

Evening Ledger

PUBLIC LEDGER COMPANY
STUART B. CURTIS, President
Editorial Board:
Published daily at Public Ledger Building.

Subscription Terms
By carrier, Daily Ledger, six cents; by mail, postage paid at Philadelphia, except where foreign postage is required, Daily Ledger, one month, twenty-five cents; three months, seventy cents; six months, one dollar and twenty cents; one year, three dollars. All subscriptions payable in advance.

Address of all communications to Evening Ledger, Independence Square, Philadelphia.

THE AVERAGE NET PAID DAILY CIRCULATION OF THE EVENING LEDGER FOR JULY WAS 92,334.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1915.

It is only the gambler who thinks that money is always trumps in the game of life.

ENLISTING FOR THE FIGHT

THE most encouraging symptom in the present political condition of the city is the popular interest in the election. The first day's registration last year when a Governor and United States Senator were to be elected was only 96,000.

THEORIES DEMOLISHED BY FACTS

NO FINESPIN academic theory of economics can stand up before the facts of commerce. Therefore we find the Democratic opponents of the policy of protection advocating some form of protective legislation for the development of the dye industry in the United States.

THEY OUGHT TO AGREE

THE conspirators, in Philadelphia, have said that they have decided to forget their differences and work together in the election this year because of its great national significance.

THE GREAT DAY OF FRANCE

A YEAR of calamity has passed since the great day on the River Marne. In that time the imagination of men has become hardened against the keen edge of disaster and is neither moved by fatalities nor thrilled by the spectacular and picturesque.

ANOTHER BOND WITH GERMANY

DIPLOMATIC relations are not the only field in which the American people now find themselves in accord with the German people. It has been claimed that the Germans, realizing their error, are now engaged in a desperate attempt to win American goodwill.

GOVERNOR BRUMBAUGH WISES FROM SAN FRANCISCO

GOVERNOR Brumbaugh wires from San Francisco that he washes his hands of the majority in Philadelphia. "Out, damned spot!"

PHILADELPHIA YOUNG WOMEN ARE MODEST

PHILADELPHIA young women are modest. Only 18 of them responded to an advertisement calling for the most beautiful girl in the city.

AUSTRIANS WILL SOON INVADE SERBIA, SAYS A NEW REPORT

AUSTRIANS will soon invade Serbia, says a new report. Once ought to be enough. If Austria would only pick on a little fellow like Russia all the time her armies might gain a few victories.

WINE OF HUMAN LIBERTY WAS BORN SAFELY BACK TO ITS ALTAR.

If France had failed the war would now be over. Yet who would purchase peace with the disgraceful coin of slavery and humiliation? It is said that in the gray days of the invasion Paris, and all France, went through its hours with dazed and unseeing eyes.

UNITED IN THE PRESENCE OF LOOT

THE real reason for the solitude of the contractor bosses for harmony has not yet been publicly confessed by them. Their candidate for Mayor has interested himself in politics because it helps his business.

THE GREAT FISH-HOOK

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ITALY'S HUNDRED DAYS IN THE WAR

The First Phase of the Austro-Italian Conflict on the "Fish-hook" Frontier—A Clear Description of the Present Situation

By FRANK H. SIMONDS

ON SEPTEMBER 1 the first hundred days of Italy's war were ended and the period supplies a useful measure of the first phase of the campaign of the Italian troops. What, then, have the soldiers of the Peninsula accomplished in a span equal to that which separated Napoleon's landing in France from the collapse at Waterloo?

As far back as the year of 1909, when the Bosnian episode first revived ancient Austro-Italian bitterness, Austrian engineers began the work of throwing round the great permanent fortresses of the Trentine Tyrol and the lower and upper Isonzo lines of permanent trenches, lined with cement.

Early in the present war, when Italy at last began to make insistent demands for a redrawing of her Venetian frontier, which should abolish the triumphs of the Austrian map-makers of 1866, Austrian military leaders took instant alarm.

The Great Fish-hook. Roughly speaking, the Austrian frontier resembles a fish-hook; the barb is the Trentino projection into the Po valley; the curve the mountain wall south of the Pusterthal valley from Cortina to Pontebba.

Trent itself lies just inside the barb; east of it are the Dolomites, rising to a height above 9000 feet; west the Ortlers, which are crossed by the Stelvio Pass at an elevation of more than 9000 feet.

Now the first concern of the Italians must necessarily be to take this whole Trentine barb. In Austrian hands it was a constant menace. It was a gateway through which could be brought by the Pusterthal and the Brenner Pass great masses of German and Austrian troops, which would be protected from attack until they reached the Italian boundary.

A successful invasion from this direction would compel Italy to retire behind the Po and the Mincio. Venetia would be lost and the armies operating far to the east along the Isonzo might be enveloped and captured, certainly would be in danger at all times until the Trentine threat was removed.

The problem supplied by the curve of the fish-hook related mainly to that which has been described. Here the Italian frontier follows the crests of the mountains, save about Cortina. A push of ten or a dozen miles, the easiest possible thing, to judge by the map, would carry the Italians into the Pusterthal, a great natural roadway leading from the upper valley of the Drave to that of the Adige.

Having cut this the Italians could push west along the Pusterthal toward Franzensfeste. This is the second great Austrian fortress, and it covers the railroad which comes south across the Brenner and is the only other railway binding Austria to the southern Tyrol.

Similarly, if the railroad were cut south of Franzensfeste at any point, the effect would be the same. But the mere cutting of the railroad in the Pusterthal would not isolate Trent because it would not affect the Brenner railroad.

