

# ITALIAN PROSPECTS AS SEEN BY FRANK H. SIMONDS

## VENICE AND PADUA MAY BE GIVEN UP IF AUSTRIAN DRIVE TOO GREAT

### Retirement to Point Behind the Bacchiglione Would Shorten Italian Line and Improve Situation on Military Side, Providing No Disaster Ensued, but Moral Advantage to Austrians Would be Great.

(By Frank H. Simonds.)

On May 14, 1916, a great Austrian offensive was launched against the Italian front between the Brenta and the Astico, that is, from the Austrian Tyrol, south of Trent, and toward the Venetian Plain north of Padua and Vicenza. Now, on May 7, 1918, both Austrian and Italian official reports indicate activities which seem the preliminaries to one more attack in substantially the same region which saw the terrific but abortive offensive of two years ago.

There are two aspects from which it is necessary to view the Italian problem: the military and the political. Certain military results are obviously bound to flow from a great success of the Austrians in Venetia; not less plainly there are certain political considerations which weigh both for and against the making of such an offensive and other political considerations which may flow from the offensive if it succeed.

#### Military Aspect.

To take the military aspect first: It is clear that we have reached the time of year when weather conditions make military operations in the mountains possible. When the first campaign ended the Italians had been driven out of all the Austrian territory they had conquered by two years of incessant effort, save a little slice north of the old frontier about Lago di Garda. They had lost some 3,000 square miles of the Province of Venetia, with a certain number of towns of industrial importance; as it stood then, and stands now, they had lost about half the area which France had been compelled to surrender as a result of her defeats of 1914.

If you will look at the map you will see that the Italian troops now standing behind the Piave River, from the point where it emerges from the hills east of Monte Grappa, and supplies for their munitions and depend mainly upon the railway which comes up from Verona, through Vicenza, to Treviso. If the Austrians could cut this railway behind the Piave marshes, these would be in a dangerous position and might be driven southeastward toward Verona and away from the rest of the Italian armies; they might, in fact, be caught in the swamps below Treviso and east of Padua, and be taken.

#### Its Weakness.

This is the weakness of the present Italian situation. It is excessively unlikely that the Austrians could force the Italians out of their present line along the Piave, which has been fortified during the winter and is as good a line as is necessary to have in our contemporary form of warfare. The strong positions are on the hills on the Italian side of the river; the stream is something of an obstacle, and Italian communications behind it are far better than those of the Austrians for rushing reserves to an imperilled sector.

Therefore, it would seem that if the Italians are to be evicted from the Piave position they must be turned out rather than forced out; evicted by a drive at their rear rather than by a drive at their front. In a word, the vital sector is not that behind the Piave, but that between the Piave and the Astico, where the Austrians are hardly more than a dozen miles from the vital railroad. This is the front now mentioned in the dispatches; this is the front which the Austrians made their great offensive of 1914, which failed because Austrian troops had to be shipped eastward to meet the victorious Russians in Galicia. Here, too, the Austro-Germans were making their supreme effort last autumn and early winter, when the snow came and stopped all operations.

#### Like Verdun.

In this sector the Italian situation markedly reproduces that of the French before Verdun in March and after March, 1916, although the scale is much greater.

The long delay due to winter has given the Italians a chance to prepare intermediate lines, recalling the famous "switchlines" of the Hindenburg system in France. Thus, even should the Austrians reach the plain behind the Piave line and between the Piave and the Brenta the Italians might be expected to draw back behind the Brenta and hold the front from Bassano to the sea behind the Brenta. This would mean the loss or the destruction of Venice, because it would bring the Austrian artillery near enough to batter the town to dust. Even if it did not surrender it would mean the destruction of Padua. Just behind the Brenta, but it would temporarily save Vicenza. A further Austro-German advance, if we are to assume German troops will be again used, would leave the Italians still able to stand behind the Bacchiglione, but it would mean the surrender of Padua.

