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Fortunino Matania R.I. (1881-1963)

Italian Artillery rounding a pass in the Alps.

Pen, brush, ink and wash. Signed.

Inscribed verso: 'Sph. 4/11/1916. P.78'. 'No.41'. Stamped: 'Sphere no. 876'.

Illustrated: *The Sphere*, London, 4th November, 1916, Front Cover. 13.25x10 inches.

£1,250

'Mr H. G. Wells has published some very vivid narratives of Italian warfare as a result of his visit to that front. He points out that "modern conditions certainly make operations far more deliberate than upon a level. An engineered road or railway in an Alpine valley is the most vulnerable of things; its curves and viaducts may be practically demolished by shell fire or swept by shrapnel, although you hold the entire valley except for one vantage point. All the mountains round about a valley must be won before that valley is safe for the transport of an advance. But, on the other hand, a surprise capture of some single mountain crest and the hoisting of one gun into position there may block the retreat of guns and material from a great series of positions. Mountain surfaces are extraordinarily various and subtle. You may understand Picardy upon a map, but mountain warfare is three-dimensional. A struggle may go on for weeks or months consisting of apparently separate and incidental skirmishes, and then suddenly a whole valley organisation may crumble away in retreat or disaster. Italy is gnawing into the Trentino day by day, and particularly round by her right wing." The above drawing shows Italian artillery rounding a corner in the Alps on a new military road. A soldier climbs over and watches the timbers to see that nothing is displaced by the weight of the passing gun.' (Extract from *The Sphere*).