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Italy is Now Ready to Crush Austria

AND INSURE THE EXTENT'S TRI-
UMPH IF ALLIES WILL BACK
HER WITH GUNS.

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Reversal of Battle Are on Western
Front Will Win War—But Cadorna
Must Have Cannon, Coal, and Air-
Planes to Carry Out His Plan.

With the Supreme Command of the
Italian Armies, Tuesday, Sept. 11.—
Despite Russia, the hour has struck
when the world must rivet its atten-
tion on the Italian front in Austria.
Austria and Germany are doing it. If
Italy's allies don't—well, if I may be
permitted to cable an inadequate ex-
pression, "it's a pity."

Here we had the longest and best
survey of the battlefield that any
correspondents had had since the be-
ginning of the war. I have seen the
Italian war in Austria from the moun-
tain peaks to the sea level. I have
seen things so tremendous and heard
things so important, yet so badly
stuffed in their truth, that I have had
a conversion of mind and soul about
this war. I have asked the question,
"Why are these Italian armies, their
leaders, and their offensive program
in Austria just being really discovered?"
I know the answer, but I am
unable to print it.

Here we are in the fourth year of
the war that threatens to obliterate
civilization. Here we are at the vital
moment with only a few ways to
win it, that is if we intend to end
with victory, so it need not be fought
all over again. I believe we can end
this war comparatively soon on the
Italian front in Austria. That is a
large statement—we can end this war
comparatively soon on the Italian
front in Austria.

Wait, now! I have not said that
Italy can win this war alone. I do not
intimate that our last field of glory
shall echo to the cry, "Avanti Savoia!"
and the death wail of Austria. What I
mean is that if we—by we I mean the
other allies who count, namely, Eng-
land, France and America—will agree
quickly on the present possibilities of
that front we will immediately impose
our military conditions upon Germany
instead of continuing to fight a war of

circumstances with Germany play-
ing her own military game.

A Great Italian's Questions.

I talked the other day with a great
Italian. If I might mention his name
his words would have a greater ef-
fect, but it is not permitted that the
public shall be told his name. He
said:

"Why don't your military sharps
look at a map once in a while—the
map of Italy?"

I did not reply, and then he plump-
ed at me a rather staggering ques-
tion: "What do you really think of
Italy in the United States? Do you
judge us entirely by our people who
work your railroads and who live in
New York's east side?"

Again I did not reply. A queer ex-
pression passed over his face. He
stared at me steadily. He was an im-
pressive figure, even in a drab uni-
form. But he could have worn the
toga. He could have emblazoned the
ancient and proud assertion 'I am a
Roman from Rome.' He spoke again.
"You needn't answer," he said. "I
know. But let's go back to the maps.
I refer you to a Corsican, whose name
your countrymen respect and who
studied maps, especially the map of
Italy. What he said afterwards is as
basically true now as then—over a
hundred years ago. For Napoleon
said, 'Germany can only be reached
through Austria from Italy.'"

And in this, the fourth year of this
war, I recalled poignantly that Na-
poleon followed up his assertion by
the deed. For Napoleon went to Lai-
bach. When he arrived there the
Austrian army was in such full flight
that only Austerlitz remained between
Napoleon and his dream. To-day
from the outposts of the Italian lines
in Austria the town of Laibach is only
forty miles away. If the Italian ar-
mies get to Laibach it is a safe pro-
phesy that the war is finished. Why?
Because if the Italian armies get to
Laibach the Austrian armies are
beaten. A beaten Austria is a beaten
Germany if the Allies will that it
shall be so, and a beaten Germany
naturally ends the war.

It is in such simple phrases as
these that my Italian friend have
talked. An understanding of the
country and a study of the map will,
I believe, prove them true. Military
sharps who have not studied maps
may say first: "But Italy wants

Trieste, and if she gets it her aim in
entering the war is accomplished." Quite
true, and Italy will get Trieste; but,
even so, she understands that at
Trieste the Austrian armies are not
necessarily finished. The loss of
Trieste would be a tremendous blow
to Austria, but its Italian capture
would be more a sentimental victory
than a real one. Austria would suffer
chiefly in loss of morale.

Laibach must be, and is, the real
objective, even though the military
sharp next says: "Well, she cannot
get there anyway because the going
is impossible. The mountains are too
high." Here is the answer: The
world at large may have a notion that
Italy delayed entering the war nearly
a year after the Allies in order to
prepare a sudden Austrian invasion.
That is partially but not altogether
the fact.

Italy, as a member of the Triple
Alliance, was an ally of Germany and
Austria, yet Austria prepared herself
against Italy. That was proved by
her frontier defenses and mobilisation
barracks along the Italian boundary.
So even when Italy entered the war
she was in a worse position to attack
than Austria. True, her army was
splendidly equipped and trained. Her
German alliance taught her many
military methods with which she has
profited. But Austria had the same
knowledge, and besides a far greater
advantage in physical position.

At the beginning of her advance in-
to Austria, Italy fought in the plain,
while Austria had the mountains. She
was exactly in the position of a per-
son standing at the bottom of a lad-
der against a high wall with an ene-
my at the top. Slowly, painfully, but
surely the Italian armies have gone
up the rungs of the ladder. They have
overcome difficulties that seemed
thrice harder than the job before
them to-day, for now her armies have
reached the top of the ladder and are
on exactly equal ground with the Aus-
trians, with this additional advantage,
that Austria is now invaded all along
the line. The damage that is being
done is happening to Austria.

