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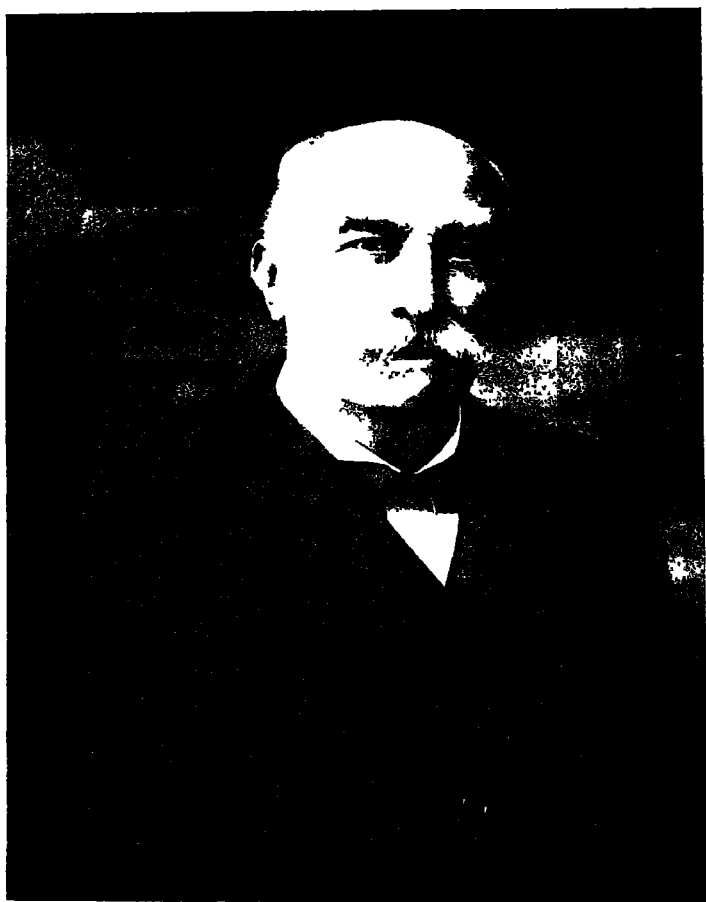
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MEMOIRS OF MY LIFE



MEMOIRS OF MY LIFE
BY GIOVANNI GIOLITTI

Translated from the Italian
by EDWARD STORER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY O. MALAGODI
Editor of La Tribuna

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1876-1922

	KING	PREMIER	FOREIGN MINISTER	THE POPE
1876	Victor Emmanuel II.	Depretis	. Melegari	. Pius IX.
1877		Depretis	. Depretis	
1878	Humbert I. . .	Cairoli .	. Corti .	. Leo XIII.
1879		Depretis .	. Depretis	
1879		Cairoli .	. Cairoli .	
1881		Depretis .	. Mancini	
1885		Depretis .	. di Robilant	
1887		Crispi .	. Crispi .	
1890		Crispi .	. Blanc .	
1891		di Rudini	. di Rudini	
1892		Giolitti .	. Brin .	
1893		Crispi .	. Blanc	
1896		di Rudini	. Sermonetta	
1898		Pelloux .	. Canevaro	
1899		Pelloux .	. Visconti- Venosta	
1900	Victor Emmanuel III.	Saracco .	. Visconti- Venosta	
1901		Zanardelli	. Prinetti	
1903		Giolitti .	. Tittoni	. Pius X.
1904		Fortis .	. Tittoni	
1905		Fortis .	. San Giuliano	
1906		Sonnino .	. Guicciardini	
1909		Giolitti .	. Tittoni	
1910		Sonnino .	. Guicciardini	
1911		Luzzatti .	. San Giuliano	
		Giolitti .	. San Giuliano	
1914				. Benedict XV.
1915		Salandra .	. Sonnino	
1916		Boselli .	. Sonnino	
1917		Orlando .	. Sonnino	
1919		Nitti .	. Scialoja	
1920		Giolitti .	. Sforza .	
1921		Bonomi .	. della Toretta	
		Facta .	. Schanzer	
1922		Mussolini	. Mussolini	. Pius XI.

INTRODUCTION

GIOVANNI GIOLITTI : THE MAN AND HIS WORK

SINCE Signor Giolitti has wished that my name should appear with his in this volume of *Memoirs*, in consideration of such collaboration as I have given, I must state here precisely to what this collaboration has amounted.

The best thing I have done in connection with the book is to have been successful in persuading him to write it. The matter came about in the following way. Last year when paying Signor Giolitti a visit at Bardonnechia, I asked him in the course of a conversation what truth there was in the rumour that he had written his memoirs during the war.

