FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE

WHY ITALY WENT TO WAR

Dr E. J. DILLON


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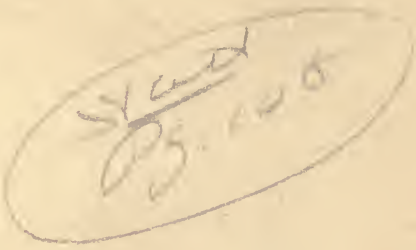

FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE

BARON SYDNEY SONNINO.

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By
DR. E. J. DILLON

PUBLISHED FOR
"The Daily Telegraph" BY
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
MCMXV

TO

KATHLEEN M. DILLON

THESE PAGES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

ITALY'S active participation in the war was the work of the nation, not of the Government. Had the decision been left to the Parliament, to the acknowledged leaders of the people, to the Cabinet or even to all three combined, it must have fallen out differently. Neither Professor Salandra nor Baron Sonnino would have gone back to office after their defeat by Signor Giolitti in May. The Dictator, or else a lieutenant of his choice, would have been entrusted with the reins of power by the King who in this matter had always displayed a meticulous respect for constitutional forms, and Austria's belated offers would have been accepted by the Consulta. But the nation, wroth with the representatives who had misrepresented it, wrested from them for a moment the powers it had bestowed and reversed their decision.

It was the act of a moment. Its effect was to impart direction to policy, not to prescribe ways and means. Wrought to white heat by the strange behaviour of its official spokesmen the Italian people rose up in its millions, disowned them and imposed its own will on the Cabinet.

Previous to this, conversations had been carried on between the Consulta and the Ballplatz on the subject of certain claims to which Italy deemed herself entitled in virtue of the Triple Alliance. Baron Sonnino, therefore, relied upon the Triple Alliance for the success of his plea and the continuity of Italy's policy and was minded, he frankly said, to restore fresh vigour to that compact if Italy received the benefits it conferred upon her. That was the ground taken up by the distinguished Foreign Secretary and his colleagues. His chief, the Premier, approving this view launched the phrase "sacred egotism" which was to have consecrated and popularized it. But it failed to catch on.

The Ministers who looked upon themselves as temporary trustees of the community, liable to be called upon to render an account of their stewardship, held that they were not free to substitute generosity for the furtherance of national interests. But the nation took a different stand. It devised a policy which would mark its kinship with the progressive peoples of the world, its sympathy for the victims of Teuton frightfulness and its resolve to link its own immediate interests with those of the Powers which were fighting against the lust of domination.

Having thus uttered its fiat the nation abandoned to its official representatives the work of translating it into acts of policy and war. And the Cabinet with a painful sense of responsibility, conscious that it is still but a trustee, has since [1] been carrying out the will of the people with the most scrupulous care for national interests. Thus it declared war against Austria-Hungary, whose obstinacy had broken up the Triple Alliance, but not against Germany, who had done her utmost to uphold that alliance. Italy's relations, political and economical, with Germany whom she has for a generation considered and treated as a sort of benevolent guardian, are seemingly only suspended. Money is still freely and openly passing between the two countries via Switzerland. To those Italians who petitioned their Government to forbid the payment of debts to Germans and Austrians during the war, the Premier and the Cabinet turned a deaf ear. The Banca Commerciale has made some changes in its staff but none that connote a change in its policy. And it seems quite possible that whatever developments the war may bring forth Italy's moral support will go with us into Turkey, Asia Minor, and wherever else we are fighting the enemy while her military assistance will probably continue to make itself felt along the Austrian frontier. For the Italian General Staff holds that that is her wisest course.

[1] Written on the 6th September, 1915.

That attitude which, we are officially assured, is approved by the Triple Entente, should serve to remind us that the European States which are now withstanding German aggression, are not members of a homogeneous body joined by close ties and bound by clear stipulations. They are independent entities actuated by motives which are by no means identical and eager to achieve aims which are far from convergent. As yet we cannot claim to have found a common denominator for them all. To convince himself of this, if he have any doubt, the reader has but to compare Italy's attitude since May 1915 with that say of France or Britain. She did not declare war against Turkey until the bulk of her subjects had returned home. The motives, too, for that decision as propounded in the official proclamation differ characteristically from those alleged by the Entente Powers. And when at last declared the war was not and probably will not be waged against the Turks, with whom Italy has always since the Peace of Ouchy striven to cultivate terms of close friendship, with a view to intimate economic "collaboration" in the future. It is always on the Austrian frontiers that she is fighting for Belgium, France, Serbia and Montenegro, for justice and civilization. Against Germany she has no military quarrel. These efforts are highly appreciated by the Entente Powers, but one can hardly consider them identical or co-ordinated with their own.

Again, Italy is apparently not bound like the other signatories of the London Declaration [1] to refuse all offers of a separate peace. Or if she be so bound she is unwilling publicly to avow the obligation, for I inquired of the Consulta and was informed that Baron Sonnino would rather not answer that delicate question. The other signatories had no such scruples. They announced their solidarity to friend and foe. That Italy has cogent reasons for thus differentiating herself from the Triple Entente we cannot, in

[1] September 5th, 1914.

fairness to M. Sonnino, doubt. Personally I do not believe that she has signed the compact, were it only because she can hardly undertake not to make a separate peace, say with Germany, seeing that she is not at war with that Empire. She cannot seriously promise to continue to wage war against Turkey until the Entente Powers have also desisted, if she has done no overt act of war against the Sultan's dominions. It is appallingly difficult under such conditions—for which no country or government can be made responsible—for the non-Teutonic group of belligerents fully to utilize their available resources against scentifically organized violence and barbarism. Much—probably most—of their strength is wasted in fitful unsystematic efforts. It was exactly thus in the War of the Succession, when Prussia was in greater danger of disaster than she is to-day. The Allies then arrayed against her who could and should have crushed her out of political existence, frittered away their time, missed their opportunities, talked of co-ordinating efforts that were hardly ever even synchronized and allowed themselves to be beaten piece-meal. At least one of Germany's calculations before embarking on this war has been verified; and an important one.

Italy less than any other belligerent has changed her nature or her disposition by coming into the war. Her national ideals, political aims, chronic likes and dislikes live on, and gather strength under the surface. Peace once concluded, possibly even before it is ratified, they will again suddenly resume sway. For this return to the past, and for the consequences it will bring forth, it behoves us all to be prepared. If the following pages contribute to this salutary end they will have achieved their object and rendered a service to the cause of the allied nations.

E. J. DILLON.

PALACE HOTEL,
VARESE (COMO).
September 6th, 1915.

CONTENTS

FROM THE TRIPLE TO THE QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF ITALY'S ENTRY INTO THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

WHY Italy went to war is a less difficult question to answer than why she ever became a member of the Triple Alliance. For there is something incongruous in the close partnership between a nation whose political ideals, social standards, and pacific strivings so nearly resemble our own and two military empires whose aggressive designs, reactionary conceptions, and military organization are an emphatic negation of those. Many attempts have been made to explain and justify this political synthesis of aims and strivings so conflicting. But as most publicists have studied the subject in the light of fragmentary data and some with the further disqualification of party or national bias, the accounts which they furnish of the chain of cause and effect, although some of these are superficially correct, are incomplete and therefore misleading. They leave the root of the matter untouched. Some writers, for example, hold that the initiative came from the Consulta which struck up the agreement as a matter of expediency, vaguely foreboding the dangers to which it exposed the country abroad and the opposition it would encounter at home. Others affirm that it was public opinion and sentiment which, suddenly alarmed by the nation's helpless

plight, forced the Cabinet of the day against its deliberate and better judgment to link the destinies of Italy with those of the world's two greatest military empires. A third set of writers seek the origins of the alliance in the wantonly provocative policy of the French Republic and the grave apprehensions it produced among the governing classes of Italy. But nearly all agree that whatever the motives, they were rooted in a desire to safeguard Italy's interests as modified by tyrannous circumstance and menaced by open and secret enemies, and that the Triple Alliance, at any rate during the first years of its existence, rendered solid services to the country and might have been made to yield greater benefits if the Consulta had felt less self-diffidence in presence of Germany and displayed a higher degree of independence and firmness in its dealings with Austria-Hungary.

But since the outbreak of the war and the disclosures embodied in Green Books, Yellow Books and other official announcements, new light has been shed on the unsunned crypts of European diplomacy. And although many of their nethermost recesses still remain unexplored, enough is already known of the doings of the unseen wire-pullers of European politics to enable us to reconstruct their aims, grasp their main motives, and follow the execution of their plans over the tortuous grooves that led to the unavowed goal. The resulting picture, interesting and unedifying, differs from those which hitherto claimed recognition and supplies us with an object-lesson in that most difficult branch of statecraft which consists in moving others to work for ends which, seemingly their own, are at bottom those of their invisible inspirers. And there is now no doubt that that was the task which Bismarck set himself in his dealings with Italy thirty-three years ago; neither can it be gainsaid that Italian statesmen—some unconscious, others suspicious of the risks they were incurring—played the unenviable part of executors of his scheme. It is fair to add that

the dangers with which the nation, whose union was then but twelve years old, was encompassed, called not only for decisive but also for speedy measures and a new political orientation. For careful deliberation, therefore, there was scant leisure.

In spite of her hatred of Austria who still held a tight grip on Trentino, Gorizia, Istria and Trieste, and in spite of her pacific strivings which were incompatible with Germany's thirst for expansion, Italy made common cause with those two Empires because at that particular conjuncture it appeared to her Government that no safe alternative was open to her. Isolation had obviously entailed impotence and might possibly culminate in dismemberment. An alliance with France, who was busily profiting by that impotence to hinder Italy's natural growth in the Mediterranean, was out of the question. And the only other issue was a pact with Germany, which had to be concluded in a hurry or not at all. But Germany summarily rejected every proposed arrangement from which her ally Austria-Hungary was excluded. It was while surveying this embarrassing situation that the Italian Government was driven to a hasty decision by the trend and force of national opinion voiced by some of the foremost publicists of the day. A piquant circumstance is that among the most insistent and perhaps influential of these was Baron Sidney Sonnino, a man of noble enthusiasms, endless ambition, high moral character and respectable abilities, who has since reappeared on the scene in the rôle of destroyer of the Alliance which he then worked so hard and successfully to create. Those are the outward facts that strike the eye at a glance. But looking beneath the surface we find that the manifestation of public opinion which thus stirred the nation and the calculations made by the nation's leaders, were cunningly provoked, moulded or swayed by the deliberate acts and words of the German Government then presided over by Bismarck, to whom is due the credit not merely of

directing all, but of originating some of the events which were indispensable to the execution of his far-reaching policy.

Fate would seem to have taken flesh in the German Chancellor and mysteriously moved those nations whose services were essential to the success of his schemes, to toil and moil for their speedy execution. Thus his fiat sufficed to bring about a *chassez croisez* among the members of the European community. Enemies became friends, friends became allies or infuriated foes, intended victims clamoured for admission to the trap set to ensnare them, while to the admonitions of the few men of political vision and even to the more impressive warnings of recent history, many of the responsible statesmen were deaf and blind. By his machinations he created among the nations of Europe scenes of tumult and confusion like that which Mephistopheles produced among the University students in Auerbach's vaults.

One of the strangest and most persistent delusions ever harboured—and one which the Italian people have not yet shaken off—was that the Germans, and Bismarck in especial, cherished feelings of genuine friendship for their country. In Crispi that belief was deep-rooted. I heard him give expression to it several times. In his successors it was a profound conviction. Giolitti regarded it as an incontrovertible axiom. Di San Giuliano clung to it with tenacity down to the day of his death. And even Baron Sonnino, who repudiated the alliance and declared war against Austria, eschewed overt acts of hostility against Germany. Nay, he willingly entered into an arrangement with Prince Bülow by which German property in Italy—the machinery and economic fruits of Teutonic interpenetration—is to be religiously respected in case war should break out, and doubtless when peace is restored the work of weaving Italian and German interests in a solid web will be harmoniously resumed. But the emergency will hardly arise. It requires a powerful effort of the imagination to picture to oneself Baron Sonnino,

the persistent champion of the Triple Alliance, declaring war on the Empire which alone embodies the might, the intelligence and the durability of that formidable league. And Baron Sonnino's respect for Germany is but a pale reflex of the awe in which Italy stands of that superhuman ethnic machine. Optimists, it is true, hold that Italy will none the less extend the front of her Great War so as to include the Germans among her foes. And they point to coming events in the near East which will, they believe, draw her into the centre of the bloody maelstrom. Well, those things are still in the lap of the gods. But even if they came to pass the resourcefulness of Italian diplomacy may surely be trusted to find the means of co-operating with Italy's allies without coming into contact with the Germans carrying on war against these, or evoking any manifestations of discontent on the part of France, Britain or Russia, if it were to Italy's interests so to conduct the policy of the State.

Bismarck boasted that he knew Italy thoroughly, and many Italians bore witness to the truth of this self-praise. But in reality he flattered himself. Utter contempt was the unchanging sentiment which at all times he fostered towards the nation, and countless were the forms in which he gave it vent. But the insults and injuries which he inflicted when he had no motive to conceal his real feelings, did not hinder him from flattering the young State and its diplomatists whenever he required their immediate services. Nor did those changing moods arouse the suspicions of his tools. Thus in bypast years when maturing his campaign against Austria, he assured Count Nigra of his respect and affection for Italy, adding: "If Italy did not already exist, Europe would have to create her, so indispensable is she to its well-being." By cajolery and threats he contrived to draw her into an alliance with Prussia against the Habsburg Monarchy, and so to word the terms of the covenant that Italy was bound to Prussia while Prussia was free from corresponding obliga-

tions towards Italy. It was in the spirit of this one-sided arrangement that one month after it had entered into vigour he opened secret negociations with Austria, against whom it was pointed. If those negociations had been brought to a successful issue, Italy would have found herself face to face alone with Austria as an enemy. But the pourparlers, as it chanced, came to naught, and in the struggle that ensued the arms of the Allies triumphed over the Habsburgs. But from the treaty of peace Bismarck excluded the hoped-for clause bestowing the Trentino on his meek and loyal ally. Nay, he concluded the armistice that preceded the peace without Italy's participation or knowledge. The news that it had been arranged reached the Italians not from Berlin but from Paris. And when he was expostulated with on the unseemliness of this conduct, Bismarck characteristically exclaimed : " Italy ? I don't care a damn for Italy ! " [1]

" It is impossible to conceive of more infamous conduct than that which Prussia displayed towards us from the battle of Sadowa down to the conclusion of peace," wrote Bonghi, a statesman of moderate views and sound judgment. None the less, nearly all Italian statesmen since then, including Salandra and Sonnino, have a lingering regard for German Kultur, which no disillusions, no shocks, nor even the war can be expected to dispel. Prince von Buelow, familiar with this Cult of Kultur, reckoned with it as a helpful instrument in his diplomatic operations before the war. It was in view of the fascination which the Teuton thus exercised over Italy that he so often repeated his conviction : " To keep Italy from making war on the Triple Alliance is to knock at an open door. My real task is to keep her from fighting Austria. Her own instinct of self-preservation will prevent her from challenging Germany."

[1] *Problemi Italiani*, xvi, Pietro Silva, p. 4.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL INTRIGUES OF BISMARCK

DURING the Franco-German campaign of 1870, the march of Garibaldi's legionaries against the Germans and the apprehension that they might be the forerunners of Italy's descent into the arena, on the side of France, stung Bismarck to the quick, and by way of taking preventive measures, as he himself subsequently avowed, he forthwith entered into relations with Italian republicans and conspirators with a view towards aiding and abetting them in an organized plan for the overthrow of the monarchy to be carried out as soon as King Victor Emmanuel should declare war. That kind of strategy, however, was not merely Bismarckian; it was German. At no period of his career, whether as a private individual or as a statesman, did Bismarck hide for long his contemptuous conception of the Italian people. Talking one day with a French General who put a question to him on the subject, he said: "Italy? Why, Italy is one of the public women on the streets."[1] And oddly enough the man who thought thus meanly and spoke thus brutally of one of the most cultured nations of Europe, had it in his power to draw it to his country's side whenever interest beckoned or danger menaced.

United Germany's position after her victory over France, and the nature of the shoals and the rocks of which she had to steer clear, are tolerably understood. The main danger

[1] Op. cit., p. 6.

she felt moved to guard against was a coalition of unfriendly Powers. Her own history offered her impressive instances of the facility with which such a coalition could be created and of the disasters it might bring down on the nation against which it was directed. Nor were symptoms wanting that the conjuncture was favourable to an anti-German league. France, now a republic, and visibly awakening from her torpor, was not merely thinking and speaking of revenge but actually making ready for it. The wounds inflicted on Austria in 1866 had not yet cicatrized. Certain of the German monarchs, and in particular the Kings of Würtemberg and Bavaria, were impatient of Prussia's supremacy. The Russian Tsar was well enough disposed towards his uncle the first German Kaiser, but his imperial Chancellor Gortschakoff, embittered against Bismarck, was actuated in his policy by one of the deadliest feelings among the mainsprings of political actions—hatred born of wounded vanity.

Casting around for ways and means of ensuring to his extended fatherland the enjoyment of the fruits of his labours until they could be consolidated and made permanently secure, Bismarck first hit upon the expedient of a league of the three conservative Empires for the maintenance of reactionary principles against the steady incursions of the growing democracy. Prussia, Austria and Russia stood for the divine right of monarchs as opposed to the new-fangled notions of the supremacy of the people's will which had been making headway among Latin people since the French Revolution. This partnership would, it was augured, not only afford Germany the mainstay she craved for, but also raise a barrier between France and those States that might feel disposed to come to her assistance. Such was the origin of the alliance of the three Emperors. Ingenious as a temporary expedient, it offered a basis much too narrow and precarious for the policy of the three commanding Powers of the Continent. Moreover, Bismarck and Gortschakoff hated each other too

intensely to work in harmony for long, and the incipient irrational jealousies between Russia and Austria, which never ceased to grow since then, thwarted the most insistent efforts to remove the real grounds for their mutual distrust. But by way of striking the iron before it grew cold, Bismarck conceived the plan of provoking another war with France, crippling her this time permanently, and then resuming the process of consolidation under more auspicious conditions. When he had completed the requisite preparations, Russia, in the person of Bismarck's bitter enemy, Gortschakoff, uttered her emphatic veto and the project had to be given up. "I sometimes forgive," the German Chancellor was wont to say, "but I never forget." In the case of Russia he did neither. And opportunity soon served his purpose.

Of the fruits of the Russo-Turkish War the Tsardom was deftly dispossessed by means of the most specious formulæ current among professional diplomatists. The Russian nation was infuriated. Count Shuvaloff on his return from the Berlin Congress was dubbed a traitor. The central Government was openly accused of the servility of weakness. A campaign against the Germans was organized in the Press of Moscow, Petersburg, Kieff, and Bismarck made overtures to Austria with a view to a close partnership between the two Empires in face of the common danger. The old Kaiser at first vetoed the scheme. He was unwilling to sever the ties of personal friendship which had so long bound him to his Russian nephew. Friendship with Russia was one of the hallowed traditions of the Hohenzollerns since the days of the Great Frederick. But after many ineffectual attempts to convince Bismarck of the imprudence of the step he proposed to take, the aged Emperor finally gave way. Thereupon the German Chancellor and the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Andrassy, drew up a defensive alliance stipulating that if Germany were attacked by Russia, she could reckon on the support of Austria, all of whose forces

would be placed at her service; that Austria under like circumstances would be assisted by Germany to the same extent; and that if either Empire became the object of aggression on the part of any Power other than Russia, benevolent neutrality would be the attitude of the ally, unless Russia joined the enemy, in which case both Empires should combine their forces.

That treaty represented not what Bismarck desired but the utmost that he could induce Andrassy to agree to. His own proposal had been a covenant which should provide for common defence not merely against Russia but also and especially against France from whom he apprehended attack. But although his scheme was supported by argument, suasion, and even violent outbursts of temper, Andrassy persistently refused to be a party to it. The positive result of these discussions was disappointment. For the arrangement come to promised the Habsburgs greater advantages than any which the Hohenzollerns could expect to reap, seeing that Russia was much more likely to fight Austria than to wage war against Germany. Moreover, France, whose thirst for revenge was the principal danger to be reckoned with, would, if she came to blows with Germany, be confronted with this Power alone, whereas Austria, should her leanings turn in the old direction, was at liberty to come to an understanding with the Republic. Thus the isolation of France still remained a pious desire, which would have to be effected by other means.

How earnestly Bismarck set himself to solve this problem may be inferred from the care he bestowed on its every aspect and from the far-fetched expedients to which he had recourse before events favoured the adoption of organized methods. He decided on the one hand to get Russia to agree to a secret treaty of reciprocal guarantees, and on the other to detach Italy from France and bring her within the German orbit. One would have thought that the latter design was wholly

beyond the range even of Bismarck's efforts. For not only was the chasm between Italy and Austria too great to be permanently bridged over by diplomacy, but Bismarck himself and the bulk of his fellow-countrymen were known as despisers if not haters of the Italian nation. But between the Chancellor and the every-day Minister there was the same wide difference that prevails between man and the most intelligent of the animals. What he could not do himself he could generally forge instruments to do for him. And that was the course to which he now resorted.

At first his path was beset with difficulties. Hatred of the Austrian which had long ago taken root in the breast of the Italian was now intensified by recent events. The unearned increment which the Habsburg Monarchy received at the Congress of Berlin from victories won by Russia over the Turk, impressed upon the Italian mind the hopelessness of a diplomatic campaign against an Empire which was backed by military Germany, favoured by England, and feared by the Tsardom. And from a military point of view Victor Emmanuel's united nation was still less able to make an impression upon the Great Powers among which it was beginning to be ranked by a stretch of international courtesy. Italy's army was seldom mentioned without a disparaging epithet or a smile of contempt. As late as the year 1879, when the French Ambassador at Berlin asked Bismarck whether Germany had undertaken to support Austria in the eventuality of Italian aggression, he received the significant answer: "If Italy were a redoubtable military Power, we might perhaps have felt moved to give the matter our attention, but we should be afraid of wounding Austria's feelings by offering her protection against an attack by her neighbour of the Peninsula."[1]

[1] Cf. *Problemi Italiani*, xvi, p. 6 (Pietro Silva). This study, to which I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness, is, in spite of its unpretentiousness, the best succinct account I have met with of the origins of the Triple Alliance.

Alone, therefore, Italy could not hope to obtain tolerable strategic frontiers, nor fruitful colonies, nor even to defend her recently acquired unity against the growing movement in favour of the restitution of Rome to the papal see. Yet her isolation was absolute. Owing to Bismarck's illwill her claim to the Trentino had been disallowed and the strategic position which resulted was such that an army twice as powerful as that which her finances permitted her to maintain would have been inadequate to defend it. In Trentino, Gorizia, Trieste, and other parts of the Austrian Empire, the Italian population was the victim of active persecution or of studied neglect. The Vienna Government, even in its most conciliatory moods, displayed a degree of animosity against Italy which might at the fitting moment embody itself in formal hostilities, while the Emperor and the court made no secret of their sympathies for the dispossessed Sovereign Pontiff or of their desire to have him reinstated in his temporal possessions.

Under these circumstances it was natural that Italy should turn to France for comfort and support. Moreover, the moment was judged auspicious. During the first years of the third Republic the official relations between the sister nations had lacked cordiality. For the Conservative party then in power could not forgive Italy's neutrality during the war, nor her haste to seize and incorporate Rome while France was fighting for her national existence. Moreover, a large body of French Conservatives fostered the idea and preached the necessity of restoring the new Italian capital to the Vicar of Christ. But of late a marked change had come over the French Republic. The accession of the republican Left to power had seemingly broken down the barriers between the kindred nations. This party hated the Catholic Church as intensely as Italy hated Austria. Resolved not to sacrifice a soldier on the battlefield nor to waste a word in the council chamber in favour of the temporal power of the Pope, it was

animated by an all-absorbing desire to make every possible preparation abroad as well as at home for the inevitable struggle with united Germany. And as about the same time the political power in Italy had also passed from the Conservative to the Liberal party, the essential elements of a Franco-Italian entente were seemingly complete.

Bismarck's task, undertaken against such odds, might well be deemed hopeless. That Italy should profess for Austria a friendship which she was incapable of feeling, or that Austria should compose herself to a considerate and neighbourly spirit towards the upstart Power which she regarded as a titled lady might regard her former menial grown rich and insolent, and that both should set aside their natural and dominant feelings of mutual aversion in order to become friends and partners in an enterprise of little or no positive value to either, might have been accounted sheer impossible. But from Bismarck's dictionary, as from that of Mirabeau, the word impossible had been erased. His resourcefulness and the gullibility of his adversaries were equal to all the demands made upon them by his far-reaching designs. And as usual he achieved his aim by means of unconscious tools. One of the most interesting and tragi-comic episodes in European history is the spectacle thus unfolded to our gaze of eminent, honourable, and self-conscious national leaders, zealously striving after aims and objects of the greatest moment, as they fancied, to their respective countries, but which were really the elements of a grandiose Bismarckian scheme, to the realization of which they were thus effectively contributing. One might liken them to a hive of bees laboriously making honey which was already destined for their owner and bespoken by his customers.

As the most imminent danger was a possible understanding between Italy and France, the first measures to which Bismarck had recourse were directed to the displacement of that. And the means lay ready to his hands. He had long

had in view an apple of discord wherewith to set his rivals by the ears—supremacy in the Mediterranean. As far back as the year 1868 he had written : " Nature has thrown an apple of discord between France and Italy for which they will never cease to struggle, the Mediterranean. It is out of the question for Italy to allow France to threaten her every moment with the seizure of Tunis."[1] And with the foresight that continually characterized him he had laid the foundations of his scheme for the co-operation of Austria and Italy at the Berlin Congress, where he supported Andrassy against Schuvaloff, and like a cunning barrator tempted France to steal a march on Italy while urging Italy to be beforehand with France in their Mediterranean rivalry. To Waddington, the chief plenipotentiary of the Republic at that Congress, he opened his mind respecting the expediency of annexing Tunis and the ease with which this might be achieved now that France was sure of Germany's good-will, England's suffrance, and Italy's impotence.

While Bismarck was thus alluring France, he was using the same bait to entice Italy on to the same course where the two rivals were bound to meet and clash with the results he needed. For at the same time the second German plenipotentiary was making seductive suggestions of a like nature to the chief Italian plenipotentiary, Count Corti. " Now that England is at Cyprus," this diplomatist asked, " why should you not annex Tunis with England's consent ? " " You want to make us quarrel with France, do you ? " retorted the Italian. The French plenipotentiary was less emphatic in resisting the tempter. He contented himself with remarking that the only interest which the Republic had in Tunis was of a negative order : that country must not be occupied by any other Power. But despite this partial renunciation, the seed sown by Bismarck took root and flourished. Waddington, assured

[1] Op. cit., p. 12.

of Germany's consent and Italy's helplessness, secretly set himself to ascertain England's sentiments. And he found the Cabinet willing to envisage the realization of French dreams in Tunis as a reasonable compensation for the firmer hold on the Eastern Mediterranean which Britain had obtained by the annexation of Cyprus.

And Italy was not merely helpless. For a time her plight seemed almost desperate. The irredentist movement in favour of emancipating the Italians still in Austria from the yoke of the Habsburgs was making itself felt with greater force than ever, embarrassing the Rome Cabinet, and provoking journalistic menaces and, worse still, military measures in Austria. For a time, indeed, it looked as though the Vienna Government were seriously contemplating a campaign which would bring back under Franz Josef's sceptre the Italian provinces recently united to Italy, restore the eternal city to the Pope, permanently disable the young kingdom and reduce it to the rank of a second-class Power.

On the other hand, those Italians—and they constituted the vast majority—who still turned their eyes towards France, discerned nothing to cheer them in the perspective there. On the contrary they saw much to discourage them. A projected commercial treaty between the two countries which the Minister Decazes had drafted was thrown out by the French Chamber in one of its perverse moods, and the effect on public sentiment in Italy was swift and repellent. A speedy advance towards the Central Empires or the Republic was fast becoming imperative. The Italian Premier Cairoli first took the former road. By way of placating Austria, he put down irredentist manifestations with a heavy hand. The task was eminently unpopular. And in order to provide an outlet for the pent-up forces of patriotic fervour he began to deploy an unusual degree of activity in Tunis, where the number and influence of Italian residents was rapidly increasing. France, whose agreement with England about

Tunis was unknown to the Rome Cabinet, had not yet clearly shown her hand. But as soon as Italy's intentions began to unfold themselves, M. de Freycinet ominously announced that " at present France does not contemplate the occupation of Tunis. As for the future, it is in the hands of God." The Italian press chronicled the utterance, but the Government's colonial ardour was nowise abated.

Fortune smiled on Italy's first ventures in that coveted African region. Represented there by a clever and enterprising agent, she secured from the Bey permission to lay a telegraphic cable between his dominions and Sicily, and, what was of more value, she obtained a concession for a railway line between Goletta and Tunis. This was a triumph of which the hard-pressed Cabinet proceeded to make the most at home. Ministers vaunted it in the Chamber and congratulated themselves in private on enlarging the field of Italian enterprise. They gloried in the thought that they were slowly building up a greater Italy. But what the Italians celebrated as a diplomatic success the French resented as a painful humiliation, and the ill-starred Bey who had bestowed favours on one of the rivals was now admonished that he must make haste to confer greater boons on the other. The energy of the two Governments was impregnated with reciprocal bitterness. Each of them felt that the moment was at hand for a decisive stroke which would bring Tunis under what is euphemistically termed its " protection." Cairoli at once bethought himself of England, still unaware of her secret understanding with France, and at the same time he felt his way cautiously in Vienna and Berlin. The lip-sympathy of the two Central Empires was lavished on Italy, while the behaviour of the French was openly stigmatized by both as infamous. The press of Germany and Austria gave free course to its indignation against the designs of the Republic and piously hoped that the lesson would not be lost on Italy, who could now at last

discern who her real friends were. And these friends with open arms were waiting for her cordial embrace.

But the Italians, for all their impulsiveness, are wont to move slowly in the field of international politics. And now they displayed no unseemly haste to throw themselves into the arms of Germany and Austria. Towards the latter country in particular their aversion could neither be overcome nor disguised. By way of dislodging it the Central European press kept repeating the saying that the way to Berlin passes through Vienna and wondering why Italy was so long in taking it. The same dictum was dinned into the ears of the Italian diplomatists who in Rome, Berlin and Vienna were then groping their way with their German and Austrian colleagues.

CHAPTER III

BARON SONNINO AND THE ALLIANCE

IN this interchange of courtesies, flattery, reproaches and threats the year 1880 passed without bringing any modification of the ground ideas of the negociators or any change in the political situation. It was not until the following year that the climax was reached. An official mission sent by the Italian colony and the Bey of Tunis to Palermo on the occasion of the visit of the Italian sovereigns to that city spurred the French to frustrate Italy's manœuvres without incurring her enmity. The means chosen were the creation of an accomplished fact, the sting of which would, it was hoped, be counteracted by the issue of an Italian Loan on the Paris market and by a commercial treaty which was then being negociated. It was further assumed by French statesmen that the danger of an entente between Rome and Berlin was in any event imaginary, seeing that the irredentist strivings of a large body of the Italian people would interpose an impassable bar to partnership with Austria, without whom Germany was resolved not to conclude an alliance.

In Italy an analogous illusion prevailed. The statesmen of Rome imagined that soft words and protestations of friendship for the Republic would ward off the danger to the designs on Tunis which was rapidly growing actual. But amenities brought forth only amenities. Meanwhile a French expedition was rigged out in April, and on May 12th, 1881, the Bey of Tunis was constrained to ratify the Bardo

Treaty which, leaving him his rank and title, transferred his power to the French Republic. On this event the best comment was made by Henri Rochefort, who wrote : " L'expédition est un des coups les mieux réussis de M. de Bismarck." The anger and disappointment of the Italian people at seeing that wealthy country—which they were eager, qualified, and, as they thought, destined to colonize—snatched from their grasp, were intense and universal. The blaze was further fanned by a free fight which broke out in the streets of Marseilles between French soldiers returning from Tunis and Italians, in the course of which four individuals were killed and seventeen wounded.

Forty-eight hours after the ratification of the Bardo Treaty the Cairoli Cabinet fell, and a new administration was formed under the premiership of Depretis who had been Home Secretary under the outgoing Prime Minister. This politician had ever been actuated by friendly feelings towards the Republic. He it was who had hitherto baulked the Austro-German efforts to draw Italy into the Teutonic alliance which Bismarck was toiling to bring about. For he realized the vastness, without comprehending the character, of the change which such an unnatural union would produce in Italy's international status, and he felt that the advantages it promised were dubious. Economically the Italian nation stood to lose enormously. For if France had deprived it of a potential colony, was not France herself—so long as she remained friendly—a colony for Italian emigrants, over four hundred thousand of whom lived permanently in that country, earning wages high enough to enable them to send home considerable savings every year ? On the other hand, it was indispensable that Italy's relations with the two Empires should in the future be marked with greater cordiality than in the past. For public sentiment had been outraged by France, and public opinion as voiced by some of the most respected and most gifted of Italy's

sons now called on the Government to change the course of the ship of State and throw in the country's lot with Germany and Austria.

Among these partisans of an alliance with the military Empires were statesmen, officers and publicists of note and influence. Even many, whose antipathies for Austria and Germany were invincible, protested angrily against the greed and unfriendliness of the sister nation. "I am a friend of France," wrote Garibaldi, less than a week after the ratification of the Treaty of Bardo, "and I hold that everything feasible should be done to preserve her friendship. But being before everything else an Italian, I would gladly sacrifice the remainder of my life in order that Italy shall not be outraged by any one." And a month later he wrote: "The French treaty with the Bey has demolished the good opinion I had of France, and if her unjust doings in Africa continue, she will force us to recollect that Carthage and Nice are as much French as I am a Tartar."

But of all the voices that were uplifted against the Republic and in favour of an alliance with the Teutons, none was as clear, strident and suasive withal as that of Sidney Sonnino, then a wealthy, ambitious and rising young publicist. He had rallied to his standard a small but resolute body of ardent patriots who ventilated their views in the pages of his organ the *Rassegna Settimanale*. Of this phalanx Baron Blanc was the brain and Baron Sonnino the voice. And the views of these innovators far outstripped the intentions of Depretis and his colleague at the Consulta, Mancini. Nothing short of a complete break with the Republic and a formal alliance with the Teutonic Empire would satisfy this self-constituted irresponsible opposition. Isolation, Sonnino declared, would spell annihilation for Italy. The phrase caught on and was repeated with variations throughout the length and breadth of the Peninsula. Mancini, the Foreign Secretary, unable to stem the headstrong current, decided

to swim with it. As it happened he was personally acquainted with Bismarck who, in one of his gracious moods, had remarked to him ten years before that Italian unity and German unity are not two distinct questions but two aspects of one and the same question, and that it was impossible to sunder them and to oppose the union of the one people without combating the union of the other. Recalling this comforting assurance, Mancini indited a letter to the Chancellor, opening his mind to him on the expediency of establishing more cordial relations between the two nations whose interests were thus virtually identical. Bismarck replied assuring the Minister of his lively sympathy for Italy. The Italian Ambassador in Berlin reported that the conjuncture was favourable. From Vienna, too, the Ambassador informed his chief that "Austria is only solicitous of living in peace with Italy."

But in spite of this encouragement the Cabinet held back. Its press organ [1] and that of the Premier [2] strove to curb the impulse that was driving Young Italy into the arms of the Teutons. Among outsiders the statesman Ruggero Bonghi warned the nation of the dangers involved in this new departure. In short, opinions were hopelessly divided and there was no real guidance anywhere. Thus the Premier was steadily opposed to the idea of a formal alliance; the Foreign Secretary advocated an alliance with Germany only; and Baron Blanc, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was pleading the cause of both military Empires with a degree of zeal, a force of suasion, and an unflagging perseverance that would have done credit to a professional agent of the German Chancellor. Meanwhile Bismarck kept himself in the background lest, by appearing too prominently in this international venture, he should jeopardize an important parliamentary scheme he was then carrying out at home. Qualifying himself for the rôle of ally of the Catholic Centre

[1] *Il Diritto.* [2] *Il Popolo Romano.*

in Germany, he was making eager advances to the Vatican, the success of which might be marred by friendly relations with the Italian Government. Hence he confided to Austria the task of taking Italy in tow and luring her into the alliance. And Austria accepted the mission with alacrity. For her hope of re-establishing genuine friendship with Russia had vanished and her desire to immobilize Italy had grown correspondingly.

The press of Vienna handled the subject skilfully. Sirens' voices filled the air with entrancing sounds, while Bismarck, who put greater faith in brutal threats than in soft-spoken flatteries, sounded a harsher note. His spokesman Treitschke, in a carefully worded diatribe against the Italian Government, hinted that the question of restoring Rome to the Holy See would be raised if Italy remained isolated and the Vatican struck up an accord with Germany. The warning, repeated in the journals of Vienna, created an impression in Rome which bordered on alarm. The Austrians, in pursuance of instructions received from Berlin, had launched a report that the King of Italy contemplated a visit to Franz Josef in Vienna. In this announcement, as in so many others made by German and Austrian Government press agencies, there was not a shred of truth. But Germany's friends in Italy hailed it with delight and lauded to the skies the unknown originator of the genial scheme. The Italian Ambassador in Vienna, a man of sound practical sense, warned his Government against the eagerness for an alliance displayed by the Italian press which tended to put Italy in the position of a mendicant suing for favours.

A shocking incident suddenly imparted actuality to Italian apprehensions and reinforced the machinations of the two imperial Governments. One night,[1] as the body of Pope Pius IX was being conveyed from the Church of St. Peter to that of St. John Lateran, a number of roughs

[1] July 12th, 1881.

assailed the bearers and strove to throw the corpse into the Tiber. The effect of this disgusting onslaught on the remains of a Pope who had once been the civil ruler of Rome was tremendous. Leo XIII called the attention of the Catholic world to the unbearable conditions that pressed upon him in the capital rendering the exercise of his functions impossible. Franz Josef took the disgraceful proceedings as much to heart as though the insult were personal and pointed against himself. Bismarck, who had meanwhile attained his end and ingratiated himself with the Vatican and the Catholic Centre, zealously attributed to the Roman problem an international character. Italy's isolation was thus growing more painful and dangerous, and at any moment a collective endeavour might be put forth by the Great Powers for such a solution of the Roman problem as would undo the work of Italian unity.

By way of heightening this impression, Bismarck despatched his famulus, Dr. Busch, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Rome to intimate to the Vatican the desirability of getting the Pope and his court to quit the clerical city and take refuge in Fulda in Germany, where he could reckon on absolute liberty of action "during his exile." Emanating from any other European statesman, this invitation might be the outcome of a legitimate desire to conciliate the Catholics of the realm he governed, or of an equally legitimate ambition to secure for his country the glamour attaching to the dispensation of hospitality to the Supreme Head of the Catholic Church. But on Bismarck's insidious manœuvre established facts forbid us to put any such harmless construction. For it was he who, in the year 1875, had expressed in strong terms to the Italian Government his conviction that the Guarantee Laws regulating the status of the Pontiff were much too generous for the Pope and much too dangerous for the other Powers because they rendered the Head of the Church invulnerable. And two

years later he exclaimed to Crispi: "You have wrapped the Pope up in cotton wool so that nobody can deal him a blow." [1] And now when he fancied that his own purposes could best be served by a resentful Vicar of Christ, he had no scruple to condemn the laws which he had thus eulogized and to declare them incompatible with papal liberty, or to exhort the Pope in justice to himself and his spiritual children to quit the country that had generously enacted and was scrupulously observing them.

Bismarck and his Austrian confederates had another motive for the animus which they were manifesting towards Italy now that she was about to enter the net so cunningly spread for her. They feared that Italian diplomacy, with its wonted circumspection, would hedge round its adhesion to the alliance with awkward provisoes. What they were playing for was the unconditional surrender of Italy's liberty of action in the sphere of international politics. And they ended by securing it.

King Humbert, dismayed by the national peril and dissatisfied with the indecision of his Cabinet, unexpectedly took the matter into his own hands and arranged a visit to the Austrian Emperor. In this as in one or two other fateful moves he seems to have consulted none of his Ministers. Indeed the Italian Government, when reports of the projected meeting of the monarchs came to its knowledge, denied them with sincerity and emphasis. The Foreign Secretary telegraphed to his Ambassador in Vienna inquiring who had originated the unfounded rumours, and his despatch was crossed by one from that Ambassador asking whether there was any truth in them! The King's initiative turned the scale, and the journey to Vienna was arranged for October 26th.[2] Even at that late hour the Italian Cabinet

[1] Cf. Pietro Silva, *Problemi Italiani*, xvi. *Come Si Formò la Triplice*, p. 30.

[2] Cf. *La Triplice Alleanza*, Ricordi, Note, Appunti di un Vecchio Parlamentare. Roma, 1914.

strove hard to whittle down the significance of the visit which it was unable to countermand, and suggested among other things that the trysting-place should not be Vienna and that the King and his Consort should undertake the journey, unaccompanied by members of the Cabinet. But these limitations were demurred to by Franz Josef, who insisted that the sovereigns should repair to the Austrian capital and should bring with them the chiefs of their respective Governments.

The ensuing interview and the solemnity with which the Austrian Government invested it, clinched the political problem. The germanophile press of Rome broke out in pæans of victory; Germany and Austria were lauded to the skies; Crispi discoursed eloquently of an alliance of the strong with the strong; and the joy of Sonnino at seeing his pet programme on the point of realization knew no bounds.

"The King's journey," he wrote, "has given us an assurance that the Ministry is at last minded to strike out a new line of foreign policy, and inaugurate a clear-cut system of alliances. In order to reach Berlin it was indispensable to pass through Vienna. Well, we have passed through Vienna. But we must not halt there. We are pushing on to Berlin, abandoning all ideas of an alliance with France." [1]

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[1] Op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

THE IRONIES OF FATE

IT is interesting as an object lesson in the ironies of fate to compare the fervid enthusiasm of the Sonnino of 1881 for the cultured Germans and Austrians and his exuberant hatred of France with the cold logic of the disabused anchoretic Sonnino of 1915 who suddenly acquired widespread popularity by undoing the work he had so laboriously helped to achieve a quarter of a century before. European history ever since Germany began to obtain success in moulding it, has been full of these piquant Penelopean activities, some of which are fast losing their humorous points in grim tragedy.

One more sensational incident broke the smooth surface of Austro-Italian relations before these were fixed with the relative finality which treaties with Germany and such-like scraps of paper can confer. The chief Vienna press organ came out one day with the announcement that Franz Josef would return King Humbert's visit at the very first opportunity. "It matters little," the journal added, "in what city it will be returned. If we ourselves had any voice in the matter we should suggest Florence. But it is impossible, for comprehensible reasons, that the return visit should be made in Rome." For Leo XIII had refused to receive the Austrian Emperor if he went to the Quirinal, and as head of a Catholic State Franz Josef could not well visit Rome and ignore the head of the Catholic Church. This was a grievous disappointment to the Italian partisans of

Austria and Germany, and it poured water on the mill of the few who were imploring the Italian Government to bethink themselves before it was too late of the chains they were forging for their country. While these contrary currents were clashing and swirling and embarrassing the Cabinet, Sidney Sonnino, "impatient to see the Triple Alliance become an accomplished fact, ran suddenly to the rescue" of his programme and wrote: "We go further even than the *Neue Freie Presse*: to us, too, the place of the visit does not matter one jot. In order that the alliance should be concluded we are willing that the return visit should be postponed *sine die*."[1] National dignity went for nothing in the honour and glory of an alliance with Germany and Austria. Baron Sonnino had his wish: the alliance was signed on May 20th, 1882, and the visit was postponed *sine die*.

In his own country Baron Sonnino's popularity if not his reputation is founded on the ability and firmness with which he fought his diplomatic duel with Prince Bülow in the year 1915, and on the moral courage with which he dissolved Italy's partnership with Germany and Austria and entered into an alliance with France and Britain. And his cautious temper, exquisite tact, and dialectical skill as displayed during the progress of those conversations, were in truth highly creditable to Italy's official spokesman. So, too, was his rare moral courage. The concrete results constituted tardy but solid amends for the sins of his generous but impetuous youth when, with the noblest intentions, he worked assiduously, unwittingly and durably *pour le roi de Prusse*. But they were attained, like so much else that is precious, without having been expressly sought for.

Among the many political riddles which have exercised and baffled the ingenuity of students of the history of this period, several turn upon the preliminaries, the form, and

[1] *Rassegna Settimanale*. Cf. *La Triplice Alleanza*, pp. 19–20.

the wording of the Triple Alliance. The secrecy that enveloped every official interchange of views and every proposal and modification of the text of the Treaty remained impenetrable until German interests required its partial removal. In addition to the little which then became known, certain momentary glimpses behind the scenes were vouchsafed me in the capitals of the two Central Empires and elsewhere. The few facts which I gleaned are instructive without being sensational and may help to elucidate some of the recent political developments which seem to call for explanation. One of these deals with the pristine texts of the Treaty.

I have good grounds for affirming that the first form of the Triple Alliance differed considerably from the second. It consisted really of two distinct treaties: the one between the Habsburg and the Italian Monarchies, and the other between Italy and Germany. In addition to these there was the older treaty between the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs. The grounds for the double Italian compact were technical and political. For the Consulta always recognized a noteworthy difference in its views and treatment of the two Central Empires, that of the Hohenzollerns being regarded as a powerful friend to be conciliated and humoured, while the other was the masked enemy to be mistrusted, watched, and guarded against. Hence it had been Italy's ardent desire when coming to an accord with Germany to ignore Austria altogether. And more than once proposals in this sense were made to Bismarck. But the Chancellor invariably answered in the words trumpeted abroad by Baron Sonnino and his patriotic friends, that the road to Berlin passed through Vienna and that there was no short cut. And whenever a plea for modifying either this decision or the text of the Treaty was put before him, Bismarck's stereotyped answer was virtually this: "If you don't like it you may lump it." The only exception which he admitted to this rule—the insertion of the famous Com-

pensation clause known as Paragraph VII—proceeded from the only error of judgment committed in his dealings with Italy.

