

lantern. He put both arms before his face and groaned aloud twice. Then he picked up the lantern and went on.

Lewis Brant went to the Klondyke, at that time the lure of all men who sought fortune or forgetting. Scant measures of the former he found there, but enough of the latter to make life tolerable again. At long intervals a letter from Carl Schultz reached him. Those letters were formally and carefully written and related chiefly to Lewis's property interest in the farm. He had taken a mortgage on the farm in lieu of wages, and left instructions with Carl that the old people were never to be worried about the interest.

In the course of time Lewis drifted down the coast and through the West, prospering reasonably,

as a man will who cares for nothing but his work. After a while he began to care about his prosperity. It was a promising investment opening up in the tenth year of his exile that recalled his claim upon the farm. He decided on a personal return to investigate the chances of immediate realization.

On a wet evening in spring he walked into Carl Schultz's dooryard. He knew that Carl had married Vinnie, and that he was paying for the place he lived on. Lewis felt like an entirely different person from the wretched exile of ten years before, but the outward change was not great. Vinnie knew him instantly.

She opened the door with a plump, staring baby on one arm. A round-eyed two-year-old clung to her skirt with one hand, the other grasping a tin

cup in which a large marble rolled uncertainly.

"Well, Lewis Brant! Come in!" cried Vinnie. "Well, if you don't look natural!"

She put him in a rocking-chair by the kitchen window, set the baby on the floor and bustled about getting supper, talking all the while.

"My land! Won't Carl be tickled! My! He ain't far off. I guess he's somewheres round the barn with the boys. When'd you come? What you been doin' all these years? You ain't married yet?"

Carl came in from the barn with his two elder children. He greeted Lewis heartily, washed his face and hands at the sink, took the baby on his knee and kept the toddler out of Vinnie's way as she hurried back and forth.

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# THE WAR FROM ALL ANGLES

**A** CERTAIN monotony has now marked the progress of the war for many weeks, a monotony broken only by a few such events as the Italian capture of Gorizia and the surprising French success at Verdun. At all other parts of the field there is the same slow and steady pressure with local gains and losses, but without any visible prospect of critical actions. And yet we must suppose that critical actions are contemplated, and that the daily monotones are actually steps toward their accomplishment. And behind the panorama that is within our sight there is a certain stealthy movement that suggests a groping for peace, a certain blind search for something that may be talked about rather than fought about, for something that shall at least make talk possible.

The explanation of the great Somme offensive that has been suggested from time to time in this column has aroused the resentment of certain critics, who prefer to believe that the Allies have set themselves an impossible task and that they have embarked on an effort that is foredoomed to failure. The Somme offensive, we are told, is an attempt to push the Germans out of France, and its success is to be measured by the extent of the German withdrawal as compared with the extent of the territory that is still held. This is the view that has been combatted from time to time in this column. The Allies are not trying to expel the Germans from France by means of a direct push, but by means of such strategical gains as shall make their position an untenable one. And a gain of even half a mile in the right place and at the right time might easily have this result.

Now this view may be an error, but if so it is one in which the German staff participates. Recent German newspapers publish an official report from the German army headquarters at Berlin in which the Allied aim is clearly recognized and in which no other aim is even considered. The aim, says the report, is to pierce the German lines, and not merely to push them back toward their own frontier. Speaking of the September movements, the report says: "By an undeniably increased pushing force he obtained an important gain in terrain and, resuming his bold intention of breaking through, the enemy directed all his efforts against the top of the triangle." A few lines further on we read: "The southern battle in the district of Biaches and Vermandovilliers, after the failure of the endeavor to break through on a big scale, resulted in a noticeable gain of terrain in the section of Berny and Chaulnes in consequence of powerful local thrusts." And again: "The enemy did not succeed in breaking through the German lines." No other aim is even suggested except toward the end of the report, where we find a mention of "the modest aim of detaining a sufficient number of German troops on the western front in order to impede a great German action in another war theatre. Nowhere is there a hint that the Allied aim was to push the Germans back, step by step, out of France. There may be those who are amused by rule-of-three comparisons between the area gained and the area to be gained, but the German staff is not among them.

The Allied aim is, of course, correctly stated in the German report. It is to pierce the line and so to force a sudden and precipitate retirement to avoid

Lewick. A subsidiary aim is to bulge the German of Graceard so as to compel a withdrawal from the "Look here angle. If the latter aim should succeed just what it would not necessarily be disastrous. "He didn't say withdrawal in good order and in "Well, your ma, attacks would be immensely difficult. She was silent. "Would assuredly follow the pierce- "Now, look here! I'n. There could be no real re-

## *The Allies are not Trying to Drive the Germans out of France by a Direct Push but by Strategy to Make their Position Untenable*

By SIDNEY CORYN

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covery from that. It may be taken almost as an axiom that whether a battle line is entrenched or in the open, it is already defeated if it has once been cut. Now a line may be cut as the result of a direct and concentrated attack upon a small area, or it may be cut by such a faulty disposition of its parts as to leave a gap of which the enemy may take advantage. Germany lost the battle of the Marne because she allowed the two flanks of her army to draw apart, and so created a gap in the centre through which Foch poured his forces. It was a blunder of such magnitude as to justify the Emperor's suggestion that the guilty general would do well to shoot himself. It is such a gap, either forced or accidental, that the Allies are hoping to create or to discover on the Somme. Sir William Robertson says that it can be created. He says that such is the Allied goal. Time will show. But it is evident that the distance of the armies from the frontier has no bearing or but a very slight one, upon the problem. If the feat can be done at all it can be done wherever the armies happen to find themselves.

