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THE SOUTHERN FRONTIERS OF AUSTRIA.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

(Read before the Alpine Club, December 13, 1915.)

HISTORIANS and poets, amongst others, Livy, Tacitus, and Petrarch, have apostrophised the Alps as the citadel or the rampart of Italy. But this claim is surely inconsistent with the facts. In the earliest times of which we have any record the Gauls, Livy tells us, had already crossed the Western Alps and dwelt on both sides of them. The plains of the Po were known to the Romans as Gallia Cisalpina. It was the Apennine, running transversely across the peninsula from the Gulf of Genoa to where the slender stream of the Rubicon trickles into the Adriatic, that was for centuries both the real and official limit of Italy. Its invaders from the north, from Hannibal and Hasdrubal to Francis I. of France and Napoleon, found ways over the Alps for their armies. In modern history the same state has at many times and in many places held the country on either side of the mountains. To take only one or two of the most conspicuous examples, we

find in the past the Holy Roman Empire, Burgundy, and the dominions of the House of Savoy, at the present day Switzerland and Austria, disregarding the Alpine watershed in their political boundaries.

One reason for the failure of the Alps to serve as a protection to Italy from northern invasions may be found in the fact that, since the fall of the Roman Empire, the Italians have seldom been masters of the southern approaches to their crest. A mountain region—the Alps are no single range—may serve, at any rate temporarily, as a good defence to those who hold it strongly up to the summit ridge. The Alps are proving so now in the case of Austria. But if you hold only the lower slopes on one side it may be more of a snare than a support. In popular estimation the importance of mountains in warfare has been exaggerated; they play as a rule but a secondary part, and mostly a preliminary one. The decisive battles of history, as many strategists have pointed out, are fought in the plains.

To-night, however, my task is not to deal with the Alps as a whole, but with the portion of them that serves as the political frontier of Austria, the mountains that stretch from the easternmost wedge of Switzerland to the head of the Adriatic. In its western section the Austro-Italian frontier, as at present defined, coincides roughly with the southern limits of the former Prince-bishopric of Trent. This district, properly known as the Trentino, has (with a disregard of ethnological, linguistic, and historical facts the motives of which are obvious) been renamed by Austrian officialism, 'Süd-Tirol.' I shall next say something of the continuation of the frontier eastwards through the Carnic Alps, the range that overlooks the flats of Friuli. Of all this country I can speak with more or less of personal knowledge. With the Trentino, in particular, I have been familiar in all its recesses for the last half-century. It is fifty-one years since I was one of the first party to reach its highest peak, the Presanella (11,800 feet), anticipating by a few weeks the R.G.S. Gold Medallist, the late Julius Payer, of Arctic fame. Payer described his own work in the then unmapped Adamello and Ortler districts in more than one article in *Petermanns Mittheilungen*.

In 1875 I published a volume named 'Italian Alps,' which dealt in great part with the fascinating valleys and fantastic peaks of this, the most beautiful of the many beautiful thresholds of Italy.

Politically my title 'Italian Alps' was no doubt incorrect, though we trust it will not long remain so. But for the sake of anyone who may be inclined to dispute its geographical

accuracy I will quote the reasoned opinion of that high authority, the late Dr. Ratzel, of Leipzig. The following are the sentences in which he summarises his views :—

‘It must not be overlooked that the Swiss Central Alps are not flanked by a developed South Alpine system such as that which first rises to importance in the Bergamasque Alps. This constitutes a distinct Italian Alpine land, which extends through the Brescian, Vicentine, and Venetian Alps to the western slopes of the Julian Alps. The Western Alps Italy shares with France ; the Central Alps with Switzerland ; the Southern Alps, where they stand out as an independent group, are wholly Italian ’ (‘ ganz Italienisch ’).

Yes ; Italian they are, and their peculiar charm lies in the combination they display of Italian space and serenity with Alpine grandeur. There is a delightful element of surprise when the wide harmonious sweep of the landscape is interrupted by the strange shapes of the spires and obelisks that suddenly surge up above the lower hills. The eyes of the traveller, in place of being confined between two mountain walls, wander out into great distances, over wide expanses, and his imagination follows them to recall past rambles, or anticipate fresh adventure.

The district south of the Ortler group, the country between the Stelvio Pass and Botzen on the north and Brescia and Verona on the south, is, I repeat, from the picturesque point of view one of the most varied and fascinating districts in the Alps. Its charm is due not so much to the height of its peaks, which do not quite reach 12,000 feet, as to their variety ; granite walls and glacier curtains facing dolomitic towers and pinnacles of the strangest forms. At the feet of the mountains lie open valleys rich in all the luxuriance of southern foliage and studded with prosperous villages ; it is a land of maize and vines, of fertile slopes linked by wild gorges through which the rivers cut a devious way for themselves out of the mountains. Seen from any moderate eminence the hilltops compose instead of confining and bounding the landscape ; they spread out their broad backs to the sunshine instead of cutting it off. In place of striking against one predominant range our gaze sweeps across twenty surging ridges and wanders in and out of a hundred hollows, distinct or veiled according as the sun or shadow falls on them, until it meets on the horizon the snows of the Adamello or the spires of the Dolomites.

I must deal more in particular with the chief features of this district—the Western Trentino—since they have, I believe, had a material influence on the strategy of the campaign.

East of the Lake of Como, extending as far as the junction of the Adige and the Eisack at Botzen, a continuous range, roughly parallel to the watershed of the Alps, separates the two longitudinal valleys of the Adda and the Upper Adige (the Vintschgau) from the waters flowing more directly to the Lombard plain. Beginning in the Bergamasque Alps, this water-parting is continued in the great spurs of the Ortler group. But south of this range and east of Lago d'Iseo the eyes rest on three lofty ridges, running transversely to the general trend of the Alps—running, that is, north and south. The western ridge, separated from the mountains behind and north of it by the depression of the Tonale Pass, culminates in the Adamello group, a noble mass of snow and ice with glaciers 12 miles broad, crowned by three peaks of over 11,000 feet, the southernmost outposts of the Eastern Alps. From their summits the climber looks west to the far-off Monte Viso and away south over the battlefield of Solferino to 'the line of the olive-sandalled Apennine.'

This crest, gradually falling in height till it sinks into the plain near Brescia, forms the boundary between the Trentino and Lombardy. The only carriage road over it is that of the Tonale Pass, obviously a point of high strategic value.

Immediately south of the Tonale and Val di Sole, and in the very heart of the Adamello group, lies one of the noblest of the high valleys of the Alps, the Val di Genova. In glaciers and precipices it rivals the vale of Lauterbrunnen, in waterfalls and primeval forests it surpasses its Swiss rival. Rising in true granitic fashion in successive steps, it presents at each step a waterfall in addition to those that pour down its sides from hidden icefields. It is in its whole length without a village or permanent inhabitants; the only dwellings until a few years ago were the summer chalets, which in this region still retain the classical name of *mandra* or *mandrone*. In winter it is left to the bears, who were a few years ago fairly numerous. An old hunter whose exploits are recorded by Payer boasted of having slain twenty bears and 350 chamois.

According to local legend, as recorded in the Year-book of the Trentino Alpine Club, the Council of Trent availed itself of this mountain fastness as a place of banishment for the witches of the countryside. The familiar spirits with whom they had been on good terms did not desert their friends, and the neighbourhood was reputed to be infested by lively young devils, invisible by day but apt to break out at night on the belated hunter or herdsman who lingered too long in their haunts.

‘Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.’

In the last twenty years the devils have disappeared, driven away by the members of the Leipzig branch of the German Alpine Club, which has erected a substantial hut, or rather barrack, above the head of the valley. This has been used by the Austrians as a base in attempts (of which more hereafter) to turn the Tonale.

Between the Adamello range and the Lower Adige we find two parallel troughs and two ridges, all running north and south. There is the ridge of the Brenta Group, starting from the south side of Val di Sole, culminating in the fantastic dolomite crags of the Cima Tosa (10,420 feet) and its neighbours, and stretching down to Salo on Lago di Garda. It is broken in two places, by the formidable gorges of the Sarca, and, further south, by the hollow in which nestles the charming little Lago di Ledro, a Cumberland tarn transported to Italy. But this latter gap is ineffectual for strategic aims, for it is closed by the abrupt precipices that fall on the head of Lago di Garda behind Riva. Still further east and immediately overhanging the trough of the Adige the long ridge of Monte Baldo (7210 feet), precipitous on its eastern side, reaches from the gorge that gives access to Val di Non down to Verona. It is, however, crossed by a railway and two carriage roads through narrow passes strongly fortified.