It would be unfair to imply that Italy without this stipulation to fall back upon would now be fighting side by side with her two Allies against Britain and France. Many perfectly legitimate and cogent motives rendered such a consummation impossible. But between military co-operation and hostility there are many intermediate halting places, and Paragraph VII effectually encouraged Italy to abide in none of them. None the less, it was vaguely hoped in Rome that somehow and sometime circumstances might enable her to cultivate Germany's friendship without the paralyzing set-off of Austria's alliance. Into the motives which impelled the Chancellor to acquiesce in a stipulation, of which the destructive effect was manifest to the average mind, it would be idle to inquire. One would do well, however, to remember in this connection that Bismarck, unlike the statesmen of France and Britain, never leaned with much weight on parchment treaties. The struggle for existence among Great Powers, he said, reduced treaty obligations from an absolute to a relative force. Against vital interests, they are unavailing.

One of the most telling arguments of the party headed by Sonnino in support of an alliance with the two military Empires had been the necessity of safeguarding Italy's interests in the Mediterranean. Encroachments such as those of which France had just been guilty might, it was argued, recur, and single-handed the nation was powerless to hinder or resent them. But once associated in partnership with the two mightiest military States in Europe, Italy would have nothing more to fear from that or any quarter. And this security alone, were there no further advantages to be hoped for, would more than warrant the new orientation of the country's policy. In this plea there was force,

and the Government, recognizing it, sought to provide in the terms of the Treaty for reciprocal guarantees of territorial integrity and also for the protection of Italy's interests in the Mediterranean. But this latter request was curtly negatived by the Teutonic Governments who were minded to bind their would-be ally without binding themselves. In this way Italy was cheated out of the one positive gain for the sake of which she had taken the fateful step that bereft her of the friendship of France, impaired her economic condition, deprived her of the privileges she might have received from the Republic in Tunis, obliged her to suppress her sympathies for her kith and kin in Austria, and degraded her to the rôle of a satellite.

That, too, was one of Fate's cruel ironies, and its effects reach far; farther than is realized even yet.

One of the stipulations agreed to by all contracting parties was the observance of absolute secrecy. And this obligation was not confined to the terms of the alliance but extended to the fact that it had been concluded. But, as usual, the moment the Teutonic Powers thought that their interests would be furthered by a breach of faith, they committed it. And that moment arrived within three weeks after the signature. For one object pursued by Bismarck was the chronic estrangement between Italy and France. And nothing could contribute to this more speedily and efficaciously than the announcement that Italy had turned against the sister-nation in peace and in war and would henceforth be found siding with France's relentless enemies. Accordingly in the Reichstag the Chancellor alluded to the Treaty, and a few months later Count Kalnoky mentioned it at the Delegations in Budapest. In this way and through the deliberate indiscretions of the German and Austrian press the fact was trumpeted abroad and Bismarck's object fully attained. An alliance between the Latin nations to Germany's detriment was rendered impossible. France's

schemes of revenge were become harmless dreams, Russia had no longer to deal with a timorous Austria but with three inseparable allies, and the Teutonic States were free leisurely to conceive and thoroughly to work out the most grandiose scheme of world-conquest and transformation which has ever entered into the mind of man.

This was not the Triple Alliance which Crispi had imagined and worked for, and for which he is unjustly made responsible. He neither drafted, signed, nor renewed it. He criticized its terms severely. But finding it as one of the instruments of his country's international policy, he used it to the best of his opportunities and strove in vain to have it modified to Italy's advantage. And when the rivalry between Germany and Great Britain began to assume the form of subdued hostility and Italy's position became tragical, he perceived the appalling consequences it would bring forth and strove hard to insure his country against them. Indeed the uneasiness of almost all Italian statesmen bordered on alarm after the commercial accord was concluded between Austria and France. "What is happening?" asked Crispi. "Every hand is turned against Italy because of the Triple Alliance. It is we who are supporting all the weight of that concern. . . . We are told that the Triple Alliance was instituted for the sake of peace. But for us it means war. . . . Under these circumstances, it behoves us to reflect whether it is to our interest to remain in it." The Germans pricked their ears and frowned at these ominous tokens of restiveness. The Kaiser called on the Italian Ambassador and informed him that he himself would shortly repair to Rome to talk matters over with Crispi and make an amicable arrangement. The Ambassador telegraphed the good tidings to Rome. But three days later Crispi had fallen and the Kaiser's concessions were no longer called for.

CHAPTER V

THE RENEWAL OF THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

ITALIAN statesmen bestirred themselves often since the Triple Alliance was first forged to obtain for their country some sensible betterment of the irksome terms on which it had entered the concern. But in vain. Once drawn within the net, the would-be comrade was ranked as a serf. Italy was publicly insulted by Germany for years. Her diplomatic representatives there were treated as menials. For three consecutive years the Italian Ambassador in Berlin sued for an audience of the Chancellor, and sued in vain. For three years! At last one of the few diplomatists of clear political vision, Count di Robilant, becoming the head of the Consulta, a new leaf was turned. He was the diplomatist who, as Ambassador in Vienna, had continually warned his Government against yielding to the pressure of the unripe youthful patriots headed by Sonnino. Alive to the fact that Bismarck, while feigning to belittle the worth of Italy's adhesion, really prized it as one of his most valuable assets and would have been terribly grieved to forfeit it, di Robilant, when the time came for renewing the pact, simulated unwillingness and indecision. And the stratagem succeeded so well that Bismarck was deeply perturbed and by way of compromise assented to the insertion in the instrument of the famous Paragraph VII, recognizing the parity of Austrian and Italian interests in the Balkans. Now the admission of this clause, for which the entire credit is due to Robilant, was the one mistake committed by Bismarck

in the course of his negociations with Italy. For it supplied a handle to the Consulta for the claims put forward in 1914–1915 and an admirable weapon for the diplomatic duel which Baron Sonnino subsequently fought out with dialectical skill and firmness. One may say that it at once imported the germs of dissolution into the newly created international organism, obviously rendering the compact dissoluble at conjunctures when it would be of the utmost consequence to one or other of the parties that its stipulations should be executed.

The new clause enacted that if one of the contracting States should acquire power or territory in the Balkan Peninsula the other would be entitled to put in a claim for compensation. And as Austria's designs and activity were concentrated on the Balkan Peninsula, it was not very difficult to foresee that the seed of dissension thus sown would bring forth bitter fruit. In Vienna a few clear-visioned public men realized this danger. The Chief of the General Staff, Konrad von Hoetzendorff, who, to my thinking, is perhaps the ablest statesman in that Empire, told me that he placed not the slightest reliance on Italy's co-operation when the hour for combined action should strike. On the contrary, he looked forward to a series of bickerings which would culminate in a diplomatic quarrel and probably a military struggle. Konrad's forecast, which events have amply confirmed, does more credit to his sagacity than the means by which he would fain have warded off the danger reflected on his political morality. A preventive war, like the stroke of grace by which a compassionate physician might put an agonizing patient out of pain, is one of those desperate and fateful expedients which the conscience of the civilized world rightly refuses to sanction. And in this case the aged Franz Josef, still master in his own house, vetoed it.

It is worth noting that during the thirty-three years' duration of the Triple Alliance, the aims pursued by the two Teuton partners were specifically their own, and neither

Italy's interests nor those that might be deemed common to the entire concern had any permanent place in their action or designs. It is further interesting to record the fact, which recent disclosures have established, that Austria's policy, always inspired by contempt and distrust of Italy, was since the introduction of Paragraph VII into the treaty uniformly actuated by unfriendliness to that State, and that on one occasion, as we have seen, a preventive war against it advocated by Konrad von Hoetzendorff was elaborately prepared and was on the point of being waged when the firm veto uttered by Count Aehrenthal, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and sustained by the aged Emperor, frustrated the nefarious project.

The wording of Paragraph VII, as revealed in recent official communications, was as follows:—

> Austria-Hungary and Italy, who aim exclusively at the maintenance of the *status quo* in the East, bind themselves to employ their influence to hinder every territorial change detrimental to one or other of the contracting Powers. They shall give each other reciprocally all explanations requisite to the elucidation of their respective intentions as well as of those of other Powers. If, however, in the course of events, the maintenance of the *status quo* in the territory of the Balkans and on the Ottoman coasts and islands of the Adriatic Sea and the Ægean become impossible, and if, either in consequence of the procedure of a third Power or of other causes, Austria and Italy be constrained to change the *status quo* by a temporary or lasting occupation, this occupation shall take place only after previous agreement between the two Powers on the basis of the principle of a reciprocal arrangement for all the advantages, territorial or other, which one of them may secure outside the *status quo* and in such a manner as to satisfy all the legitimate claims of both parties.

The insertion of this clause in the treaty so insistently demanded by Italy was at once followed by the first renewal of the Alliance.

As the Central Empires still declined to protect Italy's

interests in the Mediterranean, Crispi instinctively turned towards Great Britain for the attainment of those safeguards without which her actual position as Germany's ally and France's prospective enemy would be considerably worse than it had been before the alliance. Such a twofold insurance with Germany on land and with Britain on sea had been Crispi's favourite scheme from the outset. But the British Government, averse to foreign entanglements, fought shy of formal treaties. Had it been otherwise, the German Chancellor would have offered no objection. On the contrary, he urged Italy to cultivate the friendliest possible relations with Great Britain, "whether Salisbury or Gladstone happened to be in power," and complimented Crispi on the skill and tact with which he was carrying out this counsel. For at that time Britain felt no mistrust towards the Teuton Empire, and the phrases "blood is thicker than water," "we are both Protestant nations," and "we must live and let our rivals live," were being bandied about by the politicians of both parliamentary parties, as so many magic formulæ. The upshot of Italy's efforts and England's good-will was at last announced by Lord Salisbury at the Guildhall,[1] when he told his hearers that the traditional fraternity between England and Italy was about to assume more concrete forms and that England would see that the *status quo* in the Mediterranean was not upset to the prejudice of the Italian nation.

The Triple Alliance, at first concluded for a term of five years, was prolonged in March, 1887, under the circumstances and with the addition already mentioned. The Marchese di Rudini renewing it in June, 1891, extended the term from five to twelve years with the proviso that each side reserved to itself the right of seceding from the partnership at the end of the first six years. He also imparted to it a marked economic character which, besides satisfying certain pressing

[1] 1887.

needs of his country, insensibly blunted the anti-French point of the alliance. The commercial treaties concluded by Italy with Germany and Austria while enriching those Empires had also for a time a distinctly beneficent effect on the material well-being of the Italian partner. To my mind it was this semi-consciously achieved feat of political transubstantiation which, by purging the alliance of its anti-French spirit, rendered possible the secret Franco-Italian agreement concluded by MM. Delcasse and Prinetti in February, 1902. After that and the arrangements subsequently come to by Italy, Great Britain and France, one might truly say that the first-named country occupied the anomalous position of being the friend of the Entente and the formal ally of the Central Empires, the potential enemy of Austria and of France and the lasting friend of the two irreconcilable rivals, Germany and Britain.

In 1902, the year of the secret alliance with France which Germany did not discover until six years later, the Triple Alliance treaty was adhered to by all three States without modification.

Finally and for the last time it was agreed to in 1912, a whole year in advance of the period fixed for its renewal. This anticipatory agreement was intended by Germany to serve as an admonition to the Entente Powers that the Triple Alliance was one, indivisible, vigilant and ready.

According to one of those stereotyped phrases with which indolent or interested politicians are wont to delude themselves that they are solving international difficulties, the object aimed at and the advantage bestowed by the Triple Alliance was the maintenance of the peace of Europe. That was always the thesis of Germany, Austria and Italy. It was also for a time the belief of Britain and France. And to a certain extent this claim advanced and vaunted by its advocates was warranted. What people never troubled to ascertain was the scope of that peace, whether its advantages

were equally distributed, and to what use they were being put. And yet the pith of the matter lay there. Peace was indeed preserved, but at the cost of Italy's aspirations, of France's velleities, of Russia's strivings, of Britain's security and of the military preparedness of all these States. And it was preserved mainly in order to give Germany the leisure and the means of stretching forth her tentacles, seizing the economic resources of Europe and laying in the arms, munitions and finances requisite for her part in the world-war which formed the culminating point of her policy. Germany having cemented the alliance against France, proceeded to utilize it for the purpose of rendering herself independent of non-Teutonic allies and of making herself a match for all Europe outside Austria-Hungary. That was the object of the peace which the Kaiser so perseveringly upheld and which the British people so enthusiastically extolled. And once within hail of that goal he launched out upon a policy of aggression which several times endangered the general tranquillity, brought Europe within sight of war, and then by giving way in the nick of time he claimed and received the credit of maintaining international tranquillity. "Wilhelm, the Peace-Emperor," "Germany, the Peace-Power," were some of the clap-trap phrases which masked up the wily expedients of Berlin and bespoke the child-like credulity of the Entente peoples during this insidious game.

Italian statesmen were not all blind to this systematic abuse of the ascendency which the Triple Alliance conferred upon the Germans. The indications that some of them clearly discerned the sinister objects of Teutonic policy are many and clear. One instance may suffice; among the instructions telegraphed by Crispi to the Italian Ambassador in Berlin we find the following passage:—

> It is needless for me to repeat to you that in reality the difficulties with which we now have to cope emanate for the most part from the fetters that bind us to Germany. And if we have

no intention to demand from the letter and the spirit of the Treaty consequences which might in Berlin be accounted excessive, it is none the less true that it behoves us to ask, now more than ever, whether, to what extent, and in what way our interests are protected by a treaty which has indeed for its main object to obviate and hinder a European war, but which assuredly ought not to be looked upon as alien from what, in a form more or less disguised, is tantamount to a war waged outside Europe against one or other of the allied Powers.

But Crispi, like Mancini, Robilant, and di Rudini, was powerless to do more than watch, report, and wring his hands in impotent grief. The die was cast. Before her adhesion to the Alliance Italy might have accepted France's conciliatory offer of an amicable arrangement about her interests in Tunis and President Ferry's suggestion that she should annex Tripoli. But once the treaty was signed Italy's liberty of action was gone. She had concluded a bad bargain and her only course was to make the best of it. This necessity was glibly expressed by simplicist politicians in the phrases: "Austria and Italy must be either allies or enemies, there is no middle course. And hostility towards Austria is a luxury which Italy cannot afford." Those formulæ give us the clue to the policy of abject submission to the harsh behests of her allies in which Italy steadfastly persisted for thirty-three years. And her secret understanding with France reveals the expedients by which she endeavoured to insure herself against some of its most mischievous effects.

During this long period, the European situation underwent several far-reaching changes, some of them marked by historic events, but Germany's policy remained the same. For it was the result of a sequence of systematic, single-minded efforts to enforce her own absolute overlordship upon Europe. In diplomacy she compassed this object by endeavouring to keep the two Latin nations not merely sepa-

rated but mutually hostile, by strengthening the Slav element in Austria at the expense of the Italian, and by endeavouring to drive such a wedge between France and Russia as should split their alliance or immobilize one of the Allies in the supreme hour of the other's need. The story of these last-named manœuvres has never been written. It has not even been sketched. Yet it abounds in thrilling episodes which lay bare the workings of the strongest and basest of minds and fascinate the feeblest and best intentioned, and a certain chapter of the story which I could reconstruct in every one of its sensational details would throw a painfully intense light on some of the foulest corners of underground politics.

It was only when the cunning devices invented for the purpose of stirring up dissension or awakening distrust among the Entente Powers had failed of their object that the Kaiser set himself to obtain separately from Russia and from Britain promises of neutrality for the "eventuality" of his wars against any and every Power other than that one to whom he was making the request. This self-denying stipulation, had it been assented to and ratified, would have given Germany a free hand to attack, defeat, cripple, and subject the natural allies of Great Britain and of Russia, while immobilizing all the forces of these two States and reserving each of the latter for subsequent attack under conditions ruinous to them and auspicious for herself. But fortunately there were limits to the simplicity of the two Candides, and at that particular moment they were drawn just here. All that the Cabinets of London and Petersburg could at that time be induced to do was to declare that no political combination to which they actually belonged harboured aggressive designs against Germany and to undertake that they would withhold their support from any alliance or league one of whose objects was inimical to the integrity or peace of that nation.

CHAPTER VI

UNFAIR TREATMENT OF ITALY BY HER TEUTON ALLIES

ITALY was the *famulus* or fag of her two so-called allies, and she had not even a hireling's reward. During my friend Count Taaffe's long tenure of power as Prime Minister of Austria, the Slavs of that Empire were the spoiled children of the Vienna Government, and from that time down to the outbreak of the present war the Italians of the South, whose struggle with the Slav element there was bitter and incessant, were neglected, persecuted, or driven out by a system which was alternately simple and complex, gradual and sudden, legal and arbitrary, but always effectual. The object was destructive. Italian irredentism in Austria was to be plucked up root and branch, and the preliminary expedient resorted to consisted in driving a Slav wedge into the Italian population there. Slavs were encouraged to immigrate into Trieste and other places inhabited by men of Italian race and coveted by the Italian nation. They were favoured socially and politically to an extent which was generally demoralizing. Thus in the year 1910 among the 4,600 civil servants in subordinate positions in Trieste no less than 3,700 were Slavs. In the State railways out of 828 salaried officials 728 were men of Slav origin. In the Lloyd dockyards almost fifty per cent. of the workmen were Slavs. The climax of this coercive policy was reached under Prince Hohenlohe whose Draconian methods strained Austro-Italian relations to the snapping point.

Italians were arrested without any more solid reason than their national sympathies expressed or merely assumed.

In one little district alone 950 Italian labourers were expelled,[1] postcards with the portrait of Dante or of the Italian Royal Family were confiscated—in a word, the authorities of the Dual Monarchy, whose claim to existence was founded on the protection it afforded to the various nationalities of which it was composed, made a fateful exception to the detriment of its ally who was dealt with as an enemy to whom no compromise was possible.

In truth the Triple Alliance existed solely as an agency for executing schemes woven by the Dual Alliance for the exclusive behoof of its two Teutonic members. Only the two Teutonic partners sat at the Council board, whereas all three were working on the executive committee. Italy was made much of when the Kaiser landed at Tangiers, when the Conference was sitting in Algeciras, during the crisis that followed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and after the despatch of the *Panther* to Agadir. Whenever any step was taken which menaced the peace of Europe, Italy at once became the trusty and trusted ally whose views coincided with those of her two comrades and whose resolve was identical with theirs. But once the incident was over she became the needy and brow-beaten client of two wealthy grandees on whose rare generosity she was wholly dependent, and whose behests it was part of her functions to carry out. It was in vain that Ministers like Crispi, di Robilant, Guicciardini protested against this gross abuse: Italy was caught in the trap and had to undergo her fate.

How cruel this fate was and how helpless she felt against it, is not, cannot be, realized by any but the statesmen who underwent the ordeal and were subjected to the pressure. An episode—one of several—may help the reader to form an idea of how Italy, the ally, was browbeaten by her neighbour and co-partner.

Towards the close of November, 1893, Giolitti's Cabinet resigned. Zanardelli, then Speaker of the Chamber, was

[1] In the year 1911.

sent for and charged with the mission of forming a ministry. He succeeded to his own satisfaction and that of the fair-minded among his fellow countrymen. On December 5 the list was ready. A friend of mine, Fortis, was one of the members and the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs was offered to and accepted by General Baratieri, a man of military capacity, of whom a high opinion was entertained in Austria, especially by the Emperor. But as Baratieri, like Barzilai, was a native of Trentino in Austria, the Vienna Cabinet took exception to his appointment to be Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. "The nomination of M. Baratieri," Count Kalnoky [1] had said, "in consequence of his origin, is not consonant to the ties of alliance and amity which link the two States." The Austrian Ambassador at Rome reiterated the objection. But at the same time Vienna and Budapest newspapers, inspired by the Government, declared that all rumours to the effect that Austria had raised difficulties on account of Baratieri were false and mischievous.

Baratieri was thunderstruck. He not only withdrew his acceptance of the portfolio, but he announced his resolve to resign his post in the army and abandon his career altogether. But Zanardelli, to his credit, refused to bend to Austria's will and admit her veto as a factor in Italian politics. Therefore he turned to the only alternative and laid the mandate in the King's hand.[2]

In the true sense of the term Italy was never treated as an ally. When her interests were at stake the utmost she could hope for—and the hope was cruelly belied—was to be left alone to safeguard them to the best of her ability. A very different spirit actuated the conduct of the two German Empires towards each other. At Algeciras, the Kaiser's claims were upheld by Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Minister, with a degree of zeal and vigour which elicited the

[1] Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.
[2] Cf. *Nuova Antologia*, October 16, 1915.

Kaiser's gratitude and won for Austria the epithet of Germany's "brilliant second." When Aehrenthal incorporated the two Slav provinces, Germany made the ensuing quarrel her own and despatched to Petersburg the famous communication which was erroneously described as an ultimatum.[1] But when Italy set out to acquire a new colony in Africa, her campaign against the Turks was not only not facilitated by the moral support of her allies, but its success was endangered by their arbitrary limitations, and its progress was systematically impeded by their unfriendly acts. From the beginning of that war, Italy's enterprise called forth scathing condemnations in the German and Austrian press. Counsels of resistance were, it is known, tendered to the Porte by the German Ambassador in Constantinople. And while the German Empire secretly contributed men and money to the Ottoman ally, the Austrian Government frankly forbade Italy to occupy Chios or Mytilene, to bombard Prevesa and to adopt the naval and military strategy and tactics which would have brought the struggle to a speedy and successful close.

And yet the African provinces for which the Italians were fighting had long been ear-marked by them with the implicit consent of Germany and the express, if secret, acquiescence of France. It was the statesman, Emilio Visconti-Venosta, Italy's chief plenipotentiary at the Algeciras Conference, who had definitively arranged the matter with the French. In reality this agreement was but the application of the principle accepted by Delcassé and Prinetti in February, 1902. Visconti-Venosta had been sent to Algeciras by Sonnino's colleague and friend, Guicciardini, both of them still partisans of the Triple Alliance, and both dissatisfied with the rôle in

[1] This incident will one day be recounted as it really occurred. I know the details which, when compared with the version at present in vogue, will serve to show up the slipshod way in which history is sometimes written, by the very men who made it.

that alliance assigned to Italy by her partners. At Algeciras the steady and helpful support which the Italian delegate gave to France was highly appreciated and suitably requited by that country and Great Britain, whose Governments offered Italy a free hand in Tripoli, whenever she should feel disposed to imitate her French sister and build up a new African colony.

And now that the Consulta deemed the auspicious moment come, it was natural to assume that the enterprise would be looked upon more favourably by Italy's allies than by mere friends. For the latter owed incomparably less to her Platonic amity than the former to her implicit obedience, while all of them had assented to what all felt to be a political necessity. On moral grounds no doubt a stand might easily have been taken against the forcible seizure of a Turkish province and its incorporation in the kingdom of Italy. But neither her friends nor her allies being without sin, she had no fear that any of them would cast ethical stones at her. And yet this cheering forecast was quickly belied by incidents which left a sinister and abiding impression.

By her own allies Italy was hampered at almost every step. The first prohibition was launched in the name of Germany as well as Austria.[1] Count Aehrenthal informed the Duke d'Avarna that operations on the Ottoman coasts of European Turkey and in the islands of the Ægean Sea could be permitted neither by Austria nor by Germany because they ran counter to the treaty of the Alliance. And the clause of the Alliance which was pleaded in support of that contention was the famous Paragraph VII which Count di Robilant had expended such ingenuity and pains to have inserted! The occasion of this prohibition was even more extraordinary than its alleged justification. It had been rumoured that Italian warships had turned their searchlights on the environs of Salonika! Two days later[2] Count Aehrenthal apprized the

[1] On November 5th, 1911.

[2] November 7th, 1911. Cf. Italian Green Book Despatch, N. 6.

Italian Ambassador that he looked upon the bombardment of such ports of European Turkey as Salonika, Kavalla, etc., as contrary to Clause 7 of the Treaty, and five months later [1] Count Berchtold, who had meanwhile succeeded Aehrenthal, complained to the Duke d'Avarna that the Italian squadron replying to the cannon of the Dardanelles forts had damaged them! Nay, the Austrian Minister went to the extent of menacing the Italian ally: he declared that if the Royal Government was minded to resume its liberty of action, the Austrian Government would do likewise. If any similar operation were attempted in future, it would carry with it "grave consequences."

That was the spirit in which the Teuton allies interpreted their friendship and alliance with Italy. And it was in the same spirit of varnished mistrust and masked enmity that the two Central Empires worked for the realization of their own ends during the thirty-three years that the Treaty was in vigour. Austria never ceased to regard Italy as the potential enemy for whose destruction it was incumbent on her to keep her powder dry and prepare favourable conditions. And so offensive were the manifestations of this ill-will that some of the hardiest apostles of the Triple Alliance in Italy were unable to hide their ill-humour or repress their protests. One of these was Fortis, a politician of mark who was for some time Premier. He was so fervid a partisan of the Alliance that he helped to found a Review which was published in Budapest for the spread of Triplicist doctrines. Yet he complained to the writer of these lines more than once of the shortsighted policy and chronic bitterness of Austria and asked him to direct the attention of the Ministers at Vienna and Budapest to the sinister consequences of a wanton procedure which was estranging the Italian nation and damaging the Austrian Empire. Cavour displayed more

[1] April, 1912.

sagacity when he declared years before that " Italy can never be tranquil as long as Austria remains a Great Power."

During those memorable years of steady preparations for the great European war which they were one day to let loose upon Europe, Austria and Germany were pursuing each their own special aims which were in turn but means for the one common and immutable end. Austria had her own reasons for the aversion she felt for Italy: jealousy of Italian expansion in the Adriatic and contempt for the unwarlike people whom she herself had recently been ruling with an iron rod. This latter sentiment partly explains the systematically harsh treatment which the Italian population of Austria received at the hands of their rulers, whose dealings with the Slavs were marked by equity or generosity. There was another motive further removed from the surface, but not less cogent than this: Austria, as Germany's fag in the South and East, was being spurred forward to become mistress of the Adriatic, owner of Salonika, guardian of the Balkans, and therefore to blast Italy's hopes, to encircle her with narrow and impassable barriers and keep her in a state of permanent dependence. And she never lost sight of the first essential condition of success either in her own course or in that which was traced for her as Germany's agent. She continued to plan in secret the downfall of her friend and partner, and made ready to compass her design on the first occasion that might offer.

In view of this contingency the Vienna Government spent a milliard krons on the construction of redoubtable strongholds and strategic railways on Italy's eastern boundaries. Nor were her precautionary measures exhausted by these heroic efforts. Franz Josef's Government did not scruple to approach the Russian rival with an infamous proposal pointed straight against the Italian friend and ally. The Petersburg Foreign Office was solicited by the Vienna Ballhausplatz to strike up a covenant by which the Tsar's Govern-

ment should bind itself to preserve an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the Habsburg Monarchy in the probable event of the latter State waging war against Italy. And this arrangement was duly concluded. Thus one Central Empire treacherously and elaborately makes ready to destroy its loyal friend and ally whilst protesting the strength of the brotherly affection that links them together, just as the other Empire made a compact with one of its prospective enemies against its own bosom friend and termed the expedient a " back-alliance."

It is fair to say that between the Military Empires themselves ever since the dissolution of the " back-alliance," the honour that prevails among professional thieves was scrupulously observed and magniloquently described as " the fidelity of the Nibelungen." [1] They stood by each other manfully through thick and thin, their vital interests exacting this solidarity. It was only towards outsiders that the doctrine of the worthlessness of plighted faith and the sacredness of treaties was unofficially preached and officially practised. What community of interests joined together no mere doctrines could sunder. But whenever the time drew near for the renewal of the Triple Alliance which kept Italy's hands tied, the mask of affection was donned, the bugbear of French designs against the sister State was conjured up, and all the contemptible Teutonic devices with which the world is now so familiar were employed to allay the resentment and soften the feelings of the nation towards its covert foes. And the moment the diplomatic instrument was signed, the mask was forthwith doffed and Italy once more reduced to the intolerable position of fag and forced to cut and pickle rods for her own back. But she had no alternative.

It was thus that after the Austrian and Italian Foreign Secretaries had paraded before Europe in Abbazia as representatives of two States animated by one mind and one

[1] Nibelungentreue.

heart, Austria opened her purse and laid out vaster sums than her people could afford in fortifying the confines of the Empire on the Italian side. It was after the friendly, nay affectionate meeting in Salzburg that Bosnia and Herzegovina were annexed. It was on the morrow of General Canevo's visit to Vienna, where he deprecated and belittled Italian irredentism as "the folly of a few evil-minded persons," that Prince Hohenlohe, the Viceroy, promulgated the four anti-Italian decrees of his coercion law in Trieste. And it was shortly after the last meeting in Abbazia at which the Podestà welcomed the Marchese di San Giuliano that Austria, unknown to her Italian ally, precipitated the war which is still decimating Europe and impoverishing the world.[1]

The history of world-politics affords few such examples of uniform treachery and insincerity on the part of one ally towards another, if we except the doings of the Prussian anti-Machiavel, Frederick the Great, to whom belongs the invidious distinction of having made knavery and foul play the groundwork of his foreign policy. And in the execution as well as the conception of this system of perfidy and baseness, Germany, who contrived to keep herself out of sight in the dusky background of the scene, effectively aided and abetted her partner. Even during the "friendly conversations" between Prince Bülow and Baron Sonnino, in the first half of the year 1915, while the Berlin Government was lavishing gross flattery on Italy and the Italians and inspiring them with high hopes of untold advantages from the generosity of the two Empires, wagon-loads of "Munich beer" were passing through Italy, on their way to Lybia. One of those happy accidents which occur occasionally on railways smashed one of the beer-barrels, revealing its double bottom and the presence of arms and ammunition for the rebels of Tripoli to be employed against Germany's dear friend and ally.

[1] *La Triplice Alleanza*, pp. 23–24.

CHAPTER VII

AUSTRIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

FOR a long while Austria hesitated between the two courses which formed the essence of her own foreign policy, the subjection of Serbia and the crippling of Italy. Both were judged essential to her future prestige and prosperity as well as to the realization of the general Teutonic programme. And adequate provision was made for tackling either. The decision as to which should be undertaken first was made dependent on opportunity. If the political conjuncture should favour an attack on Italy, the Serbian enterprise would be adjourned; but if, on the contrary, circumstances should render Serbia isolated and friendless, every effort was to be concentrated on severing the ties that linked her with Russia, whittling her territory, destroying her defences and drawing her by force within the Austrian sphere of attraction. On the advantages, necessity and duty of accomplishing these two schemes, there was no divergence of view among the political or military leaders of the Monarchy. It was only on the question of opportunity that a difference of opinion made itself felt, engendering bitter dissension and giving rise to a campaign of subterranean influences and intrigues.

Konrad von Hoetzendorff, Chief of the Austrian General Staff, and one of the most gifted public men in the Habsburg Monarchy, had long been working hard to get the army into trim for either campaign. But for a long time the difficulties with which he was confronted were deterrent. Hun-

gary's move against the use of the German tongue in the army and in favour of a looser union with Austria had exasperated the German half of the Monarchy and betrayed its leaders into words and acts which stiffened the necks of the Magyars. And the latter refused to respond to the reiterated demands for larger credits for the land forces. Yet these lacked many requisites. It was not until after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that the danger of a European war forced the adversaries to unite, to close up their ranks, forget their differences, and supply the army not merely with necessaries but also with superfluities. An ultimatum was prepared for Belgrade which Count Aehrenthal authorized me to announce in advance. This unexpected turn of events gladdened the heart of Konrad, whose ideas were shared and whose projects were approved by the Heir-Apparent, Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

But Serbia knuckled down and the crisis subsided. The Slav war spectre being thus laid, it seemed to both those personages a wanton waste to leave the army unutilized. Konrad urged that as an expedition against Serbia had become unnecessary, a war with Italy would remove an ugly obstacle to his country's progress and infuse a new spirit into the peoples of Austria-Hungary. True, Italy had done nothing to deserve such a calamity. On the contrary, she had repressed her outraged feelings, shut her eyes to the system of coercion which Austria had put in force against Italians of the Monarchy, and loyally discharged all the duties imposed on her by the Alliance, even when the cost was painfully heavy. The Archduke and the Chief of the General Staff, well aware of this, had no intention to punish Italy for the past, but only to hinder her from assuming a hostile attitude in the future. In other words, they advocated a preventive war.

On political grounds Count Aehrenthal, then Foreign Secretary, dissented from the ideas and opposed the policy

of Franz Ferdinand. The work of diplomatic reconstruction, he held, was greatly in arrears and might never be completed if Austria were to launch out upon a war which was absolutely unprovoked and against an ally whose conduct had been exemplary and whose further co-operation might prove helpful. The moment, too, was less propitious than had been assumed. The annexation, although an accomplished fact which the Entente Powers were forced to recognize, had irritated every Government in Europe, excepting that of Germany. Already accusations of bad faith had impaired Austria's credit, and if further and more solid grounds were now purveyed by Austria herself for this indictment, she would forfeit more than a victorious campaign against her ally would bring her in. Moreover, Italy had substantially contributed to put an end to the Turkish boycott against Austrian wares. Besides, although engaged in a struggle with Turkey, the Italians were neither resourceless nor wholly friendless, and a campaign which began on the Italian frontier might easily extend until its battlefields covered all Europe. On those grounds Aehrenthal, who had an Austrian programme to carry out, besought the Emperor to veto the scheme. "It can only bring down disaster on all concerned," he said, "and it would be madness to attempt to realize it, even if it were certain that Italy never means to fulfil her duties as ally." He added that in no case would he remain at his post if it were persisted in. Even then for a brief space of time it looked as though the decision were uncertain. But that period was very brief.

Franz Josef, whose deep-rooted aversion to war was not overcome until July, 1914, readily acquiesced in the conclusions of his Minister and signified his will that all designs against warlike Italy should be relinquished. His remonstrances with the Archduke, whose unwarranted interference had nearly plunged the country into a tremendous conflict, are said to have been barbed with a painful sting. Rumour,

which in Vienna is circumstantial and untrustworthy, affirmed that the monarch upbraided the Heir Apparent with damaging by his thoughtlessness imperial interests which it had taken decades to build up, and with having alarmed the suspicions of an indispensable ally at the very time when it was a matter of supreme moment that her loyalty should not only be, but also appear to be, above suspicion. The Archduke withdrew, disappointed and soured, and he left nothing undone to undermine Aehrenthal's position until that Minister's premature death removed a serious obstacle to his projects. But however sharp the Emperor's strictures may have been, no trustworthy report of them reached the public ear, and so long as no overt act revealed a change in Austria's dispositions, Italy, whose rulers were aware of what had been brewing, made no secret of her ill-humour. Aehrenthal pressed the Emperor to placate the ally by a sacrifice which should leave no doubt that the Government repudiated the machinations of Franz Ferdinand and Konrad von Hoetzendorff. In compliance with this exhortation Franz Josef relieved Konrad of his functions but appointed him to be Inspector-General of the Army.

Thereupon the Treaty of Alliance was renewed—one year before the date for extending it fell due—and the world was solemnly informed that the three Allies had never been more intimately united or more unanimous in what they regarded as the groundwork of their policy which was now become the most solid safeguard of European peace and progress. And soon after this demonstration Konrad von Hoetzendorff was reinstated in his position as Chief of the General Staff, Austria's anti-Italian policy was reinforced with unprecedented rigour, and the Austrian Admiral Montecuccoli—a renegade Italian—publicly declared that the Austrian navy's function was to drive "the enemy" from the Adriatic.

The sorry figure cut by Italy not only in European affairs but within the narrower limits of the Triple Alliance was now fully realized. The writer of these pages stood in close proximity to the principal actors in that historic episode which is linked by a causal nexus with the vaster drama of the Great War. And among the striking facts he observed was that Italy was neither consulted as to the annexation nor apprized of it in advance nor conciliated subsequently by Austria-Hungary. On the contrary her statesmen were deliberately kept in the dark and encouraged to make solemn declarations about Austria's policy which the lapse of a couple of days showed to be ridiculously erroneous. Another characteristic of international relations was the manner in which the annexation was effected: it constituted a profound humiliation for the Italian partner, and the compensations which Italy asked for by way of saving her face were promised by the Ballplatz and vaunted by the Consulta but never accorded.

Patriotic Italians were stung to the quick. Baron Sonnino and his friend, Francesco Guicciardini, the politician whom he chose for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the two occasions when he formed a Cabinet, were burning with indignation. To their thinking—they were now in opposition—the annexation and the procedure by which it was accompanied were quite as much of a provocation to Italy as to Russia. And they called on the Cabinet of the day to protest against it. But as the Ministers merely smiled and discoursed sweetly about the concord and amity that characterized Italy's relations with Austria and about the compensations reserved for their own country, Guicciardini demonstratively uttered the protest. He declared that if the Triple Alliance stood for Italy's humiliation, for her submission to the Central Empires, and for her thraldom to Austria, the best course to pursue would be to snap the ties asunder that bound her to that partnership. His anger

was grounded. Not a word had been whispered to any of Italy's representatives by her ally about the impending annexation. Signor Tittoni, who had specially gone to Salzburg in order to confer with Baron Aehrenthal,[1] stated categorically on his return that Austria-Hungary had not the faintest intention of annexing the two provinces and that she was so strongly averse to such a measure that if it were suggested to her by the Powers that signed the Berlin Treaty she would decline to acquiesce in it. And while that statesman was still lavishing these assurances on a sceptical world, the Austrian Count Khevenhuller-Metsch was on his way to Paris with a letter from Franz Josef announcing the annexation. And by the time Izvolsky[2] had reached the French capital, the notification had been made to the President of the French Republic.

Count Aehrenthal's act was accounted by the Entente Powers a deliberate infringement of the Treaty of Berlin. What was certain is that it impaired Italy's prestige, lowered her dignity and damaged her interests in the East. The Ministers putting a good face upon their discomfiture boasted that they had demanded and would receive adequate compensation. One form of compensation was, they alleged, the evacuation by Austria of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar. As a matter of fact, however, I know that that far-reaching decision was not taken by way of satisfying Italy: it was taken in response to a demand insistently preferred by M. Izvolsky during the Buchlau interview and afterwards observed by Austria because its infringement would have been treated by Russia as an unfriendly act. Italy had to content herself with having her name associated with the suppression of the police functions exercised by Austria in Montenegrin waters. That was the sop thrown to the trusty ally for the shifting of the equilibrium caused by the annexa-

[1] Then Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.
[2] Then Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

tion. What the Consulta did ask for was the creation of an Italian University in Trieste. And it was granted by Aehrenthal on his own authority, and trumpeted abroad as a special triumph by Ministers in Rome. But the Austrian statesman who, it is fair to say, made the promise in all sincerity was forced to leave it unredeemed, the reason alleged being the safety of the Austrian Empire! Thus even a local high school which would have kept at home some of the most intelligent and enterprising of Austria's Italian subjects who would otherwise have finished their education and received an anti-Austrian bias in Italy, was seriously declared to constitute a danger to the Austrian Empire.

It must, one would think, have been gall and wormwood to the patriotic Sidney Sonnino and to many of his friends who had had such a large part in forging these chains for his beloved country, to be now condemned to sit still while Italy chafed and fumed helplessly against the implacable enemy whom she was constrained to obey as a master and honour as a friend. Twice during this martyrdom Baron Sonnino came into office as Premier, but neither he nor any other statesman essayed to modify the policy followed. It is characteristic of the curious mental attitude of Italian statesmen towards this alliance that when fortune at last placed in Sonnino's safe keeping the political strait-jacket he had helped to weave for Italy in the days of his generous and unsuspecting youth, people were surprised that he should have dealt with it as Penelope dealt with the web destined for her royal father-in-law. But the reasons appear to have lain principally in the short-sightedness and clumsiness of the Vienna Cabinet.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ALBANIAN QUESTION

THE effect of the last anticipatory renewal of the alliance was what Germany had expected and Italy had feared. It embittered France, spoiled her incipient friendly relations with Italy, and confirmed her suspicions that King Victor's Government was more deeply committed to the Central Empires than was commonly assumed. It also grieved Russia who had behaved as Italy's best and indeed only friend during the campaign against Turkey, and it awakened the suspicions of Great Britain. Thus it widened the breach between Italy and the Entente Powers to an extent which gladdened the hearts of German and Austrian statesmen and cleared the way for the execution of their schemes. From that time onward, various subjects of dispute, petty in themselves and capable of being summarily and amicably disposed of, were treated by France and Italy in an uncompromising spirit of rivalry as though they involved vital issues. The protection of religious congregations in the East, for example—a matter which had been regulated by a formal written agreement—gave rise to heated discussion in Rome out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. The division of Anglo-French naval labour in the Mediterranean, in virtue of which French warships had been substituted for a number of British vessels, produced widespread irritation in Italy where the measure was construed as a deliberate provocation and a menace.

One day the Marchese di San Giuliano opened his mind

to me on that subject, unfolded the motives that had impelled him to sign the treaty a year in advance, expounded the reasons why Italy's membership of the Triple Alliance ought to be welcomed by the Entente Powers as a guarantee of peace or at any rate an embargo on war, and asked me to put his exposé in this light before the Russian Foreign Secretary and the British public and Government, and at the same time to make it clear why Italy felt disappointed and grieved at the arrangement adopted by France and Britain in the Mediterranean. And so bitter did the feeling grow between the two Latin nations that when the declaration of war took the world by surprise, it was regarded as probable by some French statesmen that Italy would be found fighting on the side of the Central Empires.

In the course of the conversations I had with di San Giuliano in 1913 he entered fully into Italy's attitude towards Albania and the various political interests which were bound up with the progress or failure of that incipient State. Just then the eyes of Europe were turned towards Durazzo, Scutari and the Epirus, and speculation was rife about the outcome of the interwoven tangle of intrigues which characterized the activities of Austria and Italy there. The Italian Foreign Secretary sought to impress me with the fact, which seemed fairly well established, that Italy's interest in that country was negative. She would not brook the seizure of the seaboard on that side of the Adriatic by any other Power and least of all by Austria. That was the pith of her policy. Neither could she shake off the conviction that the systematic activity of Austria's agents was directed precisely to the attainment of the one aim which ran directly counter to Italian interests. The Foreign Secretary was careful to add that the Vienna Cabinet repudiated any such designs and that both Governments were anxious to reduce friction to a minimum. He concluded his statement with a warm invitation to me to visit Albania and

see with my own eyes what was being done and attempted there. And as I had already been exhorted by Count Berchtold to repair to Durazzo, Scutari and other Albanian towns, I decided to go.

The Albanian problem had long had a special fascination for me as a student of Indo-European philology. The antiquity and primitive condition of the people, the unique place occupied by their language among the tongues of the Indo-European race, the absence of written law and the survival of old-world customs and local traditions —intensified my desire to watch the unique experiment which was then being made to weld elements, which for thousands of years had proved incohesive, into a compact and organic State. The experiment was being conducted under conditions of enormous difficulty. The impulse had come from without. In the country itself there was no political tradition, no national enthusiasm, no common aims or ideals. The scheme was born of the mutual jealousy of two allies who were parading before the world as close friends, and its realization would have come to them as even a greater disaster than its sudden abandonment. At the London Conference, where the plan was first mooted and gradually brought into shape, the curious interplay of hollow pretensions, insincere demands, and obstructive under-plots amused or disquieted disinterested onlookers. Austria's magniloquent declaration that, moved by considerations of political idealism, she was resolved to establish the independence of the posterity of Skanderbeg, was taken as a tragi-comic joke, of which the point was revealed by Italy's insistence on rendering all Europe, and not merely the two Adriatic Powers, the guardians of the new political organism. But the fear entertained by these two Powers, lest the experiment should succeed, and the efforts they put forward from the outset to hinder this consummation, caused Albania to issue from the Conference a still-born child of jealousy

and hate. The one Italian statesman who had the courage to blame the policy of San Giuliano which condemned Italy to take part in this Sisyphean labour, was Barzilai.[1]

My Professor and friend, Ernest Renan, was wont to assert that if he had funds enough to draw upon, he could found a new religion in the Semitic East which would live, spread and flourish. By the same means one might with equal confidence set about establishing a new political community and endow it with vitality. Personally I am disposed to think that Albania might have been fashioned into a viable State, as helpful or obstructive as any of the Balkan kingdoms. But abundant financial resources, a coherent scheme, a firm resolve and intelligent methods were indispensable conditions. And none of these was available. Indeed the antecedents were superlatively chaotic, and the first deliberate measures intensified the confusion. Every interest was safeguarded, save that of the Albanian people. The ruler was an easy-going German prince, devoid of ambition, who had to be goaded into accepting the thorny crown. Before he was officially proposed, the writer of these lines exerted himself to dissuade his illustrious backers from carrying out their project. The gendarmerie was Dutch, and its chiefs, feeling impelled to prove that they were as skilful in politics as they were brave in battle, intrigued with a section of raw nationalists against the two nations which had invited them over to maintain order. And so devoted were they to their ideal of Albania that they conspired with the Prince against Albania's two strong men and with Austria

[1] The Republican Deputy Barzilai, a native of Trieste, is one of the most gifted orators of the Italian Chamber. He has also approved himself a statesman of clear vision and comprehensive views. His criticism of the policy followed by di San Giuliano, Tittoni and others was sharp, loyal and convincing. Its weak point was the fact, for which Barzilai made no allowance, that the Ministers in question had no alternative but war, for which Italy was unprepared. Signor Barzilai is at present (October) a Minister without portfolio.

against the powerful Moslem party. The Mbret was hampered by an Italian and an Austrian counsellor, each of whom proffered advice which was deprecated by the other as nationally ruinous. The Ministers, divided among themselves, were swayed now by Italy, now by Austria, two only working selflessly for the regeneration of their country against overwhelming forces of destruction. An international board of financial control, consisting mainly of Commissioners who felt convinced that the whole experiment was foredoomed to failure, intensified the chaos that prevailed, and the lack of money struck the two Ministers' fitful endeavours at consolidation with barrenness.