"There is no truth in the report," he replied. "I have never even thought of it." When I asked him why he had not considered the idea, he answered: "What would be the good of it? I have always sought to do the best for my country's interest. Now that my work, such as it has been, is ended, I cannot see any advantage to be gained in writing a book about it."

I, however, repeated my suggestion, and said that his long experience at the helm of the Italian State since its foundation could not but have an historical and exemplary value, and in the end, I was able to bring him to my way of thinking. I offered, moreover, to lend any assistance in connection with the technical and formal part of the book's composition. It was thus that I came to have a small part in the volume.

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My collaboration has been entirely extrinsic and impersonal, and has almost wholly consisted in getting together documents both private and public, of which there were necessarily a great number, and in assisting in what Signor Giolitti jestingly called "archæological excavations." The phrasing of the book, the written or dictated words, the corrections and emendations, are the work of the narrator himself. I think it important thus to define the extent of my collaboration, because on the first announcement of the memoirs, it was stated in the press that I had assumed the responsibility of giving the book a so-called literary form. I should certainly hesitate long before perpetrating such a sacrilege. Giovanni Giolitti, author of a mass of political prose, as may be seen from his speeches, has a style of his own, which is neither that of a purist of the good old time, nor of an up-to-date Futurist writer. This style of his corresponds perfectly to his mentality as a man of action, as any one knows who has had occasion to have private discourse with him. To-day Giolitti, in publishing his memoirs, widens the circle of those conversations with the calm and simple words of this narration, which will make him better known to the public of our time.

Giovanni Giolitti, notwithstanding his predominance and activity during so many years in the most important events of our history, has until recently been practically an unknown personality for the Italian public, which has been content to imagine him as a colossus of a State functionary, a monster of bureaucracy. This atmosphere of ignorance of the real personality of the man has been due in part to the work of polemics and partly to the rivalries and interests owing to which, during his life and often for some time after, a politician cannot appear before his world as a calm impersonal figure, to be judged from an intellectual point of view. In addition to these explanations, we must look for deeper and more general reasons.

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The first, in my opinion, lies in the limited understanding on the part of the Italian public of the force of the genius of action, in comparison with that appertaining to art and science, rhetoric and sophistry. Our public possesses an innate and sincere devotion, tending sometimes towards a slightly fatuous mysticism, for artistic or scientific genius, whose manifestations it understands well enough and whose presence it instinctively feels. It also lends itself to a transitory and superficial admiration of sophistical ingenuity and rhetorical virtuosity, of which we have examples in debates of the *curia* and pulpit eloquence. The Italian people at one time could recognise a fine painting at first sight, and even to-day possesses a sensitive and ready ear for music, but alas! it appears more prone to appreciate a fine but useless work of art than practical and useful work. To anyone like myself, who has had in youth to detach himself from our national life and interests, the life of another country and the difference in the point of view of other nationalities comes as a revelation. In England, for example, appreciation of artistic and scientific genius pales in popular imagination before manifestations of the genius of action, which includes great politicians and soldiers, who are the recipients of an universal and respectful admiration which to us would be scandalous, an admiration which is also accorded to creators of practical inventions and financiers who have for a moment held the city in their thrall or legally accomplished some Napoleonic invasion of the public's pocket. With us action, to be understood and admired, must have other attractions. It must be highly coloured as the tarts sold on booths at village fairs. We, almost unconscious of the continuous activity in normal life, realise and admire its dramatic moments and exceptional forms, which are not always the most important, even if they produce the strongest impression. Garibaldi and Mazzini were undoubtedly great men of action in the most genuine meaning of the word, but certainly the tasselled red cap of

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the one and the air of conspiracy and the symbols of the other gave them a large measure of popularity, in comparison with that won by the wide but severely contained activity of the "man in a frock coat," Cavour, whose work lay in Parliament and in administration of the law. It is strange that in the first attempt at a more real appreciation of Giovanni Giolitti one perceives a certain mystical transformation of his personality. Now in every genius, whatever may be the sphere of his activity, there is always something mystical and transcendental. Such a man is always a little *fuor de l'uman uso*, if for no other reason than for the singularity of the inclinations and actions from which his natural active force is derived. We must, however, abstain from mistaking this fact for an explanation. It does not reveal, but rather hides. . . . We must penetrate beyond that veil, and understand as far as we can the man as he is, in all the complex play of his virtues and defects, his strength and his weakness.

