EUROPE'S FATEFUL HOUR

EUROPE'S FATEFUL HOUR

BY

GUGLIELMO FERRERO

Author of "Greatness and Decline of Rome," "Ancient Rome and Modern America," etc.

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1918

PREFACE

When the war broke out in August, 1914, it was generally supposed that it would be on much the same scale as the various struggles for the balance of power or the wars of aggression which had rent Europe asunder since the French Revolution; an opinion which prevailed so long as to exercise no small influence on the conduct of the war. It is only indeed comparatively recently that governments and peoples alike seem to have realized that the present conflict is more far-reaching and more complex than a repetition of even the Franco-Prussian War on a vaster scale.

The essays collected in this volume were all written to show the erroneousness of this idea and to prove that this struggle is not merely the continuation of the national and political wars of the nineteenth century, but rather a great crisis in what is commonly called western civilization — a crisis whose development will be far more extensive than was ever contemplated and whose consequences will far transcend the territorial ambitions of the various belligerent states. In order to prove this assertion, I have endeavoured to trace the component elements of this crisis with the help of what is generally known as the comparative method, studying modern civilization in the light of the civilizations of ancient times, trying by this means to discover their strong and weak points, and making use for this purpose of the comparative studies along these lines which I had made before the outbreak of war.[1]

[1] Cfr. Ferrero, "Ancient Rome and Modern America," Putnam. New York. "Between the Old World and the New." Idem.

These essential elements of the crisis appear to me to be three in number. The first is of a military order — i. e., the rivalry between the Great Powers of Europe in the matter of armaments which began after the Franco-Prussian War, when for the first time in history the greatest nations of the world based their military policy not on the greatest possible limitation of armaments, as had hitherto been the case, but on the principle of the indefinite increase of men and weapons.

The second element is the development of industry, more especially in its metallurgical and mechanical branches. These industries, which have become so powerful during the last century, have not only supplied European militarism with the means of indefinitely increasing their armaments, but, by providing incredibly complicated, rapid and powerful weapons, have transformed the art of war into a kind of diabolical instrument of extermination. Until the nineteenth century armies were light, easily handled swords with which duels were fought between states according to certain recognized rules in order to settle their disputes with the minimum expenditure of blood and money. In the century of metallurgy and mechanics they have become gigantic machines for the destruction of nations.

The third element is of a moral and intellectual nature: i. e., that unshakable optimism, that blind faith in the progress and strength of man, that unbridled ambition and covetousness which has effaced or at all events dimmed the sense of limitation, of proportion, of the humanly possible and the reasonable in the whole western civilization, in the realms of philosophy, religion, art, science, politics, finance, industry and commerce alike. Western civilization was on the way to thinking itself omnipotent. This malady had attacked all the nations of Europe to a greater

or less extent, but its ravages were greatest in Germany which had fallen victim to that megalomania, that insensate pride, that unbounded ambition, that deterioration in the morals of the masses which made a country, which for long had been regarded as the model of the world, become in a few short months its terror and detestation.

These three elements gave birth to this war which knows no limits of time, space, destruction of life and property — an appalling phenomenon in the history of the world — a war which in its turn gave birth to a crisis in the whole of western civilization, owing to the overwhelming shock to its political and moral order.

* * *

I was specially pleased that an English translation of this book should be published in America, because the Americans occupy a peculiar position which makes it easier for them than for Europeans to follow these ideas. Is not the United States the living proof of their truth? If the European war were the last and greatest of the political and national wars of the Old World, it would not be easy to understand why the United States could not have remained neutral as it did in all preceding conflicts; if, on the other hand, it is a crisis in western civilization, it is easy enough to see why it could not be a mere looker on, since America forms part of that civilization.

The Americans are not only in a position to understand this universal character of this crisis, but are also better able to profit by this truth in the work of reconstruction which must follow the present cataclysm. The position of America in relation to the great events of the last three years differs from that of the European Powers in so far as only two of the elements which have contributed to this

crisis are present in America: the industrial and the moral and intellectual. The first and most important — the militarism which impelled Europe to the unlimited increase of armaments — is altogether lacking.

This circumstance has had and will have various consequences. The fact that she had not taken part in the rivalries of militarism was one of the causes which both obliged America to intervene and made that intervention more difficult. It forced America to intervene because had she not done so, she would have been unable to create a great army, and had she not created this army, she would have found herself at the end of the war the only wealthy nation in the world, but at the same time wholly defenceless against Europe, which, while possessing numberless great armies, would be bankrupt owing to the expenditures of her whole capital on armaments. The vastest accumulation of wealth which the world has ever seen would have existed on one side of the Atlantic and the most formidable accumulation of armaments on the other side. It is difficult to say what would have been the outcome of this disproportion, but no one can fail to see the danger latent in it to the political and moral equilibrium of the world. It will be one of the chief glories of American democracy that it realized this supreme necessity and the other nations will give it credit for the great service it has rendered to civilization by improvising a great army at this critical moment in the history of the world in order to reestablish the equilibrium of power on the two sides of the Atlantic. This service will be still greater if, as is hoped by all enlightened minds, the new American army acts as the army of universal disarmament; if America uses her power, her wealth and the sacrifices she is making in the common cause to induce the European Powers to accept

loyally a military organization based on the principle of reduction of armaments to the lowest possible limit.

Of the three elements which have contributed to this crisis, militarism has been the most active. Without it, as is proved by America, the other two would have been almost innocuous and it may fairly be said that this tremendous crisis of western civilization is the offspring of European militarism, as developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is therefore obvious that this evil must be abolished if civilization is to be regenerated and no State can effect so much towards this end as that Power which was fortunate enough to be almost immune from it, namely, the United States, which has it therefore in its power to save our civilization. I do not think that I can better close this preface to a book whose aim it is to discover the means of this salvation than by expressing the hope that it may rise to its lofty task.

GUGLIELMO FERRERO.

Florence, December 9th, 1917.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

The Underlying Causes of the War

1. QUANTITY AND QUALITY
2. ANARCHY, LIBERTY AND DISCIPLINE
3. THE GREAT AND THE COLOSSAL

EUROPE'S FATEFUL HOUR

QUANTITY AND QUALITY

I

THE first impression made by America on the European who sees it from the windows of a railway carriage is that of an immense desert. In the Argentine he sees boundless green plains, whose monotony is broken only by an occasional group of three or four one-storied houses behind a railway station—groups almost too few and far between to make him realize that the desert is inhabited by man. In Brazil he sees range after range of gloomy mountains with here and there a lighter patch, where the forest has been cleared to make room for coffee plantations. But on plain and mountain alike he seeks in vain for signs of the presence of man. The train runs for hours without passing through so much as a village. It is the same in North America, at all events in the Western States, where vast, dreary stretches of country meet the eye. True, villages are more numerous and less scattered, and suddenly the traveller sees that the train is passing houses, more and more houses, great factory chimneys bristle on either hand, lofty buildings tower over the ordinary buildings like giants over a multitude of dwarfs and he catches glimpses of streets with hurrying motor cars and trams. He is passing through an important town, where half a million, a million or even two million of his fellow men live crowded together under the shadows of the myriad chimneys surrounded by an al-

most deserted countryside. Soon the train leaves the haunts of men once more and rushes into the melancholy solitude of the desert plains.

A strange sight, this boundless void, to the European, who has lived all his life in one of the most densely populated countries of the world, where dwellings of man are to be found everywhere from the sea shore to the loftiest inhabitable mountain peaks. Desolate as these plains and mountains may appear, they are however not unknown to man, whose unremitting toil forces them to yield every year immense quantities of grain, cotton, tobacco, coffee, wool, meat, gold, silver, copper, iron and coal—a boundless stream of wealth which flows over the whole world. These raw materials are worked up in the great manufacturing centres of the United States with almost incredible rapidity. Even if Europeans tend to exaggerate everything concerning America, its marvels and its horrors alike, there is one thing which exceeds their estimate of it, namely, its riches. In no place or period has man succeeded in producing such boundless wealth in so short a space of time as he has done in the United States and in the great republics of South America, such as the Argentine and Brazil, since the middle of the nineteenth century. We might well believe that he had discovered beyond the shores of the Atlantic the fabulous garden of the Hesperides for which he had so long sought in vain, the promised land which for centuries to come will provide mankind with food, clothing, metals and fuel enough to satisfy the wildest dreams of avarice; the land of plenty which is one day to banish from the world the scourge of famine, before which it trembled for so many centuries. If we bear this in mind, we shall realize the importance of all that has taken place during the last fifty years in the plains, mountains and cities of America and the

great rôle which the countries of the New World now play. The riches of America would not, however, be one of the most remarkable historical phenomena of our age, if they merely furnished man with powers of action and enjoyment such as he has never before possessed. Their effect is at once wider and deeper, for they are hastening the end of a movement which began more than a century ago—one which threatens to overwhelm the very foundations of our civilization; they place before us a formidable problem, the most serious, in my opinion, which we have to face; the problem, which together with the influence, hatred or admiration of the riches of America, lies at the bottom of almost all the moral and social difficulties surrounding us: the problem of progress. This statement may appear perhaps obscure: I will now endeavour to explain it.

II

The wealth of America! We constantly hear this spoken of in Europe, frequently with envy, as if it were the riches of some uncivilized people which, in order to acquire the treasures of the earth, looks with contempt on the things of the intellect. One does not, however, need to travel in America in order to realize that the Americans are no mere barbarians, wholly given over to money grubbing. I can only here give a few instances from North America, but they would almost all apply on a smaller scale to the great States of Southern America. The effort made by the Americans to establish schools all over the country would in itself be sufficient to refute such an accusation. You have all heard of the great American universities, such as Harvard and Columbia. These institutions are real cities of learning, with splendid buildings, gardens, laborato-

ries, museums, libraries, playing fields and swimming baths. The beauty and comfort of the buildings are in themselves a proof of the esteem accorded to learning, but of this the scholastic program affords even more striking evidence. It may safely be said that everything which can be taught is taught: all languages, living and dead; the histories and literatures of every land, both ancient and modern, which have influenced the development of civilization; all sciences, both theoretical and practical. Millions are required annually for the upkeep of these buildings and the support of the professors, yet nearly all these great universities are wholly independent of the State. They are maintained by the fees paid by the students and by the generosity of the rich. Bankers, manufacturers and business men contribute a large proportion of the sum required for the salaries of all these professors of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, philosophy, mathematics, etc. Nor do the universities absorb all the money spent by public bodies and the wealthy classes on education. Everywhere we find museums, libraries and schools of every kind for both men and women of every class set up by cities, states and millionaires for the spread of general education and professional training. Face to face with these facts, it is difficult to say that the upper classes in America care about nothing but money. It may be asserted that they are lacking in taste, that their towns are hideous. It would undoubtedly require some courage to say that American cities are beautiful, but it would none the less be unjust to say that the American is indifferent to beauty or to deny that he makes great efforts to beautify his country. All the architectural schools of Europe, those of Paris above all, are full of enthusiastic American students. Fabulous sums are spent on fine public buildings by towns, states, banks, insurance companies, universities and railways.

These edifices may not be masterpieces, but it can hardly be denied that some of them are very handsome and that America possesses many talented architects. We constantly hear it asserted in Europe that Americans give high prices for antiques or so-called antiques and are incapable of distinguishing between the really beautiful and the mediocre, the genuine and the faked. But those who have visited rich Americans in their homes know that while the pretentious and the dupe are to be found in America as in every other country, there are also many Americans who are real connoisseurs.

A writer given to paradox might even assert that Americans are more idealistic than Europeans, if the desire to understand, admire and assimilate everything — art, ideas and religions alike — is to be regarded as a proof of idealism. Go to New York: you will see in the streets specimens of every kind of architecture; every religion is represented in its churches; every school of music in its theatres; every style of decorative art in its houses. Now New York is typical of that spirit of universal reconciliation, somewhat vague and superficial perhaps, but vigorous and sincere, characteristic of contemporary America, of which pragmatism is the philosophic expression. When pragmatism affirmed that all useful ideas are true, did it really intend, as has been alleged, to subordinate the ideal to the practical? I hardly think it is possible to believe this when one has once breathed American air. No, pragmatism is essentially a doctrine of conciliation. Its aim is to afford man the means of reconciling opposing ideas and doctrines by proving that all ideas, even those which appear mutually exclusive, may help to become wiser, stronger and better. Why then struggle for the triumph of one to the detriment of the other instead of allowing man to take from each all

the good that each has to offer? Those who know North America will say that if there be a distinctively American doctrine, it is this. Many philosophic objections might of course be made to such a doctrine, but, whether it be true or false, it proves that the people which conceived it, far from despising the ideal, has such a respect for all ideas, that it has not the courage to reject any one of them.

But for the limitations of space, many analogous instances might be cited. There are rich, uneducated people in America as elsewhere, but the boor rolling in money is a mythical being. Nor is this surprising. Modern society is so constituted that it is impossible to conceive of a nation which is both wealthy and ignorant. Modern industry, commerce and agriculture demand special technical knowledge and a highly perfected social organization; in other words, a high degree of scientific and judicial culture. America cannot therefore be said to be indifferent to the things of the intellect; it would be more correct to say that she is less interested in them as a people than in industry, commerce and agriculture. But is not this the case also in Europe? Who would venture to assert that the progress of literature, art and science is the dominant interest of the governments and upper classes of the Old World? Listen to the conversation of those around us. What are its topics? The perfecting of industrial machinery, the development of coal and iron mines, the utilization of waterfalls, and the expansion of industries and commerce. Kings who reign by the grace of God declare publicly that they have nothing so much at heart as the commerce of their countries! If this be American barbarism, it must be admitted that Europe is being Americanized with alarming rapidity. This economic effort of Europe is not, however, in the least surprising: it is but the dizzy speeding up of a

great historical movement which began in the far-away days when an obscure and tenacious Genoese spread his canvas and set sail across the ocean for the unknown West. Europe had, indeed, given birth to miracles of art and literature, to profound systems of philosophy, lofty moral standards and learned codes of law — but she was poor; she produced but little and that little slowly. She had made gods of tradition and authority; she had set bounds to the energy of man by means of laws, prejudices and precepts; she bent the pride of man by telling him unceasingly that he was weak, unstable, corrupt and — to quote Virgil's metaphor — like the boatman rowing slowly against the stream. Woe to him if for a single moment he relaxes his efforts to make headway against the current which is ever ready to carry him away with his frail bark! Then, suddenly, she discovered an immense continent in the midst of the ocean and realized that Prometheus, who had only stolen a single spark, was but a clumsy thief. She discovered electricity and coal mines; she learned how to make the steam-engine and consequently how to multiply her wealth with a rapidity unknown to our ancestors. From that moment man was no longer content merely to dream of the promised land; he wished to see it for himself. He demolished all those traditions, laws and institutions which hampered the flight of human energy; he learned to work both hard and quickly; he won both liberty and riches and he conceived the idea of progress.

The idea of progress was born during the closing years of the seventeenth century, at which time man began to realize that he was able to conquer the earth and its treasures. It developed and spread during the nineteenth century, and overcame both the objections of philosophers and the misoneism of the masses, the scruples of religion and

the spirit of tradition, in proportion as man extended his dominion over nature, seized her treasures and shook off the yoke of obsolete teaching. The tremendous development of the great American States ensured its final triumph and it is today the dominating principle of our civilization — one which obliges us to make efforts, to run risks and endure privation. And yet . . . if you ask people who have the word "progress" constantly on their lips what they understand by it, how many can give you an exact definition? You have only to read the books and articles on the subject or to study the proceedings of sociological congresses to see how confused and discordant are the ideas even of experts. The idea of progress appears to be as popular and all powerful as it is vague and incoherent. It is on every one's lips, but no one knows exactly what it is. Stranger still, in the century of progress you hear constant complaints of universal decadence. Workmen, employés, soldiers, students, children, parents and servants are no better than before; good cooking is as much a thing of the past as good literature, beautiful furniture, and art, and courteous manners. How is it that so many things are deteriorating in this age of progress? Are we making progress or not? Is the progress of which we are so proud and to which we daily sacrifice our leisure and our peace of mind, sometimes even our very life, but an illusion after all?

III

It is hardly necessary to point out the seriousness of this question, which may be regarded as fundamental, since on it depends the final sentence passed upon our civilization: whether it is a serious matter or a great delusion. And yet our age cannot answer it. Why is this? How is this

apparent contradiction to be explained? This is the great problem which all I saw, learned and observed in North and South America forced me to face. Has the problem of the New World struck me in this light because my starting point was not only Europe but also the dead and gone ages of ancient history? It may be so. At all events this obscure problem has always seemed somewhat clearer when I compared American, and more especially North American, society with the ancient civilizations to which I had devoted so much study. True, the civilizations from which our own is descended were poor: their desires, ambitions, their initiative, enterprise and originality were all limited; they produced but little and, while they suffered much from lack of material resources, they only looked upon the increase of riches as a painful necessity. They did, however, strive after a high standard of perfection in art, literature, morals and religion, as is proved by the artistic character of almost all the industries of the past, the importance attributed to the decorative arts, to questions of personal morals, ceremonial and forms. Quality was more highly esteemed than quantity, and all the limitations to which these civilizations were subject — limitations which seem so strange to us today — were but the necessary price of this ardently desired perfection. We have made the accumulation of riches our aim; we have won liberty and destroyed almost all the limitations of the past; but we have had to abandon nearly all the ideals of artistic, religious and moral perfection venerated by our ancestors and sacrifice quality to quantity.

Take, for example, the dispute as to the study of the classics. Why did men study Homer and Cicero with so much enthusiasm in times past? Because the great Greek and Latin writers were then considered the models of a

literary perfection greatly admired by the ruling classes, which was not merely an intellectual adornment. It could confer public esteem, celebrity, even glory and lofty positions. During the last century these models have, however, lost much of their prestige, either because many people have learnt to appreciate the literature of other ages or because they are no longer in touch with a period which speaks too much and writes too fast. How can a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, who has to make ten or fifteen speeches a day, aim at the perfection of oratory of Cicero or Quintilian? But the day when classic learning ceased to be a school of literary taste pronounced its doom; once the ancient writers ceased to be models, their works became books like any others, and less interesting to many readers than much modern literature. We hear much of an artistic crisis. Here we must, however, draw a distinction. The arts may be divided into two categories: those which merely serve to amuse man and to offer him an agreeable pastime, such as music, the drama and, to a certain extent, literature; and those which beautify the world, such as architecture, sculpture, painting and all the decorative arts. Now it is obvious that if there is a crisis in every branch of art at the present time, the crisis is far more acute in the arts belonging to the latter category. No age has spent so much on beautifying the world as our own has done; no epoch has given birth to such hosts of architects, sculptors, painters and decorators, built so many towns, palaces and bridges, or laid out so many parks and gardens. Why are we so dissatisfied with the results? Why have the Americans, who spent such fabulous sums on beautifying their towns, never succeeded in building a S. Mark or a Notre Dame? We have everything: money, artists and the desire to create the beautiful; what is lacking?

Only one thing: time. One day at New York I was speaking in appreciative terms of American architecture to a very talented architect. "Yes, yes," he answered sarcastically, "my compatriots are quite ready to spend one hundred million dollars on building a church as beautiful as S. Mark's in Venice, but they would insist on its being finished in eighteen months." The reply was suggestive. How is it possible to beautify a world which is perpetually being transformed, where nothing is stable and where everything, from furniture to buildings, must be turned out in quantities? Time, reasonable leisure, a wise moderation in the demand for quantity and a certain stability of taste are indispensable in the construction of beautiful buildings and beautiful furniture alike if even a fairly high standard of perfection is to be attained. S. Mark and Notre Dame cannot be built in eighteen months and France could never have produced her great decorative styles if public taste had been as changeable as it is now and people had expected to refurnish every ten years.

IV

How many other instances could be given! If we look around us we see on all hands this struggle between quality and quantity, which is the very essence of modern civilization. Two worlds are at war in our day; not, as is so often thought, Europe and America, but quantity and quality, and their conflicts disturb and rend asunder America just as much Europe. The impossibility of defining progress, the contradiction between our constant complaints of general decadence and our equally constant assertions that the world is progressing, are another effect of this struggle. Our age has increased the output of certain commodities while lowering the standard of quality so that it appears to be progress-

ing if we judge it from the standpoint of quantity, and to be deteriorating if we judge it from that of quality. We are bewildered, because we are constantly confusing these two standards by using sometimes one and sometimes the other. Set an architect and a builder in concrete to discuss our age: the former will tell you that the multiplication of hideous, jerry built towns and villages is a sign of decadence and barbarism, because they prove that we have lost the power of raising the marvellous monuments which are the glory of the Middle Ages; while the latter will maintain with equal sincerity that no epoch has been so progressive as ours which sees the birth of so many new towns and the extension of those already existing. The former judges from the standpoint of quality and is right in asserting that Notre Dame or S. Mark's, Venice, are of greater value than a whole American city; the other, who judges from the standpoint of quantity, is equally justified in drawing a directly opposite conclusion. In America I have seen an even more striking instance of this tragic misunderstanding, which is latent in nearly all our judgments on good and evil. When I arrived the campaign which had been going on for some years against the trusts, the great banks, the railway and insurance companies, was at its fiercest. Speeches, articles and books by men of weight accused the great financial magnates of being propagators of corruption and tools of a modern despotism no less detestable than the despotisms of ancient times, and of forming disgraceful organizations to rob honest men of the fruit of their toil. This campaign was so widespread among the middle and lower classes as to contribute in no small degree to the fall of the Republican Party. This wave of popular indignation was, however, met in America, as it had been in Europe, with absolute composure by economists and busi-

ness men who accused the whole movement of being a return to the ideas of the Middle Ages and sang the praises of modern finance, its immense enterprises, great successes and formidable organizations. How is such a marked difference of opinion on a question of such importance to be explained in an epoch so enlightened and educated as our own? Has part of the world been struck blind and only the remainder been gifted with clear vision? Not at all. It is not a question of sight or blindness, but of two sets of men having different aims and employing different standards of measurement. How can they possibly come to an understanding? If the quantitative standard be adopted, if it be admitted that the aim and object of life is to produce the greatest possible quantity of wealth in the shortest possible time, the economists are right. The injustices and corruptions denounced by the adversaries of modern finance are but the trifling drawbacks of the economic liberty to which the modern world owes its wealth. The idea that the earnings of the individual should be determined by the blind play of economic forces was, however, unknown to all the civilizations preceding our own. They always strove to adjust this play of forces, so as to bring it into agreement with the principles of charity and justice. In order to attain this end, they did not even hesitate to limit the developments of industry and commerce, as, for instance, by forbidding usury. They subordinated economic development to an ideal of moral perfection; quantity to quality. Now, if this standard be applied to the modern world, those who disapprove of modern finance are right; certain methods employed by modern finance and, in certain cases, even corruption, may further the production of riches, but are none the less distasteful to a sensitive moral conscience. The partisans and opponents of finance may talk for ever, they

will never agree, for they start from different standpoints, which can never be reconciled.

We now see why the comparisons made between Europe and America, all the discussions as to which of the two worlds is the best, can never lead to any definitive conclusion. The weak point of all these comparisons is always the confusion of the two standards. America is neither the egregious country where no one has an idea beyond money making, nor the fabulous land of marvels its admirers would have us believe it. It is the country in which the principle of quantity, which has become so powerful during the last century and a half, has won its most signal triumph. An active, energetic, vigorous people found itself in possession of an immense territory, of which part was extremely fertile and other districts rich in mines and forests, just at the time when civilization had discovered the means which rendered possible the development of immense tracts of country and the rapid production of wealth: the steam engine. This people had in its hands a country unhampered by tradition and was therefore able to march along the new paths of history with unexampled rapidity and energy. In the course of a single century it has multiplied its population, its towns and its wealth ten, fifteen and even thirty fold. It created in hot haste a social order which has subordinated the ideals of perfection prevalent hitherto to a new ideal: the ideal of increasing size and increasing rapidity. It is not true that America is indifferent to intellectual things, but her efforts in the field of art and science neither are nor can be subordinated to the other and higher ideal of the rapid and intensive development of the continent by means of machinery. At the same time it is not correct to assert that Europe stands for the essence of civilization, as against American barbarism, or that the Old World has seen its day and is

powerless and paralysed by the trammels of routine. The ancient societies of Europe have also entered upon what might be called the quantitative phase of history; in Europe, too, the masses demand a higher standard of living; public and private expenditure is increasing with alarming rapidity and it has become absolutely necessary to further the production of wealth. This is, however, a far more difficult matter in Europe than in America. Europe is far more densely populated; part of the land is exhausted; the many political divisions and the multiplicity of tongues greatly increase the difficulties of development on a large scale; the traditions of the days when men produced a small number of articles which attained a high standard of perfection are more powerful. Europe is superior to America in the higher things of the mind, but in economic enterprises she is slower, more timid, less prodigal; in short, more limited, nor could it be otherwise. She cannot produce the same quantity at the same rate. Europe may thus seem superior to America or America to Europe, according to whether we make use of the standard of quantity or quality. If the perfection of a civilization is to be gauged by its output of riches America must be considered the model; if, on the other hand, perpection is to be judged by intellectual activity Europe bears off the palm.

V

The objection might be urged: "But we cannot live for ever in a state of indecision. What standard ought we to choose? Is the world, as we see it today, a marvellous epic of progress or a gloomy tragedy of decay? Which of the two worlds, Europe or America, is the better? Which is to be regarded as the model? You have no right to set such problems if you cannot solve them, and if you cannot

solve them, you might have saved yourself your journeys to America or at all events have spent your time on these journeys on other things and refrained from writing a lengthy volume on the conflict between the two worlds." Such an objection would be both natural and reasonable. It is, however, unlikely that man will ever succeed in solving the problem with any degree of certainty during the present phase of civilization, for this very uncertainty is the price of man's conquest of the earth and of the enormous development of America which we ourselves have witnessed. In order to conquer the earth and its treasures we have sacrificed many of the ideals of perfection — artistic, moral and religious — bequeathed to us by our ancestors; are we, however, ready to give them up altogether? Can we even imagine a world of pure quantity without either morals, beauty or justice? The question is its own answer. But the pride and cupidity of man have been excited to such a pitch by his conquests, that the modern world seems to have made up its mind to go on with the great adventure to the bitter end. A religious, moral or political movement placing reasonable limits to needs and luxury in every class seems very unlikely to take place in our day and, so long as the population, the demands of all classes, and public and private expenditure continue to increase, quantity will continue to extend its sway. We shall be forced to subordinate art and morals to the necessity of manufacturing more rapid machinery, bringing more and more land under cultivation and discovering mines. The production of wealth will tend more and more to become the standard of progress and our day will become increasingly the day of those who possess vast tracts of territory, great empires, and rich coal and iron mines. Fire will once more become, as at the dawn of history, the supreme deity, and the intel-

lectual and moral uncertainty in which we live will continue. No system of philosophy, no science, will be able to replace this uncertainty by a clear and exact knowledge of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and error. All the qualitative differences between things will tend to become confused in our minds. We shall not be able to give an exact definition of progress, just as we shall find it difficult to distinguish between legitimate needs and vices, between reasonable expenditure and extravagance. We shall change our æsthetic principles every year; we shall consider a thing ugly today which we admired yesterday and vice versa, and after probing into the mystery of those things before which our fathers bowed their heads, we shall end by asking at the very moment when science is celebrating its greatest triumphs whether it is true or false, whether it teaches to know reality or merely deludes us; whether we know or are but dreaming! Here we have the great problem with which contemporary philosophy is confronted. Everything seems to totter to its fall around man who, by transcending every limit, even the reality of the world, has become too powerful!

VI

If there be no way out of the situation, why face it at all, you will say? Why recognize the existence of an incurable malady? I am of the opinion, however, that it is well to analyse our present strange position, one which is unique in the history of the world, and that a thorough understanding of it cannot fail to be of service to those men — scholars, artists, men of letters, jurists, and the religious — who represent the world of quality. With the exception of medicine, whose aim is to cure our maladies, of those sciences which make discoveries of service to industry, and

of the arts which minister to public amusement, the world of intellect of today seems out of touch with the world. Is there a single earnest priest who has not asked himself in moments of discouragement of what use it is to preach the Christian virtues to a century whose power lies in overweening pride and an almost delirious greed of possession? What intelligent historian has not wondered from time to time to what purpose he persists in recording the events of the past to a generation which only looks to the future? What philosopher has not felt in this age, so wholly absorbed in economic realities, as if he had strayed into this world from some other planet? What artist, whose ambition is not confined to money making but who strives after a high standard of perfection, has not often cursed the frenzied whirl in which we all live today? From time to time an apparent reversion to the old order takes place; a sudden interest is manifested in the progress of religion, the future of morals, the history of the past, the problems of metaphysics, and the artistic remains of dead civilizations. These passing enthusiasms are, however, too transitory to convince artists and scholars that they have a definite and useful task to accomplish. One reason why all forms of intellectual activity tend at the present time to become either lucrative professions or bureaucratic careers is that they are forced to seek outside — in money or in social position — the object which they can no longer find in themselves. How many times, during my long journeys across the great, lonely tracks of America, have I thought, as I gazed on the wheat fields or coffee plantations stretching as far as the eye could reach, of the little bits of marble so delicately carved by the artists of ancient Greece which are the treasures of our museums. Was not the marvellous perfection of Greek art due to the fact that at a certain period in their

history they ceased to try to extend their dominion over the earth and its treasures? Have we not succeeded in conquering these immense stretches of country because we have given up striving after the artistic and moral perfection which was the glory of the ancients? This idea seemed to me to shed fresh light upon the ancient civilizations and our own day alike. If the civilizations which carried their desire for perfection too far ended by exhausting their energies in the pursuit of a goal at once too circumscribed and too difficult of attainment, are not the civilizations which give themselves over to the passion for immensity, speed and quantity fated to end in a new, coarse and violent barbarism? If a people is to live happily and work profitably, there must be a certain balance between quantity and quality, and this balance is only possible if the ideals of perfection, whether artistic, moral or religious — are capable of setting a bound to the desire for the increase of wealth. How many forms of intellectual activity, which are at present neglected or despised, or else completely transformed into careers or professions, would once more become noble missions if artists, historians, philosophers, priests, men of letters and the upper classes by whom they are surrounded realized of what supreme importance it is to keep intact some sort of breakwater against the violent flood of modern progress! What renewed energy would these forms of intellectual life draw from their consciousness of this task and its importance! Take classical studies, for instance. I touch upon this point once more, as I draw to a close, because it is one about which I thought much during my travels in America — classical studies will never flourish again unless, after moderating their scientific claims, we restore to them their original artistic and literary character. They must, that is to say, have as their object the preservation of an ideal of

æsthetic perfection. We cannot, however, simply return to the humanism of times past. Greece and Rome can no longer be regarded as the one and only standard of beauty. Times have changed, the world would no longer tolerate the confinement of taste within such narrow bounds. Greece and Rome may and should be *one* of our models, the most ancient and the most glorious. The models created by Greece and Rome have exercised such immense influence on the history of the world, they have so often aided nations to emerge from barbarism and to find in limitation the consciousness of beauty, truth and justice, that it is our duty to keep them alive in our minds and ready to come once more to our assistance. In order to keep them alive, we must have schools where we can learn to know and feel them. No ideal of perfection is either absolute, eternal or necessary; they are one and all born of an arbitrary and hence transitory limitation; they are like so many sparks from the infinite light surrounding us. They pass away in an instant if man makes no effort to retain them. There have been periods which shattered statues and burned books whose fragments we treasure as relics and this destruction of antiquity might conceivably take place again, though under less violent forms. What will be the use of filling our museums with Greek statues when the world no longer appreciates their beauty, or of publishing perfect editions of the classics when only a handful of specialists can read them? Just because in the great continents of America fire is once more about to become the lord of the earth and the supreme deity of man, as it was at the dawn of history, the law of equilibrium demands that in both Europe and America there should be a select few devoted to the worship of the Muses and capable of appreciating the harmonies of Virgil even amid the deafening whirl of modern machinery.

ANARCHY, LIBERTY AND DISCIPLINE

I

THE European war, which has already devastated so much of the world we knew, this war which has been spoken of for years, though often without any more real belief in its possibility than in that of the sun being extinguished or the earth colliding with some wandering comet, this war took but a week to become a grim reality. On the evening of July 24th, 1914, Europe from the Baltic to the Ionian, from the Pyrenees to the Ural Mountains, went to rest never dreaming but that the next day would dawn as usual, bringing to the world, like its predecessors and successors, its wonted burden of good and evil and then vanishing into the abyss of time with nought to mark it from its fellows. The German Emperor was on his usual summer cruise in the North Sea, the Emperor of Austria was taking the waters at Ischl, the President of the French Republic was about to leave Russia on a visit to the Scandinavian sovereigns. But on Saturday, July 25th, all Europe read with dismay the threatening words addressed to the Serbian government by the Austrian Minister at Belgrade and the following Saturday, August 1st, Count Pourtalès, the German ambassador at Petrograd, handed the declaration of war to the Russian government. How did this come about? Whose fault was it? What was its object? Even now after three years the rapidity with which in one short week the imaginary comet appeared, grew and collided with us, the paralysed stupefaction with which we watched its approach, seem like some hideous dream.

When the time comes, history will investigate and relate

everything that was said, thought and done day by day and hour by hour at the courts and in the chancelleries of Europe during that fatal week. At present each government strives to divulge only that which tends to throw the responsibility for this appalling catastrophe on to the shoulders of other governments. There is, however, one point as to which no impartial observer can be in doubt. The European war broke out because and solely because Germany, both her people and her government, willed it. The respective parts played by people and government matter little. What does matter is the fact that at the critical moment people and government agreed to fall upon their two powerful eastern and western neighbours who asked nothing better than to be left in peace. Hence we are faced with the question, why should such an industrious people, professing to be actuated by the same moral and political principles as its neighbours, a people which therefore had every reason to desire peace as much as the other peoples of Europe, have suddenly been seized by such an overwhelming desire to go to war without provocation and in a cause that only concerned them indirectly? Does this people despite appearances differ from its neighbours? Is it in reality a stranger in that Europe in the very heart of which it dwells and multiplies?

If we are to answer this question aright we must bear in mind that this war is not merely a war but, like the fall of the Western Empire, the advent of Christianity, and the French Revolution, an historic cataclysm. Hence if the accidents which immediately brought it about are of recent origin, its real underlying causes must be sought in the remote past; they date back to that immense upheaval of which the French Revolution itself was but an episode, that upheaval which for two centuries has been undermining the

principles on which the social order had rested since the beginning of history.

Bygone centuries had said to Man, every new thing, just because it is new, must be regarded as worse than its predecessors, and consequently every old thing must be held sacred. One century, the nineteenth, ventured to reverse this principle and to proclaim in the name of progress that the new, just because it was new, should be preferred to that which was already in existence and that it was the duty of each generation to give new lamps for old as frequently as possible. The bygone centuries had told Man that moderation of desire, simplicity of life and frugality were the supreme virtues. The nineteenth century reversed this belief also, deeming it a virtue to earn and spend lavishly and to multiply its desires, needs and aspirations. For centuries and centuries Man had been told that he was born into the world in order to submit to authority both human and divine; the nineteenth century proclaimed, on the contrary, that he was born in order to live in liberty and to exercise his faculties freely and that, in consequence, it was his duty to inquire into the reasons for the authority to which he was asked to submit. This was perforce the result of that great movement of peoples, classes, ideas and aspirations which after the discovery of America impelled Europe first, and then both Europe and America to conquer the earth, that reversal of principles by which what was bad has either become or was in process of becoming good, and what was good either has become or is in process of becoming bad, inevitably engendering universal unrest in the life of the world, an unrest far more widespread than that caused by Christianity, which had also, though by another process, reversed so many of the social principles of the ancients, an unrest whose causes escape most observers, but is none the

less making itself felt everywhere in the world today. Whether the new principles of liberty and progress can ever succeed in uprooting and suppressing wholly and for ever the ancient principle of authority and tradition, or whether a longer time than has yet elapsed is requisite for its uprooting and annihilation, the fact remains that in nearly every European country the new principle has only achieved a partial triumph and the old principle still holds partial sway. Consequently in all modern European countries we find a lack of internal harmony which is both disturbing and constant, but varies in degree, since authority and tradition have not yet yielded or been forced to yield to the same extent all over Europe. One nation is conservative and clings to tradition in those very things in which another is striving eagerly after progress, innovation and vice versa.

II

If from this point of view we compare the three principal European Powers we shall perhaps understand why France and England desired peace and why Germany on the contrary forced war upon them as she has forced it on the whole world. To the great upheaval of ideas and principles which brought forth modern civilization France contributed her share, and what a share! the Revolution. To the principle of authority, which for so many centuries held sway in every State, the French Revolution opposed the principle of liberty. For this reason France is undoubtedly the European nation in which the new principle of liberty has succeeded in establishing its ascendancy in politics to a greater extent than in any other country and is perhaps the only one in which the State, stripped of its outward show, the mystic pomp and ceremony of bygone ages, is revealed

to man in its naked reality as a creation of reason pure and simple, intended for the service of those who are subject to it and in which authority instead of coming from above emanates from those who are bound to obey it. Thus untrammelled public opinion holds absolute sway over the Republic, a state of things of which the bare suggestion would have seemed mad or impious three centuries ago. But apart from the State and political doctrines there is perhaps no nation in Europe in which the ancient spirit, respect for tradition, sense of moderation and recognition of authority is as strong as in France. Many look on France as behind the times because in that country old traditions hold their own more successfully against the encroachments of modernism than they succeed in doing elsewhere, always provided that it is not a question of political theories. Even the rich live modestly and simply, at least in proportion to their ample means; they practise economy, a virtue which has fallen into disuse; they are slow to change the sacred habits of everyday life, and family feeling is very strong in them. The mania for novelty in philosophy, art and science is not widespread, as among the cultured classes of other countries. After the Revolution France, and this is by no means the least of her merits, did not give birth to many fresh systems of philosophy or wax enthusiastic over those brought forth in such numbers by Germany. Today France is perhaps the only nation which does not demand novelty in art at any cost or refuse to recognize the authority of the old criteria.