Characteristic of the deep-rooted suspicion with which Italy and Austria watched each other's movements in Albania was the constant alertness with which the so-called stipulation of "going halves" was invoked and enforced. It had been settled that if Austria should confer any boon on the Albanians, Italy would be justified in contributing exactly one-half of its value, and vice versa. One day the Archbishop of Prizrend expressed the wish to have a carriage. And the Vienna Government supplied it with alacrity. Congruously with the "fifty per cent. arrangement" the horses for the vehicle had to be demanded of the Italian Cabinet. Unhappily the Italians were so long about procuring them that a hint was dropped to the Austrian representative who at once telegraphed to his chief in Vienna. And the horses were duly despatched from Austria. Political Italy, commoved by this unfair advantage, made haste to repair the omission. At last the Italian steeds arrived and the Church dignitary found himself in the enviable position of having four horses to convey him to his clergy and his flock! [1]

Whether San Giuliano realized the hopelessness of the ostensible task and the danger of the real undertaking in which his country was thus engaged, is immaterial to the

[1] Cf. Sulliotti, *La Triplice Alleanza*, pp. 43–44.

issue. My personal impression is that he did, but that he also felt how futile it would have been to draw the practical consequences which this clear vision seemed to impose. For Italy had no choice in the matter. Her position was the resultant of causes still operative which might have been counteracted before the Alliance was first concluded but were now no longer capable of being removed without a war with Austria. This was the moment when it could be affirmed with truth that the two countries must be either allies or enemies. Consequently it would be unfair to treat di San Giuliano's Albanian policy as a heavy deduction from the high estimate gradually formed of this statesman's sagacity during the earlier phases of his public career. An Italian writer aptly compared the necessarily intimate association of Italy and Austria in this Albanian venture to that of two convicts in the galleys bound to the same chain and thus forced in their own interests to watch vigilantly over every symptom of each other's acts and intentions.[1] To grumblers who urge that Italy might safely have left solicitude for the integrity of Albania to Europe or at any rate to Russia who would have treated the occupation of Albania by Austria as a hostile act, the Consulta would have been able to retort that this assumption was gratuitous. It was known in Vienna and also no doubt in Rome that the re-occupation by Austria of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar would have been construed by Russia as a *casus belli*, because its definitive evacuation had been stipulated by Izvolsky [2] and solemnly promised by Aehrenthal as a set-off to the

[1] Op. cit., p. 38.

[2] Italian statesmen claim to have made the evacuation of that district a condition *sine qua non* of the recognition of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And Aehrenthal certainly encouraged them to include it among the "compensations" given to Italy. But in truth the evacuation had been demanded by M. Izvolsky, and Aehrenthal himself told me that it was decided upon at the same time as the annexation and before Italy had hinted at it.

annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But in Albania the Tsar's Government had no direct interests, nor would an Austrian occupation, say of Valona, have of itself sufficed to bring about a diplomatic rupture between the two Empires. And from the knowledge of this fact the Consulta drew the motives which impelled it to place the new State under the guardianship of all Europe.

Thus what Italy dreaded most during the last few years of her co-partnership with Austria was to be left to deal single-handed with that ally in any undertaking that involved momentous national interests. To this piteous condition of irremediable impotence and isolation had she been reduced by German wiles devised by Bismarck and abetted by the ingenuousness of her own public men. The Chancellor, could he have witnessed these results of the policy he initiated, would have chuckled over the miserable plight of Italy bereft of diplomatic independence, forced to follow her cynical and hostile companion through thick and thin, dissembling her enmity and feigning friendship the while, encircled by dangers which she was powerless to elude or exorcise, deprived of allies and friends, and devoid of grounded hope.

But Germany's hold was not confined to the sphere of politics. It cannot be too often repeated that her diplomacy, unlike that of her rivals, has as many eyes as Argus and as many hands as Briareus. Nor should the circumstance be blinked that the personal element of her professional diplomacy at which French and British critics are so ready to scoff, is often its least important factor. Indeed the broader traits of Germany's policy do not appear even yet to have emerged to the view of European statesmen who are too prone to draw a broad distinction between politics and economics. Not content with making the political aims and strivings of another country dovetail with her own, Germany invariably proceeds to interweave the financial, commercial, industrial,

and economic interests of both, until a composite web is produced capable of withstanding a much greater strain than any scrap of parchment or paper. To the Teuton statesman economics and politics are but two halves of the same sphere. And both are therefore objects of equal solicitude and endeavour on his part. He rightly argues that if the root of most of the international jealousies, disputes and wars of to-day is economic, this branch of modern politics deserves to be studied with the same assiduity and applied with the same care as are bestowed by his Government on questions of territorial boundaries, the interpretation of treaties, and the negociation of international conventions. Certainly it cannot with safety be abandoned to the zeal or supineness of the individual citizen.

CHAPTER IX

COMPLETENESS OF TEUTONIC ORGANIZATION

MOST of the amazing results obtained by the Teutonic nations in the so-called political domain, since the close of the Franco-German war, are due to the unceasing exertions of the Central Government to evoke, quicken and reinforce the efforts of private firms and enterprising individuals at home and abroad. If Berlin statesmen had adopted the principle of *laissez faire* which underlay the action and inaction of every British Cabinet during the historic period of warlike preparation, the astounding radiation which we now witness of all kinds of forces, military, naval, technical, industrial and financial, flashing out from Germany as from some inexhaustible centre and smiting any and every Power that ventured to question her right to rule the earth—would have been impossible. Germany's military and naval strength is rooted in economic conquests scientifically planned and systematically executed by her Government in association with her people and rendered feasible by the obstinate refusal of her rivals to treat economics as an essential element of politics.

Italy's experience is charged with instructive ideas on the supreme importance of State initiative in matters connected with foreign trade. And Italy is but one European State and Europe only one of the Continents over which the wakeful, strenuous, plodding Teuton flung his toils. The problem to which he set himself was how to acquire control of the markets, and also of the industries which supplied the markets, of the country on which he was about to experiment.

And one of the many difficulties he had to surmount was lack of capital. He was spared the much more redoubtable one of serious resistance on the part of native rivals and strenuous competition from foreign competitors. It is only fair to say that if he owed much to the shortsightedness of both, he can fairly claim the credit of deftly adjusting the means he used to the ends he pursued and adopting methods which his antagonists were too purblind or sluggish to imitate. And above all else, the individual Teuton was never left to struggle single-handed. He was vigorously backed by his Consul, his Ambassador and Government who were ready with information, advice, help, concessions, imperial legislation, advantageous customs, tariffs and railway freights. In a word, the co-operation among all political parties and social layers of the German nation which astonishes the world to-day was displayed in narrower compass but with the same perseverance and force in the silent pacific struggle for the world's markets which preceded the present struggle for world-sway.

Turn to the history of Teutondom during the past thirty years in Turkey, Spain, Roumania, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Persia, Britain, in a word, in any part of the globe, and you find the same essential features of Teutonic interpenetration, modified to suit local conditions. On the one side—the side of the invaders—a vast compact organization, working to realize a coherent and grandiose plan, employing scientific methods, armed with technical skill and aided by a real Government which inspires, heartens, leads, and helps its subjects, identifying their success with its own. And on the other side, classes and masses mutually distrustful, parliamentary parties ready to fraternize with foreigners, deputies willing at the suggestion of these to ask awkward questions of the Government, political clubs eager to welcome spying strangers as guests or members and give them facilities for acquainting themselves with State secrets; commercial

institutions and industries longing for foreign capital or brains, and willing to save a few pounds by admitting spies masquerading as hard-working clerks from abroad who serve " without salary " ; public men at the outset of their career, thirsting for foreign recognition and sensible to delicate flattery, and journalists pining for first-hand information and ready to undergo any ordeal for a " scoop." On the invaders' side a body of resolute men toiling and moiling perseveringly, backed by the most powerful Empire on the globe, their gaze rivetted on the goal, their scruples consumed by patriotic fire ; and on the side of the invaded, political parties, groups and institutions, each one forming an independent centre, all striving after a variety of conflicting aims, each dependent for success on its own unaided efforts, and glad of help or recognition even from the intelligent foreigner.

For the invading phalanx to make headway against the loosely joined crowd—so loosely joined in Britain that it could never have survived so long but for its insular position —all that was needed was tenacity and organized plodding labour. And the Germans exhibited both. They also displayed other qualities which stood them in serviceable stead. They contrived to influence in some countries without corrupting the native press, to suggest and impose the views and convictions which they wished the nation to cherish and act upon, and in this way they furnished that particular solution to each momentous problem which was requisite to the success of their own schemes. Thus they supplied rising journalists with news from first sources, they sounded the praises of this or that plastic public man at the beginning of his career in their own papers and also in those of his native country. In this way they made many an ephemeral reputation, and it was my privilege to watch this process more than once from the preliminary to the finishing stage and to scrutinize some of the by-products thrown off and utilized.

Their blandishments and threats were not always efficacious. With those stark unbending personalities who are the salt of a nation, they proceeded on opposite lines, undermining their influence by exaggerating their maxims, or secretly spreading and then vociferously refuting abominable calumnies against them, and in kindred ways.

In each country the pioneers of the German invasion made the most of whatever institutions they found in vigour there. Religion and atheism, freemasonry and clericalism, Roman Catholic associations, Protestant societies, Jewish sodalities, Mohammedan fraternities and sects, Trades Unionism, socialism, conservative leagues, anarchist bands, industrial trusts and syndicates, journalistic congresses, scientific meetings, peace societies, women's guilds—in fine every line of cleavage social, political, religious and other was used as a suitable fissure into which the wedge of destruction was fitted and driven by a force which was that, not of the pioneers, but of the mighty German Empire. Decades must yet elapse before the vastness and perfection of this organization will be realized by its countless victims.

The Italian State offered a promising field for this kind of action. Politically united only twelve years previously it was in no sense a first-class Power, had no prospect of becoming one before another great war should give fortune's wheel a violent turn, and yet, having been admitted by courtesy to the highest rank in the hierarchy of nations, felt impelled to live up to the dignity. Hence material and diplomatic help was peremptorily necessary to her growth. For the young nation was still a negligible quantity from a military point of view, because devoid of defensible frontiers and unprovided with an adequate army. It might construct a navy to defend its extensive sea-board, but against Austria who possessed redoubtable sea-frontiers, it was and must remain at a ruinous disadvantage. Under these conditions chronic isolation would have been disastrous, while an alliance which necessi-

tated a large military and naval effective would have saddled the nation with a heavier burden than it could bear. Its revenue was slender and depended to a considerable extent on the savings of Italian workmen who emigrated temporarily to various parts of the world in search of skilled and unskilled labour, and sent home a large percentage of their earnings every year. Taxation was producing as much as could be reasonably expected, and the main hope of cautious economists lay in retrenchment and thrift.

France was in some respects qualified to become Italy's natural friend and ally, and the trend of Italian sentiment and opinion was in the direction of close amity with the Republic. The natural conditions on both sides were favourable to a Franco-Italian alliance, but Bismarck, deftly inserting the German wedge at every line of jointure, succeeded, as we saw, in driving the would-be friends into two reciprocally hostile camps. And his aiders and abettors were the French and Italians themselves. "Were it not that we ourselves supplied you with handles for your hatchets," said the trees to the woodmen, " you would never be able to cut us down."

For a time the vagaries of French policy were sometimes fantastic, often disconcerting, and generally anti-Italian. In spite of this discouragement public men of real weight in Italy, less impulsive or more far-sighted than their French confrères, clung to the Franco-Italian ideal. But they were finally out-hectored by a band of fiery patriots who, like Barons Blanc and Sonnino, fancied they could discern the germs of Italy's well-being and greatness in a union with Germany and Austria. When these impulsive agitators had their way and Italy was linked with the two military Empires, it became her first duty to organize an army proportionate to her population and therefore in excess of her financial capacity. And this, in turn, was considerably diminished by a series of bitterly hostile measures adopted by France,

whom exasperation against her Italian sister carried to extreme lengths. But French reprisals only riveted all the more firmly the chains that bound Italy to her Teuton masters.

To reduce Italy to a state of economic dependence on Germany and Austria was one of the first and main objects of Teutonic solicitude. And its attainment was compassed in different ways simultaneously. Central Government, Ambassadors' private firms, and press associations all had their special schemes, which were judiciously co-ordinated and admirably combined. Now and again a clumsy act or hasty word revealed for a moment the intensity of German greed and the comprehensiveness of German projects, but the Italian nation was too well hypnotized to awaken for long to a sense of the sinister reality. A curious but little known incident which takes us back to the year 1895 is worth recording as an illustration of the Teutonic frame of mind. Crispi having returned to power was desirous of infusing the spirit of reciprocity into the Triple Alliance and proving to the nation that Italy too could hope to reap real benefits from that international concern. Accordingly he wrote a letter in this sense to Berlin, and suggested that some compensation be given to Italy for the terrific commercial onslaught she had had to bear from France, because of her alliance with Germany. The consequences of that campaign were making themselves felt most painfully. The country was passing through an economic crisis, and timely help such as Germany could afford to bestow would enable the nation to emerge from the ordeal quickly and unscathed.

Crispi's letter produced a deep impression and had an immediate effect. Soon afterwards it was announced that one of the major gods of German finance [1] would be delegated to Rome with full powers to make any arrangements that might commend themselves to him and the Italian Government. He duly arrived, was received by the Minister, and

[1] It is said that Bleichroeder was the man chosen.

passed the usual urbane remarks on the genial Italian sky, the picturesque scenery, the Kultur of the people, and ended by uttering a fervent longing to see Naples and a poignant regret that the time at his disposal was so short. Then coming to the point he said: "Germany is well disposed towards Italy. She is alive to the fact that even in her own interests it is desirable that her Italian ally should be strong economically, and she is prepared to give her a helping hand." The Finance Minister responded fitly: "The realm is new, the nation young, the soil fruitful, and the population industrious. Like every other country Italy may be tried by a year of scarcity or a period of depression, but its staying powers are marvellous and its recovery rapid. If help be tendered, the healing process will naturally be swifter still, and if that help were to come from Germany it would be all the more welcome. Naturally, what we should like to know in the first place are the terms on which assistance would be given?" "I understand," replied the delegate, "that the Italian Government would not object to cede us by way of guarantee, the customs of the realm?" The Finance Minister, pointing to a clock in the apartment, said: "Your Excellency expressed a desire to see Naples and a regret that you have so little time. In less than an hour from now the fast train, which is the most comfortable of all, will start, and it would be a thousand pities if your Excellency missed it." [1]

But this merited rebuff had no slackening effect on the on-pouring legions of Teutondom. With firm purpose and methodic plans they continued to invade the country, quartered themselves in the towns, and little by little won a position not merely of preponderance but of control over the staple resources of the kingdom. The principal organs of production and distribution were gradually wrested from the natives and made to serve the interests of the Teuton.

[1] Cf. *Giornale d'Italia*, June 6th, 1915; *Corriere della Sera*, June 7th, 1915.

For in the end Italy was become an economic colony of Germany.

Here a German manufactory arose, or a branch house of some German firm; there a German institution, after having first struggled with an important firm, rescued it in the nick of time from ruin, summoning it to knuckle down. At the same time a strike of sailors would paralyze independent steamship companies while the companies already broken in were paying copious arrears of wages to their sea-folk, who in virtue of solidarity were contributing to the funds of the strikers. And secret accords appeared to ward off from the Austrian marine the danger of serious Italian competition in the Adriatic.[1]

Psychologically fraught with interest is the attitude of Italians themselves towards this audacious invasion of their country, which would have been a mad freak without the indifference of the many and the assistance of the few. Even the Consulta and its organs were vehemently on the German side during the first and decisive period of Teutonic interpenetration, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bollati,[2] was busying himself persuading the editors of Italian periodicals to discourage subscriptions for their journals among Austria's Italian subjects. And all this time Vienna was seconding Berlin in an enterprise the profits of which would be reaped by both. On the one side Germany was exerting herself to drive her tentacles into the organism of Italian life in order to enthral and exhaust it: Italian production, congruously with this new ordering of things, would be no longer possible, except in so far as it did not compete with that of Germany; commerce would

[1] G. A. di Cesaro. Cf. *La Germania alla Conquista dell' Italia*, pp. 6–7.

[2] This gentleman afterwards became Italian Ambassador in Berlin, where he remained until Italy declared war against Austria. Signor Bollati was a great favourite in the German capital, and he employed all his personal influence to hinder the war against Austria and especially against Germany. In the latter task he succeeded.

have found an outlet only in places inaccessible to that of Germany; banking institutions would not work otherwise than as branches of the Teutonic bank; life, political, social, military, would be adjusted to German life.

And on the other side stood Austria, who in this international game was playing the part of Germany's advanced outpost on the Mediterranean: her gaze turned towards the Near East, she was awaiting the opportune moment to assert her claims and enforce them in spite of Italy. Thus the Triple Alliance was reduced to this: Germany was working inside the country with a view to paralyzing Italy's energy and powers of resistance. And according as these forces waned, Austria pushed forward the programme of expansion, directly for her own behoof and indirectly for that of Germany. And this combined operation was being executed by means of a perfect organization, of agencies of information, of industrial plant, of missions, and of press propaganda. But the backbone of this organization was the bank.[1]

[1] Loc. cit., pp. 7–8

CHAPTER X

THE BANCA COMMERCIALE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE HISTORY OF ITALY

THE political history of Italy during the last ten years would seem to be closely bound up with that of a bank, more closely indeed than is yet realized by the bulk of the Italian nation. A few men of sagacity, acuteness and courage, like Signor G. Preziosi, Professor Maffeo Pantaleoni, and the deputy G. A. Colonna di Cesaro, have endeavoured to shed light upon this interesting by-way of history and to open the eyes of their countrymen to its main outlets. That bank is known to the world as La Banca Commerciale Italiana, the headquarters of which are in Milan. The name bestowed on this institution is a misnomer. It is worth noting that whenever the Germans found a bank, a joint stock company, a trust, or other agency abroad for the purpose of exploiting a foreign nation and interpenetrating the country, they invariably give it a name apt to throw off suspicion and foster the belief that it is a national institution. To the bank which has played such a momentous rôle in subjecting the Italian to the German people, not only was this principle applied but various expedients were adopted to give colour to the fiction that the concern was and is essentially Italian and to enable official apologists to come forward at a moment's notice with statistics about the number and nationality of the shareholders and directors and about the

sources of the capital subscribed. These details constitute an essential part of every Teuton scheme; they characterize, so to say, the architectural style of the fabric.

The story of the Teutonic invasion of Italy, like that of other countries, its grandiose aims, paltry means and unpromising beginnings; the formidable hindrances with which it was beset and the dexterity with which they were dislodged; the calm self-consciousness of the meanest of the invaders, conscious that they embodied the force of a mighty empire; the crafty scurvy way in which the natives were enlisted in the German cause which was decked for their behoof in Italian colours; the pathetic enthusiasm of all classes of Italian society, of most parties in Parliament, of rising journalists and of experienced statesmen—that story, if narrated with artistic sense, would create an interest in the minds of civilized peoples as intense as that aroused by a first-class novel. Nothing more fantastic yet real, more splendid or squalid, more sublime or base, has been conceived by the most imaginative writer of fiction. It is a gorgeous vision, of which many of the elements are ugly, base, and repulsive, a vision which seizes and fascinates the imagination while it chills the moral sense of the spectator. The central action centres round a bank which, created almost out of nothing, wormed itself into the economic organism of the kingdom, grubbing up capital as it wriggled forward, undermined native industries and institutions, seized and bereft them of their national character, teutonized their direction and activity, but left them their pristine shape and colour; and in this way caught in its clutches production and distribution, metallurgical works, steamship companies, financial institutions, municipalities, electoral constituencies, influential press organs, chiefs of parliamentary parties and Cabinet Ministers, and swayed the nation's policy, negociating peace, ending war, imposing neutrality, and exercising suzerain rights in the guise of the accomplishment of patriotic duty.

No more astounding phenomenon has been revealed to the world's view by any period of human history.

This is not the place for the consecutive story of a seemingly useful institution which, in the brief space of twenty years, economically developed and consolidated Italy to the requisite degree and then swathed and pinioned her and rendered her tributary to Germany. A few master facts will suffice to enable the reader to conceive an idea of its constitution, methods and influence. The Banca Commerciale was founded in the year 1895 with a capital of £800,000 by the fathers of high German finance, and in especial by Herr Schwabach, chief of the firm of Bleichröder. Eight hundred thousand pounds was a relatively small sum for an undertaking which aimed at nothing less than the economic and political conquest of Italy. But those latter-day Conquistadores had no misgivings. Their audacious plan was as unsuspected as were their methods and their latent power. If 74 per cent. of the shares had been held throughout by Teutons, the suspicions of Italians might have been aroused. But the foreign directors were circumspect. Conversant with the facilities offered by the law on joint stock companies, they took the fullest advantage of these.

It is said that the number of those companies in Italy is 793,[1] of which only 245 are quoted on 'change, and that the total capital invested amounts to 3,898,174,049 francs, or say £155,926,961. Now whoever controls this capital controls Italy. And this enormous power has been acquired by Germany, thanks largely to the bank which began its existence with a capital of less than a million sterling twenty years ago,[2] and partly also to the ease with which joint stock companies may be manipulated by a powerful financial institution. A large capital is unnecessary. A relatively small sum suffices, if concentrated in the hands of a few able

[1] According to a publication of the Credito Italiano quoted by G. Preziosi, op. cit., p. 43.

[2] Ibidem.

financiers acquainted with the mechanism of joint stock companies and the laws that regulate its action. The shares being scattered all over the country, fictitious majorities can be got together without trouble, by means of transfers and representation. The bank has been governed by a triumvirate composed of clever men bearing the German-Jewish names of Joel, Weil, and Toepliz, who, having divided the various domains, economic, financial, political, among themselves on the basis of a well defined and thoroughly studied programme, apply it " with the firmness, steadfastness and also with the brutality which are Teuton characteristics." [1] It appears that at the general meetings of the Banca Commerciale the majority is formed of a compact group of shares of the value of about twenty-two million francs, possessed by German bankers. These shares, added to those which are deposited with the bank temporarily, give it an artificial majority which carries with it a potent influence on the entire economic and political life of Italy.[2]

The Banca Commerciale which began with a capital of £800,000 in 1895 had already increased it by the year 1914 to £6,240,000, and the shares were by this time distributed in a way to calm suspicions and invest the institution with a seemingly Italian character. Only 2½ per cent. of the shares were now in Teuton hands, not less than 63 per cent. were owned by Italians and 20 per cent. by Swiss. What more could be expected of an Italian bank? But these figures, it is alleged, do not convey to the reader the decisive fact that, with this small percentage of shares, the German element still contrives by the means enumerated to control the majority. The directors of the bank were Germans and their representatives were reduced to nine on a board of thirty-three. But even nine is more than the holders of 2½ per cent. of the shares are entitled to. Moreover, the nine were what one may call heavy guns of finance as compared

[1] Op. cit., p. 41 [2] Ibidem.

with the remainder. Besides, the chief Italian was a fervent and militant Germanophile. The real directors, the men who piloted the bank, in good weather and bad, constituted the triumvirate already mentioned, Joel, Weil, and Toepliz. From time to time the Banca Commerciale executes manœuvres with Italian securities on the Stock Exchange, sometimes bulling but generally bearing, and earns in this way the funds requisite for the payment of dividends to the German shareholders.[1] It is affirmed that these operations, "besides impoverishing thousands of families . . . serve also to discredit many of our industries obnoxious to Germanism and to engender in the public distrust of Italian industrial organization." [2]

The chief manœuvres of the financial weavers at the centre of this vast web were well thought out. By an ingenious system the solvency of persons and firms was secretly assessed, and long credit allowed to German importers and vendors of wares who in turn conferred the same facilities on their Italian customers. The result was a sort of Teutonic freemasonry of trade and industry from which all independent Italian merchants were excluded. Regular operations were then begun against those who thus kept aloof outside the pale. At first they were rigorously boycotted. Not only did they not share the benefits of the German credit system, but effective means were resorted to, whereby they were disqualified from participating in any system of credit. They became commercial pariahs. This sentence of economic death was usually passed by a secret *Vehmgericht*, known as the "secret and confidential information bureau." As banks and commercial houses which give credit to merchants often have nothing to base this kind of speculation upon except the data communicated to them thus confidentially, the system may be useful, perhaps even necessary. But its abuse is all the more criminal that it can seldom be brought

[1] Op. cit., p. 42. [2] Ibidem.

home to the offender. And the Germans abused it, whenever their interests prompted them, with the same contempt for truth and justice that they exhibited before and during the war. Individuals, institutions, joint stock companies were silently struck down with these *fiches d'information.* And ruin followed as a matter of course.

By these and kindred methods Italian industries were besieged and stormed or forced to surrender at discretion. In the latter case they were taken over and dealt with as " tied houses," being allowed to eke out a more or less stagnant existence, on condition that they followed the German lead and contributed to the realization of the German plan. And as every fresh victory added to the power as well as the prestige of the Teuton institution, the campaign ended in the subjugation of every enterprise of importance in the kingdom. Metallurgical factories, shipbuilding works, steamship companies, great and lesser electrical works, almost all fell under the control of the Banca Commerciale which laid down such rules for their activity as were conducive to the success of the broad scheme of interpenetration. Little by little the main arteries of the economic organism were held and regulated by the German junta which took the saving precaution of having its decrees promulgated by Italian agents. For a whole army of natives was recruited and trained, natives devoted not perhaps to the German cause as such, but to the Banca Commerciale, to Herr Weil or Herr Joel, to this German institution or that. Soon tens of thousands of good Italians were trumpeting abroad the praises of Teutondom in the Peninsula.

On the rise and growth of this opinion Germany's hold on the Italian press had a most potent effect. And her grasp was comprehensive and tight. Journalism in Italy is on the whole a poorly paid profession, and some of its higher lights lead a life of extravagance the cost of which cannot be defrayed by the fees or fixed salaries which rule in the journal-

istic market. To such men temptation comes as a windfall. The money value of their work depends upon their literary style, their prestige, the circulation of the press organs with which they are connected, and kindred considerations. Some of them are subsidized in a more or less permanent fashion by retaining fees, while others are engaged for a special campaign. Occasionally when the competition of two sides waxes keen, and one strives to outbid the other, as happened during the period preceding Italy's declaration of war against Austria, the onlooker is treated to the interesting if unedifying spectacle of a journalist suddenly changing sides and madly smashing the idols he had just been devoutly worshipping. "Levity" of this kind apparently inflicts no abiding mark of disgrace, if one may judge by the friendship subsisting between one of these press condottieri and pillars of the Government who are themselves men of integrity and honour

Between the system of "secret commercial information" and that of political and military espionage there is no sharp or solid boundary. They merge into each other insensibly, especially in the German mechanism which needs and interchanges all three. This was illustrated by the behaviour of the heads of German firms in Antwerp, Brussels and other German cities, and it might be further demonstrated by the secret reports—some of which are no longer secret—despatched home by the principals of Teuton firms in Russia, France and Britain. But in Italy the facilities for picking up all kinds of useful information were especially great. A number of representatives of both Houses of the Legislature were enlisted by the Banca Commerciale and its affiliated institutions, as figure-heads or agents. Another contingent of the nation's law-givers looked to those Teuton concerns for election to the Chamber. Such a large percentage of the constituents and of the most successful electioneering agents was at the beck and call of the bank or its affiliated steamship

companies, that many a deputy is said to have owed his return to the beneficent Teuton. The funds, too, for the expense of standing were occasionally supplied by the well-disposed foreigner. And the Banca Commerciale not only arranged the appointment of prefects and mayors, whenever the result warranted the effort, but had its own Prime Minister in readiness to supplant Signor Salandra if, as it hoped and intended, the latter were overthrown. Under these circumstances it may safely be inferred that in the political domain there were no secrets into which the German junta was not initiated. The by-ways as well as the highways of Italian politics, domestic and foreign, were more familiar to the Teuton observer than to the most vigilant Italian politician.

It was the enormous power conferred by such knowledge, and the ease with which it could be wielded without risk, that enabled the German invaders to sway Italy's attitude on every question of moment. Hardly had the Lybian campaign begun when the Banca Commerciale, in harmony with the Foreign Offices of Berlin and Vienna, endeavoured to bring it to a speedy termination. The Central Empires, solicitous about the welfare of Turkey, were eager to preserve that country from exhaustion without provoking a popular outburst in Italy. And they were efficaciously helped by the restrictive action of the Banca Commerciale. When the war seemed likely to go on for an indefinite period, unless some *deus ex machina* suddenly appeared to stop it, it was an agent of the Banca Commerciale who, without any authorization from the Government, repaired to Constantinople and opened conversations on the advisability of concluding peace. These pourparlers over, the treaty of Ouchy was negociated by the agents of that same all-powerful bank: MM. Volpi, of the Oriental Commercial Company,[1] the Deputy Bertolini

[1] The Societa Commerciale d'Oriente has been defined as an agency of the Banca Commerciale in Constantinople which under the Italian flag paralyzed Italian expansion in the East, for the benefit of German expansion there (cf. G. Preziosi, op. cit., p. 68).

predestined, it was said, for the permiership, the son of the ubiquitous triumvir Joel, and Signor Nogara, who afterwards obtained the concession for the so-called Italian railway in Asia Minor.[1] This concession really benefited Germany, yet the Italian Government, hypnotized by the influences by which it was encircled, purchased it by foregoing its claim to compensation for the administration of the islands of the Dodecannese.

No wonder that clear-visioned Italians bitterly lamented the humiliating fact that "there is not a concern or an industry which has not directly or indirectly its German principal, while the best brains of the nation employed in finances or politics are mere delegates, genuine servants of the powerful employer who is half-concealed in Milan, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna."[2]

One of the most curious phenomena in all this movement of interpenetration was provided by the electrical industries in Italy. All of German origin, they furnished the most fruitful and trustworthy source of the valuable information about institutions, individuals, fortresses and barracks, everything in a word that interested the politicians of the Wilhelmstrasse and the officers of the General Staff. In order to exploit an electrical enterprise, the sources of energy and the ways of transmitting it have to be studied with care and thoroughness, and this investigation enables the engineers who conduct it to acquaint themselves with the strategic positions of the important places, the resources of the arsenals and fortresses, and everything else which they want to ascertain. The supervision of the plant, the periodic examination of the apparatus, can be conducted only on condition that the employês are privileged and have access to every house and apartment unhindered. The story of the formation of the Swiss-Elektro-Bank and of its various

[1] Op. cit., p. 71.
[2] Op. cit., pp. 44–45.

"Italian" emanations offers many useful lessons to those who have not yet realized the formidable nature of the German machine of interpenetration. [1]

The rise of the Banca Commerciale to this commanding position marked a startling change in the history of Italy. From out of its political laboratory in Milan there flowed a subtle poison into the veins of the nation which paralyzed the independent action and numbed the energies of the people. Italy drew closer to Germany and Austria, in spite of the unfriendly conduct of those Powers during the Lybian campaign; at the Italian Embassies in Berlin and Vienna representatives were installed whose pro-German leanings were notorious; at the Consulta officials were appointed on whom the Berlin Foreign Office looked with favour; at Cairo was an agent whose efforts to discredit British rule in Egypt were persevered in down to the month of May, 1915; hastily and a whole year in advance the Treaty with the Central Empires was renewed; relations with France became tenser than for a long time before; Italy's official intercourse with Britain growing rapidly colder was marked by mutual distrust; well-nigh the entire Italian aristocracy bowed down before Teuton idols, and the worship of everything German was fast becoming a criterium of good taste. And when at last the European War broke out, all Italy was unanimously resolved that whatever line of policy the Government might adopt towards the Habsburg Monarchy, there must be no conflict with Germany, whose Kultur was highly appreciated and whose international activity was characterized as eminently beneficial. Austria's disposition was known to be egotistic and unfriendly, but Germany's growth and strivings were said closely to resemble those of Italy and to encourage the two nations to keep together. Those doctrines were industriously spread and generally accepted.

[1] The subject is treated summarily by G. Preziosi in the book already quoted.

From the Consulta in Rome to the rustic hut in Calabria the same Germanophile atmosphere was everywhere diffused. In many influential quarters the Teutonic element was further strengthened. There were politicians, ambassadors, parliamentarians—and among them, it is credibly asserted, a candidate for the premiership—who advocated war against France, Russia and Britain in the name of Kultur and Treaty obligations. And they put forth vigorous exertions in private to have their teachings carried into practice.

But it would be an error to imagine that the men in Berlin who were watching over the progress of interpenetration contented themselves with the striking results thus summarily described. No lever was too small for their attention, no contingency too remote for their provision, no expedient too audacious for their enterprise. Their activity was limited by no theories, their thoroughness was checked by no scruples. What private initiative, stimulated and assisted by public departments, could not accomplish, the Central Government undertook to carry to a successful issue. By way of obtaining for German wares a permanent advantage over those of France and Britain, an ingenious system of commercial treaties was conceived, worked out, and imposed upon other countries with results which, if Germany had only gone on peacefully harvesting them in for another few decades, would have made her the wealthiest nation on the globe. The value of these treaties as an economic asset and a source of German strength has never been realized by the statesmen of Great Britain, nor does it appear that the necessity of counteracting them effectually and for good has yet impressed itself on the minds even of those British Ministers who are credited with a faculty of wide and sweeping forecast. The Berlin Government, alive to the incalculable worth of advantages of this nature, made every exertion to secure them and descended for the purpose in its dealings with Russia to political threats and personal

servility. With Italy it employed methods which were resented by those who experienced their application. But German diplomacy, for all its alleged clumsiness, achieved its end in all European countries and Teuton enterprise was enabled by a sequence of clever expedients to employ a large percentage of the savings of foreign peoples for the purpose of subjecting these. Thus in 1914 [1] a commercial treaty was virtually imposed on Italy by her German ally which secured to Teuton commerce and industry a steady profit of two hundred and fifty million francs a year.

Everything is fish that comes to the German net. Whatever could further the audacious plan of pacific conquest or seemed calculated to promote it later on, was taken possession of in good time. Thus to the Vatican, which might render valuable services as a broker, a marplot, or an ally, a keenness of attention was devoted which surprised the few and amused the many. The average newspaper reader jeered at the old-fashioned quirks of the Teuton. The picture of a pious priest in the chair of St. Peter endeavouring to intervene actively in the political history of the twentieth century tickled the fancy of the humorous pacificist. And his appearance as a self-complacent pawn moved hither and thither by the Kaiser in his international chess gambits heightened the whimsicality of the notion. But heedless alike of criticism and ridicule, the German pushed onward unflaggingly, turning everything that came in his way into a tool or a stepping-stone. But the worth laid upon the good will of the Vatican seemed exaggerated even to those who held that a considerable part would yet be played by that ancient institution in the affairs of a world which it repudiated. It was not forgotten that a third of the population in the German Empire owes spiritual allegiance to the Pope, that Austria and Hungary are Catholic countries, and that if the religious incentives of which the

[1] December 3rd.

Church disposes can no longer unite parties and peoples, its political action is still capable of setting them by the ears. German diplomacy, for all its alleged obtuseness, discerned the blunder committed by the French Republic in breaking off relations with the Vatican and strove methodically to profit by it. In Rome Austrian, German and Italian prelates of Teutonophile leanings were set in posts of trust and authority. The identity of certain interests, German and papal, was pointed out and dwelt upon in every tone and every tongue, until children at their catechism were able to show that the Church and the German Empire both stood for the maintenance of the principle of authority against French republicanism and Franco-Italian atheism, freemasonry and anarchism.

And whenever siege was laid to a stronghold, religious or profane, commercial or political, a phalanx of supple pressmen was ever ready to blow their trumpets till the walls fell. In the same spirit and congruously with the same method, Teutonism had been grafted on other countries in Europe and beyond the seas.

In Turkey Mohammed was eulogized, Islam exalted, the Sultan flattered. In Persia the Shiites were made much of and Ali revered. In Italy the Roman Church was the centre of the spiritual world and clericalism the valuable lever to be kept available for use. In France Socialism, Judaism, Freemasonry were the trump cards. In a word, Germany made herself all things to all men, and the majority of nations became her dupes. The exceptions were few. In England the rare individuals who, like the writer of this sketch, ventured to keep on warning his fellow-countrymen in plain words, reinforced by cogent evidence, against the redoubtable danger, were shouted down as mischief-makers, by British and Germans in unison. The newspaper press shrank from discussing questions of foreign policy and the Teuton's course ran correspondingly smooth. In Italy, too, now and

again a sharp-sighted politician of high public spirit saw clearly what was coming and proclaimed what he saw. Few in number they were earnest of purpose and undaunted by the secret decrees of the *Vehmgericht* and the open campaign of calumny in the newspapers. Happily the centre of this patriotic movement was a really independent and influential press organ, the *Corriere della Sera*, edited by its proprietor, Signor Luigi Albertini.

CHAPTER XI

CREATING AN ARMY—THE "NEUTRALISTS" AND THE "INTERVENTIONISTS"

ON my arrival in Italy early in February, I sojourned in Milan for the purpose of acquainting myself with the principal political currents, ascertaining their relative strength and gauging the forces which Teutonism could reckon upon when the contest between it and nationalism should reach its culminating phase. From Milan I repaired to Rome, which became my headquarters until the fateful decision was taken and war was declared. Neutrality was the refrain of almost every conversation I had with the chiefs of parliamentary parties and other prominent men. "Italy cannot go to war against Germany with whom she has lived so long in cordial friendship," "Italy cannot afford to fight now, because she possesses neither funds nor an army," "Italy's one aim should be to squeeze what she can out of Austria, without spending a lira or losing a soldier." Those were some of the expressions of opinion which I heard at every hand's turn. The commercial community, especially those sections of it which came into contact with the Banca Commerciale and its emanations, was indignant at the mention of a possible rupture between Italy and the Central Empires.

The results of my observations appeared in the *Daily Telegraph.*[1] Written without bias, for the purpose of giving a faithful presentation of what was said and done and hoped and believed by the principal sections of Italian society, they

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, March 13th, 22nd and 23rd, 1915.

have been deemed worthy of preservation as the records of an eye and ear witness. That is my warrant for reproducing them here.

The following reflections were written at the beginning of March :—

Creating an Army

Italy's position among the neutral Powers is imperfectly understood in France, Russia, and Great Britain. Most writers of those countries, when dealing with what they conceive to be the rights and duties of Italian statesmen at the present conjuncture, treat the problem as eminently simple, because they rivet their gaze on one portion of it, instead of taking a comprehensive survey of the whole. They see that a favourable opportunity has suddenly offered itself for uniting the unredeemed fragments of Italian territory, for emancipating Italy's enthralled sons, and establishing on a solid basis her claim, hitherto allowed by courtesy, to be treated as a Great Power, and entitled to a voice in moulding the destinies of Europe and the world, and they cannot understand why there should be any hesitation or delay in utilizing a chance that may never return. Indeed, many of them write as though it were a question of deciding between alternative boons and advantages. In truth, it is a choice of dangers and evils. And what is worse, it is seemingly Hobson's choice, so that the utmost that can be done is to stave it off for a time while striving to obviate or deaden some of its worst consequences.

Departure from the attitude of neutrality, whatever its ultimate effects—and these would certainly be fateful—must first lead to a long train of privations, hardships, and economic shocks, which would subject the limited staying powers of the nation —accustomed to peace, and only now beginning to thrive—to a searching, painful, and dangerous test. From a Government impressed by this perspective, and conscious of its responsibility, careful deliberation rather than high-pitched views must reasonably be expected.

And the attitude of the Cabinet since the outbreak of war has been marked by the utmost caution and self-containment. Contemplated from a distance by people whose attention was absorbed by the political aspect of the matter, this method of cool

calculation seemed to smack of indecision or pusillanimity. Why, it was asked, should Italy hold back or weigh the certain losses against the probable gains, seeing that she would have as allies the two most puissant States of Europe, and the enormous advantage of sea power on her side? In any case, as the door to the battlefield must be either open or shut, they could not understand why she took so long to make up her mind as to which it should be.

But the critics who thus find fault with the leaders of the Italian people for procrastination lose sight of the decisive fact that the problem is but one of the many facets of a much larger question, and that at best it is a choice of great evils which no Government with a due sense of responsibility would make without necessity. And one must add that during the first phase of the war one all-important condition of intervention was lacking —adequate equipment for the task.

Intervention in the present struggle is not one of those ordinary enterprises on which Italy might reasonably embark, after having carefully counted up the cost in men and money, and allowed a reasonable margin for unforeseen demands on both. In this venture the liabilities appear to be unlimited, whereas the resources of the nation are bounded, the limits being much narrower than in the case of any other Great Power. And this is a hampering circumstance. But serious though it is, it would hardly avail to deter a nation from accepting the risks and offering up the sacrifices requisite, if the motive were at once adequate, peremptory, and pressing.

France, Russia and Serbia had no choice. They were challenged. No acceptable alternative to armed resistance was left to them. Great Britain, too, was obliged in honour to redeem her solemn pledge and vindicate Belgium's guaranteed right to live in peace unmolested. But Italy, it may be pleaded, had no such unbearable provocation. Not that she had no grievance. She had been badly dealt with by her allies. For nearly a generation she had been a partner of the two militarist States, and she suspended her close connection with them because they deliberately broke their part of the compact. This breach of covenant not only dispensed her from taking arms on their side, but would also, owing to the consequences it involved, have sufficed to warrant her adhesion to the Entente Powers. But for conclusive reasons she drew the line at neutrality. Whether

this moderation was spontaneous, or was the result of necessity, is irrelevant, seeing that the operation of necessity cannot be gainsaid.

Italy is essentially a land of peaceful progress. Nowhere in Europe is there a people more averse to war than the subjects of Victor Emmanuel. They keenly appreciate the blessings of peace, and their deep-rooted desire to ward off everything that might lead to war preserved them from the irrational vicissitudes which occasionally chequered the career of their neighbours. And it constituted the best justification of their membership of the Triple Alliance. For so long as Italy belonged to that group of States her influence was steadfastly exerted in the cause of diplomatic as opposed to military action, and therefore contributed to the maintenance of peace in Europe. Ever since the Abyssinian chapter of her history was closed her progress in every department of public life derived its motive power from methods which presupposed, and tended to uphold, the continuance of the *status quo*.

In social legislation, sciences and arts the Italian people made much more considerable advance in recent years than the average foreigner is likely to realize. By dint of unceasing moil at home and abroad, of thrift and sobriety, they laid the solid foundations on which the material well-being of the State and the community reposed. These tireless efforts might aptly be compared to the laborious toil of the marine polyps which, tiny though each one is, contrive together to build up huge coral islands. The amount of money sent home to Italy every year by hard-working Italian emigrants from South America, the United States, Austria, France and other countries has for long been a source of the nation's solvency. And this stream of gold must cease to flow once the mobilization order has been issued.

Having thus adopted a permanent peace policy as the course best suited to the character and pursuits of her people, Italy cannot without a painful wrench make a sudden step backwards and change the set tendencies of all classes into their opposites. Those are important factors in the case, and the members of the present Cabinet have a complete grasp of them and also of the corollaries that flow from them. They are aware that war has a meaning for Italy, which, although divergent only in degree from that which it bears in Russia, Britain and France, yet connotes a difference which is almost specific in its magnitude.

The three allied Powers now fighting for the liberties of peoples and the civilization of Europe have more than once pointed to their manifest unpreparedness for war as one of the many unanswerable proofs of the contention that the trend of their policy was towards peace. The same argument, and with still greater force, might be adduced by Italy, the orientation of whose entire political and economic life was adju ted to the smooth working of the various international agreements on which the peace of Europe was based. In that country there was so little apprehension of war that no precautionary measures were adopted to meet the emergency. The complex machinery of the State was kept going in the ordinary way, as though the millennium had been inaugurated. The enormous gaps made in the national defences by the Lybian campaign, which proved far more costly than had been anticipated, were not filled up. Arms, ammunition, uniforms, boots, in a word the means of equipping an army, were lacking. The expenditure of £80,000,000 sterling during the conflict with Turkey rendered the strictest economy imperative, and so intent was the Cabinet on observing it that the first candidate for the post of War Minister declined the honour, because of the disproportion between the sum offered to him for reorganization and the pressing needs of the national defences.

The outbreak of the present conflict, therefore, took Italy unawares and found her in a condition of military unpreparedness which, if her participation in the war had been a necessity, might have had disastrous consequences for the nation. Happily for her, the one State which would gladly have weakened her had its hands tied, and Italy was enabled to make good the wear and tear of the Tripolitan campaign. What has been accomplished during the seven months that have elapsed since then may aptly be described as a rare feat. The Army has been not so much reorganized as created. Italy, although a Great Power and the ex-ally[1] of the two militarist Empires, has had to

[1] When those lines were being written, the speculative question whether Italy was still the ally of Germany and Austria was open to doubt. The consensus of opinion in the chancelleries of Europe was that the alliance had been dissolved by her refusal to march against France and Russia. I was aware that that was not the view taken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Sonnino, and I said so. None the less, I used the expression ex-ally which was then in vogue.

tackle a problem similar to that with which Great Britain was confronted. She has had to raise and equip an enormous army, to lay in provisions and ammunition, to supply her troops with guns, to train the men, and generally to qualify herself to play the part of a Great Power, whether as a neutral or as a belligerent. And so far as one can judge she has at last achieved the feat.

From now onward, therefore, Italy is become the mistress of her own destinies. Heretofore bereft of the means of establishing and enforcing her claim to be heard in the councils of those who will reconstruct the future of Europe, the political inaction to which neutrality imparted a decorous form was the only course which a patriotic and wise Government could have deliberately pursued. To-day provided with a formidable weapon of defence and offence, it is open to Italy to choose whichever line of action may seem best calculated to safeguard her rights and satisfy her aspirations.

But King Victor's Government, unable to delay much longer its decision, cannot, without an overpowering sense of responsibility, approach this momentous question of crossing the Rubicon or sitting on its bank like Horace's peasant: *Rusticus exspectat dum defluat amnis.* For since the beginning of the war many divergent and mutually conflicting interests and sentiments have been drawing the nation in different ways. Thus considerations of an economic order point in one direction, while motives of a political character suggest another. Again, national aspirations which cannot be identified with concrete claims or dormant rights create an atmosphere in which strong leanings and impulses are generated, and demands are thrust upon statesmen with a suddenness and pressure which are disconcerting. The Government is composed of men who are not only honest, well-meaning, and patriotic, but are known to be so. Consequently they are trusted by the people. They are resolved to do their duty by their country for the welfare of the nation to the best of their lights, and without the slightest regard for party or personal interests and inclinations. But they are alive to the limitations set them by the feeling of the masses, coloured as it undoubtedly is by the desire to avoid as far as may be such changes as would set back the progressive economic movement, which has been steady for several years.