But it is not until we come to consider the drainage system of the district, and its distinctive and singular feature, the zigzag course of the Sarca, that we shall fully realise the nature of the obstacles that meet an invader who wants to get to the Adige valley and Trent. It may be relatively easy for a force advancing from the south to penetrate the Giudicaria over the low watershed that separates the Chiese and the Sarca, but it finds no sure means of progressing eastward.

Of the two troughs the western has at its head the broad meadows of the Campo di Carlomagno, which afford easy access to Val di Sole. Through its middle portion, Val Rendena, a sunny vale clothed in maizefields and chestnut woods and sprinkled with prosperous villages, runs the Sarca, until at Tione the river turns east and the natural course of the valley is interrupted by a low hill (2280 feet), on the other side of which the stream of the Chiese flows to Lago d’Idro and the plain through a district known as the Giudicaria, from certain rights granted by the Bishops of Trent to its inhabitants. The eastern trough, also open at its head behind the Lake of Molveno—a spot some day to be frequented for the sake of the

view of the Brenta dolomites reflected in its bright waters—receives the Sarca on its exit from the gorges and leads it past Arco to the Lago di Garda, there to be re-formed from a mountain torrent into the smooth-flowing Mincio.

Now you may grasp why an invader attacking the Trentino from the west must strike north or south of the Adamello glaciers by the Tonale or the Giudicaria. If he takes the Tonale he is liable to be attacked in flank from the broad uplands in which the two troughs end, at Campiglio and Molveno, or to be checked later on in the narrow defile where the Noce issues into the Adige valley.

If he comes up from Brescia by Val Ampola past Lago d'Idro the low water-parting between him and the upper Sarca is insignificant, but his way east is more or less barred by the precipices that overhang Riva, and further up by the defiles of the Sarca. And then, even if master of the head of Lago di Garda, he has in front of him the high and steep crest that rises immediately west of the Adige valley and cuts him off from Trent and Rovereto.

There seem to me, therefore, to be substantial reasons for no serious invasion of the Trentino having been as yet undertaken from this quarter. The Italian aim, except near the head of Lago di Garda, where they have apparently got possession of the Ledro and Riva-Mori gaps, would seem to be limited to occupying a certain number of the enemy's troops by glacier incursions which, if they are not very serious war, are certainly magnificent.

Before I go further I must deal with the frontier question. Here I must ask your attention to the maps, on which are shown (1) the present boundaries of the Trentino; (2) the new boundary claimed by the Italian Government in Baron Sonnino's despatch of April 8 last; (3) that offered in reply on behalf of Austria by Baron Burian; and (4) the boundary claimed on popular Italian maps.

For the last hundred years the Austrian Government has no longer recognised 'the Trentino' as a political expression. The former territory of the bishopric has been merged in a district of South Tyrol,¹ including the portion of Tyrol lying south of the Alpine watershed, with the towns of Botzen, Meran, Brixen, and Brunecken.

¹ I adhere to the form Tyrol for the reasons given in the note to my book *The Italian Alps*, which still seem to me good. Mr. Coolidge, a sound authority, supports this view against his editor in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.



Sydney Spencer, photo.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

BOCCA DI BRENTA,
from the Pass to the Malga Ritorto, from Campiglio.

In the recent negotiations the official Italian claim was a frontier running along the eastern spur of the Ortler group to a point above the Adige halfway between Meran and Botzen. Here it crossed the valley and ran across the uplands that lie in the fork between the Adige and the Eisack, a region of broad pastoral hills and farmhouses with the wide thatched roofs made familiar to us by Titian's drawings. The line crossed the Eisack at Klausen, a name significant of an important strategic fact, and then ran up the ridge south of the Grödnerthal. Approaching near the Falzarego Pass the present frontier, it diverged from it again to give the Ampezzo district, Cortina and its surroundings, to Italy.

The merits of this frontier, from the Italian point of view, are obvious. It gives the command of the entrance to the Vintschgau, the valley of the Upper Adige, and also, and more important, of the gorge of the Eisack at Klausen with the issue of the Brenner and Pusterthal railways. It is, moreover, identical with the frontier of the bishopric from A.D. 1106 to the date of the Reformation, and with that which recommended itself to Napoleon in 1810 as the limit of his kingdom of Italy.

East of the Tagliamento a new frontier, giving to Italy a line beyond the Isonzo, Gorizia and Gradisca, with the approaches to Trieste, was demanded. This line is shown in detail on my map.²

In the substitute finally offered by Austria³ (a slight advance

² There are several serious mistranslations in the English version of Baron Sonnino's despatch of April 8, 1915. The note to Article 1 should be translated as follows: 'The new frontier leaves the existing frontier at Monte Cevedale; follows at first the spur between Val Venosta (the Vintschgau) and Val di Noce (the Nonsberg), then descends on the Adige at Gargazone between Meran and Botzen, reascends on to the high ground on its left bank, cuts in half Val Serentina (Sarnthal), and the valley of the Isarco (Eisack) at La Chiusa (Klausen), and running through the dolomitic district on the right bank of the Avisio, so as to leave out the Gardona (Grödnerthal) and Badia (Abteithal) valleys, but to include the Ampezzo valley, rejoins the existing frontier.' I have inserted the German local names.

In Article 2, in place of 'the track of the Chiappovano' read 'the hollow.' The Chiappovano is a waterless glen (see Ball's *Alpine Guide*).

³ See *Italian Greenbook*, p. 93. This differs substantially from the terms stated and guaranteed by the German Chancellor on May 18, 1915. These are correctly quoted by Mr. Buchan in his *History of the War*, vol. vii.

on a previous proposal) the frontier line deviated from the eastern spur of the Ortler at the Illmenspitze, some 16 miles from Monte Cevedale, and ran down south along a tributary of the Noce to that river, which it followed nearly to its junction with the Adige. East of the Adige it followed with minor deviations the ridge west of the Avisio to the Latemar, then crossing Val Fiemme below Moena, ran south of Val di San Pellegrino to abut on the old frontier just north of Paneveggio and the peaks of Primiero. By this proposal Austria would have retained an outpost only 12 miles north of Trent, and would have commanded not only the upper valleys of the Adige and Eisack but also the entrance to the Val di Non and the route of the Tonale Pass. The line corresponds roughly with the frontier of the Bishopric previous to the twelfth century. Austria further refused to give up the Fassa and Ampezzo districts, or to make any rectification of frontiers in the Carnic Alps.

According to the popular Italian claim, drawn on the principle that the basins of all the streams that flow into the Adriatic should belong to Italy, the frontier would run from the Malser Heide (4596 feet), one of the lowest, and also one of the most frequently overlooked of Alpine passes, along the icy crests of the Ötztal and Stubai Ferner to the Brenner, and then along the Tauern ridge past the Gross Venediger to the Drei Herrn Spitze; there it would turn sharply south along the low bank that divides the sources of the Eisack and the Drave and gain the ridge of the Carnic Alps, henceforth the water-parting between the Adriatic and the Black Sea. I may mention that a German writer, after careful inquiry, can find no historical connection for the name Venediger. It occurs for the first time in a document of 1797. The story that Venice can be seen from the top is quite groundless.

These various frontiers illustrate very aptly a subject we discussed here last session, the difficulties involved in any decision as to what is a practical and expedient frontier. How in the case of the Trentino are physical, linguistic, racial, commercial, and strategic considerations to be reconciled?