It is not difficult to understand that a rich, powerful, and highly educated people endowed with a sense of moderation, and not easily deceived by specious theories into a craving after the impossible, a nation in which public opinion rules the State, would naturally desire peace. France was con-

tented with her lot and did not hanker for the impossible. Why should she expose her fertile fields to the terrible scourge of war? The masses when they can follow their natural inclinations prefer peace to war. France has so earnestly desired peace that more than one of her neighbours, perhaps the enemy himself, had concluded that she had become effeminate.

When we pass to England we find another contradiction. England too had played her part in the recent upheaval of the world. The industrial revolution, without which the political revolution would have had much less effect on the old order of things, was pre-eminently her work. When man possessed only such instruments, mostly of wood, as could be set in motion by his own hand, or by the muscles of some domestic animal, he was able, it is true, to make beautiful objects, but only in limited numbers, and was therefore forced to look upon parsimony as a virtue and on prodigality as a vice. When, however, man succeeded in inventing machinery set in motion by steam, and in manufacturing an unlimited number of objects, though possibly of inferior quality, he no longer sought after beauty and good workmanship, but after quantity and variety. Otherwise what was the use of turning out so many? The more rapidly man worked, the more he multiplied his needs, the more perfect was he considered.

England, having inaugurated the industrial revolution, was bound to do as she has done and bring into discredit patriarchal habits, family traditions, simplicity and economy more than any other nation. It is a well known fact that in private life the Englishman, who is a sort of Bohemian, bound by no close ties to his environment, will leave his home, his family and change his whole manner of living in obedience to the exigencies of his work. But this ap-

parent instability rests on an unshakable foundation of political and intellectual traditions. There are no people more slow to change its opinions, methods, principles, tastes and convictions in matters of art, science, religion, philosophy and, even to a certain extent, in politics. The Germans accuse England of having desired and provoked the war, wherein they show great ingratitude towards the nation which has done everything in its power to make it easy for them to make a surprise attack on Europe. Not only did England not desire the war, but she did not even believe it to be a possibility, in spite of the repeated warnings of far-sighted men, for she had never beheld such a cyclone and war would have been too disturbing to both her business and her pleasure. Consequently she had made no preparations for war; she had neither Allies, army nor funds; she hesitated up to the last moment, up to the moment when the German soldiers had crossed the Belgian frontier, and for many months after the outbreak of the conflict she failed to realize the magnitude of the ordeal before her.

In Germany too we find a contradiction, different again from that observed in France and England. Every one knows the power still possessed by the mystic principle of authority in Germany even in the twentieth century. God still governs the Germans, who are consequently under the impression that they are the apple of His eye. We constantly hear it said that Germany is a survival of the Middle Ages. This is false if we judge by the forms of government which wear a modern dress, but true if we judge by their spirit. Where except in Germany could we find worship of royal power and of all authority emanating from the State, the spirit of the seventeenth century transported to the twentieth, become more fervid and sincere because it is tempered by a certain spirit of liberty and criti-

cism, more universal and imperative because it is taught and inculcated by an admirably organized and omnipresent State? The absolute monarchies which existed before the Revolution were much more venerated than actually obeyed, as is the case today with the authority of the State in Russia and Turkey. In Germany, by applying forcibly and with modern methods the old principles of monarchial rule, the State has succeeded in making itself respected and obeyed to such an extent that at the outbreak of war the German State was undoubtedly the strongest in Europe, the one that had least reason to fear the opposition, ill will and indifference of its subjects.

But what anarchy in customs, tastes, aspirations, criteria and ideas counterbalance this power of the State in modern Germany! There is no people among whom the old traditions of simplicity and frugality have given place to a more frantic craving for riches and luxury. No other nation has placed the duty of earning and spending, working and enjoying up to the very last moment, on a level with the heroic virtues. No other nation has prided itself to such a degree on setting aside, both in theory and practice, the bounds respected by man throughout the ages, and this applies not merely to the bounds set by tradition and authority but also to those dictated by common sense, ethical law and decency. We have all heard *ad nauseam* of German *kultur,* that system of science and philosophy which since the French Revolution has found so many followers among both adolescent and decadent nations, and of which unfortunately the Italian universities of the present day are the most servile worshippers in Europe. But wherein does this *kultur* differ from earlier or co-existent systems of learning? Herein, that too often through arrogance, lack of experience, or some similar defect, it wholly fails to distinguish

the point at which it must stop short in research, because if it attempts to transcend that point it is thrown back upon itself and hurled into the sophistic void. Many even now raise their eyes to Heaven and exclaim, "Who would have thought it of Germany? Who would have imagined that she was capable of such deeds, that she could set such an example? A country with so many philosophers and scholars, a country so full of education and learning." But do you really believe, with scholars and philosophers, that wisdom and science are incorruptible possessions, the very essence of progress, a ray of that divine light which purifies, revivifies and sheds joy wherever it shines? No, even science and wisdom, the works of man, are subject to all the perversions and corruptions of humanity; they too may err and lose their way, more especially if they claim to transcend certain bounds of knowledge, which are never laid down by science herself but by humility, common sense, and by what I might term a certain "human instinct" which the scholar ought to possess both with regard to himself and exterior things. This "human instinct" is, however, just what is lacking in German *kultur*. Impelled by frenzied pride to seek its starting point in itself alone, eager to set up fresh systems of morals, art, religion and philosophy, the German intellect has for the last century been accomplishing Herculean labours, with the result that it has too often succeeded but only in complicating simple questions, obscuring simple issues, setting insoluble problems, clouding the moral conscience and ruining the artistic taste of the world.

III

How many examples I could give! I will, however, name but one, taken from the branch of study with which I am

most familiar — an example which will hardly appear credible when man has succeeded in freeing himself from this malady — the Homeric problem. The Iliad and the Odyssey are, as every one knows, the two great monuments of poetry which stand on either side of the portals of history. They mark the starting point of European literature. It is therefore not surprising that in every age they have been subjects for diligent study and research. But however great the liberties critics have been in the habit of taking in their interpretation and comments upon the masterpieces of long dead writers, they had for centuries respected at least two boundary lines when treating of these two venerable pillars of literature. One of these lines of demarcation was the tradition according to which in the eighth century B. C. a poet had flourished, named Homer, who had written two poems and of whose life a more or less accurate account was given. Although this tradition was defective and incomplete and its details did not agree, it had been respected for centuries, simply because it was recognized that the ancients were more likely than ourselves to know when and by whom the Iliad and the Odyssey were written, and that even if they had forgotten the name of the real author it was hardly likely that we should succeed in recalling it. The other limit was still more modest, since it was set up by the common sense which says that, just as every son must of necessity have a father, every book must have an author, and that if every book we possess was written by some poor devil who one fine day took it into his head to dip his pen into ink and sit down to write the first word of his book, not giving up his task until he had written Finis on the last page, the Iliad and the Odyssey must have been written in the same way. While tradition and these considerations of common sense did not of course satisfy

our thirst for knowledge, they were for centuries regarded as the pillars of Hercules, beyond which curiosity did not venture to pass until German learning appeared upon the scenes. German scholarship knew no such hesitation, and the inevitable punishment followed, for instead of drawing fresh vigour from this living source of poetry German savants racked their brains over the impossible task of trying to reconstruct the history of a work about which we possess no data. They discussed and waxed hot over the wildest of theories; they studied and wrote much without reaching any conclusion, until one fine day some wiseacre laid his clumsy hands on the immortal masterpiece and pulled it to pieces in order to reconstruct out of the fragments the *Ur-Ilias,* the true Iliad, "made in Germany."

IV

We might cite other examples from Roman history in which the extraordinary theories of German critics have even been improved upon by admiring Italians, as also from other branches of learning, had we time to go thoroughly into all departments of German *kultur.* In short, this *kultur* fails to recognize legitimate bounds and is consequently lacking in order and discipline; it cannot distinguish degrees of importance and consequently makes the most grotesque mistakes. It is at the same time arrogant and absurdly naif, and has in consequence brought about untold confusion in every country, and more particularly in Italy, which failed to distinguish between sound and harmful principles. The real cause of the war must be sought in the want of balance which makes it possible for the strictest political discipline to exist side by side with an utter lack of intellectual discipline in the same mid-European nation. This disparity

between the intellectual anarchy and the political discipline of Germany has given birth to the cyclone which is devastating Europe. How and why it is not difficult to understand. Theories are powerless to hold the passions in check, unless they are fused into a system and rest upon some solid foundation, some tradition, authority or recognized principle, of which the truth is felt and respected by the world at large. If these bases and supports are lacking, if thought insists upon being, as it were, its own jumping off place and on formulating afresh each day the axioms from which it proposes to start on its task of reconstructing the world from top to bottom, beauty, truth and morals will necessarily cease to be anything but a noisy game of sophisms in which each player, by an arbitrary change of principles, is at liberty to uphold the most contradictory theories — a game in which the final victory is won by those theories which are most flattering to the dominant passions. Ideas will not act as brakes, but rather as spurs to the ruling passions. This has been the work of literature and philosophy in every epoch of intellectual anarchy; this is what has been accomplished in Germany during the last four decades by history, philosophy and literature — the so-called political sciences — in proportion as pride in victory and power was fostered by the growth of the population and by the new wealth so easily obtained from a soil rich in coal and iron. German *kultur,* science, philosophy and literature, which were weak because they were unfettered, and regulated neither by principles, traditions or authority of any kind and, therefore, in their turn powerless to exercise any intellectual authority, had placed themselves at the service of those passions, whether good or bad, which they were unable to correct or hold in check, such as patriotism, the spirit of discipline and unity, respect for the sovereign and the

State, cupidity, national vanity and arrogance and what is barbarously called "*arrivisme.*" These sciences thus encouraged and accentuated all the tendencies of public opinion, entirely failing to distinguish between the good and the bad, the beneficial and the dangerous. Above all, they stimulated the mania for confounding the great with the merely colossal, quantity with quality, and for regarding the German people as the salt of the earth and the model for all the world to copy. They inflamed the pride of the masses and added fuel to that craze for persecution which is always the inseparable companion and the immediate chastisement of overbearing pride, with the result that we have seen re-enacted in central Europe the terrible tragedy of Nineveh and Babylon. We behold the appalling phenomenon of not merely a king but a whole nation growing in wealth, power and prestige to such a degree as to call forth the half fearful admiration of all Europe and America, but becoming at the same time more and more restless, discontented, suspicious and querulously complaining that the other nations fail to pay it due respect, that its power is not feared as it should be, that its merits are unrecognized and its possessions threatened on every hand by disloyal and envious enemies. Then one fine day this strange people, at the zenith of its power and riches, this people living in a Europe which shudders at the very idea of seeing the sword of 1870 once more unsheathed, this people which alone in Europe could have enjoyed the blessings of peace in perfect safety, since it was feared by all while fearing none, this people suddenly threw down its gauntlet to the world *apropos* of a question which in no way concerned it and challenged five countries, including the three greatest Powers, to a life and death combat, and after this mad challenge set forth to battle and death at its Emperor's com-

mand, as one man, in meek submission to a State which, unfortunately for the world, exercises far too much authority over its subjects. The European war would not have broken out had the German people been wiser or the government weaker. The catastrophe was brought about by political discipline and intellectual disorder. Thus a government which was strong, respected and well tempered against the blows of fate, served by intelligent men and provided with both money and means, has become the tool of the most unbridled imagination and ambition in an enterprise in which the most the German people can hope is that it may make its fall memorable throughout the ages by dragging down the whole world with it into the abyss and by burying the power, which it had sacrificed in a moment of madness, beneath the debris of a civilization which was prosperous and flourishing only three short years ago, but whose state in another year or two no man can foretell.

V

No other end to the tragedy seems within the bounds of possibility. The future is of course on the knees of the gods and no one would venture to predict how or when a settlement will be reached; on the other hand, no one endowed with any historic sense can fail to see that the Germans, at all events at this stage of their history, are lacking in the spiritual and intellectual qualities requisite for the foundation of great and powerful Empires. A durable Empire cannot be built up upon valour, unity, passionate or even fanatic love of country alone; common sense, a clear intuition of what is or what is not possible, and a sense of proportion are equally essential, and in these qualities the modern German is conspicuously lacking. Indeed, unless

some unforeseen miracle were to take place, there can be no doubt as to the issue. Both sides being equally tenacious, the victory will fall to the one who has the largest means at his disposal and knows how to make the best use of them. Hence the war will be won by that coalition which can put the largest number of men into the field, whose purse is longest, which rules the seas and numbers among its members two peoples at least, the French and the British, endowed with that political sense, that sense of proportion, which alone in a war like the present conflict is worth an army corps. Do not let us lay too much stress upon the fact that the Germans are fighting on foreign soil. Napoleon was in the habit of saying that in war nothing has been accomplished until everything has been accomplished, a fact proved by his own experience in 1812. The disaster of 1812 did not take place at Lodz or on the Narev, but when he had reached Moscow itself.

VI

Moreover, even were the military situation less favourable than is actually the case, we should be forced to believe that the war could have no other end. It might even be said that it is essential that it should end thus, if Europe is one day to enjoy a long peace, untroubled by continual panics and unmenaced by obscure ambitions. Do not let us deceive ourselves — Europe will never enjoy such a peace if the German spirit is permitted to continue to play, what for the last century has appeared to be its special rôle in the world — to play it, moreover, more brutally, intoxicated as it would be with the fumes of victory. It cannot be denied that the German people possesses various great qualities; neither, however, can we deny that it has frequently made

use of these qualities in a way most dangerous to its neighbours by borrowing from its neighbours certain principles of civilization originated by them and then exaggerating them to such a degree as to turn them into perils. Take military service, for instance. The duty of each citizen to bear arms for his country was a principle of the ancients which the French Revolution had revived and applied with wisdom and discretion. But the Germans, by reducing the term of service and increasing the number of soldiers as much as possible, created and forced upon Europe the modern army, which is nothing more or less than the nation in arms, the enormous, slow and costly army which has made war a calamity in comparison with which all the other scourges which have afflicted mankind have been nothing more than trifling annoyances. Modern industry, as we have already seen, aims at increasing quantity to the detriment of quality. At the same time France and Great Britain had applied this principle in moderation. Germany arrives upon the scenes and what does she proceed to do? What are the shoddy goods made in Germany of which we hear so much but the exaggeration of this principle? Germany put it into practice to such an extent as to flood the world with all sorts of inferior imitations. No social order can exist without the use of a certain amount of force. Force is therefore up to a certain point a factor for good and an element making for progress. Every nation and every era has recognized this principle, which has only been rejected by a few dreamers. But from this elementary, simple and vital truth, the Germans have contrived to extract the theories of Clausewitz, Nietzsche, and Bernhardi, and the arbitrary maxims of Bismarck, the evil genius of European statesmen for the last forty years, and even the European war with its carnage, destruction by fire, devastation and deliberate purpose of

recognizing no law or criteria of conduct in war. Things have gone too far. Europe must once more be ruled by more mature, older and better balanced peoples. Many are of opinion that the war will continue some time longer, that a Peace Congress will then be held and a treaty signed, after which we shall take up life where we left it that fatal morning of July 25, 1914, on which we read Austria's threat to Serbia. This is, alas, an illusion. When peace has been restored and we try to take up once more the life we led before the war, we shall see that the river of history disappeared that day into an abyss, to reappear changed in both appearance and direction. We shall not be able to go back. Too many things will have changed irrevocably or will have to be reconstructed on a new plan if all these rivers of blood are not to have flowed in vain and this catastrophe is not to be the beginning of a new and better order of things but rather of a ruin still more terrible than that on which we are gazing today. These things cannot be reconstructed, this ruin cannot be avoided, unless Europe returns in thought and deed to that moderation which she had lost during the last fifty years. This is the test awaiting our generation — the test which will show us what we are capable of doing for the true progress of the world.

THE GREAT AND THE COLOSSAL

At the present time, when the future looms before us like some unknown pathless wilderness, it is well to glance from time to time at the past and to recall the links of language, culture, manners and customs binding us to that brilliant civilization which migrated from its Greek birthplace into Italy and thence in a Latinized form spread over the greater part of Europe, where it still holds sway. If we would draw strength from the past to enable us to fulfil our present duties the time has come for us to recall the most striking characteristics of the golden age of Latin civilization, its heroic striving after the great and its detestation of the merely colossal.

If we wander among the columns of an Egyptian temple, or the ruins of the immense Persian, Babylonian or Assyrian buildings, the Parthenon, the Temple of Concord at Girgenti and the other masterpieces of Greek architecture will seem small and insignificant compared to the colossal edifices, gigantic columns, and enormous blocks of stone in which Oriental pride delighted. Look at the Iliad and the Odyssey, they are but small volumes compared with the Epics of the East, interminable poems, such as the Rammayana and the Shah Nameh. Each of the four Gospels contains a collection of the words and deeds of Jesus, but compare one of them with the discourses of Buddha. A few pages were enough to set forth a doctrine destined to revolutionize the world, whilst volumes of perfectly appalling dimensions were needed in the far East to found a new religion. The East stands for bulk, weight, repetition and prolixity; Greeks for proportion, harmony, grace,

lucidity and concision. The East strove after the colossal, Greece after the great.

The difference between the colossal and the great is both intellectual and moral. The great is an effort to attain an ideal creation by the mind of man and to conquer an essentially spiritual difficulty whose law is within ourselves. The colossal is an effort to triumph over matter and over the difficulties presented by matter to our will or our caprices — or, in other words — over exterior obstacles. To quote a great French philosopher, the great is pure quality, whereas the colossal is quality with a large admixture of quantity. Stern intellectual discipline and humility are absolutely essential, not only for the creation of the great in every sphere, but also for its right understanding and appreciation, since an ideal of perfection must be accepted as law. The colossal, on the contrary, is one of the myriad forms of human vanity and is readily understood and admired even by minds of coarser fibre, wholly devoid of education.

Hence it is not surprising that even Greece and Rome after having achieved the truly great, during the most brilliant periods of their history, relapsed into the craze for the colossal. Go to Girgenti and close to the Temple of Concord, which is at once so small and so great, whose incomparable beauty may be called pure quality, you will see the remains of a colossal Temple, the ruins of columns which still evoke cries of amazement from barbarians from every part of the world. The same thing is even more noticeable in Rome. Compare the remains of the Mausoleum of Augustus and the Mausoleum of Hadrian, the Pantheon of Agrippa and the Baths of Caracalla, the latter again with the Baths of Diocletian, and you will see that the proportions of the buildings increase and become more and more gigantic with the march of the centuries. Here too the buildings

teach us, in letters of brick and stone, the history of thought and feeling. For many a long day Rome had been but a modest power, she distrusted fortune, she dreaded wealth and luxury and often shrank from circumstances which urged her to extend her Empire. Her aim was to found a great Empire, not a colossal one like those of which the conquerors of the East were so proud. Ruled as she was by a chosen few possessed of sufficient authority to direct, not merely her policy, but also her public taste, Rome during this period succeeded in understanding and sometimes even in copying in both art and literature those epochs in which Greece had attained true greatness. Wealth, success and security gradually changed the Roman soul; those who for centuries had guided public taste passed away, Oriental civilizations took possession of the mind of the masses when they were left to their own devices. The Empire fell a prey to unbridled vanity and to a craving for pleasure and excitement, and with this vanity and craving there set in the mania for the colossal.

How many similar examples are to be seen in the history of all the Latin nations, in Spain, France and Italy.

Take Venice, go down to the Grand Canal and compare the modest dimensions of the palaces built by the makers of the Republic with those of more recent date, constructed by the generations who light-heartedly contributed to her decay. Since the days of ancient Greece, life has been one perpetual struggle between the principles of the great and the colossal. It is most obvious in the decorative arts in which it is of symbolic value, but may also be traced in literature, war and politics, commerce and industry. Always and everywhere there have been and will be men, peoples and epochs which have chosen or will choose to create the great, and others which have chosen or will choose

the colossal. Let us look around; is not this the key to the present tremendous crisis in the history of the world?

When the present generation has passed away and with it the passion of feeling that now runs so high, when historians come to study the history of the European war from the archives of the past, just as geologists study the phenomena of a volcanic eruption by driving their pickaxes into the cold lava, they will find the whole cataclysm difficult to understand. "Why," they will ask, "should a rich, prosperous people, at the zenith of its power have risked everything by provoking a wholly needless war with the three greatest European powers? A war which ended by arraying practically the whole civilized world against it."

Here in a few words we have the riddle which is perplexing many troubled minds today. Greece and Rome however should be able to supply the answer and enable us to read aright the mystery of this people and of its challenge to the world.

This nation, more than any other European nation, has been carried away by its passion for the colossal — a passion which it must be remembered is but a somewhat coarse form of vanity, for the ultimate cause of this appalling catastrophe is to be found in the overweening vanity of a nation — a vanity which is characteristic of our century. Paris, that intellectual capital of the world, whose finger is on the pulse of civilization and its supreme problems, asked herself, when confronted by the terrible outbreak of violence which is devastating Europe, whether man, as he grows richer, more learned and more powerful, does not also tend to deteriorate morally.

It cannot, however, be questioned that our epoch has made great strides in moral education. Our civilization, which for two centuries has been engaged in a great strug-

gle with nature for the possession of her treasures and forces, has been successful in vanquishing the vices and inculcating the virtues which could hamper further these efforts. It has, above all, fought against idleness and taught men that accuracy, punctuality, zeal in the discharge of duty, the spirit of solidarity in groups great and small which have to work together. That cohesion of which the belligerent nations afford such striking examples today show to how great an extent this spirit has spread among the masses. No such phenomenon has been seen in any other age — a proof that our epoch has made for moral progress. How, then, does it come about that this very epoch has been overwhelmed by this barbarous mania for destruction and violence? The explanation is that in its absorption in the task of turning out disciplined workers it has forgotten that other passions left unchecked may modify the moral sense of the masses; this applies especially to vanity, of which the mania for the colossal is one of the most monstrous forms. In the early days of the struggle between nature and civilization, civilization created great things in great humility. With the increase of wealth, success and power, however, civilization fell a prey to vanity and aimed at creating the colossal for which the necessary means were unfortunately forthcoming. The Empires of antiquity were filled with pride when they succeeded in raising some monument of brick or stone or proportions hitherto unheard of. But what were their cities, armies, fleets and buildings in comparison to those of the present day? What were their industry and commerce in comparison to ours? During the last fifty years the mania for the colossal has infected all the nations of Europe and America to a greater or lesser extent and, unfortunately, one of these nations has been completely carried away by it. Nature seems to have en-

dowed this people with an unbounded energy which makes it readily lean to excess. Although during the last century it has produced many philologists and archeologists, it has never really come under the influence of Latin culture. That sense of proportion, that sense of moderation and that lucidity, which are the essential characteristics of Latin culture, have always repelled it; it has at bottom a sort of spurious and apparently invincible mysticism which drives it to seek the infinite in the vague, the confused and the indefinite. It has been victorious in two wars, it was rich in iron and coal, an inestimable advantage in a century in which iron has ceased to be the servant of man and has become the master of the world. In short, this nation ended by regarding itself as the chosen people, the salt of the earth, the model for the whole world, and by using the word "colossal" to express the highest degree of perfection. It was, however, not long before it became as insatiable, restless, suspicious and jealous as all those eaten up by vanity who cherish dreams of the colossal. How, indeed, could a people or a period, whose one and only aim was to "go one better" in everything than any other people or period, be either happy or content? One can only hope for happiness when one is making for a definite goal which may be attained. A people and a period which aim at the creation of the colossal are doomed to overshoot the mark, to wander aimlessly until they commit some irreparable folly. Hence all civilizations, which have striven after the colossal, after living in a perpetual state of restlessness, have been overwhelmed by some sudden catastrophe — a fact which makes us wonder whether we are destined to be the spectators of another such tragedy.

If this indeed be the obscure purpose of history, what light is shed upon the sacrifice which fate is exacting from

the Allied peoples? Let us never forget that only ordeals which put its vitality to a test can enable a nation to keep alive the principles of civilization which it has created or inherited. Our ancestors created many great things. They built the Pantheon, the Parthenon, Venice and Versailles; they created the Empire and the Church, the law, the philosophy and the decorative arts of the eighteenth century; they brought about the Revolution. What value did we place upon these things? The sense of greatness, which is the very essence of Latin culture, was choked by the Asiatic mania for the colossal; quantity triumphed over quality; progress — the worth of nations — was gauged solely by the growing figures of statistics. France offered more resistance to this current of thought than any other country, but for that very reason it was too often said that she was aging. Because her commerce and population was not increasing at the same rate as the population and commerce of Germany she ought to have vanished off the face of the earth. How could any system of philosophy, any doctrine, any argument, go against this formidable current of opinions, sentiments and interests (for many powerful interests were mingled in this current) which was carrying every nation and every class towards the hideous enormities of a purely quantitative civilization? The task could only be accomplished by one of those great historic events which can change public opinion; one of those ordeals which suddenly reveal the respective value of the principles held by two different communities. The ordeal on this occasion is so terrible that no man with any heart would ever have dared to predict it. But since fate has so willed it. . . . . Well, let us try to rise above death and ruins to the height of the great events which are taking place before our eyes and to draw thence the courage, firmness and resignation of which

we stand in need. A shudder of anguish ran through the civilized world during the early weeks of the war. It would be idle to deny that there were many doubters, many to whom it seemed that nothing could check and turn back the colossal mass of men and iron which, carrying all before it, was marching upon France — that country whose frail and ancient civilization seemed on the point of dying out. And in this hour of supreme anxiety the whole world turned its eyes towards the distant north in the hope of salvation. Then suddenly, just when the world was beginning to despair, this colossal mass hurled itself against some invisible obstacle which arose as if by miracle, is checked and retreats. We probably lived through one of the great moments of history, for it was then that our generation, in its amazement, began to ask itself whether perhaps after all mass and numbers were not everything. And from that moment the half-conscious travail of our souls began. We cannot yet say what this travail will bring forth. The great ordeal is not yet over. But just as we cannot doubt that the world in which we shall spend the rest of our lives will be very different from the world we have hitherto known, so we may hope that civilization may once again avert a catastrophe which seemed inevitable. The cruel bloodshed and anguish of the past years must not have been endured in vain. This war must be the final victory of true intellectual and moral greatness over the mania for the colossal which had hardened and blinded the mind of man; it must restore to the world the power to appreciate in every sphere that which is great solely by reason of the smallness of its proportions and its humility, a greatness which is wholly from within; it must once more raise up generations which can accomplish great things simply and humbly and a world which shall recover its moral equilibrium in the sense of true great-

ness. It would be rash to assert that there will never be another war, but if other great wars should take place it is our duty towards the world and ourselves to do everything in our power to ensure that never again shall mankind have to face another war such as that forced on us by the votaries of the colossal.

CHAPTER II

Teutonism and Latinism

TEUTONISM AND LATINISM

I

ALMOST the whole civilization of Europe and of America, in its essential elements, has been created, on the shore of the Mediterranean, by the Greeks, the Latins and the Jews in the ancient world; by the nations that we call Latin in the middle ages and in modern times. The religion, the political institutions and doctrines, the organization of armies, the law, the art, the literature, the philosophy which today form the basis of European-American civilization, are, taken as a whole, the work of those nations which one can, from their position, describe as Mediterranean. Far less numerous, although more recent, are the contributions of the peoples which have not had the privilege of being able to bathe themselved in the sacred waters of that historic sea. Their enumeration is not a long one. There is the Reformation Lutherism, so different from Calvinism; that is to say, from the Reformation conceived in Latin countries: there is the great industrialism which makes use of the motor force of steam and of iron machinery, created by England: there is the parliamentarism, which is also an English creation: there is the English and German philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: and, in literature, romanticism. To this we must add, to the score of the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples, some literary, æsthetic and juridical contributions of varying worth in the lines traced by the Greco-Latin genius, and the creation of modern science, at which the English and Germans have

worked together with the French and the Italians. Modern science has been created by a common effort of the peoples of Europe, and it would be difficult to compare each nation's merit.

Creation and application are two distinct things. The Mediterranean peoples have created, in their long history, a greater number of principles of civilization than the Germanic or Anglo-Saxon peoples; this does not prevent several of these principles having been adopted, applied, perfected, and even employed as arms against the peoples who had created them, by other groups.

But, having made this reservation, one may affirm that modern civilization is, taken as a whole, far more the work of the Mediterranean peoples than of the extra-Mediterranean peoples; that it has been created in part by the Greeks and the Hellenized Orientals of the ancient world; in part by the Semitic spirit; in part by, first the Romans, and afterwards by the peoples we call Latin because they speak languages derived from Latin; Italians, French, Spaniards, Portuguese. To speak only of modern Europe, it is the Latin peoples who achieved, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the greater part of that work of geographic exploration which was to give over the whole planet to the white race; it is to them above all that we owe the Renaissance, that great intellectual movement of which the modern age has been born. It is also among these peoples that we must seek those who have taken the initiative in reorganizing great States and powerful armies in Europe after the political parcelling-out and the disarmed cosmopolitism of the middle ages. The French Revolution, its intellectual preparation, its military epopee, the immense political, juridical and social transformations that it brought about in all Europe, are Latin works. The Revolution of 1848 is

another movement, at once intellectual, political and social, receiving its impetus from the Latin world.

This brief enumeration should suffice to prove that these peoples ought not to be adjudged inferior in importance to any other group in Europe. They are nothing of the kind. For the last half century the decadence of the Latin peoples has been a favourite theme of the meditations of the savants, or of those who believe themselves such. It is spoken of under a thousand different forms. Spain and Portugal hold themselves so much aloof that their existence would be almost unknown had not their ancient American colonies become so important a part of the contemporary economic system. Italy, in taking part since 1859 in the politics of Europe, has attracted to herself the attention of the world more than the Iberian peninsula; but the attention given to her present efforts is very small compared with the admiration bestowed on her past. Contemporary Italy still disappears almost entirely in the eyes of the world in her immense history. As to France, above all in the ten years which preceded the war, the opinion that she was a country fallen into decline, destined to imminent decease, was becoming general. At the moment when the war broke out the world was already convinced, or very near convincing herself, that the group of peoples that are called in Europe Latins, had, after having achieved so many things up to the end of the nineteenth century, allowed itself to be rapidly distanced by other more energetic groups. One had, accordingly, the right to consider it as fallen into the rear.

This belief had ended by penetrating even the spirit of the Latin peoples themselves. Under different forms and in different degrees these peoples have, during the last thirty years, alternated between continual ups and downs. At times they have proclaimed themselves the foremost peoples

of the world; at times they have abandoned themselves to the gloomiest pessimism as to their future. It is, moreover, indisputable that, since 1787, the group of Latin peoples has been the most agitated, from the political standpoint, among the European groups. The political crises which have disturbed them have been far more numerous and more serious than those which have disturbed the Anglo-Saxon and the Germanic world. These crises have greatly contributed toward giving the world at large, and the Latin peoples themselves, an impression of inward weakness. And, in proportion as the consciousness of this weakness increased among these peoples, the nations benefited by their decadence, real or assumed, by waxing in the admiration of the world, England first, then Germany.

England had been in Europe, between 1870 and 1900, the model most admired in industry, in commerce, in finance, in politics, in diplomacy, in social life. Germany was, up to that time, the model only for the army, for science, and for certain social institutions. But after 1900 Germany seemed rapidly to become the universal model, beating England in almost all the provinces wherein she had preserved until then an uncontested superiority.

People did not continue merely to admire the German army and science as the foremost of the world: they began also to admire its industrial organization, its commercial methods, its system of banks, as more modern and more perfect models than those which England yet afforded. The world told itself that England was growing old, and more and more men's minds turned towards Berlin. It was Germany, by its doctrines and its example, which gave the final blow to the English doctrines of free trade and to the *laisser faire* of the Manchester school. It was Germany which alone succeeded in disputing the empire of the seas

with England, by creating, in a few years, the second merchant marine and the second fleet of the world. When the war broke out, von Ballin was on the point of taking his place among the glories of Germany, by the side of Kant, of Goethe and of Wagner. The admiration for Germany had become so great that even the repugnance for its political institutions had diminished. The almost incredible indulgence of the Socialist party of all the European countries towards the empire of the Hohenzollerns is the most singular proof of this. It is also no exaggeration to say that every one, in all the countries of Europe and America, had become Germanophile since 1900. The prestige of Germany has often been attributed to her victories of 1866 and 1870. But the generation which had witnessed the military triumphs of Germany had admired Germanism far less than did the succeeding generation. After 1900 the world had no longer seen anything in Europe save Germany and her power, growing with a prodigious rapidity, in the midst of amazed or dazzled nations.

These facts are too well known for there to be any necessity to insist upon them at length. If one relied on appearances one would have to conclude that some countries, which had been, for so many centuries, active and capable, had been all at once struck by an incurable paralysis. Almost all the virtues which render a people strong and a nation flourishing would seem to have emigrated, within a few years, to Germany. There have been, among the nations, some *parvenus* of power and wealth; but one had not hitherto seen the *parvenu* of civilization: a people become, in a few dozen years, capable of teaching everything to every one, even to its former masters. Our age has witnessed this extraordinary phenomenon.

It is, moreover, the explanation which, previous to the

war, tended to become universal. The European war has rapidly changed that state of mind; it has even entirely reversed it with many people. History has rarely witnessed a change so radical and so sudden. From one end of the world to the other millions of men have stigmatized the German nation as the shame of our age, as the representative of barbarism, without any longer remembering that they admired it, three years ago, as the teacher and the model of the universe. But just because this reaction has been so violent and so sudden it seems profitable to pause and study its causes and its significance. If the world has forgotten that it considered as the model *par excellence,* only three years since, the people whom it regards today as barbarians, the fact is not the less true, and a moment's reflection suffices to seize at once its full import. We live in the most learned civilization that has ever existed. The choice of a master and of a model is the most serious action that a man or a nation can accomplish. How then has the most learned epoch in history been able to deceive itself in so gross a manner upon the most serious question in life, and take as model the people that it should suddenly have to repudiate as barbarous? Such an error must have profound causes. The search after these causes is, then, the most important problem which, at this moment, presents itself to minds which reflect and strive to understand.

II

This book is devoted to the study of this great problem. A somewhat rapid survey suffices to reveal in contemporary civilization two ideals: an ideal of perfection and an ideal of power. The ideal of perfection is a legacy of the past and is composed of different elements, of which the most

important are the Greco-Latin tradition, intellectual, literary, artistic, juridic and political; Christian morality under its various forms; the new moral and political aspirations born during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the ideal which imposes on us beauty, truth, justice, the moral perfection of individuals and of institutions as the aim of life; which preserves in the modern world the religious life, artistic and scientific activity, the spirit of solidarity; which improves political and social institutions, the works of charity and foresight. The other ideal is more recent: it was born in the last two centuries, in proportion as men perceived that they could dominate and bring into subjection the forces of nature in degrees formerly undreamed of. Intoxicated by their success; by the riches which they succeeded in producing very rapidly and in enormous quantities, thanks to a certain number of ingenious inventions; by the treasures that they have discovered in the earth, ransacked in all directions; by their victories over space and over time, modern men have considered as an ideal of life, at once beautiful, lofty and almost heroic, the indefinite and unlimited increase of human power.

The former of these ideals, the ideal of perfection, can be considered, in Europe, as the Latin ideal. The Latin genius has shown its originality and its power, and has won its highest glory, in striving to realize certain ideals of perfection; that is to say, in creating arts, literatures, religions, laws, well-organized states. That does not at all mean that the Latin peoples have not also contributed towards creating the ideal of power. The history of France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would suffice to ensure to this group of peoples an important place in the great change in the history of the world which is represented by the advent of this new ideal. But the Latin peo-

ples, who are the peoples of Europe whose civilization is the oldest, have achieved things too great in the periods in which the ideals of perfection dominated alone, or almost alone, for their life not to be still charged with the spirit of those periods. If, however, in that which relates to the ideals of perfection, the Latin peoples can claim a well-defined and characterized historic rôle, it is not the same in regard to the new ideal of power. They have developed this in conjunction with other peoples of different race. One cannot then attribute a very precise significance to these words, "the Latin genius," without identifying this genius with the irresistible tendency which causes peoples and individuals to desire all the forms of perfection of which the human spirit is capable.

The ideal of power can, on the contrary, be considered at this moment as a Germanic ideal. Here also, one must not fall into the error of believing that this ideal has been created by the Germans. Germany has contributed less than France to the long and painful work which was to end in the unfolding of this ideal in the world. But it is also unquestionable that, if it has been slow to understand the new ideal, Germany has ended by becoming, during the last thirty years, its most ardent champion in Europe. The immense development of Germany, which had astounded the world, is nothing else than this new ideal of power transformed by the Germans into a kind of national religion, become a sort of Messiahism, and applied with an implacable logic and an ardent passion to carry it out to its extreme consequences in all departments; no longer only in manufactures and business, as with the Americans, but in the world of ideas, and, an application more dangerous, in war and the army.

But, this distinction between the two ideals once made,

it is possible to understand the immense tragedy of which we are at once the actors, the spectators and the victims; to explain the unsettlement of ideas which it has produced, and to cast a glance into the future and at the duties which await us. It suffices for the understanding of why and how our age had associated these two ideals, believing that they could develop limitlessly and peaceably side by side, whereas at a certain point they were bound to enter into a violent conflict. That is what we are going to try to do.