Other reasons of a quite personal character must be considered with the foregoing general ones. Born of a people with a love of colour and gaiety, Giovanni Giolitti has on the contrary a preference for the drab and severe. His intolerance of pomp and ceremony is notorious. One might say that this man, although it was a part of his life work to be always in the front of the stage, had observed in spirit the motto of the mediæval monk, *Bene vixit qui bene latuit*. He has sought, as far as possible, to hide his personality behind his work, which has been carried out objectively. One might see in this repugnance to publicity the modesty of the strong man which unconsciously struggles with an assertive pride. It will be remembered how at a political crisis at the time of the Libyan War which especially lent itself to popular demonstration, he had the courage to throw cold water on the lighting of Bengal fires. In a few words he addressed a crowd that was giving him an ovation, advising the people to engage in practical patriotism, each man

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turning to his allotted task as he himself was doing. When he made a political speech in which one might well have expected the war and its aspects to figure prominently, he dismissed the topic in four sentences, declaring with his fine humour that no Foreign Minister had ever regretted being silent. He then passed on to internal questions, which could not but involve him in difficulties on account of their controversial character. Anyone who has enjoyed the pleasure of his conversation knows that in speaking of his work it is his custom to refer to it in the simplest and most modest terms, so much so that more than one ingenuous person must have left him with the fond illusion that after all governing a country is one of the simplest things in this world.

If Cavour then entered our public life wrapped in the diplomatic austerity of the frock-coat, Giovanni Giolitti came into it by the service door, wearing the modest coat of a subordinate.

The absence of responsibility, the surrendered will, in the life of bureaucracy, does not seem the likeliest training for that post, where responsibility is greatest, and where the will must be kept permanently in a state of tension. However, leaving literary sophistication aside, let us look at the matter both in the general and the personal aspect.

Giovanni Giolitti began his career proper about 1860. At that time, the administrative construction of the Italian State was being built up on the ruins of the small States which no longer existed. This constructive work had to be undertaken after the heroic revolutionary period, whose febrile atmosphere was little suited for a labour of conservative reconstruction. It had been a period of violent activity, a period more concerned with destruction than creation, and great patience and perseverance was required for the necessary work. Nor was it easy to find men of the type willing to consecrate twelve hours a day to such a task, which though of

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the first importance, was at the same time obscure. This young man, not yet twenty years old, who looked even younger than he was, revealed himself as a giant at such a labour, and the most important men of the time, Sella, Lanza, Minghetti and Depretis fought for his services, calling him to collaborate with them in great undertakings, placing him at the head of commissions and entrusting him with the direction of organisations, in which he had under him functionaries who had reached the highest grades in the public service. The preparation of the new Civil Code, the reorganisation of the taxation system, the communal and provincial laws found in him their chief organiser and inspirer. The quick, tireless energy of the young man, afterwards recognised and admired in the political arena, might seem to suffer a humiliation in this devotion to heavy bureaucratic work, this putting in motion for the first time so many wheels of administrative service, but it was during that daily discipline in reality, learning to know itself, gathering and maturing its forces, forces which otherwise might have become dissipated and deformed in a too premature political use. This work of Giovanni Giolitti's was that of the pioneer, and even before he rose to power or entered Parliament, these daily labours of an obscure State employee had taken on a highly political character, and become part and parcel of the new State. So one comes to understand how after the completion of this immense work, the old statesman, discussing one day the problem of the bureaucracy, said that if the State employees gave three good hours' work every day, their number could be reduced by half.

On its personal side, this apprenticeship resolved itself into a singular and perhaps unique preparation for the man's subsequent responsibilities as statesman. Thus in speaking of the early part of his life, he recalls his horror of the abstract, whether grammatical or arithmetical, philosophic or professional. Even at that time he sought, as if by instinct, the

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concrete in the matter of studies and literary exercises, and later his administration of State affairs was essentially practical. During the course of his early life he learnt to know the working of the immense organism, and at the same time came his opportunity of studying men in their various categories of functionaries, citizens, tax-payers, parliamentarians and business men. He was thus able to acquire a wide understanding of their vices and virtues. Unlike Ulysses, he never travelled; his post was always at his study table carrying out that hard daily work, that continuous assembling of minute facts which, when united, make up the sum of a country's life, as well as that of a generation, permanent, though seemingly changeable. In that constant struggle to dominate and organise affairs, he, more than any other man of his time, was repelled by the treacherous and dangerous fascination of doctrinaire ideas. In contact day by day with this reality, often mediocre and monotonous, he succeeded in clothing it with his native sense of reality, learnt how to expose vague emptiness and generic formulas, which for too many politicians are the coin of daily currency, and acquired the habit of never passing from idea to idea, from argument to argument, but of dealing always with facts.

His bureaucratic experience has been everywhere recognised as having furnished him with an excellent preparation for the minute details of the machinery of State. Actually, moreover, there must be attributed to it the wider merit of having given him a special trend of mind which was undoubtedly natural to him, but which might have been damaged by the doctrinaire academism which is too often the only school for politicians of our age. This education had the merit of developing Giolitti into one of the most formidable realists we have ever met, and producing in him a mentality which never lost sight of facts or allowed itself to be deceived by appearances, whether menacing or flattering. In a country of dreamers like Italy, the author of these

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memoirs would give way on some point, or seem to give way, but always with the consciousness of doing so. As he says himself, it is wise sometimes to give way. I could quote other examples, but those who desire can find numerous proofs of this assertion in his political career from early to recent times.