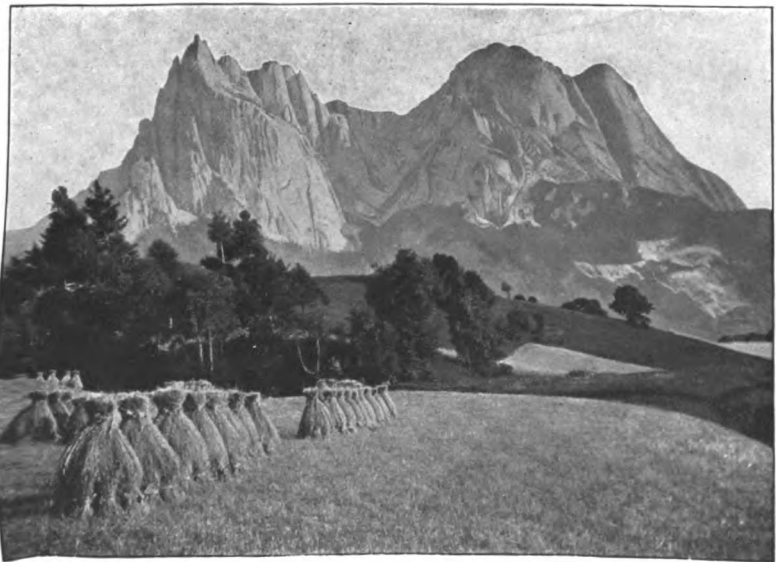
The watershed of the Alps may seize on popular imagination as the ideal natural frontier. The Vetta d'Italia the Italians call it, and they may quote Dante's

'. . . l'Alpe che serra Lamagna
'Sopra Tirallo,'

for Schloss Tyrol, which gave its name to the country, stands north of Meran. But in this region it altogether fails as a



IN THE CARNIC ALPS.



THE SCHLERN.

racial and linguistic one. In the main, and with one important exception, the boundary suggested by Baron Sonnino is a racial and linguistic frontier.⁴ The village names of Welsch Metz and Deutsch Metz may seem to indicate the true line of racial division in the Adige valley. But the late John Ball, a high authority in these parts, asserts in 'The Alpine Guide,' and more recent authorities confirm the statement, that the tide of Italian emigration has flowed upwards to the vicinity of Botzen. Botzen itself, however, though from A.D. 1106 to the middle of the sixteenth century it formed part of the Bishopric of Trent, is undoubtedly Teutonic in its language and its architecture, if not in its landscape. I note in passing that Baron Burian on April 30 last made to the Italian ambassador the remarkable statement that the population of Val Fassa and Ampezzo was 'not Italian but Ladinian, and attached to Austria with all the strength of its soul.' But Ladinian—a race and dialect akin to the Romansch of Graubünden—has no Teutonic affinity; and as to 'soul'—well, perhaps our enemies are hardly in a position to ask us to accept their judgment on questions of soul.

The Ampezzo district, if once Ladin, is now practically Italian. Mr. Ball wrote, 'The narrow glen that holds the Toblacher See serves as a portal between German Pusterthal and the Italian population of Ampezzo.' That Cortina has of late years been tied to Austria by such bonds as are created by a crowd of hotel-keepers and tourists is undeniable. But these bonds are surely of the pocket rather than of the soul!

As to the political sentiments of the population of the Trentino a Swiss writer may be allowed to be a fairly impartial witness. 'The South Tyrolese,' writes Dr. Walder, 'incline to Italy; their aspirations for self-government are notorious, and they have for years directed their efforts with the aim to be constituted a separate province, apart from North Tyrol. A great portion of the population, like that of Trieste and the coast territory, favours Irredentism—that is, annexation to Italy.'⁵

Since in 1866 a sudden armistice snatched, or seemed to snatch, this region out of the grip of the advancing Italians when their forces were within a few miles of Trent, the Trentino has been the most keenly coveted portion of 'Italia irredenta.'

⁴ See, for figures of the proportion of the Italian and German population in the Trentino in 1910 taken from the official census, the postscript at the end of this paper.

⁵ *Jahrbuch des Schweizer Alpenclub*, vol. xxxviii.

Its population has reciprocated the national sentiment. Their feeling found very various and sometimes ingenious ways of expression. A nameless peak was called *Cima Roma*. In vain did the Austrian engineers try to fix the title of Kaiser Franz Josef Spitze on the *Cima Brenta*, one of my first ascents in the Dolomites west of the Adige. Caustic was the local criticism when the foreign surveyors turned 'Vallesinella' into Val Asinella, 'the valley of the little donkey.' Let me add one more instance of an ingeniously covert expression of aversion to their rulers. The walls of village inns in this part of the Alps are apt to be decorated by coloured prints either of a hunter's funeral, in which all his victims take part, or of Bible subjects. In Val di Sole I came one day on a series devoted to St. Mary Magdalen. In the first, representing her life before her conversion, she was depicted in the company of a gay group of officers in full Austrian uniform.

Before I proceed to deal with the fighting of the last five months I would say a few words as to the history of the Trentino and the ways of traffic running through it. These high valleys of the Alps were subdued by Drusus, a feat commemorated by Horace. Val di Non still recalls the 'Genauni' of the well-known ode. The Antonine Itinerary mentions the Roman road from Trent to Innsbruck, the Brenner. The Bishopric of Trent was severed from Italy A.D. 1027, and transferred to the empire by Conrad II. Its double character, imperial politically, Italian nationally, coupled with its convenient position on a great highway, earned for Trent the distinction of being the seat of the famous Council.

In all ages the Trentino, the southern approach to the Brenner, has been a channel of communication between the regions north and south—Central Europe and Mediterranean Europe—as well as a frontier-land. As a pass the Brenner had many recommendations. The gap it crosses is broad, easy, and below the tree-level (4490 feet). It is open for many months to wheel traffic. The pass was traversed by armies no less than forty-three times between A.D. 951 and 1251. Frederick II. crossed it three times in October. De Saussure, in one of his letters, expressing a fear that Mt. Cenis might be impassable owing to the early season, writes of the Brenner as the obvious alternative, ignoring all the Swiss passes. Again, owing to the configuration of the Eastern Alps, the multitude of their parallel ridges running east and west, it is the last pass towards the east by which the mountain region can be traversed by

crossing a single ridge. But in early times, before roads were made, this counted for less, as a gorge might often be more of an obstacle than a reasonable hill, and for travellers who took this view the Brenner had an attraction in the number of by-routes that branched from it on either side. If up to the fourteenth century and the construction of the Kuntersweg the defile of Klausen above Botzen was a formidable hindrance to traffic, the merchants of Nuremberg and Augsburg could find other paths for their pack-horses. They may have had a further reason for avoiding the main valleys of the Inn, the Eisack, and the Adige. One of the great hindrances to travel on all the Alpine passes was the number of the tolls levied by the owners of the castles that lined the road. A circuit through the remoter vales might in many cases be preferable to the highway. For those who did not mind a double hill there were on the north the Arlberg and the passes of the Bavarian Alps. On the south from Sterzing travellers might cross over the Jaufen Pass (now a carriage road) and descend through the Passeyer Thal to Meran, and then go on by Val di Non and the Tonale, or through Val Rendena and the Giudicaria, to Brescia or Milan. Or from Brixen they might turn left up the Pusterthal and go through Ampezzo by the Strada d'Allemagna to Belluno and Venice, or from Trent they could pass by Val Sugana and through Bassano and Castelfranco to the City in the Sea. The Hospices of Campiglio and San Martino are relics of these by-ways of commerce.

Holy Roman Emperors took these hill-roads from time to time. In the twelfth century Barbarossa, later Maximilian, marched past Edolo and down through the Val Camonica to Lago d'Iseo. Dante, the destruction of whose statue at Trent has furnished yet another illustration of Teutonic *Kultur*, mentions Val Camonica and writes of the thousand streams that flow down from the Alps between it and Garda, to lose their waters in the great lake and re-issue from it as the Mincio. That lovely lake, Lago d'Iseo, has fallen out of fashion since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lived at Lovere, celebrated its beauties, and compared the landscape (oddly enough) with that of Tunbridge Wells. But it has a rustic charm which is lacking to the bedizened loveliness of Como. At its head the glaciers of the Adamello look down on arcaded towns, villages with landing-places aglow with oleanders, and hills wrapped in fold on fold of chestnut forest. According to a legend, supported, I fear, by no contemporary evidence, but embodied in at least three local inscriptions copied in the sixteenth century

from earlier records, a greater than Barbarossa, Charles the Great, once took this way. These inscriptions are found at the church of San Stefano in Val di Genova, at Monno in Val Camonica, and at Monte Cala near the head of the Lago d'Iseo. They pretend to record with much picturesque and circumstantial detail how the emperor with his knights and a train of bishops marched through the mountains, destroyed the castles of the robber-chiefs (*pagans* they are called—Arians ?) and converted them by violence to the true faith. The story finds some confirmation in the name Campo di Carlo Magno given to the pastures at the head of Val Rendena. Dr. Scheffel, who has studied the original authorities, is of opinion that they contain no evidence necessarily destructive of a tale one would willingly believe.