III

No profound analysis is required to discover that one of the characteristic phenomena of the last thirty years has been, in Europe, the decline of the ancient ideals of perfection and the growing prestige of the ideal of power. It is the universal fact that had been masked under the most diverse names, such as "triumph of the practical spirit," "the economic progress of the age," "the realist policy," "the modern tendencies." This triumph of the ideal of power is, moreover, as will be seen in this book, the gathering to a head of a very complex historic movement whose origins date back very far. It has been, however, accelerated, during the last hundred years, by some immediate causes. I will cite the principal of them: the immense growth of the English power, the wealth accumulated by England and France, the victories of Germany, the development of the two Americas, the exploration and conquest of Africa, the increase of the population and of public, civil and military expenses which demanded an increase of production; the improvement of industrial plant, the progress of the sciences, the decline of the aristocracies, monarchies and Churches which represented in Europe the spirit of

quality or the ideals of perfection; the exhaustion of several of these ideals, which rendered necessary a revival; the weakening of the governments; the accession to power of the middle classes; the growing importance acquired by the masses and by number in everything, in the armies, in politics, in industry. Left to themselves, freed from the old restraints, the masses, having but little culture, were bound to lean rather towards the ideal of power which satisfies the primordial instincts, such as pride, cupidity, ambition, than towards the ideals of perfection which always demand the spirit of sacrifice and a certain power of renunciation.

It was in the immense refulgence of this ideal of power that Germany increased to so great an extent in the world's estimate during the first fourteen years of the century. If it were, in truth, the supreme duty of humanity to unite all its forces towards augmenting its power, Germany would have been the true model for the world. The ideal of power, grown into a national religion, together with a combination of favourable circumstances, such as its central position, the neighbourhood of Russia, the abundance of oil, the rapid increase of population, the general economic development of all countries, had produced in Germany an unparalleled explosion of energy. Supported by a strong government endowed with indisputable capacity, the German race, industry, commerce, science and diplomacy had invaded the world, multiplied their enterprises, conceived the most audacious plans. Success had not always smiled upon these enterprises; but the checks had never discouraged either the people or the government. Everywhere the German had penetrated or assayed to penetrate, disturbing the calm tranquillity of established positions, introducing a new spirit of activity, of novelty, of competition; aiming

to conquer the foremost place by a struggle as tenacious as it was devoid of scruples.

History had not previously beheld an example of such feverish activity. The United States themselves could not sustain the comparison. They have achieved great things in industry by exploiting a territory of nine million square kilometres. The Germans had succeeded in drawing all the goods with which they flooded the earth; all the ideas, good or bad, with which they filled the brains; the strongest army and the second fleet of the world, from a territory of six hundred thousand kilometres. Increasingly hypnotized by the one ideal of power, the world had been dazzled by that amazing activity and no longer attached any importance to the question of the methods by which Germany achieved her success. What did it matter if, so far back as 1870, she had resuscitated the old barbarous soul of war and proclaimed the sovereign rights of force? What did it matter if she had developed her industry and commerce by means of artificial methods of procedure such as *dumping;* by a systematic deterioration of the quality of all the goods manufactured, and by making use without any scruple of all the means of falsification that the human mind can invent? To blame these practices would have required ideals of perfection, or qualifying standards of appraisement. But these were growing confused, losing their prestige and their force. . . . The result alone counted. In the crumbling to pieces of all the ideals of perfection there remained standing, in the centre of Europe, gigantic, triumphant, only Germany. It is now possible for us to explain why the idea of the decadence of the Latin peoples had ended by forcing itself upon all, the Latin peoples themselves included. The Latin countries, even the two strongest, France and Italy, were incapable of rivalling Germany in

this endeavour for power. France had not a sufficient population. The increase of population is a necessary condition of increase of power. Italy had the population; but coal was lacking to her. To these material causes were added some psychological causes; that is to say, a certain persistence of sentiments which dated back to the periods of qualitative civilization; the habit of economy; the repugnance to continual agitation, to incessant innovation, to the spirit of modernism carried to excess, to the mania of speed. In conclusion, the political situation of these countries rendered it impossible for their governments to support the effort of the nation with as much energy and intelligence as the German government was able to do.

For all these reasons, these nations have by degrees come to feel themselves inferior, in the struggle for power, to the Germany which, though succeeding therein only in part, they sought to imitate. Hence a very grave consequence. The ideal of power, reacting on France and Italy, excited there, in all classes, the appetite for facile gains, the desire for rapid enrichment, all the forms of *arrivisme*. But, not having been able fully to develop itself, it has not excited in the same degree the correlative qualities and vices which rendered the German life a system which, if not perfect as superficial observers thought it, was at least complete and coherent in its dangerous absurdity; audacity, pride, the habit of doing everything, even follies, on a large scale; the spirit of co-operation: confidence in the future; discipline; that kind of extravagant Messianic fervour by which the German was convinced that he was regenerating the world by inundating it with bad goods. Taking all in all the two countries remained more attached than Germany to the old ideals of perfection; remained, that is to say, . . . and the war has proved it . . . in a more elevated intel-

lectual and moral state. But at the same time they brought into the economic life a timidity, a limitation, a spirit of distrust, of isolation and of realism; an absence of all mystic illusion, which, combining with the appetite for gains and the desire for riches, engendered egoisms and corruptions very harmful, whether to the economic system, or to the whole social organization of the country. This state of things provoked a great discontent and gave to one part of public opinion, in the two countries, a very painful sense of intellectual and moral incapacity in comparison with Germany.

An effort which but half succeeds is always painful, to an individual as to a people. To this sentiment of partial incapacity were added very well justified apprehensions of a real danger. This people which was multiplying in the centre of Europe, and developing its power with such rapidity under the leadership of an energetic government, was it not a danger for the surrounding nations? But all these anxieties and fears would not have become so agonizing, in the years preceding the war, save for an illusion wherein lies the profound cause of the immense present crisis. The ideals of perfection, which could have limited to wiser proportions our admiration for Germany, had grown dim in the mind of the world; but they had not been officially abjured. No one would have admitted, even before the war, the wish to live in a world without beauty, without justice, without truth. When one spoke of progress or of civilization one always meant it to be understood, more or less clearly, as moral and intellectual improvement. Our age desired power, but it also desired, in all sincerity, charity, equity, justice, truth, good. It was easily angered if any one doubted of these virtues. Unfortunately, if it wanted these blessings, it was not the less constrained, by

dominating passions and interests, to sacrifice them daily to its desire for riches and power. It was a question, then, for our age, of increasing its riches and power illimitably, while escaping the reproach of paying for these material advantages by a moral deterioration of the whole of society. The problem was difficult: how has it resolved it? It has found a simple and convenient means of reconciling the ideal of power and the ideal of perfection: it has mixed and confused them. With the aid of a numerous army of sophists, it has convinced itself that the world would improve, would become wiser, more moral, more beautiful, in short, more perfect, in proportion as it grew rich and developed its power. Quantity could increase and quality improve indefinitely, side by side.

What a part in the intellectual life of the nineteenth century has been played by this necessity, in which our age found itself, of confusing ideas upon this vital point! What theories have been admired because they arose from this confusion, and assisted in producing it, in the minds of men! That of the superman, for example. But Germany was still the country which derived most benefit from that confusion. The apparent order which reigned in the country, and that almost perfect co-ordination of all the efforts of the nation towards power, seemed the ideal of intellectual and moral perfection. Germany became the model of all the perfections. Because she was the most powerful country, she was considered as the most intelligent nation, the most learned, the wisest, the most moral, the most serious in the world. She had solved, better than the other nations, all the problems of the period and realized the ideal of the most perfect life. Her law, her social institutions, her sciences, her music, seemed unsurpassable: she was even beginning to become a model in the arts.

Germany had transferred into the arts her mania for modernism, her capacity for imitation, and her spirit of organization; that which, in the immense aesthetic anarchy of the period, seemed, to a certain number of spirits discontented with the present, the dawn of a new era. Even the Socialists were converted, in the Latin countries, to admiration for Germany. In seeking a pretext for recriminations against the bourgeois régime, they had forgotten that it was to that régime that they owed the possibility of existing as a party: they exalted the "social laws" enacted by the military oligarchy which governs Germany as a grand progress of which their own countries were not capable; and the German Socialist party which, without the liberties given to the world by the French Revolution, would not have been able even to exist, as the true liberator of the world! Which is tantamount to saying that the government of the *Junker* was more just and more humane than the democratic governments of Western Europe. Europe was deluding herself with these absurd illusions, when all at once the sky and earth trembled. Germany had just fired the mine.

IV

Within a week the nation which had been the model of all the virtues became the object of universal execration. The dictionary no longer held adjectives adequate to stigmatize it. It was banished from the society of civilized nations. What had taken place in eight days? A thing simple and tragic: the ideal of perfection and the ideal of power, which the world had confused, as if they could develop indefinitely side by side, were entered into conflict. Therein lies the profound significance of the whole present crisis.

A philosopher would have been able to foresee *a priori* that this conflict would break forth one day or another. This prevision belonged to the number of certitudes that one could call *dialectique,* because they can be arrived at by reasoning; and which are the more sure if, to arrive at them, the argument takes its start from a well-established truth. A common-sense truth could in this case lead easily to this prevision: which is, that the blessings of life are mutually allied one to another in such a manner that they mutually limit each other in different ways; and that if one wishes to enjoy a blessing beyond a certain degree, one must renounce the other which formed its limit. But then, very often, even the blessing which one has too much desired becomes an evil. "For a fortnight," . . . so spoke, some years before the war, an old man who had known men and the world . . . "we have argued to discover what was of greater value, to produce riches, to create works of art, or to discover truths; and up to what point it was good to desire wealth. . . . Now, in doing this, what have we done save to seek the relations which exist between Art, Truth, Morality, Utility, Pleasure, Duty, Equity; that is to say, between the blessings of life? These are questions which greatly interest philosophers, who readily imagine that the world is perpetually in trouble because they do not succeed in resolving these grave problems. But does not life take it upon herself to answer them each day? Is it then so difficult to understand that these things are the limits, the one of the other? Duty can put a bridle on Pleasure and preserve it from perilous abuses: the sense of the Beautiful can preserve Morality from certain excesses of asceticism: Morality can turn Art aside from certain indecent subjects: Utility hold Truth a little in check, reminding man that 'all Truth is not good to utter'; or can pre-

vent Morality and Art from becoming dehumanized by becoming ends unto themselves; and so on. What is history if not the perpetual effort of the will to discover new balances (equilibriums) and more perfect limitations between these elements of life?"[1]

It is the same with justice, charity, reverence, equity, loyalty, chivalric sentiment; with all those ideals of moral perfection which the world had not renounced, and of power. Power and these ideals do not necessarily exclude each other, but they mutually limit each other. The stronger the ideals are in a nation or an individual, so much the more will power acquired by violating justice, charity, equity and loyalty horrify them: they will want power only within the limits traced by these ideals of moral perfection. The stronger the ambition for power, the more easily and indifferently will an individual and a nation overstep these limits. If the ambition for power become, in a man or in a nation, a kind of religion or Messianic mysticism, these limits will end by being regarded as obstacles that the man or the nation must overthrow, and with which they will boast of being openly in conflict. That is what has happened to Germany, before the eyes of the terrified world. Intoxicated by its success, by the flatteries of which it was the object, by the idea of its strength, by the hope of an immense triumph, Germany had ended by believing, as, moreover, the greater number of its admirers believed, that it was the best because it was the strongest: it was obvious, then, that it would improve in proportion as it should increase in strength: consequently, all that it did to augment its power was good. The spirit of a whole people, powerful, strong, numerous, once set upon this declivity, and it was bound to slide rapidly into the worst excesses.

[1] "Entre les Deux Mondes," Paris, 1913, p. 415.

But if Germany, which was the strongest and which hoped to win, had easily confused with the good all that which favoured her immense ambitions, the peoples attacked, who felt themselves the weaker and who saw themselves menaced by a fearful danger, took refuge by the deserted altars of Justice, of Equity, of chivalrous Generosity, of Loyalty; that is to say, they opposed to Germany and its ideal of power the old ideals of perfection. From that moment they have recommenced, in all the nations which speak languages derived from the Latin, to exalt the Latin genius, the Latin spirit, the Latin civilization, in prose and verse. And with reason; for the Latin genius sums up the ideals of perfection, which alone can limit the aspirations of man after criminal power. But if the Latin ideal is above all and before all an ideal of perfection, it is necessary for all those who today exalt the Latin genius and oppose it to Germanism, to bear well in mind that it represents the opposite of what one had formed the habit of most admiring in Germany: of that insatiable aspiration after an unlimited growth of power; of that untiring and unscrupulous activity; of that spirit of invasion; of that taste for all which is enormous, colossal, extravagant, violent. We must not delude ourselves too much: the ideal of a power which should grow indefinitely has seduced the minds of many and has deeply penetrated into even the Latin countries. Even today, after so much bloodshed, many adversaries of Germany waver between the horror and fear of the excesses committed by it, and the desire to appropriate its methods and the secret of its successes. We must not too far forget that powerful interests are bound up, even in the Latin countries, with that ideal of boundless power, whereas every ideal of perfection imposes limits, restrictions and renunciations.

V

It is above all for this reason that the present war seems bound to be the beginning of a very long and complicated historical crisis. This immense catastrophe has shown the world that it is not possible to want at one and the same time an unlimited increase of power and a continual moral progress; that sooner or later the moment comes when the choice must be made between justice, charity, loyalty, and power, riches, success. But it is not so easy to make the choice as to say that it must be made. A few examples will show what transformations and responsibilities this choice implies, should the world decide one day to limit afresh the ideal of power and the ambitions which it engenders, by ideals, old or new, of perfection. These examples will at the same time give an idea of the practical conclusions of which the ideas expounded in this book, and the conception of the European conflict which is there set forth, permit; they will thus lead to a better understanding of that which a renaissance of the Latin spirit will signify in modern civilization on the day when it shall appear.

In many States there is a question of alcoholism. It is serious above all in France. In what does this question consist? It is only one of the consequences of the effort for the unlimited increase of production of all things, useful or harmful, which characterizes our age. Alone among all the civilizations of history, our civilization has applied itself with the same energy to manufacture ever greater quantities of all products, from alcohol to explosives, from cannons to aeroplanes, without ever troubling itself as to the use that would be made of them. It is thus that enormous quantities of alcohol have been distilled; and after having been distilled they have been given to the million

to drink, even at the risk of destroying whole nations. The primary sources of the vice are in the industry and not in the men. It is not the thirst of men which obliges industry and agriculture to produce drink in ever increasing quantity: it is industry and agriculture which, swept along by the tremendous economic on-rush of the world, augment the production; and, to dispose of it all, teach the masses to get drunk. The question of alcoholism is, in short, primarily a question of over-production. Our ancestors were much more sober, not because they were wiser or more virtuous or more devout; but because they produced less alcohol, and the little that they produced was of better quality. They could not drink the alcohol which did not exist.

The deduction is clear. To eradicate this plague the State must claim the faculty of limiting certain productions for moral and patriotic reasons; that is to say, set moral limits to the ceaselessly growing productive power of modern industry. Neither propaganda committees, nor lectures, nor sermons, nor pamphlets, nor even the reduction of the number of public-houses, will cure the evil so long as such great quantities of alcohol shall continue to be disdistilled. If we want to save the masses from this curse, there is only one way: entirely to prohibit the distillation of the alcohols of inferior quality destined for the making of liqueurs, and rigorously to limit the production of the alcohols of superior quality. The people will be obliged to drink less when they no longer have anything at their disposition but wine, beer, and a few very expensive liqueurs.

Another serious question brought forward by the war is that of the limits of commercial competition between the different nations. Every one knows that the development of the German industry and commerce has been in part obtained with the aid of special methods of competition,

such as *dumping,* and innumerable ingenious adulterations. German chemistry has been the great accomplice of all these adulterations. These are ways of acting which can only be justified if one admits that quantity is everything in the world; that each people ought to seek only to produce, sell and consume as much as it can; that the worth of nations is measured by the figures of its exports; and that, to increase the raw total of commerce, all means are good. But these are the principles which have led Germany to destroy herself in destroying Europe for the satisfaction of its inordinate ambition; and against which we have been protesting for years past by opposing the Latin spirit, and its ideals of moral perfection, to the unscrupulous lusts of Germanism! If, then, we wish for the spirit of justice, loyalty, a certain feeling of trust, to regulate in future the relations between the civilized peoples of Europe, we must apply curbs and limits to these equivocal procedures. It is so much the more necessary in that, if we do not succeed in this, there is no doubt that every one will set to after the war to imitate the German system: with what result? It is easy to predict! It is therefore necessary to endeavour to impose moral regulations upon international competition: but by what means? There seems only one: to revert, by modernizing it, to an old doctrine which was less an economic law than a moral principle imposed on economics: the just price of things. *"Carius venders vel vilius emere rem quam valeat . . . injustun,"* said Saint Thomas. The application of this principle in this case can be made without hesitation, for no one will question that he who buys a thing at a price lower than the cost of its production buys it below its worth. It must then be affirmed that *dumping,* while being of service to the people who profit by it, weakens in the mind the concept of the just price of things; accus-

toming some, on the one hand, to consume products in a quantity beyond what they ought to consume, granted their wealth and the general wealth; obliging others to work at too low a price; disturbing the whole system of retributions. Consequently all the States ought to unite together to prohibit *dumping* in all its forms; and each State ought to reserve to itself the supreme faculty of quashing, by equivalent taxes, the *dumping* that another State should not be willing or able to repress.

Not less grave is the question of adulteration as a normal procedure of modern industry. For the last century it has enriched many manufacturers; it has benefited above all the Germans, who have made use of it with their customary energy and audacity; but it is one of the most dangerous of the procedures of modern commerce and industry. As *dumping* destroys in men's minds the conception of the just price of things, these adulterations render men more and more incapable of distinguishing what is good from what is bad or mediocre; that is to say, they stifle in our civilization the sense of quality. Now, in proportion as one stifles in men the sense of quality, the commercial and industrial struggle must necessarily develop itself in the sense of quantity. The business which will pour forth, and know how to impose, upon the world, the greatest abundance of worse products will be victorious. But when men exert themselves, not to make articles of a certain quality and have them admired, but to produce and sell the largest number of articles in the shortest time; it is a victory over matter, over time and over space that they aspire to, and not a refinement of their tastes and capacities. It is then an ideal of power and not an ideal of perfection that they are seeking after. It is thus possible to reconstitute the chain which links these processes of adulteration, recognized as

legitimate by modern trade, to the present crisis. The procedures of falsification stifle the sense of quality; quality is the only natural limit of quantity; the more the sense of quality becomes obtuse in a period, the more industry and commerce find themselves under the necessity of struggling for quantity; that is to say, of indefinitely increasing production. This struggle for quantity brings about of necessity the triumph of an ideal of power over all the ideals of perfection; and we see, since 1914, the possible consequences of such a triumph in a people which was conscious of possessing the strongest army in the world.

As to the procedures of adulteration, we can repeat what has been already said of *dumping*: if a curb be not put upon them they will generalize themselves after the war. Every one will want to employ against Germany the arms which it has forged and with which it has wounded us. But is it possible to put a curb on this evil? Yes: if the States again became, while adapting themselves to the exigencies of a world so greatly enlarged, what they were formerly; the guarantees of the quality of the goods. They ought not, as they did once, to impose upon manufactures a certain standard of perfection; they ought to continue to recognize the right, granted by the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century to manufactures and commerce, of debasing the quality to the advantage of the quantity, as much as they want, and as they can; but they ought ruthlessly to deny them the right of hiding this deterioration of quality by all the deceptions which industry and commerce misuse today. Very strong interior legislations and a whole well supported system of international conventions ought to prevent industry and commerce from deceiving the public as to the origin, the composition, the solidity, as to the most important qualities, in short, of the goods. Laws of this

kind were formerly very numerous, in the periods of qualitative civilization; quantity, triumphing with steam machinery, has swept them aside; but many much deplored inconveniences of the present economic régime would disappear if one returned to the inspiratory principle of those old laws, adapting it to the requirements of the modern world. One can even say that these inconveniences will only disappear on the day when industry and commerce shall accept these moral limits.

The commercial adulterations are, moreover, only a part of a much greater problem; of the greatest moral problem of our age: that of loyalty. For the last three years the German lies and perfidies are the wonder of the world. One asks oneself how our century can have engendered a people which breaks its pledged word so easily and knows how to lie with such audacity. Would it not be more reasonable to ask oneself what good faith and regard for truth could be found in a people which had enriched itself, and succeeded in obtaining the admiration of the whole world, through adulterating almost all the products of the earth? In this defect also the Germans perhaps represent our age better than one thinks. Our age has accomplished great things and has many virtues; but it shows itself more and more uncertain and weak in the conception of honour. May I be allowed to quote a book written before the war? "No century had ever so great a need as ours to set a limit to the liberty to lie. For it is in vain that I try to preach that man ought to advance towards the future without turning his head; I do not deceive myself, you know. Precisely because there are limits, conventional and always provisional limits, man is ceaselessly at war with the principles upon which social and moral order rest. Interests and passions continually seek either to overthrow these

limits by violent means, . . . wars, revolutions, seditions, martial laws, bombs, outrages, crimes; or, more frequently, to elude them by sophistry, because that is less dangerous. How is it that sophistry is never dead of the mortal wounds which logic has inflicted upon it in so many memorable duels? Why have all ages licenced and loaded with gold an official body of sophists, . . . the lawyers? How could Socrates believe that he was accomplishing a great moral reform by teaching men to argue well? Because sophistry is the arsenal to which man resorts to seek the means of observing principles when they accord him a right, and to elude them, while feigning to respect them, when they impose a duty upon him. Now, if man has already resorted largely to this arsenal in the times when principles were consecrated by religion, what will he not do today when, having passed out of childhood, he has discovered the secret of the game? The critical spirit is too keen in our age, we are too old, we know history too well and are henceforth too much accustomed to enjoy the unbridled liberty in the midst of which we live! And you were right again, Cavalcanti, when you said that, if our civilization is to such a point plastic, progressive, ardent, it is to these facts that it owes it. The more, then, that a man ages, the more he grows rich, learned, powerful, so much the more he ought to repeat to himself, and profoundly to inculcate in his spirit this supreme rule of wisdom: 'Go forward, without ever turning thy head to see what arm compels thee; believe in the principle that thou professest and observe it as if it were imposed on thee by God, as if it represented the sole truth, the sole beauty, the sole virtue, the health and the salvation of the world; discuss not, argue not, compromise not; be faithful to thy conviction to the end, without fearing to risk for it thy life and thy fortune; force

thyself not to lie and not to betray, then no other person can force thee to do so. But if thy principle breaks down, resign thyself to its fall as if it had been but a human, conventional and arbitrary limitation of that infinite Truth, that infinite Beauty, that infinite Good which continues to circulate in the world through the channel of the new principle which has swept away thine own.' Triumphant quantity, on the contrary, teaches us from the cradle to lie to others and to ourselves, to perfect ourselves in all the arts of mystification. Why? Because if, in fact, quantity triumphs in the world today, thanks to machinery, to fire, to America, it cannot, in spite of all, assume openly and in its own name the government of the world: for man always and everywhere, in no matter what condition and at what moment, requires to translate quantity into quality, and to believe that the things he makes use of correspond to an ideal of perfection. Even at a period when the world has so sadly deteriorated and when almost all the standards of measure have been impaired or confused in mediocrity; even today, I say, no one recognizes a thing as better merely because it costs more; that is to say, to make quantity the criterion of quality. Quite the contrary, each wishes to persuade himself that, if he pays a higher price, it is because the thing is better; if not it would seem to him that he was admitting his own folly to himself. That is why quantity has to take the mask of quality and use fraud to deceive men and make them believe that, at the very moment when they are only procuring abundance for themselves, they are also seeking after beauty or excellence. What are all these Smyrna carpets woven at Monza; all these Japanese goods or all this Indian furniture manufactured at Hamburg or in Bavaria; all these Parisian novelties made in a hundred places; all these rabbits whom a

few weeks suffice to change into otters; all these champagnes made in America, in Germany, in Italy, if not the lies of quantity, which steals from ruined and proscribed quality her last rags? Who does not know with how many processes and substances chemistry has furnished industry for the deception of the public? It is not then surprising that our society no longer possesses any instrument of truth and faith which may act upon consciences as did formerly the oath and honour by which religions and aristocracies constrained man to be sincere when he might lie with impunity, faithful when he might have been a traitor. And from that time onwards we see many difficulties spring up and grow serious in modern society for the solution of which we tax our ingenuity to find theories, institutions, preventive measures. But all such efforts remain unsuccessful, because these difficulties are nothing but questions of loyalty. If the sentiment of loyalty existed, it would resolve them in an instant." [1]

VI

But I seem to see more than one reader smile, and to hear repeated the objection which a justified scepticism suggests to many persons. "All these ideas are excellent on paper. But will it ever be possible to apply them? Will the evil passions and the interests of men ever consent?"

I do not deceive myself, for example, as to the difficulties that modern States, enfeebled as they are, will encounter upon the day when they shall wish to become once more the guarantors of quality in an economic world so much vaster and more encumbered than the old. And yet industry and commerce are not even the field wherein the

[1] Entre les deux mondes, p. 370

ideal of power and the ideal of perfection are destined to fight their sternest battles. The same principles can apply to questions far more grave and vital, to which I shall merely allude, just because they are too grave, and the moment to examine them thoroughly has not yet arrived. But there is no doubt at all that the Latin ideal of life, for instance, would on the day when it should be able to expend itself afresh in all its strength and coherency, lead Europe to the limitation of armaments under all their forms, from the invention of new engines of war to the manufacture of arms and effective forces. It is in war that the ideal of power, represented by Germany, has most entirely destroyed all the ancient ideals of moral perfection in which we believed; it is in war that a strong reaction will be most necessary if we desire to save modern civilization from an irreparable catastrophe. But the limitation of armaments implies another change, the import of which is even more tremendous; and which raises, under another form, the problem of loyalty upon which we have already touched. It is that the States of Europe consent to limit by treaties, the one toward the others, and in equal ratio, their sovereign rights, in view of a superior interest, common to all. It is enough merely to state this for all its difficulties to be apprehended.

And yet it would be an error to consider all these ideas as Utopias which cannot be realized. They are not, most undoubtedly, necessities upon which one can count as upon the accomplishment of a natural law; but they are possibilities which depend upon the human will. We find ourselves in a sphere where all depends upon what men want. If one had said to a man of the sixteenth century that the organization of the authority and tradition under which he lived would one day fall, he would have shrugged his shoulders.

But man has certainly succeeded in the last two centuries in overthrowing the principles upon which society was based even to the point of letting loose on the earth this hurricane of fire and sword; because he desired the unlimited aggrandizement of his power. Let us look at the world: millions of men are butchering each other; empires are falling to pieces; riches produced by two generations are melting away; the fury of destruction rages on the land, on sea, in the air; twenty centuries of moral progress seem annihilated; sparks of the immense conflagration have been carried by the wind across the Atlantic. If men have desired all that which has rendered inevitable this chaotic explosion of savage passions, is it rash to hope that they will some day also desire that which would assure to the world a little more true order, faith, justice, loyalty, charity? But that which one might call the will of periods, that is to say, the great currents of the civilizations which succeed one another, is a very mysterious phenomenon. They seem to be the work of the human spirit and yet to be superior to the spirit of each man, as if a people, a nation, a series of generations, were something more than the aggregate of the human beings of which these human groups are made up; as if they enjoyed to the full that liberty of choice which individuals may avail themselves of in only a small degree. It is for that reason impossible to say if, and when, men will desire a more stable and just society than that which is today struggling in this crisis of mad violence; and after what endeavours and wanderings they will desire it. But, whether that day be near or distant, the duty of the historian, the moralist, the philosopher, does not change. They ought to set before their contemporaries how, under the surprises, the horrors and the ruins of this crisis; in all the contradictions and uncertainties amid which our age strug-

gles; in the difficulties which present themselves on all sides; and in those, yet greater, which will present themselves; is lurking this dilemma of perfection and of power from which the world cannot escape. The struggle between the Latin genius and the Germanic genius is nothing else than this. The historian, the moralist, the philosopher, are not authorized to assert that man ought to prefer perfection to power. Man will be free in the future to resolve the problem, as he has been in the past, in deciding for one or other of the alternatives. But what the historian, the moralist and the philosopher can, and ought to, say is that it is impossible to want both the two at once; and to seek to increase indefinitely, at the same time, these two good things. Present events furnish conclusive proof of this. Have we not, for the last two years, seen returning among us what one considered as the phantoms of ages for ever dead; sumptuary laws; restrictions upon international commerce and on the consumption of goods; the taxation of prices and wages? Have we not seen all at once thrift, economy, simplicity, the limitation of needs, become once more civic virtues, exalted, as at the time of Cæsar and Augustus, by even those who used to wish to banish them, in the name of progress, from the world? Have we not been obliged abruptly, from one day to the next, by the force of circumstances, to revert to methods and ideas created by periods which had subordinated economic activity to ideals of moral perfection? And what does this inspired *volte face* signify, save that, whatever he may do, the moment will always come when man, if he do not do it spontaneously, will be obliged by the very laws of life to choose between the two ideals? The whole question for him then reduces itself into knowing whether he will choose by force, that is to say, ill, by suffering, and without gain; or if he will choose

spontaneously according to an organic and exalted concept of life and its aims.

All these truths are very simple. But it was perhaps not profitless to expound them at a moment when the minds of men are so disturbed. They will be able in any case to assist some readers to profit by the experience of the author, who has himself, at the outset, run the risk of losing himself in the fog of this great intellectual and moral confusion; and who, thanks to these simple truths, has at least succeeded in avoiding the misfortune of being an admirer of the German system in the years which preceded the war.

CHAPTER III

Ancient Rome and Modern Culture

ANCIENT ROME AND MODERN CULTURE

I

STANDING on the Capitol, the sacred hill of Rome, after a long absence spent in foreign travel, I recall the time, already far distant, when I finally took the resolution of writing a new history of Rome! Perhaps none of these memories is sweeter to me than that of the anxieties, the uncertainties, the doubts which, at the moment of departure, thronged about my path to hold me back. "Why write a new history of Rome? Is it to be presumed that our age, which rushes forward towards the future with such tremendous impetus, should find, in the midst of this unbridled career, the necessary leisure to turn its head, were it but for a moment, and contemplate a past so remote? Is the moment really come to write this new history of Rome? Has not history now entered upon its scientific phase, and is it not consequently bound to prepare the new synthesis by a long and minute analysis?"

At the moment of departure I was not in a position to reply to these misgivings with precision and with assurance; which would have been serious if history were, indeed, as some claim, a pure science, whose methods should be rigorously controllable and strictly obligatory. But, luckily, history is, or can be, something more than a science; it can be an art capable of acting in various ways upon the spirit of men, on their dispositions and on their tendencies. It can, then, be a form of action; and action, when it has a *raison d'être*, always ends by becoming conscious of this in proportion as it attains its goal. It is thus that I found the answer to these distressing questions along the world-roads; and

for that reason it seems to me I cannot better celebrate this kind of symbolic return than in bringing from the world which I have travelled, in all senses, to extol the glory of Rome, a reply, which involves one of the most disputed questions of modern culture. And it is this. Roman history is inexhaustible, immortal, privileged, and never can it be too much rewritten, especially by those who are the children of Rome; especially by Italy, her eldest daughter; because it is complete and synthetic; because, when we embrace in a glance the events of the centuries from the Punic wars to the final schism between the Orient and the Occident, we observe, distended upon this immense panorama of two imposing social dissolutions and an imposing recomposition, that which we could almost define as the woof of universal history.

How, in reality, does the history of Rome commence? Not by chaos, like the Biblical history of the universe, but by order; that is to say, by interior peace; by political discipline; by a well-established equilibrium of fortunes, all, moreover, modest, and almost all rooted in the soil. In all Italy, in the open country as in the towns, which have not yet forgotten their origins; in the midst of the rural populations as in the middle classes and the residue of the local noblesse; this peace, this discipline, this equilibrium, are maintained by means of laws, of religion, of munificence, of the half-divine prestige of victories, of a high reputation for wisdom, by the small aristocracy of Rome, which thenceforth reigns over the peninsula. It is a hereditary but not exclusive aristocracy; puritan and devout; avaricious and uncouth; preoccupied only with having in its hands the most efficacious instruments of domination, . . . landed property, law, diplomacy, religion, government and soldiery; indifferent or defiant in regard to all else; to philosophy as

to art; to Greek culture as to Asiatic creeds; to luxury as to enjoyment; resolved to seclude itself, with all the Italic races, which venerate it as an Olympus of demigods, in the ancient religion and the ancestral traditions; to confine itself within the limits of that Italy which it has conquered with such severe toil, and, within those limits, to struggle against the destiny which impels it toward the empire of the world. The energy with which it resists destiny is great: but the moment arrives when the force of circumstances breaks down its resistance. What a change then! From the second Punic war onwards the equilibrium of the ancient society changes under the action of the two most formidable revolutionary powers which in all ages, modify the face of the world; new needs and new ideas. After the empire has extended beyond the seas, after its riches are increased, after points of contact are multiplied with the refined civilization of the Hellenized East, there grow up, in all the social ranks, generations avid for facile gains; indocile, aspiring to a wider and more gladsome existence, desiring a broader culture. Many ancient fortunes go down in the current of the new prodigality, many new fortunes arise from it. The aristocracy grows impoverished or depraved; or, disgusted, isolates itself in regret for the good old times; or flings itself into exoticism. And thus, little by little, the ancient moral unity disappears; the very foundations of the State are split.

Everywhere, in religion, in the family, in the Republic, discipline breaks down. The order of knights, puffed up by riches; the middle classes, invigorated by ambitions and embittered by poverty; revolt against the nobility revered for so many centuries; interests, which the power of a class sure of its dominion no longer holds in check, engage in a fierce struggle among themselves, in the very heart of the

State, and rend it more; little by little gold corrupts all; and, for the spoiling of that which gold has not the power to corrupt, there is suspicion; the sombre pessimism which poisons souls; so that there is nothing which is not, or which does not appear to be, incurably rotten. To the ancient social harmony there succeeds a furious scission of factions and coteries animated by bitter hatreds, each of which upbraids in the others its own vices. Greek culture penetrates and diffuses itself easily in this society, already so disturbed by discords, distrust, and indiscipline; but, at the same time as it refines or strengthens the intellects, it increases the disorder. Gusts of revolutionary fury pass over Rome and Italy; and to such an extent that, during the first twenty years of the century which precedes the Christian era, the pious republic of Camillus and Fabricius seems to dissolve into bankruptcy, anarchy, defeats; into the senseless rage of dissensions, and, finally, into civil war. How many times, in these fatal years, did not even the most intrepid spirits fear that over this sacred hill, in that Forum where today, with a filial piety, we seek for the relics of those ages, there should pass, as over the ground where Carthage stood, the cultivators' plough, obliterating for ever the last vestiges of the nefarious and blood-soaked city!

A terrible man, Scylla, saves the Empire by recreating for it an army by dint of money and pillage; and restoring, with this army, by strength of terror, a rough social discipline. But, once he has gone, and in proportion as the treasures of Mithridates, conquered by Lucullus, are transported to Italy, the fever for sudden gains, the frenzy of luxury, the ambition for conquests, little by little breaks out again. For a moment this aged State seems to recover a fresh vigour. Pompey, following the example of Lucullus, conquers Syria; the dominant oligarchy wishes to enrich

itself in the provinces and among foreign potentates; those who are not able to conquer an Empire levy contributions on the States and small principalities which tremble before the shadow of Rome; the courts of the petty Eastern kings, such as that of the Ptolemies at Alexandria, are invaded by ravenous knights and senators, who, after extorting money, return to spend it in Italy, where luxury makes rapid progress; and, with luxury, debts; and, with debts, the hellenistic and oriental cultures; meanwhile, amid the incessant agitations of this age, there grows up and pursues his way the fatal man, Cæsar. The day comes when finally this predestined man crosses the Alps and invades Gaul, bristling with forests and armies, to seek there glory and treasure. The State then falls into the power of parties, greedy, audacious, energetic, unscrupulous; but changeable as the interests which they serve and of which they make use; and these parties, by their continual quick changes and restless, underhand dealings, corrode in the aged State the scanty discipline which Scylla had, with great difficulty, re-established.

After thirty and more years of such a peace, barely tolerable and laboriously maintained, there recommences a civil war, or, to put it better, a frightful tempest which sweeps away first the remains of Scylla's constitution, then the dictatorship of Cæsar, then the Senate and what survived of the Roman aristocracy, then the revolutionary triumvirate, as well as all other States, great and small, on the confines of the Empire, among them the throne of the Ptolemies. What remains standing? Ruins accumulate on all sides, men ask themselves if Rome be the greatest or the most wretched of cities. One of Rome's most lucid spirits, matured in the midst of these vicissitudes, discerns everywhere a decadence which precipitates from bad to worse:

Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox laturos
Protem vitiosiorem.