All these possible retreats would mean shortening the line and improving the Italian situation on the military side, provided no disaster ensued. It would mean the surrender of famous cities. The moral advantage to the Austrians would be very great, but the military gain would not be commensurate, provided only territory were gained and Italian morale undisturbed. The loss of ground and cities, as French morale has survived the similar losses in the French field. Once behind the Adige, the Italian position should be impregnable, for all that natural advantages can supply

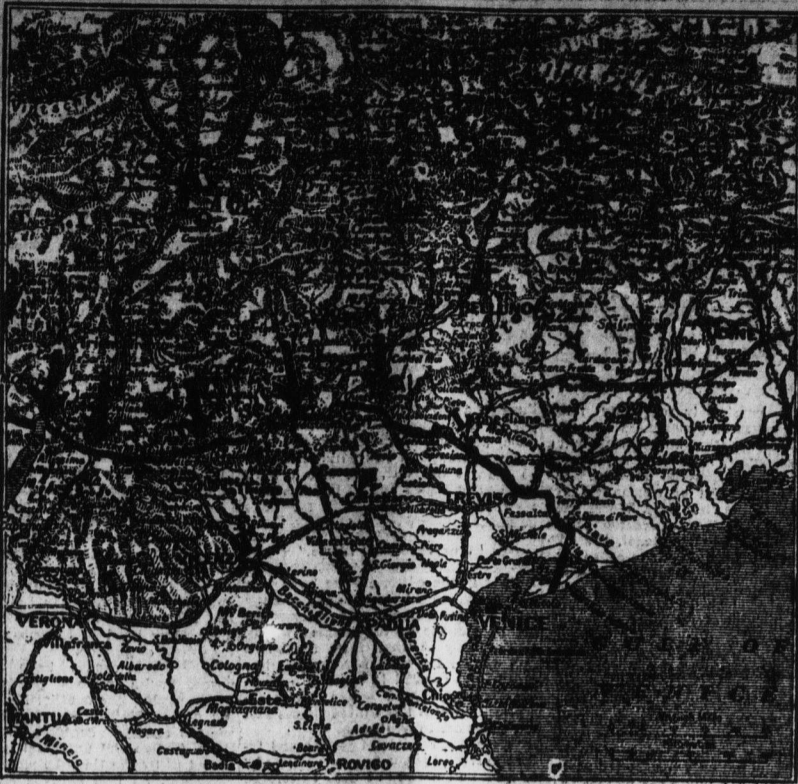
to make military defence advantages are to be found in this line, and the Italians have had six months to get ready.

As it now stands, it would seem that the Austrians have concentrated strong forces in the Trentino, bringing them down by the great military railroad, which goes under the Brenner Pass in a tunnel and follows the historic route of Teuton invasions of Italy in all past centuries. Having brought his armies south by this route, which is always beyond enemy reach or observation, the Austrian has arranged them in several smaller valleys leading out from the valley of the Adige to the Venetian plain like the sticks of a fan. He is patently intending to attack by the passes through which the Piave, the Brenta and the Astico emerge into the plain, and he holds all the upper portions of these valleys. He may also be planning a fourth attack, right south upon Verona by the Adige Valley, and possibly a fifth along Lago di Garda, but the first four are bound to be the important attacks.

If the Austrians can advance down these valleys for half a dozen miles, sweeping the hills between them as he comes on, he will then have reached the plain on a wide front and will dominate the Italian positions. He will be too near the main line of Italian communications to permit the Italians to remain along the Piave, and they will have to retire behind the Brenta, the Bacchiglione or even the Adige. If the Austrian in his first attack smashes the Italian line as he did at the upper Isonzo, or as Hindenburg smashed the British line in the recent disaster to Gough's 5th Army in Picardy, then the Italian troops along the Piave will have great difficulty in extricating themselves and escaping envelopment and capture, just as they did along the Lower Isonzo after the Caporetto disaster, and for the same reasons.

