications between the Russians and the Roumanians, and still further isolating the southern kingdom.

That Trans-Atlantic Blockade Bugaboo

THE recent plan of the Germans to blockade by submarines the North Atlantic coast is one of those frantic exaggerations of the Spectacular for which Germany has made herself quite infamously famous. If that policy had been any good as a real war programme it would have been tried long ago by Germany, who has never hesitated to do anything new, no matter how frightful or useless it might happen to be. The fact that so many of Germany's actions are both frightful and useless indicates the fatal streak on the national character. The so-called submarine blockade of the North Atlantic coast of North America will be even a worse failure than the former submarine blockade of England and the Zeppelin raids. The basic idea to strike at shipping intended to benefit England at the source from which it begins has enough novelty to attract interest among the Germans. It has, so far as can be seen, little else but novelty to make it worth considering. If submarines can be sent so far in order to blockade any part of North America, it is safe to assume that enough warships can be released from the Allied navies to look after them. A war ship can travel farther and faster than a submarine. The British Admiralty and the Department of Marine at Ottawa will have no uneasy and sleepless nights over this latest, if by no means the last, exhibition of German ingenuity. Our Canadian troops and cargoes will continue to go forward as they have been doing. If there had been any real merit in the trans-Atlantic submarine programme it would have been put into effect long ago in order to stop Canadian troops from getting on to the high seas. So far we have sent about 300,000 troops to England and France without a single mishap to any troopship. We may reasonably expect to continue so doing. How far the latest type of submarine mechanism for use in cold northern waters may affect this activity remains to be seen. But Germany has learned far less from her submarine failures than she has learned from the successes of her enemies. Her failure to make the British submarine blockade a success should be enough to warn her that the trans-Atlantic exploits of all such as the U-53 are doomed to similar dismal failure. Grandstand plays thrill the audience and sometimes gain a point or two, but in a war like this it is "dogged as does it."