And yet it is the last step towards the apogee. After this supreme ordeal the Greco-Oriental culture, which had disaggregated the ancient Italic society, transforms itself into a force of social reconstruction; it re-establishes little by little, in the Mediterranean basin, whose conquest has changed the situation, a fresh balance of interests, of aspirations, of ideas, of sentiments. Thanks to the peace, the barbarous West learns to till the land, to cultivate the woods, to sink mines, to navigate the rivers, to speak and write Latin both well and badly; it grows civilized, it purchases the products manufactured in the old cities of the East. In proportion as the new markets of the West afford it outlets, the East reopens the workshops of its industrious artisans and the busy shops of its traders; it once more sets in circulation its former traffic upon the roads extended by the sword of Rome. Thus the ancient oriental civilizations, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, rejuvenate by contact with the young western barbarisms. Between them stands Italy, excellently placed to dominate this empire around the Mediterranean, where the West balances the East; where Gaul, admirably developed since the century which follows the conquest, forms the counterpoise to Egypt, which has blossomed forth again. For the first time the Mediterranean becomes as an immense and tranquil *forum* where, under Roman supervision, Europe, Africa and Asia come into contact, exchange their produce, their customs, their ideas. From this an easy peace originates, in Gaul, in Asia Minor, in Spain, in Northern Africa, — new middle classes, new provincial aristocracies; while at Rome the last remains of the old Roman aristocracy, of that aristocracy which, by

tradition, occupied itself only with war and politics, ends by dying out. The new aristocratic families, recruited in the provinces, replace it. They have received a vigorous Roman education, they have sought to assimilate the ideas and manners of the old aristocracy of the *Urbs*. But the tendencies of the age make themselves felt; the military and political spirit declines in this new aristocracy; preoccupations as to culture, administration, justice, urban civilization, a keen inclination towards Hellenism, grow and gather force. This is the reason why, by degrees, one family, which seems to fear its own fortune, is obliged to assume all the privileges and all the responsibilities shared during many centuries among numbers of noble families. We shall never understand the history of Rome if we do not understand that the Julia-Claudian family was obliged to assume and exercise, in spite of itself, a power which, insensibly, became monarchical, in the same way as the Roman nobility had been obliged to found, in spite of itself, the Empire of which it was afraid.

There is summed up in this contradiction what might be called the philosophical essence of Roman history; since it was the destiny of Rome to perish through its conquests. It is, in fact, soon annihilated by the Empire it has founded. In proportion as the East flourishes once more and the West expands; in proportion as the prosperity, the number and the power of the middle classes and the provincial aristocracies increase; the immense Empire assumes the form, no longer of a formidable engine of political and military dominion, but of one of those highly refined urban States that Hellenism had produced in the East. Created by a puritan and strictly national aristocracy of diplomatists and warriors, the Empire falls into the power of an aristocracy and bureaucracy, cosmopolitan, pacifist, lettered, philosophical;

whose amalgamation is effected throughout the Empire, not any longer by a real or imaginary community of origins, traditions and history, but by a brilliant, though superficial, literary and philosophical culture, and by the political religion of the Empire and the emperor. The force of cohesion which internally binds together the enormous bulk of the Empire is no longer merely warfare and law; it is, above all, the urban civilization of the Hellenized East. In the same way as the Emperor at Rome, so do the rich families in the provinces dispense part of their wealth to beautify the cities; to increase the profits, the comforts and pleasures of the people; they build palaces, villas, theatres, temples, baths, aqueducts; they are liberal of corn, oil, amusements, money; they endow public services or establish charitable foundations. The Empire is covered with great and small cities, which rival each other in splendour and beauty; all expand through the constant influx of the poor populations of the campaigns, of artisans, of peasants grown rich. Schools are opened wherein the young of the middle class, by learning rhetoric, literature, philosophy, and law, prepare themselves for the bureaucratic functions which, from generation to generation, increase and ramify. It is this lettered and philosophical bureaucracy which introduces into the Roman law, originally empiric, the philosophical and systematic spirit; which introduces into the administration, originally authoritative, the juridic spirit. And it is thus that, during the second century, the Empire displays, in the sunshine of the Pax Romana which illumines the world, its innumerable cities all resplendent with marbles. But, alas, for but a brief period; for a fresh dissolution commences. The urban and cosmopolitan civilization which had linked, one with another, the various parts of this incongruous empire, begins, in the course of the third century,

to act as a dissolvent force, which throws this brilliant world back into the chaos from which it had drawn it. Little by little, with the spontaneous growth of the cities and of their luxury, that which the urban civilization consumes, exceeds the fertility of the campaigns, and these become depopulated; drained by the cities which absorb their population and their wealth. What human force will ever drive from the cities the rural populations after they have once tasted the conveniences, the pleasures, and the vices, of a refined civilization? Hereafter the Empire is devoured alive by the cities which swarm upon its enormous body. To nourish the populations which there crowd together; to amuse them and to dress them, the campaigns are harassed by a terrible fiscal regimen; agriculture is ruined; the material arts perish; finances break down; the administration falls into disorder; and soon the day will come when within the empire, by a monstrous inversion of the natural relations of things, the craftsmen of pleasure and luxury will multiply endlessly, while there will no longer be any peasants to till the fields, any bakers to make the bread, any sailors to plough the seas, any soldiers to defend the frontiers. It is the beginning of a social dissolution, the history of which is not yet written; in the midst of which there supervenes the greatest moral fermentations the world has ever undergone for the mysticism, the cosmopolitanism, the antimilitarism, the conflict which causes the old educated classes and the ancient Greco-Roman culture to clash with the barbarians, who invade the empire from without and from below, as well as the innumerable religious aberrations in formation; culminates in Christianity, which elaborates a superior morality, but whose spirit denies the very essence of the Empire; and destroys the vital substance of that ancient civilization.

The Empire defends itself with the fury of despair, but without success. East and West separate, and the West, abandoned to itself, falls into decay. The greatest of the works of Rome, its empire of the West, covers with its ruins the immense territory which borders upon the Rhine and Danube; enormous ruins of fallen monuments, peoples returned to barbarism, arts abolished, languages forgotten, laws torn to pieces or mutilated, roads, villages, cities, obliterated from the face of the earth and reabsorbed by the primeval forest which, slow and tenacious, puts forth its shoots in this cemetery of a civilization, that covers the colossal bones of Rome.

II

Such is the tree which sprang from the little seed sown in this Roman soil. For centuries this tree has been felled. Why, then, do men yet come, from all parts, to dig with ardent curiosity in the place where it had its roots? Because in none of the States which, in turn, predominated could the forces of dissolution and reconstruction, which make and unmake civilizations, operate during so long a series of centuries with so much liberty as at Rome, without being either retarded or accelerated by exterior perils and shocks. Because of this, Rome is truly a unique phenomenon in the history of the world. From the destruction of Carthage, until far on to the most calamitous period of its decadence, Rome had doubtless some severe alarms: yet she never experienced serious and lasting exterior dangers. Therefore she could yield herself to the operation of the internal forces which, from century to century, intervened to modify her; and for this reason her history is, as I have said, a complete history. It exemplifies how an empire is

constituted and disintegrated; how a historic aristocracy is broken up, and how a democracy can perish of exhaustion; by what internal processes a republic is converted into a monarchy; a military and national State transformed into a state of lofty culture, and little by little exhausts itself entirely in intellectualism, exoticism, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism. It shows how an authoritative régime ends by gradually enchaining itself in a very complicated juridical system; it produces many revolutions and reactions; a great variety of repercussions of internal politics upon external, and conversely; we can there study to perfection what is, perhaps, the most mysterious and the most disturbing of all historical phenomena; the violent moral repulsion which, especially at their first appearances, is aroused by the civilizations which, later on, matured or dead, are admired as the *chefs d'oeuvres* of the great peoples. Lastly, we see how a political religion is destroyed by a lofty literary and philosophical culture, and a new mystic religion arises which shapes itself from the debris of this same culture; as well as all kinds of minglings, contacts, encounters and conflicts between young and old peoples; between ancient civilizations and barbarisms; between different States, religions and laws. It would take too long were I to enumerate all the elements of universal history which this history of Rome presents, gathered together as in a synthesis, and, for greater convenience, grouped around one centre which is Rome itself; whence it is so easy to survey, in its *ensemble,* the immense panorama. But I do not think I exaggerate in stating that the history of Rome is complete and synthetic; and that, in her, all ages can discover something of themselves and behold themselves as in a mirror.

Moreover, the history of modern civilization proves this.

It is a well-known fact that, above all during the last three centuries, after powerful States had begun to reconstruct themselves upon the political compartition of the Middle Ages, Rome, its history, its literature, its military system, its legislation, were regarded as an historical mirage, projected by the past in front of the generations which sought the road to the future. It has furnished different models to all generations for the resolution of the most opposite political problems. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Rome is the example which all the great monarchies founded in Europe held before them; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the history of the Roman Republic, by the fervent cultus of Brutus, by the Scandalous romance of the Julii Claudii which Suetonius and Tacitus transmitted, fomented the opposition against absolute monarchy. After the French Revolution Rome once more supplied to monarchy, as argument and means of persuasion, the Cæsarean vindications of Drumann, Duruy, and Mommsen, and the panegyrics lavished on the imperial government. It may even be said that the most celebrated histories of Rome written in the nineteenth century were only written in view of the conflict which had begun between the republic and the monarchy. And it is precisely for this reason that, the struggle between these two political principles having grown weaker during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, not only have the histories of Rome so conceived grown antiquated, but many people are persuaded that the interest manifested up to that time in Roman studies has no longer any *raison d'être*. "We live, they say, in the century of electricity and steam. The task of our age is to satisfy the middle and the popular classes, who want, not war and revolutions, but a more secure and agreeable existence. We ought to work indefatigably to create the prodigious riches

which, alone, can satisfy the new desires of such numerous multitudes. An ancient history, wholly filled with military expeditions and political enterprises, is inevitably destined to become irrelevant to a century which needs machinery more than laws, chemists and physicians more than warriors and literary men." To which they also add that Latin, which until the last century remained a half living language, finally died out in the nineteenth century, stifled by the luxuriant growth of national tongues and cultures, buried beneath the ruins of the political power of the Church which, in idiom as in many other things, had prolonged the Roman Empire. Is it not obvious that the death of the Latin language marks, for Rome, the beginning of a new, supreme and irreparable downfall?

And, yet, when it was practically demonstrated that, even in the century of electricity and steam, it was an easy thing to reawaken the interest which formerly attached to Roman studies, many persons, to explain this phenomenon, attributed it to the somewhat violent remodernization of it, . . . praiseworthy according to some, very reprehensible according to others . . . which I had accomplished. But those who are acquainted with Latin literature know that I have modernized Roman history far less than is asserted; on the contrary, I have returned to an ancient point of view, the point of view from which Livy set out, and which, moreover, does not really belong to him, since it is common to many other writers of the same period. That history of Rome, which some have deemed so revolutionary, is already quite complete in embryo in the short preface that Livy has prefixed to his great work, regretting the simplicity and purity of the old manners, tainted by the corruption which, little by little, invaded Rome. In analysing this doctrine of the "corruption" which so long absorbed the Roman mind,

it is easy to discern in the three capital vices, *avaritia, ambitio, luxuria,* the continual increase of the needs and ambitions which, at the dawn of the twentieth century, condemn us all to work hard. The *avaritia* is the passion for gain; the *ambitio* is what we call "arrivisme," the incontrollable pulsion by which all men strive to advance themselves to a position superior to that in which they were born; the *luxuria* is the passion for ever increasing comfort, luxury, enjoyment. But if we thus disentangle the old doctrine of "corruption" from the moral and political prejudices with which it was charged for its contemporaries, the history of Rome, with all its revolutions, its wars and its conquests, . . . that immense history which, for so many centuries past, stands out before our civilization as a very marvel, is easily reduced to a phenomenon which each of us can understand without difficulty, since at this very moment this phenomenon surrounds us on all sides. That is why the century of electricity and steam, in looking through the glass adjusted twenty centuries ago by Sallust and Livy for less modern observers, is able not merely to cast its glance into the midst of that terrible and confused history, and discern its depth, but also to recognize itself therein.

How many analogies, with its own existence, has not the age of steam and electricity met with, dispersed throughout that ancient history, which was believed to have become incomprehensible! It has found, for instance, some of the struggles to which parties give themselves up today in France; certain horoscopes drawn in England of the destinies of the Empire and the fate of the debilitated aristocracy; the conflict, so keen in America, between the puritan tradition and the civilization of money. It has also, and above all, discovered the supreme law of the doom which

hovers above its own head; that is to say, that implacable and mysterious irony of life which annihilates in their triumph all the supreme efforts of humanity; the tragic disillusionment of all the generations which have had the fortune or misfortune to live at a time when an historical era approaches its zenith, when a foreboding seizes them that the better their effort succeeds, the more useless it becomes. In the same manner as Rome was destroyed through her conquests, losing therein her military and political virtues, her very essence; so our civilization, grown capable of producing vast riches, thanks to a culture perfected by centuries of labour, now destroys that culture little by little by burying its noblest features, its art, literature, philosophy, religion and politics, under the illusion of new riches prematurely produced; by sacrificing, for the benefit of quantity appreciable by the gross evidence of number, the quality whose standards of measure can never be defined in an indisputable manner, and which, for that very reason, is a perpetual cause of discord at the same time as it is the sole source of true greatness. It has found, in short, in that ancient history, the subtle anguish that fundamental contradiction brings into all the historical periods which approach their culminating point. Just as Rome suffered from altering her nature in her triumph, and believed herself lost on the eve of her apogee, so do we always deem our riches more inadequate in proportion as they increase; by dint of wanting to make life pleasant and easy we encumber it intolerably with complications, responsibilities and duties; by force of desiring to economize time and toil we reduce ourselves, among the innumerable occupations which encumber our life and spirit, to lacking even the time to remind ourselves of ourselves, and almost forget that we are men.

III

This is the torment, and perhaps also the expiation, of all the generations which flattered themselves that they had succeeded in creating a novel and unique destiny, greater and more beautiful than that of all the preceding generations. No generation would deserve to undergo this torment more than our own. For this reason also, the history of Rome presents to us a reflection of our own lives, in spite of the centuries which separate us. This is the distinguishing feature of Roman history, and the reason why all the children of Rome must not let it be banished. By classical studies and, consequently, by Roman studies, we have little by little set up an opposition to that practical and positive spirit deemed to be the highest virtue of our age. But upon what basis? For answer, it is sufficient to ask one question. Is it possible to imagine that the progress of the mechanical arts and chemical sciences may one day result in rendering statesmen, administrators, diplomatists, jurists, generals, educationalists, men of letters, philosophers, ministers of religion, of no use in the world? It is very clear that it does not suffice for men to dominate nature; they must also know how to influence the minds of their fellows. By the answer given to this question, the much disputed problem of classical studies is also settled, at least in principle. It is not the physical sciences, but only literature, history and philosophy which can serve as means of intellectual preparation for the *élite* whose function it is, not to act upon matter, but to influence minds; not to exploit the forces of nature, but to regulate the intercourse of men. Hence it is not possible to conceive our civilization despoiled of its literary, historical and philosophical culture any more than it is possible to conceive a

living being deprived of a vital organ. What is, indeed, the essential difference between these two states of historical development, which we call civilization and barbarism, if not this, that, in a civilized society, those who govern, who administer, who judge, are endowed with a lofty philosophical and literary culture; while in barbarous countries and epochs they accomplish their functions by conforming to old undisputed traditions, by referring to the simple precepts of gross religions, supplementing what was lacking, by rude natural instincts or by blind passions?

But if we admit this . . . and I do not see how we can refuse to admit it . . . it is absolutely necessary to recognize that, in the future as in the past, Rome will form an integral part of that lofty culture; unless, indeed, the peoples who are its children, by an ill comprehended spirit of false modernity or an access of unhealthy exoticism, insist on razing to the very foundations the last remains of its great history. Complete and synthetic, easy to adapt to all periods, as facts prove; agreeable to study; vast, but not to such a degree that it exceeds the comprehensive forces of the human mind; this history is, in a way, a very distinct miniature or a very lucid sketch of universal history. It can thus serve, among modern peoples, as the crowning touch to the education of the upper classes which, everywhere, ought to commence with the national literature and history. Let us not be discouraged by the transitory decadence of this intellectual tradition. If our century is profoundly materialistic, if it goes on dividing and subdividing itself into a great number of different peoples, languages and cultures, it will have yet more need of the common elements of culture uniting the *élite* of the civilized nations more deeply than in the momentary promiscuousness of sumptuous hotels; in the brief meetings of congresses, or

in the universal mania for flying over all the roads of the world in automobiles. The national principle is too deeply rooted in our civilization for it to be possible for the modern world, at least in a near future, to transform itself into a Cosmopolis; but it can not and ought not again to become a Tower of Babel where all the languages are confused. Therefore it also requires, if I dare say so, an ideal common language and universal elements of culture which can form so many links between the different peoples of Europe and America. Where are these universal elements to be found, now that religion has lost a part of its influence? Ancient Rome can yet offer us some of these, as is proved by this undeniable fact: the history of Rome, with that of France in the eighteenth century, and of the French Revolution, is the only one which is truly universal and everywhere read.

That being so, is it necessary to employ many words to prove that the children of Rome have an interest in not suffering this privilege to be proscribed? So long as the history, the literature, the law of Rome, remain an integral part of the higher culture of Europe and America, we, Latin peoples, enjoy a kind of intellectual entailed estate; we oblige all the peoples of two continents to be tributaries of our culture; we shall prolong for centuries, in the realm of ideas, that Roman Empire whose body has been reduced to dust. I do not ignore that our century hankers after empires more solid than these domains of the invisible, which cannot be measured, divided, enlarged, or exchanged. But if, in modern civilization, the higher culture is not destined to become the humble handmaid of finance and trade, never can that invisible empire be abandoned without detriment and shame by the peoples who have received it as a heritage from their fathers: all the more . . . and this is a consideration to which the practical spirit of the modern times

ought not to be insensible . . . it is not necessary, for its conservation, to have recourse to the force of arms and of money, nor to combine the efforts of peoples, institutions and parties, nor to risk perilous enterprises. It would suffice to reanimate, both in the State and in the intellectual classes, a profound, sincere and disinterested sentiment for the great Latin tradition, in place of the restless, capricious and litigious esoterism which rules there today. If the history of Rome can perform this unique function in European-American culture it is due to the fact that it is a perfect unit. But, if we break up this unit into a number of fragments, in what will these fragments differ, and how will they be distinguished, from the analogous fragments which make up the histories, more fragmentary and more unilateral, of so many other peoples? In itself and by itself a Latin inscription is worth exactly as much as a Greek inscription or a Phenician inscription; a ruin of a Roman monument is worth exactly the same as a piece of a wall at Mycenæ. Perhaps, even, the relics of Rome are worth less, since they are more abundant and relatively easy to discover. But, what is unique in the history of Rome is the plan that can be reconstructed from these materials. There is, then, a safe criterion for estimating the studies accomplished relative to Roman antiquity as well as to their tendencies; and it is this that, when the analysis is not an immediate preparation of the synthesis, it is a method unduly transferred from the natural sciences to phenomena which do not permit of it; moreover, it is a vandalism and a sacrilege, a kind of destruction of Rome perpetrated upon the last intellectual remains of its vast empire.

Indeed, if we seek the intellectual and inner reason, . . . setting aside some external and social causes which are, nevertheless, numerous and important, . . . of the decay

of classical studies, we shall find that it is due to the abuse of analysis, become an end unto itself both in literary and in historical studies. For motives it would take too long to set forth the studies of antiquity, which in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, arose from the dissolution of the old humanism, separated themselves more and more from art and philosophy, and, in the end, threw themselves wholly into the arms of science; or, they thought to throw themselves there; for, in point of fact, they clasped only a shadow. The results of this error are manifest today. In the schools analysis, carried to an extreme, has given the death blow to Latin which was yet vegetating, a century ago; by substituting for the old humanist teaching a philological analysis, whose aridity has caused the younger generations to fling aside in disgust the most beautiful books of Rome. In the domain of history this excessive analysis, by arbitrarily distorting the phenomena, has strangely confused both the rules according to which the problems should be stated, and the methods which serve to solve them. It has invented many chimerical problems, and it has not seen the true ones. By its obstinate resolve to know too many details, it has often rendered incomprehensible even that which, in spite of the hiatuses, was relatively clear. Finally, it has obliged history to repudiate art, and has thus shut us out from those histories which at all epochs, by means of Thucydides, Polybius, through Livy, down to Francesco Guicciardini, had been one of the most forcible intellectual stimulants of all the aristocracies truly worthy to govern.

IV

Such are the reasons why I think that every man of true culture, jealous of the intellectual prestige of the Latin

nations, should exert himself to draw forth the Roman studies from the silent cloisters of erudition, to bring them back to the midst of the life, the passions, the interests and the struggles of the world. Ancient Rome ought not to live only in the little coteries of scholars and archeologists. It ought to live in the soul of the new generations; project its immortal light upon the new societies which are arising. For, on the day when Roman history and its monuments become but dead materials, useful only for erudition, which would classify and catalogue them in museums beside the bricks of the palace of Khorsabad, the statues of the Assyrian kings and the relics of Mycenæ, . . . the Empire of Rome which, as yet, is not entirely dead, would rejoin, in the Elysian Fields of history, the shades of the destroyed empires; would wander there beneath the cypresses in company with the Babylonian Empire, the Egyptian Empire, the Carlovingian Empire; and the Latin civilization would have to submit to a new disaster.

Let us not prove unworthy of the singular historic fortune we have inherited; let us understand fully what there is that is rare, and even unique, in that ideal survival of an empire fallen so many centuries ago; and which, eliminated from the play of the interests of the world, yet lives in the system of moral forces which animate modern society; let us not listen to those who affirm that, henceforth, the sacred remains of ancient Rome can no longer serve but as supports for the aeroplanes flying majestically above the silence of the Latin campagna. Let us try above all,— we who, for forty years past, have brought within the old circuit of the Aurelian walls the tools, the ideas and the interests of a quite recent civilization,— not to deserve the reproach that like new barbarians, we destroyed what survived of that Empire of Rome that the Church carried on, with vary-

ing fortunes but without flagging, since the frightful catastrophe of the Empire of the West. Roman tradition can flourish, a vigorous branch, upon the trunk of our civilization, provided we do not obstinately resolve to cut it away; provided that we apply ourselves to preserve to Roman studies that universal value which alone can render them an essential element of modern culture. It matters little if the other histories grow old; what is necessary, on the contrary, to Roman history, precisely because it serves to educate the new generations, is that it be renovated perpetually, not merely by incorporating in it the new facts discovered by erudition and archeology; not only by infusing into it a larger philosophical spirit and by applying to it the ripened experience of humanity; but, above all, by working to preserve for it, and to increase in it, that quality which is the highest in which a history, destined to be read and studied by all, can excel: to wit: human clarity.

And, if such be the obligation which imposes itself upon all the devoted sons that Rome yet numbers in the world, it seems to me that, to conclude this discourse delivered on the anniversary date of the foundation of Rome, I could not do better than perform an act which will be in some sort a symbolic expiation addressed to the shade, so cruelly offended by the nineteenth century, of a man to whom the city owes, indeed, some gratitude since it owes him its existence; I mean to say, to resuscitate Romulus. We know in what a mystical penumbra the *Natale Urbis* is enveloped. What beginning had the fabulous greatness of this city? In all the centuries men would have been glad to rend this mysterious veil. But, century and century, we were content to repeat a legend, full of poetry, although a little confused, wherein miracles and wonders surrounded the cradle of the city. Generations and generations had cursed the

villainous Amulius, lamented the unfortunate Numitor and poor Rhea Sylvia, cherished the good Faustulus, meditated on the shade of the Figtree Ruminal, caressed in imagination the maternal wolf and saluted the kindly woodpecker who descended to nourish, and shelter under her wings, the predestined twins. That this tale was a tissue of fables the ancients had understood; but they had respected its outline, at first from civic devotion, afterwards through a religious respect yielded to old traditions, and finally because they were incapable of substituting another more exact account. Man must so often resign himself not to know! But then comes on the scene the terrible nineteenth century which claims to know everything, believes itself capable of discovering everything; and seizes in its rough hands this tissue of fables, tears it, unravels it, persuaded that it will find the truth among the separated threads; reduces it so thoroughly to ravellings that, finally, what remains in its hands is no more than an inextricable medley of dead material. The ancient fable has vanished with all its personæ; the woodpecker has flown back into the sky; the she-wolf has retired into the forest; Romulus himself, the revered and deified founder of the city, is now no more than a name; and all that remains in place of the legend is a tenebrous void sounded in vain by ingenious historians with the long measuring rods of hypothesis, without their succeeding in finding therein a single rag of truth!

And yet, since Rome has existed, it is clearly necessary that it must have had a beginning intelligible to the human mind. Now, may there not be in the ancient fable a gleam of intelligible truth? After one has cut away from the legend the poetry which enfolds and impregnates it, it seems to me that it stands up as a sufficiently trustworthy and substantial, although very summary, account; that is would

say that Rome was a colony of Alba whence a part of the population of that old city swarmed from the mountain towards the sea. The city of Rome did not originate, then, from a small village which grew, little by little, by favour of circumstances. It was a city founded at one stroke, by an act of personal volition, according to a studied design, in an intentionally chosen place; a city which was, in consequence, endowed from the first with an already mature religious and military and political institutions, since, on the one hand, they had undergone, in another more ancient city, the test of long experience; and on the other they had doubtless been adapted with discretion to the peculiar conditions of the new creation.

In short, this was a city which was born grown-up, like certain cities which are founded today in America; it was, from its very beginnig, a new city with an old culture. This explains both its marvellous position in Latium, upon a river, between the sea and the mountains, and the exact account that the ancients kept of the date of its foundation; its sudden and bold entry into history, and the rapidity of its development. But if Rome was created in this manner, it could be founded only by one or several leaders who selected its site and who ordered all its plans with wisdom. Obviously this leader was a great man. And since a founder was necessary to found Rome, what reason have we to deny that the founder was this Romus or Romulus of whom ancient tradition speaks? As I am accused of so many grave misdeeds by modern criticism, I acknowledge myself still further guilty of admitting that the scanty knowledge we possess as to the origin of Rome is contained entirely in the ancient tradition; and that, towards the middle of the eighth century B. C. a prince of the family which reigned at Alba came, for motives which

the legend allows us with difficulty to guess, into this circuit of hills, and founded upon the Palatine a little city which he launched into eternity.

V

I say that he launched it into eternity: for it is yet possible to attribute to Rome the glory of being eternal without falling into the pompous hyperboles of decadent rhetoric, if we mean thereby that what has rendered complete the history of Rome is the synthetic effort, the labour long sustained to balance all the parts of its civilization into a harmonious and proportioned unity; if we add that, thanks to these characteristics, its literature, its law, its history will be eternally the models upon which all the peoples who desire to make of their own history a harmonious synthesis, a complete whole which recommends itself by clarity, by order and by noble proportions, will keep their eyes fixed. The finest example of this in modern times is France, the nation which, unquestionably, has created the greatest history of the last centuries. Profoundly imbued with the classic spirit, France alone has succeeded, among all European nations . . . and, moreover, has accomplished it, like ancient Rome, at the cost of formidable crises . . . in creating a complete civilization, wherein, as in Roman history, everything is found, although in a more restricted lapse of time: trade and agriculture, aristocracy and democracy, the monarchy and the republic, the higher culture and war, art and law, philosophy and religion, revolution and tradition, the interior effort after liberty and the exterior effort for expansion, all the practical interests and all the ideal aspirations. If it is understood in this sense, the eternity of Rome is a conquest which, gained over time, ought

ceaselessly to recommence. For if civilization, in its most perfect expansion, is a synthesis of opposed forces, these syntheses are only prepared by long periods in which the sentiment of vital unity is lost, and in which men neither understand nor admire the circumstantial phenomena of history. Now, without doubt, we live in times when the world is becoming daily more unbalanced in her too greatly augmented bulk. We witness the final demolition of a society created on the ruins of the ancient world by Christianity; at that demolition which Humanism and the Reformation had begun, which the science and philosophy of the seventeenth century have continued, which the French Revolution was to accelerate by its tremendous impetus and which is consummated in our century with a furious ardour, by the progress of industry and commerce, the universal mania for making money, and the extraordinary development of America. From this immense revolution of history in the midst of which we live, from this supreme dissolution of an order of things so ancient and venerable, monstrous creatures are everywhere being born: States half barbarous and half corroded by the vices of the most decrepit civilizations; enormous and shapeless cities; armies which grow inordinately in spite of the rapid decadence of the military spirit; fabulous riches which accumulate without other object than their own increase; gigantic industries which are no longer upheld by the natural stay of agriculture; philosophies divorced from practice and dying of asphyxia in an atmosphere too rarified by purely intellectual preoccupations; sciences which dive so deep into the practical that they are suffocated by it; arts and literatures which claim to be their own origin and to have come into the world without fathers or ancestors.

There is, then, no occasion to be surprised that, in a

period unbalanced to this point, the nations which, like France, have succeeded in effecting a Roman synthesis of their various parts, are obliged, to maintain it, to make efforts daily more laborious; and that all the Latin world, Italy included, more and more lose confidence in its great intellectual tradition and daily inclines more to take disorder for strength, confused obscurity for profundity, incoherent extravagance for originality, wealth and its increasing mass as the sign of the greatness of peoples. There is no occasion to be surprised, perhaps; but there is indeed occasion profoundly to regret it. If then the world, in growing, and becoming complicated beyond measure, seems to flee from the synthetic and harmonic power of the Latin genius to fling itself into a delirious orgy of huge and disorderly forces, it is but the more urgent for us, the sons of Rome, to strain all our energies in order to subjugate to the harmonic genius of our race this horrible and imposing chaos of blind forces. If all civilization be a synthesis of opposite forces, the confusion of modern society must some day find a more beautiful and wiser equilibrium. What an error it would be, and how could posterity pardon our generation and those which shall follow ours, if we should let venerable traditions of social order and intellectual discipline perish at the very hour when these traditions, rejuvenated in conformity to the spirit of the times, could be of the greatest use to the world by reason of their co-ordinating virtues; the tradition which is summed up in the word "Rome" so often repeated during these twenty-seven centuries, and with such various feelings; at the sound of which I have yet been able, in this twentieth century, . . . and it will be the most precious memory of my life, . . . to see almost two continents vibrate with admiration and gratitude!

CHAPTER IV

Italy's Foreign Policy

ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY

I

On the evening of February 29th, 1896, General Baratieri, the commander-in-chief of the Italian army in Abyssinia, left Sauria with all the troops at his disposal — about 15,000 — in order to carry out a manœuvre whose object is still unknown. This movement proved disastrous. After marching all night, the little army lost its way in the labyrinth formed by the Raio and Abba Garima; it split up into three sections which lost touch with each other and was surprised by 100,000 Abyssinians, armed with excellent rifles. About 8,000 men fell, 2,000 were taken prisoners; the remainder escaped as best they could, abandoning their guns.

Unfortunate as it was, this defeat was after all only a set-back. Only four Italian brigades had taken part in the battle of Adowa but the check came upon the country at a moment of discouragement and anxiety. Italy had for some years been passing through a serious economic crisis and the pessimism which was the result of this crisis was aggravated by political dissensions. Crispi, who had been in power for two years, had not given the country a moment's peace. Sicily and the Lunigiana had been placed under martial law in order to repress disturbances as to the gravity of which opinions differed; whilst conflicts had been provoked both in Parliament and the country by the persecution of the Socialist party whose progress had alarmed the upper classes and by the increased taxation proposed by the government at this critical time and the conquests and

annexations made by General Baratieri in Abyssinia. The wide-spread irritation had been further increased by various scandals. The African policy was especially unpopular in a country which had never been used to overseas campaigns. All these causes turned a mere colonial incident into a disaster whose consequences were both complex and profound. The whole history of Italy up to the outbreak of the European war, was, as it were, haunted by the sinister memory of this set-back, which had impressed the nation as an irreparable defeat.

As soon as the news became known, the country was shaken by anger to its very depths. The Ministry was forced to resign, so as to avoid the storm which it had not the strength to resist. King Humbert called upon the Marchese di Rudinì, a great Sicilian nobleman and the leader of the Opposition, to form a Cabinet. Rudinì was a man of wide intelligence but not sufficiently resolute. He decided not to attempt to avenge the Italian defeat, which would have been an enterprise fraught with difficulty for geographical reasons; he concluded a peace with Emperor Menelik and endeavoured to quiet the people by putting an end to the persecution of the Socialists, and coming to an understanding with the parliamentary representatives of the Radical party which voiced the wishes of the lower and middle classes. The Socialist deputies were at this time but few in number. Di Rudinì did not succeed in winning the confidence of the masses but only in annoying the Court and the upper classes. The masses, who realized that defeat had weakened the government, expressed their dissatisfaction with an audacity which struck terror into the hearts of the Court and conservative parties, who had for some time been haunted by dread of a revolution. Ere long the Socialists accused Di Rudinì of tyranny because he

would not accede to all their demands; whilst at Court and in the lobbys of the Chamber and the Senate it was whispered that he had come to an understanding with the Radicals and Socialists in order to set up a republic. Di Rudinì tried to make the best of this impossible situation which had been brought about by the irritation of one party and the fears of the other, but after two years the catastrophe could no longer be warded off. The failure of the crops in 1898 provoked riots all over Italy, which began in the south and took on a more and more political character as they spread northwards. At the beginning of May violent popular disturbances broke out in Milan, a city which was always a source of anxiety to official circles. The Socialists and Radicals were stronger in Milan than in any other town and the Republicans, too, exercised considerable influence, while the lower and middle classes had always affected a certain indifference to the monarchy. Milan had moreover always been obstinately opposed to Crispi and his African policy. When Rome learnt that riots had begun at Milan there was a repetition of the phenomenon which had taken place after the battle of Adowa. On that occasion a colonial set-back had been regarded as an irreparable defeat. Now agitations which could have been easily suppressed by an energetic police force took on the dimensions of a revolution in the eyes of the upper classes. Panic broke out in official circles and spread over the whole country. The troops were ordered to fire without hesitation. Hundreds of persons were killed or wounded both in Milan and other cities. Martial law was proclaimed at Milan and elsewhere. The Di Rudinì Cabinet resigned and was succeeded by General Pelloux, a native of Savoy, who inaugurated a policy of violent persecution of the three parties of the extreme Left — the Social-

ists, the Republicans and the Radicals. Deputies, journalists and prominent members of these three parties were arrested, brought before courts martial and sentenced to five, ten and even fifteen years of penal servitude.

Such a reaction could not last and before long the country realized the injustice of these sentences and a fresh series of agitations began with the object of obtaining a general amnesty. The government made certain important concessions to public opinion on the subject, but at the same time tried to introduce laws limiting the liberty of the press and the right of holding public meetings and forming associations. A group of deputies of the Right and Centre, headed by Sonnino, supported these measures vigorously, on the ground that it was absolutely necessary to defend the State against the rebellious spirit of the masses; while the Radical, Republican and Socialist deputies organized obstructive tactics against these proposals on the ground that it was necessary to defend the cause of liberty. The struggle grew more and more acute and developed, or appeared to develop, into a conflict between the reactionary party and the champions of liberty, for, three years after the battle of Adowa, the government had not the requisite authority to break down the opposition to its restrictive measures. The three parties of the extreme Left, which knew that they had the country with them, succeeded in placing the Cabinet in such an awkward position that it was forced to dissolve the Chamber. The three parties then made common cause and obtained one hundred seats at the general election which took place in June, 1900, whereas in the old Chamber they had never held more than fifty.

This general election was looked upon as the defeat of the reactionary government. Pelloux resigned and the King called upon Saracco, an old Piedmontese senator who

was supposed to hold liberal views, to form a new Cabinet. Saracco formed some sort of Ministry and the newly elected Chamber adjourned. This was in July. Every one was well aware that Saracco's Cabinet was merely a stop-gap and that the decisive struggle between reactionaries and liberals would begin in November. The situation was extremely difficult and obscure, all the more so because the King and the Court, whose prestige had suffered considerably through the battle of Adowa, had been still further compromised in popular opinion by the recent reactionary policy. It was, moreover, obvious that no government would be strong enough to carry out a systematic persecution of the Socialists, Republicans and Radicals. But was the King likely to wish or be able to carry out any policy differing from that which had hitherto met with his approval? Would he, or could he, throw off all the influences which urged him to a death struggle with the parties of the extreme Left? This uncertainty troubled the whole political world and still further complicated a situation which in itself was far from simple, when fate solved the problem in a manner both unexpected and tragic. On July 29th King Humbert was present at some sports near Monza. At nine in the evening he left the grounds to return to the royal villa. Just as he was standing up in his open carriage to return the greetings of the crowd, a man who had got up on a chair a couple of yards off, as if to get a better view of the sovereign, pointed his revolver and fired upon the King, who sank back, mortally wounded.

II

It was under such circumstances that Victor Emmanuel III ascended the throne. Curiously enough, he was unpop-

ular with the people. He was supposed to have chosen the German Emperor as his model and to intend to make war, persecute the Socialists and govern with an iron hand. Fortunately all these rumours proved utterly unfounded. Parliamentary circles quickly discovered that the atmosphere of the Court had undergone a complete change. The elections of 1900 and the assassination of King Humbert had afforded people food for thought. All of these causes tended to bring about a speedy reaction. The Chamber, of which the majority had after all been elected in order to support a Cabinet which proposed to introduce laws limiting the liberty of the press and the right to hold public meetings, and form associations, suddenly saw the error of its ways and brought about the fall of the Saracco Cabinet on the ground that it had illegally dissolved a workmen's syndicate at Genoa. The King then turned to Zanardelli, who formed a liberal Cabinet. Once the King and the government had become liberal, conversions in the press, in Parliament and in the official world became startlingly frequent. In a few months not a trace was left of the reactionary policy of recent years, which was abjured by all, with the exception of Sonnino and a small group of faithful disciples, prominent amongst whom was Salandra, who had been a member of the Pelloux Cabinet.