I will now examine some of the fighting in its local detail. The northernmost point at which the frontiers of Italy and Austria meet, the only point from which Italy looks down on the sources of the Adige, is the Stelvio Pass (9056 feet), the highest carriage-pass in the Alps. But for political considerations this pass would never have come into use. The Wormser Joch, which is close beside it, is 800 feet lower, and less steep. When historical writers refer to the passages of German or Italian princes over the Stelvio they may be taken, as a rule, to mean the lower pass. Even Mr. Buchan, in the seventh volume of his excellent 'History of the War,' falls into this mistake with regard to a French army in 1799. The Wormser Joch (8242 feet) leads to the portion of the Münsterthal that is Swiss territory. Hence when Austria wanted a direct access to Milan she made in 1828-29 the Stelvio road, which climbs in endless zigzags in full view of the noble front of the Ortler Spitze. The Wormser Joch remained a mule-path until A.D. 1900.

The frontiers in this region have, from a geographical point of view, got badly mixed. Switzerland has stolen from Val Tellina the Poschiavo valley ; in the pastoral basin of Livigno, a branch of the Inn valley, Italy holds her largest slice of territory north of the Alps, while in her turn Switzerland has got a bit of the Münsterthal with a source of the Adige.

The Stelvio is of little military use to an invader who does not hold both sides of it. The gorge above the famous Baths of Bormio (mentioned in Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks) supplies Italy with a defensible barrier ; the steep zigzags of the eastern slope can easily be made impracticable to an armed force.

On the summit ridge the beginning of the war found the Austrians firmly planted. From this point round to the Gavia Pass 20 miles or more of continuous glacier clothe a crest, the gaps in which do not fall below 10,000 feet. In old warfare glaciers kept their terrors for soldiers. Although many of the roughest mule-tracks in the Alps were crossed at the most inclement seasons of the year, we hear little of glacier passes even in the fierce mountain fighting of the Napoleonic wars. But in the present war the spread of mountaineering, the introduction of the ski, brought from Norway to Central Europe, and the systematic training both in France and Italy of Alpine regiments, have led to constant fighting above the snow-level. The troops on both sides have put to use the skill learnt in frequent mountain manoeuvres. In the Ortler group there is hardly one of the passes invented in the last fifty years by climbers which has not been made use of by these intrepid military raiders.

The Italians starting from Val di Zebbru, a side-glen of Val Tellina, have skirted over peaks of 11,000 feet, making what the Germans call a Grat-wanderung or crest-climb, assailed the Austrians on the top of the Stelvio, and destroyed a climbers' hut under the south ridge of the Ortler. The Austrians have crossed the great glaciers east and west of Monte Cevedale, starting both from Val dei Monti and the Martellthal, and assailed the Italian outposts in Val Cedeh at the foot of the Königspitze. But these 'excursions' and 'alarms,' however adventurous, have led to but small practical results beyond the loss of a certain number of lives and the detention of a portion of the enemy's forces.

The fighting round and about the Tonale Pass, the gap between the Ortler and Adamello snows, has been more serious. But here again no attempt to advance in force would appear to have been made by either side. The fighting has been more or less desultory, though it has occupied a large space in bulletins. Knowing the ground, I am tempted to describe it in some detail as a specimen of much of this mountain warfare.

The Tonale Pass itself (6180 feet) is a very easy carriage road; the top is a broad and flat meadow, the ascent from the east is gradual, the only zigzags are above Ponte di Legno on the Italian side. It is 2110 feet lower than the Stelvio, and in every respect less formidable. In old days the Austrian frontier was guarded only by a small fort. It is now apparently protected by more formidable works, and no direct attack has hitherto been made on it. The endeavours of the com-

batants have been concentrated on annoying one another by flank marches over the mountains. First the Austrians, using as a base the Mandron hut beside the Adamello glaciers, crossed one of them, a march of two or three hours over ice, and swooped down on the detachment at the Garibaldi hut in Val d'Avio, a side-glen of Val Camonica.

Nothing came of this raid, and in due course the Italians retaliated and apparently for a time seized the Mandron hut and fired down on Bedole, the Alp at the head of Val di Genova. On a subsequent occasion, making a much shorter circuit, they assailed the Tonale road through Val Presena, the glen next to the pass on the Val di Sole side.

All these attacks were on the southern flank of the Tonale. On the northern flank the Italians climbed, and dragged artillery on to the Montozzo ridge, 8500-9000 feet above the sea, which overlooks the Val dei Monti, a glen running up from Val di Sole to the snows of the Ortler group. So the struggle has gone on, leaving matters much as they were, and with no great advantage to either side.

In the Giudicaria, where in 1866 the Garibaldians had some minor successes, there has been, as far as I know, no fighting of serious importance. The Italians have made some progress above Lago di Ledro towards Riva, but they have not as yet crossed over to Tione and the Val Rendena, or seized the upper exit of the Sarca gorges.

Along the line of the railway up the main Adige valley a certain advance has been secured. The frontier town of Ala has been occupied, and the forts of Rovereto assailed and damaged. The 'Altissimo,' the northernmost but not the highest top of Monte Baldo, has been gained, and from its brow the Alpini can look down on the head of the Lago di Garda and the towers of Riva. The Italians have not put any war craft on the lake, as was done on Lago Maggiore in 1859, and we may hope that its terraces and lemon gardens will be spared from the horrid devastation that has overtaken so many of the villages and hospices in the higher mountains.

Turning to the frontier of the Trentino east of the Adige, we find that Austria has abandoned two of her outlying districts, apparently without fighting, to the Italian advance. The Red White and Green tricolor floats on the campanile of Cortina and on the ruins of San Martino di Castrozza above Primiero. The modern hotels there we can well spare, but old travellers will miss with regret the venerable hospice with its wide circular chimney-corner, in the centre of which the



C. Lord, photo.

TRAFOI.

Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

logs blazed, while through a narrow window in the external bow a light flashed down the pass to guide the belated wanderer.

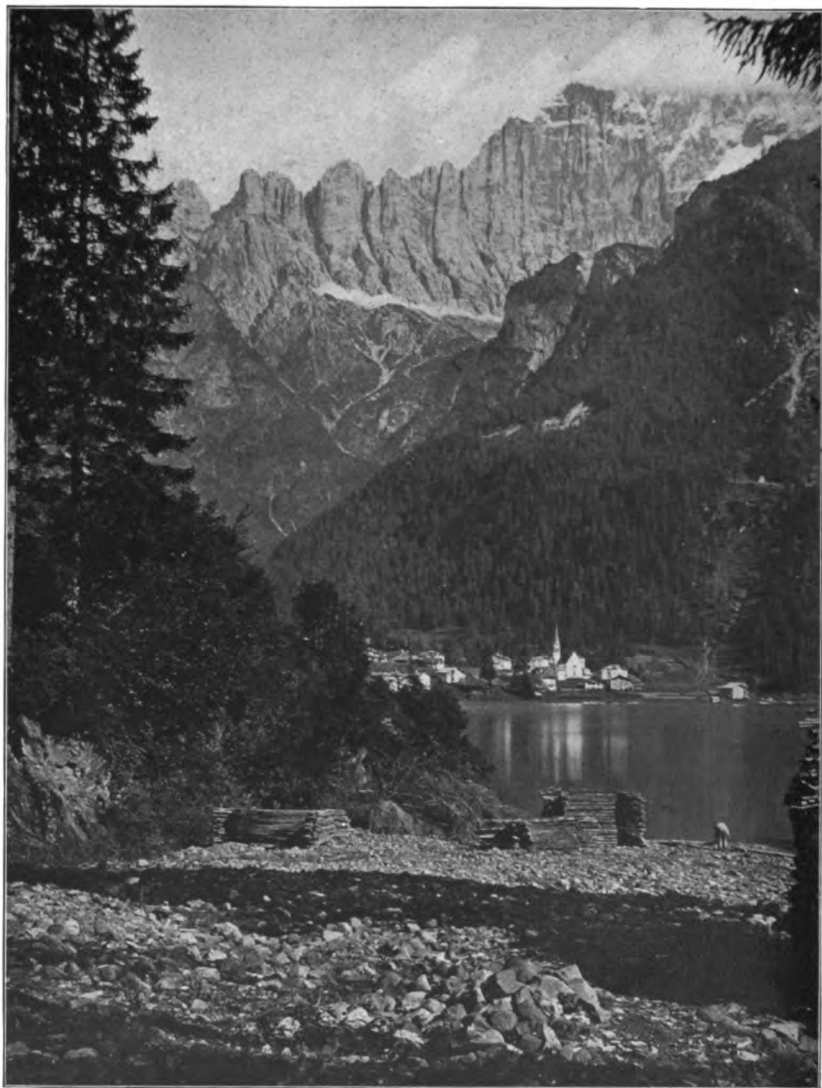
The most obvious access to Trent next to that up the Adige Valley is by Val Sugana. This great valley, traversed by the high-road and railway from Trent to Venice by Bassano and Castelfranco, lies between the Monti Lessini, the mountains of Vicenza, and the Dolomites. In its lower portion a long gorge between high walls of rock, it expands near its head into a broad vale embosoming two peaceful lakes. This basin is closed by a low ridge, from which, on the further slope, a steep hillside covered with vineyards and villas drops on to the walls of Trent. Here Italy might have been expected to attempt to repeat the events of 1866. In that year General Medici, after driving the Austrians from their strong position at Primolano, hurried his advance, and had reached Levico, 12 miles only from Trent, when his march was stayed by the armistice which preceded peace. But so far no important success has been recorded in this quarter, and Trent remains unthreatened.