#### HOPEWELL BAPTISTS CALL MR. COLWELL

Hopewell Hill, May 10.—A call has been extended to Rev. I. B. Colwell by the Baptist congregations on this field. Mr. Colwell was formerly stationed here and came to the county today to hold services on the 12th and 13th.



THE ITALIAN FRONT.

The arrows indicate probable direction of Austrian attacks. From right to left they mark the valleys of the Piave, the Brenta, the Astico, the Adige and of Lago di Garda. Note how the first three point at the Trento-Vicenza Railroad.

#### CARLETON CO. CASES WON BY DEFENDANT

Rifle Figured in Assault Charge on Becaquimic Stream—St. John Man for Devan Marshal.

Fredericton, May 10.—The appointment of town marshal of Devan will be made next Monday. Leo Hayes, a former member of the St. John police may get it. An assault case, in which threatening with a rifle was charged, was heard in the police court this morning. The defendant was Claude F. Weston, and the complainant James S. Sewell. P. J. Hughes appeared for the defendant and M. L. Hayward of Harland, for the complainant. The alleged offense took place on the Becaquimic Stream in Carleton county. The defendant objected to stream drivers trespassing upon his land and ordered them off. He had a rifle in his hand at the time. The charge was not sustained and the case was dismissed.

#### UNITED STATES MAY CALL OUT MEN OF 40

Draft Likely to be Extended to Embrace Men as Old as Two Score.

Washington, May 10.—Legislation recommending the draft age to 40 years was discussed at a meeting within a few months at a meeting of Provost Marshal General Crowder and the House military committee. Although General Crowder made no specific recommendation, members of the committee said afterwards that the war department was considering a plan for changes. An appropriation of \$15,762,000 was asked by General Crowder of expense of the draft, for the next fiscal year. Registration of the men reaching the age of 21 will require the extension, he said, of half a million more men than originally provided for. Class One the General said, now has a total of about 2,265,000 men of whom two million are effective.

#### A. P. E. I. MAN WINS SUCCESS IN THE U. S.

Angus R. McDonald, Native of Pisquid, Appointed Treasurer of all Railroad Systems of United States.

Charlottetown, May 10.—New York papers record the success of another Prince Edward Islander—Angus R. McDonald, of that city, who has just been appointed by Secretary McAdoo, treasurer of all the railroad systems of the United States. Mr. McDonald is vice-president and controller of the Southern Pacific Railway. He was born at Pisquid, P. E. Island, thirty-eight years ago, and is a first cousin of Mr. A. E. McEachern and Mrs. A. J. Biffin, of this city. His parents at present reside at Houston, Texas, and formerly lived at Little Pond, in Kings County.

#### ALBERT CO. STRONG FOR TRIANGLE FUND

County Raising Amount Allocated and will Likely Exceed it.

Special to The Standard. Hopewell Hill, May 10.—The three days' campaign for the Y. M. C. A. work throughout the county met with ready response from the people and in this district \$170.00 was raised, (including \$25 from the Patriotic League). The collectors appointed were Mrs. Geo. M. Russell, Mrs. Jennie Rogers, Mrs. Fred J. Smith, Miss Deborah Milton, Miss Iva Newcomb, Miss Hannah Beaumont, and they found everyone ready to help the boys at the front in one of the most practical ways. It is expected the total in Albert County will exceed the sum allotted.

#### MAINE BANKS CHARGE DISCOUNT MONEY

Canadian Currency is Subject to Discount of Two Per Cent, Except Ones and Twos.

It has been found necessary for the Fort Fairfield National Bank and Frontier Trust Company of Fort Fairfield to declare a discount of two per cent on all Canadian currency, except one and two dollar bills. Formerly these banks have been able to dispose of this currency for their customers but for the reason that all other Aroostook banks are now charging exchange on Canadian money, it has come to the banks in such large quantities that this action was unavoidable.

#### TWO STEAMERS ARE ASHORE IN RIVER

Lake Como and Laocoon Hard Aground—Both Bound for United States.