The man, however, on whom all eyes were fixed when the new Cabinet made its appearance before the Chamber, was not Zanardelli, but his Minister for the Interior, Giolitti, who had been Prime Minister in 1892, when he had tried to form a great "Liberal" or "Progressive" ministry. In this he had failed. At the end of 1893, when he resigned, the exchange was at 18%; Sicily in a state of revolt; the finances in disorder, public opinion depressed by the scandal of the Banca Romana and convinced that Italy

was on the verge of bankruptcy and revolution, and that Giolitti alone was responsible for the whole catastrophe. This view was exaggerated. Giolitti's ministry had undoubtedly made serious blunders, the gravest of all being one of which it was never publicly accused — that of supplying Emperor Menelik with two million cartridges, but the condition of the country at the time of its resignation was due to profounder causes than the blunders of the Giolitti ministry. None the less the people revenged itself for all it had suffered by accusing Giolitti of having brought Italy to the very brink of ruin and he had become so thoroughly unpopular that for years he could not attempt to speak in the Chamber. People even got into the habit of speaking of him as if he were dead!

The curiosity aroused by this political resurrection is therefore readily understood. Giolitti's influence moreover steadily increased both in the Cabinet and in Parliament and obliterated the memories of the past. He surprised all political parties by a complete and sudden change of front towards the working classes and the parties of the extreme Left. Hitherto the government had endeavoured to prevent strikes by all the means which a suspicious and obscure legislation, interpreted in accordance with the known wishes of industrial magnates, put at its disposal. Giolitti allowed the first strikes which took place after he came into office to take their natural course; in certain cases he even ordered the authorities to assume a benevolent attitude towards the workmen. The Socialists were of course delighted, but strikes became steadily commoner and the consequent remonstrances of the manufacturers and employers more constant. Giolitti held firm and, when his policy was discussed in the Chamber, declared plainly that the workmen had the right to strike in the defence of their interests and that the

State must remain strictly neutral. It was a revolution on a small scale. In the division on this debate, Socialists, Republicans and Radicals voted for the government, thus ensuring it a majority in the House and bringing about a radical change in the relations between the government and the parties of the extreme Left. On the Right a group of deputies, headed by Sonnino and Salandra, passed over to the Opposition, on the ground that the government was compromising the authority of the State. At the same time a split took place in the three parties of the extreme Left. In each of these parties the majority asked for nothing better than to carry the possibilist policy to its logical end, while the minority protested against these attempts to turn the party into a government party. The struggle between the two tendencies was especially violent in the Socialist party which split up into two factions: the Revolutionary and the Reformist.

Giolitti finally found himself, like the Marchese di Rudinì before him, between the Socialists, who accused him of a hypocritical change of front, and the Conservatives, who accused him of flirting with revolution. This position, which had been Di Rudinì's weak suit, proved Giolitti's trump card. Times had changed. The Court was no longer hostile to Liberalism, whilst even in the conservative ranks there were many who recognized that Giolitti's methods, while not without their drawbacks, were more successful than Pelloux's policy had been. Moreover the economic crisis of 1890–1900 was now a thing of the past. An era of prosperity had begun, and this prosperity lulled much discontent to rest and turned the energy of many people in other than political directions. The simultaneous attacks made upon Giolitti actually strengthened his position. If the extremists of both Right and Left attacked

him, it was argued that he must represent the happy medium, and in spite of various untoward incidents his influence steadily increased during 1901, 1902 and 1903 and when, in the autumn of 1903, Zanardelli resigned on the ground of old age and ill health, the King entrusted Giolitti with the formation of a new Cabinet. The Ministery of 1893 was definitely relegated to limbo and Giolitti was avenged. He formed his second Cabinet and to the general surprise appointed Tittoni, the Prefect of Naples, who had hitherto taken no active interest in politics, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

III

Once Giolitti had regained his position, his one idea was to place it on a sure basis. If we are to understand his policy and his success, we must understand the working of the parliamentary system. The Chamber is composed of 508 deputies, elected by the votes of the district. Of these 508 "electoral colleges," as they are called in Italy, there are perhaps 200 in which the deputies are elected by organized political parties. In the remainder, the deputies, though taking their seats in the Chamber on the Right, Left, or in the Centre, as the case may be, do not represent any definite political creed. Their organization being either excessively feeble or altogether lacking, the candidates are chosen and supported by rival cliques, having no political character and quite unable to carry off the victory without assistance. In these "electoral colleges" the decisive factor of success is almost always government support.

It is, therefore, possible for the Prime Minister in power at the time of a general election — provided he be also Minister of the Interior — to create a personal party in these "electoral colleges" which will return deputies whose

only political program is the support of the man to whom they owe their election. It is also clear that if a statesman were in power during several general elections, this personal party might easily become the preponderating element in the system. This happened in Giolitti's case. The first elections during his term of power in the reign of Victor Emmanuel III took place in 1904 and brought him in a rich harvest. He succeeded not only in creating for the first time a staunch and powerful personal party by making full use of every means of administrative pressure within his reach, but, owing to the circumstances under which Parliament had been dissolved, in gaining the support of many Conservatives without breaking with the Extreme Left, who had lost twenty seats owing to the public irritation caused by a general strike which had taken place just before the dissolution of Parliament. This election added immensely to his prestige and it was soon rumoured in parliamentary circles that the King wished general elections should henceforth take place under Giolitti's auspices. This rumour, though false, was quite as useful to Giolitti as if it had been true, and established his power on a firm basis. The three general elections which have taken place during the reign of Victor Emmanuel III have all been during Giolitti's terms of office as Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.

Giolitti thus was able to strengthen his party and graft on to parliamentary institutions a curious system of personal government. The keystone of the whole system was of course the fact of his being in power at the time of general elections. The fear of a dissolution of Parliament, which is entirely in the hands of the King, was therefore, Giolitti's most formidable weapon for the maintenance of the fidelity of his majority. The dissolution of Parliament is not,

however, a weapon which can be constantly used, since the Chamber cannot be dissolved within a month after its election. During the first two years of a new legislature Giolitti's authority over his party and the Chamber as a whole was of necessity weaker and the Chamber could more easily show signs of independence. Giolitti got over this difficulty by on each occasion resigning a few months after the general election. He carried out this manœuvre in the spring of 1905, towards the close of 1909, and in the spring of 1914. But if during the first two years of its existence the Chamber was intractable even with the author of its being, it can readily be imagined that it was still more so in the hands of a *locum tenens*. Hence this interim government was invariably weak and fell into general disfavour in a year or fifteen months. Giolitti's friends brought about its fall and Giolitti formed a new Cabinet. Two years had passed of the five which make up the legal life of a legislature and the deputies were already beginning to think about the next general election. *Timor mortis initium sapientiae.* The Chamber became tractable once more and Giolitti remained in power until the general election.

This ingenious game was accompanied by a process of attrition applied to the political parties represented in Parliament, of which there are five: the Clerical; the Sonnino group, which may be termed Conservative; the Radicals; the Republicans and the Socialists, who are now divided into two groups — Official and Reformist. Each party is represented by from twenty to fifty deputies and is therefore too small to act alone, while coalitions between parties are very difficult on account of their numerous differences. At the head of his personal party Giolitti was able to induce all these parties, with the exception of a few obstinate individuals, either to give him their support or to form an opposi-

tion which would do him no harm. How was any other state of things possible? The opposition of any one of these parties, standing alone, was powerless and coalitions were never a success. Giolitti's Cabinet, moreover, did its utmost to conciliate every one and to content all parties and shades of opinion, however contradictory. It gave the Socialists liberty to form syndicates and turn the railways into State concerns, while at the same time granting the great industries all the privileges and all the protection they demanded and guaranteeing the landed proprietors the intangibility of the import duty on cereals. It increased the stipends of the clergy and showed itself favourable to Clerical influence in the schools, whilst choosing influential Free Masons as Ministers of Public Instruction. In order to please the masses it reduced the term of military service to two years, refrained from imposing higher taxes and gave up all schemes for colonial extension, whilst at the same time increasing both army and navy to please the upper classes and the Conservatives. It allowed its officials to form syndicates, threaten to go on strike and do their utmost to shake off the authority of the ministers, and even rewarded these proceedings with a rise of salary. It allowed Italy to get on better terms with France without breaking off the Triple Alliance. It had adopted the principle of yielding always and at once to any fairly decided manifestation of public opinion or to anything which appeared to be such a manifestation, while prepared to withdraw the concession the moment public attention was directed elsewhere. Almost heroic strength of mind and even cruelty would have been needed to attack such an obliging government. Such principles will no doubt seem strange to most people and, as a matter of fact, the system of which it was an example has almost disappeared in

Europe, but similar governments have been common enough in the past and in other continents. Cæsar and Augustus went upon the same plan: the former in order to achieve the conquest of Gaul, the latter in order to reorganize the Empire. There are other interesting analogies in the history of Florence and in that of the South American Republics. Such a system is, moreover, the necessary outcome of an electorate which is not dominated by properly organized political parties. Sooner or later some individual, family, or group of families, will take possession of the electoral system and work it for their private ends. This system, moreover, put into practice for ten years in Italy by an intelligent, adroit time-server, endowed with a clear head and a firm will, could not fail to produce remarkable results. It enabled Italy to benefit by the period of prosperity which the world enjoyed after 1900; it eliminated a certain number of abuses from the legislation and the administration; and it checked the antidynastic movement which had gained ground during the last years of King Humbert's reign. Nor must it be forgotten that it was under this government and in part due to its efforts that an historic event of considerable importance took place: the shifting of the pivot of power from the aristocracy and the upper middle classes to the intelligentia, the lower middle classes and the masses. The dogged struggle between the parties of the Extreme Left and the other political parties which went on during the whole period of Giolitti's power was in reality a struggle for power between the wealthy and middle classes. This is not the place to discuss whether this shifting of power has been for good or evil. In any case it is an event of considerable historical importance, which must be due to profound causes, since it is a universal phenomenon. We must not forget that the Prussian aristocracy

thrust Germany into the European War for the express purpose of delaying this shifting of power in Germany. Giolitti did much to further this movement with his system of personal government by supporting to the utmost the demands and wishes of the middle classes.

There is, however, the reverse side of the medal to be considered. The system had many drawbacks. Whatever its merits, this personal government acted under the cloak of parliamentary institutions and this contradiction between substance and form could hardly fail to produce serious results. Discussions, divisions, parties, the formation and fall of ministries, the interaction of majorities and minorities and the elections, everything in fact which forms the essence of the true parliamentary system, became under this kind of government more or less thinly disguised fictions, serving merely to give a legal sanction to proceedings most of which were decided upon without reference to the will of either parliament or the electors. At the same time all political parties found themselves in a false position forced as they were to adduce principles as a reason for conduct which was in reality more often than not determined by a policy of parliamentary bargaining. The Socialists were in the most awkward position of all. The Electors, who understood nothing of these complicated intrigues, regarded their deputy, who, while in Rome, was on excellent terms with Giolitti, as the representative of the masses and the champion of social revolution. In proportion as he became more and more opportunist and possibilist in Rome, the Socialist deputy had to redeem his backsliding by becoming more and more revolutionary in his speeches to his constituents, or at Monte Citorio on great occasions, when his constituents were keeping a watch on his words and actions.

While there were many who found this state of things

quite congenial, others regarded it as both dangerous and objectionable. One phenomenon especially proved a source of irritation: the decadence of Parliament. It is an indisputable fact that both the Chamber and the Senate are of less value today than twenty years ago. In the Chamber there was formerly a small, by no means united, but very influential circle, which has almost entirely disappeared and been replaced by a herd of provincial attorneys, idle and intriguing university professors, professional politicians of the lowest order and wealthy men who regard a seat in Parliament as a rung on the social ladder. This decadence is even more serious in the Senate, whose members are all chosen by the King,—i.e.: the government. In old days the Senate was a close but select body. By filling it with the dregs of the intellectual and academic world, it has been turned into a centre of intrigue which the public refuses to take seriously. Giolitti's government undoubtedly did much to bring about this decadence, for, like all personal governments, its main object was to fill the two chambers with devoted and reliable adherents of no great intelligence, many of whom were easily to be found in those middle classes with which it was so anxious to stand well. To this serious defect must be added the debilitating effect on the State of the habitual weakness of the government when confronted by public opinion. The government's policy of yielding to every fairly decided manifestation of public opinion and of withdrawing the concessions granted when public attention had been diverted to some other subject, certainly enabled it to avoid many difficulties, but it gradually enervated the whole State, which fell into the hands of ministers, deputies and officials who trembled before the daily papers, which in their turn were terrified of public opinion, which, failing to recognize in the papers the reflec-

tion of its own ideas and passions, was led and dazzled by the press which it regarded as a higher authority. Where are we to seek the true centre of action and decision in this vicious circle of fear? It is hard to say. It must not be forgotten that governments which strive to please every one commonly end by pleasing no one. Giolitti's government was peculiarly exposed to this danger because Italy, since her unification, has had a permanent cause of complaint which must be recognized — one connected with the great transformation of modern civilization of which we have already spoken at length — one which may afford us the key to events which would otherwise be inexplicable.

IV

The constitution of the Kingdom of Italy was at once a political and a social revolution. Together with parliamentary institutions and bureaucratic centralization, the new order of things introduced what is commonly called modern civilization: railways and industrial machinery, both of which the old régime discouraged energetically as liberal conceptions and institutions. Public and private expenditure increased considerably. Large sums were needed for the construction of railways, the creation of army, navy and administration and for educational purposes. The country was therefore obliged to endeavour to produce more. For Italy, too, the epoch of quantity was dawning.

Italy, taken as a whole, is neither very poor nor very rich. She is richer than the impoverished countries of Southern Europe, but poorer than the wealthy ones of Central Europe. She is, moreover, very small. It is too often forgotten that France is nearly twice as large as Italy and

that she has a population of thirty-four million inhabitants to an area of 300,000 square kilometres, wholly devoid of coal and almost destitute of iron. It is obvious that such a country was better off in the days of qualitative civilization, when wealth had not as yet become a prime factor in the development of a nation. Be that as it may, the march of history could not be checked and Italy was forced to submit to the law of our age and toil in order to increase the wealth of the country. Her efforts were crowned with success; they developed the riches of the country, its energy, activity, spirit of initiative and even its intelligence, at all events in certain directions. The poor peasantry of Southern Italy learned to tread the world's highways as emigrants. The people and the middle classes acquired the habit of hard work, extended their technical, economic and political knowledge and enlarged their ambitions. This effort, however, brought about in the generation born after 1860 the ruin of the intellectual, artistic, social and religious traditions of the past, which had already been partially demolished by the generation of the Risorgimento, and was one of the causes of the triumph of German influence which had already begun to make itself felt by the generation of the Risorgimento, more especially after 1866 and 1870. The joint effect of this effort and of German influence was to dissociate the generation born after 1860 from the conceptions which the French Revolution had spread throughout the world — ideas in which the generation of the Risorgimento had believed — and to replace them by a dreary materialism. A superficial observer might have been deceived into seeing signs of a fairly active intellectual life in Italy during the last twenty years. It has even been alleged that this period has seen a revival of idealism in direct contradiction to this excessive materialism. This in-

tellectual life is, however, but apparent. The present generation has no thought to spare for anything but how to achieve an increase of salary, income, profits and production; how to develop industrial machinery, increase the prosperity of all classes, and ensure the progress of the country, in accordance with the crudely quantitative conception of progress with which the masses are satisfied in the present day. It has subordinated everything to this end; it has asked nothing of art but money and pleasure; nothing of science and philosophy but useful discoveries, a pleasant social position and teaching which in no way hampers it in its pursuit of business. The intellectual classes have enjoyed a high degree of liberty, as is always the case in ages which cease to demand a high degree of perfection in every sphere of intellectual activity, and they have made the most varied uses of this liberty. The majority has striven to acquire money, honours and desirable positions by pandering to the public taste for amusement and ministering to powerful public interests. In spite of all this a certain minority endeavoured to prove that it could produce work of real value in literature, philosophy, art and science; those who took the matter seriously by doing serious work and the more frivolous by taking advantage of the ignorance of youth and the conceit of the educated classes foisting on the public productions which had little to recommend them but novelty and eccentricity, both frequently borrowed from other countries. It must be admitted that this second class was the more successful of the two, as well as the larger, since it knew how to exploit the ignorance and indifference of a day which looks upon the tonnage of mercantile shipping, bank deposits and the output of blasting furnaces as the only realities of existence.

This conception of life, which had obtained the upper

hand in Italy perhaps even more thoroughly than in other countries, was the channel by which German influence was brought to bear on Italy. Germany's prestige is often attributed to her victories. This applies to the generation which entered upon the Triple Alliance in 1882 and witnessed the wars of 1866 and 1870, but not of its successor which had, moreover, a far greater admiration for Germany. It may safely be stated that in the last ten years all Italy,— professors and manufacturers, Socialists and Conservatives, free thinkers and clericals, philosophers and musicians alike, had been infected with Germanophilia. Germany was regarded as the universal model, because she had realized the quantitative formula of progress better than any other nation and was the land where population, wealth, production, commerce, army and navy were increasing most rapidly. German order and discipline seemed admirable to this generation which, by the way, took very good care not to imitate them, because they seemed important factors in this giddy process of development. France, on the countrary, with her tendency to consolidate her actual position rather than to develop it, was looked upon as an effete and decadent country. In spite of the affinity of language, race and culture, France had become a sort of enigma. The educated classes in Italy, who were becoming more and more dominated by the purely quantitative conception of progress, did not understand the tragic position of a country whose demographical conditions, traditions and historical tendencies alike impelled it to develop in the direction of quality, whilst forced to do so in the direction of quantity by the competition of its neighbours and above all by the preposterous and menacing growth of its foe. Thus German influence triumphed all along the line. Everything — army, banks, railways, industry, socialism, science, philoso-

phy, schools and universities alike — became Germanized.

This state of mind could not fail to influence the duration of the Triple Alliance. Immediately after the accession of Victor Emmanuel III a change became noticeable in the tendencies of foreign policy. The new King went to Petrograd and Paris, but not to Vienna. Prinetti, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs during the first administration of the new reign, was a pronounced opponent of the Triple Alliance. He often remarked to his friends — and events have proved him a true prophet — that there would be no lasting peace in Europe until Germany had received a thorough thrashing. There was clearly a desire to draw closer to the group of powers which was soon to be known as the Triple Entente. Unfortunately Prinetti fell ill and the moment Giolitti became Prime Minister with Tittoni as Minister for Foreign Affairs the old triplicist policy once more gained ascendancy. How is this change of front to be explained? Undoubtedly the Russo-Japanese War had much to do with it, while it is also possible that secret influences were brought to bear.

Even without these factors, however, it would have been extremely difficult to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance so long as the upper classes continued to regard Germany as the universal model. The Triple Alliance, indeed, which had for long been opposed, had come to be accepted by all classes of late years, just when it had become a constant menace to the peace of the world and was paving the way for the present catastrophe. It must not be forgotten that the Cabinet which committed the outrageous blunder of renewing the Triple Alliance in 1912 contained three Radical ministers, two of whom were amongst the most rabid Germanophiles in the Cabinet.

Italy was progressing then, at least according to the pres-

ent day conception of progress, and she was very proud of the fact. Was she equally content? No. I have remarked elsewhere that the glorification of national pride is a necessary condition of the development of modern civilization, which is based upon industrialism and elected institutions. Wealth neither is nor can be an aim in itself; it is and only can be a means. Now whatever the advantages ensured by modern civilization to the masses and the middle classes, it is very doubtful whether these advantages compensate many people for the burdens it lays upon them: constant and strenuous work, strict discipline, loss of personal liberty in factory or office, military service, etc. It was not, therefore, sufficient for the quantitative epoch to show the masses the riches of the earth in order to arouse their zeal and activity; an ideal had also to be sought and found in one of the simplest and strongest passions which moves the soul of man: pride. The initiative and activity of all nations was aroused by the argument that the increase of wealth was a means of increasing the power and greatness of the country and of showing other peoples its own superiority. This was the case in Italy. As Giolitti's grasp of power grew firmer and prosperity increased, the country listened more and more readily to those who, whether in prose or poetry, told it that Italy either was, or was about to become, the first country in the world. Unfortunately, in a period which gauges the worth of a people by statistics, neither poet, nor philosopher, nor statesman could double the limited territory or discover in it coal fields like those of Lorraine or Westphalia. By strenuous and well directed efforts Italy did, it is true, succeed in increasing her wealth, but this increase was of necessity on a more modest scale than that of other nations to whom nature had been kinder, and gave rise to constant comparisons mortifying to the

national *amour-propre* which became more sensitive as the nation advanced. Why should its efforts, which were quite as great and even more arduous than those of other peoples, be less productive of results? Moods of self-congratulation alternated with fits of despondency, during which the country attributed its inferiority to its frivolity, lack of discipline, military weakness, irresolution, inability to imitate the Teutonic virtues and, above all, to its government — the malleable, easy-going, prudent government which never dared to offend any one. The contradiction between the form and the substance of this government, democratic institutions working in a country which had almost entirely lost faith in democratic principles, could not fail to foment the general uneasiness. The intellectuals and the politicians never ceased to foster these opposing mental attitudes by propounding every imaginable theory and thus adding intellectual to moral perplexity. The country as a whole was in a perpetual state of self-contradiction, which was reflected in the behaviour and ideas of individuals and parties alike, and had made public opinion extremely nervous.

This nervousness and this tendency to sudden anger and equally sudden changes of front created at times extremely difficult situations even during the rule of Giolitti. At bottom the country was really vaguely striving after an ideal of life both loftier and more complete than progress regarded as mere increase of the wealth of the world and perfecting of the machinery used by man. It failed to find this ideal either in the present or the past. It must also be borne in mind that Italy has not escaped the moral deterioration and self-disgust brought about by economic materialism and the dominion of wealth in all modern countries in which classic learning is not confined to professors and libraries and in which Christianity is something more

than merely the official religion. This explains why the country became more and more dissatisfied both with itself and others just when it might have congratulated itself on its progress, why Giolitti's unpopularity grew in proportion to his power and why he was reproached more particularly with those aspects of his policy which, by pandering to the passions and vices of the period, ensured his own success. The contradiction was inherent in the situation itself and came to a crisis in the Tripoli campaign.

V

In order to understand aright this war and its origin, we must be thoroughly acquainted with the history of Italian home affairs from November, 1909. In March Giolitti had presided over a general election for the second time. In autumn, when Parliament met, he resigned, as was his wont. The leader of the Opposition at this time was Sonnino, but his party only numbered about thirty deputies; Giolitti, who was anxious to secure a year's rest, intended to make his majority support the Sonnino Cabinet, but Sonnino, a man of great force of character, was extremely unpopular with the majority, who obliged him to resign in three months. A more pliable man was called to take his place — Luzzatti — who, however, proved too pliable, too impressionable and too susceptible to flattery. He began with two acts of weakness: he included four Radicals in his Cabinet, two as ministers and two as under secretaries of state — and he promised to introduce a measure for the extension of the suffrage. These two acts were concessions to the Extreme Left — the party in the Chamber which Luzzatti had most reason to fear. The former was much more to the mind of the Extreme Left than the lat-

ter. Ever since Giolitti's return to power all but a very small minority of the Radicals and Socialists had become more and more desirous of holding the reins of government, in spite of their relatively small number, with the help of Giolitti's personal influence. The example of Millerand and Brand had turned the heads of a good many Socialists and consequently Socialists, Radicals and even part of the Republican party were extremely pleased to see four Radicals in the Cabinet. It was the thin end of the wedge. The suffrage question was much more complicated. As at this time no one who was unable to read and write could be placed on the register, illiteracy and indifference reduced the number of electors to about three million. The Socialists had for long demanded universal suffrage, but they did not really attach any great importance to it, and demanded it mainly because they knew that the government would not grant it. Giolitti himself had opposed any such measure only a few years previously.

By these two concessions Luzzatti had hoped to secure the support of, at all events, the benevolent neutrality of the Extreme Left. In this he succeeded but at the cost of gaining the ill will of the majority. This preference for the Extreme Left was not in the least in accordance with sound parliamentary principles. As for the extension of the suffrage, it met with great opposition, owing to the complicated nature of the system proposed by Luzzatti. The majority would gladly have brought about the fall of the Ministry, but Giolitti was not as yet inclined to resume office and this time he succeeded in instilling patience into his followers. The resulting situation was extremely curious. In the Chamber the majority did its utmost to put obstacles in the path of the Radical ministers, who were not men of any special ability; the Extreme Left in its turn

opposed the Cabinet ministers who belonged to the majority; while these ministers intrigued against their Radical fellow ministers both in the Cabinet and in the Chamber. Luzzatti endeavoured to gain time by making great speeches and promising everything which was asked of him. The prestige of a government soon disappears under such circumstances. Giolitti remarked once that Luzzatti lost votes wholesale in order to gain them retail. Dissatisfaction became so general both in country and Parliament that the Luzzatti Cabinet fell in March, 1911, and Giolitti was forced to resume office.

He had reached the zenith of his power. Luzzatti's government had created such a universal sense of irritation that Giolitti was hailed as a saviour. The Exertme Left hoped that he would form a great democratic Cabinet in which many of its members would hold office; the majority that he would dismiss the Radical ministers and abandon Luzzatti's sweeping democratic measures; the country contented itself with hoping that he would govern firmly. The Extreme Left came off better than the majority. Giolitti even offered a portfolio to a Socialist, Bissolati, and when this offer was refused, retained in the Cabinet the four Radicals appointed by Luzzatti and added two more to their number — a minister and an under secretary of state. The new Radical minister, who was destined to play the most unfortunate part in this ill-fated Cabinet, was Nitti, who was nominated Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry. But if the composition of the new Ministry did not fulfil the expectations of the majority, its program had still more unpleasant surprises in store. As for the extension of the franchise, Giolitti brought in a much simpler bill than that suggested by Luzzatti: he proposed to grant manhood suffrage, with the one provision that electors who

could not read or write should not be allowed to exercise their rights until they were thirty years of age instead of at twenty-one. He further proposed to make life insurance a State monopoly.

It was not to be wondered at that Giolitti should continue Luzzatti's relations with the Extreme Left in his own policy. He had always striven to rally the extreme parties to the monarchy, while at the same time endeavouring to shift the pivot of power from the wealthy to the lower and middle classes. Since the three parties of the Extreme Left are those representing the middle and lower classes, Giolitti might well think it the part of wisdom to give these classes a share in the government proportioned rather to their social importance than to the number of their deputies. The majority, however, did not look upon it from the same point of view and considered that Giolitti was acting even less in accordance with "the sound principles of constitutional law" than Luzzatti had done and complained of being dispossessed by *coup d'état*. A struggle began between the majority and its leader. The majority said: "I am the majority and I have, therefore, the right to rule." Giolitti replied: "Yes, you are the majority, but not by your own efforts. I created you and you are bound to do my will." For the first time the reality of this personal government came into conflict with the formulæ of Parliament in which it was concealed. The difficulties consequent on this contradiction would not have been so serious had Giolitti not proposed at the same time to make life insurance a State monopoly and to introduce universal suffrage.

The monopoly of life insurance was not in itself a reform of so radical a nature as necessarily to involve such bitter struggles. The measure could have been carried

without any great difficulty had it been better prepared. Giolitti had however, as we have seen, chosen as Minister of Industry a Radical deputy, Professor Nitti, and Nitti precipitated a political catastrophe by the carelessness and imprudence with which he prepared the scheme. In a few weeks he launched on the country a scheme which was not only incoherent and inadequate from various points of view, but in its first clause decreed in a few lines a sort of total confiscation without awarding the insurance companies any compensation. According to this clause all life insurance companies were to cease work at once and stated that no compensation could be claimed for the loss entailed by the new law either by the insurance companies, their employés or the insured. Such a high handed abolition by the State of the rights of its subjects, such a calm appropriation of private property for its own purposes was an unheard of thing and only an extremely strong government could possibly have carried such a measure and Giolitti's government was far from being strong. The majority, which disliked the composition of the Cabinet and dreaded the introduction of manhood suffrage, promptly rose in arms against the legal enormities of the bill, which was attacked from every point of view. The protests of those affected gained over parliamentary circles and ere long the question of manhood suffrage was relegated to the background. For a time it was hoped that Giolitti would realize his mistake, withdraw the bill and sacrifice its unlucky author. This time, however, Giolitti persisted in his scheme. He managed to get it approved by the parliamentary commission which examined it and laid it before the Chamber. The situation went from bad to worse. The Chamber was resolved to reject the scheme, but did not know how to set about it. The House had entered its third

year of existence and Giolitti was supposed to have the decree of dissolution in his pocket. The Socialists fomented the general irritation by making it plain that they intended to profit by the rupture between Giolitti and his majority to seize the reins of power. The storm, which had nearly broken four years before, began to lower in the lobbies of the Chamber and the word "treason" was whispered for the first time. Giolitti was betraying the monarchy and had gone off his head. Whilst these whispers were heard in the lobbies, the discussion of the bill dragged on for weeks in the Chamber. No one dared to attack it boldly, and Giolitti showed no intention of yielding and he was only convinced of the impossibility of passing it in its present form by Salandra's forcible speech showing its absurdities and mistakes. By this time June was drawing to an end and Giolitti profited by this fact to ask for a vote approving the general principle of the law, whilst postponing the discussion of its details — i.e., the essential part — till November, after which the House adjourned for the holidays.

This affair left the ministry very weak. The scheme itself, the carelessness with which it had been prepared and the shifty behaviour of the Chamber had disgusted the country. The hopes raised in April by the "great ministry" had given place to bitter disappointment. Political circles were more and more absorbed by the scheme for manhood suffrage and the attitude adopted by the Socialists who were now posing as the next heirs to power. The dissatisfied state of public opinion was aggravated by the uncertainty and contradictions of such a paradoxical situation. No one knew whether Giolitti would emerge from it as the triumphant ruler or the hated victim. His enemies were working hard. Just at this juncture the "Panther"

went to Agadir and the Franco-German *pour parlers* on the Morocco question began. Ere long no one doubted that Morocco was about to become a French protectorate. Many newspapers then reminded the public that once Morocco had become French, the only territory in North Africa left for Italy would be Tripoli and pointed out that if she failed to seize this opportunity, she would be encircled and stifled in the Mediterranean.

Until that time the Italian people had but a very vague notion of Tripoli. The efforts made by writers and politicians after the Mediterranean agreements with France and England to draw its attention to these regions had been fruitless. The memory of Adowa still lay heavy upon the nation, but this time to the astonishment even of those who had opened the campaign with but little hope of rousing the people from its indifference, public opinion suddenly showed an interest in the matter — an interest which grew daily. Yes, Italy would lose an opportunity which could never recur if Giolitti's government showed its usual indifference to the great questions of international and colonial policy. In reality Tripoli was but a pretext. The country was longing to escape from the state of discontent and despondency I have described and it seized this occasion, regardless of danger, in the hope of finding in Tripoli what it had vainly sought in liberalism — the increase of wealth, a new, happier and nobler life. When, however, the public asserted that if France took Morocco, Italy must take Tripoli, it forgot that Tripoli was a province of the Ottoman Empire, and that since Turkey was a European power, to seize Tripoli would upset the balance of Europe, on which depended the peace of the world. It was easy enough for the nation to demand Tripoli; it was quite another matter for the government to satisfy its wishes. Accordingly it hesi-

tated. When, however, the press, the various political parties and those who did not wish to see the Radicals in power, or the introduction of the State life insurance monopoly and manhood suffrage saw both this hesitation and the excited condition of public opinion, they did everything in their power to excite public opinion still more as the most efficacious way of discrediting the Ministry. They succeeded so well that the Cabinet realized that its fall was inevitable if it tried to resist the wishes of the people. If Giolitti had not set up a Radical ministry; if he had not tried to introduce either the life insurance monopoly or manhood suffrage, he would probably have been able to make the country understand that it was impossible to attack another Power without rhyme or reason merely because the nation desired to do so. Under the circumstances, however, he could not enforce this view, since, had he attempted it, all his enemies and political opponents would immediately have accused him of betraying the interests of the country; he could not have hoped, with all his power, to withstand the onslaughts of excited public opinion and the fate which overtook him in the spring of 1915 would have been his in the spring of 1911.

The government therefore decided upon war and declared it as best it could. From the point of view of International Law, the pretext for hostilities was somewhat feeble, and those who had kept their heads were therefore not surprised that Italy's step was not cordially received by the other Powers. This attitude annoyed Italy and the extent to which the country had been Germanized during the last thirty years suddenly became manifest. The nation, or at all events the most influential classes, seemed to take a morbid pleasure in making a bad use of its power, in replying angrily to all foreign criticisms, even the most courte-

ous and reasonable, in abusing all Europe, in clamouring for the extermination of the enemy, in exalting war and conquest as the sacred rights of the higher races and in forcibly suppressing all dissentient voices. Every arrangement suggested which might have saved the prestige of the Sultan whilst at the same time giving satisfaction to Italy was regarded as humiliating, and the country demanded unconditioned victory with such resolution that the government was forced to issue the decree of annexation. There was but little dissent from this universal greed for conquest; the Socialists were, to do them justice, the only political party to oppose it. The storm which had threatened to ruin Giolitti and his Cabinet blew over, the sky cleared and Giolitti actually became popular. Such is the irony of human affairs! The man, who had been unpopular when he had striven to make the country prosperous and contented and to please every one as far as in him lay, became the object of general admiration and had to make speeches from his balcony to crowds beside themselves with enthusiasm when his errors in home affairs had forced him to forge the first link in the claim which was to end in the world war.

Whilst the nation was intoxicated with dreams of conquest, the government had made the same blunder as in 1896 and was entering upon a colonial campaign with the forces intended merely for home defence — a blunder which had the gravest consequences. At the beginning of the war even the masses were full of enthusiasm; they had taken the press too literally and were convinced that Tripoli was a country of fabulous wealth which would afford land and work to millions of emigrants. Their enthusiasm cooled rapidly. The Italian generals were obliged to wage a war of positions, for blood could not be shed recklessly in order to achieve the conquest of what the troops rightly

or wrongly regarded as a sandy waste. The war dragged slowly along and became a source of anxiety not only to Italy but to the whole of Europe. The enthusiasm of the first few months gave place to impatience, irritation and even greater discontent than that prevailing before the war. The government, which was still anxious to pass the Insurance Monopoly and Manhood Suffrage Bills, had recourse to all kinds of artifices — such as press campaigns, an attack on the Dardanelles and the occupation of the Dodecanese — in order to keep up the spirits of the people. It succeeded in passing a modified form of the Life Insurance Monopoly Bill which had more respect for vested rights and in introducing Manhood Suffrage. A little later, during the autumn of 1912, it also succeeded in concluding peace with Turkey. These successes, however, only weakened the power of the government. The two years which elapsed after the introduction of this electoral reform and before the outbreak of the European War were amongst the most anxious through which Italy has passed since 1860. The Peace of Lausanne was hailed with joy, as a way out of an intolerable situation, but it satisfied no one. It was a matter of universal knowledge that while Italy had not been defeated in Tripoli, she had not achieved the complete success hoped for. The disappointment was aggravated by the fear of possible internal repercussions. The coming elections, the first since manhood suffrage had become an accomplished fact, were the absorbing thought of political circles. This common anxiety instead of, as might have been expected, showing the advisability of union between the ruling classes, seemed to make them more suspicious of one another, whilst the general public was weary and indifferent. The two Balkan wars, the many evidences of the increasing instability of the European balance of power,

the menacing growth of the German army and navy, and the incessant Austrian intrigues, made but little impression on either the government, political circles, the press or the nation. Deputies and parties alike were busy trying to gain government support during the coming elections and were carrying on a fierce wordy warfare both in Parliament and the press. The public took no interest whatsoever in these intrigues and struggles, thus leaving the government free to settle the most weighty matters as it thought fit. The government, thus left to itself by public opinion, weakened by the war, and itself anxious as to the results of the coming elections, allowed itself to be influenced by passing events, habit and every kind of intrigue. Austria and Germany profited by this state of things to induce the government to renew the Triple Alliance before the term agreed upon, to take their side against Serbia, to support their policy in Albania and to do everything in its power to bring about the second Balkan war, of which Italy is now feeling the disastrous results. The Marquis of San Giuliano, at this time Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was left to his own devices, readily yielded to the various influences brought to bear upon him, whilst Giolitti devoted his whole attention to the general election, employing to their fullest extent his favourite tactics of weakening all parties by intermingling them. The confusion which prevailed during the general elections of 1913 will never be forgotten. In one district the Minister supported the Socialist candidate against the Clerical; in another the Clerical against the Socialist; the very same Prefect who in one constituency supported the Radical candidate opposed him violently in the neighbouring one. These contradictions were specially marked in the large towns, where the government policy varied according to the street and district. Influential

deputies belonging to Giolitti's personal party were of course supported against every party. The most notable instance of this confusion was that of a Cabinet Minister, a prominent Free Mason, who seemed about to be defeated by a Clerical candidate, when the Vatican, at the request of the government, ordered the Clerical to withdraw his candidature in favour of the Socialist.