Ignorance of Some Americans.

It is difficult to write about Italy the
way I want to write owing to the
deep-seated conviction that my fel-
low-countrymen will be hard to con-
vince. Americans realize so little
about the war in France that writing
about any place further off seems
rather hopeless. They ask such sim-
ple questions to prove their appalling
ignorance of anything and everything
about it. One said to me a few weeks
ago in Paris: "This Verdun—(he pro-
nounced it Verdon)—is it now in the
hands of the French or Germans?"
That seems incredible, but it is only
one question of many. Indeed, the
ocean is too wide for a comprehension
of the war. Even the Channel was
too wide for England immediately
to grasp the fact that she was fighting
for her life. I hope that the propor-
tions of water and understanding are
not carried out so that America un-
derstands too late.

If The Italians Get to Laibach.

But to get on to Laibach. Italy is
waging a classical war. Her opera-
tions are greater than Napoleonic. She
imposes every condition on the enemy.
And every step that Italy advances
hurts Austria to a point where Aus-
tria is already beginning to groan.
The Italian boot is descending on Aus-
trian ground. If the Italian heel rests
on Laibach with the toes pointing to
Vienna or Budapest comes naturally
the question, How will that end the
war?

The answer is that if Austria can
resist up to that point it is fairly cer-
tain that both her morale will be
shaken—with Trieste lost meantime—
and her armies will be rather well
done. Then at Laibach the moun-
tains end, and the plains, practically
unfortified, stretch away across Hun-
gary. But more important is the fact
that the fall of Laibach means the
finish of Austrian railway communi-
cations to the Dalmatian coast.
Fiume and Pola will be cut off. Aus-
tria's navy would soon be cut of ac-
tion and there would be an abrupt
termination to submarine activity in
the Adriatic and Mediterranean. These
indications may show in some degree
the plight of Austria if the Italians
get to Laibach. Voila, the French
say.

As to Germany.

What about Germany, is the next
question. I have already said that a
beaten Austria is a beaten Germany if
the Allies impose their will. Of
course, if they get sentimental and go
and make peace with her, why, then,
of course, Germany may struggle on.
But if they get to Laibach they have
it in their power to dictate terms that
will mean beating Germany and an
end of the war.

But can't the Germans help Austria
in the meantime? Now we come to a
bit of strategic reasoning. They
might help Austria. They would hope
to help her, and, perhaps, if they don't
bury themselves too far in Russia,
they might try. All right. Let us
take our fancy back to that Anglo-
French line stretching from Switzer-
land to the sea. That is the line
where the military sharps have all de-
clared final victory must come. That

is where America will have her troops.
There the Allies have for a long time
been sending in heavy right and left
hooks on the Teuton body. The ef-
fect is as one wants to consider it—
these latest, greatest offensives. There
the Allies are working on the outside
of a long, curved battle line, and the
Germans on an interior line of com-
munications. That has been a diffi-
culty for the Allies to overcome ever
since the battle of the Marne.

Suppose now in this fourth year of
the war we get together and put pa-
rochial matters to one side. Suppose
all decide that the Anglo-French front
without being in the least reduced in
importance shall form only the left
hook on the Teuton body, while the
Italian front forms the right punch
on the jaw of Austria. Without much
difficulty the rules of the game are
automatically reversed against Ger-
many. If that happens seriously Ger-
many will have the awkward line of
communication—chasing madly round
from France and Belgium to Austria
where the roads are almost the worst
on earth, while the Allies will be
working on the interior of a curved
line from France to Italy where the
roads are the best on earth.

It is hard to realize that French
cannon working on the battlefield of
the Somme can in four days be blaz-
ing away on the Italian Sarso. Even
that time can be bettered. It is forty
hours' train ride from the French
Grand Quartier General to the Italian
Commando Supremo. Germany may
feel that she can afford sending men
to Austria, but the beauty of the idea
is that Italy is not clamoring for men.

Then the cheerful critic remarks:
"In that case what is all this fuss
about? Let Italy go ahead, especially
if nobody is able to stop her."
Before arriving in Italy I heard of
English and French guns on the Car-
so. I have seen them and counted
them. But Italy needs guns by the
thousand. What does it matter now
in this fourth year of the war where
the end comes, if it only comes? Who
would object if Portugal finished the
job if only she could go ahead and do
it?

Coupled with the fact that the Ital-
ian front in Austria has only re-
cently been discovered, there is also
in America what seems to be a lack
of comprehension on the subject of
Austria. Austria has not so good an
army as Germany, but she has an
army that must not be despised. In
fact I am inclined to believe that as
a purely defensive fighter Austria can
carry on about as well as Germany.

Italy has plenty of men. She has
not even called all her classes. She
has an army of four and a half mil-
lions in the field—which is something
for America to reflect upon in her
consideration of Italy. But what she
does need is guns. She also needs
coal and airplanes, but, above all, she
needs cannon. Italy puts her cards
upon the table and says frankly what
she must have. She asks her allies to
give it to her. Cannon, cannon, and
more cannon, and Italy will go to
Laibach!

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