That feeling of the masses[1] has to be taken into account were

[1] Baron Sonnino frankly admitted, at the outset of negociations, that the leanings of the masses were towards neutrality.

it only because it also affects one of the essential conditions of Italy's political status in Europe. Her economic resources are relatively slender. The wherewithal to assert the rights and discharge the duties of a Great Power are drawn from tiny springs, the sealing up of which would reduce the country to dire straits. Unless, therefore, the motive for departing from her attitude of vigilant neutrality were rendered irresistible by advantages to be secured or disaster to be avoided, it is hard to see how any Government could take upon itself the responsibility of war. Is there any such motive to determine action?

To this question there are two emphatic answers. The "Interventionists" hold that there are conclusive peremptory reasons why Italy should at once throw in her lot with the Allies, seize and annex Trentino, Istria and Triest, and claim to be heard on the subject of the partition of Turkey. The "Neutralists," on the other hand, contend that the attitude assumed by the Government on the outbreak of hostilities is still imperatively imposed by the present conjuncture, and is also the best suited to the pacific temperament, economic conditions, and vital interests of the nation. The ex-Premier, Signor Giolitti, in a letter which provoked lively comment, seemed to veto in advance any change of policy on the part of the Cabinet by intimating his belief that those territorial advantages which are indispensable and adequate to the country, and the pursuit of which would alone justify an armed conflict with Austria, may be secured without striking a blow or stopping for a moment the rhythmical movements of the economic machine.

This was a serious and singular step for a public man of conspicuous name like the ex-Premier to make at a moment when every influence thrown into the scale was bound to take effect.

Fortunately it was widely known that Signor Giolitti's influence in the Legislature, which is unrivalled, rests upon his complete mastery of Parliamentary tactics and his accessibility to large constructive ideas coming from without, that his acquaintance with the principles of international politics dates only from the Lybian war, and that his knowedge of the decisive elements of the present problem was at best but partial and superficial. Hence to the accents of his voice, which proceeded from chronic elasticity of spirit, and was inspired by his ingrained habit of Parliamentary compromise, the only echo came from a few of his more intimate friends. The bulk of responsible politicians felt

that the pursuit of the central aim of the nation at this fateful moment depended for success less upon Parliamentary strategy and suppleness than upon single-minded patriotism, a sane overruling judgment, and a tendency to realize the Dantesque conception of Italian nationalism as the synthesis of politics and morality. And the Ministers at present in power, although some of Signor Giolitti's friends affected to treat them as minor luminaries, were deemed by the bulk of the nation to possess as many of these qualifications as could reasonably be looked for in a humdrum political world.

On the burning political question of the day Italy then is divided into two camps, with one of which German influence is undoubtedly, but, one hopes, not fundamentally, associated. The " Neutralists " would fain see the Government persist to the end in the easy policy of aloofness which was hurriedly proclaimed on the outbreak of the war, and which, to their thinking, will bring in, if not everything desired by Italy, at least enough to serve as an acceptable instalment. That Austria, persuaded by Germany, would assent to a rectification at her own expense of Italy's frontiers is, they contend, more than probable. Responsible German and Austrian officials in Rome have made their readiness to do so abundantly clear. Signor Giolitti himself manifestly put faith in these offers. And the Neutralists calculate that this extension of Italy's territory, taken together with the value of peace as gauged by the destructiveness of the present war, would more than outweigh the utmost rewards that could be offered at the price of participation in the conflict.

The " Interventionists," on the other hand, are strongly impressed with the enormous disadvantages which Italy would have to face if, like Dante's neutral angels, they definitively refused to take part, either for God or the Devil, and were only for themselves. The enforcement of the claims of irredentism,[1] and the realization of the higher aspirations of nationalism are integral parts of their programme, but do not exhaust it. They also hold strongly that Italy has not only rights to assert, but duties to perform as a member of the civilized and civilizing community of Europe,

[1] The political movement which has for its aim the " redemption " of those parts of Italy which like the province of Trent are still under Austria's sway and therefore " unredeemed."

that these duties are ethical in character, and that it behoves her to discharge them at whatever sacrifice.

Neutralism, as it has been called, is a name that covers many shades of opinion, from that which would confine abstention within the bounds of political expediency to that which renounces absolutely all velleities to take part in the war. Among the latter, and perhaps among all the partisans of aloofness from the conflict, one may assume the existence in different degrees of vigour of an invisible fibre of pacificism, which some people perhaps rashly ascribe to the entire nation. It may seem a paradox but it is looked upon by many as a fact, that certain races of to-day, although formerly restless and warlike, have become so modified by the operation of historical forces that their capacity for struggles of the fierceness of latter-day campaigns is vastly diminished, and in some cases temporarily atrophied, so that they can hardly be expected to reach the high road of military efficiency. Whether this theory is unconsciously applied to Italy by any of the Neutralists is an academical question that does not concern us here, because no Italian has ever yet invoked it.

The motives usually relied upon by the Neutralists turn upon the homelier points of profit and loss and the dictates of political expediency. They contend that Italy has no urgent motives, whether in the shape of hopes or fears, to take sides in the great world-struggle, whereas the losses which a war against Germany and Austria must entail upon her would far outweigh the greatest gain that could be anticipated under the most favourable circumstances. The moment the order for complete mobilization was issued the functions of Italy's economic life would be palsied, and a considerable part of the population, which is even now hard set for cheap bread, would be reduced to the point of starvation. And there would be little hope of the nation being recompensed after the conclusion of peace by a boom in affairs such as that to which the other belligerents confidently look forward. For the sources of much of Italy's revenue are situated in Germany.

Many Italians remark with feelings akin to bitterness that the subjects of the Entente Powers when seeking for foreign enterprises in which to invest their surplus capital uniformly give Italy a wide berth. Great Britain has untold sums buried in concerns of various kinds throughout the globe, but hardly a splash from that golden stream ever sprinkled the Italian Peninsula. France has given enormous loans to the Russian Government, to Russian

corporations and individuals, to Turkey, Austria, Hungary, and Spain, but nothing to Italy except a few paltry millions coming from the Paris firm of Dreyfus.

Germany, on the contrary, so they say, has been lavish towards Italians with their surplus capital, and has at the same time done good business with them. It is computed that she has invested not less than three milliards of francs, say £120,000,000, in Italy to the advantage, it is alleged, of both borrower and lender. Without this inflow of German capital the material progress which Italy has made during the past fifteen years would have been much less marked. The city of Bari, which is now a flourishing port, has doubled its population in the short span of ten years, and the influx of workers into this growing city from the country districts continues. And the cause of the intenser traffic, as well as the impulse given to shipping there, are both almost exclusively German. In like manner Catania, the second port after Genoa, is now become one of the most thriving towns in the realm, with a population which during the last ten years has doubled in number and considerably raised its standard of life, thanks to German capital and German enterprise.

And these are but a few typical instances. The part played by pushing Teutons in supplying Italians with funds or credit for the development of the resources of the country is much more considerable in fact than appears from the official records. The close connection between Berlin financial houses and certain Italian undertakings is often hidden from the profane eye. Certain steamship companies, for example, owe a heavy debt of gratitude to a certain commercial bank which operates with German money, and in some instances the bonds which thus connect Italian and German interests are so subtle as to be imperceptible to any except the initiated, and yet so powerful withal as to resist every attempt to sever them. Meanwhile the results of this economico-financial relationship are palpable to all.

Some of my informants, who had special reason to set a high value on this financial aspect of Italy's foreign relations, went on to affirm, rather illogically it seemed to me, that if France and Britain had co-operated to the same extent as Germany in the economic development of the country, gratitude for the services thus rendered would have embodied itself in military assistance during the war. Gratitude is a plant of capricious growth, about whose freaks one can never be quite positive.

As things now stand, I was further assured, and despite the depressing effect of the war even on neutral Italy, the economic condition of the country may fairly be described as good. Work is abundant and wages are high. The cotton industry, for example, which was drooping some time ago, is now become brisk and profitable. The iron and steel industries are booming. Agricultural and kindred pursuits were never before so lucrative. The class of farmers, gardeners, millers, is, so to say, coining money. Italian shipping, unlike that of Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, has received a fillip from the war the like of which is not remembered by living men. The orange industry is reaping enormous profits. In a word, every trade and occupation connected with the land, the sea, and minerals, with the sole exception of the wine export, is doing immeasurably better than at any time for many years past.

In this way, not only the economic organization of the country which is running so smoothly, but also its dependence on German support, forbid any step calculated to endanger the existence of either. And both would be upset by the entry of Italy into the arena. If we turn to the most puissant motives that can be set before the Salandra Cabinet as a stimulus to action—it is further contended—we look in vain for their adequacy to determine the Government to swerve from the policy of caution and expectancy which has, at any rate, the merit of having kept the nation out of the bloody maelstrom that is fast ruining the greatest peoples of Europe. A great deal has been written about Italy's territorial requirements, national aspirations, and prerogatives as a great Power. Far too much, it is urged, has been made of them. In theory they constitute the desiderata of the people. In practice they possess no driving power. Look at the recent past for confirmation of this statement. Ever since the days of Crispi Italy, as a member of the Triple Alliance, has adjusted her conduct not to the pursuit of those remote aims, but to the furtherance of her immediate interests, hardly any of which were substantially political. Now, if that was sound policy during all the period in question, it is equally sound policy to-day. The deep-rooted conviction of the country's most eminent leaders is that, come what may, the reunion under the Roman sceptre of all Italians, together with the territory on which they are now living, is a foregone conclusion. And every public man in the country holds that the aim of King Victor Emmanuel's Government should

be to realize the greatest number of the potentialities of the race at the lowest possible cost.

The Trentino and Trieste are national and standing demands. Austria and Germany are aware that they will never be abandoned, just as Italy knows that they cannot be denied always and with finality. The territories would be worth much to Italy, because, apart from the sentimental bearings of the annexation, they would greatly simplify, cheapen, and strengthen the national defences by land and by sea. But, none the less, the possession of these provinces would nowise justify the enormous losses and still more enormous risks which a war against the two greatest military Empires of to-day would entail. For a chance of conquering a lost province Italy could not with safety play *va banque*. And if this is true in politics, it holds equally good in the military sphere.

According to the views expressed in neutralist quarters, Italy, Great Power though she be in name, is not equal to the task, which is always minimized in words, but would be made herculean by circumstance, once it were attempted. The Italian type of to-day is made of the finer kind of clay, superior to that which serves as food for cannon. The people are essentially pacific. For ages they cultivated the arts of peace, and for generations they have been regulating their life in congruity with the belief that war was a contingency which lay outside their orbit. And it does so lie. That explains why no systematic preparations were made for a conflict, and why when General Porro, as incipient War Minister, asked for a large credit to enable him to reorganize the battle-worn army, the present pacific Administration refused the request, whereupon the War Minister elect laid down his portfolio, which was accepted by General Grandi.

In the recent past Italy owes more to diplomacy than to feats of arms, and in the immediate future, it is held, she could with profit, and certainly without heavy loss, place her trust in the same means. But if, after all, war were recognized to have become a fatal necessity, it would still be incumbent on the Government to stave it off as long as possible, to determine with the greatest attainable accuracy the decisive moment, when the inrush of the fresh forces would produce the maximum effect in the shortest span of time, and thus entitle Italy to a voice equal to that of Britain, France and Russia in the moulding of Europe's destinies. If Italy joined the Allies too soon, she would jeopardize her future. For a war of six or eight months would drain her dry.

Present reverses and the prospect of coming tribulations have rendered Austria more compliant than ever before. And Germany's efforts, now canalized and directed by Prince Bülow, may succeed in performing the Cæsarean operation, which, delivering Austria from a burden, will bestow upon Italy one of her cherished desires. There are already some tokens of this belated conversion of Franz Josef's Government. Prince Bülow, as the spokesman of the active partner, has announced this progressing change to all and sundry in the Italian capital. The Austrian Ambassador Macchio, too, has duly danced to his leader's piping. For Germany, isolated by the hatred of the whole world, like Brünhild encircled by fire, is desirous of the friendship of at least one Great Power. And she is all the readier to give the price demanded, that it will be paid at another's cost. Already Italy is in possession of Valona, which as recently as ten months ago Austria was resolved at all costs to hold inviolable. To-day this Empire has unofficially, but adequately, signified its readiness to acquiesce in the retention of this important potential base by Italy, who already wields the rights of legitimate possessor, sanctioning or forbidding the transfer of lands and other transactions.[1] Every act which requires State sanction in that corner of Albania has now to be drawn up by Italian lawyers, and approved by the Italian State.

Public thought and feeling in Italy, in so far as they busy themselves with the grounds for the coming great decision of the Government, agree, it is contended, in substance with these views. Had it been otherwise a leader of the country so prominent as Signor Giolitti, whose great merit lies in his ability to discover the trend of national sentiment, and to get his Parliamentary adherents to follow that, would never have written the historic letter in which he records his belief that Italy's safest course lies

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[1] I had been informed that the Vienna Foreign Office had intimated its willingness to compensate Italy for the actual and impending changes in the equilibrium of the Balkans, by foregoing all Austria's claims in Albania. The official Italian Green Book has since confirmed this information. On January 10th, 1915, Baron Sonnino telegraphed to the Italian Ambassador in Vienna that Baron Macchio had alluded to the possibility of compensations in Albania; and in another despatch dated January 15th Baron Sonnino records Macchio's return to his suggestion about Albania.

in the exercise of military inaction, diplomatic energy, Christian patience, and tireless vigilance.

Such in brief is the case against intervention as put by its most authorized champions.

Italian " neutralists " thus put forward a number of propositions which are based exclusively upon expediency and interest. For these politicians assume that the present European struggle differs only in magnitude from past wars, and should consequently be dealt with on the usual lines. On the other hand, a number of eminent publicists whose earnestness and sincerity are universally appreciated plead for immediate intervention. And the leaders of this movement are men endowed with the faculty of concentrated vision and with a high sense of the responsibilities imposed by supreme issues such as the emergence of wholly new political and social conditions. In the contest which now convulses Europe they discern elements far more dissolvent than those of ordinary politics, and they also recognize corresponding obligations of a higher, more sacred, and more peremptory nature, which for the time being absorb into themselves the sum total of the aims and interests which constitute the conjuncture.

Quick with glorious memories and noble sentiments, the Italian people, despite its spiritual numbness of recent years, is still full of flexible sympathy for all that is noblest in the civilizing forces of the world. It has a keen sense for far-off issues, an intuitive feeling for the hidden bonds that hold together and bind in kinship truly humanized and constructive peoples.[1] And it has been the aim of the neutralist leaders, of whom the most influential is Signor Luigi Albertini, editor of the *Corriere della Sera*, of Milan, to arouse these dormant instincts, to set the unprecedented task with which the Government and the country are now faced in its true light, not as an occasion for the exercise of vulgar bargaining or studious compromise, but as a splendid opportunity for bringing the national life and its potentialities within the vaster circle of the great community of which Italy is a promising member.

This view, which nowise excludes care for the more material interests of the nation, possesses commanding attraction for a large class of leading men of thought and action in the country, who,

[1] I wrote those lines at the beginning of March, when the belief prevailed throughout Europe that the Italian people were incapable of any but egotistic sentiments.

nerved by faith and impelled by virile force, are eager to see Italy's destinies poured into a vaster and firmer mould, and brought into harmony with those of the great world-Powers with which it is her ambition to keep permanently abreast. Patriotism is conceived by them in a wider sense than was hitherto in vogue, for it has come to include, besides Italy's present territorial claims and strivings, all the glorious potentialities which await only a favourable opportunity to be unfolded and realized. The nation, according to Signor Albertini and the Milan group of patriots, is much more than an organism instinct with healthy egotism, eager to get all it can at the cost of any neighbour in distress, while giving as little as possible in return. It is also, and above all else, a loyal member of the European family, conscious of its duties, as well as jealous of its rights, ready for exertions and sacrifices as great in proportion to its resources as those put forth by Great Britain, France and Russia. In this large conception due account is taken of all the elements, duties, interests and aspirations which lie about the roots of the nation's life.

The attitude of the friends of intervention towards the profit and loss issues is to the full as patriotic as that of their adversaries. One is constantly struck in reading their utterances by the sincerity of their desire to get at the best solution of the difficulties in the most dignified way, without waiving the smallest right or evading the least attractive obligation. They argue that the present trial of forces is no mere dynastic struggle, nor one which concerns only the States actually engaged in it. It is a clash of peoples who have sacrificed much and are risking all in a cause which at bottom is Italy's own. The issues are clear-cut. Militarism eager for absolute domination is pitted against pacific peoples intent on developing in legitimate ways each its own characteristic gifts and leading its own national life. Italy's hour, therefore, has struck, as well as theirs, and she can already perceive what awaits her at the end of each of the two roads between which she must speedily make her choice. No mere formula can be substituted for vigorous action. She must rely on her own exertions, which will have to be proportionate to those of the peoples who are nobly risking their all.

The partisans of neutrality insist upon the advantages of a diplomatic deal with Austria and Germany which will secure for Italy at least a portion of her demands. The interventionists object that this hope is ill-founded, and that if it were realized the

concessions thus extorted would be of little abiding value while the resulting isolation of Italy would be fraught with greater and more imminent dangers than she has ever yet encountered. Austria's real dispositions towards her are frankly unfriendly. And for years past they have been covertly hostile and obstructive.[1] For a generation Italy followed the lead of the Habsburgs meekly and supinely in a policy of which the ostensible aim was the prevention of war. Yet far from being prevented, war was deliberately precipitated. What reward did Italy harvest in for her loyal and self-sacrificing co-operation? None. Nay more, her safety was deliberately sacrificed by her ally. The Ultimatum to Serbia was framed unknown to her, and she was suddenly faced with the alternatives of embarking on a tremendous struggle, in which she must risk her national existence, or shrinking from the ordeal and being brandmarked as a traitress. And the aim of the war thus secretly and disloyally conjured up was indirectly but efficaciously to upset to Italy's grave detriment the *status quo* in the Near East. Thus was insult added to injury with a naïve directness which would be amusing were it not repulsive.

And although now reduced to dire straits Austria is still impenitent. The hopes voiced by the Italian partisans of aloofness from the war have been blasted by no less an authority than the Emperor Franz Josef himself. In a conversation which he had a few weeks ago with a person, whose name is not mentioned, he said: "No State territory can be ceded to an enemy who shrinks from fighting."[2] But even abstraction made from this utterance, which bears all the marks of authenticity, one has but to ask a few questions in order to make Austria's temper clear. Assuming for a moment her readiness to abandon the Trentino and Trieste to Italy, one would like to know whether this sop would be thrown unconditionally, or only in case she wins a decisive victory. Obviously only in the latter contingency.[3] For it is hardly to be supposed that a defeated Austria, compelled to cede Transylvania to Roumania, the Bukovina to Roumania and

[1] This assertion, which at the time it was made seemed contrary to fact, has since been fully proven by the documents published in the Green Book.

[2] This was also Austria's official attitude, as the Green Book has since demonstrated.

[3] This assumption, for which I had good grounds at the time, has been since borne out by official documents.

Russia, her Southern Slav provinces to Serbia, and her Polish possessions to the Tsardom would feel warranted in abandoning over and above the Trentino and Trieste to Italy.

But if the cession of the territory in question were conditional upon the defeat of the Allies, and the triumph of the Dual Monarchy, would this gain to Italy be compensated by the enormous and irreparable loss which Austria's success would inflict upon her elsewhere? For what that victory would mean is the complete control by the Habsburg Monarchy of the Balkan States, the command or possession of Salonika, and the irresistible attraction of Italy herself within the orbit of the two Teutonic Powers. Thenceforward Italy might be tolerated during her good behaviour, but her status as a Great Power, her mission as a civilizing force, and her development as a great Mediterranean State would be definitely gone.

Since Prince Bülow, the diplomatist of the golden speech, returned to Rome as the Kaiser's Ambassador, he has lent currency to the statement that although Austria may be unwilling to purchase Italy's neutrality by the offer of the Trentino and Trieste, she may be persuaded or constrained by her ally to make some reasonable bid for it. And this view is strengthened by the reflection that Germany doubtless perceives already that the costs of the war will have to be paid very largely by her allies, Austria and Turkey, and that she can afford to be generous with the substance of her neighbours. But to this there is a conclusive answer. Austria might possibly make over a portion of the Trentino to Italy, but she would never agree to part with the entire stretch of territory demanded by strategical considerations, which include everything from the Brenner Mountains to the Bocche di Cattaro, and constitute about one-fifteenth part of Austria. Still less is it to be imagined that she would make a present to Italy of Trieste, her great outlet to the sea and the centre of her foreign trade.[1]

But even if a promise of these concessions were given, no faith could be put in their binding force. For it should be borne in mind that Austria is, so to say, less closely bound to Germany than is Germany to Austria. In other words, the Entente Powers are well aware that Austria is not the bitter, cruel, relentless foe that her ally is. Germany's designs on Trieste, Salonika and Asia Minor are integral parts of her scheme of self-develop-

[1] These conjectures proved to be correct. Austria refused the demands as exorbitant and humiliating.

ment, so that even if Austria felt constrained to promise Trieste to Italy, no one would be surprised, the Allies once worsted, to see Germany treat this promise as a scrap of paper, and bid Italy be satisfied with a rectification of her frontiers in the Trentino.

The claim to the Trentino and Trieste as fragments of unredeemed Italy, and also as indispensable parts of her strategical frontier, constituted the permanent background to the policy of the Consulta among a sequence of shifting aims and transient interests. And throughout all those years Italian statesmen envisaged the inevitable necessity of having one day to assert that claim by force of arms, with or without allies, and under circumstances which they ardently hoped they might be capable of rendering propitious. To-day this hope is realized beyond their rosiest dreams. The destinies of the nations of Europe are in the crucible, and will soon be cast in new moulds. If after the war, Austria by way of compensating herself for losses suffered in her Slav provinces, were to pick a quarrel with Italy, one can hardly fancy the French Republic altruistically rushing in to save her kinsfolk.

In their tireless endeavours to win over Italy to their schemes, the Berlin wire-pullers flatter her by exhortations to turn her back to the Adriatic and fix her gaze on the Mediterranean, where her glorious future lies. Well, Italians have done and are doing that. But in the Midland Sea they behold no ships afloat except those of the Allies and the neutrals, and they ask themselves to what plight would their own country, which is now suffering from inadequacy of foodstuffs, be reduced if Italian ports were blocked like the Austrian. But the Adriatic cannot be navigated even by neutral ships on account of the mines, which thus proclaim that the dominion of that sea belongs to the State which owns the opposite shore. And Italy sorely needs that second lung in order to attain normal health, and before she can achieve her mission in the Mediterranean.

The Neutralists flatter themselves that as the struggle will be long and the outcome uncertain, Italy stands to gain a good deal if the Allies are beaten, while she will lose nothing if the contrary contingency is realized. Moreover, if Germany can only hold out long enough, she may succeed in breaking up the alliance. Then Italy will have several trump cards to play, and it will be for her statesmen to choose the best. Men of more mature judgment put the case less crudely. If Italy must come into the struggle, they argue, let her wait until the decisive hour has struck and the

Allied States are literally bled white. Then as she can turn the scales in favour of either, the price of her succour will be left to herself.

To these pronouncements writers of the Milan school of politics reply that it is not by sitting at the window until the curtain has fallen on the world-tragedy that any neutral State can qualify for a vote in the councils of the heirs of the departed. Diplomatic astuteness may go far in ordinary times, but in a world-tussle like the present it is worse than useless. When the Allies have sheathed their swords they will have such difficult problems of their own to solve that they will take care not to aggravate them by vindicating the claims of neutrals. It behoves the Italian people, therefore, to take thought of its own aims and claims while there is yet time.

From the day on which the Austrian Ultimatum was presented to Serbia, the partisans of Italian intervention gave it as their conviction that Italy must break at once with her two allies. They added that she would be considered by Germany as a traitress. And the correctness of this judgment has since been borne out by events. "There shall be no recompense for treason," exclaimed the Emperor Franz Josef to a diplomatist pleading for a sop for Italy. And yet Italians who can entertain no doubt as to how their conduct is condemned in Berlin and Vienna, write and speak and act as though their ex-allies had forgotten or condoned their so-called "treason" and conceived for them a positive affection.

In truth Italy has been severely isolated by her neutrality, and unless she casts about for friends and allies in time she will still be isolated when the day dawns for the distribution of parts for the next act of the world's drama. Would she find it easy to acquire friends among any of the Great Powers after having watched their efforts, gauged their dangers, and turned over in her mind how best to make capital out of their difficulties? Among the Allies there would be none willing to enter into partnership with her, and for reasons which lie on the surface. But neither is it likely that her allies of yesterday would become those of to-morrow. Would they pardon what they term her "perfidy" and dismiss all fear of its recurrence? And would Italy herself accept as adequate the guarantees she received before, and which guaranteed nothing but bitter disappointment? Those "safeguards" did not keep Austria and Germany from breaking their compact. Would they prove more effectual a second time?

The truth is that both those Empires condemn Italy's behaviour as treason, which they would gladly punish at once if they could. If they were victorious would they forgo this " right and duty " ?

According to the leaders of the interventionists, who are followed by many members of all parties, Conservatives, Nationalists, Republicans, and Socialists, the question of Italy's decision has been placed by the friends of the ex-Premier, Giolitti, and by that statesman himself, on too low a level. It is beneath the dignity of a great nation to lie quiescent while two groups of States are engaged in a life-and-death struggle, one of them for a cause which is largely her own, and to speculate on how much may be extorted from the weakness of whichever of them is vanquished.

Italy, we are assured by the foremost of the Milan publicists, might have received in exchange for her co-operation the promise of Corsica, of Nice, of Savoy, of Tunis, of Morocco, and of Egypt. And speaking for myself I can confirm the statement. But the Italian people, he goes on to say, would have risen in wrath against any one who should urge her collaboration in an enterprise of aggression and oppression.

This truth, he adds, will prove painful for those who would fain urge the nation to take a hand in Germany's " world-politics," " but it is a fundamental truth which cannot be ignored when the question is asked what the Italian nation can or cannot do. We are now dealing not with colonial policy, but with that world-policy for which a people should be ready to offer up, if necessary, its life-blood, as Germany is doing. . . . Let us therefore acquire for the country a position in the European equilibrium which is congruous with its temperament, its spirit, its instincts.

" Happily our aspirations in the Adriatic, our interests in the Midland Sea and in Northern Africa coincide admirably with the policy which it is easiest for us to pursue. Unless we profit with the utmost prudence, with the greatest circumspection, by the present rare opportunity which history offers us to set the finishing strokes to our unification, to render our land and sea frontiers immeasurably more secure and more easily defensible than they are and to harmonize our foreign with our domestic policy, we shall experience after the close of the war the darkest and most difficult days of our existence. The crisis through which we are passing is the gravest we have yet encountered. Let us make it a crisis of growth, not a symptom of irreparable senile decay." [1]

[1] *Corriere della Sera*, Feb. 8th, 1915.

In this way the publicists of Milan have been endeavouring to awaken national emotion and a sense of national dignity, and to set free a current of stimulating force capable of enlightening and strengthening the Government.

CHAPTER XII

THE POLICY OF THE MARCHESE DI SAN GIULIANO

DURING the latent crisis that was imperceptibly drawing Europe into the red maelstrom where it is now madly whirling, the statesman who acted as pilot to the Italian ship of State was the Marchese di San Giuliano. This politician, well known in London where he had represented his country as Ambassador, was a fine specimen of the Sicilian type of nobleman, developed and improved by close intercourse with the West. A skilful diplomatist and brilliant talker he was appreciated by the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers in Rome with whom he would chat vivaciously for hours without committing a political indiscretion. His insinuating manners concealed a firm character marked by unflinching moral courage, and an intellect which was brilliant and quick rather than genial or profound. His policy was less a comprehensive systematized course of action than a single-minded resolve to perpetuate the *status quo* and the alliance which he accounted its surest mainstay, and failing that, to hold on to Germany as long as possible, even after parting from Austria.

This leaning towards and upon Germany had been a tradition at the Consulta ever since the Crimean War. But in San Giuliano's case, it was also a profound personal conviction. The easy-going brilliant Sicilian was powerfully impressed by German thoroughness, painstaking and perseverance, and was literally hypnotized by their monumental results, by the numbers and quality of the Kaiser's army,

by the rapid growth of his navy, by the solidity of German finances and by the spread of German trade and Kultur. And to his mind thus constituted and equipped one of the weightiest criteria by which any course of political action under consideration was judged, was its effect upon Italy's relations with Germany. By that central care he was fascinated to the point that he occasionally allowed his predilection and apprehension to pierce through the conversational mist that was meant to obscure them. Thus a few months before the storm-cloud broke di San Giuliano, at a banquet where several Frenchmen were his table companions, gave it as his conviction that the German race was the fine flower of the human kind, inasmuch as it had contrived to unite in admirable harmony the highest qualities of the British with the highest qualities of the French. It would, however, be unjust to the memory of that gifted statesman not to add that all Europe joined in this appreciation of the race which is now brandmarked with almost equal unanimity as the Cain among the nations of the earth.

What is worth remembering in all this is the deep-rooted sentiment inaccessible to argument that Italy's safest course in the vicissitudes of international relations was to cultivate close friendship with Germany. And this feeling has left an abiding mark on the policy of both countries which can be readily traced down to the present moment and bids fair to survive the European struggle. Germany is not at war with Italy. After the peace the two may need each other again, and they are preparing for this eventuality. But for all that, San Giuliano was an enlightened patriot who beheld in the Triple Alliance, at the very lowest, a war-obstructing instrument of tested force and efficacy, and his efforts were concentrated on intensifying this aspect of the arrangement.

The greater Italy's power and prestige grow (he remarked to me at one of our last meetings), the more potent will our influence

over our allies become. And as our primary interest is peace, that influence will be thrown in the scale against war and against every innovation that tends to produce war. And it is from that angle of vision that Italy's various exertions to increase her specific international weight and also her fidelity to the alliance ought to be contemplated by the Powers of the Entente. You would be rendering a signal service to the cause of humanity by setting forth these considerations in England and Russia.

Curiously enough all Europe, with a few noteworthy but unheeded exceptions, assented to the view thus put forward by the Italian Minister. But from this soothing day-dream San Giuliano was rudely awakened in August, 1913, a year before the opening of the world-war. On the 9th of that historic month, the plenipotentiaries of the Balkan States were gathered together at Bucharest for the purpose of liquidating the two sanguinary wars which had upset the political equilibrium of the Peninsula. Take Jonescu, who saw clear and far, had been pleading the cause of equity to no purpose. General Fitcheff, Bulgaria's dignified representative, had advocated his country's claims in words which also applied with telling force to the interests of Serbia and Greece, but his arguments fell on deaf ears. Bulgaria was despoiled of her conquests and Austria, who had espoused her cause and undertaken to make it prevail, was ready to resort to extreme methods.

On Sunday the 10th a treaty was to be signed which would cripple the protégée of the Habsburgs permanently. The day before the signature, San Giuliano received an official communication from Vienna to the effect that the Austrian Government intended to take action against Serbia, and that as this action would be "defensive" in character, Italy would be expected to draw the practical conclusion and behave as an active ally. This astounding definition of a "defensive" war came as a revelation to the Italian Minister, who at once apprized the Premier Giolitti of the fact. The

Cabinet unhesitatingly displayed a steady determination to use all its influence to keep the Austrian torch from being laid to the mountain of inflammables and to draw clearly the line between legitimate defence and wanton provocation. Austria, if she were minded to wage war, must, Italy said, undertake it alone. She was in no danger of attack. Di San Giuliano boldly appealed to Germany, whose consent to Austria's experiment must be taken as given. But Bethmann-Hollweg naturally vetoed a course which would have broken up the alliance or at least separated the allies. And a more fitting opportunity for paralyzing Serbia was waited for.[1]

I had the impression that di San Giuliano was more elated by the momentary efficacy of his intervention as peace-maker than by the amazing mentality of his ally and the perspective of recurring dangers which it revealed. In subsequent conversations he assured me that Italy's influence for peace was far-reaching, that it had already been tested and found potent, and that, in the future as in the past, the part she played in the Triple Alliance would entitle her to the gratitude of Europe.

When a year later Austria had a relapse which clearly revealed Germany's complicity in the inexpiable crime against humanity, the two conspirators judged that Italy, having forfeited her right of ally, should be deprived of the opportunity to use her good offices as peacemaker. The Ultimatum to Serbia was accordingly drafted without her knowledge and the conflict deliberately precipitated before she could tender advice or even intimate dissent. But emphatic dissent on Italy's part might have been taken for granted. It was not only a corollary of the whole tenor of Austro-Italian relations during the preceding thirty-two years, but also a necessary consequence of certain unmistak-

[1] These revelations were made in the Italian Chamber by Signor Giolitti, in the first days of December, 1914.

able incidents of recent date. On the last day of April, 1913, while the Powers were mooting the proposal of an international occupation of Scutari in Albania, the Marchese di San Giuliano, who was never hindered by wont or bias from rising to a great occasion and asserting the rights and dignity of his country, telegraphed to Signor Tittoni: "If the Conference of Ambassadors does not give satisfaction to Austria-Hungary, and, if Austria-Hungary moves against Montenegro without our acquiescence, a delicate situation will arise, and it will be difficult to maintain the Italo-Austrian agreement and the integrity of the Triple Alliance. Italy must not remain inactive, but should, while Austria is operating in the north, manœuvre in the south by landing troops in a convenient place." Tittoni replied: "If Austria means to occupy all or part of Montenegro we must go to Durazzo or to Valona, even without her consent. The day when Austria attempts to disturb in any measure whatever the equilibrium of the Adriatic, the Triple Alliance will have ceased to exist." And Signor Tittoni, who narrated this incident over two years later, comments on it as follows: "Thus it cannot be said that what Austria lacked was warning from us. What was lacking was her own good will."

While granting all this and brandmarking the secret schemes and open juggling of the two Military Empires as a piece of infamy, it would be unfair to leave unsaid on the other side what is evident to the unbiassed and well-informed observer, namely that the efforts made by Italy's official representatives in Rome, Vienna and Berlin to infuse warmth and life into their country's relations with Germany and Austria were not inconsistent with the far-ranging optimistic construction put upon them by Franz Josef's Ministers. And that that interpretation was accepted as fully warranted by the text and tone of the official messages from Rome I, who was in Vienna at the time and possessed of the means of knowing the facts, am able to attest. This view is indirectly borne

out by the silence of the Italian Green Book on the interchange of despatches and assurances that took place during this first stage of a discussion which led to a dispute and culminated in war. In Rome unauthorized but reiterated reports emanating from well-informed quarters had it that di San Giuliano was in favour of Italy joining her two allies in August, 1914, but that the dissent of his colleagues and the pessimistic report of the War Minister decided him to content himself with neutrality. Similar rumours were rife about the view at first taken of Italy's obligations by Baron Sonnino. It is alleged that although not yet in office he was requested by the Premier Salandra to state his opinion on the matter; for the two had for years been friends and comrades. Baron Sonnino, who received the message at his solitude of Romito, repaired to Rome and arrived one day after the Cabinet Council had decided that Italy would not participate in the war. Sonnino is reported to have expressed dissent from this resolution on grounds which were neither technical nor recondite. This narrative, which may be apocryphal or over-coloured, is at any rate interesting as an indication of public opinion and feeling.

From other and trustworthy sources we learn that the first presage of the impending disagreement between Rome and Vienna emerged in a mild shape some time before Austria had presented her ultimatum in Belgrade. Foreseeing Italian tactics, Count Berchtold had taken the precaution to inform the Consulta that even if pacific expedients should prove fruitless to bring Serbia to a sense of her international duty, Austria would in no case wage a war of territorial conquest and annexation.[1] This was a gentle admonition that the Compensation Clause would have no application to impending events. But the Consulta paid no heed. Four days later [2] the Italian Ambassador in Vienna announced to Count Berchtold that Italy reserved her right to invoke

[1] On July 21st, 1914.

[2] July 25th, 1914.

that clause and meanwhile proposed that the two Governments should come to an agreement on the subject before Serbian territory was actually occupied. But the diplomatist added that in the eventuality of an armed conflict between Austria and Serbia, the Italian Government was minded to assume a friendly attitude towards Austria conformably to the duties of an ally. This was a significant statement and was treated as such in Vienna at that time, and the form in which the tidings were communicated to me was this: "Italy has solemnly promised that she will redeem her plighted word as Austria's ally in case the Dual Monarchy gets involved in a war with Serbia." I had that statement from a sure source and I believed it. The impression it seemingly made in official quarters in Vienna was distinctly favourable and the conclusions eagerly drawn from it were far-reaching. It is undoubted that, as I then pointed out, Italy's official relations with Austria and Germany were good, and that San Giuliano seemed anxious to keep them so, or even better them.

The famous Article VII of the Treaty which had been introduced by Count di Robilant provides that whichever ally disturbs the equilibrium of the Balkans shall give fitting compensation to the other. Now Austria's contention was that it had no application to the conditions prevailing because these excluded conquest and aimed only at national security. Rome naturally demurred to that thesis and appealed to Berlin for support. Germany, waiving the plea, boldly adopted the Italian view and admitted in principle Italy's right to compensation. Count Berchtold then made the first concession to the Consulta in the following declaration—

> If we be constrained, contrary to our expectation, to proceed to the occupation of Serbian territory—occupation which would be provisional—we should in this case be ready to inaugurate an interchange of ideas with Italy as to the compensation due to her. On the other hand we expect that Italy should not hinder her

allies from putting forth the efforts requisite for the attainment of their ends, but should preserve a friendly bearing towards us, in conformity with the alliance.

By way of deepening the good impression which this announcement was expected to make, the Austrian Emperor was moved into the foreground and advised to despatch a telegram to King Victor which would, it was confidently assumed, clinch the matter.

In accord with Germany (Franz Josef wrote) I am resolved to defend the rights of the Triple Alliance, and I have ordered the mobilization of all the military forces. To the Triple Alliance we owe thirty years of peace and well-being. I note with satisfaction the identical interpretation of the Treaty by our Governments. At this solemn conjuncture I am happy to be able to reckon on the support of my allies and their powerful armies, and I give utterance to my fervid desire for the success of our arms and for the glorious future of our countries.

A curious calculation after all that had gone before! And yet, as we have seen, it was not wholly destitute of a basis.

To that message the King of Italy gave the following answer—

I have received your Majesty's telegram. I have no need to assure your Majesty that Italy who has made all possible efforts to ensure the maintenance of peace and who will do everything feasible to restore it as soon as may be, will preserve a cordially friendly attitude towards her allies, congruously with the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, her own sincere sentiments, and the great interests which it behoves her to safeguard.

The Austrian and German Governments professed to believe that this royal response was a renewed promise by Italy to discharge the duties of an ally. They maintain that it was confirmed by a statement from a high military authority. On August 4th the Austrian Ambassador in Rome communicated to Count Berchtold a curious declaration

alleged to have come from the Chief of the Italian General Staff, Cadorna: "If Austria," he said, "refrains from occupying Lövchen and disturbing the equilibrium of the Adriatic, Italy will never declare war against her." The authenticity of these words has since been called in question by Cadorna himself. Into this dispute we cannot enter. One cannot, however, deny that there is some logical force in the Italian contention that a political statement coming from a military chief is known by all diplomatists to be worth nothing. Military officers are not the natural or the truest exponents of their country's foreign policy. None the less, if the assurance had been given by General Cadorna, it would have been valuable not only in itself but also as bearing out what was believed to be the view taken by the Court, the King and the Cabinet.

In any case the Ballplatz was alive to the possibility of unpleasant surprises. And this prevision was whetted by the venomous comment made on Cadorna's alleged assurance by the Austrian Ambassador in Rome, von Merey, to his Chief in Vienna: "Your Excellency will gather from the data in question that the policy of blackmail is being persisted in." "Traitors and blackmailers" were therefore the characteristics of the Italian Government, according to the responsible advisers of the Austrian Emperor.

It was in that spirit of mingled bitterness and loathing that these officials entered into conversations with that Government. Rancour and contempt impregnated the words and inspired the whims and deliberate acts of the Austrian negociators, rendering a fair, straight, equitable bargain well-nigh impossible. Aware of that spirit, although not acquainted with all its causes, I felt at the time that an accord between them was hardly to be hoped for, unless indeed a set of new conditions were created. For well-informed Italians were under no illusion as to the feelings with which Austria contemplated them or the standard

by which she gauged their conduct. The faith which they put in Austria's promises, to be redeemed only if she emerged from the conflict strong enough to repudiate them, was very limited. Even in the course of the official conversations the most telling argument invoked by Vienna was a threat that Italy, if she broke off the negociations, would find the German armies as well as those of Austria-Hungary arrayed against her. On the other hand, it was no secret at the Consulta that the European War ought, and was intended according to Austria's original plan, to be preceded by a crushing defeat of Italy, which fate had unexpectedly caused to be postponed.

That in spite of this knowledge and the further conviction that an Austrian campaign against Italy would have found their nation without a single ally to back her, King Victor's Government left the national defences in such a plight that they no longer deserved the name of "defences," throws light upon some of the differences between the temperament of the allied peoples and that of the Teutons. But that Signor Giolitti, who was principally responsible for this neglect, should have afterwards invoked it in conversation with the King as a clinching argument against intervention, betrays the presence of an ethical twist in that statesman's mentality of a kind which was reasonably taken by the nation to disqualify him for the post of its principal trustee.

Di San Giuliano had employed the brief period between the presentation of the ultimatum and Austria's order to mobilize, in endeavouring to get the two allies to listen to counsels of self-containment and humanity. But they retorted by dwelling on the enormous odds against the Entente Powers and their own splendid chances of victory. Russia, they urged, is wholly unprepared for a European war and Great Britain would never take the field against the Triple Alliance. But the dissenting Italian Minister was nowise disconcerted. He construed Austria's measures of 1914 as he had inter-

preted her intentions of 1913, and characterized the resulting war as aggressive. In logic the argument was sound and in politics the attitude was at once safe and obligatory. For only on the supposition that Italy's contention was correct could her contemplated refusal to aid her two allies be justified. And her allies implicitly acquiesced in her plea, and congruously with these plastic attitudes, neither of the Military Empires broke off its friendly relations with her. On the contrary, professions of amity were lavished on the Consulta by the Kaiser's Government and re-echoed by the press of Berlin, Vienna and Frankfurt. And one of the outward signs of this tender affection was the despatch of an ex-Chancellor—Germany's most distinguished statesman—to Rome, to wipe out old scores, reconcile present differences, and draw closer "the bonds that had so long linked the two peoples together." Meanwhile it was implicitly assumed by all three that the alliance was still in vigour but that the conditions which alone could oblige Italy to participate actively in the war had not in the judgment of her statesmen been realized.

After this the Italian Government, gazing awe-struck at the perspective that opened out before the nation, the lack of trustworthy and powerful friends, and the absence of adequate means of defence, set to work to organize a new army, to lay in munitions for a severe and long campaign, and to reorganize the navy. Happily for the country, Austria regarded these measures as empty bluff, and in lieu of offering serious concessions, put her hope in hair-splitting arguments. The negociations turned mainly upon the Italian contentions arising out of Article VII, on which Baron Sonnino, after the death of San Giuliano, laid especial stress. The latter statesman, notwithstanding his reserve of moral courage and patriotism, had always displayed in his dispatches a tender regard for the susceptibilities of his country's allies. His successor seemed more outspoken and his

utterances were certainly more emphatic. Whether his mind was haunted with bitter recollections of the thirty-three years of humiliation and coercion which the fatal treaty had brought down upon his beloved Italy is very doubtful. If it was he never showed it. On the contrary the belief of the public and of his personal friends would seem to warrant the view that, like all other Italian statesmen, he recognized the utility while deprecating the one-sidedness of the Alliance. There is no ground for assuming that he ever discovered that the object for which he agitated in his youthful days was but one of the baits cunningly set before Italians by the past-master of diplomatic legerdemain in Berlin.

CHAPTER XIII

IMPRESSIONS OF BARON SONNINO

WITH the death of di San Giuliano the first phase of the Austro-Italian dissension came to an end. And for the second act of the drama the cast was considerably modified. For Continental nations, unlike the British, never allow themselves to be hypnotized by old saws like that about swapping horses in mid-stream. In Rome, Baron Sonnino, invited by his former partisan, the Premier Salandra, to the vacant post, now discharged the functions of Foreign Secretary. In Vienna Count Berchtold had withdrawn into private life and his place was taken by Baron Burian, Austria's reputed best statesman.[1] At the Austrian Embassy in Rome Baron Macchio, a native of Friuli, one of the unredeemed Italian provinces, succeeded von Merey, and Germany recalled her Ambassador Flotow, whose wife was a patriotic Russian lady, and delegated in his room the world-famed statesman, the connoisseur of Italian art and history, Prince von Bülow,[2] who was expected to evolve harmony out of discord and restore to the Triple Alliance its pristine vigour on a new and more solid basis. Russia recalled her Ambassador at Rome, M. Krupensky, and gave him M. Giers as successor. Another figure that now began to flit fitfully across the field of vision casting a dark shadow on the brightest scenes was the ex-Premier Giolitti. Although only a private member of parliament without office or responsibility, this politician was felt throughout to be the sole master of the situation, and

[1] January 14th, 1915. [2] December 3rd, 1914.

at the culminating moment he boldly realized the theory, usurped the functions without resuming the title of Premier, and turned out the Cabinet by an audacious extra-parliamentary master-stroke. Thereupon the nation cried, "Thus far, and no farther!"