The result of the elections was disastrous. Out of five million electors, one million voted for the Socialists, who had eighty seats in the new Chamber as against forty in the preceding one. They gained this large number of votes — more especially in the country districts — because they had had the courage to protest against the Tripoli campaign, and would probably have gained still more, had they conducted their anti-war campaign with more boldness and intelligence. This result of the elections increased the general depression. The Chamber became the scene of invective disturbances and even blows; Giolitti as usual seized the first favourable opportunity of resigning and was succeeded by Salandra, who, next to Sonnino, was the most influential member of the small party of the Right which had always remained in Opposition. His selection was not, however, due to any recognition of the principles of constitutional law, but because it was absolutely essential to place at the head of the government a man who, while more malleable than Sonnino, was both capable and conscious of the seriousness of his position, and would endeavour, without breaking with Giolitti and his party, to deal with the situation resulting from the war and the policy of the late government. Salandra, though he did not attempt to form a Conservative Ministry, dissociated himself from the Radicals, and set to work. He was, however, soon confronted with the most unforeseen difficulties. Be-

fore Giolitti resigned, he had proposed various new taxes to cover the deficit caused by the war. The new Cabinet brought forward these measures, which were clearly absolutely necessary, but the Socialists opposed them by every means in their power on the ground that the poor were to be made to pay for a war desired by the rich. Whilst the government was still trying to overcome this opposition, a skirmish took place at Ancona between the police and a crowd which had taken part in a political meeting. The police fired upon the people and killed one person; the Socialist party proclaimed a general strike which in many towns caused outbreaks of violence; stations and churches were burnt down, revolver shots exchanged freely; several town in Romagna proclaimed themselves republics, while everywhere the authorities, taken by surprise, dealt with the outburst with a sort of fatalistic inertia. Order was re-established, but, though the government succeeded in putting down the riots, it failed to overcome the obstructionary tactics of Parliament and had to content itself with a compromise: i.e., a royal decree authorizing it to impose these taxes for one year. The upper classes were pervaded with a sense of insecurity and indeed the whole country felt as if it were on the edge of a volcano. It was under these disquieting circumstances that the Chamber adjourned in the summer of 1914. In a few weeks a far greater storm burst over the world — the European War.

VI

When confronted with this cataclysm, the country pulled itself together. German aggression and the violation of Belgium neutrality aroused in the masses that moral sense which the Tripoli campaign had dulled, while at the same

time opening the eyes of the nation to the danger threatening Italy, and the Power which had begun a world war with such criminal callousness, which had broken faith with such insolence and had proclaimed to the world that it recognized no law but that of might, became in a few days the object of general execration. Justice, honour, loyalty, right, all those ideals in fact which the era of quantity had scorned, once more became matters of moment. The hatred of Germanism, which had been latent amongst the masses since the days of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, suddenly awoke and intense indignation was roused in all classes.

The Treaty of the Triple Alliance was denounced on May 4th, 1915, but it had really been rejected by the nation between the 1st and 4th of August, 1914. Even if the Italian government had been foolish enough to pledge itself to take part in a war of pillage and aggression, it would not have been able to keep its word, for the country would have refused to support it. It was in vain that the German ambassador offered the Italian government Tunis and two milliards of francs and that the military attaché tried to convince Cadorna that it was a matter of a short and easy campaign, that "in six weeks the whole thing would be over." If the government had at that moment been in a position to renounce the Treaty and declare war on the Germanic empires, the country would have supported it with enthusiasm, but such a course was not possible and Italy had to resign herself to being a mere spectator of the great struggle, though there could be no doubt as to which way her sympathies lay. The masses quickly realized that nothing could be a greater disaster than the annihilation of France; old quarrels were forgotten and the three weeks which elapsed between the battle of Charleroi and the bat-

tle of the Marne were weeks of the most intense anxiety. During those three weeks, the circulation of the newspapers, which had risen considerably since the outbreak of the war, dropped rapidly, for the public would not read the bad news they contained.

The Battle of the Marne and the Battle of Lemberg allayed their fears, the former especially being hailed with great joy. Italy was glad to receive proof that, in spite of all that had been said about the decadence of France, there was still beyond the Alps an army strong enough to bar the road to Paris. The public gradually realized that the surprise sprung on Europe by the two empires had failed, that the war was developing along unexpected lines and would be of long duration. The part which Italy would have to play soon came to the fore. The general feeling of sympathy for the Allies and of disgust with the Central Empires was so strong that the possibility of Italy's ranging herself on the side of Germany and Austria was never even considered. Italy had to choose between neutrality and going to war against the two empires and on this point the country split into two parties — the Neutralists and the Interventionalists.

If we are to understand the ensuing struggle aright, we must have a clear grasp of its causes. The party which from the first was heart and soul for the war was recruited from the educated classes — journalists, teachers at the secondary schools, men of letters, students, and the most cultured section of the upper middle class and the nobility. It also included a small number of university professors, but the majority of these professors remained true to Germany which they regarded as the fount of all learning. The journalists were the most active advocates of the Interventionalist movement. The press, with the exception of a

few newspapers which were frankly organs of the Neutralist party, was favourable to intervention, even the papers which had hitherto supported the Triple Alliance and looked favourably on the spread of German influence in the country taking up the same line. Many Interventionalists, more especially those belonging to conservative circles, realized that if Italy did not intervene, she would find herself in a position of dangerous isolation after the war. National aspirations, Irredentism, as they were commonly called, the re-conquest of the Italian provinces still subject to the Hapsburgs, were the main ground for intervention in the eyes of many young men of the conservative classes and also of the Republican and Socialist parties, which had been Irredentist out of opposition to the Triple Alliance. The parties of the Extreme Left realized, moreover, with anxiety the inevitable political and social consequences of the victory of the Germanic empires — the triumph of militarism, of the monarchical principle and of reactionary ideas. The dread of German hegemony weighed more or less heavily on all classes. The unbounded ambition of Germany together with her desperate efforts to satisfy it had taken the whole world by surprise, since Germany had always been regarded as the nation most nearly approaching the modern ideal of progress and there were very few who had any suspicion that the gospel of progress could give birth to ambitions and acts of violence such as those at which Italy was now gazing in horror. This very astonishment added to the universal dismay. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that amongst the reasons which inclined many people to intervention was the ancient hatred of Austria and a half unconscious desire to engage in some great enterprise which should enable the country to shake off the spirit of despondency and unrest resulting from the

events of the last few years. The Interventionalist intellectuals belonged to all parties. Moreover, in each party there was a group of intellectuals which did its utmost to win over the whole party — an effort which succeeded in certain cases and failed in others. The Radicals, Republicans and Reformist Socialists declared for intervention; the Official Socialists and the Clericals for neutrality; the Conservatives and the Liberals — that is to say, the classes and groups upon which the government had leaned until Giolitti's Radical ministry came into power — did not commit themselves definitely one way or the other. If we are to have a clear grasp of the attitude of the various parties, we must not forget to take into account an important fact which is the key to the events which led to Italy's intervention — that the masses, i.e., the peasants, working men, and lower middle classes, the classes affected by the introduction of manhood suffrage — much as they detested Germany and Austria never desired war. They wanted peace for the simple reason that they considered it preferable to war. "We will go to war when we are attacked," summed up their view of the case. The considerations of world policy, the equilibrium of Europe and the danger of German hegemony were altogether beyond their comprehension, and they were utterly indifferent to Irredentism. No one had spoken to them of Trieste and Trent for thirty-two years, for the government had enforced silence on this national question in deference to the Triple Alliance.

The attitude of the lower classes explains why the Socialists and the Clericals declared for neutrality. In the case of the Clericals there was another reason, this party having always been Francophobe and Austrophile, for reasons which are not hard to seek. The attitude of the masses also affords an explanation of the contradictions and oscil-

lations of the Liberals and Conservatives; in other words, the ruling classes. Thus, while the organs of these parties and classes were for the most part favourable to intervention, the Chamber and the Senate were impenitent neutralists. The Chamber was afraid of the electors brought in by manhood suffrage who had so plainly shown their dissatisfaction with the Tripoli campaign and was moreover anxious as to the political consequences of intervention. Would not a break with the Germanic Empires be tantamount to confessing that the alliance of thirty-two years had been a mistake? Would it not put a formidable weapon into the hands of the Opposition? Whilst the Radicals and Republicans were filled with anxiety as to the political consequences of a German victory, the Conservatives were equally anxious as to the results of a German defeat. The exaggerated veneration for everything German so prevalent during the last thirty years in certain aristocratic and intellectual circles — more particularly in the universities — seemed to have disappeared with the first shock of the war, but raised its head afresh when the intervention campaign began, as was evidenced by the appearance in Rome during the autumn of 1914 of a weekly journal published by a group of professors at the University of Rome, whose object was the seconding of Prince Bülow's intrigues by means of a venomous and unscrupulous campaign against the Triple Entente and especially against France. Economic considerations also played their part, for it must not be forgotten that during the last ten years Italy's trade with Germany and Austria had become more important than that with the Entente Powers. The Central Empires afforded the chief market for Italy's agricultural produce. German influence also predominated in both the banking and the industrial world. If to these reasons we

add anxiety as to how the losses and expenses of the war were to be met, the uncertainty as to its duration and issue, we shall readily understand why government circles and their supporters hesitated to take action.

Ere long the question of intervention became the subject of lively discussions which were however confined to certain small circles. The masses remained quiescent. At this juncture von Bülow arrived in Rome and set to work, much in the same way as if he had been at Athens or Constantinople. He bought everything which was for sale in the press and in the political world; he rallied round him all those German interests which might be expected to exercise pressure on the country and he took advantage of his numerous personal connections to plot and intrigue in political circles. He found many supporters among the Slavish admirers of Germany and the professional members of the Senate which became the centre of pro-German and unpatriotic intrigues. What was the Government about in the meantime? The government too had pulled itself together and, after proclaiming the neutrality of Italy, was preparing armaments with a rapidity and energy hitherto unknown. San Giuliano having died, Sonnino became Minister for Foreign Affairs — a very significant appointment — for while Sonnino has his faults like any other man, it is an undeniable fact that his devotion to duty had ended by making him extremely unpopular in Parliamentary circles. As for the line to be taken up by Italy, the government had come to the conclusion that she could not remain merely a spectator for an indefinite period; further that the government ought to take advantage of this excellent opportunity of settling the question of the Unredeemed Provinces — a question at once national and strategical — that this question should be settled diplomatically if possible,

but that if diplomacy failed, Italy should have recourse to arms. Accordingly on December 9th, 1914, Sonnino opened negotiations with Austria by requesting that the conditions contained in Art. 7 of the Treaty of Alliance would be carried out. This article laid down that any act which disturbed the power of balance in the Balkans, whether performed by Italy or Austria, would entitle the other Power to compensation. By declaring war on Serbia, Austria had disturbed the balance of power in the Balkans, thus giving Italy the right to compensation.

This step was both perfectly correct and extremely clever. The Italian government could not be accused of wishing to violate the treaty, since it was merely asking that one of its provisions be carried into effect. If Austria consented to settle the national and strategical question of the Unredeemed Provinces by way of compensation — a contingency which the government regarded as very improbable — the government would have a decisive argument wherewith to convince the Interventionists of the futility of their war propaganda; if Austria refused, the Neutralists would be forced to admit that war was unavoidable. I believe I am correct in stating that this line of conduct was taken up by the government with the full knowledge and approval of Giolitti, who as the leader of the majority was bound to afford all possible assistance to the government. It must be admitted that he gave his support as ungrudgingly as the circumstances demanded. It cannot, however, be said that his followers did their duty equally well. They could not forget that Salandra and Sonnino were the two most eminent members of the small group of the Right which had never ceased its opposition to Giolitti's government. They had agreed to support Salandra for a few months while Giolitti enjoyed a rest, but the European War threatened

to upset their whole game. The Salandra Cabinet seemed settling into power and, if it managed to conduct a great national war successfully, might it not rally to itself sufficient forces to dispossess the Giolittians altogether? They therefore began to make trouble in Parliamentary circles, alleging on the one hand that the government was rushing the nation into a war which could not fail to be disastrous, and, on the other, that if war were really inevitable, the conduct of it ought to be in the hands of Giolitti and his party.

During the whole winter of 1915 a spirit of unrest pervaded the upper classes and Parliamentary circles. Both political parties and the press continued their pro or anti-war propaganda. The Ministry continued its secret negotiations with Austria. Von Bülow poured out gold like water, invited senators to dinner and intrigued in the political world. Giolitti's lieutenants worked the Parliamentary circles where they felt themselves strongest, while the Socialists carried on their campaign against intervention with increased energy and attacked the Ministry with ever growing violence. Is the story true that during March and April very intimate relations had been set up between von Bülow and certain of Giolitti's most prominent lieutenants? I cannot say and I would fain hope that German influence had nothing to do with the fierce and virulent campaign carried on by the official organ of the Socialists in order to prove that all the belligerents were equally to blame and that France and Great Britain were just as much actuated by capitalist motives and greed of conquest as Germany. Whatever may have taken place during these months, it is a fact that the public, which had remained perfectly calm, was much less interested in these intrigues and discussions than in trying to divine the real intentions of the government. Did it mean to remain neutral or to go to war?

We now know what it was doing and what its real intentions were, but at this time it was only known that it was negotiating both with Austria and the Triple Entente, whilst Interventionalist circles were inclined to blame it severely for what they considered disgraceful bargaining with Austria. The most widely different rumours were in the air, and towards the end of Italy's period of neutrality — i.e., in March and April, 1915, the general public began to show signs of unrest. Uncertainty was enervating public opinion, for a nation cannot live for months under the shadow of impending war without becoming excited.

Suddenly, on April 21st there was an indication that the crisis was not far off. On that day the Socialist organ *Avanti* published an interview with a " former minister " of the Giolitti Cabinet, in which the state of the negotiations between Austria on the one hand and the Triple Entente on the other was set forth and the conclusion drawn that Italy ought to remain neutral and even strengthen her ties to Germany in order to safeguard her Adriatic interests. Whoever may have been the personage concerned and whatever the value of his conclusions, the revelations as to the negotiations were absolutely correct. Those who were *au courant* of the situation made no mistake as to the object of the articles in question, which was an anti-war manœuvre arranged with the Socialist organ by persons whose accurate information proved them to be highly placed. The Neutralist party was preparing to make a general appeal to the masses against the government and the Interventionalists. It was obvious therefore that the war party was getting the upper hand in ministerial circles. A few days later Paris telegrams announced in a somewhat vague form that Italy had signed an agreement with the Powers of the Triple Entente. The news was denied, confirmed and de-

nied again. It was next announced that the King intended to be present at the unveiling of the monument to Garibaldi's Thousand at Quarto which was expected to be a great Interventionalist demonstration. At the same time contradictory rumours as to the issue of the negotiations with Austria multiplied. The agreement had been concluded — it had not been concluded — the King would declare war at Quarto — Italy was about to resume her old place in the Triple Alliance. Suddenly it was announced that the King was not going to Quarto at all, but this announcement was accompanied by another to the effect that his change of plans was due to the fact that the government had come to decisions of such weight that the Head of the State could not be absent from Rome. What had really happened? The public racked its brains in vain. On May 5th the Quarto monument was unveiled, but the ceremony did not make the expected impression on the nation and was even followed by a certain amount of disappointment. The absence of the King and members of government had been explained on the ground of impending serious decisions and the nation accordingly expected some news of importance on the 5th or 6th. None came. The public was inclined to believe that the government had not taken part in the ceremony at Quarto for fear of annoying Prince von Bülow, as had been stated by certain newspapers. Then suddenly the Giolittian section of the press published a list of concessions made by Austria and announced that Giolitti had been summoned to Rome by the King. On May 7th Giolitti left Cavour for Turin and on the following day he arrived in Rome.

What had happened? The mystery is now revealed in part. Since December the Government had been negotiating with Austria without, however, coming to any arrange-

ment. The Green Book tells the story of these fruitless negotiations. It took time to induce Austria to admit the possibility of a discussion based on Article 7 and further time to induce her to make any proposals. What she offered was much less than Italy asked. Moreover, the question as to when the agreement would be carried into effect was a source of great difficulty. On April 26th the government signed an agreement with the Triple Entente, valid if Italy declared war within a month. The government had decided to hurry events and declare war without delay if Austria would not accede to Italy's demands.

On May 3d, Austria having refused to yield, the government denounced the Triple Alliance. This meant war. I think I am safe in saying that these two steps — the agreement with the Triple Entente and the denunciation of the Treaty — were taken without consulting Giolitti who was still at his home in Piedmont. Parliamentary circles soon divined that war was imminent. The anxiety of the majority, of official circles, and of the Giolitti party was great and the Pro-German party in the Senate redoubled its activities, as did also von Bülow. What took place at this juncture? It is difficult to say for certain. Too many points are still far from clear. But it would appear that Germany and Austria, alarmed by the denunciation of the Triple Alliance, which came as a painful surprise, had organized a plot to overthrow the Cabinet with the assistance of various senators, Socialists and lieutenants of Giolitti's, influential personages sufficiently blinded by political passion to lend themselves to the intrigues of foreign Powers. The idea which gave rise to this conspiracy seems to have been as follows: The Neutralists had a large majority in the Chamber — numbering as they did 400 out of 508 deputies. The Chamber was to meet on May 20th. The

problem was how to bring about the fall of the Ministry before that date, thus preventing it from declaring war, and then confronting Parliament with the accomplished fact? How was it to be done? In this dilemma the Neutralists turned to the powerful politician who had practically created the Chamber and appeared to hold the fate of the Cabinet in the hollow of his hand.

In my opinion Giolitti was not absolutely opposed to the idea of declaring war on Austria. He, too, realized the necessity of taking advantage of the European War in order to settle the question of Italy's eastern frontier if he did not wish to give the Opposition a formidable weapon against the monarchy but, since he was convinced that the war would be very long, he thought that Italy should only intervene if absolutely necessary, when, that is to say, diplomacy had failed, and that her intervention should even then be deferred until the last possible moment. I am also of the opinion that he hoped that it would be possible to go to war with Austria only and not with Germany, which latter power he had always regarded as a necessary guarantee of Italy's safety with France and Great Britain. This scheme was ingenious enough; the only doubt was its feasibility. Such being Giolitti's views, it is easy to see why the Neutralists regarded him as the one man who could force the Salandra Cabinet to resign before the Chamber met. Giolitti was to be called to Rome by the King; Austria was to make fresh concessions in addition to those already rejected by the Cabinet; these new concessions were not to be communicated to the government, which had already denounced the treaty, but given to the public in the columns of the papers implicated in the plot; a demonstration in favour of Giolitti was to be organized in the ranks of the Parliamentary majority, after which Giolitti was

to declare that there must be no rupture with Austria and that the discussion of the proposed concessions must continue. The Cabinet would find itself confronted by a popular peace movement on the one hand,— in which the Socialists were expected to play a leading part — and a Parliamentary demonstration on the other and would have no choice but to resign. It is easy to see the weak point of this intrigue as far as the Italians involved were concerned. They were co-operating with foreign Powers, which were on the point of becoming enemies, in order to bring about the fall of the Ministry. It must, however, in justice be added that men who were thoroughly *au courant* of the situation and whose loyalty is beyond suspicion declare that on May 8th, when Giolitti left Turin for Rome, he was not aware that the latest Austrian concessions had not been communicated to the Italian government and that he was under the impression that he had to deal with official proposals which had been properly presented. Giolitti himself had therefore been deceived by German diplomacy, which rewarded him for his fidelity to the Triple Alliance by telling him a lie which induced him to make a *faux pas* which was destined to have the gravest possibile results. This scheme, an excellent example of the unscrupulous boldness of German diplomacy, seemed at first about to succeed. By some means or other Giolitti's summons to Rome was accomplished; he arrived on May 9th and next day had an audience with the King and a long conversation with Salandra. He must therefore have known that the agreement with the Triple Entente had been signed and had already begun to come into effect, that the Triple Alliance had been denounced, and that Austria's latest proposals were of a wholly unofficial character and were simply a low stratagem to deceive both Parliament and the nation. How was it

that he failed to realize that it was not possible to undo what had been done, that war was inevitable and that everything must be done to avoid spreading distrust amongst the masses who were still cherishing lingering hopes of peace? Had he compromised himself too deeply with his lieutenants? Was he simply giving vent to his annoyance with the Cabinet for taking such important steps without consulting him? Did he fail to realize the gravity of his proceedings? Had he gone too far to draw back? History may perhaps shed light on the mystery. The fact remains that on the day following Giolitti's interview with the King the newspapers announced that, according to him, the negotiations with Austria were to continue. The effect of this declaration at first seemed very marked. Three hundred deputies and a large number of senators rushed to leave their cards on Giolitti; there were excited scenes in the lobbies of both Chamber and Senate and shouts of "Down with the Pro-war Cabinet," while both the Crown and the Ministry had to face a very awkward situation. The Alliance with the Central Empires had been denounced and the understanding with the Triple Entente was already being carried into effect: how could Italy go back? Yet how could she declare war in the face of vacillating public opinion and directly against the wishes of Parliament? There was some talk of bringing the question before Parliament, but the danger of such a course was obvious. The Ministry was therefore forced to choose between a *coup d'état* and resignation. It decided to resign. Then certain sections of public opinion veered round. The movement began amongst the educated classes, but quickly gained over part of the aristocracy, lower and upper middle classes. This change was brought about by a variety of sentiments: the disgrace of seeing Italy descend to the level of Greece;

anxiety as to the probable result of such vacillation; the longing to put an end to the uncertainty in which the country had lived for the last two months. But there were two sentiments which did even more to produce the storm. One of these was anger at Germany's interference in Italy's home policy. Erzberger is said to have furnished the newspapers which lent themselves to the conspiracy with the famous list of the latest Austrian concessions; if this be so, the Triple Entente has every reason to be grateful to him. The overbearing, encroaching spirit and perpetual intrigues of German diplomats, bankers, and even of those officials whom the Italian government had been weak enough to take into its service had been tolerated too long, but this time the unscrupulous insolence of German and Austrian diplomacy met with the chastisement it so richly deserved, and the fury of the people was aroused when it saw Italy treated like some decadent eastern state. There was a violent outbreak of hatred for Giolitti who in those two days had to face the accumulated detestation which his rule had earned in the course of years. The opponents of his Manhood Suffrage Bill and of the State monopoly of life insurance, together with those who disliked his system of personal government, his weak foreign policy, and his contradictory home policy, seized the opportunity of avenging their wrongs. His third attempt — or what the public regarded as his third attempt — to resume power when it happened to suit him disgusted the people. Was the government of a country like Italy to be, so to speak, the personal property of Giolitti? Shouts of "traitor" and "treason" were heard in the streets and echoed by the press, while in the large cities, and especially in Rome and Milan, there were constant demonstrations whose war-cry was "Death to Giolitti." In Rome the best known mem-

bers of the former Premier's party were abused and subjected to violence in the streets and the Houses of Parliament were invaded by a furious crowd. Parliament, press and political parties, who had for long been accustomed to yield to any fairly decided expression of public opinion, made no attempt at resistance. The newspapers either attacked Giolitti or were silent; the senators and deputies who were too deeply compromised disappeared; others were suddenly converted to intervention; in two days Giolitti's personal rule, which had appeared invulnerable, collapsed, while Giolitti himself, forsaken by his party, was forced to shut himself up in his hotel lest he should be shot in the streets by one of the numerous Interventionalists, who would fain have punished the "traitor!" When the demonstrations had lasted three days the King, who for all his reserve was favourable to the course matters had taken, put an end to the struggle by announcing that the war party had carried the day. He refused to accept the resignation of the Cabinet; Parliament understood that King and Cabinet were of one mind and yielded to the force of circumstances. Fiction had for a moment endeavoured to become reality, but the wrath of the nation had promptly banished it to the realm of shadows. War was voted for almost unanimously by a Senate and Chamber of which the majority would not even hear of such a thing ten days before.

It must not, however, be supposed that all Italy rose during those stormy May days. With but a few exceptions the masses took little part in the political demonstrations, which however were furthered even by their abstinence from active participation, since the plan of the German Embassy of bringing about the fall of the Cabinet might have succeeded had the Socialists started counter-agitations in the Neutralist interests. Had they done so, disturbances

would undoubtedly have taken place and with civil war menacing it, the government would not have ventured to declare war on Austria. Why did the Socialists remain quiescent instead of coming out boldly at the decisive moment? For the simple reason that, while they desired peace, they hated Austria who had let loose the hounds of war and, when the underhand manœuvre was revealed to which they were asked to give their support, were not inclined to engage in a sort of civil war on behalf of the King of Prussia and the ravages of Belgium. They left the Interventionalists masters of the situation and the war party triumphed.

VII

And now Italy, like all the other European peoples, is in the hands of God or of Destiny — whichever you choose to call it. She has nobly redeemed the error of the Tripoli campaign by intervening in this most appalling of wars without being forced to do so by any direct attack, thus ranging herself on the side of the nations who have been the victims of German aggression and are struggling to save Europe from an intolerable hegemony. The impulse which made her take this step was not, however, as has been often said a mere outburst of national feeling. It was something much more complicated — something far deeper. The necessity of putting an end to an artificial, contradictory and enervating system of government; shame at having for so long submitted meekly to German influence; horror and dread of this monstrous power resting on numbers, steel, the authority of the monarchy, the prestige of the army, the credulity and blind passions of the masses exploited by a strong and unscrupulous oligarchy; the desire for moral independence which could only be hers with a

more secure frontier, together with a somewhat vague but very real longing for a nobler, higher and happier life — all these causes impelled Italy to take part in the struggle. A coalition of various elements overcame the official opposition to this act of sacrifice and put an end to the vacillation of the masses. This coalition has been of the greatest service to Europe, but it has entailed grave responsibilities. Italy has pledged herself to her allies to induce the country to make the greatest possible effort in the common cause and they have pledged themselves to give the country, together with its natural frontiers, a sure and lasting peace, moral independence and an existence free from the obsession of German example and influence. The coalition which willed the war might one day find itself in a perilous position should it fail to fulfil these pledges. It will fulfil the former, for, the masses, vacillating as they were up to the very declaration of war, have accepted the heavy sacrifices asked of them with admirable courage and dignity. It is for the Allied Powers to help it to redeem the pledges it has given to the country, by taking into account the limits placed upon Italy's participation in the war by the circumstances under which she entered it. It must never be forgotten that the problem of war is not presented in the same way to the government of a country which has been forced to take up arms by brutal aggression, as to the government of a country which has desired war on political and national grounds which are always open to discussion. If the Allies bear this in mind, they will be better able to help the Italian government and be in turn helped by it to attain the common goal: the victory which will ensure to Europe a real, lasting and equitable peace.

CHAPTER V

The Genius of the Latin Peoples

THE GENIUS OF THE LATIN PEOPLES

I

History is full of tragic surprises, but it is indubitable that no generation, . . . not even that which witnessed the stupendous upheaval of the French Revolution . . . has seen, as has ours, all its illusions and its hopes destroyed in a few weeks by a catastrophe more unexpected.

It is not the war which has been the surprise. Even while hoping that the precarious and uneasy peace which Europe has enjoyed for more than forty years might be prolonged indefinitely, every one knew that war was one of the possibilities in the old continent. But no one expected to see overthrown, in a few weeks, the very foundations of the civilization which had sheltered us, with our possessions, under its protective roof. And yet we have seen the nations which were considered as the *élite* of humanity, who had exerted themselves to sweeten conduct to the extent of protecting horses in the street from the brutality of drunken carters, fling themselves on one another for a war of extermination. We have seen an age which had deified productive labour annihilate, in a few years, the wealth accumulated during generations. We have seen Europe which seemed to us a living unit animated by rivalries, if not courteous at least not mortal, divide itself all at once into two camps separated by an insuperable abyss, which can no longer exchange, across that abyss, but cannon shots and curses. There is no longer any way of understanding each other; for that which is the good on this side of the barrier is the evil on the other side.

If our hearts are wrung at seeing this youth mown down each day upon so many battle fields, the bloody sacrifice of a generation is yet, unhappily, but a part of this prodigious cataclysm, destined to change the course of history. It is consequently natural that men seek to understand its profound significance, and that they ask themselves what dangerous madness has impelled one of the most powerful nations of our epoch to risk its whole position, and unfortunately also the well-being and happiness of the whole of Europe, to possess itself, in a few weeks, of the empire of the world. For there is now no longer any doubt that the European war, in its origins and in the dark plans of the State which plotted it, was the audacious attempt to possess itself, by a *coup-de-main,* of a hegemony which would have delivered over to Germany at least the half of the world. One has only to follow up on the map the operations of the German army, from the violation of Belgian neutrality until the battle of the Marne, to understand that Germany attempted, in a few weeks, by a lightning-like surprise, to annihilate France; to destroy for centuries, if not for all time, her riches, her power, her prestige. Nor is it any more uncertain, now, that, had this plan succeeded, neither England nor Russia alone would have been able to save Europe from the German supremacy; Europe would have fallen under the dominion, direct or indirect, of the Empire of the Hohenzollerns; and how much time would have been required by a Germany, yet further extended, overlord of all the European continent, intoxicated by this new success, to prepare itself for a decisive struggle with England? . . . that is to say, for the conquest of a world supremacy? But it is also evident that a stroke of such audacity, if it did not succeed within a few weeks, would

set going a struggle for life or death among the greatest powers of Europe.

So that the real problem of the European war seems to present itself thus: how was a nation, universally regarded as a brother of the great European family, able to conceive, at the dawn of the twentieth century, the idea of conquering, by surprise, a decisive supremacy over all the other countries of the world, by destroying with fire and sword, in a few months, one of the most ancient, most glorious and most active centres of civilization; and how did it decide to stake all that is possessed, . . . that is to say, a very brilliant position, . . . in this venture?

II

For the last years the world has been in perplexity over this problem. The problem seems so much the more difficult in that, for thirty years past, we were accustomed to attribute to Germany the genius of order. Germany,—that was order. It is for this reason that, in almost all countries, the upper classes felt for her a growing admiration. And behold, all at once, from one day to the next, without apparent reason, this pretended land of order throws the whole of Europe into the bloody chaos of this tremendous crisis, and reveals itself as the most astounding force of disorder that history has yet seen. The world has difficulty in comprehending a phenomenon so paradoxical. It will, however, appear simpler if one reflects a little upon order, upon what it is and upon the conception which we form for ourselves of it. It is evident that order is a very vague word and that it can signify many different things, according as it is employed by a *gendarme* or by a philoso-

pher, by the Home secretary or by the head of a Christian church. But, in recent times, this elementary truth had been a little too much forgotten, and, thanks to that intellectual levity which held sway to some degree everywhere in Europe previous to the war, we had ended by believing that, where the government was disputed and unstable, disorder must reign; and that one found oneself in the realm of order where the authority of the State was better obeyed. But this concept of order and disorder was too simple. Order is too complicated a phenomenon for us to be able to confide the task of defining it exclusively to the police, as this concept would assume. Order is also, . . and for my part I shall not hesitate to say is above all . . . the sense of the limits which a society ought not to overpass if it does not wish to see reason transform itself into folly, truth transform itself into error, beauty transform itself into ugliness, good transform itself into evil. It is a law of the human mind, in every domain of practical and of spiritual life, that all effect, if it overpasses a certain limit, destroys itself, and, instead of attaining its end, engenders the most varied troubles and crises, becoming a disturbing element. There is nothing more noble in the world than the love of truth, of justice and of beauty. And yet all science which, having lost the sense of the limits of its powers, seeks to resolve insoluble problems, departs from the luminous sphere of reason and loses itself in the fog of chimeras, producing intellectual disorder. The states and religions which have demanded of their age too great a moral perfection, by means of methods of coercion too violent, have sometimes ended by sowing moral disorder through provoking the most unexpected reactions of vice and crime. The divine force of art is originality, that privilege of genius which creates beauties yet unknown;

but originality has also its limits, for it risks, in overpassing them, falling into extravagance, into confusion, into the absurd. This law is even more obvious in the practical realm. It is a well known fact that nothing is so dangerous for any political or economic organization . . . whether a state, a party, an army, a bank, or a business . . . as to engage in enterprises which are beyond its powers. The extreme limit of its powers is also the limit beyond which, for all human institutions, disintegration begins; that is to say, the incurable disorder which precedes death, slow or swift.

This concept of order accepted, we can affirm without hesitation that the spirit of order is represented, in history, not by the Germanic genius, but by the Latin genius. From a certain point of view one can say that the Latin genius is essentially order in its highest possible concept, and that such little order as has reigned in the world has been its work. The political troubles which have agitated the Latin countries at different periods, and especially for the last hundred and thirty years, have not changed this profound characteristic of our spirit. It is always difficult to define the genius of a people, of a race or of a civilization. This genius is always a very complex force, which eludes precise definitions. It is never, moreover, constant and uniform in itself. All nations and all civilizations contradict themselves in their history, by recurring, in certain periods, to the tendencies which dominated preceding epochs. But if one understands by the genius of a people or of a civilization its most persistent tendencies, to which the people or the civilization returns after inevitable fluctuations, one can say that the Latin genius, like the Greek genius to which it owes so much and which has been its master, is a genius *par excellence* limited, and in consequence orderly: and that

it is a limited and ordered genius because, in its most brilliant periods, it, like the Greek genius, set before itself, as an end to be attained, models of perfection, æsthetic, moral or intellectual, as defined as possible. Let us take Greece: why has she attained, in many arts and in certain forms of literature, so great a perfection, which has consecrated so many of her works as models that are always studied with profit? Because she succeeded in limiting the creative energy of genius by traditions and by rules, and the force of the traditions and rules by the creative energy of genius. In all the arts, she has produced, in the most brilliant moments of her activity, great geniuses, who have been able to work within the limits of tradition and of rules strong enough to support them, but not so strong as to stifle them. In philosophy, Greece has produced all kinds of theories. All the conceptions, and even all the aberrations, to which the human mind reverts periodically, are there represented. But it is not by mere chance that one of the two great Greek philosophers whose work has come down to us almost entire, and who has exerted so great an influence upon the ancient world and upon the whole development of the Latin civilization, whether directly or through St. Thomas Aquinas, is Aristotle. Aristotle might be defined as the philosopher of limitation and of order *par excellence.* He began by limiting the universe, by reducing the world to a narrow enclosed system, contesting the astronomic theories which, in making the earth turn round the sun, would have exacted as corollary the infinity of space. He limited the development of the universe, by giving too all things a point of arrival which does not recede in proportion as they approach it; which is fixed and determinate; its *entelechie,* the complete realization of its faculties or of its tendencies. He has founded morality on the idea that virtue is a mean be-

tween two extremes; and he has, consequently, admitted that no element of human nature is radically evil when it keeps to its own place; it only becomes so when it overpasses the limits assigned to it by nature. He has created a system of æsthetics which is, in the main, but a very subtle and ingenius philosophical justification of a certain number of rules which the taste of his epoch imposed upon the poets, writers, and orators; that is to say, the philosophical justification of the limits imposed by the Greek taste upon the originality of genius. He has, in short, created a system of politics which bases itself, ultimately, on the limitation of the population. Aristotle would find himself very much out of his réckoning in his political theories in the modern world, and above all in the countries where, as in Germany, the population swarms; for the State such as he conceives it requires, for its good government, a limited and but little varying population. But what is the aim which this State, whose population is limited, ought to set before it? It is not the unlimited increase of power and wealth; it is virtue; that is to say, an ideal of moral perfection. Virtue is the first care of a State which truly merits this title and which is not a State only in name.

If ancient Greece possessed to so high a degree the sense of limits in the spiritual domain, Rome possessed it in the political domain. The phenomenon which is seemingly the strength in the history of Rome is the persistent spirit of opposition to territorial aggrandizements which dominated its policy after the conquest of Italy. So long as it was a question of conquering central and southern Italy, Rome proceeded, when she was able, with a sufficiently decided spirit of aggression; but so soon as it was a matter of overpassing the Apennines, the Alps and the sea, of founding the great Mediterranean empire which has had so great

an influence on the history of Europe, she felt herself as it were paralysed by the very greatness of the opportunity which presented itself to her. Even during the centuries of the great conquests in Europe, in Asia and in Africa, the aristocracy which governed the empire was always opposed to the policy of annexations and of conquest. It is no exaggeration to say that Rome created her immense empire in spite of herself, forced by a sequence of events which was stronger than the will of her government, or by exceptional personalities such as C. Flaminius and Julius Cæsar, who were not, moreover, much admired. The admiration of Julius Cæsar is modern; the intellectual *élite* of his generation and of the succeeding generations felt towards him, rather, fear and distrust. This phenomenon seems bizarre and almost incomprehensible to an age like ours, where aggressive imperialism has enjoyed such high favour in all countries; but for him who looks from the Roman point of view the reason for this is clear. The Roman nobility knew that it was easier to conquer territories than to keep them; it saw on all sides the ruins of empires which had fallen because they had wished to expand too much and too fast; it did not wish to risk too much for the conquest of an empire which it would not have the strength to keep. The Roman nobility, moreover, . . . and it is another characteristic which distinguishes it from the ruling classes of our age, . . . was never ambitious to make of Rome a state richer or more powerful than other states; it only wished, after having conquered Italy, that Rome might enjoy a certain security and that she might be governed according to certain principles which seemed to it, rightly or wrongly, to represent a perfect ideal of virtue and wisdom. In short, it put into practice, to the best of its ability, the principle of Aristotle, that virtue is

the chief preoccupation of a state which merits that title. For centuries Rome found herself in contact with states which were richer, or more powerful, or more cultivated than herself; never was she envious of them, never did she feel herself humiliated by the comparison, nor obliged to seek to imitate them. She limited herself always to taking from the other peoples what seemed to her useful for her own conservation; but she sought, above all, not to compromise that ideal of wisdom and virtue in which she saw the goal of all her effort. To remain faithful to that ideal, she preferred, during several centuries, to renounce conquests and enrichments which would have been easy to her; which explains, for instance, why Paul Emilius, after having conquered Macedonia, closed all the gold mines and forbade their exploitation; which explains also why, at a certain moment, the Senate refused to accept Egypt, which the King had bequeathed it in his testament. Yet Egypt was considered the richest and most fertile country of the ancient world. But Rome refused it just because it was too rich. The traditionalist and puritan aristocracy feared lest these riches and the Egyptian examples might end by "corrupting" Rome; that is to say, by divorcing the new generations from that ideal of moral perfection in which it believed, and which seemed to it essential for the maintenance of the people in a state of moral vigour. The ideal of moral perfection prevailed over the ambition for power and the desire for wealth. This prudence also explains to us why, when she conquered a country, Rome asked nothing better than to let it live as it would, with its laws and its beliefs, mixing herself with its affairs as little as possible. Rome never dreamed of imposing her language, her manners, or her laws upon her subjects; all the peoples who, under her rule, became Romanized freely and slowly,

because they believed it advantageous to adopt the language and ideas of the dominant nation. Rome knew that she would not be able to impose her will upon all the subject peoples, and she preferred to leave them to govern themselves. This prudence and these hesitations explain the slowness with which the Roman Empire was created, but it also explains its duration.