But this operation is easy only on the map. Actually there are only two possible roads open to the Italians, that which goes from Cortina to Toblach over the Ampezzo Pass, and a second just to the east, which crosses the Monte Croce Pass and reaches the Pusterthal at Ischnich.

By one of the vagaries of the Austrian map makers of 1866, Cortina, which is well south of the crest of the mountains and also outside the military line of Austrian defense, was included in Austrian territory.

Accordingly in the early days of the war, when the Italians occupied Cortina, a successful invasion of the Pusterthal was forecast, but the advance came to a dead halt but a few miles from the village, which has been for so many years the summer centre of diplomats spending their winters in Rome.

It remains now to describe the Isonzo line, the shaft of our fish-hook. At Pontebba, the main Venice-Vienna Railroad passes from the Italian Plain to the watershed of the Drave, by one of the most romantic gorges in Europe.

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LEARNING HIS LESSON



that Napoleon advanced toward Vienna in 1797 and reached the summit of the Semmering Pass, before Austria yielded and the Treaty of Campo Formio brought peace.

A few miles south of Pontebba the Isonzo River begins to parallel the Austro-Italian frontier, a few miles to the east. Down this from Tolmino to Gorizia runs the Trieste-Trent Railroad, which is also one of the two lines connecting Trieste with Vienna.

Now from Tolmino to Gorizia this river flows through a narrow gorge. At Gorizia, however, the western bank, rising first to some little elevation on the Podgora hill, sinks to the level of the plain. But on the east, the Carso Plateau, stretching north from Trieste meets the Isonzo, which flows to the sea along its base.

The Austrian position is in the main behind the Isonzo, protected at first by the gorge. But near Gorizia it crosses the river and holds the Podgora hill, which is the key of Gorizia. South of this point it follows the crest of the Carso Plateau, touching the sea north of Nabsresna, which is in sight of Trieste.

Thus the Isonzo position rests upon three fortified points, Malborgetto at the north, Tolmino in the centre and Gorizia and the Carso Plateau at the south. Close to this line runs the Trent-Trieste railway, so near as to be under fire of the Italian artillery and unserviceable.

Against the Trentine projection, the barb, from the Stelvio Pass, on the Swiss frontier, to Cortina, at the Ampezzo, Italy was bound to press an attack which had for its object, first, the seizing of all possible positions commanding the entrance into the Italian plain.

Secondly, Italy was bound to follow the first advances by a serious and sustained operation, directed at reducing the forts about Trent and thus abolishing the dangerous enemy citadel within her natural frontiers.

Thirdly, Italy was bound to endeavor to push north over the Ampezzo and Monte Croce passes into the Pusterthal and thence west against Franzensfeste in the endeavor to isolate the Trentine salient and thus completely encircle it and insure its ultimate surrender to famine and exhaustion of ammunition.

Fourthly, there was the Isonzo problem. Unlike Napoleon, Cadorna had no immediate ambition to take the road to Vienna. Trieste was his objective, and therefore his main thrust was to be made not at Malborgetto, not even at Tolmino, but at Gorizia, although subsidiary operations against those points would contribute to the main operation by aiding in isolating it.

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You know, even though you would not say so, you know that the Organization will surely win the Majority and all that goes with it this fall unless they beat themselves by foolish factional strife, as George H. Earle was beaten in 1911.

Of course, I will admit, I, myself, would like to see the primaries work as they were intended and see all of those that filed their nomination papers make a free for all race of it, giving me, as one of the rank and file, a chance to have my say who I think ought to be the standard bearer for my party.

As to the fourth task, that of forcing the Isonzo line, the situation is only different in a degree. Fort Malborgetto still holds out, although it has frequently been demolished in Milan reports. The Pontebba road to Villach, which Napoleon forced, remains closed.

The length of the Gorizia battle front may be estimated at about 25 miles. It extends, roughly speaking, from Plava, where the Isonzo approaches the Italian plain, to the Carso Plateau, just north of the Adriatic and a little east of Montefalcone. Gorizia is about in the centre.

Back to Trench Work. South of Gorizia the Isonzo makes a wide bend to the west and then to the east, entering the Adriatic near Montefalcone. But here the Austrian line crosses the Carso Plateau, making the string to the bow, which is the curve of the river.

In the opening days of the war the Italians rushed forward from their territory, a few miles west of the Isonzo, to the river towns of Gradisca and Montefalcone, captured both and crossed the river. They also forced a crossing of the river to the north about Plava.

Early in August both Vienna and Rome agreed that the Italians made a series of attacks, preceded by artillery. These attacks were desperate efforts to force the lines still held by relatively small Austrian forces, before German or Austrian reinforcements could be sent from the east.

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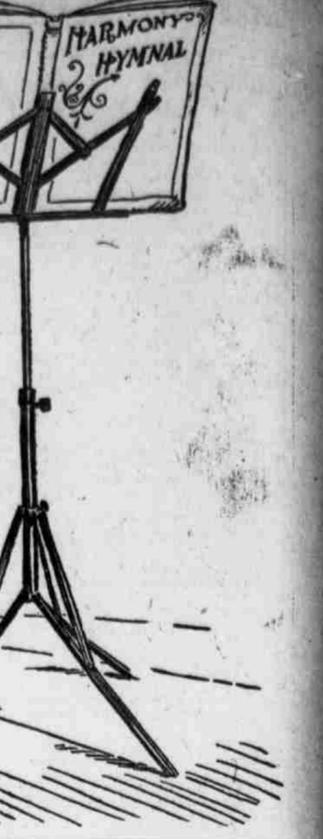
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