It was with such a preparation that Giolitti entered on political life, or rather was impelled to it without his own volition by his mountain people, simple and democratic like himself. It was as though they felt the desire of proclaiming their virtues and qualities through the medium of this strong man. He entered the Chamber, and it is said that his first impression was of hearing many foolish speeches uttered by the Right and responded to by equally foolish ones from the Left.

What has his programme been? His critics and adversaries have from time to time framed this question with an intonation suggestive of doubt and challenge. Owing to the force of facts, they have recognised his capacity as a politician, but have formulated an invidious distinction in order to deny him the title of statesman, which designation, in these critics' opinion, would be more in accord with grandiose political programmes prophetically imagined and never altered. In answer to such criticism, it may be said that Giovanni Giolitti has pondered and set forth several programmes of political reform, and, moreover, has carried them out. The question, however, must be examined diversely.

Those who assume that the real statesman is he who secretly matures and constructs a vast project of reforms and political measures, tracing out their lines and proposing to carry his plan into execution in some ten or twenty years, are victims of a delusion. They mistake action for meditation, the creator for the doctrinaire, the statesman for the professor. The latter, seated in his chair, and having before him students, who are not in a position to impose on him their ideas, can

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comfortably trace out his plan as best pleases him. On the other hand, the man of action, in whatsoever field he may be, but especially in the political one, has, from moment to moment, to take account of rebellious and ever changing human material, and herein lies the art of his calling. I shall not repeat here what a fine writer has written about Napoleon, that the field of thought and action of such men is limited to the twenty-four hours. This is a paradox which confuses the physical day with the historical day of some event or series of events. This paradox of a truth comes not unnaturally from the lips of those who, with a certain fatuity, seek to impose their own ideologies on the already grave burden which the man of action must support. Only those can cherish this paradox who have had no direct experience of the fight with realities, in which no sooner is one obstacle overcome than another is generated, without taking into consideration the unforeseen. While the feather-brained and the doctrinaires approach their tasks with an imperturbability born of ignorance, the man of action brings to his labour something of the same mistrust with which the artist, who is his younger brother, faces the loved yet tormenting problems of his special art. The man of action never has ready in his head or his pocket the perfect plan, the carefully outlined programme. He drafts it as he works, changing and adapting it to the vagaries of reality, which in themselves depend on his very action. Giovanni Giolitti, even if he has never expressed this idea in philosophic terms, has always had a vivid appreciation of its truth. I remember in connection with this an acute remark of his on the subject. We were speaking of the probable course of certain events, and I was seeking to learn his intentions with regard to the matter. He answered that it was useless to hazard decisions on mere probabilities and conjectures. I insisted on the probability of my interpretation of how events would turn out, an interpretation which was afterwards justified by events. He

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answered me: "I agree as to the correctness of your suppositions, but you must recognise that even when an event turns out as one has foreseen, it always takes place with some difference which, small though it may be, is often sufficient to change the situation, and render necessary other decisions than those already planned." Thus the observations of the practical man are seen to coincide with the most original speculations of modern philosophy, as we read it in authors like Bergson or Blondel, in connection with the character and conditions of action and its development.

The strength and greatness of the man of action do not therefore show themselves in the wisdom of his plans or the ordering of his designs, but rather in his quick seizing of the phases of the ever-changing present, in a clear vision of reality hidden under appearances, and in the rapidity with which his decisions face the variations of the latter and meet its surprises. But this does not mean that the man of action is at the mercy of events and must servilely follow their course. To employ an image, I would say that the man of action is in the position of the old sailing ship, which has its port and course clearly marked out for it, but which, nevertheless, must reach harbour by adapting itself to the capriciousness of the elements, taking advantage even of adverse forces and tacking with contrary winds. The compass of the man of action is not the "programme" of the doctrinaires, but consists in a certain native tendency, deriving from his temperament, refined by reason and strengthened by experience. It is always the reality of some historic moment which calls him, and the true statesman answers this call rather than the dictates of any pretended interior wisdom, abstract and written. Political wisdom, so lively at the moment of its birth, becomes a skeleton and falls to dust when it is sought to perpetuate it in doctrine.