From this gap, due east of Trent, up to the bend of the frontier, where it turns east near the snowy Marmolada, the Queen of the Dolomites, the country is a tangle of glens and ridges. Between these points there are only two carriage roads that cross the frontier, that by San Martino di Castrozza and Paneveggio, and the road from Botzen to Cortina across the mountains by the Karersee and the Falzarego Pass. Desultory fighting, difficult to follow, but in which neither of the combatants—I have had the advantage of reading Tyrolese newspapers as well as the Italian bulletins—claims any decisive successes, has gone on all over this region. The Italians, as their enemies admit, have shown prodigious energy in hoisting guns on to the most difficult heights; on both sides sturdy hill-climbers have vied in stalking one another among the mountain fastnesses—applying to warfare the methods of chamois-hunting.

The fighting has been most serious about the road that runs from Botzen eastwards to Cortina. It crosses by several grass-passes from valley to valley. Bear in mind that we must not carry ideas framed on the physical features and landscapes of Switzerland into the Venetian Alps. In the Central Dolomites there is no high continuous ridge rising above the pasture levels. Such expressions as 'great wall' or 'sheer rampart,' which I have read recently, seem to me out of place

when applied to the mountain range south of the Pusterthal. The ascent from Cortina to the crest is less than 1000 feet, the drop to Toblach little more. The Dolomite groups would be correctly figured in the Impressionist maps of which we have so many, not as lines but dots; big dots, no doubt, scattered about in a region of valleys and pastoral heights. The valleys have a way of ending in a low gap instead of a high ridge. Consequently you pass from one to another with relatively little trouble. Here and there frown, like giant castles, the red or grey-gold walls of the great Dolomites, the Pelmo and Antelao, the Civetta and Marmolada, the fantastic Rosengarten, and the incredible Pala. But between them spreads a bevy of green and friendly hills. One of these, the Col di Lana—Col in the Dolomites is from *collis*, and means a hill, not a pass—commanding the Falzarego Pass, has been the scene of furious fighting. The Austrians were at the top, the Italians on its spurs. When I strolled up it years ago in early July, the broad pasture of the Incisa Alp, on which it looks down, was more gloriously arrayed than any Alpine meadow I have ever seen. There were bays of red rhododendrons, pools of the larger gentian (*G. acaulis*), rivers of forget-me-nots, lilies tawny and white, brilliant arnica, fragrant nigritella. It recalled to me the description of the Valley of the Princes on Dante's Mountain of Purgatory. And now this Garden of Proserpine, the haunt of shepherds and peaceful herds, is being defaced by trenches and watered with blood. The pity of it! But the works of Nature will recover more readily than the works of man. The ruins of Rheims will remain through the centuries the shame of Germany. Here a few years, and flowers will cover the trenches and the graves, and there will be only an echo in the valley homes to tell of 'old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago.' Battles, I fear, with relatively small result. The Italians have gained the disputed crest of the Col di Lana, but they are still far from breaking through the hills and bursting out on Brixen or the lower Pusterthal. Could they do so in sufficient force they might cut not only the railway from Lienz and Vienna, but also the Brenner line below Franzensfeste, the great fort that protects the junction of the two railways.

An easier if not more inviting line of attack lies open along the Strada d'Allemagna from Cortina, and from the valleys next it. There is, as I have already said, little or no pass in the more common acceptation of the word between the southern valleys and the Pusterthal. The Tofana and Monte Cristallo



C. Lord, photo.

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LAGO D'ALLEGHE AND CIVETTA.

stand up like two Egyptian pylons shadowing the crooked trench through which the high-road runs past Peutelstein and the gloomy Dürrensee. From Cortina to the railroad at Toblach is only 18 miles. Here in June the Italians advanced in three columns—along the high-road, and through Val Travernanzen behind the Tofana, and through Val Grande under the cliffs of Monte Cristallo. In these encounters the Austrians claim that the loss of their opponents was 59 killed and 119 prisoners. Some ground was probably gained, but no really important strategic advantage appears to have been secured. On the east a few miles distant at the Mesurina lake, and on the watershed of the Drave at the Kreuzberg at the head of the Sextenthal, there are low and practicable gaps furnished with carriage roads. Here the Italians hold the crests; from the Misurina lake and the Kreuzberg they have made incursions and harassed the enemy, but no more.

We have now reached the eastern limit of the Trentino.

We must, I think, reviewing as a whole the operations on the Trentino frontier during the first six months of the war, come to the conclusion that the Italian offensive has been intentionally limited to a defensive object. This, without further explanation, may sound paradoxical. General Cadorna has, I believe, striven, and on the whole successfully striven, to secure the positions that were most essential in order to repel possible attacks on Lombardy or Venetia issuing from the Trentine highlands. But, as far as I can judge, he has shrunk hitherto from the cost of life necessary under existing conditions to storm the main Austrian positions that protect Trent and the railways that connect it with the north. Italian impulse is apt in essentials to be tempered by a fund of political discretion. In the national temperament the qualities of a Cavour as well as those of a Garibaldi play their part. But if the daring feats which the Italian troops have accomplished, feats frankly acknowledged by the foe, among the glaciers of the Ortler and the crags of the Dolomites, have not so far led to any great strategic successes, they have more than sufficiently proved the enterprise and the gallantry of our allies.

East of the Sextenthal and Auronzo we enter the zone of the Carnic, or Julian, Alps, lying between the Gail valley on the north and the tributaries of the Tagliamento and the Isonzo on the south. The types of scenery on the two flanks afford a strong contrast. On one side we have green valleys with meadows, pine-forests and trout-streams, broad wooden farmhouses, each standing solitary in its fields, Slavonic in their character :

on the other deep trenches, their naked sides gashed by torrents and landslips, their flat floors a mass of boulders through which, except in flood-time, a scanty stream wanders vaguely from side to side past dark stone-built hamlets. The district is one of the wettest in Europe, and its valleys are appropriately called 'Canali.' The suggestion that this term came from their connection with Venice will not bear examination; it is also in frequent use in the Tuscan Apennine, and in the Cantabrian mountains, the Picos de Europa. It is not till the lower hills on the verge of the flats of Friuli are reached that the landscape shows any touch of Italian luxuriance.

Across this range there have been from Roman (and even earlier) times four separate routes open to tribal migrations, armies, or commerce. Their goal was at one time Aquileia, and at a later period Venice—both marts of Eastern produce and links between the Levant and Central Europe.