Quebec, May 10.—Salvage workers had not yet succeeded today in floating the steamer Lake Como, stranded at Point Des Monts, nor the steamer Laocoon, aground near Cape Dogs, down the St. Lawrence. The vessels both stranded Wednesday night, while on their way from Quebec to an Atlantic port, in the United States.

#### GOVIN SEES PRELATE.

Quebec, May 10.—Sir Lomer Govin left today for Ottawa, where he is to meet Mr. O. E. Mathieu, Archbishop of Regina, Sask. The reason for this meeting is not known.

## "Say it with Flowers"

**Don't Forget Your Best Friend on Mother's Day**

The nation deems that on this noble festival we should express our sentiments with flowers. Send Mother—

**ROSES**—There are many inexpensive varieties to choose from. For those who wish to spend a little more we suggest the queen of all flowers—

**American Beauties**—with long stems.

**SPRING FLOWERS**—in Baskets or Growing Plants are ideal for brightening mother's favorite room.

**White Flowers**—for your own personal use.

**K. PEDERSEN, LTD.,**  
36 Charlotte St., Phone M. 1864.  
On the Wrong Side of the Street

**Place Your Order Now for Sunday, May 12th**



## MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day, Sunday, 12th

For mother's memory, flowers white; Mothers living, flowers bright.

## THE ROSERY

53 Germain Street  
**ADAM SHAND**  
Proprietor



## FLOWERS for Mother's Day

For mother's memory, flowers white  
Mothers living, flowers bright

## DO NOT FORGET YOUR BEST FRIEND

Send some of our spring flowers, or a potted plant. Place your order early. We deliver to all parts of the city.

## W. PEDERSEN Florist

49 Charlotte St., Market Bldg. Phone M 2590.

## A Wonderful Array of NEW BLOUSES

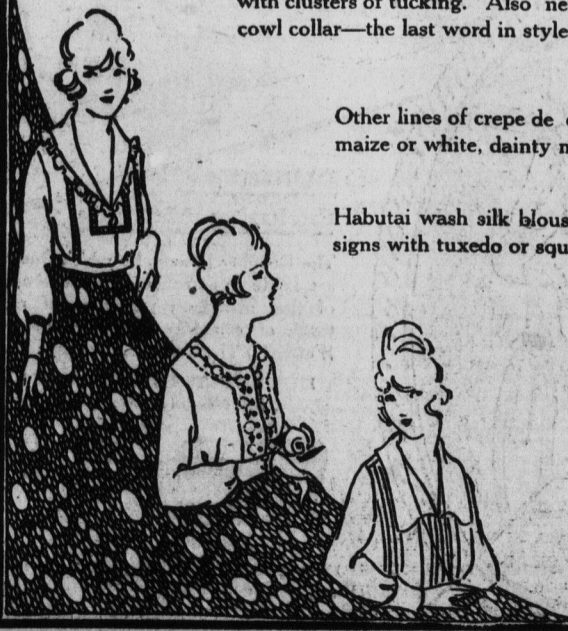
That embody the latest style features

- There are georgettes, crepe de chenes or voiles in most charming designs.
- Be sure to see the new slip on collarless blouse, most effective and becoming, in plain colored Georgettes, dainty shades, or with trimmings of contrasting shade on the light colors. \$6.90 to \$12.50
- Sheer voiles with beautiful Swiss embroidery designs in white or colors, most attractive and very useful. \$1.29 to \$6.50

Crepe de chene blouses in extra quality French crepe de chene, plain design with tuxedo collar, embroidered fronts, or with clusters of tucking. Also new models with monk's or cowl collar—the last word in style smartness. \$5.50 to \$8.50

Other lines of crepe de chene blouses in flesh, maize or white, dainty makes. \$4.25

Habutai wash silk blouses in numerous tailored designs with tuxedo or square collars, white or black. \$2.98 to \$6.90



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