In the case of Giovanni Giolitti, this native tendency, strengthened by calm observation and grafted on the will

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to action, was a democratic and liberal feeling. Scion of a strong, free race, the son of hard-working and liberty-loving middle class folk, of simple and almost patriarchal tastes, he, in common with his own people, has always had two strong antipathies; idle hereditary wealth and doctrinaire vanity. His sympathies have always been with the hard-working people, both peasants and operatives, and he has always shown a special leaning for the small owner class and tenants, in whose case a direct interest in their property or business incites to a more profitable productiveness. This fundamentally patriarchal attitude of his has not, however, prevented him from recognising the great figures of modern industry, their necessity and possibly beneficent influence, nor has he failed to appreciate the work of the great captains of industry and chiefs of finance in the creation of new forms of wealth, though, at the same time, he has always felt a certain repugnance for the egotistic avidity of the *nouveaux riches*. In the parasitic and idle dominion of the old favoured classes, and the merciless and greedy work of modern speculators, which between them accounted for the entire national economy in the years between the end of the old century and the beginning of the new, he saw the commencement of the masses' awakening. This movement, created at first by exclusively economic causes became bit by bit also political in character, and took on forms that were certainly not such as a mentality like his could regard with pleasure, averse as he has always been to everything suggesting excess. He favoured this movement of the masses, not only because he was convinced of the justice of the workers' demands, whose poor wages, together with the increased cost of living, had rendered life difficult if not actually insupportable, but also because he had the conviction—never shaken by circumstances—that in the end, and notwithstanding the violence of ideological opposition, it would help the growth of the peasants' wealth. And his opinion was that the result would

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be that the organism of the State itself would be reinvigorated, since it becomes strong in proportion to the number of prosperous citizens it possesses. The underlying idea behind his concept was that its transmutation into reality would act like an injection of fresh blood into the veins of the nation, which was somewhat anæmic and rickety as far as concerned its privileged classes, who had indeed never been robust, either in wealth or authority, who had come into being under the petty régimes that had disappeared and did not seem able to rise to the height of their responsibility under the vast national organisation.

Giolitti began this work of favouring the rise of the masses from the time of his first ministry, when he had opposed to him—irony of the world of politics—the rhetoric of the Socialists. He carried on his campaign later in the face of the assault of the formidable Conservative reaction personified by Crispi, a man who in his time had also been an ardent reformer, and who still, by means of his African undertaking, vaunted patriotic airs and tendencies. This democratic faith of his, the writer of these memoirs steadily maintained in spite of the excesses of the demagogues of the movement he was sponsoring, maintained it with a calm faith in the fundamental good sense of the Italian people, maintained it with a constant loyalty that has few examples in political history. Indeed political history records, perhaps, few examples of such flagrant ingratitude as was shown by those who benefited by his work. For in this struggle of his, carried on over three lustra, Giovanni Giolitti not only found himself faced with the implacable though politically justified resistance of the Conservatives, but often enough, and in the most difficult moment, had at his back the hostility—occasionally interrupted in moments of clear-sightedness and understanding—of the classes and parties who derived the life blood of their existence from his policy.

The battle for liberty which he waged ended in a total vic-

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tory which was due to the combination of excessive violence and proved impotence of the reactionary party. Conversions to the Giolittian idea of government were so numerous as to be almost general. The surrender of the supporters and defenders of the opposing ideal was so complete that the very reasons and arguments of the struggle vanished with the tacit understanding that the question should be buried.

Of that Conservatism which had, from 1892 to 1900, fought so tenaciously to establish its regime within the law, there only remained a presumption that men of the Conservative party were more rigid in their application of governmental force than the members of the Democratic Liberal party.

Had that Conservatism maintained its positions, even idealistically, in the hour of defeat, Giolitti would have had to keep himself armed in readiness to affront it.

The downfall of Conservatism that took place then, being also an intellectual as well as a practical defeat, absolved him from the necessity of remaining armed to meet any attacks, and gave him renewed freedom of action, in which he was able to recognise the immanent truths of Conservatism himself, and to take advantage of their value in a larger and higher conception of them. Thus it happened that at a certain point in the career of this man who was remarkable in his fortune, he had to play at one and the same time two parts in the political drama, the Conservative and the Democrat, embodying in himself and his work the entire dialectic of the country's historical moment. This is the second great epoch of his political activity, which opens with his handling of the Socialist revolutionary strike in 1904, during which he ceased to be the man of any particular party, and became the moderator and arbiter of the various clashing interests, drawing from them, one might say, an equation favourable to the superior and permanent interests of the country. His was the position which the leaders of peoples have had in the

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dawn of history, and this historic dawn renews itself with every fresh cycle of time.

What were these supreme interests that served Giolitti as his ultimate aim and guided his policy at every stage and in every phase? However much these interests may have varied and been modified from time to time, they can always be summed up by the words, "Country," "Fatherland," "Italy." Giovanni Giolitti, in his sincere patriotism, prefers the simpler of these terms. With him it is "Country." This needs some explanation.