The westernmost, the Plöcken Pass (4471 feet), was a Roman road, and large portions of the old paved track still exist. The pass served afterwards, for the commerce of Venice, as a branch of the Brenner. It is very easy and is still traversed by some sort of carriage-road. Like the other passes, it has been the scene of sundry unimportant engagements in the present war. I pass over several little-used gaps in the chain, the names of which may be read on the map in Mr. Buchan's 'History of the War.' I am told on good authority that roads not yet marked on official maps have been built by the Austrians up to their frontier on three of these passes.

With the last three passes on my list, the Pontebba, or Tarvis Pass (2582 feet), the Predil (3829 feet), and the Birnbaumer Wald (2892 feet), we come to the point of greatest weakness in the long Alpine frontier, and consequently of greatest pressure. These passes afford the key to the head of the Adriatic to an invader from the north or east. An Italian army that has mastered them has overcome the chief obstacle on the road to the Danube.

It was from the Birnbaumer Wald that the hordes of the Cimbri threatened Italy. It was in this region that Napoleon, in his brilliant campaign of 1797, forced in a few days the passage of the Alps and opened the march that ended by the peace concluded at Leoben. No contrast can be sharper than that between the slow, ineffectual persistency of modern trench-warfare and the brilliant manœuvres by which Masséna broke at Tarvis the right flank of the Austrians, and cut off the retreat of half their divided force, while Napoleon drove the

rest helter-skelter back over the Isonzo from Gorizia to Laibach. Here, by protracted and very severe fighting, the Italians have mastered the first line of defence, but are still beating against the second. The Italians have attacked Pontebba and approached Tarvis. But they have not as yet won the command of the passes. Nearer the coast they hold the line of the Isonzo; but the resistance of the enemy behind it is, if shaken, unbroken. Despite the most gallant efforts, the entrenched camps of the Austrians still close the lower ground between the mountains and the sea, and bar the approach to the Birnbaumer Wald and the road to Trieste. The Austrians profess to be content to hold the invader until such time as they may have their hands free to take their revenge. It will be for the military critics and historians of the future to explain the reasons for which the more serious efforts of so large an army as the Italian have been, like those of our own in Flanders, concentrated on a single and narrow front.

We must all hope that this strategy may be crowned with success, that at no distant date the lines written by a late Roman poet to celebrate a successful campaign on this very ground may be again applicable :

‘Illa sub horrendis praedura cubilia silvis,
Illi sub nivibus somni, curaeque, laborque
Pervigil, hanc requiem terris, haec otia rebus
Insuperata dabant; illae tibi, Roma, salutem
Alpinae peperere casae.’*

Before I end my paper I am tempted to add some particulars and show a few views relating to another and less-known section of the frontier of Austria: the frontier she acquired by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. In 1907 I travelled along the portion of the frontier that faces the Sanjak of Novi Bazar and Montenegro, following the line of an old and neglected caravan track, now being converted into a military road, by which merchandise from the heart of the Balkan Peninsula could evade the Montenegrin fastnesses and reach Ragusa without making the long circuit by Sarajevo and Mostar. After admiring the beautiful waterfall of Jaice and climbing the heights of the Prenj I visited Sarajevo. From the Bosnian capital I profited by the strategic railroad, of which one branch ends at Visegrad, famous for its Roman bridge, on the Serbian frontier, and the other on the edge of the Sanjak.

* Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 359–63.

From the station of Ustapraca a good road leads past the prosperous country town of Gorazde up the idyllic valley of the Drina, a deep, smooth-flowing stream, whose green waters linger in long, still reaches, on their way to the distant Save and Danube. The district is famous for its fruit gardens and orchards. Pleasant villages nestle among them, and over the orchards rise the homely wooden minarets of Turkish mosques. The Turkish population here gives no trouble. It has been among the Orthodox Serbians that the Austrian Government has found its chief difficulties. Foča, the chief town of the district, was my first sleeping-place. Its name has been often in the newspapers in the last twelve months. The Montenegrins last year came out of the upper valleys about the Drina sources and occupied it for a short time. It is a charming spot; the town itself is still very Turkish in character, a pile of old wooden houses and carved balconies. Its situation in the centre of hospitable hills, and at the meeting of two rivers laden with timber-rafts, is delightful. Its former importance is attested by a mosque far surpassing in architecture and decoration any at Sarajevo. The minaret is of admirable proportions, the porch of noble size, the stone-carving of the pulpit and gallery is exquisite, and the interior is painted with delicate patterns resembling those of the best sixteenth-century Persian tiles and carpets. In the days when the caravans from the centre of the peninsula, going to Ragusa, came this way, Foča must have been a place of much traffic, the last halt before the traverse of the wild gorges and wind-swept uplands of the Herzegovina.

In 1907 the carriage road ended at a bridge over the Drina a few miles from Foča. At that point the old paved Turkish road leaves the river which flows down out of the heart of Montenegro, and climbing along a wooded hillside, dotted with scattered farms, descends again into the valley of a tributary stream. The scenery now grows more mountainous, and glimpses of fine limestone peaks open to the south, amongst them Maglič (7891 feet), over the top of which runs the Montenegrin frontier. After passing a bridge and a Turkish coffee-house the gorge of Sujeska, the most famous of the many Bosnian gorges, is entered. Limestone defiles are apt to be very similar in their features. The special character of the Sujeska is due partly to the very jagged nature of its rocks, and partly to the picturesque way in which they are wooded. Splintered combs bristle on the hillsides; sharp teeth cut against the sky-line. Dark pines with stiff horizontal branches,



CATTARO.



GORGE OF THE SUJESKA.

like those of a Japanese print, perch upon every ledge, and there is no lack of deciduous foliage to supply autumn tints and lend beauty and variety to the landscape.

In a most romantic site in the very heart of the defile, a day's ride from Foca, stands the blockhouse of Suja, in which a room is reserved for the few, mostly official, travellers. A letter kindly given me by the Governor of Bosnia ensured me admission. Seen by moonlight, the surrounding landscape may perhaps best be described as operatic. But there are no players in the foreground. The only inhabitants of the mountains, besides a few outlaws, are chamois, deer, bears, wolves, and eagles.

Beyond Suja the mountains close still more nearly on the river. At the upper end of the gorge the cliffs touch the stream, and the track is carried for a few yards on a wooden balcony above the water. Here in old days was a castle, a gate, and a toll. The name of the spot, of these impending rocks, Tavernich, sounds familiar. The lines of Dante, in which he emphasizes the thickness of the ice in Hell by telling us that if Pietra Pana or Tavernich were to fall on it, it would not crack—'non avrea fatto cricch'—leap into the mind. Pietra Pana is the Pania della Croce of the Carrara Apennine. Have we found the Tavernich which supplied the poet with a rhyme and has worried most of his commentators? Dante may as well have heard from Italian merchants of this remarkable place as of the dykes of Flanders. The suggestion may seem fantastic to some; it did not seem so to the late A. J. Butler, or the Marquis of San Giuliano, both competent Dante scholars.

After this exciting gorge one comes to tamer scenes: an upland vale, pastured by much cattle and countless sheep, whence the track climbs to the watershed, if a ridge that sheds water only on one side can be called a watershed, at the Cernero Pass, 4528 feet. It is a broad, grassy brow, crowned by a large Austrian fort, where the garrison spend long snowed-up winters and shadeless summers. Henceforth there is a fort every few miles all the way to Trebinje. Looking back one sees the limestone peaks of the Maglic and its neighbours. In front stretch the waterless uplands of the Herzegovina, a region where rocky reefs rise in interminable succession, and there is more stone than grass. At Gacko, the first Herzegovinian hamlet, the carriage road begins. Its white houses lie in one of the broad level basins girt by hills characteristic of Karst scenery.

Across these hills for a long day's drive the road winds over

a desolate district, with the tame ridge (4000 to 5000 feet) that marks the edge of Montenegro always within a mile or two on the left. It is a strange, monotonous country, with an air of the Syrian Desert, and, like the Desert, capable of gem-like moments when its grey dress is exchanged for a coat of iridescent atmospheric colours. At last the road descends steeply between heights crowned by high-perched fortresses, and Trebinje comes into sight below. It is a small walled town lying on either side of a sheet of deep green waters, half river and half lake, set in the centre of a little plain of rich vineyards and orchards, and hemmed in on all sides by steep barren hills of strange shapes and violent colours. The landscape is weird ; it falls into no category. It is neither European nor Asiatic, though in the sharp contrast between barrenness and the fertility caused by irrigation it inclines to the East.