**T**HE existence of a certain mystery in connection with the Dobrudja operation has been disclosed by the most recent reports, and we may still look upon the Dobrudja as the most likely field for critical events. When Mackensen pushed northward through the Dobrudja, taking Constanza, and driving the Roumanians before him, he was reported as continuing his march northward and refraining from any attempt to cross the Danube to his west and so to invade Roumania proper. Indeed we were told that his advance northward from Constanza was so extraordinarily rapid as to prove the demoralization of his enemy, and there were even those who believed that he intended to cross the Danube to his north and to threaten Odessa—for we must remember that the Danube constitutes the northern frontier of the Dobrudja as well as the western. There seemed to be good reasons why Mackensen should not at that time attempt to cross the river to the west. In the first place the Constanza-Cernavoda bridge had been destroyed, which would mean at least delay, and in the second place it would be premature to do so in the absence of some reasonable prospect that he could join hands with Falkenhayn, who was endeavouring to invade Roumania from the west. That Mackensen did actually leave Constanza and the railroad behind him is certain. The reports to that effect were regular and definite, and they came from all sources. But it now seems that he also sent a force across the river, headed presumably for Bucharest, while he himself continued the pursuit of the retreating Roumanians. We know nothing of the size of this force. We do not know how it was transported across the river. And we do not know why such an operation should have been kept secret, and by all the different belligerents, except on some general principle of reporting nothing that remained uncritical and undecided.

But now the veil is suddenly lifted, or partially so. We are told, or rather we are allowed to infer, that when Mackensen passed northward up the Dobrudja he sent a portion of his force across the Danube to the west for the purpose of invading Roumania in the direction of Bucharest. And we are told quite

positively that this force now finds itself confronted with a Russian army that has succeeded in edging it toward the river and the marshes, and that has hopes of surrounding and capturing it. All this information is given in a quite casual way, and as though relating to a situation that was generally understood. But we are still told nothing as to the size of these forces, and we can hardly suppose that they are large, at least on the Teuton side. Mackensen's entire

army is not a large one, while the apparent ease and speed with which he drove the Roumanians before him after taking Constanza is evidence that he could not have detached many men for the raid across the river. Probably it was a raid and nothing more, and undertaken in the hope of striking a swift and fatal blow against Bucharest, or perhaps of hindering what is now actually happening—the intervention of a new Russian force coming down the west bank of the river.

**B**UT in the meantime Mackensen himself has been meeting with bad luck—the worst of bad luck. It was evident that in driving the Roumanians northward up the Dobrudja he was forcing them toward their friends. They must have been growing steadily stronger as they met the Russians coming southward to meet them, while Mackensen must have been growing steadily weaker as he lengthened his line of communications. When last we heard definitely of Mackensen he was thirty miles north of Constanza. Then came reports that the Roumanian resistance was stiffening. A day later we were told that Mackensen's flanks, resting on the Danube to the west and the Black Sea to the east, were slowly giving ground alternately before Roumanian and Russian attacks. And now we learn that Mackensen is only twelve miles to the north of Constanza, that both Cernavoda and Constanza are in flames, and that Constanza is being bombarded by Russian warships. And immediately on the other side of the Danube, to the west of Constanza and Cernavoda, there is a battle in progress between the force left behind by Mackensen for the invasion of Roumania, and the Russian force that must have been sent from the north, through Roumania, to meet it. No wonder Mackensen should now be falling back with such speed. Even though he were not compelled to do so by the superior forces confronting him he would none the less realize the gravity of his position if the Russians should win the fight at Cernavoda and Dunareav and so be in a position to cross the Danube to his rear. It has been said more than once in this column during the last few weeks that Mackensen was likely to find himself in serious danger in the Dobrudja, and events have now justified that prediction. He committed himself to a march up a long neck of land with enemies to the west and north, and the sea to the east. His line of communications is of the most fragile kind and needing the strongest defence against Roumanian raids from the west. And now he finds that the line is threatened, not only by Roumanian raids, but by a Russian army which bids fair to succeed, not only against the small German force opposing it to the west of the Danube, but in crossing the Danube to his rear. Mackensen is a shrewd and capable commander and he is not likely to stay in a trap merely to see if the door will actually close behind him. It would be foolish to do more than indicate the possibilities, and the rapidity with which Mackensen is now retreating shows clearly enough what those possibilities are. He does not intend to find that there is a Russian army before him as well as behind him when he reaches Constanza. He means to be there first, and either prevent the crossing or be well on his way southward and past the danger point before it