Italians, in speaking of their country, are inclined to amplify their feelings of nationality, not in the imperial and actual sense, like the English, but rather in an ideal and historical one. Their pride of citizenship is a legacy of history, and goes back to the glory of Venice, Genoa, Florence or Papal Rome, and, especially, to the all-embracing grandeur of ancient Rome. This amplification is not unjustified and is the expression of a sincere sentiment; at the same time it opens the door to pitfalls and deceptions of rhetoric with the attendant danger of confusing historical values, no longer having a political or economical force, with present-day factors. The victories of the Romans over the Carthaginians and of the Venetians over the Turks have a closer bearing on the history of the world in general than they have on the situation of Italy to-day, for, however immortal their glory from the historian's point of view, these events belong to the great past. In fact, there is always the danger that this glorying in the past, this proud feeling of being a descendant of the *civis romanus* and the munificent merchant of the Renaissance may obscure the Italian's vision of the world of facts in which his life and that of his country moves.

As if to react against these tendencies and their dangers, Giovanni Giolitti's patriotism is essentially of a practical nature. To be sure, he also takes pride in the great past of his country, but he is in no danger of succumbing to the

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temptation of making this past weigh in the balance of things of to-day. Concerned with the living present, he eschews that rhetorical evocation of the past, too dear to the literary soul of Italy, even when such evocation might serve to stimulate and incite the imagination. It has been his constant aim to obtain a just and clear view of the situation of his country as compared with that of rival states, never blinding himself to the fact that Italy is economically a poor country, owing to the narrowness of its territory and the shortage of raw materials, the basis of modern wealth, to which must be added three centuries of inertia and lack of colonial and commercial enterprise which have prevented the accumulation of great fortunes. On the other hand, he has never failed to appreciate the moral qualities of his countrymen, their sober good sense and laborious energy, though this latter quality has been seriously impeded by insufficient education and deficiency of modern implements and machinery to take the place of antiquated methods.

It must also be borne in mind that in Italy the number of those who are qualified to act as leaders is small, and that however intelligent and anxious for progress they may be, they are still too easily influenced and too prone to exaltation and depression—in short, too little conscious of their real mission and duties towards their countrymen. Italy, in short, is not, as certain pessimists would pretend, a decadent country, but a country in formation—this formative process being complicated by the amalgam of ancient elements which have to be absorbed.

It must be placed to Giolitti's credit that he has understood better than any one else this amalgamation of age and youth and divined the special treatment it requires, just as the physician proceeds with caution in treating the convalescent who is recovering from a long illness. It is, in fact, a favourite saying of his that the statesman, like the doctor, in the treatment of his country must above all consider the

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condition of the heart and worry less about accidental and secondary ailments. The heart of a nation is the State, and it is just the weakness of this very organ which is the historical cause of Italy's sufferings. Hence the reason why Giolitti has always aimed at strengthening the State, protecting it against all subversive and disrupting influences, regardless of their source and origin; why he has sought in every way possible to strengthen it with the infusion of new blood, endeavouring to awaken in the great masses of the people an interest in the State as such, and once such interest has been awakened, to widen and intensify it, at the same time taking care that the special claims and conceptions of the various classes do not generate new causes of debility in the heart of his country. Thus the man who inaugurated with such courage, faith and broadmindedness a regime of democracy and liberty is also the man who militarised the railway workers and introduced legislation regarding the juridical status of the employees, of which the object was to prevent legitimate agitations for better conditions from destroying the discipline of those who should be faithful servants of the State. True to this conception, Giolitti, after having allowed full freedom to the strikers as a means for establishing a balance between salaries and increased cost of living, when in 1904 the strike took on a political colour and threatened the State, did not hesitate to go to the country in order that it might pass judgment on the ringleaders—a judgment which was necessarily conservative.

On the other hand, for the sake of re-establishing a proper balance in the State, Giolitti, in consideration of the fact that the Radical party, which had supported the revolutionary element in a miscalculated competition with other demagogic elements had fared very badly in the election, chose a Radical as president of a Conservative Chamber, thereby preparing the final integration of this party into the constitutional orbit; and it was with this very Chamber that Giolitti

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carried through reforms in favour of the popular classes. Again, during the ministry of 1911-1913, Giolitti succeeded in reconciling divergent and even opposing points in a single programme and brought about the reform of universal suffrage, despite the fact that perhaps every deputy who voted for this measure was secretly opposed to and afraid of it. It was with the support of the Socialists and in face of the bitter though concealed opposition of the Conservatives, that Giolitti created the insurance monopoly; but then, reversing the situation, he undertook the Libyan campaign for reasons of national policy, with the passionate support of the Conservatives and Nationalists and the disapproval of Socialist demagogues.