With the entry on the scene of these eminent *dramatis personæ*, public interest in the plot grew keener. But at the same time the means of satisfying this natural curiosity almost completely vanished. For Sonnino, who lives and moves in an atmosphere of solitude and mystery, insisted on the maintenance of absolute secrecy during the conversations. His resolve to conceal their trend from the public gaze was so fixed that he stipulated with Bülow the right to consider a breach of this covenant as tantamount to a rupture of the negociations. The Minister justified this course as a matter of necessity and a peremptory condition of success. To the expectant nation, which had had to acquiesce in tremendous sacrifices for the reorganization of national defences, this was a trying ordeal, especially because the belief was general that peace was certain to be maintained. But it was borne with dignity. Weeks passed and months, during which no news, no hints, not even a vague notion, were allowed to leak out as to how the conversations were proceeding. The Government, heedless alike of its own interest and of that of the nation, failed to prepare the mind of the people for what was coming. Meanwhile, the Press exhorted the country to remain calm and patient and hopeful. The Cabinet, it argued, had the confidence of the Chamber and the King, its one aim was to further Italy's interests at the least possible sacrifice, and it had already put the country in a position to await with equanimity either of the alternatives before it.

As the personal element played a large part in the development of the crisis thus opened, it may not be amiss to call to mind the salient characteristics of the chief actors.

Baron Sidney Sonnino, whose name, six months before the crisis, was unknown beyond Italian parliamentary circles, had a certain reputation in his own country as a speculative politician and a lonesome parliamentarian, who took a marked interest in finance, political economy, and those moral problems which lie at the root of healthy society. A man of restless ambition, elevation of sentiment, high public spirit, respectable abilities and contempt for that consistency which is so often demanded as a proof of depth and sincerity in public men, Signor Sonnino is half a Briton and half a Jew. He is endowed with some prominent traits of both racial types. British steadiness, tenacity and reserve combine with Jewish penetrative observation, subtle analysis, and a marked tendency to scepticism. When the crisis which associated his name with one of the decisive events of the great war was over, I penned the following impressions :—

From his first masterly speech in Parliament, when he struck the persistent note of his public career, down to the declaration of war against Austria, he has manfully persisted in the discharge of what he deemed public duty, even when individual effort, however strained, seemed unavailing to sway the currents of opinion and sentiment in the only direction where they could become fruitful. From the first, his conception of politics rose high above party arrangements and personal ambition, and included the equitable adjustment of financial burdens, the equal distribution of political rights, the emancipation of the Italian working classes whose lot was sometimes little better than that of serfs, and the duty of the Government to displace the obstacles which hindered the material and intellectual development of the nation.

His parliamentary life is replete with splendid undertakings and noble schemes, often left inchoate, seldom completed, and sometimes defaced by men who were less his personal antagonists than foes to any kind of progress which might jeopardize their own tenure of power.

Sonnino's sympathy has been with the community as a whole rather than with any of its concrete types ; but despite a steady glow of social feeling, the constitutional shyness, impenetrable

reserve, and sombre non-conducting atmosphere, which he carries about with him, may account for his failure to organize and keep together a parliamentary party of real influence. With a taste for great undertakings he has a passion for small ones. Temperament has made him firm in applying principles, but neither reflection nor experience has rendered him pliant in dealing with people nor indeed desirous of holding converse with them. His implicit confidence in the nation is coupled with invincible mistrust of individuals; and he seems unmindful of the fact that a leader is useless to his party if his suspicion is so deep-rooted as to make him unwilling to run the risk of being hoodwinked. He is a recluse rather than a statesman, and for months at a time he retires to his hermitage at Castello Romito by the sea, where he shuts himself out from human society, even from that of his intimate friends. Indeed his high-pitched seriousness, modesty, and morbid taciturnity have come to resemble some strange malady that benefits others while injuring himself, like that of the oyster —the symbol of silence—which produces the pearl. What he sadly lacks is that quasi-magic quality which is vouchsafed to all master-spirits born to lead men—the mysterious power of attracting, thrilling, and stimulating others to combined action.[1]

Years of careful observation and varied experience had broadened his horizon, subdued his impulsiveness, matured his judgment; and when at last poetic justice offered him the welcome opportunity of undoing the greatest and most deplorable work to which he had contributed, he conscientiously refrained from utilizing it until compelled by the necessities arising out of the technical problem which the nation had set him to solve. Sonnino, whose personal characteristics are apparently incompatible with parliamentary leadership, lacks the gift of oratory. He is not only a poor speaker, but he oftentimes has to read his addresses to the Chamber.

[1] Cf. E. J. Dillon, *Quarterly Review*, July, 1915, pp. 260–261.

CHAPTER XIV

SALANDRA AND GIOLITTI

ANTONIO SALANDRA, described by himself as "a modest burgher of Apulia," busied himself a little with journalism, became an average professor of administrative law, and in time an honest, easy-going deputy whose influence made for the removal of public grievances, the efficiency of the public service, the leavening of politics with morality, and the making of life-conditions easier to the masses. Salandra's political life has been a series of local battles during which he had Sonnino as his chief and comrade, Giolitti as his parliamentary adversary, and the purification of politics as his aim. But unlike Sonnino he has never played the part of a Cato, neither has his name been ever associated with repressive legislation. Modesty, as he himself true-heartedly tells us, has been his predominant characteristic as journalist, professor and politician. During his long life-struggle with its petty vicissitudes, quick-fading laurels and personal chagrins he displayed unflagging good nature as well as public integrity, but no spark of genial fire. After the last elections he gave up the struggle against Giolitti, whose policy he now approved, and he deprived Sonnino, his leader, of his last partisan. He, too, like greater statesmen, laid but moderate stress upon consistency. Before March, 1914, when he received the premiership from the hands of his new leader and political friend Giolitti, having already entered the seventh decade of his existence, Salandra had had no opportunity of

justifying the generous praises of his more enthusiastic friends who credit him with that rare combination of inborn faculties and slowly acquired attainments which is usually known as statesmanship. Journalists, like poets and epitaph composers, are wont to confer titles with a lavish hand. Salandra and Sonnino, in acquitting themselves admirably of an arduous task, have approved themselves noble workers for the public weal. But neither has any claim to the gift of statemanship, of insight or leadership. Their force lies in their sincerity and moral courage. A historic situation of unsurpassed magnitude has lifted them high above the general level. It is a deserving case of dramatic situation predominating over character.

Giovanni Giolitti is a political condottiere who by dint of mother-wit, personal luck, and the loose fibre of his environment won for himself a parliamentary army and a kind of arm-chair throne. He has never given evidence of that fine ethical quality which has enabled his two adversaries, and indeed most leaders of the allied nations, to dispense with the more brilliant mental endowments which might seem almost indispensable to chiefs of governments in a world-crisis like the present. But no doubt he, too, has given to his country of his best. For long his judgment was Italy's guidance and his word the law of the land. This unquestioned authority was not, I repeat, the guerdon of any of those rare qualities of statesmanship, diplomacy, or high moral purpose which are occasionally displayed by Italian politicians. Signor Giolitti approached the problem of power and popularity from a wholly different side. Conversant with the working of the administrative machinery in all its branches, he introduced that system into politics, and rendered his partisans dependent upon himself for place and influence, as though they were mere subordinates in a State Department. But at the same time he adopted and clung to a single principle which stood him in good stead ; he never forgot a pro-

mise, nor put off its fulfilment; he never left a political friend in the lurch. This vaunted fidelity to his partisans was a standing exhortation to all those politicians of other roups who felt aggrieved by the neglect of their chiefs to flock to his standard and share in the good things going. And numbers enlisted in Giolitti's Parliamentary army, receiving either quick promotion—one of them even the leadership of the House—when they possessed qualifications, or other tokens of appreciation when their intellectual equipment was lighter. Prefects of provinces, heads of departments, presidents of electoral committees, ambassadors to Great Powers, were among the devoted followers of the "Dictator," and through them he always had a Parliament composed of a great majority of deputies ready to follow him through thick and thin. The Chamber therefore came to be looked upon as a body representing not so much the nation as Signor Giolitti. Being also a patriot he considered that his own aims were the most conducive to the honour and interests of his country. And in this sense the legislature was national and patriotic as well as Giolittian.

By means of his subservient majority, the members of which were at his beck and call, Giolitti felt himself free from the restraints of political principle or common consistency. His words had the magical virtue of transmuting things and facts. Thus when a couple of years ago the Premier Luzzatti proposed to give the franchise to a few hundred thousand citizens who lacked the vote, Giolitti's lieutenant, Bertolini, opposed the measure as unnecessary and dangerous, the people being still unfitted to take part in the government of the country. But as the debates were proceeding Giolitti himself suddenly rose up and opposed the bill, not because it would confer too extensive privileges, but because it did not bestow enough! In the lapse of a few weeks the benighted people had suddenly waxed ripe

for the responsibility ! He then turned out Luzzatti, assumed the reins of power, enfranchised over three millions, mostly illiterates, and was efficaciously seconded by his lieutenant Bertolini !

In order to save constitutional appearances and to relieve himself of irksome responsibility, Giolitti was wont to retire from office whenever any grave problem became actual and pressing. He would then withdraw voluntarily without provoking a hostile vote which his devoted majority was incapable of giving, and would nominate as his successor a political friend or even a good-natured opponent who had to act as his temporary substitute. But the vicarious Cabinet might not carry any measure obnoxious to the Dictator, and above all else, it was forbidden to remove his prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, and other officials who were indispensable to the success of his electioneering campaigns. For this electoral machinery was one of the main sources of the Tribune's ascendancy. And curiously enough, the monarch, who is constitutionally invested with a prerogative which enables him to have the elections presided over by the Minister of his choice, left them three times running to Giolitti. Thus the Court, Legislature and Administration, as well as the all powerful Banca Commerciale and all its many dependencies, became plastic at the Tribune's touch. The one sacrosanct creation of the Dictator which must on no account be touched by his proxies was the mechanism which ensured him his parliamentary majority. And his friends admit that it was partly because the Salandra Cabinet was credited, and correctly credited, with designs on that source of his influence that he conspired against it and implicitly, they add, against his King and country.

In the domain of international policy, Giolitti is a novice. Years ago he confessed to me that he abandoned that branch of public affairs to others. And since then he learned nothing on the subject save certain rudimentary notions, which were

borne in upon him by the painful pressure exercised on his Government now by France and now by Austria and Britain during Italy's campaign against Turkey.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, that neither he himself nor his friends made any serious pretence of adjusting their opinions or accommodating their action during the great international crisis to the cardinal elements of the problem. So long as the talisman in which the source of his dictatorship resided was left untouched he was content to let Salandra and Sonnino cope with the task and unravel the tangle, while his partisans resigned themselves to waiting a little longer for admission to the feast of the good things of office. For Salandra had been nominated to the Premiership by his new leader Giolitti on the usual implied conditions: tenure of office during the good pleasure of the Dictator, who could overthrow the Cabinet in a jiffy by means of his obedient Parliamentary majority, and prohibition to meddle with the prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, and other creatures of the Tribune. And, responding to the Dictator's nod, the Chamber passed several votes of confidence in Salandra's Cabinet.

Shortly before the crisis had reached its culminating point the Premier, as Minister of the Interior, dismissed or transferred a number of prefects and sub-prefects, not because of their political convictions, but on grounds which would appeal to any honest administrator. And it has been alleged that that act of moral courage did more to provoke the resentment and accelerate the active opposition of the Giolittians than the trend of the negociations which the Government was carrying on with foreign States. They were in dread lest the source of their power and emolument

[1] The incident recounted on p. 159 of the conversation between Giolitti and Salandra on the choice of a candidate for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is an illustration of the former statesman's peculiar mental attitude.

should be demolished. And their fears were well grounded. The Salandra Administration, despite the Premier's recent expressions of admiration for Giolitti, and especially ever since Baron Sonnino joined the Cabinet intended, if it could remain long enough in power, to destroy root and branch the foul, corrosive thing that in Italy went under the misnomer of Parliamentary Government.

This irreconcilable opposition between the Cabinet and the Parliamentary majority, on whose good will its existence depended, was understood, welcomed, and fructified by Prince Bülow. His aim was to keep Giolitti's Parliamentary forces in reserve until the crisis should reach its climax, and meanwhile to wring from Austria concessions enough to satisfy the demands of the Cabinet as moderated by the Dictator. These tactics, which were pursued from the outset to the finish, depended for success on Bülow's possessing unquestioned command of the Italian Chamber and Senate. And it was conferred upon him. He wielded it unhesitatingly when the Triple Alliance was denounced, and sending Giolitti to the King he had the Salandra Cabinet turned out of office.[1]

It was the utter rottenness of the parliamentary system in Italy and the subjection of the legislature, the great commercial and industrial interests and the Court to one man who looked upon international politics as mere manure for the soil he was cultivating, that inspired Prince Bülow with confidence in the success of his mission. For the German plenipotentiary was thoroughly acquainted with land and people and faithfully served by high and low there. Married

[1] Cf. E. J. Dillon, *Contemporary Review*, June, 1915. This estimate of Signor Giolitti is an extract from a long message which I despatched from Rome on May 13th. It was, however, held back for reasons of State by the Censor, as were about nine special articles and another series containing 35,000 words, as well as various other telegrams. Subsequently, however, a portion of one series was released and published in the *Daily Telegraph* of Aug. 16th and 17th, 1915.

to a highly-connected Italian lady, his brother-in-law is a member of the Conservative Senate which steadfastly advocated neutrality. Other connections of his occupied positions which enabled them to learn everything that was being done by the State, and they professed political doctrines which were held to warrant them in comparing notes and making common cause with the foreigner. Under such conditions not only were intrigues to be apprehended, but they were certain be to of a most dangerous character. Giolitti himself had easy access to the King by whom, as a member of the Annunziata order, he might expect to be addressed as "cousin." In posts of high trust in the palace were militant partisans of the Dictator. The army contained some of his warmest supporters and trusty lieutenants. In a word, the only hope that the Cabinet could cherish of conducting the negociations unhampered lay in the severe ordinance it had issued enjoining absolute silence on the negociators. And even that hope was belied.

A curious incident which came to light only several months after the conversations were closed and war was declared enables one to divine how insidious were the thrusts to which the Cabinet was exposed from unscrupulous negociators who trafficked in real and spurious State secrets with the Italian opponents of the Government. For the Giolittians were well posted about every movement made by Ministers, the knowledge of which would be helpful to Bülow and his friends; and the latter by communicating half truths to the Giolittians could indirectly influence the Italian nation. Well, in a telegram dated May 10th the Austrian Ambassador in Rome wrote to Baron Burian—

> It is an established fact that the King, and indeed most of the members of the Cabinet, have been systematically supplied by Baron Sonnino with merely partial information about our concessions and about the temper of the country. In particular it

has been ascertained that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who personally jotted down my precise communications, read them over and expressly stated that he would put them as they stood before the Cabinet Council, did it only defectively. For instance he announced the concessions but omitted the *mise en effet.*[1]

Now those statements could only have come to the Ambassador from those of his Italian friends who were in close touch with the Government and the Court. And by way of reciprocity the Austrian Ambassador and his colleague, Prince Bülow, decided to violate their solemn engagement of secrecy and to circulate information about the course of the negociations. It is Baron Macchio himself who reveals this in the same despatch to the Foreign Secretary Burian—

In order to enlighten influential circles and those which, in part less favourably disposed towards the Triple Alliance, were seized with the general mistrust, it appeared opportune to cause to be delivered to them a list of Austro-Hungarian concessions, attested by Prince von Bülow and myself. In this fashion the game of MM. Salandra, Sonnino and Martini could be thwarted. In this list only certain points had to be enumerated so as to leave open the prospect of further concessions in the sense of Italy's pristine demands.

Between this conception of ambassadorial obligations and rights and that which was manifested later on by the Austrian Ambassador at Washington, Dr. Dumba, there is a family trait.

Commenting on these confessions of the Austrian diplomatist Signor Salandra mordantly observed—

It is not possible that Baron Macchio, whom I studied attentively, should have imagined such a thing by himself. His men, tality is cramped, or say rather Austrian, and therefore incapable of thinking out so subtle a perfidy. I am certain that it was an

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[1] Cf. the Austrian Red Book.

Italian who put that stupid invention into his head—stupid for an Austrian, infamous for an Italian.[1]

Those words cut deep.

Those incidents have a general as well as a special value. For they throw light upon the free and easy way in which the two Teutonic Ambassadors construed the solemn obligation of secrecy which they had contracted towards their Italian colleagues and they also mark the depth of subjection into which Italy had fallen. "The Italian Foreign Secretary keeps back our generous offers from the King," soliloquizes Baron Macchio. "We must remedy that, Prince Bülow and I. We must send Giolitti to Victor Emanuel who is slumbering in a child's paradise. We must also have our offers published without delay for the enlightenment of the nation." And neither their plighted word nor the limitations which ambassadorial functions set to their interference in internal affairs availed to hold them back.

Another inference to be drawn from this curious interlacing of family kinship, political clanship, public service and party obligation—and Bülow drew it—was that to enlist Giolitti on the side of Germany was to win the game. For Giolitti was the legislature, the executive court, the commercial interests, to a great extent the army, and therefore the nation. The chief nationalist organ, characterizing the behaviour of the deputies, put the matter pithily thus:

> These law-mongers had and have their chief, their symbol, their self-lord, Giolitti, in whose name they load themselves with infamy and treason. They had and have a common denominator; they bear a hall-mark by which they are recognized, they possess a business house in which to conceal their cynical trading in morality—the Parliament. The Parliament is Giolitti; Giolitti is the Parliament; the binomial expression of our shame.[2]

[1] *Corriere della Sera*, July 17th, 1915. *Giornale d'Italia*, July 16th, 1915.

[2] Cf. *Idea Nazionale*, May 15th, 1915.

And the German Ambassador met with little difficulty in securing the support of the parliamentary Condottiere. For Giolitti was under no illusion as to the dependence of his cunningly devised framework of parliamentary government on the maintenance of peace. A war would necessarily and obviously render the vicarious Cabinet permanent and independent and upset the whole fabric of Giolittism. It would be unfair not to add that the Tribune, whose ideas about international politics were vague and confused, might well have held that his country's interests could best be furthered by persisting in her attitude of neutrality.

CHAPTER XV

THE CLAIMS OF ITALY

PRINCE VON BÜLOW'S name stands for several chapters of European history, and for as many more of the chronicle of frivolous gossip. He is unquestionably the most distinguished statesman in Germany, and also the most resourceful diplomatist. But his statesmanship is over diluted with the spirit of feuilletonism whereas his diplomacy approaches more closely the most approved school of the early nineteenth century than that of any of his countrymen. For the post of Ambassador and plenipotentiary his qualifications were more than adequate. He was liked in Italy, where he had mostly resided since his retirement from the office of Imperial Chancellor. By his marriage with the Princess Camporeale he is connected with influential Italian Senators and officials. His fortune enabled him to dispense hospitality at the Villa Malta with a lavish hand, and thus to create an Italian party of his own, which he kept together and directed throughout the course of the negociations, This throng of clients was frequently entertained to lunch. dinner, tea, was invited to balls and receptions, was "atmosphered" at the Villa Malta, and, when the Italian nation, kept in ignorance of the course of negociations by its own conscientious Government, suffered from painful suspense, it was treated from time to time to misleading half-truths about Austria's concessions by these priests of the Teuton oracle. About ways and means the Teutons have never had a scruple. It is fair to say that the German Ambassador

had to cope with a series of extrinsic difficulties which rendered his task just arduous enough to yield a stimulus and an attraction. In Germany he had to contend with envious rivals whose faculty for obstruction was extensive, and in Austria he was confronted with obtuseness, ignorance, pride, and obstinacy. To the latter obstacle he himself ascribes the failure of his mission. But speculation on what might have been under circumstances that were never realized, is futile.

One of Bülow's first moves, on reaching the Italian capital, was to secure the co-operation of the press. Germany has always paid the highest conceivable tribute to the power of the press and the lowest to the integrity of pressmen. In Italy many of these proved venal and servile. Some influential organs were regularly subsidized, new ones were founded, fostered and sold for little or even gratuitously distributed. Sets of articles were ordered and delivered. Books were compiled. Items of information were presented to the independent organs in the hope that they might be tempted to give them circulation. An excursion of Italian journalists to Germany was organized by German officials, publicly censured by some honest pressmen, and finally investigated by the courts of common law. In Florence the well known journal *La Nazione* was so completely under the sway of the Teutons that the local German Consul used to take manuscript articles in his pocket direct to the printing office of the paper, correct the proofs there, and alter the headlines of articles written by the permanent staff.[1]

Bülow also sought and obtained the backing of the Vatican, which was a most helpful asset. Pope Benedict XV, to whose prematurely renowned statesmanship one looked for light, guidance and practical help during one of the darkest periods of human history, had shown himself to be neutral in public morality, while in politics he was an energetic opponent

[1] *Messaggero*, February 28th, 1915.

of Italy's armed intervention on behalf of the allied Powers. Towards martyred Belgium and suffering France he has been generous in lip-sympathy and alms. But he had found no word of blame for their executioners. Neutrality in matters of public morality on the part of one who claims to be the custodian of the morals of the Christian world is an attitude that was received with disappointment and will long be remembered with regret. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that personally Benedict XV has been careful to keep aloof from Bülow and his band, but his apologists would have had a more hopeful case to argue if they could spirit away the celebrated Wiegand interview which revealed the Pontiff's Germanophile leanings and lack of reserve. No denial was or could be given to the message which he entrusted to the American-German champion of militarism at the instigation of his intimate counsellor, Monsignor Gerlach. This ecclesiastic is one of the most compromising associates and dangerous mentors that any sovereign ever admitted to his privacy. He is described as a man of Austrian nationality, German Christianity, and cosmopolitan suppleness, who, when in Vienna, consorted with ecclesiastics of the type depicted by Poggio and incarnated by French Abbés of the free and easy days of the Regency—when many an ecclesiastic practised the rule of the Monks of the Screw, of which the first ran—

> My children, be chaste—till you're tempted;
> When sober, be wise and discreet;
> And humble your bodies with fasting
> Whenever you've nothing to eat.

Years ago, the story runs, Gerlach made the acquaintance of a worldly-minded papal Nuntius in the fashionable salons of gay Vienna, and, being men of similar tastes and proclivities, the two enjoyed life together, eking out the wherewithal for their costly amusements in speculations on the Exchange. When the Nuntius returned to Rome, donned the Cardinal's

hat, and was appointed to the See of Albano as Cardinal Agliardi, he bestowed a canonry on the boon companion who had followed him to the eternal city. The friendship continued unabated and was further cemented by the identity of their political opinions, which favoured the Triple Alliance. Gerlach became Agliardi's tout and electioneering agent when that Cardinal set up as candidate for the papacy on the death of Leo XIII. But as his chances of election were slender, the pair worked together to defeat Rampolla, who was hated and feared by Germany and Austria. Their bitter opponent was Cardinal Richard, a witty French prelate who laboured might and main for Rampolla. But Rampolla's party was silenced by the Austro-German veto, and Mons.Gerlach is now a personality in the Vatican. During the period of impecuniosity which the falling off of Peter's Pence inaugurated, Mgr. Gerlach, whose fortune is said to be princely, is having certain works of reconstruction, in which the Pope takes a special interest, carried on at his own expense. That a man of such violent Pan-German sentiments should be the Pope's mentor and guide through the labyrinth of international politics seems a curious anachronism.

The Vatican, as distinguished from the Pope, was, and is, systematically hostile to the Allies. Its Press organs, inspired by an astute and influential Italian ecclesiastic named Tedeschini, by Koeppenberg, a rabid German convert, and by the Calabrian Daffina, organized a formidable campaign against King Victor's Government and their supposed interventionist leanings. Its agents, including the priest Boncampagni and the German Catholics Erzberger, and others, were wont to meet in the Hotel de Russie to arrange their daily plan of campaign, and when at last the people rose up against Giolitti and his enormities, the Vatican had its mob in readiness to make counter-demonstrations, and was with difficulty prevented from letting it loose by the superhuman efforts of certain legations, of decent Catholics and orderly

citizens. It is a fair thing to add that the attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy throughout Italy was, with some few exceptions, consistently patriotic. Even the bishops and archbishops of the provinces deserved well of their king and country, while the bulk of their flocks left nothing to be desired on the score of loyalty and patriotism.

Bülow made the most of his allies, and had solid grounds for the hopeful forecasts he sent to Berlin. For all the foretokens were promising, and his own, bearing towards Sonnino, was correspondingly bland and pliant. On the contentious question whether Clause VII of the Treaty entitled Italy to compensation from Austria, he ranged himself on the side of his Italian against his Austrian colleague. But as time went on, Austria's derisory offers and systematic procrastination sapped the hope entertained of a direct understanding.

A thorough sifting of fact from legend will leave no doubt that Sonnino's tactics, which can be defended on the highest grounds, were open to misconstruction by the uninitiated. The Minister has a paralyzing fear of publicity. Toiling conscientiously for the weal of the whole people, he is destitute of confidence in the good sense of the individual unit. But it was not this distrust—less the result of experience than the projection of his personal instincts—that inspired his resolve to deny to most of his colleagues in the Cabinet, including even the Francophile Minister of the Colonies Martini, information about each day's work done with the Ambassadors of Germany and Austria. That precaution was prompted by the delicate nature of the conversations, the quick temper of the Italian people, the unscrupulousness of Germany's numerous agents and the ease with which the indiscretions even of a well-meaning fellow-worker could be employed to wreck the whole plan of campaign designed by the Government. None the less it betrayed a degree of suspicion which, whether it denoted a morbid peculiarity of

the Minister or a striking lack of self-control on the part of his colleagues, could not but weaken public confidence in the Cabinet.

Surveying the forces on both sides when the diplomatic battle for terms began to grow earnest, we find that the two Teuton Ambassadors disposed of troops comparable to those of Xerxes when he quitted his country to conquer Greece, whereas the Italian Government could rally only a small party of enlightened patriots under the lead of Luigi Albertini and the publicists of the *Corriere della Sera* and the *Idea Nazionale*. The two Houses of Parliament, the bulk of the Prefects, Sub-Prefects and Mayors, the Socialists, all the important commercial and industrial firms throughout the country, the Banca Commerciale, the peasants, the Pope, the Vatican, the greater part of the clergy, and almost all Italy's diplomatic representatives abroad were arrayed on the side of neutrality. A just recognition of the intensity of this universal tendency and also the weight of positive evidence compel one to admit that whether General Cadorna did or did not promise neutrality, an important section of the army looked upon intervention with marked disfavour. In a word, the Italian nation was disinclined to fall out with Germany and Austria, and ardently hoped for a compromise which would permit it to continue its economic progress without external let or domestic hindrance. This situation was fairly described by Sonnino in his official despatches and conversations, as when he said and wrote: "I remarked to Prince von Bülow that the situation in Italy might be summed up in very few words. The majority of the nation is in favour of maintaining neutrality and supporting the Government for this purpose, but with the presumption that neutrality shall bring about the realization of some national aspirations."[1] Thus the first move in Italy's independent progress was towards the assertion of her right to compensation. It was also presumably moderate.

[1] Italian Green Book, Despatch N. 8, December 20th, 1914.

Planting oneself at the outsiders' point of view—and even most Cabinet Ministers were for a time mere outsiders—and contemplating the formal issues in the light of the nation's pacific leanings, one could not help prognosticating that Italy's claim would be allowed and the Triple Alliance restored to vitality as a consequence of the principle of give and take proclaimed by the German, Austrian and Italian negociators. Every token, every publicly uttered word, every act ascribed to the Cabinet, every motive imputed to the Teutonic Ambassadors pointed to that conclusion, which the writer of these lines rejected only on special grounds. Italy was still the ally of Germany and Austria. And the main motive which had kept her from denouncing that alliance when it was most galling—her military impotence—was still operative, whereas the painful friction had not merely passed away, but was slowly giving place to a sense of ease and enjoyment. Austria would surely give up some of the territory so long and wistfully yearned for by the Italian people in return for a pledge of peace which was what nearly all Italians most ardently desired. The chief difficulty was to move the statesmen of Vienna to admit Austria's liability to compensate her ally for the shifting of the political centre of gravity in the Balkans. But as even Prince Bülow had ranged himself on Sonnino's side in the dispute about the construction of Clause VII of the Treaty, the conclusion was foregone. The Italian nation's eagerness for the preservation of peace and Germany's solicitude that Italy should, in Bismarck's words, not exactly fight, but just " place a trumpeter on the Austro-German side accompanied by four infantry men with their faces turned towards the Alps," would, it might be anticipated, attune them both to compromise and concord.

Judging by the frame of mind which Sonnino and Salandra brought to their conferences with Bülow and Macchio, and by the terms in which the issue between them was set forth,

the matter seemed destined to be arranged with finality by the four negociators. The worst that could befall, once the principle of compensation had been adopted as the basis of discussion, was that the extent of the concessions offered might appear too slender to the one side and too generous to the other. It cannot be gainsaid that Baron Sonnino made it tolerably clear that neutrality was the line of policy which he and his colleagues were resolved if possible to persist in, and that its feasibility depended upon Austria's sense of fairness. He told Bülow quite frankly that he considered there was a good deal of truth in the saying that Italy and Austria must be either allies or enemies, and that the alliance could only be fruitful if perfect cordiality prevailed. Thus there were grounds for believing that both parties were animated by a genuine desire to strike up an agreement. That cordiality would, it was reasoned, be one of the immediate corollaries of Austria's broad conception of her real interest.

Moreover for war there was no demand except among as few irresponsible publicists. And those writers were blamed by the country at large for laying undue stress upon claims and aspirations which, if pressed too insistently, would bring the two nations into conflict. In theory, of course, the enforcement of those claims was the steady aim of the Italian race. But in practice they lacked driving power because they were nowise urgent. The country having waited for them patiently for a long sequence of years, would continue to wait all the more tranquilly that the alternative was a tremendous war, the vicissitudes of which might lead to a catastrophe. Italy could afford to risk something, to risk much in case of real necessity, but she could not venture her all on a gambler's throw. And to embark on a war against the Teutons would be little else, especially at a moment when Germany and Austria spontaneously acknowledged in principle the justice of her claims and were willing that they should be satisfied at least in part.

Thus, in analysing the motives that made for neutrality and in gauging the issues raised by the European struggle, the advocates of quiescence looked to the certain losses which would, they held, be immense and immediate and contrasted them with the hoped-for advantages which seemed far-off and problematical.

That was one way of estimating the chances of an agreement. But there was another, and to the writer of these pages it commended itself from the outset. It started from the assumption, borne out by a sequence of significant events, that Italy's natural growth had been stunted by Austria's haleness—to say nothing of her jealousy and contempt—and that however averse to war either or both nations might be, a conflict was inevitable, a conflict, too, not so much for territory as for national existence. The only debatable aspect of this dire necessity turned upon time and opportunity. Austria had once selected both, fixing upon a moment when war would have connoted irreparable disaster for her rival. And she would have executed her design but for the hindering hand of Fate. Italy had never been able to take the initiative because of her political isolation and military inferiority. And it had always seemed to her futile to endeavour to enlist the support of allies in a quarrel about remote and narrow issues which left their interests untouched. But now the conjuncture had changed. Three Great Powers had joined in battle with the two Empires which, for over thirty years, had held Italy in thrall, exploited her people, numbed her energies, put indignities upon her Government, and threatened her with dismemberment. It depended on herself to have those States as allies and to make her national defences adequate to her actual needs. Would she strike out that course ?

As a mere matter of self-interest neutrality, if maintained to the end, would lead to disillusion. For foremost among the aims which she is impelled by the instinct of self-preser-

vation to set herself—and which circumstance had now for the first time brought within the field of practical politics —was that of national unity. From the Trentino to Dalmatia Italians live and work away from their brethren of the Kingdom, deprived of political existence, checked at every hand's turn in their efforts to keep alive the cultural gifts they have inherited from their fathers, and forced to give their substance and their blood to perpetuate Austrian misrule. The utmost that Austria could be expected to dole out without a fight is Trentino and the strip of land as far as the river Isonzo. But these concessions form but a fraction of what is deemed indispensable, not only from the ethnic point of view, but also from the military and naval standpoints.

Italy has no defensible frontiers. In a war with Austria she would therefore be in a condition of terrible inferiority. The Alps with their almost inaccessible heights, their dizzy precipices, their yawning abysses, are the natural fortresses of her secular enemy. And Austria, by dint of military science, has rendered these mountain fortresses impregnable. Tonale, Lardaro, Trento, Riva, Rovereto, the fortresses of Malborghetto, the caverns of Carso, the forts of Tolmino and Gorizia, bar the march of an Italian army as effectually as a broad arm of the sea, while allowing the troops of the Habsburgs to advance with ease and withdraw with security. Italy compared with Austria, to employ a comparison suggested by a Spanish friend of mine, resembled a man who naked and without modern weapons has only a bludgeon with which to defend himself against an adversary provided with formidable arms and cased in mail. Consequently, if the concessions in question were accepted as payment in full, Italy would be waiving definitely rights which were theretofore held to be indefeasible.

Trieste was another of the places to which Italians laid claim on the same grounds and with the same absence of

hope. For Austria would never divest herself of such a valuable possession—the greatest port in the Adriatic, the outlet for Austrian and German trade with the East. Trieste is indispensable to her growth and almost to her very existence. And even if Vienna were moved to cede it, Berlin would veto the intention. Kindred considerations militated against the cession of the seaboard of Istria and of Fiume. These "unredeemed" lands would have to be conquered with the sword, if ever they were to become Italian. And yet they must be secured by hook or by crook, if Italy is not to remain without defensible frontiers on the Austrian side. Her natural boundaries are, as we saw, the fortresses of her enemy. From the Brenner chain southwards the territory now belonging to Austria must change hands if Italy's strategic limits were to become tenable in war time.

But even that represented but the land side of the problem. The sea frontier required analogous rectification which was in turn beset with like difficulties. As a Great Mediterranean Power, the command of the Adriatic had been one of the abiding aims of Italy's policy. The pursuit of this object was the mainspring of the friction between her and Austria, which was first eased by the "self-denying ordinance,"[1] and has since been partially settled by the Italian occupation of Valona. Heretofore Italy's position in the Adriatic was untenable because that sea is dominated by Pola, by the Dalmatian Archipelago, and by Valona. The possession of Pola is a postulate of Italy's future as a Great Power. The notion that the Dual Monarchy would ever cede that important place is entertained by no sane thinker. War is the only means of obtaining it.

Last in order, but first in magnitude, if one contemplates the problems in correct perspective, came the question of

[1] An agreement by which Austria and Italy bound themselves to the policy of "hands off" in Albania, and agreed to unite to keep other Powers from acquiring a foothold there.

Italy's status in the Eastern Mediterranean. This problem received actuality from the Allies on the day on which they bombarded the forts at the entry of the Dardanelles. That operation presupposed an understanding among those States respecting the partition of Turkey. The Powers which arrived at this decision were three. Italy, if her army and fleet should contribute to the success of theirs, would be the fourth. But if she kept aloof, the general effect of the arrangement would be to divide up Asia Minor—where her potential interests, especially in the economic domain, are much vaster than is commonly realized—without any consideration for her aspirations.

And to those who objected that Italy, if she threw in her lot with Germany and Austria to the limited extent of maintaining her neutrality to the end of the war, would establish a claim to a sphere of interest in the Ottoman Empire, the obvious reply was that this is inconceivable were it only because in case the Teutonic States were victorious, the Ottoman Empire would survive as their protégé and vassal. Moreover it requires a puissant effort of the imagination to picture to oneself Italy furthering her interests in Asia Minor with the help of the Teutons, while asserting her rights in the Adriatic against them.

Turning from the political to the ethical aspect of the complex problem, it might well appear to men of high purpose such as Sonnino and Salandra, that no Great Power that prides itself on its civilizing mission should cower in inglorious safety while two groups of States—members of the same international community—were locked in a life and death tussle for the cause of civilization, which is its own, and speculate on the gains it could extort from the weakness or apprehensions of the losing side. But all these considerations belonged to the domain of speculation whereas the Italian Government kept scrupulously to the sphere of pragmatism.

I announced this open-mindedness of the Cabinet in a sequence of telegrams. I also set forth the unlikelihood of Austria being able, even if she were willing, to render Italy contented and quiescent during an upheaval which would transform the political framework of Europe for a century. The following message from Rome—one of many—was published in the *Daily Telegraph.*[1]

I have to-day had a most interesting conversation with a personage who, without vouchsafing to raise even a corner of the veil behind which the weavers of Italy's destinies are working, threw a welcome light upon the personality of the principal actors, their temperament, the motives to which they are constitutionally susceptible, and the mode in which their mental and moral attitude is affected by the present crisis. The information he gave confirmed the accounts I have written of the situation in my messages to the *Daily Telegraph.*

Thus, the authoritative statement recently issued by the Italian Ambassadors abroad to the effect that the policy of the Consulta has undergone no change whatever may be taken as an adequate presentation of the facts, and tallies with my exposé. Not only has nothing yet been done or uttered by responsible Ministers which would entitle one to affirm that any definite scheme of policy has crystallized in their thoughts, but circumstantial evidence is overwhelming in support of the belief that their minds are still quite open and their hands absolutely free. And all the signs and tokens point to their desire to keep clear of every entanglement to the end of the chapter. Even the interventionist kites that have occasionally been set flying are devoid of significance as symptoms of Ministerial intentions, and are at most evidence of readiness to confront either of the two alternatives with which the country may be faced.[2]

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[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 29th, 1915.

[2] It is perhaps worth recording that about that time rumours were circulating in Rome to the effect that Salandra had assured Giolitti that he would as soon commit suicide as lead Italy into war. Deputies alleged that they could attest this. They also pointed to the circumstance that Giolitti could have thrown out Salandra's Cabinet without difficulty or inconvenience just then, and that he certainly would have done so had he apprehended war.

Doubtless Ministers entertain personal opinions respecting the line of action which the nation might advantageously strike out in the present embarrassing and perilous conjuncture, but they are too prudent and scrupulous to allow opinions which have not hardened to conviction to sway their policy or force their hands. And in the delay which results they perceive no inconvenience. From the diplomatic standpoint it will serve to raise the value of Italy's co-operation, while from the military point of view there is no motive why the Government should relinquish its freedom of choice while snow still lies deep on the mountain passes which the army would have to traverse if it took the field against the Habsburg Monarchy.

It is safe, therefore, to affirm that no general support will be given by the Cabinet to an academic doctrine of neutrality or intervention as the basis of their policy before the details have fully matured and the pressure of circumstance has outweighed the force of theories, released them from the heavy responsibility of choosing a decision, and constrained them to take the only road left open. Their sense of responsibility is so developed, their caution so intense, that they are incapable of committing an imprudence, even when it seems prompted by the highest interests.

The ex-Premier, Signor Giolitti, on the other hand, owing to his habit of taking a prompt decision in moments of national crisis and to his hold upon the Parliamentary representatives, is invested with a force of moral authority which the modest and scrupulous members of the present Cabinet are loth to flout.

Views and tactics of this nature, taken in conjunction with the rigorous secrecy observed by the principal negociators and their intermediaries, render it impossible for outsiders to base their forecasts upon any more solid foundation than induction and surmise. But a survey of the probabilities leads one to the conclusion that Austria does not possess all that Italy requires, and that she could not dispossess herself even of that part of it which she still calls her own without forfeiting her right to her status as a Great Power.[1] When this assumption has been clearly revealed by the pourparlers, then and only then will an attitude of neutrality have obviously ceased to be compatible with due consideration for Italy's vital interests.

[1] The publication of the official Green Book in the following May confirmed these statements in all respects.

Meanwhile, despite the pushing forward of military preparations, the Cabinet still implicitly admits the survival of the Triple Alliance, and explains Italy's neutrality as the necessary consequence of the terms of the treaty, which provided for common action under conditions which have not been realized. And it is in the capacity of an ally that Germany has intervened between Austria and Italy.

Whether the Italian negociators were swayed in their attitude during the conversations by erroneous notions respecting Austria's internal plight and her approaching collapse, one cannot now determine with certitude. But that this belief was prevalent among many of the leading politicians in the allied and neutral countries, cannot be gainsaid. On several occasions I endeavoured to convince them that the data for their assumption were fictitious, that the nationalities in Austria, like those in Germany, would, on the whole, behave in the way anticipated by Franz Josef's Government, and that in especial the Austrian Poles would fight with martial ardour against the armies of the Tsar. It may, however, be worth recording that utterances were attributed to Salandra and Sonnino to the effect that Austria was but a sleeping or rather comatose partner of the German Empire. The Kaiser's Ambassador in Vienna, a man whose talent for intrigue is undeniable, communicated to Count Berchtold the gist of Bülow's talks with the Italian Ministers, and in the course of his narrative ascribed to Salandra and Sonnino the view that " Austria, in consequence of her internal condition, is unable to sustain a new war and is foredoomed to dissolution." [1] If that was indeed the deliberate judgment of those two statesmen, there was some colour for it in the defeat of the Austrian armies in Galicia, but no solid foundation anywhere.

As soon as the Austrian Ambassador in Rome felt able to start from the same principle as Baron Sonnino—and that was not for a long while—he intimated his readiness to

[1] Cf. Austrian official Red Book and Vienna journals of July 14th, 1915.

listen to the expectations of the latter, however distasteful, and he hinted at compensation in Albania. But Sonnino informed him that he was not disposed to entertain an offer of territory belonging either to other belligerents or to Albania. Italy's interest in the latter country he described as purely negative. Moreover he laid it down that any arrangement agreed to must be independent of the outcome of the campaign and be promptly realized.[1] One of the principal obstacles that loomed large at the outset of the conversations had to do precisely with this demand for the immediate execution of whatever stipulations might be concluded. And it was emphasized by the approving attitude of Germany, who had meanwhile sent Count Wedel to Vienna to induce Franz Josef's Government to cede Trentino. At the same time, however, Bülow dwelt on the awkward consequences that would follow from allowing the soldiers born in that province to quit the Austrian army during the war as Italy desired and demanded. He also urged that it would wound the susceptibilities of the Emperor, one of whose titles is Count of Tirol. Throughout the conversations in which these matters were gone into, Prince Bülow assumed that the Transfer of Trentino would be taken by Italy as a full discharge of all her claims and an adequate return for absolute neutrality.[2]

By way of realizing this assumption the crafty Ambassador preferred the following insidious request in so artless a fashion that one can hardly check a smile at his expectation that a cautious statesman of Sonnino's calibre would fall into the trap. "Prince von Bülow," the Italian Minister narrates, "asked me whether it would not be feasible eventually, as soon as an agreement was come to about Trentino, not indeed to announce the matter to the public nor even to the

[1] Italian Green Book, Despatch N. 10. The subtle irony that pervades Sonnino's replies to Macchio renders the Green Book enjoyable reading.

[2] Green Book, Despatch N. 11.

Chamber, but merely that the Government should tell the Chamber that it had grounds for thinking that the greater part of the national aspirations would be realized. I answered that that was absolutely impossible." Prince von Bülow surpassed himself. Baron Sonnino knew that to acquiesce in this suggestion would be to lose his case irremediably. For the aspirations of the Italian people would not be satisfied with Trentino. A solid groundwork of concord between Austria and Italy could be formed only after the elimination of the irredentist formula of Trento and Trieste. And the Italian Minister said so. Bülow retorted that Austria would prefer war to the cession of Trieste and that it was of supreme import to Germany as well as to Italy that war should be avoided.[1] In any case he could not do more than obtain Trentino.

After this the discussion dragged on tediously, Austria inquiring why Italy should decline compensation at the cost of other belligerents, and Sonnino returning short pat replies barbed with ironic suggestion,[2] or else reasons being asked for Sonnino's refusal to set forth a list of expectations before Austria had acquiesced in the principle that any concessions to be accorded must be carved out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The temporizing tactics of Baron Burian tried the patience of the Italian Ministers, who finally stated that they would formulate no demands until he had consented to recognize the obnoxious principle. The Austrian Foreign Secretary then alleged the necessity of examining carefully its bearings on domestic and foreign policy and of submitting it for a like scrutiny to the various governing personages and bodies of the Dual Monarchy. And so the weary word-duel dragged its slow length along, while the excitable Italian nation was burning with curiosity to learn what was going on behind the walls of the Ministry. After the lapse of ten

[1] Green Book, Despatch N. 4.

[2] See for example Despatch N. 12.

days, which had brought neither positive result nor even interchange of views, Baron Sonnino uttered his first solemn warning that expedition was essential to the attainment of an accord.[1] It passed almost unheeded, the Austrian Minister again alleging that other factors would have to be consulted, and so on after the manner of Spenlow and Jorkins.

More to the purpose was Burian's demand that Austria's right to compensation for the occupation of the Dodecannese and Valona should be included in the discussion. Sonnino, however, showed cause why this topic and every other subsidiary matter should be ruled out, and then adroitly turning the tables on his Austrian colleague, uttered his second and more solemn warning. Weeks and months have gone by, he telegraphed, and we have not yet elicited an answer even on the question of principle, and the dilatory tactics with which we are confronted have dispelled our illusions about the outcome of the conversations. By way of safeguarding Italy's dignity he thereupon withdrew his former proposal and initiative in the discussion, took his stand on Article VII as construed by Austria during the Lybian campaign, and announced that he would consider further military action by Austria in the Balkans whether against Serbia, Montenegro or any other State (except in the case of a previous accord with Italy), as a violation of that compact, for the serious consequences of which the Royal Government declined responsibility.[2] One effect of this declaration, which was repeated with emphasis soon afterwards, was the suspension of Austria's military operations against the Serbs and Montenegrins. But it failed to rouse the drowsy Austrian statesmen to wakeful energy. Burian demurred to Sonnino's interpretation of the famous Paragraph VII, and the Italian Ambassador, reporting this decision to his chief, added the comment: "Respecting this last point, it is

[1] February 7th, 1915. Green Book, Despatch N. 19.

[2] Green Book, Despatch N. 22, February 12th, 1915.

vain to cherish illusions. The Imperial and Royal Government will never consent, under present conditions, to the cession of territory belonging to the Monarchy." [1]

That was not my impression, as I stated in several messages to the *Daily Telegraph*. Nor did it long remain the impression of the Ambassador. But I further held that even if Austria were prevailed on to give way on the subject of Trentino, the remaining points of discord between the two empires would effectually hinder a settlement acceptable to both. Thus I telegraphed:— [2]

My own personal impression, for which I have no official authority whatever, is that German diplomacy has put forward certain feelers here in order to ascertain the extent of the sacrifice which Austria would have to make in order to satisfy Italy's claims and aspirations and also the exact nature of the requital which might be anticipated from the grateful Government of King Victor Emmanuel. To this record of my personal impression I can add nothing except my conviction that, even if Germany succeeded in obtaining a promise that Austria would cede the Trentino in return for such considerations as Italy could safely offer, these considerations would appear inadequate to both the military empires. Furthermore, I am assured by experts who speak with authority on military matters that the cession of the Trentino, even as Germany might understand it, would not solve satisfactorily the problem of the strategic frontier which Italy is so anxious to see settled once and for all. But that Berlin will make the most tempting offers possible now that a new and seemingly decisive factor is being imported into the struggle by the Allies in the Near East may be taken for granted.