Far more beautiful, if less original, is the final long descent from the top of the last ridge to Ragusa. The road drops to the Adriatic down hillsides which yield in nothing to those of Mentone or Sorrento, through a revel of summer and sunshine and perpetual greenery, of figs and vines, olives and mulberries. At the foot Ragusa basks in the sunshine and dips her feet in the waves, an unspoilt mediæval seaport, still enclosed in a girdle of lofty brown walls and moats, the latter gay with oleanders and orange trees. *Unspoilt* the city remains because by a happy chance the harbour is too shallow for modern ships, and its port and railway lie two miles off at Gravosa, on the other side of a low peninsula.

From Trebinje the frontier runs south over a highland district inhabited by fighting clans, so as to give Austria control of the Bocche di Cattaro. On the north shore of this lovely fiord—a Lago Maggiore by the Sea—Austria possesses a picturesque town, the terminus of a railroad, Castelnuovo. At the head of the fiord lies Cattaro. Mt. Lovchen, from which it has been bombarded for many months, is, one of our newspapers informs the public, 'the only prominent mountain in Montenegro.' I am afraid that is a sample of the sort of information, with maps to match, which too often lies on our breakfast-tables. I have a list, gleaned in the last few months from our daily press, of similarly wild assertions and confusions with regard to the Italian frontier. Most of them might have been avoided by the use of a Baedeker. But probably editors are too patriotic to use Baedeker any longer. With a view of Cattaro, the quaint little port wedged in between the sea and the mountains, I close my travels and my discourse.

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POSTSCRIPT.

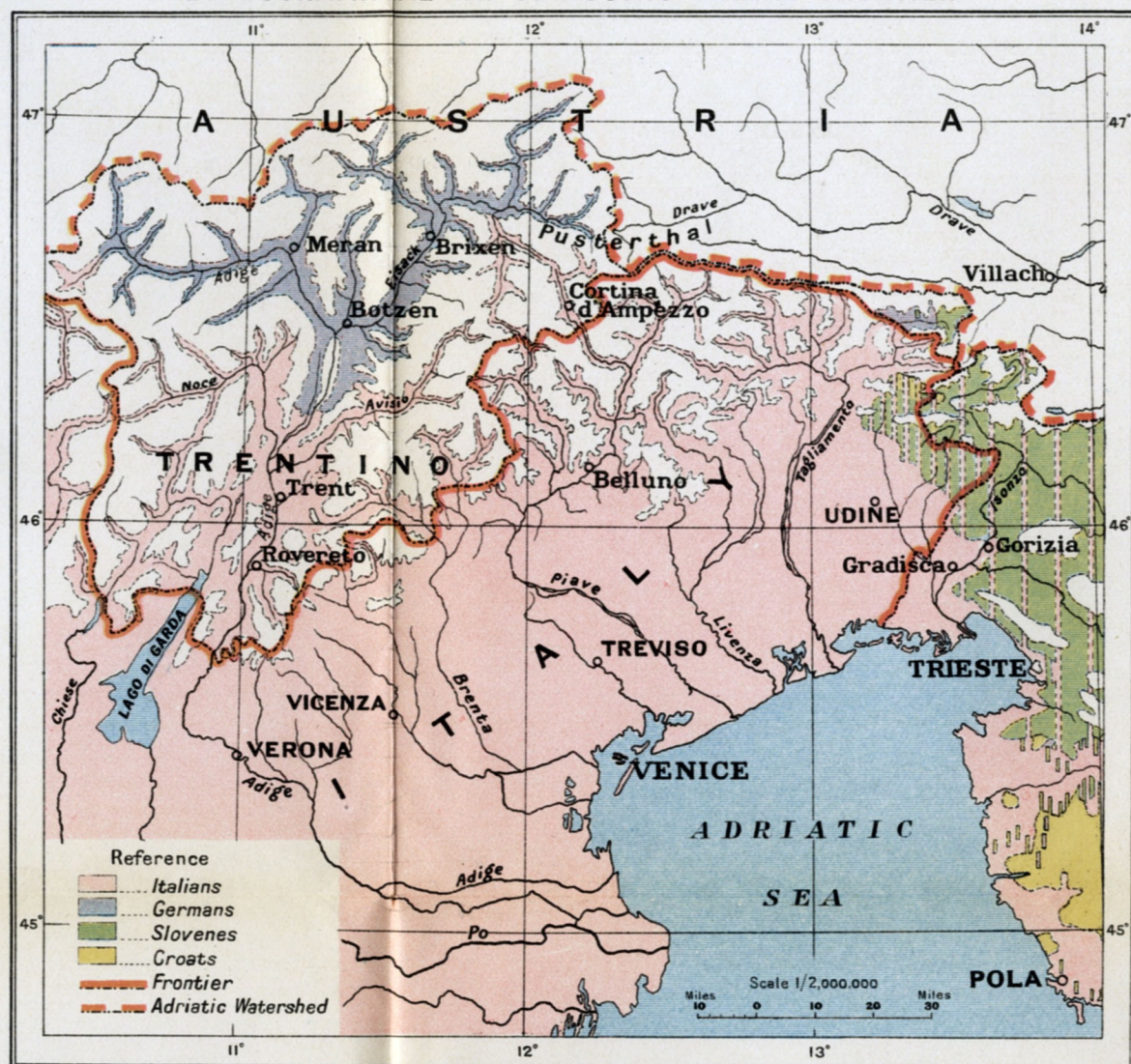
A recent paper, 'Oesterreichisch-Italienische Grenzfragen, von Dr. R. von Pfaundler, Wien' (*Petermanns Mitteilungen*, June, 1915), is a painstaking and able plea in favour of the frontier offered by Austria. Its argument rests mainly on linguistic and racial considerations, with some reference to existing administrative boundaries. The writer apparently inclines to give the Ampezzo district, which he calls *Heiden*, to Italy. In this case he works out from the census of 1910 the figures as follows:—

Territory ceded by Austria :	{	Italians and Ladinians, 366,837
	{	Germans, 13,892
Territory retained by Austria :	{	Germans, 511,222
	{	Italians and Ladinians, 18,863