These methods give a special and peculiar character to Giolitti's policy—a policy pursued along lines not outside, but above parties, inasmuch as every party, with its special interest and tendencies was in turn utilised for the ends which Giolitti had in mind. Who can wonder that this policy often astonished and nonplussed the public and made its author the object of the most conflicting accusations and rancour? To the Conservatives he was a demagogue, to the revolutionaries a reactionary; nor were the temporary and successive satisfactions obtained by the various parties an offset to this hostility and suspicion; for in politics, benefits are measured by the ounce and reverses by the pound.

These various accusations against Giolitti can be summed up under one head: dictatorship. Nor can we deny a certain dictatorial character to the Giolittian policy in actual practice. But this admission needs further definition. The word dictator has a harsh sound for our ears, owing to its historical connotation with repression and violence, evoking as it does the imposition of uncontrolled individual will over that of the majority. But the form of dictatorship as conceived and developed by Giolitti is of a very different nature. In its individual aspect, Giolitti's dictatorship has, to be sure,

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always been characterised by that strength of will which fears no struggle, confronts all attack and pursues its object regardless of obstacles. But this will-power in Giolitti's case has never been used in a narrow, personal or irresponsible manner, and has been always remarkable for its prudence and reflection. Before translating itself into action, it has always sought its vindication in hard facts, so that, if properly considered, this will appears to be that of the majority at a given moment, finding its expression through a single individual. In other words, this dictatorship always seeks a consensus of opinion, which from one quarter or another, is never denied it, individual initiative confining itself to the free choice of this consensus. This freedom to select and group a consensus of opinion is, in fact, in an ideal sense, the justification of exercising this will, and marks the difference between the liberal minded and the traditional dictator, who simply serves a particular interest; at the same time it is a means of making a diversity of interests serve the State and nation.

The dictatorship of Giolitti, viewed in this light, can easily find the noblest precedents in our history and in that of other nations. We may even ask whether this form of moral and universally acknowledged dominion, thanks to which a man of proved value and long experience assumes the sum of responsibilities for the government of a nation, exercised always under the necessary control, is not the best fruit of modern democracy, which otherwise is in danger of wearing itself out in the strife of factions without arriving at a true synthesis of the component forces which constitute a State. Men who succeeded in realising this form of free yet personal government possibly deserve another title than that of dictator—which, owing to historical associations, is too easily confounded with that of tyrant—a title, for instance, like that of "Protector," assumed by Oliver Cromwell, who in many respects was unwilling or unable to realise any other

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than the old form of dictatorship. Giovanni Giolitti, if consulted, would certainly prefer the more modest appellation of "Servant of the State." Yet it must be remembered that this supreme form of service can only be accomplished by the firm will and ability to dominate others.

I have undertaken this political sketch of Giovanni Giolitti realising how little the Italian public, despite the fact that for so many years he has been the dominating figure in its political life and the object of continual discussion, has learnt to understand his complex individuality, and how superficial and erroneous are the opinions voiced in newspapers and personal discussions in his regard.

The "secret of political men," so dear to the heart of the public, does not exist in the case of Giolitti, for all his actions are simple and straightforward—unless perhaps this very simplicity constitutes the mystery *par excellence* for a public used to consider all politics a web of intrigue and a labyrinth of complications. Despite this, or because of it, there has grown up a legend round the man and his supposed political and parliamentary arts, which excites the wrath of adversaries and misleads parties. Giolitti—it is rumoured—is endowed with such superhuman shrewdness and craftiness that all attempts at defence or attack against him are vain; it is said as a proof of his scepticism that he will use as pawns in his game the sacred scruples of others, while the vehemence of his likes and dislikes is made to account for the fidelity of his friends and the respectful dread of his adversaries, and so forth and so on. Thus in these days of realism a literary legend has been created under the name of "Giolittism" and continues to thrive in newspapers and at political meetings.

As often happens, the legend not only exaggerates, but falsifies the truth, serving to reflect rather the state of mind of its authors than the true character of the man who is its hero. Nor can we wonder that the success of a Giolitti is

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ascribed to miraculous craftiness in a country which holds this quality in such high esteem that it counts for four-fifths in all political and parliamentary competition between individuals and parties. The truth, however, is that Giolitti, though endowed with a goodly measure of shrewdness which enables him to elude the snares and stratagems of his enemies, has always employed the simplest means in pursuit of his ends; possibly this very simplicity, in the midst of so much intrigue and artifice, has proved the highest form of artfulness.

