

large bodies of men from the Russian front, and had conducted all their operations with such profound secrecy that when their principal attack commenced, the Italians were ill prepared to oppose it. On May 14 the Austrians began a violent bombardment of the Italian positions on a front of many miles. They employed upwards of two thousand guns, of which eight hundred were of very large calibre, among them forty howitzers of the largest class. The force assembled for this attack numbered 350,000. The infantry assault began on May 18, and continued to gain ground in the valleys of Adige and Brenta until June 2, when it was checked upon a new line many miles in rear. The Austrians reported the capture of thirty thousand prisoners and three hundred guns. For the next two weeks they continued to attack the new Italian positions from day to day on various parts of the line, and on one occasion along its whole front, but failed to make any important advance. Three divisions were then hastily withdrawn to oppose the Russian offensive in Galicia. On June 25, the Austrian retreat began to a selected position protected by strong rear guards, but was not effected without serious losses.

An Italian offensive had been planned to take place on the Isonzo, simultaneously with the allied attack on the Somme and the Russian invasion of Galicia, having Gorizia as its main objective. This had been postponed on account of the Austrian advance in the Trentino. The attack began on August 6, and Gorizia was taken three days later. The advance was continued successfully until August 17, when it was checked. Their offensive on this front was not resumed until October 11. Several lines of trenches were captured on that and the following day. On the Carso plateau, a further advance was made on November 1 and 2, when a portion of Austrian intrenchments was carried and many prisoners taken. Further active operations were prevented by bad weather.

OPERATIONS ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT, 1916.

At the beginning of the year the Russians still occupied a defensive line in front of their railway, extending from the gulf of Riga to the frontier of Rumania, over seven hundred miles in length. Here they repelled every attempt of the enemy to pierce their positions and reach the railway. On December 23, 1915, they commenced an offensive to divert attention from their projected operations in the Caucasus. Fierce fighting continued until the middle of January, 1916, along the Strypa and Styr rivers without any important success on either side. On March 16 the Russians advanced towards Vilna to relieve the pressure at Verdun and possibly to anticipate a German offensive in the vicinity of Riga. Little progress was made before a thaw put an end to operations at the end of the month. Another great offensive on their part began in June, with three army groups acting under the immediate direction of the Czar with General Alexieff as chief of staff. This movement opened with simultaneous attacks on selected portions of the Austrian line, south of the Pripet marshes on June 4. Both the opposing Austrian armies were forced back with heavy loss in prisoners, chiefly of discontented soldiers who