Meanwhile the Government, with the acquiescence of all the political parties, except the so-called official Socialists, is putting the finishing touches to the military measures which shall enable it to confront all contingencies without misgivings. Already some 1,200,000 men are with the colours, and practically all the other arrangements have been made which this move involves. No parliamentary party except the official Socialists will do anything to hamper the Cabinet, on which alone responsibility for the fateful decision rests.

[1] February 22nd, 1915. Cf. Green Book, Despatch N. 27.
[2] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 2nd, 1915.

CHAPTER XVI

A TURN IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

MEANWHILE the Allies' expedition against the Dardanelles, the success of which was universally believed to be certain and rapid, caused a remarkable stir not only in the Balkan Peninsula but also in Italy. The impressions on this subject which I received in Rome were conveyed in a sequence of messages to the *Daily Telegraph*.[1]

Fuel for more intense and widespread excitement than had been witnessed in Italy since the war began is now being supplied by news from the Near East. The fall of the two external forts of the Dardanelles is contributing to dispel the quiescent serenity with which this country has heretofore watched the European conflict, calculating the chances of each group of Powers and endeavouring to adjust Italy's attitude to the resulting expediency.

If a national referendum were taken yesterday on the alternative policies of neutrality or war, I am convinced that in Parliament and the country alike a large majority would have been found in favour of remaining inactive. To-day the ranks of the neutralist party are thinner and the convictions of its honest partisans are weaker.

At the same time the bulk of the nation is quite willing to abandon to the Government the initiative and responsibility for the fateful act which would place the now reorganized army in the field against two great military empires. For the Government alone is admittedly in possession of adequate data for a decision, and probably no one, not even Signor Giolitti[2] himself, whose influence in Parliament is still paramount, would venture on a campaign against the Cabinet.

But since fate has begun to pursue and seemingly to overtake

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 1st and 2nd, 1915.

[2] This belief was founded on statements made to me by Giolitti's trusty lieutenants. He himself was away in Piedmont at the time.

Turkey, the foundations of Italian serenity have been considerably shaken, and the curiosity with which this nation heretofore witnessed the ups and downs of the conflict has suddenly been transformed into earnest preoccupation. It is realized that Italy's interest in the future of the Near East, with which she would fain see her own interwoven, is sufficiently momentous to make it worth her while to pass once more in review the motives which have hitherto justified her attitude of expectancy. Meanwhile, she feels grateful to Britain for eschewing every act and word which might be construed as pressure.

It is, perhaps, permissible to remark that, down to the present moment, the military and naval campaign of the Allies looked to many as though it were planned on purely technical grounds, and wholly divorced from politics. Were it otherwise Russia ,might usefully have directed her principal attack against Austria contenting herself with a vigorous defensive against Germany. This scheme would have impressed the neutral States profoundly, and might have moved them to independent action.

Now, for the first time since August have the Allies adopted a plan of campaign the results of which are bound to be of far-reaching political as well as military importance. With the disappearance of the Turkish Government and the seizure of Constantinople it is reasonably assumed that the Allies will also have traced, at least in broad outline, the basis of that ultimate equilibrium which will permanently obtain in the Near East and the Balkan States, and that they will take into account only the claims of those countries which have already contributed to their success. It is no secret that since yesterday reflections of this order are being freely indulged in by all parties here, or that the offer of a rectification of Italy's frontier with Austria is shrinking to a mere imaginary point in comparison with her potential interests in Asia Minor, and the fleeting opportunity for realizing them which is fast vanishing.

Two days later I wrote on the same theme :—

In Italy, too, the necessity of envisaging the international situation, as modified by the Anglo-French offensive in the Near East from the point of view of opportunity, is forcing itself upon the minds of all public men. Some who were heretofore convinced partisans of neutrality pure and simple are, to my knowledge, reconsidering their position, and reluctantly avowing that cir-

cumstance is stronger than human will. The independent Press also lays due stress on this aspect of the matter, and, with trenchant dialectic, propounds those motives for intervention which seem most adapted to convince conscientious, scrupulous, and undecided patriots. The *Messaggero* writes: "Italy cannot remain indifferent to a possible change of government in Constantinople and to the liquidation of the empire which would follow at a brief interval after the occupation of the Straits by the Allies. That is why it is absurd to spread a report about her great refusal. Is there to-day any statesman who would dare to repeat the gesture of Mancini towards Egypt? . . . It is manifest, therefore, that Italy's interests cannot be safeguarded without an efficacious and clear accord with the Powers of the Entente."

The spirit displayed by Sonnino—calm, dignified and resolute—from the first underwent no perceptible change as the result of the Near Eastern venture. Hence the greater trenchancy of his diplomatic action just after the fall of the two outer forts of the Dardanelles may be attributed by those who know of no other motives to the Austrian Minister's unbearable logic-chopping and obvious determination to shirk the issue. "My conversations with him," wrote the Italian Ambassador, "might be prolonged everlastingly without leading to any practical result, seeing that he would go on formulating ever new arguments in support of the contention he is putting forward." [1] Sonnino on his part telegraphed to the Ambassador: "I take it there is nothing to hope from a continuation of the discussion with Baron Burian respecting territorial compensation in connection with Article VII,"[2] whereupon he proceeds to notify Italy's line of conduct. Military action, he says, undertaken by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans without a previous accord with Italy, will be construed as a violation of the Alliance; no discussion of compensation can lead to a settlement which does not contemplate the cession of territory belonging to Austria and

[1] Green Book, Despatch N. 34.
[2] Ibidem, Despatch N. 35, March 4th, 1915.

Hungary. Italy demands compensation for the mere fact that military action was begun by Austria, and this set-off shall not exclude ulterior compensation to be determined by results. The concessions thus allotted instead of being kept secret, shall be realized at once and the territories shall be forthwith occupied by Italy, who, on her part, declines to admit discussion of compensation to Austria for the occupation of the Dodecannese and Valona.

That spirited declaration and the ferment among the Italian people which was gaining volume and force, produced an immediate effect. Austria bestirred herself. Baron Burian assured the Italian Ambassador that he would shortly deal definitively with the question of principle. On March 8th Prince Bülow told the Italian Minister that Austria's uncompromising mood was giving way to pliancy, and on the following day he apprized Sonnino that Burian was ready to argue the question of compensation on the basis of ceding Austrian territory, and to collaborate with him in drafting a statement to be read to the Italian Parliament. The notion of the two Teutonic Ambassadors drawing up a declaration for the Italian Chamber was peculiarly obnoxious to Sonnino. It was Bülow's former request for an official declaration from the Italian Government in a new guise. It would have been tantamount to an undertaking by Sonnino to exclude the one alternative to a diplomatic bargain with the Central Empires and therefore to eschew war, which was his most powerful lever. But both the Italian Ambassador in Vienna and the Italian Minister in Rome rejected it with vehemence.

In this striving to jockey Italy into a binding declaration of neutrality or some implicit engagement to keep clear of war, Bülow expended quite as much energy as in the conduct of the overt negociations. It is the same order of ideas that underlay German efforts before the war to tie in like manner the hands of Great Britain and Russia and induce them to

forswear their right to have recourse to arms. And to the success of his exertions he attached such importance that he continued perseveringly to put them forward in ever new shapes, employing alternately open methods and unseen manipulations. His line of reasoning was that if the Italian people, which asked only to be left in peace, had any authoritative statement which it could construe as an assurance that the danger of war was definitely dispelled, it would cherish that as a solid guarantee and adjust its political thought and national sentiment to the tranquillizing perspective. And it would then keep the Government to its supposed engagement. For Germany's purpose, therefore, some such impressive utterance must by hook or by crook be procured. From Sonnino and Salandra nothing of the kind could reasonably be expected after their repeated and sharp refusals. But were those Ministers the real heads of the Government? Were they not merely the proxies of the national Cabinet-maker Giolitti, at whose word they must vanish into obscurity?

Throughout Italy Giolitti was lauded or decried as the Dictator whose power and responsibility were without limit. Whatever else might be thought or said about him, there was no room for doubt as to his absolute command of the legislature and consequent sway over the nation. Government by corruption, if not invented by him had been so perfected, simplified and regulated as to deserve the name of Giolittism by which it was everywhere known. His political adversaries alleged that certain of his antecedents ought to have disqualified him ever to return to public life, much less to be raised to a dignity that conferred upon him the title of "cousin" to the King. But although there was a political purity party, now mainly outside the Chamber, which laboured ceaselessly to cleanse the Augean stables of parliamentary and municipal life, it was numerically small and powerless. It had the right to say what it liked, on condition that Giolitti was free to do what he liked. Accustomed to withdraw from office whenever a thorny pro-

blem or an irksome task had to be faced, he was wont to nominate a temporary successor, and the King never vetoed his choice. On this last occasion he selected a recently converted adversary in the person of Professor Salandra. That deputy had long been a courteous political opponent of the Dictator and had worked in harmony with his own chief Sonnino, to check the spread of the political poison of Giolittism. But his temperament was more sociable, his manner less stiff, and his opposition less fanatical than that of his leader. "A modest burgher of Apulia," he displayed many of the qualities common to the Southerner, and in particular that popular combination of heart and brain, of likes and dislikes, which is sometimes characterized as an excess of human nature. Thus instead of wasting his energies in sighs and heart-beats after unattainable perfection he was apt to take people and things as they were and to make large allowances for human weakness. Endowed by nature with more than average mental powers he seems constitutionally incapable of that strenuous steady labour with which only a genius can dispense in the struggle for renown. Modesty, as he himself intimated, has been his characteristic trait in life, and it endeared him to many whose jealousy would have been whetted by more brilliant power. He never attempted to excel. As a University professor he made no contribution to science, as a lawyer he won esteem without the vogue of a great jurisconsult, and as a parliamentarian he acquired the friendship of most of his colleagues without gaining a hold on the country or the Chamber, impressing either with a sense of his power, or associating his name with any constructive system of political thought or definite course of political action.

Salandra was Sonnino's last partisan. And when he separated from the leader in the beginning of the year 1914, frankly confessing that he had misjudged Giolitti and tardily expressing admiration for the Dictator's statesmanship, Baron

Sonnino remained alone. Of his programme he could have said like the legendary French writer: *c'est mon opinion et je la partage.*

Giolitti was generous to converts from hostile camps. He had bestowed on Sonnino's ex-partisan, Bertolini, a ministry and a reversionary claim to the premiership, and he now conferred the post of Prime Minister on Salandra. It had been expected that he would choose as his temporary successor Luzzatti, Italy's most cultured public man. But shortly before Giolitti resigned office a misunderstanding, followed by a somewhat acrimonious discussion, caused him, it is alleged, to change his intention. However this may be, he nominated Professor Salandra, and the King accordingly charged that gentleman with the mission of forming a Cabinet. When discussing the selection of candidates for the various ministerial posts still vacant, a scene, we are told, was enacted which is too characteristic of the Dictator to be omitted here.

MM. Giolitti, Salandra and Martini were the actors in the episode; San Giuliano's intimation that he would resign together with Giolitti was the subject of the conversation; and Salandra's request that Giolitti would use his good offices to persuade San Giuliano to remain, furnished the opening of the scene.[1] "Yes," the Dictator is reported to have said, "if you like I will talk to him on the subject and ask him to stay on. I don't see any good reason why he should go out with the Ministry. But neither can I see why you should be so very solicitous to retain him." "It is because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is such an important post, di San Giuliano such an experienced Minister, and the difficulty of finding a suitable candidate is so great." "Difficulty! Surely it is easy enough to light upon a qualified candidate." Salandra, looking up interrogatively, ex-

[1] I narrate the story as I heard it. The evidence on which it rests is respectable. The speeches of the personages are not of course given word for word.

claimed: "For example?" "Well, Schanzer for example."[1] At the name of this man who had no experience whatever of international politics, both Salandra and Martini looked up in amazement and cried: "Schanzer?" "Yes, Schanzer, he knows three languages. Three. Isn't that qualification enough?"

But San Giuliano let himself be persuaded to retain office with the new administration in which the Chamber, at the solicitation of its master, passed a vote of confidence. It was no secret, however, that Professor Salandra was but the shadow of Giolitti who would set him aside again in the fulness of time.

On the outbreak of the European War, when Italy was summoned by her allies to take her stand by their side, di San Giuliano had interesting talks on the subject with the Premier Salandra, the gist of which has never been divulged. On that phase of the proceedings no Green Book sheds any light. What we know, however, is that neither Germany nor Austria believed that Italy would join their enemies, that the Consulta was friendly with Berlin, and that Giolitti and his partisans were convinced that Salandra would keep clear of war. These facts are established, as are all those corollaries which flow of necessity from them.

The death of San Giuliano and the sharp turn taken by European affairs upset Giolitti's calculations. For things were now to some extent taken out of his hands. Once the negociations with Germany and Austria had entered a critical phase, it would have offended the nation's sense of the fitness of things, had Salandra and Sonnino been set aside, unless it became urgent to ward off imminent failure or eke out too scanty success. Giolitti therefore watched, waited, and adopted measures of precaution, one of which was a private letter destined to become public which he addressed to a

[1] Schanzer is a deputy who is an Austrian by birth, a Jew by religion, an Italian by adoption, and a Giolittian in politics.

political friend.[1] Seemingly artless and casual, it was fraught with grave purpose. In it the Dictator merely recorded his belief that Italy could by diplomatic means obtain from Austria "somewhat" (*parecchio*); and left his correspondent to complete the thought by inferring the sufficiency of what could thus be acquired and the needlessness of war or of action that might lead to it.

The effect of the letter was widespread. It almost supplied the guarantee for the Italian nation which Bülow had been so anxious to procure. It still lacked the authority of the Cabinet, but then the Dictator was the Cabinet and the country. The Neutralists forthwith proclaimed that an accord between Italy and her militarist allies had been attained in principle and that whatever else might hereafter befall, war was eliminated from the list of eventualities. The Interventionists assumed that Austria had exhibited a larger degree of liberality than they had credited her with. Germans and Austrians triumphantly asked their Italian friends what they now thought of the French and British mischief-makers who would drive Italy into war. And Germans and Austrians were increasing in numbers. They were in force in Rome, Milan, Naples, Bologna, Catania. They were writing in the Press, proselytizing among the peasants and working men, egging on the priests, encouraging the Deputies and Senators, entertaining the aristocracy, bribing those among the needy and the grasping whose services were worth paying for.

Who is ignorant (wrote the *Messaggero*)[2] that we are encircled by too many suspects? Who is unaware that whenever there is a labour agitation, a political fermentation, or a discussion about war and peace, there are present emissaries of this or that Government, who do not content themselves with the rôle of spectators?

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[1] The Deputy Peano.

[2] March 3rd, 1915.

Commenting on that statement I wrote [1]—

In connection with the allusion made above to the presence of emissaries at every meeting of malcontent workmen, or meetings for and against war, a curious phenomenon has just come to light which is worth noting. During all the recent troubles at Milan, Bologna, Reggio, Emilia, Naples, and other places the most unruly members of the crowds which vociferated their disapproval of intervention in the war were workmen employed in factories and other establishments owned by Germans.

At the presence and interference of German emissaries who imitate German Ambassadors and meddle in the home politics of the country that gives them hospitality, one is hardly surprised. But for intrigues between the German Embassy and Italian conspirators, for the reception of professed anarchists at Prince Bülow's house, even enraged haters of Germany were hardly prepared. Yet the fact is vouched for by a section of the Italian press.

What we are now about to narrate (writes the *Messaggero*) [2] is a faithful reproduction of narratives recounted to a member of our staff by anarchists of Rome in an outburst of indignation. It is well to exhibit once more the disloyal spirit which actuated Germany and Austria and the criminal measures to which they did not disdain to stoop during the diplomatic negociations in order to create in our country factitious currents of opinion and sentiment.

About January 20th the anarchists of Rome became cognisant of a new journal called *Arms Down!* in which articles by Malatesta, Merlino and others appeared,—articles composed in other epochs and printed in other journals, but so reproduced as to seem indited for the occasion, and to deal with the present European conflagration.

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[1] *Daily Telegraph*, March 4th, 1915.
[2] *Messaggero*, May 31st, 1915.

Their suspicions being aroused they made inquiries which elicited the fact that the journal had been published by the Austrian Embassy. The anarchists threatened to reveal to the public the trick devised to deceive them. Thereupon the journal ceased to appear.

Another intrigue confided to a member of the staff of the *Messaggero* was "hatched at the Villa Malta."

A trusty anarchist 'comrade' was invited by a German friend attached to the German Embassy to repair the Villa Malta, where he would be introduced to a person whose function it was to encourage the anti-interventionist action of the anarchists. Having obtained the authorization of his fellow anarchists the comrade accepted the invitation and went to the Villa Malta.

There a gentleman who spoke with a foreign accent but in faultless Italian opened the conversation by assuring him that there was no intention of corrupting anybody; on the contrary, everybody's principles and opinions were held in respect. But as neutrality was in truth of the greatest moment to Italy, and as the bulk of the anarchists were in favour of neutrality, all that was intended was to furnish them, they being poor devils,[1] with the means requisite to carry on their propaganda efficaciously while allowing them absolute liberty of action. And besides money the functionary spoke of Browning revolvers and of packets of dynamite. This conversation, which took place on May 1st, ended with a declaration of our friend that he would refer the whole matter to us, and with the announcement of the German official that in the premises of the Embassy there would be no further conversations on the subject but only in an apartment which would be hired for the purpose in the centre of Rome. In the meanwhile the reply of the anarchists was to be given at the General Post Office opposite the little door of the poste restante, where the section beginning with the letter "M" is situated. Our friend laid everything before us, and we directed him to break off relations with the functionary, which he did readily.[2]

[1] The speaker used the word *pezzenti*, but really meant *poveri*.

[2] *Messaggero*, May 31st, 1915. *Corriere della Sera*, June 1st, 1915. Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, June 4th.

What most disquieted German and Austrian agents of every grade and calibre from the Ambassadors down to the press scribes was the knowledge that so long as Italy had not actually bound herself to neutrality, mishaps might occur to force her hand, and that one of the most dangerous was the expedition against the Dardanelles. For it was calculated to divert Italy's solicitude from irredentism to the Eastern Mediterranean and the crumbling Ottoman Empire. I noted these apprehensions and set forth the grounds on which they reposed.[1]

The independent Italian Press organs (I wrote) are almost unanimous in holding that the motives which have heretofore hindered Italy from overstepping the limits of neutrality have been profoundly modified by the Anglo-French expedition against Turkey, and by the unspoken corollaries which will necessarily flow from that, and they express confidence that the Cabinet will so regulate its attitude as to bring it into harmony with this new factor, and to see that Italy loses nothing by the change in the situation.

The *Messaggero* states frankly that from the day on which the Allied Fleets began the bombardment of the Dardanelles, thus revealing their determination to force the Straits, and therefore their agreement about a solution of the problems to which this exploit will impart actuality, the Italian nation understood that a new factor of supreme importance has been imported into the matter. The journal goes on to remark that if a partition of zones of influence in Asia Minor and the definitive liquidation of Turkey as an independent State be contemplated, " then the mere hypothesis of seeing Italy excluded from a practical solution of the problem would be deemed worse than abdication; it would be suicide."

The *Giornale d'Italia* writes—

" When the Allies will have derived from the events of the war the requisite force to lay down the law for the Ottoman Empire we may be confronted with the dismemberment of that State—that is to say, with a radical shifting of the political, military, and economic equilibrium in the Balkan Peninsula, as well as, and

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, March 6th, 1915.

above all, in Asiatic Turkey, and especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. A colossal banquet might be served up, in which case Italy could not, without irremediably impairing her own future, remain aloof and absent or content herself with the rôle of the last guest. All this is palpably evident, and Italians perceive it with the intuitive instinct which impelled and impels them forward beyond the sea and towards the shores of the Mediterranean."

Writers in the *Corriere della Sera*, with a fine feeling for what is best in the character of their countrymen, poured the force of logic of national interest and of deep sympathy with wrong endured into a political channel. The publicists unfolded the main motives for Italian intervention in a series of powerful articles which, whatever effect they may have on the question of the day, tend to give to Italy's action a direction which is undoubtedly moral and in sympathy with the most exalted feelings of human fellowship.

Meanwhile Italy's international relations have undergone no marked change. The Germans and Austrians are hammering away as usual, unofficially offering to recompense Italy for sustained neutrality if it contribute to their final success at the expense of France and Serbia. But Italy's policy, as represented by Signor Salandra and Baron Sonnino, although nationalist and calculating, is aboveboard, frank, ethical, and includes the fullest recognition of the achievements, aspirations, strivings, and interests of the nations now shedding their blood and risking their existence for the cause of civilization which is her own. And I can at present affirm categorically what I hitherto assumed without concrete proof, that if any such proposals should be officially made to her responsible statesmen, however decorous the form and attractive the substance, they would not be even discussed.

This statement of mine is now borne out by official documents published in the Green Book.[1]

[1] Cf. Green Book, Dispatches N. 10, 34 and others.

CHAPTER XVII

POURPARLERS

GERMANY at last broke the resistance of Franz Josef, carried the point insisted on by Italy, and asked that the conversations be resumed. I recorded that in messages of which the following passage may be quoted [1]:—

I am informed on trustworthy authority that the Vienna Cabinet is ready to come round to Germany's view, respecting the necessity of offering certain territorial concessions to Italy as a consideration for her neutrality if it is maintained throughout the war. But no direct negociations whatever have taken place down to the present moment between the Austrian and Italian Governments.

And again :—

Germany's efforts to bring about an accommodation between Austria and Italy on the basis of the cession by the former State to the latter of the Trentino and of a rectification of the more easterly frontiers as far as Gorizia have become more strenuous and insistent than ever. The entire press of Germany is now carrying to importunity their appeals to the Vienna Cabinet to resign itself to the lesser of two evils, one of which is become inevitable. Prince Bülow here is working hard in the same sense, but the utmost he can achieve is to clear the ground.

It will be remembered that Sonnino, irritated by Austria's temporizing ways, had withdrawn all his proposals to the Vienna Government and declined to take the initiative any further.[2] The form in which that decision reached me

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 11th and March 16th, 1915.
[2] February 12th, 1915. Cf. Green Book, Dispatch N. 22.

at the moment was exaggerated. It was said that offers from Vienna would no longer be entertained. As a matter of fact Italy had withdrawn her proposals but nothing more. And now that Burian had given way, Sonnino telegraphed that although he had withdrawn all his suggestions he would not stand on a matter of form in a crisis so momentous. He agreed, therefore, to resume negociations on condition that absolute secrecy should be observed while they were proceeding and that the stipulations subscribed to should be carried into effect at once.[1] I telegraphed the faint echo of all that as follows[2]:—

The vague reports which were current in Parliamentary circles this morning respecting the question dealt with in the Cabinet Council last night have now hardened.

Official circles remain obstinately silent. Another supposition which proceeds from the same starting-point attributes the recent meeting between Signor Salandra and Signor Giolitti to the desire of coming to an understanding respecting the attitude which Italy should adopt in case Austria's alleged intentions were embodied in concrete proposals.

The only symptom denoting the possibility of a change in the dispositions of the Consulta which I have noticed to-day is the decided unwillingness in certain quarters to repeat the assurance given a couple of days ago that offers from Vienna, if tendered now, would not be considered.

In every other respect the situation, in so far as it can be surveyed from externals, has undergone no change.

Prince Bülow and the Italian Premier, Signor Salandra, had a conversation this morning lasting from 10.30 to noon, which, becoming known at four o'clock in the lobbies of both Houses of the Legislature, formed the subject of lively comments. The Consulta, as usual, denies that negociations about neutrality were the subject of the conversation, but no credence is given to these assurances in Parliament.

Prince Bülow as guardian of the Habsburgs, is endeavouring to ascertain whether Italy will undertake to remain neutral in

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 11th and 13th, 1915.
[2] Cf. Dispatch N. 42, Green Book.

return for territorial concessions, which are alleged to comprise the Trentino, together with a rectification of the frontiers as far as the River Isonzo, and other smaller strips of land.

But from a variety of symptoms, some of which were concrete enough while others eluded analysis, I felt convinced that no settlement would or could be come to. And I accordingly added :—

The situation remains unchanged. Despite contrary reports, my personal belief is that Italy will join the Allies.[1]

Meanwhile the tide of popular sentiment against Austria began to swell. The secrecy with which the conversations were proceeding, the length of time that had elapsed since they were supposed to have begun, and the brutal way in which Teuton emissaries were lording it over independent Italian politicians, exasperated national feeling and gave an adverse poise to public opinion. The air was thick with rumours, and I chronicled one of the most curious which, launched by the Nationalist organ,[2] was to the effect that " an arrangement was being negociated by which Italy, with Germany's connivance, might attack Austria and wrest the unredeemed territories, provided she abstained from turning her arms against Germany herself." [3] In another telegram of mine which was suppressed I wrote :—

To me it is quite conceivable that without any express arrangement between Rome and Berlin war may be declared and waged against Austria alone. This procedure would certainly harmonize with the traditional views of the Consulta about Germany which were those of di San Giuliano and also, I believe, of Baron Sonnino. War against Turkey might also be declared, were it only in order to annex definitively the Dodecannese ; whether it would also be actually waged would depend upon the

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[1] *Daily Telegraph*, March 13th, 1915.
[2] *Idea Nazionale*, March 12th, 1915.
[3] March 13th, 1915, *Daily Telegraph*.

expected results. But it is too early as yet to speculate on contingencies that lie so far ahead.

Meanwhile nothing was known about the exchange of views going on. Not only was secrecy imposed by the Italian Government but orders were issued to deny the resumption of negociations. I telegraphed [1]:—

Pourparlers are proceeding between the Cabinet and Prince Bülow. Everybody is aware of this, yet the Government and its officials deny it point-blank.

Meanwhile ominous symptoms were cropping up on all sides. Laws against spies; the discovery of German villas in proximity to strategic positions; the pushing forward of military preparations; the propaganda of emissaries; the creation of emergency hospitals for the troops—bore in upon observers the fact that the alternative to an Austro-Italian alliance was being seriously contemplated by the Government. I dealt summarily with all these foretokens as they emerged into view.[2]

A decree has just been issued ordering only one kind of bread to be baked throughout Italy, so that everybody assumes that hostilities may break out at the end of the month.

Loud voices of indignant protest are lifted up throughout Italy against the perfidious German attempt to smuggle rifles and cartridges to Italian Tripoli, to be employed there against King Victor Emmanuel's troops. Yesterday the authorities still believed that the beer barrels, containing the arms, were addressed to Turkish Tripoli, and declared the newspapers were mistaken in stating they were meant for rebels in the Italian colony. To-day no further doubt is entertained, and even neutralist organs brand as a scurvy trick this plot, woven by a so-called loyal friend of Italy, to supply Italy's enemies with French rifles, and thus create the belief that France was treacherously aiding and abetting the Tripolitan insurgents.

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[1] March 13th, 1915, *Daily Telegraph*.

[2] March 13th, 15th and 20th, 1915, *Daily Telegraph*.

And again—

The expedition with which the bill against spies and contrabandists is being hurried through the Legislature is regarded here as symptomatic. So, too, is the order issued, two days ago, by the German Government, forbidding the exportation of coal, enormous quantities of which had been conveyed from Prussia into Italy during the past few weeks.

Among the symptomatic incidents now of daily occurrence, it may not be amiss to mention the following. The Minister of Public Instruction has demanded exact information respecting the military status of every professor, teacher, and employé in all the educational establishments of the realm. Measurements are being taken of the dimensions of the rooms in those establishments, with a view to ascertaining the number of beds they are capable of containing.

I am credibly assured that several Consuls of the Central Empires are already removing their archives.

The position of the Habsburg Government when the Italian Minister laid down the conditions on which he would be willing to enter on the discussion, was a state of discomfiture and humiliation. They had sharply and insistently denied Italy's treaty right to compensation and had then grudgingly acquiesced in it. To Sonnino's reiterated request that his set of proposals be taken as a basis for negociations, they had returned that most dangerous of all answers, the word "never," and were forced to assent to it immediately afterwards. They had spurned Italy's suit for the Trentino as a personal insult to the Emperor, a dissolvent of military discipline, and a disaster to the Empire, and then had suddenly veered round and professed to welcome it as a means of cementing the alliance with the Italian people. And in his capacity as diplomatist, Burian had sustained a reverse as stunning as in his character as patriot. For the Italian Minister having gently inserted the thin edge of the disintegrating wedge by claiming compensation for an Austrian military expedition the outcome of which was still dubious,

had then insensibly enlarged his pretensions and finally asked for the immediate cession of Austrian territory while the war was progressing, under the specious pretext that cordial relations between the two countries entailed the complete disappearance of their differences. Austria-Hungary had indeed fallen on evil days.

But the Vienna statesman was bent on drawing the line at the demand for the immediate cession of the coveted province. And he informed the Duke d'Avarna of his resolution which, like all the foregoing decisions, was described as final. It is impossible, he explained, to assent to the transfer of any territory of the Monarchy before the conclusion of peace, and this for divers reasons which by the very nature of things are peremptory. And his determination impressed the Italian Ambassador, who wrote to the Consulta that he held out no hope of modifying Austria's *non possumus*.[1] Having received an inkling of what had taken place, I despatched a long message of which the following extract is the beginning[2] :—

The important statements I made when telegraphing on Sunday, respecting the initiative and the present phase of the pourparlers between the Central Empires and Italy are now common property here. There is no longer any doubt that the first step was taken by Prince von Bülow only after he had vainly endeavoured, by various indirect means, to get the Italian Government to make concrete proposals, which he allowed it to be known he was prepared to consider favourably.

Neither Signor Salandra nor Baron Sonnino felt called upon to come forward with demands or suggestions, or to do anything more than take into consideration any propositions that he might feel moved to lay before them, and to judge them in the light of national interests.

Secondly, I announced the readiness of the Austrian Government to fall in with Prince von Bülow's desire that certain territorial concessions should be reserved for Italy as a recompense for

[1] Green Book, Dispatch N. 43, March 13th, 1915.
[2] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 19th, 1915.

the maintenance of strict neutrality until the close of the war. The word "reserved" is the only one that adequately expresses the arrangement, for at no time was it to be expected that the Vienna Cabinet would consent to part even with the Trentino before the campaign has been pursued to a decisive issue in one sense or the other. And, for this reason, I maintained that nothing which the Habsburg Monarchy could spontaneously offer would be of a nature to satisfy Italy's demands.

. . . . . .

The grounds for this prudential attitude are obvious. If Austria were to abandon say, the Trentino, to Italy the progress of the campaign, the vicissitudes of the military operations, or the stress of political necessity might force Italy to take an active part in the war, whereupon the Habsburg Monarchy would be deprived of the advantages of strong strategical positions, which would then be in the hands of the enemy.

Germany, it is alleged, concurs in this cautious way of looking at the transaction, but suggests the following means of solving the difficulty: Whatever territory Austria may agree to abandon will be first handed over to Germany's safe keeping, to be transferred on the conclusion of the war to Italy, provided that this country shall have maintained its neutrality in the letter and the spirit, and have also discharged any other obligations which it may have taken upon itself as part of the compact. Germany would thus retain in her hands a guarantee of Italy's good behaviour, as the two Central Empires understand the term, they being the supreme judges.

. . . . . .

But however inadequate the territory may be which Austria is prepared to sacrifice, and however illusory the form in which the offer may be made, the receipt of an overture, direct or indirect, at this present conjuncture, imposes on Italian Ministers the duty to examine whether it offers a basis on which an exchange of views can be attempted. Any other attitude would have exposed the Cabinet to the reproach of precipitating war for an object which might have been obtained by dint of diplomatic bargaining.

Nor should it be forgotten that at the present moment all the routes leading to the Trentino are blocked with snow, and military operations are impossible. Since the outbreak of war, 8,000 Italian railway wagons have been retained in Germany and

Austria, and, despite repeated endeavours to have them returned, they are still commandeered for the transport of troops and war material. On Monday, a secret meeting of two German, two Austrian, and two Italian representatives of the State railways took place in Venice, but no decision was arrived at. Italy demands, at least, the return of a part of the total number.

CHAPTER XVIII

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN BÜLOW AND SONNINO—THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE VATICAN

THE necessity of an accommodation between Austria and Italy strengthened in Bülow's mind, with Austria's military reverses and the prospects, then bright enough, of the speedy capture of Constantinople by the Allies. He accordingly employed all his suasive powers to move Sonnino to abandon the condition which raised the sole impassable barrier between the two countries—the immediate cession by Austria of the territory to be allotted to Italy. In an interview with that statesman he urged that such a demand could neither be subscribed to nor entertained. It was without precedent in history, and it was new even in the discussions with Italy. Moreover, it was superfluous, because once a settlement was struck up, its execution would be guaranteed by the signature of Franz Josef. "And then, too there would be the guarantee of Germany who mediated and approved the accord." [1] He further asserted that the immediate transfer of territory "would provoke a revolution in Vienna." Lastly, the provinces could not be alienated without Parliament's consent, and no parliament would sanction such a sacrifice at that conjuncture. Bülow wound up expressing his moral conviction that if that condition were dispensed with, an agreement on the territorial question would be reached. And he held with equal force the opinion that on this point no understanding was possible.

[1] Green Book, Dispatch N. 46, March 17th, 1915.

His peroration consisted in the expression of horror of the appalling consequences in the near and distant future of a rupture between Italy and Germany.[1]

Bülow's misgivings about the real intentions of the Salandra Cabinet were meanwhile growing in intensity and he deliberately allowed them to pierce through the polished surface of his eloquent appeals. He suspected that a desire for cordial friendship with Austria was merely the flag under which the Consulta was sailing, not the rudder by which it was steering the ship of State. He knew that the Entente Powers were eager for Italy's co-operation, and he distrusted Sonnino, Salandra and Martini. He let Sonnino see this when he significantly remarked: "An understanding might still be come to in March, *unless you are decided to wage war.*"

The Italian Minister scored a point over his opponent when he urged that as Austria had agreed to let the extent of her concessions be made public during the war, the moral and political effects of this announcement would be the same as if the actual transfer were proceeded with. I at once telegraphed my impressions of these conversations, which I gathered from the scanty but trustworthy accounts that reached me from a quarter that must ever remain unknown. The interview between Bülow and Sonnino took place on March 17th, and on the 20th I wrote[2]:—

I am informed to-day that, despite the serious initial differences between Rome and Vienna, conversations, mainly one-sided, continue between them, the statesmen of the Ballplatz displaying strenuous efforts, which are presumably warranted by their estimate of the magnitude of the issues, in convincing or persuading the Consulta that the offer, despite its necessary limitations, represents the fruits of a successful war without any of its calamities. And these limitations, it is argued, are imperiously imposed by circumstance. Considerations of a moral, political, and mili-

[1] Ibidem.

[2] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 22nd, 1915.

tary order forbid the immediate transfer of territories to Italy Such a concession, if realized while the war is in progress, would be ascribed to a consciousness of growing weakness, and tend to shake the faith of the peoples of the Habsburg monarchy in the triumph of the cause. It would also place Italy in a position of strategic superiority by rendering her mistress of an important line of frontier forts.

But the last argument alleged in supoprt of the plea is the most curious of all. It is this : Among the new subjects of King Victor Emmanuel, if the Trentino passed into Italy's possession, would be several thousand fighting men, who are among the best artillerists in the Austrian army. The Trentino men enjoy the reputation of skilful specialists in this branch of the service, and it would be impossible to dispense with them before peace is concluded.

But every guarantee short of actual transfer Austria is prepared to provide. A written undertaking, with a voucher from Germany, will be tendered willingly. I am told that the attitude of the Consulta during the conversations has been, so to say, Socratic, consisting in putting questions calculated to elicit a clearer definition of spontaneous proposals, rather than in formulating concrete demands or framing counter-propositions. For all that the Italian Government agreed to do was to take cognizance of the nature and extent of Austria's offer, and, having fully ascertained that, to consider whether it could be acquiesced in without derogating from the dignity or impairing the interests of the nation. And all that has been hitherto accomplished is to discover exactly what Vienna is resigned to give, when she will transfer it, and with what conditions the execution of the compact is bound up.

No expression of opinion indicative of the Italian Government's judgment upon these overtures as a whole has yet been offered.

All those statements were correct. I still, however, adhered to the conviction I had already so often expressed, that the conversations could not lead to the revival of the alliance and that the consequence of their failure would be war. Thus I telegraphed on the same day—

Meanwhile my own personal impression which I have more than once recorded remains unchanged.[1]

[1] Ibidem.

Prince Bülow, who, unlike his Austrian colleague, keenly realized the danger that threatened to wreck their combined efforts if Sonnino remained in office, tackled that Minister's obstinacy. After having held out to him the warranty of Franz Josef's signature and the pledge of the German Government, he reinforced them with the offer of the personal guarantee of the German Kaiser.[1] But Sonnino exhibited the inflexibility of a thinker who lives and moves among ideas and is almost inaccessible to the influence of men. He proclaimed, however, his perfect readiness to assure Italy's neutrality during the whole course of the war, if the accord which sometimes seemed to Bülow almost within reach were embodied in a diplomatic instrument. "I declare myself willing," he telegraphed to Vienna, "as I have already assured Prince Bülow and Baron Macchio, to examine seriously whatsoever concrete proposal the Imperial and Royal Government may be pleased to lay before us, and with the resolve to facilitate the discussion."[2] This open-mindedness of the Minister is worth keeping in memory, for it proves at any rate his readiness to shape his policy in accordance with the exigencies of the moment. He had no preconceived idea, no personal preference. If an outsider like myself ventured to foretell the rupture of the negociations, it was because I had good grounds for holding that the exigencies would militate against an acceptable settlement. I chronicled these matters and set them in what seemed correct perspective in a sequence of messages of which one extract has already been reproduced.[3]

Dealing with the relations between the Vatican and the Quirinal, I wrote—

Another supposed sign of the nearing conflict is contained in

[1] March 17th, Cf. Green Book, Dispatch N. 48.

[2] Green Book, Dispatch N. 52. March 22nd, 1915. This assurance is repeated on the following day, Dispatch 53.

[3] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 29th, 1915. See pages 146–148.

the alleged accord between the Italian Government and the Vatican respecting the suspension of certain papal privileges in case Italy should be drawn into war. Thus all foreign Ambassadors and Ministers accredited to the Vatican would be requested by the Pope to withdraw from Rome during hostilities, inasmuch as the Italian Government could not allow them to remain here and communicate by means of ciphered dispatches with their Governments, some of which would be enemies of the nation. I am authorized to state that all these reports are without foundation.

In like manner the reception by his Holiness the Pope of the Master of the Ceremonies of the Royal Court was construed as proof that negociations on these matters were really in progress, whereas the object of the reception was merely to settle questions of ceremony in connection with the baptism of a Royal princess and the first Communion of other Royal children. The official attitude of the Holy See has undergone no modification whatever in any sense towards any Power. The neutrality which is imposed upon the chief of the International Church has been rigorously observed, and the Belgian Catholics in particular gave utterance to their natural disappointment on the seeming lack of that sympathy which their sufferings had entitled them to expect from the Holy See.

The view taken of the international situation by the new Pontiff—whose talent for statesmanship was unduly magnified—and the means devised by the Vatican for giving them practical effect now, began to interest the Italian people and in a lesser degree the other nations of Europe. I was received by his Holiness, who had been made aware of my intention to lay before him certain facts and considerations which must, I thought, interest him, might possibly modify certain of his views, and could not be known to him in all their details and bearings. And he was understood to be willing that our conversation should run on these lines. But when the hour for the audience took place, the Pontiff's recent experience with the German-American Wiegand appears to have acted as a deterrent, and we talked of other matters.

I had already written on his policy and sketched the course which I thought he would adopt.[1]

So beset with difficulties and embarrassment (I wrote) would the Pope's position as influenced by the declaration of war become, that one cannot affect surprise at his fervent desire to see the danger averted. Peace is the native element of a latter-day Pope. At present Benedict XV is a sovereign without territory who enjoys many of the attributes and prerogatives of a monarch, but only in virtue of a law passed by the Italian Parliament which neither he nor his predecessors have accepted or recognized. The Parliament considering the Pope as an international person and the Church as an international organization acknowledged and ratified several of his rights and prerogatives and guaranteed that they would be respected by the State. Among these is the extra-territoriality of his palaces and grounds, the inviolability of his own diplomatic representatives and of those of foreign States accredited to the Vatican, and their right to correspond with their respective chiefs by means of ciphered telegrams.

Now if Italy should abandon her attitude of neutrality, the Ambassadors of the three hostile States to the Quirinal would be recalled. But would the envoys to the Vatican remain and claim inviolability and the other privileges accorded to them in peace time? Theoretically the answer should be in the affirmative, seeing that the Pope is neutral and has no quarrel with any Government. In practice this solution would be intolerable. Powers hostile to Italy, watching her every movement and maintaining numerous spies in the country, could not be permitted to have representatives in the capital authorized to send ciphered telegrams and other privileged communications, and in a position to transmit to their native country deliberately or unwittingly information capable of inflicting incalculable injury on the Italian nation. The force of this thesis is self-evident. But what restrictive procedure, it has been asked, can be adopted which would be efficacious without raising other and awkward issues? Jurisconsults, whose bias against the Vatican is well known, argue that the answer should be sought in the intention of the lawgivers who framed the guarantees which regulate Italy's relations with the Vatican,

[1] Cf. E. J. Dillon, *Contemporary Review*, May, 1915, pp. 558–560 and pp. 563–564.

and they add that this intention is to be found in the debates on the bill. During those debates the deputy, Corte, proposed the following amendment to the clause dealing with papal envoys: "All the privileges accorded to the Pope and which have reference to the Ambassadors to the Pontifical See and to the transmission of telegrams and postal correspondence, shall be suspended in the event of a war during which Italy remains neutral and in any other eventuality in which it may seem necessary for the safety, internal or external, of the State. But the amendment was rejected and the privileges were made absolute.

Some eminent jurisconsults, however, contend that the right of the Chamber to suspend the Guarantees in case of need was taken for granted. But the point has never been raised, and a step of this gravity could not be decided upon except under heavy pressure. It is felt that the Law of Guarantees should not be modified even temporarily if any other issue out of the difficulty be available. For it would impart actuality to a scheme which has not been seriously mooted for years, not indeed since a Church dignitary, who was supposed to be voicing the thought of Pius X, suggested in a public discourse that a stable *entente* between the Vatican and the State might be reached if Italy would consent to the internationalization of the Law of Guarantees instead of being herself their sole voucher. That Italy could not without impairing her prestige and independence consent to an international guarantee of the papal rights and prerogatives, so long as the seat of the papacy is Rome, hardly needs pointing out. Nor would such an arrangement, if it were feasible, work satisfactorily from the Church's point of view. For one thing the inevitable friction between the ecclesiastical and secular powers, which the foreign guarantees would be unable to hinder or lessen, would soon become intolerable to the Vatican and the Quirinal. It is needless, however, to dwell further upon a scheme which cannot be regarded as within the pale of practical politics. But none the less the raising of this and cognate issues would be unwelcome to the Italian Government, which, it is fair to remark, is careful to extend the utmost consideration to the Church functionaries. It is hardly too much to say that no other Power in Europe or elsewhere, with the probable exception of Spain, would have behaved with the same generosity and loyalty as Italy towards the Vatican and the Pontiff.

Meanwhile it is evident that if Italy should see fit to abandon

her attitude of neutrality and declare war against the Central Empires, the international Church and the Italian State would find themselves in a situation bristling with unprecedented difficulties. As neither the Vatican nor the Quirinal would welcome the necessity of invoking the aid of the professional legislators to dispose of these, and as the present occupant of St. Peter's Chair is a man of resource, it seems probable that he will arrange the matter satisfactorily and spontaneously by means of an accomplished fact which will obviate the need of legislation. If, for instance, he were to induce the envoys of Austria, Prussia, and Bavaria to quit the Holy City on leave of absence during the campaign, there would be no object in appealing to the legislature for a temporary suspension of the 11th Clause of the Law of Guarantees. And although I possess no special information on the intentions of the Pope, I cannot help thinking that it is in this way that the embarrassment, should it arise, will be ultimately got rid of. The current affairs between the Vatican and the two Central Empires would be dealt with after the departure of the envoys by the so-called auditors of the Rota, by one of whom each of the nations is permanently represented. With regard to the privilege of sending and receiving written communications which, it must be taken for granted, would deal exclusively with ecclesiastical problems, there should and would be no difficulty about an accord between two so reasonable organizations as the Italian Cabinet and the Vatican.

All those anticipations were duly realized.

I further enumerated some of the consequences that must flow from the Pope's estimate of European peoples and institutions and from the circumstance that most of its elements are of German origin.

The Pope's general ideas on the burning issues raised by the war are (I affirmed) derived largely from sources which must be described as turbid. His surroundings are permeated with an atmosphere in which, to put it mildly, active affection for " atheistical France " cannot thrive. It would be erroneous to absolve the French themselves from responsibility for the unfriendly currents which flow to and from the Vatican. The intolerance displayed by men like MM. Combes, Malvy, and their political associates towards everything that smacks of religion is not a

whit less reprehensible or pernicious than the intolerance shown by Philip of Spain towards everything that savoured of heresy. And the repercussion it has had on politics is deplorable. Even from the narrow vantage ground of national interests religious persecution is a mistake, as France has more than once discovered in her dealings with Italy on the subject of the protection of religious congregations in the East and also with the Vatican, where she is still unrepresented. In this connection it is impossible to blink the solid advantages, past and present, which Prussia is reaping from the moderate and conciliatory treatment which she has been careful to mete out to her Catholic population and their spiritual chiefs.

