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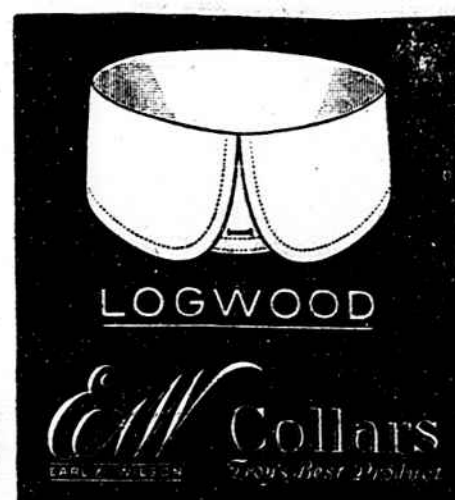
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H. C. FOLK, Telephone 26-W Bamberg, S. C.

VENICE WELL PROTECTED.

MILES OF MARSH KEEP HUNS FROM "QUEEN OF SEA."

Many Peasants Homeless, but the Sacrifice Has Been Worth All the Trouble.

Countless square miles of desolate marsh lands, interspersed and cut into numberless islands by sluggish lagoons and land inundated to the depth of several feet, line after line of stationary batteries of guns three to fifteen inches in calibre and deep, muddy trenches filled with men determined that the enemy shall not advance any further—such are the impressive and apparently well-nigh unassailable defenses of Venice.

The character of the warfare all along the lower Piave line and particularly the methods employed to defend the queen of the seas from the Austro-German invasion undoubtedly are unique even in this war of novelties. Nature has placed a barrier in the path of the invader apparently more insurmountable even than the mountains across which the enemy has fought his way, and these natural obstacles have been fortified as probably no other place in Europe.

Perfect Camouflage.

Human ingenuity has outdone itself to provide floating fortresses armed with huge guns which, camouflaged and concealed cunningly from point to point, never offering a mark for the invaders and yet always able to bombard the enemy at he attempts nightly to build pontoon bridges across the river Piave.

Skilled engineers have ferreted out every bit of solid mainland in the vast swampy area north of Venice where batteries, large and small, according to the distance from the Austrian lines, have been established. They never relax their vigilance. The same engineers have cut away the dikes that formerly controlled the water to irrigate the fertile Italian plains, creating a vast lake.

Homeless Peasants.

The inundation has made a thousand peasants homeless, but it presents an almost insurmountable barrier to the Austrian artillery from its scores of vantage points and frustrates every attempt of the Austrians to steal across unnoticed. Finally in addition to the foremost infantry lines in the inundated sec-

tion large and small batteries are scattered everywhere and floating monitors constantly are on patrol. They trip through the defense system of Venice and along the lower Piave, which the correspondent made beginning at Venice from which city a speedy naval motor boat ploughed its way at sunrise into the confusing maze of canals.

Virtually all signs of life were left behind as the boat worked its way into the narrow channels. Even the customary animal life of any wilderness seemed to be lacking except for a few ducks.

Suddenly the press boat almost collided with a greyish steel bulk. The vessel bearing a huge gun had successfully thrown shells to the Piave river and many times had defeated the effort of the Austrians to complete a pontoon bridge to the southern shore.

Steal Away at Night.

In case enemy airplanes were seen during the day the monitor was prepared to steam away at nightfall to some other spot where the Austrian shells would be unable to reach it, but from which point it could continue its work of destruction.

The monitor was only the first of a series. Other lighter guns and crafts were lying in reserve ready at a moment's notice to slip through the winding channels to some point nearer to the enemy. The armament of the monitors generally decreased in size as the press boat approached more closely to the front lines.

Inundated Area.

The artificial waterway runs almost due east and west from Porto Grandi to the ocean, while the new Piave, several miles to the north, flows eastward to the sea. The area between this water way, composed of Sile canal and the old Piave and the course of the new Piave which normally is fertile and productive, is that which has been inundated, and as far as the eye can see the trees, houses, and farms are standing in about four feet of water. Some peasants, whose homes abut on the canal, still occupy them, using boats to reach the canal bank.

The Austrians have occupied the Piave. The main body of the troops, however, had been unable to cross over because of the activity of the monitors and stationary batteries, and they are unable to inflict any serious damage because they are too far away from Venice for their big

guns to be effective.

At Capo Silo the correspondent temporarily left the naval escort for a military escort, so as to inspect the infantry positions, which were indescribably muddy and bleak.

They bisect the ruins of the towns, the houses of which have been destroyed by the Austrian artillery. The infantry men were cheerful and disregardful of the discomforts, and were busy bettering these conditions, notwithstanding the unceasing whine of Austrian shells.

Later the press boat again ploughed through seemingly endless mazes of canals meeting with monitors, new and cunningly located batteries, which as the afternoon approached, began to get into activity, especially against airplanes that were circling about. The canals and lagoons were resounding with the explosions of shells of all calibres as the correspondents' boat steamed off to the huge shore batteries that gave the final touch to the defenses of Venice. The guns here made, even those on the biggest monitors look like playthings.

To make the trip complete the correspondents were treated to a glimpse of the British monitors which were in operation in union with those of the Italians. The sunset had tinged the waters of Venice to the appearance of a sea of blood as the press boat steamed back into what probably is the best protected city so far threatened by the war.

MONEY TO DEFEND TRIMBLE.

House Sets Aside Fund to Combat Suit of Prioleau.

Washington, Dec. 16.—Aaron Prioleau, the South Carolina negro who has caused so much trouble in the lower congressional districts of the State by making unsuccessful efforts for the last 15 years to get into congress and by urging for many years that other negroes do likewise, is still making trouble in Washington. About two weeks ago he filed suit against South Trimble, clerk of the house, for \$20,000 alleged damages, claiming that Trimble did not file his last contest papers and now the house has just appropriated \$500 for counsel fees to defend Trimble. Prioleau seems to be obsessed with the idea that the First district place is his and that Congressman Whaley holds it illegally as he thinks George Legare did, who was in the house before Mr. Whaley.

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