III

These examples show us the Latin genius, and the Greek genius, which has been the master of the Latin genius, in their characteristic manifestations, seeking, in art as in politics, in literature as in philosophy, order, measure, harmony. Both the one and the other have supplied the models studied and imitated until two centuries ago, more or less well, by all the civilizations which have followed one another in Europe. One may say that the Latin spirit dominated Europe, although with some more or less grave lapses, until the end of the seventeenth century. Up to that period all the social organizations of Europe, diverse as they were in details, had yet a character which could be defined as Greco-Latin. They were all based upon the great pessimist doctrine which has been formulated under force so different by the religions and philosophies of the past, and according to which human nature is more prone to evil than to good. They deduced from this principle that it was necessary to distrust men, to multiply restraints and limits around their perverse instincts, to master their pride and cupidity. They sought to succeed in this partly by all kinds of moral and political coercion, partly by enjoining on the generations elevated ideals of perfection. All these civilizations were poor, were lacking in energy, and ignorant in comparison

with contemporary civilizations; they limited their desires, their ambitions, their spirit of initiative, their audacity, their originality; they produced little and slowly, and even while suffering much from the insufficiency of their material resources, they considered the augmentation of wealth only as a painful necessity. But they sought to attain to arduous standards of perfection . . . artistic, or literary, or moral, or religious. To make use once more of a formula which I have perhaps a little abused in these latter days, quality prevailed over quantity; all the limitations to which these civilizations submitted with so much patience were only the necessary price of these coveted perfections; in good as in evil, effort was made rather in the direction of depth than in that of extent. Rather than to generalize vices and virtues by extenuating them, these civilizations tended to create a small number of great villains, of great characters, of great scholars and of great artists.

A conclusion thus forces itself upon us: it is that, if the Latin spirit had dominated the modern world as it dominated the ancient world, a catastrophe like this would not have been possible. Europe would have yet seen wars; but she would not have seen armies so formidable, nor engines of war so murderous, nor proceedings so barbarous, nor so savage a fury of passions, nor a people dreaming of conquering the empire of the world in a few weeks, nor the frightful disorder which that insane ambition would let loose. Rome had shown, by a conclusive historical experience, that the empire of the world cannot be, even where it is possible, but the slow and patient work of centuries. But then another question arises: for what reason has the Latin spirit no longer today the influence over the world which it had formerly? What new force has replaced it? Why, to these limited and ordered civilizations has there succeeded

a social state which can give birth to such cataclysm? What has happened in the world? An immense revolution . . , the greatest perhaps that men have ever seen . . . and which has overthrown in two centuries the world wherein our ancestors lived. I believe that it is not possible to understand the import of modern life if one has not understood the magnitude of that revolution; and one cannot understand it if one has not an exact idea of the civilizations which have preceded our own. Classic culture, if it should succeed in freeing itself from the German influence which, at least in Italy, has dominated it owing to the baneful influence of the universities, ought to serve, above all today, to make modern civilization in its essential difference understood by an exact knowledge of ancient civilizations. In what does this difference consist? An enthusiastic optimist has succeeded, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and with the aid of favourable circumstances, in convincing a part of humanity that human nature is inherently good in itself; that, delivered from all the restraints with which laws and religions had surrounded it, abandoned to its instincts, it would continually better itself, and would create happiness around it, by a kind of interior law. All the means of coercion, of which former ages made use so largely to subdue the evil tendencies of human nature, have been mitigated or destroyed; man has conquered liberty; he has permitted his will and his intelligence to develop to the extreme limit of his energy and power of action; he has created science, conquered the earth and the air, subjugated nature. . . . But he has been forced to abandon or lower almost all the ideals of artistic, moral or religious perfection venerated by our ancestors; forced everywhere to sacrifice quality to quantity. . . . History has thus changed its course; a new world has come into being, in which cer-

tain principles of life seem to have been reversed. Was this new world better or worse than the old? For the last century we do nothing but discuss this problem, under a thousand different forms, and, for the most part, without being aware of it, in our quarrels, political, religious, philosophical. This problem underlies all these quarrels. But the question, thus stated, is insoluble. For the two conceptions of life, being partial, have their true side and their false side, their weaknesses and their strong points. The ancient has given to the world incomparable master-pieces, great philosophers, great religions. It has also given horrible tyrannies and fetters very heavy to bear. It has divided men into a great number of small isolated and antagonistic groups; but it has given birth, in the midst of all these enmities, to the most sublime among the doctrines of love and charity that man has ever known. The modern conception has bestowed on man much liberty, dominion over all the earth, a fabulous wealth and power. But it has too much mixed up, and confounded, in a kind of fog, the distinctions between truth and error, between beauty and ugliness, between good and evil. And it is in this confusion that three generations have sown with confidence the noblest ideas of fraternity and love, to gather the bloody harvest of this gigantic war!

IV

The present catastrophe is, in reality, only the final outcome of a gigantic but confused effort accomplished by four or five generations who have thought only of augmenting the power of man, without distinguishing between the power which creates and that which destroys; who have considered it equally progressive to construct steamboats as

to build dreadnoughts, to construct railroads as to construct monstrous cannons or to invent terrifying explosives; who, although not repudiating the moral traditions of the past, have left full liberty to all the passions which could stimulate human activity, even to those which seemed the most dangerous to the predominating morality of past ages, such as pride and cupidity. Our age has demanded of men three things: activity, patriotism, and the docility to economic and political discipline which great industrial civilization requires. Outside of these three virtues it has not imposed with vigour any moral law, either upon private or upon collective life. Beneath its apparent unity the world had ended by concealing a restless chaos of opposing interests, of passions and of ideas, in which the Latin genius, which is a genius of order, of reason and of perspicuity, has ever felt itself a little misplaced; whereas the German genius, remaining turbulent and uneven, delighted in it as in its element, and grew, in it, over-excited to the pitch of preparing, in silence, for the unsuspecting world the formidable surprise of this war. All the tragedy of our age lies in this contradiction; and no country has felt it, has suffered by it, as has France, which had remained the most loyal to the Latin tradition in the midst of the tremendous shocks of the last two centuries. The political convulsions which have shaken her during these last hundred and thirty years have caused many people to think that France was the great centre of disorder in Europe. It is to be presumed that the European War will have proved to the most obstinate that the centre of disorder was elsewhere. Even at the very height of its gravest political crises France did not cease to be, to such a degree as this was yet possible, an element of order in Europe, because she has been, among the great nations of Europe, the one which has preserved

to the highest degree the two qualities which are the condition of true order: the sense of limits, and the aspiration towards a qualitative civilization. One might even go further, and say that the agitations and revolutions from which France has suffered during more than a century, and which have caused her to be considered as the greatest focus of disorder, proceeded, at least in part, from the discrepancy existing between the tendencies of the epoch and her spirit of order. "France," . . . and I here ask your permission to quote a page written by myself; not that it possesses any special value, but because it was written previous to the war. . . . "France, in effecting the Revolution, gave the *coup de grace* to the limited civilization of our fathers. It was not of set purpose, but in thinking of and aiming at something else, that she dealt the blow; and this is so true that she has since continued, and, perhaps alone in the world, she yet aspires, to produce excellence, to be of worth, and to assert herself through quality rather than through quantity. But excellence cannot multiply itself so quickly, so easily, and in so large a degree as the mediocre and the bad. And so it is that the nation which did not tremble before Europe in arms, which dared to defy God and instal Reason on His throne, hesitates, takes alarm, is terrified at the ever-growing figures read in the statistics of its neighbours; and it no longer knows whether it is in decline or if it marches as the head of the nations; and sometimes it is proud of itself, sometimes is discouraged; has the sense of being isolated; asks itself: 'what is to be done? Resist to the death the universal triumph of quantity? Or utterly abandon the ancient tradition and Americanize oneself like the rest?' Often when I come to Paris I go, at sunset, up the Avenue des Champs Elysées towards the Arc de Triomphe. . . . Do you know what, for some time past,

I cannot help thinking when I walk along that avenue? I think of the statistics of the production of iron in Germany. A million and a half tons in 1870; two millions in 1875; three in 1880; nearly five in 1890; eight and a half in 1900; eleven in 1905; nearly fifteen in 1910! My friends, believe me; it was on the day when Apollo made his speech in Olympus that there began between him and Vulcan the war which is let loose today in the whole world. Who will prevail? Iron is incontestably a precious metal; railways and machines have been made of it; cannons, guns, breastplates have been made of it. But to encumber the world with iron to the point of driving out beauty from this earth, and all the qualities which reveal the mobility and greatness of the human spirit, is not this to lead the world back to barbarism? Who will prevail? Vulcan or Apollo? Quantity or quality?"

The struggle between the two gods of Olympus, which I had dreaded during my journeys in America, has assumed all of a sudden a form most violent and terrible. One day, suddenly, in this chaos of conflicting interests, passions and opinions in which we live, pride, ambition, and the spirit of violence prevailed. The nation which had made a superficial age believe that it represented the spirit of order in the world has, seized with a fit of madness which was the logical outcome of its pride and cupidity, thrown Europe and half the world into the disorder of an unprecedented historic crisis. Since that day we dwell upon an earth which quakes; and as if, from one moment to the next, the sky would fall upon our heads. The sky will not fall upon our heads; but it would be difficult to foresee the future which awaits our civilization if it does not succeed in regaining once more, in the quest for new æsthetic and moral perfections, a surer sense of limits. Is the prob-

lem which the war presents to Europe anything, indeed, but a problem of limits? It presents it to all under a material and geographical form. There are some nations which have emerged from their frontiers and invaded the territories of their neighbours; there are others who struggle to drive back the invaders and to conquer frontiers which shall protect them for the future from fresh outrages. But if it be necessary, before all, to drive back the horde, so soon as possible, into the territory from which it ought never to have issued forth, to drive it back is not sufficient. It is necessary to create in Europe a political situation and a moral state which shall prevent the turbulent genius of the Germanic peoples from again filling the pages of history with a second venture of this kind. Together with the question of geographic and political limits, there is a question of moral limits; the greatest, perhaps, that has ever been presented to man: the question as to the limits which states, nations, economic interests, intellectual cultures, shall know how to set to their ambition, their activity, their spirit of competition and of conquest. For the whole question lies in that. The European War shows that modern civilization is yet more powerful than even its most ardent admirers had thought it. No one, I believe, would have dared two years ago to prophesy that the greatest states of Europe would be able to endure for years a war of this magnitude. It is unquestionable that men had never achieved a more stupendous effort. But just because one part of humanity has arrived at a degree of power which had never been attained, the question today is to know to what use it intends to put that force. Does it intend to yield it as a blind instrument of destruction to pride, to cupidity, to ambition, so that they may periodically precipitate crises such as that which today agitates the world? Or will it

desire to make use of it solely in definite directions and for aims which shall be in accord with a high and noble ideal of life? Will it succeed, in short, in imposing on its tremendous force some moral limits, . . . and what?

There is no doubt that the future of Europe depends upon this alternative. It is difficult to believe that the masses would adapt themselves indefinitely to regard, as the final expression of progress, a state of things by which, periodically, two generations should work tenaciously so as to afford to the third the means of exterminating itself. The world in which we live, huge and powerful, but unbalanced and full of confusion, requires a little more order, harmony, justice, beauty and measure. The crisis in which Europe is struggling proves clearly that, if we do not succeed in raising the moral tone of European life, the civilization of sword and science will end in a kind of gigantic suicide. The task which awaits Europe, on the morrow of the war, is, then, very difficult; for it is a matter of nothing less than attempting to profound, serious, organic reconciliation between what is most noble and most beautiful from the moral, religious and intellectual point of view in the qualitative civilizations of the past, and the new forces created by our age, such as industrialism and democracy. We have, hitherto, set side by side and jumbled up all these contradictory elements; it is necessary to blend them. Now these adjustments, when they are not superficial hoaxes, but serious attempts to lead men to accomplish their duties better, are always very difficult, demanding a great spirit of sacrifice, a great moral energy, the ardent faith in an ideal. Our age, moreover, has achieved things too great, and obtained too much success in over-passing all the limits respected by our ancestors, not to feel a strong attraction towards the limitless greatness of quantity, towards all that

is colossal, unbalanced, enormous, violent. The task then will be difficult. . . . But if human nature has not changed; if beauty, reason, virtue, have not lost their eternal forces of attraction for the soul, the task should be possible and glorious. It is not conceivable that Europe will emerge from this crisis without understanding that there are, in contemporary civilization, some excesses which we must correct under pain of seeing all our efforts periodically annihilated by catastrophes. It is the struggle between the two Gods of Olympus; between the God who forges the iron and the God who knows the laws of the necessary proportions between the elements of life; that is to say, the secret of health, of beauty, of truth, of virtue; it is this struggle which has provoked the immense moral crisis from which the war has ensued. We, the Latin nations, have suffered more than the other nations from this moral crisis . . . for we were especially devotees of the God who is the august guardian of measure. The solution of this great moral crisis would be compensation to us for the sacrifices which this crisis in history imposes on us; and no country would have so well deserved it as France, which has made the greatest sacrifices. Like all the foreigners whose hearts are wrung by the thought of all that France has suffered and will suffer in this war, I ardently hope that it will usher in in Europe an epoch in which the Latin genius will be able to shine with its full radiance, in a world which will understand what is order, harmony, reason, humanity, better than the last generation had understood. France is entitled to this recompense for the terrible sacrifices that she endures with so much steadfastness; and history will bestow it upon her, to her glory and for the happiness of the world.

CHAPTER VI

The Intellectual Problems of the New World

THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEMS OF THE NEW WORLD

I

THERE is perhaps nothing which will surprise the historians of the European War more than the general reconciliation of parties and opinions by which its outbreak was followed. Strange as such a statement may appear, there can be no doubt that Europe enjoyed internal peace for the first time during the greatest war history has ever known. The most bitter religious, political and intellectual feuds were forgotten in the space of a few short days from end to end of a continent which for three centuries had never ceased to afford the world a spectacle of ever recurring conflicts.

This extraordinary phenomenon has been one of the greatest surprises of the war. At the same time it is one which readily admits of explanation. Every country realized immediately that union of strength was absolutely necessary, since not merely its prestige or the possession of some special territory, but its very life was at stake. Undoubtedly this explanation is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. The phenomenon is in reality more complex and attributable to causes which lie deeper. Reconciliation is almost always a very difficult matter when it has to deal with animosities fostered and intensified by long centuries of conflict; on this occasion, however, it was comparatively easy, because the European War involved in serious difficulties all the parties and schools of thought which had striven so fiercely for the mastery in time of peace. Much as each party or the adherents of each

school of thought would have enjoyed casting their opponents' mistakes in their teeth, they preferred to forgive, seeing that the arguments of each and every party might be turned against it.

A few examples will make this clear. What Pacifist would today venture to assert that universal peace is the necessary result of the evolution of modern society? Such utopian theories have been carried away in a deluge of blood. On the other hand, what opponent of pacifism would dare to avow that when he maintained the necessity of war, he had in his mind a war which knows no limits whether of space, time, destruction of life and property, or the unscrupulousness of its methods? If events have proved the Pacifists to be in the wrong, they have so far transcended the predictions of their opponents as to preclude any possibility of triumph for the advocates of war. It is of course clear that those who, at a time when Germany was arming herself to the teeth, demanded the reduction of armaments, were mistaken; they were, however, right when they asserted that modern armies were being developed beyond the limits set by nature to this organ of the social body. It is, moreover, evident that one reason why we have returned to the war of position is the enormous size of modern armies and the complicated nature and destructive power of their weapons. The war of manœuvre demands armies which are relatively small in comparison to their field of action, can be readily moved about and the range of whose weapons does not exceed a certain limit. But how can a war of position, which lasts for years, in an age when armies are composed of all able bodied men between eighteen and fifty years of age, fail to lead to a universal cataclysm? The actual outbreak of the European War proved the Pacifists in the wrong,

but its course has shown them to be right in declaring that Europe's vast armed hosts would not ensure her peace and would make the next war an appalling social catastrophe. It must indeed be admitted that their pessimistic predictions fell short of the truth, for no Pacifist ever so much as dreamed of so long and terrible a conflict.

If we turn our attention to the relation between the European War and the political doctrines which divided Europe before the war, we shall find the same contradiction. Germany had many admirers all over the world, more especially in the upper classes, simply because she represented, or seemed to represent, the principle of authority and order. Her government was indeed, as we know to our cost, the strongest in Europe, the only one perhaps which did not as yet stand in awe of those whom it was supposed to rule. It was able to take the initiative in this war and to inflict this appalling scourge upon the world just because it was so strong and could exercise such unlimited authority over its people. This fact will in the eyes of several generations lessen the prestige still enjoyed by strong, autocratic governments. The existence of the principle of order cannot be admitted in a system which brought this overwhelming disaster upon the world, and, whatever may have been the mistakes and weaknesses of the democratic and parliamentary governments of western Europe — and they were only too numerous — posterity will judge them leniently, since these governments would never have involved the world in this war, or violated the neutrality of Belgium, or waged war in so barbarous a manner. At the same time the world will be forced to recognize that a little more farsightedness before the war and a little more rapidity, energy and intelligence in its prosecution, would have been of material service to these governments. It is

fairly safe to predict that all the nations concerned will issue from the war more or less dissatisfied with their respective governments, for one reason or another. Seeing, however, that every civilized form of government is represented among the belligerent states, the European War is hardly likely to furnish any decisive argument in favour of any one such form; it is more likely to emphasize the weak points of all the various systems which Europe has created and tried in the hope of finding the one most nearly approaching perfection.

The same thing applies to the much disputed subject of protection and free trade. It is difficult to say which of these two theories, each of which has had such ardent partisans during the last century, is likely to gain by the experiences of the war, which seems to prove protection and free trade to be equally necessary and equally dangerous. Has it not shown conclusively that national defence is impossible without the support of certain industries which must consequently be artificially furthered if they fail to develop naturally? It is obvious today that absolute free trade would put certain European countries at the mercy of others from a military point of view, but it is no less clear that the increasing difficulties with which all the belligerents have to cope are partly due to the hindrances placed in the way of international commerce by the war. Food supply difficulties have exercised great influence on the course of the war and are likely to influence its outcome, but these difficulties are merely the result of the suppression of free trade. Just as absolute free trade would have placed certain countries at the mercy of others, the blockade, that is to say, the suppression of exchange, will be one of the causes of the eventual capitulation of the

Central Empires. Even in this problem, we find ourselves faced by an insoluble contradiction.

II

There would be no difficulty in finding other examples. Any thoughtful man who turns his attention towards the events of the present day and the discussions to which they give rise, will easily find other instances to which these reflections apply and understood why so many sworn foes have agreed to sink their differences. The various political parties suddenly found themselves face to face and without weapons of defence. The war has had the effect of a philosophic earthquake, shaking to their very foundations the most diametrically opposed ideas or at all events those which claimed to solve the most urgent problems of contemporary life. It is a phenomenon unique in the history of the world and one which is worthy the attention of all thoughtful minds not wholly absorbed by the military situation, just as financiers are already turning their attention to the taxation and commercial treaties of the future. This intellectual upheaval is indeed a far more serious problem than the destruction of wealth and probably no less so than the destruction of so many human lives which were the hope and mainstay of Europe. This upheaval will probably be the point of departure of that great crisis of modern civilization of which the world war is but the prologue — a crisis which promises to be universal, economic, intellectual and moral. In order to realize the truth of this, we have only to consider the position after the conclusion of peace of the institutions, parties and theories of which the war has shown the weak points and

falsified the predictions. These institutions, political parties and theories, which ruled European society with varying degrees of success before the war, will find themselves, as it were, in an empty void, and the probable consequences of such a position and the moral crisis resulting from it are easily divined. Hence it is important to seek its causes. How was it possible for so learned and powerful a civilization to be suddenly confronted with events which falsified so many of its beliefs, shattered so many of its hopes and proved all it had thought and accomplished during two generations to be erroneous? How could it fall into so gross an error?

III

The answer to this question is simple. The error was possible because our civilization had too many aims and, by striving to attain them all at the same time, had lost the power of selection. This expression may seem obscure, but I will endeavour to explain it by choosing the most obvious of the numerous examples which lie to hand: the way in which Europe had faced and solved one of those great problems which have engaged the attention of every successive generation — the problem of peace and war. In every age there have been discussions as to peace and war, their nature and the part they play in the world. In every age there have been men who looked upon perpetual peace as the highest good and others who regarded law as the divine law of life. Without entering into the discussion of this subject, we may safely assert that there have been periods when the principle of war has prevailed and others when that of peace has been predominant; that both have accomplished great things and that both have at a given moment

passed through a crisis determined by the development of the principle which had guided them. If it be admitted that each state is a sovereign will, which neither can nor should recognize any limit to its liberty save the greater strength of another state, the principle of war will prevail. Each state will strive to be as strong as possible; it will turn every citizen into a soldier; it will avoid contact with other states, that is to say, with those other sovereign wills which are fated to come into collision with its own will in the course of time; it will be hostile to everything which tends to make the peoples of different countries expand and fuse their interests: i.e., to commerce, treaties, international marriages and the adoption of foreign customs. It will act upon what I may call the principles of narrow nationalism on which the cities of ancient times were founded; the system prevalent in part of the classical world before the Pax Romana. It cannot be said that this régime is in itself opposed to human nature or radically bad, when we reflect how much was accomplished by ancient civilizations under it, but if, on the other hand, it be admitted that each state is subject to a higher law of fraternity, charity and moral perfection, of which it is but the instrument, political and military organization will lose much of its importance and the necessity of fulfiling this higher duty will lead men to fuse their interests, ideas and sentiments. We have an example of this, due to the influence of Christianity, in mediaeval Europe. The peoples of Europe had almost entirely lost their political and military spirit; they were no longer capable of organizing a great state; their wars, which occupy so large a place in our modern histories, were mere child's play, since they did not know how to raise even a small army and had lost the art of strategy. The intellectual and moral frontiers between nations had vanished and

given place to a cosmopolitanism of which Latin was the official language. The disadvantages of cosmopolitanism were indoubtedly great, but here again the system cannot be condemned as in itself opposed to human nature or radically bad. The Middle Ages were amongst the greatest periods in the history of Europe — a period to which we are immensely indebted. It gradually populated countries which the upheavals following the fall of the Roman Empire had depopulated; it brought many barbarians under the influence of civilization; it brought forth marvellous arts — architecture, for instance. Moreover, it was under this régime of political cosmopolitanism that Europe began that magnificent work of exploration which has made the whole world ours.

It is therefore clear that man can live under either a national or a cosmopolitan régime and neither will prevent his contributing his quota to that great and mysterious task of history whose purpose we vainly seek to read. Both systems have their weak points and drawbacks; like all things human, they have their limits and at some given time they become exhausted; they may, however, none the less be of service to what we somewhat vaguely term the progress of the world, provided that man makes a definite choice between them and accepts all their inevitable disadvantages. The inhabitants of classical cities did not aspire to the advantages of cosmopolitanism, just as the peoples of the Middle Ages resigned themselves to the drawbacks of political dismemberment and disarmament. The weakness of the individual state was an essential condition of the cosmopolitanism of the Middle Ages, just as the spirit of exclusion was an essential condition of Sparta and Rome. Where our age has failed is in its inability to choose between two principles and two systems. By developing to the utmost a movement

which began in the seventeenth century, it has confused these two distinct principles, just as if it were possible for them to develop side by side without the time ever coming when one of them would say to the other: "Thus far and no farther," thus making a choice absolutely unavoidable. It had apparently adopted the principle of peace. The various states of Europe, large and small alike, had made endless treaties and agreements. They had all allowed foreigners to reside, move about freely, own property, engage in commerce and marry within their borders. They had done everything in their power to encourage the exchange of capital, merchandise, ideas, discoveries and tastes. We had ceased to possess an international language like Latin, but there was more study of languages, and important books were translated into all the leading languages. Internationalism was ostentatiously advocated by certain political parties and an international organization of interests had come into existence which was to a certain extent the necessary condition of the interior well-being of each nation. The Great Powers of Europe had moreover recognized officially, though with varying degrees of good faith, the maintenance of peace as the end and object of their policy — an aim to which everything else was to be subordinate. Our age had indeed created a cosmopolitanism which in certain respects recalled the Middle Ages. The logical consequence was that the opposite principle of war should have been so limited that wars endangering this international order, this comity of nations, by their length, their extent or their duration would be absolutely impossible. This was not the case. A political organization of the Great Powers, recalling in many ways the nationalism and belligerent spirit of the cities of ancient times, but on a far vaster scale, was grafted on to this cosmopolitanism. The Great European Powers for

various reasons vied with each other in the increase of armaments such as the world had never seen — armaments which turned war into a duel *à outrance,* just as in the days when each state looked upon each of its neighbours as an enemy. In almost every country national pride, suspicion or hatred of neighbouring peoples, the spirit of jealousy and rivalry, the desire to be the first in everything were all sedulously fostered, just as though we were living in a perpetual state of war. In the most powerful military empire of Europe we have even seen the development of a school enjoying official protection, which preached to an unprotesting world the doctrine of war knowing neither law nor limit, contempt for treaties, the divine nature of force and the uselessness of the rights of civilians. This school, intoxicated by official protection and the admiration of the world, ended by making Germany ready to make war upon the most highly civilized nations of Europe, her best customers and most sincere admirers, with the ferocity of African savages before they came under European rule. It is no exaggeration to say that the nationalism grafted by Europe on to the interests and aspirations of cosmopolitanism was far bolder and far more dangerous than the nationalism of the ancient world, which did at all events recognize the sanctity of treaties. A treaty was a sacred thing, placed under the protection of the divinity, and binding the contracting parties unconditionally. A state which desired to violate a treaty had to try and prove that it was really being true to it, since it would have been an unheard of thing for it to declare that it no longer intended to carry it out because it no longer served its purposes, a theory which it was reserved for twentieth century Europe to teach in its universities — a theory evolved in Germany, of course, but received favourably even

in the universities of those countries which are now fighting against her.

IV

It is obvious enough today that if peace and war be two natural conditions of human nature, we have, by our unwise confusion of the principles of peace and war, invented a high explosive which has ended by destroying Europe. Europe had, however, gradually become so used to this unique and paradoxical situation that she looked upon it as quite natural. The various efforts made to rouse her to a realization of her imminent peril all failed. This illusion was after all but a special instance of a more universal illusion to which our civilization fell victim, which was the foundation of our whole mode of thought and of our conception of the world, and will probably be looked upon by our grandchildren as positively childish: i. e., the illusion that man can have anything in the world without its corresponding drawbacks — the advantages of war and the benefits of peace; both power and perfection, both quantity and quality, both speed and beauty. Our age is the most learned which the world has ever seen, but, in spite of its immense learning, it had contrived to forget one very simple truth which far more ignorant peoples have borne in mind: that the good things of this world are so intimately interrelated that it is impossible to enjoy them all at the same time for an indefinite period. A moment invariably comes when one becomes the limit of the other and a choice must be made between them. This simple truth, of which we lost sight in our quest of power and riches, is the key to the whole of the vast tragedy which the world finds so hard to understand. The contradiction between the two principles

of peace and war which we have studied has not been the only error into which our age has fallen. But for the limitations of space, we might analyse in like manner the antithesis between the other principles of which we have spoken: liberty and authority, tradition and progress, ethics and economic interests. We should find everywhere, when comparing our age with its predecessors, the same phenomenon: the attempt to reconcile two irreconcilable principles instead of assigning definite limits to each and then choosing between them. Our epoch, which was the first to attempt this compromise, has done so in every sphere: in politics, ethics, law, and even in art. Those who deplore the decadence of art in the modern world are constantly told that no other age has so striven to understand and appreciate the most widely different schools, styles and artists. The remark itself is true enough, but the conclusion drawn from it is not equally so, since this endeavour to admire everything results from an inability to make a definite choice peculiar to our day. The ages which gave birth to the greatest works of art were limited in their tastes. When artistic taste comprehends so many different styles, it becomes feeble and superficial and ends in becoming mere dilettantism which weakens the creative power of the artist when he has not the strength to rise above the caprices of fashion. The effects of this inability to choose are, however, nothing like as injurious to art as to law, politics and ethics. The enfeeblement of governments, their inconsistencies, the irritability and uncertainty of public opinion in every country, the short-sighted fatalism prevalent before the war, the intoxication of public opinion in Germany, are one and all the offspring of this intellectual and moral confusion. When an age ceases to be governed by clear and definite principles, its actions will be either slow and uncertain or violent and

passionate, and Europe before the war was in both these frames of mind. A nation which was a prey to diabolic pride, unlimited greed, unbounded confidence in its own strength and superiority, was surrounded by vacillating, perplexed peoples, conscious of their own weakness and of the peril threatening them, but unable to do anything to avert the dreaded catastrophe and even, from time to time, deceiving themselves into thinking that the frenzy of their dangerous neighbour could be held in check by smiles and concessions. The intellectual and moral confusion, which dominated our epoch and made a course of action having definite aims and dictated by definite principles an impossibility, had brought about two opposite results: an ever increasing frenzy in Germany and an ever increasing disquietude in every other country, and it was inevitable that this frenzy should one day break out openly in central Europe and claim as its victims the perplexed peoples of the neighbouring lands.

V

How could such an enlightened epoch as our own cherish the delusion that it is possible to possess everything at the same time? What part was played in the great drama of modern history by that inability to choose which resulted from this illusion and is characteristic of our age? Here we have the great problem which Europe must face once more and endeavour to solve definitely after the war, when so many institutions and theories which seemed founded upon the rock will prove to have been built upon the sand. I said that Europe must face this problem once more and endeavour to solve it definitely, because it has been continually discussed under the most varied forms during the last century. The two solutions found seem, however, to have been

mere makeshifts, since one of them regarded this confusion merely as an aberration of minds led astray by pride and false doctrine, while the other looked upon it as a higher condition, a kind of perfection attained at last by part of the human race. The time has perhaps come when man will more readily realize the inadequacy of both these solutions. It is not difficult to prove that, far from being a mere collective aberration, this confusion was the condition of an immense effort made by the two last centuries. It must not be forgotten, if we would understand the modern world and its crises, that Europe has for two hundred years been engaged upon two gigantic tasks without precedent in history. She has been striving to organize society and the state on wholly new principles, such as the will of the people, liberty, the concept of progress, nationality and its rights, and she was at the same time endeavouring to populate the whole earth and turn it to account with the help of marvellous instruments, thus making the whole world one. In order to succeed in both these tasks she had to stimulate the energy, initiative, activity and capacity for work of every class,— an unceasing effort which has been considerably furthered by the illusion that man can have all the good things of this world at the same time, and by the mental fog which leads him to confuse beauty and ugliness, good and evil, truth and error. Men and ages alike, when aiming at rapid and continual success, are fond of imagining themselves omnipotent and are unwilling to be hampered by definite ethical, logical or æsthetic principles, which, while sure rules of conduct, are also definite limitations. A civilization which aimed at the rapid creation of wealth, institutions, conceptions, theories, machinery and new nations, was bound to hate all modes of thought and all laws which would have hampered it and to adopt standards sufficiently

flexible to approve as good and beautiful everything which favoured its many and varied interests.

This confusion, which has been considered a mere aberration, was therefore the essential condition of what we have rightly or wrongly called the progress of our age. Must we then conclude that those who regarded this confusion as a state of perfection were in the right? In default of other reasons, the crisis of so many institutions and opposing doctrines, which began with the European War, would be enough to make us doubt it. If the principles of authority and liberty, of pacifism and militarism, of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, have all alike been affected by the war, it would be absurd to conclude that they are all alike false and that they must one and all disappear. They are all principles which have ruled human society and it is obvious that they must continue to do so, since it is impossible to conceive of a state not dominated by one or other of them. What else is then proved by this universal crisis of necessary institutions and doctrines but that we must no longer strive to reconcile and blend opposing principles as we have hitherto done; that we must no longer desire peace and prepare for war at the same time, multiply the prerogatives of the state and diminish its authority and its prestige, worship both right and force and confuse success with perfection?

VI

We see then that there are numerous indications that the time is approaching when Europe will have to choose one of the various principles which she had confounded. If this be the case, we can also see what a tremendous intellectual task will fall to the lot of the new world, which will have to substitute systems of philosophy, ethics, politics, law and

religion, schools of art and learning whose aim it will be to distinguish between opposing principles from those which endeavoured to reconcile and fuse them — an attempt to which they owe the success which they have enjoyed during the last half century. Thus stated, the change seems simple enough, but those who have to initiate it will soon realize that it involves a far reaching intellectual revolution. The whole question of German versus Latin culture, which has been the subject of such heated discussions since 1914, contains in itself a dim presentiment of the necessity and difficulty of this intellectual revolution. Since that fateful date there has been one continual protest against the supremacy of the obscure and ill-balanced Teutonic genius over the lucid and harmonious Latin genius. How was it possible to prefer obscurity and complication to lucidity and simplicity? Why was the brilliant Latin genius dimmed by the fogs borne by the north wind from the forests of Germany? Surely this state of things must come to an end. On all hands it is admitted that the Latin and the Germanic genius are irreconcilably opposed. What is the meaning of all these protests and recriminations?

What has already been said, and a careful comparison of modern civilization with the civilizations of ancient times will help us again here. The lucidity of the Latin genius is merely the endeavour to define principles exactly, to prevent their being confused with one another, and consequently to lay down accurate and certain laws. German obscurity, which has so frequently been taken for depth, is the attempt to confound principles by weakening the force of laws. In philosophy, law, ethics, history, in every branch of learning indeed, the German mind has, more especially during the last two centuries, steadily confounded principles and definitions, demolished traditions, confused

good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly, the true and the false, in order to give a freer rein to passions and interests. The moral and intellectual confusion of our age is not wholly the work of the German mind; other peoples, even the Latin races themselves, have helped to bring it about, but there can be no doubt that the German mind has accomplished more in this direction than any other, and it is just because it has been, often under the cloak of liberty, the most determined and energetic factor in this untold disorder, that in spite of or, it may be, on account of its faults, it has contrived to obtain the pre-eminence in the modern world. It appealed to the tendencies of an age which would submit to no discipline but that imposed by work and the state and aspired in everything else, in art and private morals, in religion and family life, in business and pleasure alike, to an ever increasing measure of liberty. Even obscurity of form had become a virtue, since it served to conceal the incoherence of contradictory doctrines. Kant, one of the most involved writers of any age or country, was the most highly esteemed philosopher of the nineteenth century: why? Because contradiction was the very essence of his system. His materialistic spirituality, his absolute relativism, his theistic atheism, his free determinism, were admirably suited to a period which thought it did well to admit all principles, even to the most contradictory, so as to make use of them all. Obscurity was a valuable quality to a system which was based upon contradiction. If Kant had written like St. Thomas Aquinas or Descartes, the world would perforce have seen all those contradictions which he was anxious to conceal from it.

The hatred of Germanism which is now prevalent leads us then to the same conclusion as the examination of the position of political parties and doctrines at the close of the

war. We must strive to emerge from the intellectual and moral confusion by which we were surrounded when the war broke out, and if we are to do so, we must make a great intellectual effort in the direction indicated by our analysis of this confusion. We must induce coming generations to aim rather less at power and rather more at perfection; we must teach the mind to find enjoyment once more in lucidity of thought and simplicity of sentiment; we must familiarize man in a world grown so wide, and a civilization become so powerful, with the idea of the impassable limits of truth, beauty, virtue, reason and power, which men understood so readily when they were weaker and more ignorant; we must discover scholars, artists, writers and philosophers endowed with not only the intelligence but also the moral force necessary for the accomplishment of this task. Will Europe be equal to this effort? The future alone can tell. It would seem, however, as if not only the possibility of a lasting peace, but the very existence of the older civilized peoples depended on this transformation. We have always felt somewhat out of place amid this confusion, which was only suited to nations, which, like the German peoples, were subject to fits of passion and attacks of collective madness. Of this the present crisis affords a proof. The governments of the nations now arrayed against Germany and Austria have frequently been reproached for their lack of military preparedness. It is, however, beyond question that this unpreparedness, at least in so far as France, Great Britain and Italy are concerned, was not due merely to lack of foresight on the part of their respective governments. We allowed ourselves to be outdistanced by Germany in the race for armaments partly because we realized that this race was madness and that the exaggeration of the system was making it absurd. Not

being blinded, like the German people, by pride, covetousness and ambition, we shrank from developing a system whose excesses, complications, difficulties, untold sacrifices and dangers were more or less clearly perceived by all nations. We were wrong, of course, and we are now expiating our mistake. This expiation will not, however, render reasoning nations better able to play their part in a world dominated by the absurd and its train of attendant passions. It is therefore a matter of life and death for us to lead the policy and institutions of Europe back to more humane and logical conceptions than those prevalent during the last half century, since in a world ruled by passions and theories carried to extreme, those of us who are reasonable beings will always be at a disadvantage and will end by becoming the victims of the madman and the turbulent. It is above all for this reason that we must do everything in our power to bring the war to a victorious end. We shall not deliver Europe from the insanity of which she all but died unless we succeed in defeating that army which is the master-piece of that rabid spirit to which Europe has been forced to submit for the last forty years — a spirit which she had even come to admire from time to time. This is the task of the soldiers of whom we think with such tenderness and with the hope that they may accomplish it ere long and with such a meed of success that their sacrifices may not be in vain. When, however, their work is finished, the task of scholars, philosophers and lawyers will begin and we must only hope that their patience, tenacity and self-sacrifice will prove worthy of the soldiers who are preparing the way for better times — times in which Europe, far removed from the perils which menace her on every hand today, may live in peace and safety in the light of newer and loftier conceptions.