Maps to illustrate the paper on SOUTHERN FRONTIERS OF AUSTRIA

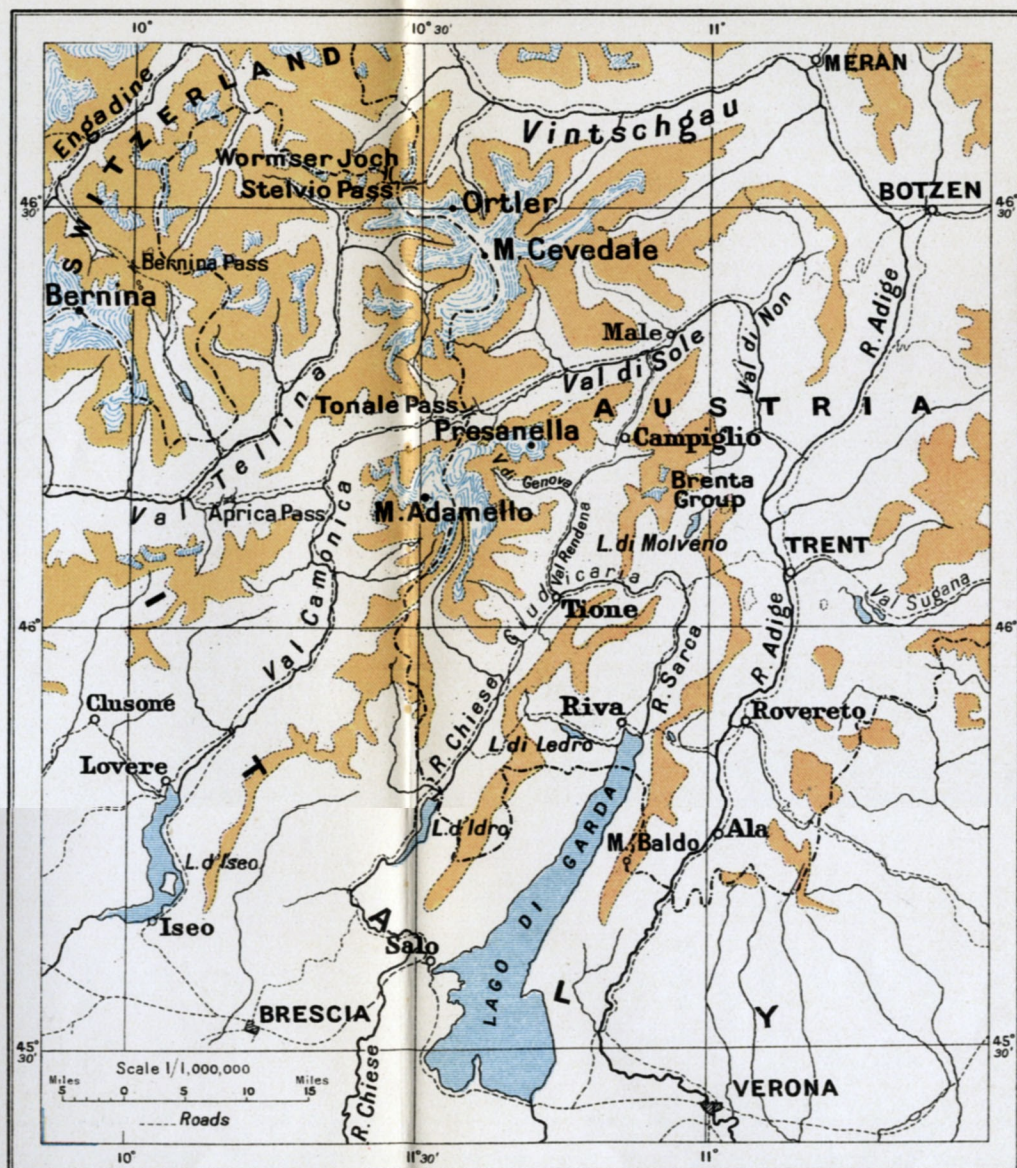
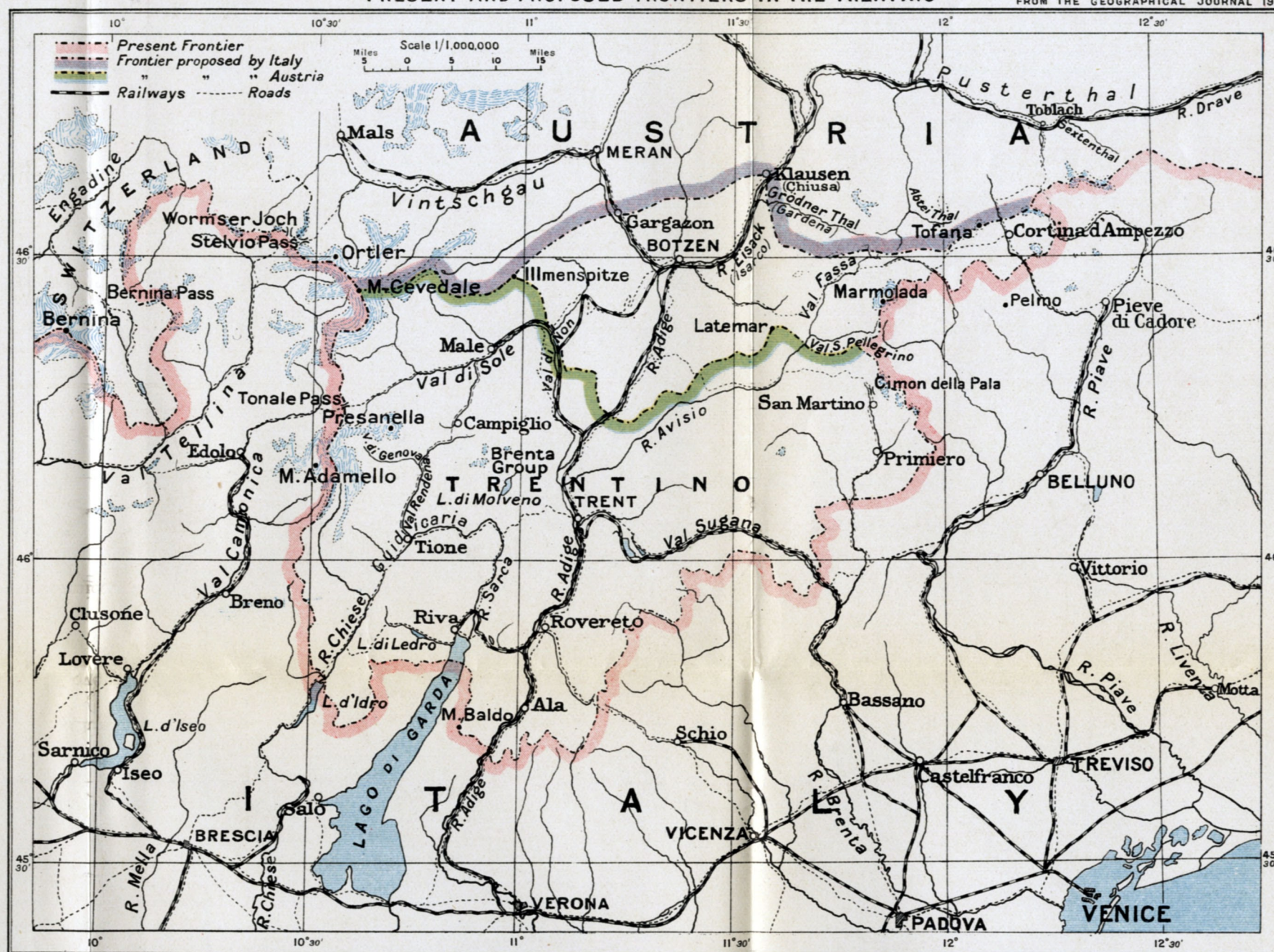
BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD

ETHNOGRAPHICAL MAP OF AUSTRO-ITALIAN FRONTIER



PRESENT AND PROPOSED FRONTIERS IN THE TRENTINO

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION
FROM THE GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNAL 1915



THE WESTERN TRENTINO: PHYSICAL



PRESENT AND PROPOSED FRONTIERS NORTH OF TRIESTE



THE WESTERN FRONTIER OF MONTENEGRO

He proceeds to give figures for the frontier officially claimed by Italy :

Territory claimed from Austria	{	Italians and Ladinians,	371,477
		Germans,	47,000
Territory retained by Austria :	{	Germans,	440,805
		Italians and Ladinians,	14,229
The population of the Ampezzo district is stated to be	{	Italians and Ladinians,	5,990
		Germans,	443

From a practical and judicial point of view the weakness of the case presented is that it ignores the strategic objections that may be raised by Italy while insisting on those alleged by Austria. Botzen and its surroundings, with the control of the mouths of the great valleys and the access to Trent, are the substantial bone of contention.

The accompanying map, in laying down the frontiers offered by Austria, is not in accordance with the statements of Baron Burian recorded in the despatches of the Italian ambassador at Vienna of April 16 and 25, 1915. In these the line indicated keeps for Austria more of the Nonsberg and the districts both of Fassa and Ampezzo.

THE 'LOCH IN DER WAND' IN THE CARNIC ALPS.

HARDLY more than three miles west of the Plöcken or Monte Croce Pass (1363 m.), of classic renown, lies another higher and far less known bridle-path pass (1983 m.), the so-called *Wolayer Uebergang*, formerly much frequented by smugglers. In the V-shaped depression between the Monte Coglians (2782 m.), on its eastern, and the Monte Canale or See Kofel (2550 m.) on its western side, there lies a beautiful little lake called after the pass, for it is of comparatively recent formation, brought about, there is little doubt, by moraines. The Monte Canale has the usual Dolomite features; towards the north or Austrian side it falls in one great sheer precipice about 1500 feet in height, but on the Italian side the slopes are not quite as steep and present no difficulties to speak of to an ordinary mountaineer. Close to the top of this peak, something like a hundred feet from the crest, is a curious tunnel-like cave which penetrates the mountain from the Italian to the Austrian side. Standing at a like altitude on a ridge which runs parallel immediately to the north of the great frontier wall, one can see daylight through this hole and observe such singular effects as the rays of the setting sun pierced this natural perforation. As heavy fighting has been reported near the Wolayer Lake, it is probable that the Alpini have taken advantage of what is practically an unapproachable stronghold, for access to it can only be gained from the Italian side.