On the outbreak of the war the Allied Powers were practically unrepresented at the Vatican. The Belgian Minister, a venerable old man whose diplomatic career was drawing to a close, wielded no influence there. Russia's representative, M. Nelidoff, was tolerated, but in his quality of schismatic and spokesman of a nation of proselytizing schismatics whose aim is supposed to be the crushing out of Catholicism in the Tsardom, his voice carried no weight. Great Britain as a Protestant State and France as an anti-Catholic Republic, were without envoys. The Teutons, on the contrary, were in force. Some of the most important ecclesiastical offices in Rome were, and still are, held by members of the two nations. Germany as an Empire has no diplomatist at the Vatican, but Austria, Prussia, and Bavaria, had sent resourceful Ministers, who are not content to rest upon their laurels. Prussia has, as long as I can remember, had her most brilliant men accredited to the Vatican. And from the diplomatic point of view Dr. Muhlberg does no discredit to his predecessors to-day.

Most of the information respecting the negociations which preceded the rupture and setting forth the position and the aims of Germany and her ally, reached the organs of the Vatican after having been filtered and coloured by those interested agents. And there was no corrective available. If we add to this decisive fact the circumstance that the story thus told was also the narrative which was calculated to meet the wishes of those who heard it, we cannot affect surprise at the strong Germanophile leanings which are still noticeable at the Vatican. The Teutonic diplomatists bore well in mind the fact that the Pope, whatever personal sympathies he may foster, is the living embodiment of forces of bygone ages and that these have a strong grip of him

which cannot be shaken off. Thus the principle of authority, on which he lays great stress in his Encyclical, claims and receives his especial reverence. And it certainly is not to such countries as the western democracies that he would feel tempted to look when in quest of props to stay it up.

Respect for authority is the alpha and omega of Church discipline, which is an important element of Catholicism. And that also is among the foundations of the political structures of both Germany and Austria. To contribute therefore in any degree, however remote, to the downfall of those States, and consequently to the uprooting of the principle of authority, might seem, and it was certainly made to appear, an act of suicide on the part of the Church. Moreover *the* great power in Europe which identifies itself with Catholicism, is the Habsburg Monarchy. Within the boundaries of this State the Church and its institutions have free scope for their activity and are efficiently protected by the strong arm of secular power. And so long as Austria endures, the Church may continue to thrive and dream of better things in retrospect and prospect, but with the disappearance of the Habsburg Monarchy from the rank of the Great Powers, the last stronghold of Catholicism among European States will have passed into the hands of an enemy.

It would be unfair to accuse Benedict XV, as some writers have done, of a velleity to favour the Central Empires and damage the heretical and schismatical Allies. One would do well to remember that even the most open minds have necessarily, though often unconsciously, much of the bias which is an element of the atmosphere they breathe. And his Holiness is no exception. Among most of the functionaries of the Vatican the mode of conceiving the policy of the Teutons, long since become habitual, is on such a different plane from our own that it can hardly be dislodged by argument or evidence. Moreover, in any balancing of the Prussian against the Allied cause, the weight of the Church's interest in the maintenance of authority, monarchy, compact organization, and of the force that gives these coherence, might easily cause the scale to descend on the opposite side from ours. It is to be regretted that among the conspicuous

and influential organs of the Vatican—as also it must be confessed of some other Governments—one seeks in vain for one of those far-seeing and clarifying spirits who have it in them to forebode the magnitude of the upheaval now proceeding, and tentatively to lay the bases of reconstruction.

CHAPTER XIX

FURTHER NEGOCIATIONS

PRINCE VON BÜLOW was meanwhile toiling and moiling to dislodge the obstacle of obstacles which Sonnino himself called insurmountable,[1] namely Italy's demand that the territory to be ceded by Austria should be transferred as soon as the agreement was signed. I had given it over and over again as my personal opinion that the negociations could never bridge the chasm which this divergence had opened between them. The Teutons, however, had no doubt of ultimate success. Not that the German Ambassador was blind to the serious nature of this hindrance to progress which indeed was patent to all. But neither of the two diplomatists gave up their cause for lost on that account. Macchio could not conceive any safe issue out of the deadlock for Italy except an accord with Austria. The alternative—war—was, he felt sure, beyond the compass of her military, financial and economic resources, however bright the prospects it might open up. And he laughed to scorn the notion that she could turn against her mighty allies. "Baron Burian," wrote the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, "cannot, as he has frequently given me to understand, realize as yet the eventuality of a declaration of war against Austria-Hungary and Germany by the King's Government if its demands were not accorded *en bloc*." [2]

[1] "Insanabile" was the Italian expression really employed. See Green Book, Dispatch N. 72.

[2] Green Book, Dispatch N. 74, April 25th, 1915.

In Rome Macchio's German colleague, who had paid serious attention to the trend and fluctuations of public opinion in Italy, had felt the pulse of the legislature, the nobility, the army, and the commercial community, considered himself competent to forecast the verdict of the people. And his estimate was eminently favourable to his hopes. It would, he was convinced, be for neutrality.

For if the worst came to the worst, the Italian nation's Master was at hand to play the rôle of a *Deus ex machina.* Giolitti would come to the rescue with joy. He was waiting and preparing for the dramatic scene. He had already sounded the keynote of the overture when he made known his belief that Italy could obtain " somewhat " from Austria by dint of diplomatic bargaining. He could easily be induced by a word to write another private letter for public circulation, to organize a parliamentary demonstration or even upset the Cabinet and re-take the reins of power. And then the solution of the crisis would be in safe hands. Hence the serenity and self-complacency of the two Ambassadors who ceaselessly pursued their proselytizing work, entertaining useful people, paying services with hospitality, flattery and ready money, and listening sweetly to the mild apprehensions and soluble doubts of their fervid Italian clients.

Possession of that open sesame to the accomplishment of their designs rendered the two Ambassadors more uncompromising than they would have been had they possessed an intuition of all the elements of the problem. It is only fair, however, to add that von Bülow evinced a clear conception of the difficulties that beset him and a correct estimate of the efforts requisite to overcome them. But the insistence and pressure of the Italian Minister on the one side and the shilly-shallying ways of the Austrian Statesman, who is said to have been hampered by the Emperor on the other side, thwarted his projects and tried his patience. The Italian Ambassador in Vienna, the Duca d'Avarna, who

was a professed admirer of the Austrians and a close friend of Count Berchtold, lost hope of doing any real business with Franz Josef's Government. "I am afraid," he telegraphed, "that we shall hardly succeed in bringing home to him (Baron Burian) the reasons which make it absolutely necessary for us to have the territories ceded as soon as the agreement is concluded." [1]

My own anticipations were of the same character, and I never once discerned any grounds for modifying them. Thus on the day when Baron Burian enlarged his offer to Sonnino [2] I telegraphed from Rome: [3]

Although the Austro-Hungarian Government has shown itself, more generous in its conditional offer than it ever could have been if the confidence ostentatiously proclaimed by its political leaders in the military resources of the two Empires were really entertained, none the less it has made reserves not only on the subject of Gorizia, but much more emphatically with respect to the fortresses in the district of Malborghetto, the strategical importance of which is paramount. It would, however, be a mistake to infer that if these differences were composed by further concessions the nature of which must also necessarily be conditional, an accord would naturally follow.

I understand, but am unable to affirm positively, that the Consulta has made no counter-propositions in the strict sense of the word, but has contented itself with formulating questions destined to bring out more fully the extent of the concessions offered and the conditions under which the territory would be transferred.

It seems probable that some decision will be reached by May 12 the date for which Parliament is convoked. The reasons for this assumption lie on the surface. The present Cabinet, which is in a minority in the Legislature, could hardly meet the deputies during a continuance of the present painful suspense without exposing itself to serious dangers and the country to unpleasant surprises.

Italy cannot afford to maintain her actual number of troops on a war footing without a proportionate return. Financially and

[1] Green Book, Dispatch N. 54.
[2] April 16th, 1915.
[3] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 17th, 1915.

economically, the strain is severe, and every week that passes tends to intensify it. The State has incurred a debt of four milliard francs since the outbreak of the war. The premium on gold has risen 12 per cent. The export trade which was carried on mainly with Austria and Germany has practically ceased, and imports have to be paid for in gold. The temporary emigration of workmen to foreign countries, which relieved the Italian labour market and brought in a stream of gold every year, has also been stopped, so that not only is that source of national revenue sealed up, but the ranks of the unemployed have swollen proportionately.

Depressed by these trying conditions, the nation is desirous of seeing healing measures of some kind adopted without much further delay, and the preliminary condition to these is the adoption of a decision respecting the Cabinet's attitude towards the belligerents.

Those are some of the grounds on which I base my belief that the pourparlers with Vienna will have been wrought out to a positive or negative issue before May 12th. Respecting the outcome, I possess no more information than any outsider, but, weighing the considerations that militate respectively in favour of neutrality or belligerency, I long ago formed the impression, which is still unchanged, that the balance of advantages is on the side of intervention against the Central European Powers. And as Italy's statesmen discern these inducements and are swayed by a patriotic desire to do the best for their country, the upshot appears foregone. But it is well to remember, without, however, pressing the parallel too closely, that motives of equal or greater force appealed to the Ottoman and Hellenic Governments without impelling these in the direction to which they pointed.

Meanwhile, I persist in assenting to the belief that the issue which the Government will take out of the present embarrassing situation will lead to the battlefield, not to the Ballplatz.

Burian, accustomed to Oriental ways, figured to himself the negociations as a haggling transaction in the course of which, in true Eastern fashion, he could beat down the Italian, and get him to lower his terms by dint of sheer obstinacy and slight concessions, And Baron Sonnino presumably guessed as much. As a matter of fact, the Italian Minister struck out a wholly different course. He first

laid down clear-cut conditions on which only would he embark on a discussion of terms, and he then put forward a demand which was the lowest he could accept and which therefore it was out of his power to abate. His very sincerity and relative moderation produced the effect of a stratagem which lured on the Austrian to his discomfiture. An impartial observer would perhaps tax the Italian Government with having shifted its ground during the conversations, with having opened them with a modest demand for compensation as provided for by the clause of a treaty and with having suddenly flown off at a tangent and claimed territory which was never contemplated by that treaty as the matter of eventual compensation. But against whatever truth there may be in this criticism, one should set considerations of an order which was neither provided for nor foreseen by the treaty-framers. The spirit and the letter of the alliance had been violated. Europe was in consequence plunged in a bloody vortex, so that all the unredeemed Italian lands possessed by the Habsburgs would have been inadequate to make good to Italy the sinister consequences of the upheaval.

The parties had now reached a deadlock from which there was no issue visible. For Austria was inexorable in her refusal to deliver up any territory before the campaign was ended. And Italy was firmly resolved not to enter upon negociations without Austria's promise to make that anticipatory transfer. Baron Sonnino at last yielded on the point of form and consented to Burian's proposal to talk over terms before dealing with the subject of the transfer. The first suggestion emanated from the latter statesman. Italy, he said, must maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards Austria and her allies for the duration of the war, must leave them full freedom of action in the Balkans and forswear the right to compensation for territorial or other advantages that may be reaped by them; and in return Italy would receive practically all the Trentino, but

would have to take over the various debts of the ceded province.[1] Sonnino's reply to this suggestion was not dispatched at once. While he was meditating it, Burian unexpectedly requested that in lieu of a reply he should forward a schedule of Italy's claims.[2] This request was acceded to and a list of eleven articles drawn up in Rome, sent to Vienna,[3] and presented by the Duca d'Avarna. The principal demands were the Trentino with the boundaries of the year 1811; rectification of Italy's eastern frontiers, comprising the towns of Gradisca and Gorizia and other places; the separation of Trieste from Austria, the enlargement of its boundaries and its transformation into an independent and autonomous State; the cession of the Curzolari group of islands to Italy; the recognition of Italy's complete sovereignty over Valona, Sasseno and the backland; the renunciation by Austria of all claims to and designs on Albania; and the immediate transfer of such of the ceded territories as were in Austria's possession. Italy on her part would bind herself to observe strict neutrality during the war, towards Austria and Germany, and to forego all claims to compensation in virtue of Article VII of the Treaty.

As might have been expected, the statesmen of the Vienna Ballplatz were pained, if not greatly surprised, at the amplitude of what under San Giuliano's pen had been a friendly request for a modest set-off to Austria's increase of territory or influence in the Balkans. Still despite appearances they saw nothing in the whole position to disquiet them. And they kept jogging on in their set direction fancying that the game of haggling had just begun. And in accordance with its rules they were in no special hurry to reply. Sonnino on the contrary seemed greatly pressed for time. For of late he had been receiving alarming dispatches from

[1] Green Book, Dispatches NN. 56 and 60.
[2] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 62.
[3] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 64, April 8th, 1915.

Ambassadors in various capitals announcing that Austria was secretly feeling her way towards a separate peace with Russia. From Petrograd for instance Marchese Carlotti wrote that he had it on unimpeachable authority that a serious bid for peace had been made to the Tsar's Government by a person who spoke in the name of Austria-Hungary.[1] Four days later a telegram arrived from the Ambassador in Berlin stating that certain symptoms which were confirmed by an authoritative source went to show that Germany would not refuse to discuss peace with Russia.[2] From Nish, came this despatch signed by the Italian representative there: "According to confidential accounts a separate peace between Austria-Hungary and Russia is possible."[3]

It looked as though it was those reports that stirred Baron Sonnino to a keener sense of the value of promptitude and the perils of delay. For three days after receiving the last message he telegraphed to the Italian Ambassador in Vienna: "It is most urgent that your Excellency should expedite the reply to our demand."[4]

Parenthetically it may be remarked that the Italian Minister probably classed the rumours about a separate peace as notes in the irregular ebb and flow of international life in war-time, and believed that they rested on a substratum of fact. In any case the use to which he put the reports was legitimate enough. In the suspicion and distraction which prevailed everywhere just then it was easy to overlook the criteria which one would not have failed to apply under normal conditions, and to accept improbable imaginings for sober reality. Being immune from any such confusing pressure, I knew that there was no substance in those allegations, and I ventured to say so. I telegraphed[5]—

[1] Green Book, Dispatch N. 57, March 29th, 1915.
[2] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 61.
[3] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 66.
[4] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 67, April 13th, 1915.
[5] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 7th, 1915.

Rumours of Austria's desire for a separate peace and of informal overtures to Russia for its attainment, have been frequent of late, and in some cases are accompanied by interesting details. I have refrained, on principle, from taking notice of them, because being in contact with sources of information worthy of implicit confidence, I am absolutely certain they are devoid of foundation in fact.

Austria, as soon as she perceived the magnitude of the conflict which she was instrumental in provoking, would gladly have composed her differences with Russia, but Germany burned her boats and precipitated the war. Since then, the Austrian Emperor and the Government have displayed attachment towards their ally under trying conditions, and are to-day as far removed from velleities of breaking away from Germany as they were at the outset. The Emperor proclaims himself a German potentate, and is resolved to act the part at every cost. The question of separate peace has, therefore, never been considered, even speculatively.

I made this announcement in the *Daily Telegraph* some months ago. I am in possession of fresh information which warrants me in repeating it with emphasis to-day. From Budapest I am informed on equally trustworthy authority, that no member of the Cabinet or party entertains at present views on the subject differing materially from those held in Vienna. The differences between the two Governments which have occasionally arisen during the campaign turned upon secondary matters which had no bearing upon this topic.

Moreover, while it would be rash to assert that the political leaders of the Hungarian nation will adhere to this or that principle in defiance of events which, especially affecting their own people, might call for exceptional treatment, it seems highly probable that Count Tisza's Cabinet will persevere steadfastly in its fidelity to the German alliance.

On the other hand, I have positive and personal knowledge that certain Hungarian politicians, who have no connection with the Government, are, and have been for some time, turning over in their minds the effect of certain eventualities upon the attitude of Hungary towards her enemies and ally. If, for instance, the Russian army should completely defeat the Austro-Hungarian troops in the Carpathians, overrun the Hungarian plains, and advance on Budapest, then, according to these patriots, it would

behove the nation's leaders to consider the most efficacious means of providing for the future weal of the Hungarian State with minds untrammelled by extrinsical considerations, however hallowed by tradition these might be.

After all, Hungary's present ties are only the means to a desirable end, and if this end ceases to be desirable, or if the means heretofore effective were to become useless, the ties would be severed by the force of circumstances, which it would be folly to ignore. This view, it should not be forgotten, which is held only by a group of persons who at present have no political power, is purely speculative, and refers to a set of conditions which are not yet realized.

Some days later I sent an account of Austria's offers to Italy which was held back by the British Censor. The following is an extract from it [1]—

Within the last few minutes I have received tidings of the highest importance from a source which is absolutely unimpeachable touching upon the course of the pourparlers between Rome and Vienna. The Austrian Emperor, yielding to the insistent representations of the Berlin Foreign Office and moved by the danger which threatens his Empire from the Russian advance, has consented to bestow upon Italy territorial concessions considerably larger than was generally anticipated. They comprise Trentino, not only including Botzen in Tyrol, but also the chain of fortresses to the north of Botzen.

The situation created by the result of the negotiations which I recorded this morning is curious and the issue is far from simple. One important link in the chain of data which I received is missing. I am not informed whether Austria is willing to hand over the territories in question at once or only to bind herself to transfer them after the conclusion of the war. Personally I am convinced that Italy will have to content herself with a formal undertaking vouched for by Germany. Then, if the Central Empires were worsted in the struggle and Trieste became an easy prey, Italy would be bound to respect her promise and keep her hands off. And if the Teuton Powers contrived to secure a victory over the Allies, it is unlikely they would feel morally constrained to redeem a promise extorted from them, as they hold, by immoral methods

[1] I despatched the message from Rome on April 12th, 1915.

For Austrians and Germans maintain that by taking undue advantage of their present straits to force them to make far-reaching territorial concessions, Italy has committed an act unworthy not only of an ally, but even of a neighbour, and that a promise made under such compulsion is binding, only so long as the compelling force is operative.

And again [1]—

During the first and early part of the second phase of negociations, the opinion prevailed throughout Europe that Austria would not cede one square mile of territory to Italy, without war. The *Daily Telegraph* was the first paper to announce that on the contrary Franz Josef and his Cabinet had signified their assent to territorial concessions in principle, and that the questions to be settled were the extent of surrender, the date of transfer, and the conditions on which the compact could be ratified. The headway made by negociations down to the present moment amply bears out the correctness of my announcement that Austria has manifested a spirit of self-abnegation which borders on the tragic. The proposals which I telegraphed yesterday furnish us with the measure of her distress. Those proposals were officially laid before the Italian Government at the end of last week.

They were carefully examined by the Government here and judged inadequate, and the views of the Consulta, having been reduced to writing, were duly despatched to Vienna where they will be presented to Burian by the Italian Ambassador there. In addition to the details I telegraphed yesterday, I have only two more statements to make, both of which are almost self-evident. Austria will on no account part with Trieste, which is essential to her existence as a great Power. Neither is it possible for her to transfer the territory in question during the progress of the war. Whatever the outcome of negociations may be she is resolved not to swerve from this position.

When Burian's rejoinder arrived it was seen to be a dialectical expansion of the old refrain *Non possumus*. "For political, ethnographical, strategical, and economical reasons which it was superfluous to unfold," most of the proposals were unacceptable. On a single point Austria was prepared

[1] The following message despatched from Rome on April 18th, 1915, was suppressed for State reasons.

to go a very little further than before and increase her offer in the Trentino. On every other issue she remained unmoved and inflexible. But Baron Sonnino paid far less heed to the exiguity of Austria's offer than to her refusal to consign immediately the territory which she was willing to concede.[1] The Duca d'Avarna, laying stress on the same point, held that under the circumstances an accord with Austria on the basis of Sonnino's demands seemed "almost unrealizable."[2] It was on April 21st that the Italian Minister in a telegram to the Duca d'Avarna declared the Austrian proposals inacceptable and the differences between the two Governments unbridgeable. And on the following morning I telegraphed to say that "the conversations between Vienna and Rome have reached a point at which the obstacles to an accord are seen to be absolutely insurmountable. As yet, however, they are not formally broken off."[3]

Three days later I wrote[4]—

Judging by all the symptoms, public and private, with which the political air is now thick, the first act of Italy's national drama is fast drawing to a close. One curious characteristic of the last scene is worth noting. Both the parties into which the country is divided, those who pine for an accord with Austria, as well as those who would fain see Italy realize her aspirations at whatever cost before the unique opportunity has lapsed, are all at once grown unwontedly hopeful. The former point contentedly to frequent interviews and long conversations of the Austrian Ambassador with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and hint that the chasm which still sunders them can, and probably will, be satisfactorily bridged. The latter emphasize certain demands which Italy, in justice to herself, is constrained to put forward, and Austria, for a like reason, forced to refuse.

Deputy Cirmeni, who is one of the most consistent and best-informed leaders of the neutralists, has to-day published a state-

[1] Green Book, Dispatch N. 72.
[2] Ibidem, Dispatch N. 74.
[3] *Daily Telegraph*, April 23rd, 1915.
[4] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 26th, 1915.

ment fully bearing out the account which I gave ten days ago of the concessions offered by Vienna, and judged inadequate by Rome. The points of difference, he admits, turn upon substance and form. I announced that Austria, while promising all the Trentino, inclusive of Bozen and the line of fortresses north of that city, reserves another group of strongholds in the neighbourhood of Malborghetto, and that she had also demurred to the transfer of Gorizia, without, however, exhibiting a serious resolve to persevere in this refusal.

These offers and others, which I shall not now enumerate, leave Trieste wholly on one side. And this elimination, if embodied in an accord, would arouse widespread and abiding discontent here.

The difference of form proceeds from Italy's natural desire, in case she should agree about the extent of the territorial concessions, to enter into immediate possession, as contrasted with Austria's refusal to part with a rood of land before hostilities have definitely ceased. Signor Cirmeni's exposé apparently tallies with mine, but he still entertains good hopes that an Austro-Italian settlement is impending. My own contrary impression, which I have had no further opportunity of testing by comparison with trustworthy data, remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, the general nervousness is growing intense. Even ardent neutralists envisage the situation with the anxiety inseparable from such a tremendous crisis as that with which Italy is now confronted, and those foreign friends of the country who understand the ordeal through which the nation is passing cannot withhold from it their sympathy, whatever decision may be taken. In the midst of this painful suspense a humorous element is furnished by the reflection that if Italy, whether by dint of diplomatic ingenuity or the fortune of war, annexes Gorizia—and this is a foregone conclusion—the present Austrian Ambassador here, Baron Macchio, will become an Italian subject, and might, if circumstances should favour him as they favoured his countryman, Greppi, under like conditions, qualify for the post of Ambassador of United Italy to Vienna, to which post he does not look forward with eagerness.

But however serenely the neutralists may view the prospects of a diplomatic settlement, the military authorities of both countries are patriotically preparing for the worst.

The Italian authorities have already removed all the more precious paintings and other works of art from the galleries of

Venice. Some of these have been transferred to Florence, others to Milan.

The Italian Ambassador had another long interview with Burian, who scrutinized every nook and cranny of Italy's case, exposed what seemed its weak points, and sought to defend by good reasons his own illogical course. He threw out no suggestion, however, nor would he modify his refusal. His decision was final. The Ambassador's message bringing these tidings was received in Rome on the last day of April, and on May 3rd, nearly thirty-three years after the Treaty of the Triple Alliance was first signed—thanks largely to the fervid exertions of Sidney Sonnino, the journalist—it was denounced in a trenchant official communication by Sidney Sonnino, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Poetic justice had for once been done in international politics.

Three weeks before this consummation I had telegraphed [1]—

Between Rome and Berlin no progress whatever has been made down to the moment of telegraphing. It is believed here, however, that the fall of Przemysl, and its inevitable military and moral consequences, will render the Austrian Government considerably more pliant than heretofore, and may contribute to displace certain reserves which Prince von Bülow would gladly see abandoned. But it still remains as improbable as before that Austria will swerve from the main lines of conduct which have been already sketched.

Rather than surrender Trieste, for instance, to Italy, the Austrian Government would consent to make a separate peace with the Allies, which would leave her in possession of Dalmatia, Trieste, the Trentino, and Friuli. That, however, is merely tantamount to saying that Kaiser Franz Josef's advisers will persist to the bitter end in the attitude they traced for the Dual Monarchy at the outset, with the sole modification—proposed by Berlin and strenuously advocated by Prince von Bülow—provided Italy accepts the conditions to which it is attached. And, before the Consulta can close with this offer, it must acquire the conviction that everything which Italy aspires to as a great

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, March 26th, 1915.

Power, as a member of the community of European States, and as an expanding nation and civilizing agency is in Austria's power to bestow.

Before this dramatic ending conversations had been going forward between Rome and London. The scope of these was traced by those Italian interests which it was not in the power of either Germany or Austria to further. Against the motive that actuated them no exception could be fairly taken nor did they involve any slackening of effort on Sonnino's part to effect an arrangement with the Central Empires. I placed the fact on record at the time [1]—

During the past few days Italy has entered into closer contact with the Entente Powers with a view to obtain a more comprehensive survey of the perspective as envisaged in the light of one of the alternatives which open out before her. As one formidable obstacle to a satisfactory agreement with Austria lies in the impossibility of obtaining from Vienna anything more substantial than a mere promise of territorial concessions under conditions which may never be realized, so, too, some misgiving is felt respecting the wisdom of making a supreme sacrifice to the Allies' side without the certitude of securing thereby corresponding returns in that quarter of the world to which Italy mainly looks for her future development as a Great Power.

In bygone years she has more than once entertained reasonable grounds for the belief that certain claims recognized at the moment as equitable would be allowed in due time by the interested Powers in return for definite services rendered, and in nearly every case this hope was belied. This time, when it would be a question of making the heaviest sacrifice which she has offered up since she became a Great Power, it behoves her statesmen to see that disappointment, which in this case would connote disaster, is wholly eliminated from the list of eventualities. And to this object the efforts of the Government would naturally be directed as soon as it became evident that the overtures from the Austro-German side were destined to fail.

Whether and to what extent definite compacts of this nature

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[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 5th, 1915.

are feasible under present conditions, which are anything but definite, is for others to decide. These conditions, however, are surely such as to ensure to the Italian nation, even in the absence of any formal covenant, the fullest scope for future growth and development, political and economical. It is perhaps natural that in view of former disillusions the political leaders of to-day should do everything in their power to obtain satisfactory guarantees, antecedently to a fateful decision, such as intervention; but I am personally convinced that such a general understanding, as the present circumstances warrant, will be found sufficient to dispel doubts and hesitation, and foment a feeling of confidence which will certainly not be misplaced.

My own anticipation as to the upshot of pourparlers is unchanged.

Meanwhile a storm was brewing in Italy. Passion became incandescent among Neutralists and Interventionists who were beginning to substitute blows for arguments. Public meetings were held in various cities at which fiery sentiments were clothed in eloquent garb and subversive doctrines preached with apostolic unction. The nation was overwrought by long suspense and quickly alternating hopes and fears, and the impenetrable secrecy of the Government. I chronicled my impressions of this growing excitement in several telegrams, of which the following is a specimen :[1] —

The expiring days of the period of the negociations are marked by a sharp journalistic controversy about the nature and extent of Italy's demands on that group of belligerents with which she may ultimately throw in her lot. The handling of these delicate questions is, in some cases, extremely maladroit, and proposals are mooted and pressed forward by Neutralist organs of a nature to bewilder reasonable men.

It should be premised that the statement, first published in the *Daily Telegraph* on the 5th instant, that the Consulta had been endeavouring to ascertain in London what return Italy could look forward to if she should decide to co-operate with the Allies, is now admitted on all hands, and this inquiry has furnished

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 13th, 1915.

the Press with an opening for the discussions alluded to. Signor Giolitti's organ, the *Stampa*, which has become aggressively Neutralist of late, warns the Government of the danger that may accrue to the nation from an accord made with the Allied Governments without first insisting upon favourable terms, clearly expressed and ratified. Among these inducements we find not merely the Trentino, Istria, the Dalmatian Archipelago, Valona, and Adalia, but also Corsica, to be ceded by France, and Bizerta to be dismantled. Interventionists inquire how the party which, for sake of an entente with Austria, was ready to forgo its claims to Trieste, to the most important part of the Trentino, to Pola and Fiume, and to the command of the Adriatic, can expect such exorbitant terms for collaboration with the Powers without whose goodwill Italy's future can never be secure.

People qualified to form a correct judgment of the significance of this journalistic phenomenon consider it as a token that the supreme moment of decision is drawing near, and that the upshot bids fair to provoke the dissatisfaction of the Neutralist party. To me, the only comment which seems called for by these polemics is the advisability of eliminating them wholly from the Press of the Allied nations. At the present conjuncture the only national organs qualified to discuss these delicate matters are the respective Foreign Offices, and the only effect which an acrimonious debate in the Press can produce is to render an understanding more difficult than it need be. As things now stand, no two opinions can be entertained as to the side on which Italy's interests lie, and no insurmountable obstacles to a mutually satisfactory agreement have been encountered.

It is true that none of the Allied Powers has unsheathed the sword for the purpose of acquiring territory, and that therefore no prospective division of spoils has been arranged among them. For this reason it would be well if States now neutral, but moved by their own national interests to take the field, should carry out their intention in the same spirit of trust. But if, for special reasons, certain clearly-expressed stipulations have to be substituted for this broad-minded confidence in the equity of prospective partners, it should not be difficult to draw the outlines of a conditional arrangement which, after military and naval successes, could subsequently be filled in.

I am so convinced of the feasibility of such an understanding and of the forcible nature of the motives which must guide Italy's

choice, despite the somewhat extensive demands which appear to have been put forward, that my personal impression respecting the outcome and duration of the pourparlers, which was several times recorded in the *Daily Telegraph*, remains unchanged.

Meanwhile, and until the die has been cast, the Government is resolved to put down all attempts on the part of demagogues and agitators, to whichever side they may belong, to excite the masses for or against war. Some four or five weeks ago the authorities forbade all public meetings for this purpose, but the prohibition was disregarded, and troubles arose in various towns, especially in Genoa, where the windows of houses belonging to Germans and Austrians were smashed, and cries of " Down with Austria ! " were vociferated through the streets. To-day meetings of partisans of war and neutrality having been convoked in Rome, elaborate measures were adopted to prevent their taking place. Police, carbineers and troops were posted at the places fixed for the meetings, also at the Embassies, and whenever knots of men assembled they were at once dispersed. In some places crowds formed again, but, the cavalry being called out, the square was evacuated before it arrived. Several orators attempted to harangue the populace from chairs outside the cafés, but were arrested on the spot. A group of Interventionists, drawing near the office of the Norddeutscher Lloyd with unfriendly intentions, was scattered by Carbineers, but not before the signboard was shattered by a volley of stones.

CHAPTER XX

THE FATEFUL HOUR

ABOUT ten days before the dissolution of the Alliance and when things were growing rapidly worse owing to the perverse incoherency of Austrian statesmanship, Prince von Bülow seriously bethought himself of his Italian allies. Their name was legion. The Chamber, the Senate, the nobility, the merchant and industrial class, part of the army, the entire bureaucracy, and a noteworthy section of the Press were among his voluntary and salaried coadjutors, and more precious than all besides, the Dictator Giolitti was commander-in-chief of those disciplined forces. The situation, to Bülow's thinking, called for a demonstration which should remind the Cabinet that they were presuming too far on the patience of the Statesman who had placed them in office and would maintain them there only so long as they adjusted their policy to the interests of the nation as he conceived these. And already they had swerved from the path he had traced for them.

Bülow had easy access to the Senate through his brother-in-law, Prince Camporeale, who is himself a member of that body, and through another relation of his wife's, named Blaserna, who is its Vice-President. The man he chose on this occasion was Carafa d'Andria, an ex-Nationalist Senator suddenly converted to the German faith. To this sympathetic hearer he is said to have opened his mind and spoken approximately thus [1]:—

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, April 23rd, 1915.

"Sentiment and interest inspire Germany with a sincere desire to maintain the present cordial relations with Italy unimpaired. The two countries have long been staunch friends, and each has been the better for the friendship. An indispensable condition of a continuance of this advantageous fellowship is the speedy arrangement of an accord between Italy and Austria. That is self-evident, Austria being our devoted Ally. That also explains why Germany moved every lever to induce Austria to make the largest possible concessions to Italy and to move Italy to accept these gifts as a pledge of future neighbourliness and goodwill between the two countries. I may now reveal to you what this offer comprises, so that you may judge for yourself of the intensity of our desire to be of service to you, and of the force of the motives which appeal to your Government to second our efforts."

Then the Prince is alleged to have enumerated the concessions offered by Austria, the exact nature and extent of which I forwarded you on the 12th instant, but which for State reasons were not published. And it must be admitted that the territory which Austria promised, under certain conditions and at a future conjuncture, to transfer to Italy is considerable, and the Italian Government was allowed, or rather encouraged, to believe that Gorizia would also be included if insistently asked for in a spirit of give and take and on the express condition that this extra gift would definitively and for all time put an end to Italy's claims and aspirations in the Austrian Empire.

Having passed these proposals in review, Prince Bülow is reported to have uttered suitable comments, and expatiated on the advantages accruing to the Italian nation from this accession of territory, coupled with the boons of a present peace with all the Powers and future friendship with Germany and Austria. He concluded with the expression of his regret that public sentiment was raising a formidable barrier to a friendly deal between the two nations, and with the more poignant regret that in case of a rupture Germany would be constrained by her duties to her ally, and in spite of her tested friendship for Italy, to take an active part in the conflict by the side of her trusty Austria.

The Senator grasped the point, repaired to the Senate, and recounted the conversation to his political friends, as Bülow no doubt intended that he should. The tidings were construed as a cry of distress uttered by Germany and a

note of alarm at the advent of war, and the Senator was requested to communicate them to the Premier, which he accordingly did with appropriate comments. The warning was understood and resented by the Cabinet. It was one of those clumsy blunders which have made German professional diplomacy a by-word among self-respecting nations. And yet its author was Germany's most polished, tactful and consummate diplomatist. We should remember, however, that to the German Ambassador his alliance with Giolitti was more cardinal than the smooth progress of Burian's negociations with Sonnino.

Bülow's readiness of resource in other places made up for his occasional clumsiness in Rome. The following instance of how he got Constantinople to throw a sop to Rome may serve as an illustration at once of the Ambassador's astuteness and of his country's utter lack of moral sense. The reader may remember that in the list of Italy's claims and obligations drawn up by Baron Sonnino there was an article worded thus: "Italy undertakes to maintain an attitude of perfect neutrality during the present war towards Austria-Hungary and Germany." In his critical analysis of this schedule Baron Burian remarked: "Inasmuch as Turkey is united with Austria-Hungary and Germany by its participation in the war, the neutrality to the observance of which Italy would bind herself down to the close of the campaign would also include the Ottoman Empire." Now this was a delicate point with the Consulta whose patriotic impulse was presumably to separate the Eastern from the Western war and treat each independently of the other. And Italy's interests in the Mediterranean, which were certainly vital to her growth, depended for their furtherance on the maintenance of this distinction. The break-up of Turkey would impart actuality to a number of problems whose bearing on Italy's welfare was palpable and to be obliged to watch this process without actively participating in it or benefiting by the new distribution of the force of

nations, would have brought the aspirations and the mission of the Italian race to a premature and inglorious end.

Since the Lybian War the relations of Italy and Turkey had oscillated between stiffness and cordiality, in accordance with the alternating self-confidence and dejection of the Young Turkish Government. The Treaty of Ouchy, negociated by the agents of the Banca Commerciale, was acquiesced in by the Consulta which foresaw the Balkan conflict and was anxious to free itself from entanglements before its outbreak. But the peace terms acquiesced in left much to be desired. The presence in Tripoli of the Caliph's spiritual Vicar was to Italians a standing reminder of the incompleteness of their conquest and to the natives a symbol of their lost nationality and a pledge of their future liberation. After Talaat Bey had devised the audacious plan of reconquering Adrianople and worked it out successfully, the overbearing arrogance of the party towards Italians became intolerable. And yet Italy had behaved handsomely towards the Porte: her Italian Ambassador asserting the right of the Turks to keep the contested city. But in spite of this and other rebuffs, Italian diplomacy, following Germany's lead, displayed a keen and comprehensive interest in everything connected with the Near East. And in most disputes between the Ottomans and their neighbours, it supported the Turks.

In return for those interested good offices Italy's demand for a railway concession in Adalia was listened to with favour. Facilities for surveys were readily accorded. The Ambassador in Constantinople, Garroni, whose ambition was to follow in the footsteps of Marschall von Bieberstein, had formed grandiose designs which the construction of that railway would, he anticipated, ripen and extend over the economic as well as the political domain. This hope was frustrated by hindrances of various kinds which kept mysteriously cropping up. At first their origin could not be traced,

But at last the mystery was cleared up. Italy, who had plumed herself on being the only candidate for an opening in that part of the Sultan's dominions, all at once discovered Austria there. Her own ally and ubiquitous rival, Austria. German omnipotence in Stamboul had obtained for Austria a concession in the eastern part of the Adalian zone, and the competition between the Allies bade fair to degenerate into hostility. Here again Germany, by composing the differences she had created, established a fresh claim on Italy's gratitude.

Meanwhile Turkey's interest in Tripoli revived and the forms it assumed grew irritating. What was achieved in Adrianople might be repeated in Africa. Accordingly officers, arms, money, ammunition, decorations were sent from Constantinople to the rebels, with a supreme contempt for the scrap of paper signed at Ouchy, and for the Italians who relied upon it. To these no quarter was given. On the outbreak of the European War, Italy's resolve to remain neutral provoked a campaign of vituperation and calumny in the Turkish Press which had no parallel in Germany or Austria. The semi-official *Tanin* gave vent to the view that Italy's conduct was unspeakably disloyal and "that no nation would ever again care to conclude an agreement with a State which thus backed out of its obligations." And when the Capitulations were arbitrarily abolished by the Porte, the first and worst victims of the reign of licence which then ensued were the Italians, who were arrested without cause, molested by a blackmailing police, hampered in their business, and even robbed of their property.[1] It needed all the self-restraint of a well-disciplined nation trusting in its strength and confident that its opportunity would not long be delayed, to bear these insults without indulging in reprisals.

Suddenly, however, the dispositions of the Turkish Government changed as if in response to the waving of a magician's

[1] Cf. *Temps*, September 1st, 1915.

wand. Delegates from Constantinople pilgrimaged to Rome and held out vistas of endless fields of economic effort in the Ottoman dominions to Turkey's Italian friends. And in truth a wand had been waved, but the magician who held it was Prince von Bülow who had found it expedient to diffuse an atmosphere of brotherhood around Italians and Turks —in Europe. In Lybia Turkish machinations were not discontinued, but they were carried on with greater secrecy. The Turks still despatched officers, revolutionary proclamations and Ottoman decorations to the insurgents and the Germans sent rifles in double-bottomed beer barrels, viâ Venice. The rifles were new and most of them bore the mark " St. Etienne," being meant not only to arm the revolt against Italy, but also to create the belief that France was treacherously aiding and abetting the Tripolitan insurgents. And to crown all, during the efforts of fraternization, in German fashion, Enver Bey's brother clandestinely reached the Senoussi, bringing two hundred thousand Turkish pounds and the Caliph's orders to purge the land of those Italian traitors.[1]

With angry disgust the Consulta watched these Turko-German tricks, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs doubtless bore them well in mind during the progress of the negociations and in his final summing up of motives. In the meanwhile neither the bullying threats nor the elephantine tenderness of the Teuton had any effect on the subtle and essentially rational mind of Italy's diplomatic spokesman.

The repercussion of these methods and of their striking manifestations on the sensitive mind of the Italian people was immeasurably great, although at first hardly noticeable. The violation of neutral Belgium, the shooting and burning of civilians there, the slaying of the wounded, the torturing of the weak and helpless chilled the hot aortic flood of humane sentiment and then sent it boiling to the impressible brain of the

[1] Ibidem.

Latin race. Every new horror, every fresh crime in the scientific barbarians' destructive progress intensified the wrath and charged the emotional susceptibility of the Italian nation with explosive elements. The shrieks of the countless victims of demonic fury awakened an echo in the hearts of plain men and women who instinctively felt that what was happening to-day to the Belgians and the French might befall themselves to-morrow.

The heinous treason against the human race which materialized in the destruction of the *Lusitania* completed the gradual awakening of the Italian nation to a sense of those impalpable and imponderable elements of the European problem which find expression in no Green Book or ambassadoria dispatch. It kindled a blaze of wrath and pity and heroic enthusiasm which consumed the cobwebs of official tradition and made short work of diplomatic fiction. I was deeply moved by the extraordinary way in which the soul of the Italian people was affected by the sufferings of their distant fellows, and I described my impressions in the following words [1]:—

> Deep into the heart of the Italian people sank the awful tidings of the destruction of the *Lusitania* to-day, awakening feelings of loathing and abomination for its authors, to which free expression is given everywhere. The spirit that actuated this inhuman enormity is brandmarked as that of demoniacal fury loosed from moral control, and from the ties that bind nations and individuals to all humanity.
>
> Rome at the moment was absorbed by rumours and discussions about Germany's supreme efforts to coax Italy into an attitude of quiescence. But these machinations were suddenly forgotten on the fiery wrath and withering contempt which the foul misdeed of the scientific assassins evoked, and in pity for the victims and their relatives.
>
> The effect upon public sentiment and opinion in Italy, where emotions are tensely strung, and sympathy with suffering is more

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 10th, 1915.

flexible and diffusive than it is even among the other Latin races, was instantaneous. One statesman who is, or recently was, a partisan of neutrality, remarked to me that German "Kultur," as revealed during the present war, is dissociated from every sense of duty, obligation, chivalry, honour, and is become a potent poison, which the remainder of humanity must endeavour by all efficacious methods to banish from the international system.

"This," he went on, "is no longer war; it is organized slaughter, perpetrated by a race suffering from dog-madness. I tremble at the thought that our own civilized and chivalrous people may at any moment be confronted with this lava flood of savagery and destructiveness. Now, if ever, the opportune moment has come for all civilized nations to join in protest, stiffened with a unanimous threat, against the continuance of such crimes against the human race. Europe ought surely to have the line drawn at the poisoning of wells, the persecution of prisoners, and the massacre of women and children. If a proposal to this effect were made, I would second it with ardour."

That Italian, whose aversion to war was extreme and whose leanings towards Germany were pronounced, was a type of the nation whose soul was suddenly turned from contemplation of its own interests and possessed by a predominant feeling of sympathy and sorrow for its fellows.

The anti-German temper of the people was fast becoming red-hot. Their patience was exhausted, and one can hardly wonder at the fierceness with which, when the great Dictator came forward to reconcile them to those horrors, they felled the idol, smashed his shrine, and peremptorily decreed that the Government should smite the miscreants.

That new element would seem not to have been carefully weighed by either Prince Bülow or Baron Macchio in their estimates of the future. They had no instrument by which to measure the throbbings of the soul of a high-spirited people.

After the denunciation of the Triple Alliance, there were no further negociations between Rome and Berlin. Nor could there well be, inasmuch as the Statesmen of the Consulta on

parting company with the Germans and Austrians took the road to the Triple Entente. The Austrian Ambassador made some vigorous and clumsy attempts to have the conversations resumed, but to no purpose. Soliloquies there were but no more dialogues. "In order to enlighten influential circles," Baron Macchio afterwards wrote, "which, to some extent less favourably disposed towards the Triple Alliance, were smitten with the general mistrust, it seemed expedient to distribute among them a list of Austria-Hungary's concessions, attested by Prince von Bülow and by me. In this way the game of MM. Salandra, Sonnino and Martini could be frustrated. That list was to include only certain points, in order to leave the door open to the prospect of further concessions, in the sense of Italy's pristine demands." And the Austrian Baron drafted a treaty which was to be laid before the new Giolittist Ministry. For everybody knew that the Italian Parliament was convoked for the twelfth of May, and it was also matter of common knowledge that the Giolittist majority was resolved to overthrow the Cabinet and instal a new administration, with Giolitti himself, or more probably Signor Bertolini, as Premier. To that new Cabinet Macchio's draft treaty, which was already known to and approved by each of the presumptive Ministers, would be formally presented. And in this expeditious way the problem, how to avoid war and preserve the Triple Alliance, would be satisfactorily settled. The treaty consisted of two articles only. I received cognisance of it several days before it was communicated to the Italian Government, and it first appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. Salandra said of it in the course of his speech in the Campidoglio: "It came into the hands of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and mine after it had been in the hands of various politicians and journalists."

On May 3rd I wrote [1]:—

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 4th, 1915.

Conversations with Austria and Germany have come to a deadlock, from which there is absolutely no issue compatible with Austria's dignity and Italy's interests. Of this I entertain not the slightest doubt, and I write with knowledge of the facts. Secondly, although no arrangement whatever has been concluded between Italy and the Allies, the exchange of views between them which was rendered necessary by Italy's permanent interests in the Mediterranean, which would have to be provided for even if an accord had been reached with Austria, has made it amply clear that no fundamental opposition of interests nor divergence of opinion is to be apprehended on any vital point. Even the Adriatic problem, to which only one solution would be acceptable to King Victor Emmanuel's Government, will offer no serious obstacles to an understanding with Russia, should a formal understanding be deemed advisable. These are the two salient facts which govern the situation, and all the necessary corollaries of these may be counted upon with confidence.

Gripped by the hard reality of diplomatic failure, Bülow turned for help to his Italian allies. They were his last resource, but at least they would not fail. Their number had indeed fallen off, but the Parliamentarians—and they alone counted in his estimate—were all there ready for any work which it might please their chief to set them. The Vatican, too, could be mobilized with telling effect, and suitable measures were being adopted for the purpose.

The evening papers (I wrote) [1] announce that the leader of the German Catholic Parliamentary party, Herr Erzberger, has arrived in Rome. This influential politician has been several times since the outbreak of war on political missions in this city, and has been cordially received by the Pope, so that it would not be surprising if at a moment when the Austro-German hopes of coming to an arrangement with Italy are vanishing he should be sent to co-operate in a supreme effort to ensure her neutrality.

A week later I returned to this subject and wrote [2]:—

The chief of the German Catholic Parliamentary party, Herr

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 4th, 1915.
[2] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 13th, 1915.