CHAPTER VII

The Great Contradiction

THE GREAT CONTRADICTION

When we consider the present state of things in Europe, we invariably find ourselves confronted by the question — a question as persistent as the importunate widow, a question which has never yet been satisfactorily answered — How is it that an epoch so concentrated on the increase of wealth, the greater security of life and the establishment of the universal rule of reason could prepare, will and wage this appalling conflict? We will make one more attempt to find the answer to this poignant and ever recurring question.

I

PATRIOTISM AND PROGRESS

The old proverb tells us that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good," and even in the terrible calamities of the world war we may find some ground for encouragement. It was commonly supposed that if a European war ever broke out, and reason and compassion failed to do their work, egotism would issue the order to lay down arms. It was further alleged that in every grade of society men had been too long accustomed to an easy and safe existence to endure the ruin and privation of a universal war. We were told that revolution would be the inevitable result if the war lasted more than three months. Our century was credited with the spirit of self-sacrifice and abnegation for a few weeks at most. The General Staffs of Europe recognized self-interest as their sovereign and declared that they would never go to war except in obedience to his orders. When the history of the Great War comes

to be written, it will be seen that almost all the blunders and cruelties of its early days were due to haste. The rulers who had willed the great adventure set out with the fixed idea that the campaign must be finished quickly because no nation would stand a long ordeal. Here, however, we did ourselves scant justice. None of these prophecies has been fulfilled. In July, 1914, the dissensions which had so long troubled Europe seemed to take on a fresh lease of life. Civil war appeared imminent in Ireland. In France the two parties which had for centuries been at loggerheads, had flown at each other's throats in the confined area of the law courts. In Italy there had been a sort of dress rehearsal of revolution. In Russia millions of workmen had gone on strike. In Austria each of the many races of which the Empire is composed was endeavouring to shift the blame for the assassination at Sarajevo on to the shoulders of its neighbours. But in the forty-eight hours from July 30th to August 1st, when it became apparent that war was inevitable, all these dissensions were laid aside. Even France, the country whose geographical position and history alike have made it the storm centre of Europe for centuries — the land in which the struggle between Teutonism and Latinism, Protestantism and Catholicism, authority and liberty, the principle of quantity and the principle of quality have never ceased — had but one heart and one soul, perhaps for the first time since the days of Julius Cæsar. Not only did political and religious discords cease, but the mutual recriminations of riches and poverty also came to an end. Socialism betook itself to the nearest barracks and donned its uniform as meekly as a young conscript fresh from his native village. Moreover, today, after more than three years of war in which millions of

men have been killed and wounded, untold wealth destroyed, and the whole order of things we had known for so many years demolished, not one of the belligerent nations has uttered a cry for mercy. History had never subjected such an immense number of men to such an ordeal and the great ordeal has been so magnificently borne as to be almost miraculous. But each of the so-called miracles of history is a slow process accomplished secretly by time and suddenly revealed to man in its completed state. We find the explanation of this miracle, too, in the revolutionary changes which began in Europe after the discovery of America to which we have so often turned for the key to the calamities of the present day changes, which by giving a fresh aim to existence, gradually rendered the world more uniform and hence more harmonious. It is of course obvious that modern civilization is more uniform than its predecessors: for proof of this assertion we only have to compare Europe and America, and the most ancient lands of Europe with its more modern countries. Most people, however, fail to realize clearly that this difference too results from the transition from ancient qualitative civilization to its modern quantitative successor. The man who aims at perfection must of necessity work in limited sphere; he must, that is to say, choose one of the innumerable types of perfection with which he is confronted, without, however, concentrating all his powers of soul and intellect upon it or ignoring or rejecting all the rest, for there is no surer way of being mediocre in everything than to aim at too many different types of perfection. Variety, isolation and discord are consequently the very essence of all qualitative civilization, which aims at one or more types of perfection: hence the countless religious, artistic, literary,

moral and political struggles which rent the world asunder in times past. At the present day the only violent struggles are those between races and languages, where one race is governed by another which wishes to force it into allegiance to an alien people and tongue. The other struggles — religious, artistic, literary, moral and political — have for the last fifty years been gradually growing feebler in both Europe and America. What is the reason of this change? It is because in proportion as quantity dominates the world and man chooses the conquest of the earth as his aim rather than beauty, glory, heroism, honour, and holiness, the differences which in time gone by aroused such bitter hatred and caused so many wars gradually lose their force and finally vanish altogether. Europe still numbers among her inhabitants Catholics and Protestants, laymen and clergy, the proletariat, the middle classes and the nobility, the learned and the ignorant, romanticists and classicists, conservatives and liberals, monarchists and republicans, but the men of the present day hardly notice these differences when they are labouring together to conquer the wealth of the world,— an enterprise in which nothing counts but skill, zeal and activity. An artisan, an employé, an engineer or an official is estimated according to what he can do, not according to the religion he happens to profess. The upper classes may still have more refinement of manner, but the middle classes are richly endowed with the energy which the world holds of more account than manners, because it is of more service. The proletariat may be coarse and ignorant, but does that give the upper classes any right to look down upon them? If the masses did not work hard and spend their wages freely; if they were content, as in the good old times, to earn little and live poorly provided they had not to work too long, would

not the upper classes be impoverished? It is not difficult for the rich to show human sympathy for the masses in an era when they can love themselves in them. Literature has ceased to be a laborious striving after a high and envied degree of perfection and has become but a pastime or a weapon in the latest political and social struggles which rend the world asunder: provided that it fulfils these two purposes, one school or one style is the same as another to an eclectic and changeable public which has lost the very idea of the standards of perfection at which literature was wont to aim in times past. Monarchy and republic are two forms of government based upon different principles; but who has either time or leisure to fight for or against either of these principles in a century whose one object is to increase the wealth of the world? Republics, kingdoms and empires alike strive to enrich their respective peoples. It is therefore the part of wisdom to make the best of the existing régime. The last republicans will resign themselves to living in a monarchy and the last monarchists to living in a republic. Hence for the last century, during which man has devoted himself with growing enthusiasm to the conquest of the earth to the neglect of every other enterprise and ambition, every nation of Europe and America has become a more or less homogeneous mass, in which the struggles between opposing religious, moral and æsthetic principles characteristic of preceding civilizations, and even differences of religion, class and race have become obliterated and the spirit of isolation and discord has gradually grown weaker. This accounts for the accusations of materialism and of indifference to everything but wealth so frequently brought against our age — accusations which are, however, unmerited, since there are two mystic ideas which pervade the homo-

geneous mass of modern nations and insure their coherence: patriotism and progress,— both very simple ideas or at all events ideas which can be simplified to such a degree as to bring them within the comprehension of even the most ignorant. Both are somewhat vague, by which I mean that they are more apt to excite than to restrain the dominant passions of the epoch and more especially the pride which plays such a prominent part among the sentiments actuating our century. The idea of progress is, as I have already pointed out, both contradictory and incoherent. Both these ideas may be regarded as mystic and transcendant, because they force man to sacrifice his egotism — today his pleasure, tomorrow his liberty, his most cherished opinions, his possessions and sometimes even his life to something which transcends them all — something invisible, something surrounded with the halo of a sacred mystery. Even if up to August 1st, 1914, man toiled from morning to night to increase the wealth of the world, did he enjoy the fruits of his toil? Why do we bear so many burdens — unceasing hard work, military service for a term of several years, the perpetual danger of war, innumerable taxes and countless civic duties — unless it be to further this ill-defined progress whose meaning we hardly understand and to create wealth which is more often than not a burden and a source of anxiety? This epoch, which is supposed to be so practical, is on the contrary mystical to the last degree, and that nation which is apparently the most practical of all, the American people, is the most mystical, since it more than any other strives to create wealth of which it has the least enjoyment!

Do not let us be unjust to our epoch if we would understand the European War and find an explanation of its surprises. The sudden concord between the citizens of all

the nations of Europe, the spirit of sacrifice of which they have given proof, are no inexplicable miracle. Europe desired peace, but when she saw the German menace, she met German concord with her own concord; she was able to put aside in a few days all religious and political dissensions, because they had for long been growing weaker and because the spirit of patriotism had spread in even the least homogeneous of nations. The fact that Germany had given the example made it easier for the various governments to obtain the ready consent of the whole people to every sacrifice, and they were thus enabled, with the help of the powerful means at the disposal of the modern state, to take possession of both body and soul of their respective nations to such a degree as to make any subsequent repentance both useless and impossible. We see every nation bearing the unspeakable sacrifices of war with the utmost patience, either because in every nation, and more especially in those composed of a single race speaking the same language, the spirit of patriotism has pervaded even the most ignorant classes; or because they have pledged themselves to their Allies to fight to the bitter end, so that none can now draw back; the aggressors as a matter of honour and for fear of the reprisals they so well deserve and the victims from the necessity of defending themselves and the thirst for vengeance.

We thus find ourselves brought to the happiest of conclusions. We have really been born in the Golden Age of legend and poetry! The doctrine of progress cannot deceive us, even if we cannot define it accurately! The world is really on the path of progress, since we possess all this world's goods — wealth, power, learning, concord and the spirit of sacrifice; since we are capable of living in peace and yet know how to make war. The century

which we reproached with materialism, concealed unsuspected treasures of heroism.

II

THE TWO SIDES OF PROGRESS

This conclusion is, however, too optimistic and too hasty. The doctrine of progress in which we have hitherto believed was ambiguous if not actually false, and its ambiguity has involved us in the present crisis. When I was travelling in America and comparing that continent with the classical world which had for so many years been my spiritual home; when I was subjecting the innumerable contradictions inherent in our idea of progress to the searchlight of analysis, and gazing at the world half sadly as it struggled and strove for something newer and better without really knowing what, I had never for a moment imagined that within a few short years one of these contradictions would bring about such a catastrophe. The student who would trace the causes of the European War back to their remotest origin, passing in review one by one the intrigues of diplomatists, the sinister plans of General Staffs, the ambitions of governments, the jealousies of nations, the agitations of the press, the random utterances of paid philosophers, the rivalries of industry and commerce, the turmoils of decadent empires, the sufferings of oppressed peoples, the pride, ambition and dreams of the German nation and its tendency to overshoot the mark, will find himself led step by step to one of the numerous contradictions in the midst of which we have lived for the last century — the great contradiction from which we have never succeeded in liberating ourselves — the mania for increasing the power of man with-

out troubling to distinguish between the creative and the destructive power. When science made some new discovery, when industry constructed some more rapid and powerful machine, when we counted our riches and found that they had increased, we were convinced that the world was progressing. Had our century not undertaken to conquer the whole earth with the help of fire and science? Was not every step which brought us nearer this goal to be regarded as progress? Europe and America had therefore advanced by abandoning the old time coaches for trains and sailing boats for steamers; by inventing the telegraph, the telephone, the motorcar, the aeroplane and the dirigible; by acquiring the knowledge and the means enabling it to pierce the Isthmus of Panama; by constructing reaping, threshing, measuring, ploughing and sewing machines and other machines for making shoes, driving in nails, and performing at lightning speed many other operations for which for centuries man had no other apparatus than his hand.

Nor is this all. Our era, consistently with its own definition of progress, extolled activity, discipline, obedience, courage, energy, initiative, ambition and self-confidence as the noblest of virtues; its heroes were self-made men, fortunate or unfortunate inventors, pioneers of every sort of aspiration, leaders of revolutionary movements in art, industry, religion, banking, fashion and politics. Our epoch, however, has not confined itself to constructing railways, ships, ploughs and threshing machines; it has not merely discovered marvellous remedies, and how to make electricity produce a brilliant light, and learned to talk and write across space; it has also manufactured rifles, guns, ironclads, and explosives a hundred times more powerful and more deadly than those known to our fathers and grandfathers. It enlarged and beautified schools, hospitals and libraries; but

with what appalling weapons it has furnished the greatest armies the world has ever seen! Are we to be equally proud of both these types of progress? It is a difficult question to answer. If we answer it in the affirmative, we were virtually adopting Hegelianism, venerating destruction as much as creation and worshipping God and the devil on the same altar — a view revolting to an epoch which believed in the goodness of human nature and strove so hard to increase the wealth of the world. If, however, we answer it in the negative, universal disarmament, the dethronement of the monarchies at the head of the present armies, the reconstruction of the map of Europe and a far-reaching change in the spirit of the modern state should necessarily have followed. For such sweeping changes Europe had not the courage. She took refuge in ambiguity and a definition of progress sufficiently vague to cover both peace and war, justice and violence, life and death, steam ploughs and Lewis guns, Pasteur serum and melinite. She shrank from saying definitely whether the same meed of admiration was to be accorded to audacity, courage, self-sacrifice, initiative and perseverance when displayed in wars of aggression as when employed in the struggle against nature. She has always halted between two opinions. The century demanded peace, but its teaching was received with such ironic smiles by so many soldiers, philosophers and politicians that it lost heart, and the century which had dared so much did not venture even to repeat what St. Thomas Aquinas boldly affirmed amid the barbarism of the Middle Ages — that war is only justifiable when waged in a good cause and without evil intention.

Thus the day dawned when Germany set Europe ablaze. She dared this crime just because she had brought to greater perfection than any other nation this very conception of

progress which reconciles the idea of destruction with that of creation by affirming boldly that a people must strive to be great in peace and war alike, and that it is no less meritorious and glorious for it to force other nations to submit to its will than for it to conquer nature and wrest her secrets from her. The victories of 1866 and 1870, the development of her industries, the increase of both her population and her wealth, the lack of feeling for humanity and of sense of proportion characteristic of the German mentality, the wave of overweening pride, ambition and cupidity which has swept over Germany during the last few years explain how she has been able to reconcile two such contradictory principles in her hybrid definition of progress; how she could manufacture instruments of life and death without apparently any feeling of incongruity, build factories and barracks, merchant ships and ironclads; how she could at one and the same time be a vast factory and a vast entrenched camp, by regarding progress as a two-faced deity, inciting men to become at once wealthier and more redoubtable, more learned and more cruel, more industrious and more violent. Then, when she had reached the very zenith of prosperity and power, she thought she had also reached the apex of strength and challenged three great nations to a deadly combat, and the great butchery began — that butchery whose end cannot be foreseen, since this war differs from all previous struggles in that it knows no limits whether of space, time or form.

III

A RUTHLESS WAR

In all preceding wars, even in that of 1870, only part of the nation was engaged — that young, vigorous sec-

tion which was already trained in the use of arms. The forces on which each nation could count were limited and wars were consequently short, violent and decisive. In the present war several of the great belligerent nations have ceased to take into account either age, weakness, lack of training or family circumstances: every man capable of learning in a few weeks how to handle a gun is pressed into the service. It may indeed truthfully be said that even women and old men have been mobilized, since those who are not actually fighting are taking the place of those on active service in all kinds of civil employment, caring for the wounded and helping families whose heads are away. One almost wonders whether the war will not be brought to an end by beardless lads and white-haired men. The participation of all Europe in the wars of the French Revolution and the Empire had appeared something at once tremendous and unheard of: this time Europe, the whole of North America and many of the South American States, British India, China, Japan, Siam, a large part of Africa and all the British overseas dominions are involved—practically the whole civilized world. When the war broke out, we all thought it could not possibly last more than a few months; forty months have elapsed and, unless some miracle happens, there seems nothing to prevent its dragging on for many another weary month. Although it is certain that the Great War must come to an end some day, like everything else in the world, and it is not unlikely that the end may be sudden, we can as yet catch no glimpse of the bound set to this fresh instance of human folly; nor do we see any signs of a limit to the ruthlessness of those of the belligerents who apparently propose to wage warfare with no regard to the dictates of laws, conventions or principles of compassion and humanity.

Even legend has no records of such a struggle — a struggle involving such hosts of combatants, such prolonged battles, such wholesale destruction of life and property, such arousing of the fiercest passions of mankind. Modern civilization is more powerful than any of its predecessors, but it will brook neither curb nor limit, and is consequently lacking in discernment. It creates and destroys, does good and evil according to the dictates of self-interest and the circumstances or passions of the moment, and it does both in accordance with its character, that is to say, on a large scale. For three generations it busied itself colonizing new countries, opening up new routes, increasing riches, learning and machinery, teaching and disciplining the masses, and it must be admitted that it accomplished marvels. When, however, in a moment of madness it turned its energies to destruction, it achieved its object to an equally great degree. Are not the very virtues — concord, patriotism, the spirit of self-sacrifice — evoked by the war also the very reason why this fierce struggle has lasted so long? Germany, France, Belgium, Serbia, Russia, Austria and the rest have been fighting now for years; now the one, now the other side gaining the upper hand; countless thousands have fallen and yet the war is still going on. Why? Because the conflict has ceased to be merely between armies and states and is being waged by whole peoples, each and all of them equally determined to conquer at any cost, because they are one and all animated by that mystic spirit of patriotism which adds fresh fuel to the fires of pride and love of domination on the one side and inspires their opponents with the determination to avenge the wrong inflicted upon them by their aggressors. This too explains why the defeats and victories of this war are never decisive. Battles which do not end in the an-

nihilation of the forces of one or other side — and such decisive battles are rare — have no effect beyond the moral impression they make: hence a people may be defeated repeatedly without being conquered provided it does not lose heart and hope. The wars waged by the ancient Romans afford endless proofs of the truth of this assertion, for there has never been a nation which was often more defeated or won more wars. Were we then self-deceived when we flattered ourselves that our civilization had attained a higher degree of perfection than any of its predecessors? It would almost appear so. There are compensating circumstances in everything. The men of the Middle Ages were undoubtedly poorer, coarser and more ignorant than ourselves; they had no railways, no aeroplanes, no submarines; on the other hand they never so much as dreamed of the horrors witnessed almost as a matter of course by Europe today: cities burned down, millions of men killed, mutilated, burned alive, blown up by appalling explosions, great vessels sinking in a few minutes with their living freight. The Europe of 1317 was a paradise compared to the Europe of 1917: and this is the result of six centuries of progress — progress which surely gives the Chinese, Indians and other peoples to whom we are wont to consider ourselves so superior, every right to smile ironically — progress which fills the soul of many a European with deep distrust. Is this progress? we may well ask. We can no longer let the question pass in silence, as we have done hitherto, claiming that the answer is to be found in our deeds rather than in our words; for our desire to advance without wasting time defining progress and taking for granted that everything which served our purpose or ministered to our pleasure for the time being must necessarily be progress, has brought us to the point of destroying in a few months the treasures

which it has taken us years to accummulate and of being forced to look on helplessly at the wholesale massacre of our young men. And this in an age which has even set up societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals! The masses have every right to ask those who in the name of progress led them to this fiery ordeal whether they are not themselves deluded. The Chinese and Indians may well ask if the European War is to be regarded as another proof of that civilization which we are so anxious they should adopt. How many of us can be certain that the horrified world will not answer by rejecting as false that progress of which Europe was so proud?

IV

NEW STRENGTH AND ANCIENT WISDOM

And yet it is not really so. The progress in which we have perhaps believed somewhat too readily is not altogether a delusion; it is rather one of the laws of life which at times seems to be deceptive, simply because it is obscure and we do not as yet understand it, although we are not insensible to its influence.

It is beyond the power of man to foretell the future, but we may none the less venture to assume that history will look upon the European War as the crisis of a civilization which prided itself on having enabled human energy to throw off the chains and shackles which had hampered it in the civilizations of the past, but proved powerless to hold it in check when it fell a prey to the lust of destruction: the crisis of a civilization which, after exhausting three generations in laborious creative work, is now destroying the fourth with all its heaped up wealth for the selfsame

reason — because it knows no bounds either for good or evil. The first great crisis of that society to which Socialists apply the epithet *capitalist* (from the order of things established by the nineteenth century in both Europe and America) is the European War: a crisis very different from that predicted by Socialists and no less so from the last great historical crisis — the French Revolution. Then, an age thirsting for liberty, wealth, power and learning arose and overthrew all the ancient barriers which stood in the way of the realization of its aspirations; today we see tottering to its fall, wounded to death, an age, which after winning for itself liberty, power, science and all the treasures earth has to offer, has fallen victim to a mania which prompts it to destroy not only itself but all the fruit of its labours as well.

One of two things must happen. Either it will rise again, its wounds closed, to resume as soon as it has sufficiently recovered its strength, its course towards its old goal — that goal which recedes as fast as man marches towards it — in which case the European War will have been but a parenthesis in the history of the twentieth century, a terrible but transitory incident like an earthquake or a flood — a useless warning to man — the first rehearsal as it were, of a still more appalling catastrophe to take place in fifty or a hundred years; or else this war will cure the world once for all of the mania which had taken possession of it, forcing it to ask itself what use it has made in the past and what use it should make in the future of its unbounded power — a question which will mark the dawn of real progress. I see no way out of the apparently insoluble difficulties with which thought and action are confronted when thought would fain define progress, and action is equally anxious to put it into practice, save the admission that each epoch ac-

complishes but a portion of the never ending and multifarious task set humanity as a whole. Some civilizations have produced works of art and systems of philosophy; others political institutions; others have given birth to religions and rituals; others to fresh developments of industry and commerce and others again to weapons and the tactics of war. All these incomplete labours of successive generations are contributions towards a whole, and true progress lies in the slow but constant additions made to their number — the only way in which we can hope to reconcile quality and quantity in our definition of progress, for each successive generation possesses a larger number of qualitative principles; or, in other words, a larger number of æsthetic, political, religious and moral principles, allowing of a greater wealth of combinations and of a fuller and more original life.

Let us take an example. If we compare ourselves with the ancient Greeks or Romans or with the peoples of the Middle Ages, we shall undoubtedly find that we are superior to them in some respects, though inferior in others. The Greeks were superior to us in art and literature; the Romans in law; the Middle Ages in certain branches of art, such as architecture. On the other hand, we are much wealthier, much more learned and much more powerful than the Greeks, the Romans, or the peoples of the Middle Ages. When confronted with these differences how are we then to decide whether the world has made progress in the centuries which have passed since the days of the ancient Greeks? If we are to answer such a question, we much first decide whether it is better to be a scholar or an artist, to construct steam engines or build beautiful cathedrals, to explore Africa or be the creator of "Antigone." It is, however, obvious that every man and every age believe the work accomplished

by himself and his age to be the most useful and the noblest of all, and that it is impossible to prove that riches are of greater or less value than beauty, or beauty of greater or less value than science. All the lines of argument by which one or other of these points is supposed to have been proved take for granted a definition of progress in which the thesis to be proved is already tacitly admitted; they therefore merely amount to sophisms which only interest and passion could seriously look upon as arguments at all. We may, however, fairly affirm that the world has progressed when we compare our epoch as a whole with ancient Greece, for we enjoy Greek art and literature; we are acquainted with her philosophy; we have adopted some of her views and political principles, while we are acquainted with other arts unknown to the Greeks, mediaeval architecture, and Japanese sculpture, amongst others; we are acquainted with other systems of philosophy; we practise the virtues taught by Christianity, such as love of our neighbour, charity and purity; we add to their political principles those to which the French Revolution gave birth; we possess far wider geographical and scientific knowledge; we travel by railway, we speak across space and have learned to fly.

If this is what we understand by progress, a little light is shed on the moral problems raised by the European War. The increase of wealth, learning and power only constitutes progress if we make of this wealth, learning and power a wiser, nobler and finer use. We shall, however, never learn to do so of ourselves and starting, as it were, from nothing if we make no attempt to blend the ideas, sentiments and principles transmitted to us by past generations with those which we ourselves have created. The ancient civilizations knew how to hold man in check and thus prevent him from committing great and dangerous acts of folly, but at the

same time they limited his power of initiation and action. Modern civilization exalted human energy by freeing it from every fetter, and has enabled it to accomplish wonders, but it has at the same time removed the bonds which restrained it from committing acts of supreme folly. Our civilization will reach the zenith of glory and perfection when, by tempering the new powers it has created with the ancient wisdom it has forgotten, it succeeds in subduing the disorderly energies of men to the moderating influence of æsthetic, moral, religious and philosophical rules and principles which shall set a limit to them — a limit as wide as you will, but none the less clear and well defined. Historians and philosophers would accomplish ends of far greater value if they would endeavour to prepare the mind of man for this fusion of two great civilizations which may give birth to a third civilization of a higher type than either, instead of wasting their time on discussions as to whether Romulus ever lived or not, or toying with eighteenth century theories of knowledge.

When exhausted Europe has laid down her arms and is forced to ask herself what she ought to do in order to provide for the future, will she not find herself face to face with the eternal question which confronts man at the end of every path which he takes in search of happiness — the question of limits? If after the European War the different Powers begin once more to increase their armies and fleets just as they did from 1870 to 1914, we shall sooner or later find ourselves back at the same point. Europe, drained as she has been of her life blood, can only hope to recover her strength if the belligerent Powers come to a serious understanding as to the limitation of armaments — a condition easy to propose, but extremely difficult to carry into effect, since there is nothing from which the modern

world shrinks so much as the suggestion of any sort of limitation — no matter what the motive. I have already remarked that St. Thomas Aquinas asserts and proves war to be a sin in itself, that is to say, an evil, but adds that it may become permissible on three conditions: i. e., that it be waged by lawful authority in a just cause and without evil intention. The subtle teacher of the Middle Ages had foreseen wars waged in a just cause but with evil intention. Who can fail to see that this view of war is the one appealing most strongly to all those who have not interested motives for desiring the continuance of the war or are not totally devoid of that sense of humanity which German philosophy has done so much to blunt even in ourselves? Who can fail to see that to ensure Europe a true and lasting peace all that is necessary is that these principles should be put into practice? Yet in the nineteenth century you will find few thinkers who ventured to uphold such teaching boldly without being somewhat ashamed of what was regarded as an old woman's idea! How is this strange discrepancy to be explained? Only by the fact that almost all modern systems of philosophy have started from themselves and have refused to submit their investigations to any of the limits respected more or less voluntarily by the systems of antiquity, or even to those imposed by common sense or the sense of humanity, which shrink from every doctrine and every principle which is opposed to the most obvious requirements of human nature. These various systems of philosophy, thus emancipated from the bands of discipline and surrounded by so many different passions and interests, held the sound common sense of St. Thomas Aquinas in utter contempt and, reversing each other's arguments, proved war to be either divine or diabolical, those taking the former view maintaining that to carry off the

victory in war is to give evidence of the highest degree of perfection; while their opponents asserted with equal conviction that war was utterly degrading and should never be resorted to by civilized peoples even to repel aggression! If it was diffcult to induce our age to accept reasonable theories as to war and its limits, is it likely to be easy to induce it to act reasonably? Yet who can doubt that modern civilization will end by destroying itself with its own hands if it does not learn to use its terrible powers with more judgment? Our descendants will perhaps say that our century played with machine- and quick-firing guns, shells and millions of soldiers like a child with a box of matches without realizing how terrible its toys would be when put to real use: the century must grow up and learn to handle such engines of warfare with the prudence demanded by their dangerous character. We must pray the shades of our fathers to let their wisdom, which we have too long neglected, help Europe out of the difficult pass to which her pride and foolhardiness have brought her. We must above all invoke the shades of those great writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who taught man that there might and should be such a thing as national as well as individual justice — a sentiment which, like so many of those newer conceptions which dignify our age — had its birth in eighteenth century France. It found a refuge in hearts and books and thus survived the devastating wars of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Gradually, during the long period of hopes and regrets which followed the fall of the first Empire, it ventured out of its hiding places and spread secretly over Europe under the suspicious eyes of the police, winning thousands of hearts and intellects, until the memorable year 1848, when it seemed to establish its sway over

all Europe in a few brief weeks and to become the ruler of a new and happier world. Disillusion swiftly followed, however! How distant was its triumph still! The political and economic upheavals of the second half of the nineteenth century, the era of steel and steam, the blatant triumph of quantity, the clash of classes and interests, the advent of the middle classes, were all still to come. This great conception was no longer the object of police persecution, but rather that of ridicule and contempt. The attempt was made to isolate it by closing every door to it; it was banished from school and parliament alike. In every country more or less successful efforts were made to provoke admiration of Bismarck in the hope that the mere sight of his bull-dog countenance would chill the souls in whom the new ideas had lighted the fire of enthusiasm. The efforts to win the minds of men made by the new conception were met by governments and political parties with an ever increasing production of new weapons, with the appointment of philosophers and philosophasters to burnish up in press and university alike old theories, such as Hegelianism, which might be turned to account as antidotes. It was accused of being half Catholic, half Protestant; Catholic, because it aspired to be transcendent and eternal; Protestant, because it claimed to be the offspring of reason: as if a conception could forfeit the right to act as a guide to truth or become an imposture merely because it is able to give an account of itself and justify its laws. In spite of all these criticisms, however, the conception did not perish, simply because it was a true conception springing from the very depths of the soul of man, and it may yet save Europe from ruin, because it knows how to set limits to the pride, the ambition and the passion for power of the different peoples. We must therefore bring about a revival of this principle in the

soul of man and call in the aid of reason in order to give definite form to its precepts; we must let it exercise dominion in Europe over the masses who are looking on in horror at the present catastrophe — those masses whom the age of quality has made arbiters of almost everything and more especially of peace and war.

V

BACCHUS IN BONDS

It is given to none of us to be able to foretell what the future holds in store. We may, however, before concluding these pages, turn our attention for a moment to an indication which time has already made plain — a sign perhaps slight in itself but which may encourage us to hope that the conscience of Europe is really progressing, not with halting and uncertain steps as in so many other directions on which we none the less prided ourselves — but making real advances, thanks to the revival of old principles, in the midst of the powerful but outrageous disorder of the modern world.

The ancients numbered wine among the gods, because they regarded as divine a drink which, taken in moderation, soothed pain, stimulated the imagination, promoted cheerfulness and stirred the mind; but during the last century the ancient deity has appeared upon earth in so many and different forms as to forfeit his status as god and sink to that of a demon, begetting madness, crime, sterility, poverty and death instead of joy and gladness, as of old. We all know the disastrous results all over the world of this disease, to which the medical profession has given the name alcoholism, but in Russia and France two of

its worst forms — vodka and absinthe — had wrought more havoc than anywhere else. It is therefore not surprising that in these countries special efforts should have been made to stay the plague. Statesmen, scientists, philanthropists, priests, moralists, industrial magnates, schoolmasters and estimable women all had some panacea to offer. Countless commissions were appointed, countless societies founded, countless laws promulgated during the last twenty five years to cope with the evil and convert men to sobriety, while of the making of books with the same object there was no end. But in spite of all the efforts of these many physicians, the evil steadily increased in every country and more especially in Russia and France. The remedy was apparently not to be found. Church and school were alike impotent. The workman listened to the good advice given him and then betook himself to the nearest public-house for another glass. Many of the would-be physicians came to the conclusion that man is naturally vicious and that it is useless to try to prevent him from going to perdition in the quest of pleasure. Some even sought excuses for the vice. Was it really so fatal as was supposed? Was there anything else which could do as much to lighten the burden of the toiler in modern industry? Every man tries at times to escape as best he can in imagination from the fetters which hold him captive in the world into the unbounded freedom of infinity, and the glass of wine or spirits may serve as the gateway into the infinite for the workman who knows no other means of escape.

Accordingly Europe indulged freely in strong drink, although many thoughtful people who did not share the illusions of the optimist felt their hearts sink as they watched noble peoples thus degrading themselves. And there seemed no hope of finding a remedy. Then the European War

broke out and the authorities, realizing that if drunkenness be a dangerous vice in time of peace, it is far more so in time of war, when both those who fight and those who remain at home must make the best possible use of their mental powers for the common weal, decided on a drastic measure — a remedy so heroic that no one had ventured to suggest it seriously before — the prohibition of the manufacture and consumption of the most harmful beverages. The egg of Columbus with a vengeance! When the workman and the peasant can no longer turn into the nearest public-house for a glass of some pernicious drink, they will cease to get drunk, or at all events will do so much less often. No sooner said than done: half measures are not for wartime. On the day after the proclamation of martial law, the military authorities in France prohibited the sale of absinthe, and when Parliament met it lost no time in passing a bill prohibiting for ever the manufacture, sale and import of absinthe. A few weeks after the outbreak of war, the Tsar closed all distilleries and places where vodka was made or sold, vodka being in Russia a state monopoly. And while it cannot of course be said that no vodka or absinthe is consumed in Russia and France — since evasion of the law will continue as long as the world exists — temperance has steadily increased and the evil effects of drink have equally steadily decreased.

Why were so many years and a cataclysm like the European War necessary for the discovery and application of the remedy? — the only efficacious way of keeping the intemperance of the people in check. If the men of two or three centuries ago were in certain respects much worse off than ourselves, they were undoubtedly also much more temperate, simply because they did not distil so many kinds of spirits every year, they did not press so many tons of

grapes, so that no one person could drink more than a moderate amount. A few wealthy drinkers might possibly ruin their health, but such a proceeding was not in the power of the poor and those of moderate means. Why have men taken to drink to such an alarming extent during the last century, a period which coincides with the dawn of the era of quantity? Because the nineteenth century planted vines in thousands of acres of hitherto uncultivated land, even upon land snatched from Islam, even on land beyond the ocean; because it enlarged and added immensely to the number of breweries; because it invented countless new and ingenious ways of distilling alcohol from endless different substances; because it manufactured in great distilleries all over the world liquors of which only a few bottles had hitherto been made annually by private families after some traditional receipt. Then when it had distilled so many intoxicating drinks, modern industry had to find some means of ensuring their consumption. It is useless to say that all these intoxicating liquors are made to satisfy the demands of a thirsty world, that vice is the cause and not the effect of the immense increase in the wine, beer and liquor trades. No — here, as elsewhere — industry first created abundance and then persuaded man that it was his duty to consume its whole production.

It is therefore clear that as long as industry is free to distil as much intoxicating liquor as it chooses, just as it is at liberty to weave as many yards of linen or cloth as it likes, alcoholism will increase in the world. The trade will be driven to manufacture such drinks in ever increasing quantities and the world will have to swallow veritable floods of beer, wine and spirits every year. The brewery and the public-house will encourage men to drink more than they need both night and morning, Sunday and week-

day, for man is naturally inclined to excess in his pleasures, and, if you make vice easy for him, he will not fail to take advantage thereof. Our age first gives men full liberty to drink to excess, and then is amazed that they do so, just in the same way as having created the vastest armies history has ever seen, and provided them with the most murderous weapons, it fails to understand how the vastest and most bloody war of all ages can possibly have broken out. The cause of its surprise is the same in both cases. Our age has created the greatest armies of all time not because it intended to bring about its own ruin in a world war, but because no power, or mortal power, or authority existed in Europe strong enough to set a limit to the competition of armaments. It left vice full liberty, not from perversity or corruption, but because in its anxiety to further industry and commerce, it shrank from setting any limit — even that demanded by health, morals and beauty — to the increase of wealth; it furthered productive industries and at the same time encouraged men to consume as much as they could, to eat, drink, smoke, amuse themselves, wear out and renew their clothing, travel, and seek for the greatest available measure of comfort. But in order to achieve all this it had to abolish the standards which in past ages distinguished wise expenditure from extravagance, and the undue growth of desire, since, had these criteria been as clear and definite as they were two centuries ago, they would have set limits to this liberty of expansion of which modern industries are so jealous; and in the same way it has failed to distinguish between the services rendered by science and industry to peace and those rendered to war.

The European War put an immediate end to this contradiction so far as drink was concerned. It has already brought certain of the European peoples back to the prin-

ciples which ruled the world two or three centuries ago. In the face of immediate danger all have had to realize that the State has both the right to prevent the people committing suicide by excessive drinking and is bound to exercise that right; that the welfare of the race and the interests of public morals must and should set a limit to the full liberty of indulging in pleasure to excess which individuals had claimed as a right for the last century. Will Europe understand equally quickly that war ought not to be — as it is in Europe today — the savage explosion of all the forces of destruction and sacrifice, love and hatred, good and evil accumulated by human nature in the course of a generation, until the whole physical and moral strength of a nation is exhausted — something like a natural force, subject to no law? Will it understand that war should be a human institution like justice, a sign and symbol of the strength of a people, as true and adequate as possible to what they represent, but limited, if it is not to become a scourge of God and a means of exterminating victors, vanquished and neutrals alike?

The future will show. The obscure, powerful will of the masses who are today engaged in this titanic war will decide. The essential thing today is an act of will — a great act of will on the part of the masses. During the last two centuries man has inverted the order of things in which his fathers lived so long; he has begun that new and marvellous history of the world, whose final crisis is taking place today, because he has determined to have liberty, wealth, power and knowledge. Our children and grandchildren will enjoy peace if they really desire it, by endeavouring to realize in what the essential conditions of a real and lasting peace consist. At this moment when so many men are in arms keeping a watch on one another with

field glasses and cannon, by land and water, it is well to repeat to the soldiers of the new alliance — this time a Holy Alliance in very truth — the soldiers of the Powers which have had to endure this war, because the Central Empires forced it upon them, the memorable words of St. Augustine, words worthy of being taken as the motto of the newer and better Europe for which we all hope, for which so many have already given their lives: "*Esto ergo bellando pacificus, ut cos quos expugnas, ad pacis utilitatem vincendo perducas.*"

THE END