Erzberger, whose arrival in Rome I announced some days ago, is *persona gratissima* at the Vatican, and disposes of the services of the German and Austrian Church dignitaries who give the tone in ecclesiastical Rome. Herr Erzberger hobnobs with deputies, gives instructions to Germanophile and German writers, issues one-sided information to the Press, and plays such a leading part in Italian politics that this morning angry deputies declared that these methods, which would be criticized even in the South American Republics, are intolerable and must be stopped in Italy. Herr Erzberger's latest device was to have typewritten copies of Austria's proffered concessions to Italy sent out to the Press, and published by way of proving that Baron Sonnino was refusing all that Italy claimed and aspired to. This list of Herr Erzberger's tallies with the one sent by me and published in the *Daily Telegraph* of May 6th.

I also telegraphed [1]:—

I have announced many times that by May 12th the fateful hour would probably have struck, and that an accord with Austria was not possible. And now, at the twelfth hour, efforts are being intensified to raise the barrier to the advance of fate. Herr Erzberger, chief of the German Parliamentary Centre and *persona grata* at the Vatican, has arrived here with the hope that the Pope may devise some way of keeping Italy neutral. But Benedict XV has already exhausted his well-meaning efforts, which had a twofold aim—to re-establish peace and to save Catholic Austria-Hungary from destruction by the Slav Schismatics. His last resource was embodied in the message he gave to the American-German Wiegand, and it produced an effect contrary to what was hoped. At present all the diplomatic resources are exhausted. Austria's *non possumus* is decisive, not only for Italy, but also for Roumania, whose cause was championed by Italy. The fateful hour is striking.

At the festivities in Quarto at which the King was to have been present, it was expected that a decisive word would fall from the Minister or the Monarch. But at the last moment it was settled that they should both remain away.

The gathering merely served to focus the growing senti-

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 6th, 1915.

ment of the inarticulate nation. I chronicled the incident thus [1]:—

Never since the outbreak of the European conflict has the tide of patriotic passion run so high, or the cry for the completion of Italian Unity been raised by so many voices in unison, as on the shores of the Ligurian Sea this morning. The festivities in commemoration of Garibaldi and his Thousand were treated as ceremonies in some religious ritual, as sacred symbols appealing to the heart and imagination, and the moral will to sacrifice to the country all that is dearest and best.

Representative men from all the provinces and districts of the kingdom were present, the only noteworthy absence being that of the King and the Ministers, and that aroused keen disappointment throughout the realm. The King expressed his regret in a telegram couched in appropriate terms, which left no doubt as to his own personal sentiment. This declaration, deliberately made after he had read the text of Gabriele d'Annunzio's discourse, is among the most significant of the facts of to-day's celebration.

D'Annunzio, who might fitly be called the Poet Laureate of Italian Unity, sounded the silver trumpet notes of the new era. The text of his poem in prose was that the spirit of Garibaldi, still a living and a working force among the Italian people, is about to be embodied in an historic movement, and to accomplish the patriotic work which that hero inaugurated; and that his fellow-countrymen should at once trim their lamps and gird their loins for the arduous struggle about to commence. He takes it for granted that the decision is foregone, and that his soul-inspiring words will become the vade-mecum for a nation setting out on a glorious campaign.

Two days before the date which I had set down approximately as that on which the inevitable rupture would occur, I summed up the situation as follows [2]:—

In my message published on April 17th, and several times since, I gave it as my conviction that before May 12th the pourparlers would come to an end, and probably be succeeded by Italy's

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 7th, 1915.
[2] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 10th, 1915.

intervention on the side of the Allies. That forecast is now being confirmed by events. Any moment now may witness a change of scene from the Council Chamber to the battlefield.

With the Entente Powers pourparlers were meanwhile carried on continuously. But their course was less smooth than had been expected. Between Rome and Petrograd there was a wide divergence of views on the subject of Dalmatia on which Italy had set her heart. The population of that province is mixed, but the Italian element constitutes hardly more than 3 per cent. as against 97 per cent. of Slavs, and for this reason influential publicists in Petrograd and Moscow insisted on deciding the question to whom Dalmatia should belong by an appeal to the principle of nationality. These Russian patriots were flushed with anticipations of a magnificent triumph over the enemies of Europe's liberties. Already a series of brilliant successes had somewhat warped their sense of proportion and lulled their perception of the leading facts. Towards the claims of Italy as towards the demands of Roumania they turned a deaf ear. A Press polemic ensued in the course of which sharp words passed, and finally the two Governments had to enforce silence on the patriotic mischief-makers. The dispute ended as the treatment of the subject ought to have begun, with a serene consideration of the claims of each party from the point of view of political expediency, which at such a conjuncture takes precedence over all others. Italy is said to have won the day and the Entente Powers won Italy's co-operation. The convention regulating the duties, rights and advantages was duly signed by the Italian Government.

The compact was secret, but like most secrets which have to be kept by several chancelleries of democratic States, it was revealed to German agents in Paris who communicated it to Berlin. From Berlin Prince Bülow was apprized of the lengths to which the Salandra Cabinet had gone, and he felt that the only course now open to him was to turn it out of

office. To Giolitti this task was reserved. He was then reposing at his country seat in Piedmont. He was sent for in haste. Before reaching Rome an audience with the King was arranged for him through the mediation of Bülow's friends. The object was manifest. The Ambassadors of Germany and Austria professed to believe that the King had not been fully informed of all the leading facts by Salandra and Sonnino, and they hoped that for him the decisive coefficient would be Giolitti's judgment and advice, which were hostile to those of the responsible Ministers.

The part which the Dictator now went on to play cruelly disabused the Cabinet whose members had continued to give him credit for at least those elementary qualifications for public office which are taken for granted in every deputy. He deliberately created a situation which, being not merely anti-governmental, but also anti-constitutional, could not be accepted by Ministers whose authority to act for the country rested on a constitutional basis. I summarized these and kindred facts in a message embodying the views of an Italian Statesman of distinction, whose name I was not at liberty to disclose. The following extracts from that telegram may still have some historic worth:—

It has been pleaded that Signor Giolitti held no assemblies or conciliabules. That is true, but it is also irrelevant. For in other evident and efficacious ways he induced his Parliamentary supporters publicly to manifest their adhesion to his view that an accord with Austria was still possible, although at the time he was in possession of conclusive proofs that it was neither conducive to Italy's interests nor compatible with Italy's honour. The consequences of these tactics was the certitude on the part of the Cabinet that on meeting Parliament it would be confronted by a hostile majority no longer accessible to any argument and absolutely closed to conviction. It would have been sheer loss of the country's valuable time now that every day counts to lay before a group of deputies whose vote was thus bespoken, the official exposé which would and will convince every unprejudiced Italian

that his country's honour and interests forbade and forbid an accord with Austria. For thus deliberately thwarting the work undertaken by the Cabinet in the name and in behoof of the King and the nation, Signor Giolitti's responsibility is tremendous.

Unhappily it cannot be pleaded on his behalf that he was unaware of what had been done by the Cabinet. He was familiar with all the decisive data when taking up his attitude of opposition to the Government. He knew, for instance, that Austria and Germany after having refused Italy any terms worth entertaining during nearly nine months of conversations and negociations, and having waited until they knew absolutely that she was bound in honour to their adversaries and unable to entertain any further offers from themselves, came forward with proposals less absurd than any they had yet made, and asked our Cabinet to accept them.

This manœuvre, it was evident, would have the twofold advantage from their point of view. It would put the Consulta in the position of either refusing concessions which were at any rate no longer worthless, or else of exposing our nation to eternal obloquy as guilty of an infamous breach of faith. Moreover, these belated concessions were not offered to the Italian Government in the first instance. They were typewritten here in Rome and distributed by German agents among the Senators and Deputies of Signor Giolitti's party, together with an exhortation to consider what folly it would be for the Italian Government to reject them, and go to war. While they were being thus handed around and published in the home and foreign papers [1] the King's Ministers had no knowledge of them whatever. They had not been officially proposed, but only privately distributed and used as a weapon wherewith to deal a blow to the men who were labouring on behalf of the country and the King.

It was only after the Oppositional Press had attacked the Cabinet on the strength of those offers, which had not yet been made to the Government, and which even if they had been made could not be entertained, that they were formally communicated to Baron Sonnino. This procedure is not in accordance with international usage, nor, indeed, with common morality, for the Governments of both Empires were fully aware when making their

[1] I sent them to the *Daily Telegraph* myself and they were published on May 6th, 1915.

proposals of the impossibility in which our Government was of considering them. Under such circumstances there was no reason why they should not have been much more extensive than they actually were.

With regard to Signor Giolitti, whose opposition necessitated the resignation of the Cabinet, it should be said that he knew all the facts as well as the King's Ministers. He had been kept informed of the course taken by the negotiations, of the obstacles thrown in the way of their success by Austria, of their hopelessness, of their close. Yet he assumed the formidable responsibility before the Italian nation and the entire world of helping Prince Bülow, the agent of this country's enemy, and declaring deliberately that an amicable understanding with Austria and Germany was and is still feasible. What such an understanding would involve if made now in the face of the obligations already assumed by the country is self-evident. Yet Signor Giolitti not only expressed his belief and wish that Italy should commit that unqualified breach of faith, but he marshalled his followers and was prepared to overthrow the Cabinet on the 20th, and subject his country to that dishonour. His scheme was baulked by the generous impulse and noble humanities of the people. The demeanour of the King has been throughout constitutional, patriotic, and honourable.

The Italian Premier, in the stirring speech he addressed to the people of Rome from the Capitol,[1] alluded to those offers in the following words:

We were bitterly reproached for not having accepted offers made towards the end of May, but were these offers made in good faith? Certain documents indicate that they were not. Franz Josef said that Italy was regarding the patrimony of his house with greedy eyes. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg said that the aim of these concessions was to purchase our neutrality, and, therefore, gentlemen, you may applaud us for not having accepted them. Moreover, these concessions, even in their last and belated edition, in no way responded to the objectives of Italian policy, which are, first, the defence of Italianism, the greatest of our duties; secondly, a secure military frontier, replacing that which was imposed upon us in 1866, by which all the

[1] On June 3rd, 1915. Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, June 4th.

gates of Italy are open to our adversaries; thirdly, a strategical situation in the Adriatic less dangerous and unfortunate than that which we have, and of which you have seen the effects in the last few days. All these essential advantages were substantially denied us.

To our minimum demand for the granting of independence to Trieste the reply was to offer Trieste administrative autonomy. Also the question of fulfilling the promises was very important. We were told not to doubt that they would be fulfilled, because we should have Germany's guarantee, but if at the end of the war Germany had not been able to keep it, what would our position have been? And in any case, after this agreement, the Triple Alliance would have been renewed, but in much less favourable conditions, for there would have been one sovereign State and two subject States.

On the day when one of the clauses of the Treaty was not fulfilled, or on the day when the municipal autonomy of Trieste was violated by an Imperial decree or by a lieutenant's orders, to whom should we have addressed ourselves? To our common superior—to Germany?

In view of the Dictator's tactics the Cabinet resigned in a body on the ground that it did not possess that unanimous assent of the Constitutional parties to its international policy which the gravity of the situation demanded. The King reserved his decision and consulted several leading statesmen.

What followed I summed up in a telegram of which the following is an extract [1]:—

The crisis is nearing an end. To-morrow, it is believed, an official communication will be issued announcing the result to the nation, and that result cannot, I am convinced, be other than the maintenance in power of Signor Salandra and Baron Sonnino, who will be authorized by the King to continue to pilot the ship of State through stormy waters to the safe haven to be reached at the close of the war.

In face of the unexampled situation in which the King, country and Cabinet were placed by Prince Bülow's plot and the countenance it received from Italy's most prominent statesman, the Mon-

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 17th, 1915.

arch has fully justified the confidence reposed in him by his subjects. He first sent for Signor Giolitti, of whom it was well known that he lacked the moral courage to accept the responsibility of office in a crisis like the present, and asked him what course, in his opinion, would be the most conducive to concord. The reply was that a Cabinet formed by the President of the Chamber would perhaps restore normal Parliamentary conditions. As the President, although a member of Signor Giolitti's party, is also a man of integrity, and has made no secret of his conviction that a war against the Teutons is become a necessity, this Cabinet, had it been constituted, would not have repudiated the engagements made by Baron Sonnino. But Signor Marcora, after duly deliberating, declined the task and recommended that the Salandra Cabinet should be kept in office.

The next person whom the King summoned was Signor Salandra's Finance Minister, Signor Carcano, who felt unable to separate himself from his colleagues, and suggested that Signor Salandra himself should be entrusted with the mission.

In a word, every person whom the King sent for was a man who, to whatever party he belonged, considered that Italy had no choice but to join the Allied nations in their struggle against the barbarians. From this it is evident that never for a single moment did the Monarch contemplate any solution of the crisis which would have warranted misgivings as to his own and the nation's determination to keep faith with the Allied Powers. As all the voices designated Signor Salandra as the man for the situation, there can be little doubt that upon him will devolve the duty of seeing the country safely through the difficulties and dangers that now beset it.

Seldom in history has an entire nation so emphatically dissociated itself from a leader who was virtually its dictator as the Italian people has separated itself from Signor Giolitti. Even now demonstrations continue everywhere. The streets of Rome are patrolled by troops, but the principal thoroughfares are blocked by dense throngs, shouting "Death to Giolitti!" or cheering for England or Russia.

At this very moment thousands are congregated under my windows demonstrating before the Russian Ambassador, who is my neighbour in the hotel. Herr Erzberger, leader of the German Parliamentary Centre, and friend of the Vatican, was so terrified by the crowd yesterday that he fled from his hotel and took refuge

in the German Embassy, where he will remain until his chief departs.

What I had foreseen took place on Sunday, May 16th.

The King, having consulted the Presidents of both Houses of the Legislature and other eminent Parliamentarians, has refused to accept the resignation of the Salandra Cabinet, which remains in power, and will work out its policy to the end.

The popular enthusiasm is indescribable.

By the day on which Parliament met the parliamentary majority was metamorphosed. The number of sudden conversions was almost miraculous. The Giolittist Chamber had found salvation in patriotism and repentance. I wrote :[1]—

The most memorable day in United Italy's national life has dawned, left its mark on European history, and is now wearing fast into night. It has been a day of general rejoicing and of fateful decisions. The entire nation asserted its will in heart-given accents that thrilled every citizen, and in fiery words that will never be forgotten. The dominant feeling throughout the country was that the feeble discord-riven nation, whose destinies were being shaped by an insidious rival,is dead, and the birth-struggles of a new State, greater, nobler, and self-contained, have begun under the auspices of a patriotic King and courageous Ministers.

Banners and flags were displayed in every street, and all the shops were closed, as the notices explained, "on account of the national rejoicing." Soldiers occupied the city in military fashion, cutting off all approaches to the Parliament House. Only persons provided with tickets were allowed to pass, and even they were excluded if they arrived later than half-past one. As the sitting was fixed for 2 p.m. I could survey at leisure from my seat in the Tribune the representative men and women of every class and condition gathered together in fellowship, their hearts full, their attention undivided, their emotions keyed to the highest patriotic pitch. No scene equal to this in solemnity,

[1] Cf. *Daily Telegraph*, May 22nd, 1915.

grandeur, and fervour has ever been witnessed in the Italian Parliament.

Every one of the numerous galleries for strangers was crowded, the Court, Senate, and diplomacy having contributed its quota. The ambassadors of the Great Powers were still absent, and one could discern no room to accommodate them if they should come. Deputies numbering some 400 were already in their places, now mere units of the nation which, by attracting and compelling, had absorbed all parties and groups and individuals. All but one. The extreme Socialist brotherhood, thirty strong, sat sullen and gloomy in their seats, contributing the sole shadow to so much sunshine.

There was never such a Chamber in Italy. Less than a fortnight ago it had notified its resolve to uphold its party leader, overthrow the Cabinet, and implicitly vote for the alliance with Austria and Germany. To-day it has already renounced its leader, voted confidence in the Government, and approved a bill which provides for war against the militarist empires.

Two Ministers also have passed through a severe and dangerous ordeal, and come forth transfigured. Only ten days ago they were still accounted mere Parliamentarians, hampered with principles dependent upon the will of an irresponsible dictator, but they have since been uplifted on the crest of the patriotic wave and reappeared to-day bright with the reflection of the national halo, and with a reputation for statesmanship such as no Italian has enjoyed since the days of Cavour.

But the triumph of the Cabinet was the handiwork of the nation which rose up as one man, denounced its Dictator, and declared that it had had enough of corruption at home and servility abroad. The remembrance of the fate of Belgium, the destruction of the *Lusitania*, and of the atrocious horrors that had marked Germany's progress brought out the sympathy and stirred the passion of the Italian people. The magnitude of the danger evoked by the Dictator and rendered imminent by the blind obedience of the Legislature awakened the nation's instincts of self-preservation and nerved it to a supreme effort, which can be compared only to that sudden and radical change in individuals which is known as spiritual

conversion. Inflamed by the spirit of wholesome action and drawn irresistibly towards noble ideals, all Italy suddenly became fused in one body and permeated with the consciousness of a single aim. Giolitti fled from Rome, a broken old man. The foul system with which he had associated his name was shattered; the wild sweep of the forces which his enormities had let loose cleared the ground for a new spiritual conformation; the Government declared war against the scientific barbarians; the Parliament voted its confidence in the Government; the Quadruple Alliance was formed, and Italy took her place among the civilized and civilizing nations of Europe.

CHAPTER XXI

ITALY'S DECISION

THE dispute between Italy and the Central Empires was fought out with energy and insight by MM. Sonnino and Salandra on a narrow basis and under the flag of sacred egotism. If these conditions had been maintained it must have ended in a compromise. But the conflict was suddenly clenched by the Italian nation, which, discerning its broader aspects, recognized it as a life and death struggle between scientifically organized barbarism and the easy-going democratic civilization of to-day. And unencumbered by diplomatic formulas, prudential motives or selfish passions, the nation rose and recorded its noble conception of that higher patriotism which, blending with the spiritual life of humanity, recognizes the superiority of moral over material forces. Stirred by an enthusiasm for freedom, brotherhood and progress which received its promptings from everlasting ideals, heedless of dangers and ready for sacrifices, the Italian people chose its part in the face of certain suffering and dubious returns. All this was a revelation for the members of the Cabinet, as well as for the outside world.

Conversant with the quibbles of legal casuistry and eager to reap all the advantages which the treaty under exceptional pressure might be made to yield, the Ministers approved themselves resourceful special pleaders and careful trustees. Gradually they enlarged their country's demands until these far outran the most liberal compensations ever dreamt of by the framers of Clause VII. The deftness and solemnity

with which Sonnino put forward those claims, as though their moderation were almost criminal, nettled and disconcerted the Vienna negociators. The truth would seem to be that the practical consequences drawn by the Consulta from the treaty stipulations were extravagant, while the demands, which a fair and equitable consideration of Austro-Italian relations in all their bearings warranted, would have outstripped the most exacting terms that any Italian Minister would have ventured to put forward.

Carried on within the limits marked off at the outset, as a dispute about the interpretation of a treaty, the odds against its degenerating into an armed conflict were overwhelming. For neither of the negociating parties wanted war. Austria's aversion to it was embodied in the self-abasing offer by which she would fain have bought Italy's neutrality. And that Italy was in no mind for a fierce struggle against the champion military nations of the world was evident to every student of European politics. Peace was prompted by the interests of the nation, desired by the population and imposed by the condition of the national defences.

Down to the fateful month of May Italy had seemed what she was not. And she was too supine to make an effort to become more like what she seemed and less like what she was. Ranking as a Great Power, she could hardly claim to be even a compact nation. She certainly lacked some of the essential qualifications of both. Her territory was so extended and so exposed to attack on the Austrian confines, that it lay virtually at the mercy of the Hapsburgs, whose will she dared not withstand. The extent to which Italy had to bend to that will in domestic as in foreign affairs gives us the measure of her political dependence. Economically, too, she was tied to the Teutons. The sources of her production, her ways of communication, her banks, shipping and commerce were all in the hands of the two

nations which she recognized as her future enemies, but felt constrained to treat as her closest friends. Her army, at no time numerically comparable to those of Russia, Germany, or Austria, was hardly equal to half that of France. And its equipment was lamentably deficient. Her navy, which years before had given promise of great things, now occupied only the seventh place among maritime nations, and seemed doomed to drop lower still. For nothing had been undertaken by the Giolittist party for the national defences, and the Giolittist party, although no longer in power, was still the real if unofficial Government.

Those were some of the characteristics which affected Italy's relations with foreign States. Others which went to the deepest roots of her national life were even more sinister. The nation could scarcely be said to be compact. Homogeneous in race, it was composed of peoples foreign to each other in sentiment, needs and strivings. The population, which included conscious Italians, was composed mostly of Piedmontese, Lombarda, Sicilians, Tuscans, Neapolitans, Venetians, Sardinians, whose fatherland was the province in which they were born, not the kingdom of which it formed an integral part. Provincial patriotism, known as regionalism, clung like ivy to the fabric of the new State and deprived it of its cement. Here regionalism had an economic base, there it was political, everywhere it worked as an obstacle or a corrosive. Patriotism based on racial consciousness and national purpose played a preposterously small part in the affairs of the country, and few were aware of its absence. A Great Power only by courtesy, Italy was a nation only in name.

The parliamentary machine, supplied with poor materials, turned out wretched products. The choice of men was extremely circumscribed. Italy is a Catholic country, and the papal ordinance forbidding Catholics to take an active part in the general elections bereft the nation of the services

of some of its most vigorous and trustworthy citizens, and transformed many of them into enemies. Inferior elements thus thrust into the foreground had to be drawn upon and utilized to the detriment of the community. Before it had had a quarter of a century's existence the parliamentary system had degenerated into an Italian Tammany with a boss at its head called " the Dictator " and named Giovanni Giolitti. Since his advent legislative effort was too often detached from national aims and the promotion of the general weal. Corruption in all its forms furnished the mainspring of parliamentary action. Patriotism as a motive point dwindled to a mere point. In this way the forces of the nation were split up into parliamentarism, Giolittism, regionalism, socialism, clericalism, anticlericalism and patriotism. This last sentiment was the rarest of all, and the least self-asserting. Indeed, in most of the struggles it was wholly lacking.

An anti-patriotic attitude brought down no disgrace on the heads of those who yielded to temptation and forgot or even bartered away their country. Men and women of illustrious families denied their own nation with effrontery; " Long live Turkey " was the cry of certain socialists during the campaign, although Italian soldiers had just been crucified by the Turks at Shara-Shat. " It is not for you to kiss my hand," exclaimed an Italian countess to a young Austrian diplomatist,[1] " the hand of an Italian. It is for us Italians to kiss yours. Austria is our guide and our benefactress." Even men whose fathers' names are writ in letters of gold in the annals of united Italy toadied to Macchio and Bülow, supplied them with information which sometimes involved the disclosure of State secrets, ran down the patriotic Ministers of Salandra's Cabinet, and generally demeaned themselves with less dignity than well-trained lackeys.

Of this obsequious current the Giolittist party, led by the

[1] At the *Grand Hotel* in Rome, in May, 1915.

political syndicate that ruled the realm, was the able exponent. The Dictator's system of government depended for its stability on his steering clear of all foreign complications. Accordingly the maintenance of peace was its sheet anchor of safety, and to that he bent all his efforts. That he also found arguments which quieted any untoward qualms or misgivings that may have arisen in his mind may fairly be assumed, for in everything that concerned the international relations of his country Giolitti was a simplicist. Master of the domestic situation, he had for years adjusted his economic, financial, military and naval policy to the attainment of " Tammany " ends, confident that he could always avoid quarrels with the only foreign States with which Italy's relations lacked cordiality—France and Austria. So sure was he of dispelling every danger that might arise, that he, of set purpose, left the national defences in the disorganized plight to which the campaign against Turkey had reduced them, and the years that preceded the war, instead of being a time of preparation, spiritual and military, had been a period of sloth and presumption. Giolittism, become a cancerous growth on the body politic, had diverted the national resources to its own uses and usurped possession of the organs of the State.

But Giolitti did not create his system out of nothing. He had found suitable materials to his hand. Nay, he himself is the product rather than the creator of Italian parliamentarism, which is perhaps one of the most repulsive forms of constitutional government engendered by unripe democracy and individual rapacity. It is true that he ruled Parliament, but it is also a fact that in turn Parliament swayed him. Had the soil been unpropitious, the tree could never have brought forth fruit. Chamber and Dictator are correlates of each other. All this was well known to Prince von Bülow when, setting out for Rome, he undertook to exorcise the danger of war. It was because of his close

acquaintance with Italian politics, and of his intimacy with its leaders, that he felt able to reassure his friends as to the outcome of his exertions.

Between Germany and Italy (he said) war is excluded, whether my mission succeeds or fails. The only question turns upon Italy's relations with Austria. To get the two to blow off their superfluous wind in the council room is my mission. And at present success appears likely enough. Personally I feel confident. But the chapter of accidents is always longer in war time than in peace.[1]

There is no good ground for supposing that this forecast would have been even partially belied by events, had Prince Bülow's Austrian colleagues played up to his hand at the outset of negociations. If in lieu of haggling they had made their biggest offer at once, before the national conscience had been stirred by German enormities, and the latent humanitarian tendencies of the Italian people had been struck into life and action by the lightning of noble passion.

Towards the middle of March the German Ambassador was full of hope. That is to say, he was convinced that Italy's demands and Austria's offers could be brought into equilibrium without calling on Giolitti to put undue pressure on the Cabinet. But time and tide, which wait not for the convenience of men, were left out of account by Austria. And under the word Austria we are to understand, in the first instance, Franz Josef, whose hands hold the threads of the foreign policy of the Empire. He and some of the archdukes and other influential personages disapproved the notion of ceding any territory to Italy. Burian and his colleagues finally succeeded in vanquishing this unwillingness, but by the time the Court came round to their views

[1] The informants from whom I had these particulars were friends of von Bülow's in Rome. Since then their statements have been confirmed by Prince Bülow himself, who confided the causes of his failure to Count Voltolini, an anti-Italian publicist.

the opportunity had vanished. Bülow asserts that the changed military situation, especially after the capture of Przemysl, caused Italy's demands to go up, and that after the national frontier line the Consulta coveted the strategical boundary line. The force and weakness of this change may be measured by the dispatches published in the Italian Green Book. When Vienna finally returned its reply, fresh discord arose on the subject of Trieste. Austria was for keeping that city and district, bestowing on its inhabitants autonomy of a kind, whereas Italy insisted on all its ties with the Hapsburgs being cut excepting the economic. At this critical moment there came the tempting offer of the Entente, whereupon Bülow, despairing of bringing Austria and Italy into line on the basis of negociations, conceived the plan of a state-stroke in Italy and enlisted the services of Giolitti for the purpose. And Giolitti's certainty of success was admitted by everybody. The plan was frustrated by the anti-parliamentary revolution that was precipitated in Italy. This remarkable upheaval was a result of that flash of clear vision which intense emotion can bestow upon nations as upon individuals at some turning-point in their career, when the whole current of existence has to be changed. Bülow called it a demonstration of the streets, and ascribed it to the reaction against the clumsy devices of his countryman, Erzberger, the Catholic deputy and friend of the Imperial Chancellor, who strove to undermine the Salandra Cabinet with the help of the Vatican. But the real cause of the transformation was no mere mechanical action, but an inward prompting of the nation's soul.

On that revolution no one could have reckoned, and perhaps, least of all, the members of the Italian Cabinet. For they had done nothing to prepare the public mind for the fateful decision to be taken, or to fortify the nation's moral fibre to bear the heavy sacrifices that awaited it. The periodical Press had had no direct contact with the State authorities.

On the contrary, Baron Sonnino considered it one of the essential duties of his department to cut off all communication between the two, and he discharged that duty conscientiously. Nobody knew, therefore, with anything approaching certitude, what turn the conversations with Vienna were taking, and most people believed the lying story propagated by the venal Press and by Erzberger and his paid agents, that an understanding with Austria was accepted in principle, and that the war-spectre had been laid definitively. Hence the ideas and the sentiments of the nation constituted an unknown, an incalculable factor. And when the transfigured people arose, smote Giolitti, and made an end of his infamous process of national degeneration, few were more astonished than certain members of the Government.

One may say, therefore, that it was Austria's temporizing and irritating methods which, technically speaking, marred the diplomatic development of a situation that was among the most interesting on record. For Italy was formally committed to a pacific settlement of her claims and a renewal of the Triple Alliance, if Austria acquiesced in certain conditions, which, in Prince Bülow's estimation, she could and should have fulfilled. And if, instead of splitting hairs and gaining time by losing opportunity, Franz Josef and his Government had come to the point at once and made a serious offer to Italy, the Consulta would not have rejected it off-hand. And if King Victor's Ministers had spurned a fair proposal, Giolitti would then have had a strong case against the Cabinet, and would have been able to set it before a nation for which the hour of passionate insight and high emotion had not yet struck. Manifestly, therefore, promptitude and straightforwardness were the essential conditions of such success as the Austrian Government could hope for, whereas dawdling and double dealing were the expedients to which they had recourse.

An Italian deputy, who during the conversations supported

Giolitti in good faith, believing that peace with honour was an attainable and desirable end, wrote a letter after the publication of the Green Book to repent and explain his conduct.

If Austria (he urges) had not imagined that she could reckon upon Giolitti's omnipotence in the Chamber and at Court, she would have given way in time. And time is one of the circumstances that change cases. We may take it that if the concessions which Austria, with tardy repentance, made only in the middle of May had been offered of her own free will in August, 1904, they would have caused Franz Josef to be acclaimed in the public places of Italy and would have obliged us to fight side by side with Austria. If they had not been put forward until January they would have disarmed us. Assented to in May and in a form that insulted us all, they drove us into war. That is the truth.[1]

So much for the worth of promptness. As to the specific value of straightforwardness there may be a difference of opinion among diplomatists, but no one who knows anything of the workings of Sonnino's mind will call in question the decisive importance which sincerity had for him and the adverse poise which double dealing imparts to his judgment of persons and causes depending upon it for success. As he was kept cognisant of the doings of the authorities of the Hapsburg Monarchy, he must have had wind of many enlightening instances of their insincerity, and he needed no help to draw his own conclusions respecting the value and finality of any arrangement he and they might come to. Probably he was also aware that in the first half of March, while Prince Bülow, full of affection for Italy, was still confident that the distance between what she demanded and what Austria could grant her might easily be bridged, Franz Josef's Government were making ready for war against Italy. And their preparations were assuming a form the most odious that an Italian patriot could well conceive.

[1] A. Petrillo, Deputy of the Chamber. Cf. *Giornale d'Italia*, May 24th, 1915.

On March 14th the Governor of Tyrol and Vorarlberg penned a letter to the Minister of the Interior about a scheme for the deportation *en bloc* of all Franz Josef's Italian subjects dwelling in those provinces. It was a vast project that brings back to one's mind the transportation of whole nations in Old Testament history.

> Congruously with the dispositions taken for the evacuation of the fortified places of Trento and Riva (writes the Governor), and with the intentions of the superior military commands to remove at least two thousand individuals of those populations, besides 15,000 refugees from South Tyrol and other Italian subjects of the Empire to the number of 12,000 . . . It is a question altogether of more than 40,000 persons.[1]

It was by these and similar means that Austria forfeited a position which at the outset was distinctly favourable, and did not become precarious until March, 1914—nor quite hopeless, so long as the decision lay in the hands of the Italian Government, official or secret. It was only when the anti-parliamentary revolution took the matter out of the hands of Giolitti, the Parliament and the official trustees of the nation and declared for war against Austria, that Prince Bülow] abandoned all hope of hindering the outbreak of war between Italy and Austria, and had to content himself with the conviction that no fear need be entertained of hostilities breaking out between Italy and Germany.

The entry of the nation on the scene as *deus ex machina* was but a sudden and transient episode, a lightning flash which, searing the loftiest tree, burns a house but leaves everything else as it was. Ministers having taken their cue as to general policy from the nation, which repudiated its head and representatives, were left to their own resources in dealing with the details of ways and means. And here

[1] The letter is long and instructive, but too detailed to be given in extenso. Cf. *Mattino*, September 12th, 1915, and September 13th, 1915.

they moved warily along the old lines, considering themselves the nation's stewards and trustees, risking as little as possible, leaving nothing to chance, and cultivating meticulous prudence to an extent which their foreign critics deprecated as overdone. Once the popular fever had subsided, the Government, taking stock of diplomatic traditions, found itself confronted with the circumstance that, however bitterly the nation hated Austria in the past, there had never been any like feeling against Germany, whose status as a virtual enemy was wholly due to her alliance with the Hapsburgs. On the contrary, Germany and Italy had long been friends, and more than once had fought side by side as allies.

Their antagonism of to-day, it was argued, is factitious and short-lived. Even Treitschke, the Prussian patriot, acknowledged this, and lamented this empoisoning of Germany's intercourse with the Italian people who are more closely related to her than any other. Maximilian Harden and others recognize that Italy's war against Austria is only the logical continuation of that healthy process of national growth which Prussia and Italy began together. "Italy is naturally Germany's friend." This has been the prevalent doctrine in Prussia and Italy for generations, and one cannot expect it to be discarded over night. It is only fair to make allowance for it when about to pass judgment on the policy which culminated in war against Austria, while leading only to a diplomatic rupture with Germany. Austria alone holds Italian soil, misgoverns Italian men, keeps a Damocles sword exerlastingly suspended over Italy's head. It would be childish to make Germany responsible for her ally's folly. Again, it is part of the stateman's functions to look far ahead, and Italian Ministers peered into the plight of Europe, and of their own country in particular, after the war. Aware how dependent Italy has been on Germany for that economic sustenance which supported the limbs while enfeebling the vital organs of the

body politic, they may well have felt perturbed when forecasting her condition after an exhausting struggle which will dry up most of the alternative sources of her economic subsistence. Germany, too, was commoved, seeing that the sudden suspension of her work of interpenetration endangered her investments of one kind and another in Italy, which were valued at several milliards of francs. Hence, German statesmen were anxious to ensure these against the risks of war. And as the right of confiscating these possessions might have tempted Italy to open hostilities, the German Ambassador set himself to displace it. And he succeeded.

After the denunciation of the Triple Alliance Treaty, Prince Bülow and Baron Sonnino drew up and signed a remarkable convention by which each country agreed to respect the private property of the subjects of the other. And as the Germans possess in Italy property valued at several hundreds of millions sterling, whereas the Italians have but modest interests in Germany, the significance of the convention is manifest. Hence the mere announcement of its existence produced a powerful impression even in Rome. In the month of July an important meeting was held in Switzerland to fix the ways and means of carrying out the provisions of this convention, in so far as they related to German property in Italy. Two well-known personages of the Berlin financial world were present. The capital of which it was question was represented not merely by commercial and industrial concerns, but also by immovable property, and by merchandise then deposited in the holds of interned vessels. Krupp's firm was the principal concern interested in the last-mentioned goods.

Several Italian journals ascribe Germany's attitude of expectancy and reluctance to declare war to commercial motives. "The economic breakdown which will overtake Germany at the close of the war will have contributed to

deter her, if not from provocative words, at least from provocative acts."[1] Like motives, one may object, should have produced like effects in the case of Russia, seeing that the Tsardom had also become an economic colony of the German Empire. To that the answer is easy. When war against Russia broke out, Germany's confidence in a complete and speedy victory rendered such precautions superfluous. The German Press, on the other hand, gives a similar explanation of Italy's unwillingness to proceed to extremes with Germany. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, for example, writes :—

> Officially Italy is endeavouring to act upon the circumstance that with Germany diplomatic relations are broken off, but no declaration of war has been promulgated. The censor suppresses all articles of the Jacobin Press in favour of declaring war. Its obvious intention is to perpetuate the present uncertain question of right. And yet there is no doubt that the outbreak of hostilities is a question of fact, not of right.[2]

It is highly interesting, from the point of view of international law and politics, to note how neighbourly the intercourse between the two nations has been since the opening of the campaign against Austria. In the summer of 1915 the Prussian Minister of Commerce issued a circular announcing to all whom it might concern that there existed no prohibition to export German wares of innocuous character to Italy ; that, on the contrary, the exportation of goods which could not be applied to military purposes was to be encouraged, in the economic interests of Germany !

And it is amusing to peruse the objections raised to that pronouncement by certain patriotic press organs of the Fatherland. One of the most influential of these [3] complains that the Italian Government is lacking in reciprocity ;

[1] *Giornale d'Italia*, June 25th, 1915.

[2] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 8th, 1915. *Corriere della Sera*, June 9th, 1915.

[3] The *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

otherwise it would not have suspended the service of coupons for its loans in Germany as soon as war broke out, nor suspended the payment of annuities, bills of exchange and other liabilities and transactions by the intermediary of Swiss firms. These restrictions, the journal argues, are not in keeping with the convention concluded between Germany and Italy.

As indications of the strength of the roots struck by Teutonism in Italy, and of the timidity of the Italian State when face to face with the task of plucking them out, it may be worth contrasting the provisions of Germany's legislation respecting the relations of her subjects who owe money to Italians with Italy's enactments about the rights and duties of Italians who have incurred debts to Germans and Austrians. In Italy the law that was in force in normal times is still valid, the only modification since introduced turning upon a detail of procedure in cases where Austrians are plaintiffs.[1] This decree merely deprives Austrians of their right to sue Italian debtors. It confers therefore on Italian subjects the privilege of withholding payment from Austrian subjects, but it imposes no duty. To pay his debts to his Austrian and German creditors, therefore, is not a misdemeanour on the part of an Italian in the eye of the law. Consequently Italian firms and individuals desirous of preserving their friendly relations with Austrian houses can and do discharge their debts scrupulously. The ways and means of accomplishing this are many and well known. As Switzerland is the seat of most of the clearing-houses which transact business of that nature, it is natural that the Italian Exchange on Switzerland should have fallen to over 20 per cent., despite the circumstance that Italy's exports to the latter republic greatly exceed her imports from it.

Germany's mode of action, on the contrary, is thorough.

[1] The Decree of June 24th, 1915.

Fixed by decrees specially promulgated against Great Britain [1] and France,[2] it does not merely give German debtors the right, but imposes on them the obligation of denying payment to enemy creditors, of refusing to deliver goods, scrip, money directly or indirectly, and it punishes disobedience with imprisonment up to three years, and a fine not exceeding 50,000 marks, unless circumstances should call for a severer punishment. And this penal enactment is applicable to all banks and financial houses that may be guilty of aiding and abetting German debtors to discharge their pecuniary liabilities to enemy creditors.

Italy looks upon Germany more benignantly than upon Austria as a country with which she is not at war. Her legislation not only permits Italian debtors to pay their German creditors openly, but allows the latter to sue them in Italian lawcourts and compel payment. In Germany, on the contrary, the rupture of diplomatic relations was held to be a motive sufficient to suspend the rights of foreigners to exact their pecuniary claims.[3]

It is not easy to blink the painful solicitude which Italy, conscious of her enonomic weakness, displays during her struggle with Austria to keep in neighbourly contact with Germany at any rate at some fixed points. Caution, in its extreme form, would seem to be the characteristic of Italian statesmanship. Baron Sonnino in particular, who enjoyed and deserved a reputation for careful financial management, is gifted with all the prudence of an experienced politician without the occasional imprudence of the statesman. And therein lies the crack of cleavage between genial direction and plodding care.

It is not given to the most far-sighted student of politics to foresee what developments fickle circumstance may yet

[1] *Bekanntmachungen* of September 30th, 1914.
[2] *Bekanntmachungen* of October 20th, 1914.
[3] Cf. *Reichsanzeiger*, No. 56.

import into Italy's curious relations with Germany. On the one hand, the Government and the Press are most anxious to make it clear that their war is no mere expedition to redeem Italian territory from Austria's yoke, but whole-hearted participation in the great struggle of nations for all that civilized humanity holds dearest. This copartnership confers the right to an equal share in the spoils of war. On the other hand, the ways and means of effecting this co-operation being left to the judgment of military experts, these may decide that by restricting her efforts to a powerful offensive against Austria in the unredeemed provinces, Italy can offer the most useful help to her allies compatible with the maintenance of those principles of self-protection which fittingly take precedence of all other considerations. In this forecast there is no implied censure, but merely an inference from a sequence of facts. On the contrary, Italy, as distinguished from her leaders, deserves credit for higher motives than those of "sacred egotism." It was thirst of liberty, justice, brotherhood with progressive humanity that urged the nation forward more than the desire to possess itself of Trentino and Trieste. That the Government, actuated by "sacred egotism," should take its inspiration from the General Staff, which makes prudence the corner-stone of its schemes, does not vitiate the noble impulse of the Italian race.

In conclusion, it may be well to point to one circumstance which might be urged for the prudence and precautions of the Italian State. It is this :—The currents set in motion by Germany's crime against humanity have drawn many peoples from their old moorings and brought some of them into close relations with each other so that the lion may be said to have lain down with the lamb. But the cause of these touching changes will, many Italians hold, cease to be operative after the war. Whether, for instance, the present reconciliation between the French and Italian nations will,

as it certainly could, be wrought into an efficient instrument of international progress is, to their thinking and mine, in need of further demonstration. The consequences of certain historic facts are inevitable and reach far. Each of them in turn is a source of other consequences which cannot be done away with, and therefore have to be faced. And in Italy signs are not wanting even now that the colonial and economic orientation of the country is towards the German Empire rather than the French Republic. National like individual kinks cannot be straightened out overnight.

From the foregoing pages it may be inferred that the view put forward so often during the negociations between Rome and Vienna ascribing Italy's decision to certain unexplained and subtle influences exerted by Entente diplomacy in Rome is without foundation in fact. Baron Sonnino is, of all public men in Italy, the least accessible to suasion or stimulus in matters of national moment. Indeed, the mere suspicion that pressure of any kind was being used or contemplated would have damaged the cause in which it was employed. Signor Sonnino gave the foreign diplomatists no inkling as to how the conversations were going forward. He held that it was a matter solely for the countries and negociators directly concerned. Hence from the official intercourse which the transaction of current business obliged him to carry on with the ambassadors in Rome, allusions to the progress or the deadlock of the negociations were rigidly eliminated. Characteristic is the circumstance that a certain Cabinet Minister who, being the friend of one of the Ambassadors, was believed capable of involuntary indiscretions, was suddenly deprived by Sonnino of the information which he had been regularly receiving on the subject. As I wrote at the time, quiescence and dignity were the qualities called for in Rome during those days of enervating suspense, and the diplomatists of the Entente were abun-

dantly endowed with them. Evidences of rarer gifts may be looked for later on when Italy's active co-operation on other fronts than that of the unredeemed territory is needed and solicited by the Allies. The relations between Italy and the Anglo-French Entente are far from being what they seem, and the scope for a complete and permanent betterment is great enough to attract and satisfy the highest diplomatic ambition. In this domain, however, as in that of statesmanship, it behoves our nation, while hoping for the best, to prepare diligently for the alternative.

From the outset the writer of these pages was profoundly convinced that there could be but one ending to the diplomatic dispute between Italy and Austria, that it would be war with the Hapsburg Monarchy, and that for various reasons it would be confined to those two States. These opinions were embodied in various telegrams and letters published and unpublished.[1]

Among the reasons which appeared to him peremptory was the obvious impossibility of reconciling the permanent aims of Austria's policy with Italy's vital interests. The incompatibility of the two had assumed so many concrete and minatory forms during the preceding twenty years that there was no hope left of a sincere and lasting accord. Even the duties and inducements emanating from the Triple Alliance had been ruthlessly thrown into the background by the iron necessities of that Teutonic policy. It spurred Austria to organize a war against her own ally whose policy she was systematically thwarting while pretending to promote. The thirty-two years of the Alliance demonstrated the alarming thesis that so long as the framework of political

[1] Nearly every message in which the probability was expressed that the war would at any rate for a long time be confined to Italy and Austria was held back by the Italian or the British authorities, although the reasons assigned by me for this restriction were creditable to Italy.

Europe remained unchanged, Italy could not hope to grow or thrive, and might consider herself lucky if she were not disabled for all time by her former mistress and present ostensible ally and covert enemy. Furthermore, the pseudo-alliance which deceived only the simple-minded was to my thinking no longer capable of being galvanized into new life after Italy's two refusals to conspire with Austria against the liberties of Europe. Those acts of rebellion would not, could not, go unexpiated. If the Central Powers came out victorious, their pæans of victory would be Italy's funeral knell. If they were worsted they would strive to compensate themselves on Italian battlefields for reverses sustained elsewhere, and attributing to craven fear Italy's neutrality, which had been prompted by prudence overdone. And neither from France nor from any other Power could Italy then look for help or even for moral sympathy.

Many Italians hoped and many feared that prudence would gain the upper hand. In official circles this anticipation was entertained with satisfaction. To those who objected that the nation under Cavour had gone into the Crimean War without any direct interest in the issues that brought it about, Italian officials made answer :—

That is true. There was a period, and it lasted quite long enough, during which our ill-starred people had to risk all in order to gain something. When Italy's hopes and aspirations were embodied in Piedmont and a defeat would have scattered them to the four winds of heaven, we were not faint-hearted. We then staked Piedmont, for the sake of Italy. Later, when, having annexed Lombardy, Emilia, Romagna and Tuscany, we had formed a nucleus of Northern and Central Italy, we hazarded it all through the expeditions in the South. For it still behoved us to seize every opportunity to put together the fragments of our nation. After success had crowned that enterprise, leaving, however, Venice and Rome outside the kingdom, we again felt that the opportunity which the year 1866 brought to our door must not be thrown away. And once more we ventured our all on a war for which we were but poorly equipped. Again

fortune favoured us. But, Venice safe under the House of Savoy, Rome remained without, an irresistible attraction and a formidable danger. Then for the first time the Italian State, turning a new leaf, displayed that prudence which grows with the success of strivings and the realization of desires. We have not yet had to regret the new tactics, nor have we now adequate reasons for changing them.[1]

But those motives of prudence were weakened by the promptings of national interests, the exceptional character of the opportunity, and the moral certainty that it would never return. Even Salandra's " sacred egotism " found an irresistible stimulus to warlike action in the attitude and policy of the Central Empires. And the generous impulse of the Italian people turned the scale.

[1] Cf. *Giornale d'Italia*, September 14th, 1915.

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner, Frome and London