The same can be said of his reputed "scepticism," for few men in the present-day eclipsing of moral values—perhaps the greatest of our many afflictions—have adhered with such fidelity and so little ostentation to those eternal values which we designate by the name of "country," "duty," "loyalty," a faith which, however, could be tempered with a spirit of irony towards the pettiness and shortcomings of humanity. What has often appeared as scepticism in Giolitti is, as a matter of fact, a form of serenity—the serenity of the mountaineer who from Alpine peaks perceives the true proportion of things. It is this serenity which has enabled the statesman to view with calm amid the general excitement certain monstrous scarecrows of demagogy and bogeys of imperialism and pass judgments on events which, after causing general amazement, were nearly always found to be true evaluations and accepted as such. The value of this serene judgment, especially in moments of crisis, has been duly appreciated, not only by the government and politicians, but by the public at large, which Giolitti has done so little to flatter and propitiate. So true is this, that whenever the political situation seems dangerously entangled, it is the people who, often with reluctance, turn towards Giovanni Giolitti as to a safe and trusty guide who will unravel the web and save them from confusion but who will not indulge their weaknesses. Giolitti, for the Italian people, spells

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Lenten fast after the follies of carnival. It is well for Italy that it continues to feel the need of this austere season and that there is someone to whom the country can turn when Ash Wednesday arrives.

These characteristics of Giolitti are borne out in his relations with men. Easy of access in private life, he disdains all theatrical effects, and maintains with all alike the same note of simple good fellowship. Though he believes in first impressions, he is not ruled by them, and in judging others weighs deeds rather than words. Generally speaking, his closest friends are not concerned with politics and have no personal ambitions to pursue. But when politics come into play, the friend is sunk in the statesman.

Strongly convinced of the justness of his views and the truth of his political conceptions, Giolitti has always proved a formidable adversary, one who is not afraid to give and take hard knocks, but who at the same time never confounds a political opponent with a private enemy and respects his foemen in open combat. Many of the latter have since become his friends. His respect for the honest adversary has its counterpart in his high conception of the duty of friendship. He must be sure of his collaborators, for collaboration with him means mutual trust. At the same time, he judges men in politics from the point of view of the politician, and looks with ironical pity on those fatuous ones who fear to come to conclusions and think that words can take the place of action; but, above all, he has no patience with weaklings. "Better be governed by a rogue than a weakling," as he remarked to me on one occasion. It is, after all, merely a question of computation; for the rogue will only do as much harm as coincides with his own interests, whereas the weakling, in trying to please all his friends, has no limit to his baneful action.

Apart from his personal judgment on men and events, Giolitti has his own general conception of politics and of

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the moral and intellectual qualities necessary for the statesman. His aversion to abstractions and rhetorical forms leads him to express his ideal in terms so simple that the result appears often as the humorous enunciation of a platitude. Thus he will sum up the requisite qualities for a statesman under the general headings of common sense and strength of character. Similarly his favourite eulogy of great politicians past and present consists in the terms "men of good sense," "strong men." This, at first hearing, seems to be a too scarce measure of praise, until one reflects how rare and difficult is the development and application of these simple virtues in our everyday life, and how infinitely greater must be their range and quality in the statesman than in the peasant. Firmness in the former, especially when he stands at the helm of state exposed to the buffeting of all the winds, may indeed be called a major virtue.

But there is another homely quality which Giolitti deems essential for the statesman, and that is good health. All who know how tense and highly charged is the atmosphere of higher politics will understand how valuable an asset this is. Of its force and value Giolitti is himself a living example, for his life has always been inspired by discipline and regularity and has been passed as much as possible in the country, far from the enervating centres of modern civilisation. It is his fondness for daily walks which has led him to say that nature really intended him to be a country postman. It is doubtless thanks to this good health and wise mode of life that Giolitti at eighty years of age still dominates the political life of Italy and appears to us as the patriarch of the ever fresh and lucid mind, to whom the country can still turn in moments of difficulty for wise counsel and sage action.

These lines only purport to be a just presentment of the moral and political qualities of Giolitti, as they appear in his work, without passing judgment on this work itself, which

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can only be properly estimated when we have gained the right perspective of the period of history to which it belongs.

At the same time, I should like to meet a certain criticism or accusation against the Giolittian policy. It is alleged that this policy has been definitely discredited by the present confused and conflicting situation, inasmuch as it was this policy which aimed at democratising the State and called on the collaboration of the masses, and that by general consensus a form of reaction is now necessary for the good of the State. This is a vain contention, for every form of political action tends towards excess until reaction sets in as a restraining and limiting influence. But it is false to suppose that such reaction can annihilate the movement which has called it forth and against which it is directed. On the contrary, this reaction only serves to make this movement an integral part of that vaster political complex which we call history. On the other hand, we may well ask whether the now prevailing conception that every citizen must sacrifice his interests to those of the State could have become possible without the antecedence of Giolittian policy, which formed new classes of citizens among the ignorant masses by offering them privileges entailing new duties.

It may be affirmed that every future policy of ours, however original and personal, can only be erected on the foundations laid by Giovanni Giolitti, though it may actually be in opposition to it, which means that the latter has become a part of history; this could only happen because this policy responded, in fact, to an historical necessity and was an absolutely essential factor in the development of the Nation and the State. As further proof of this truth, we may point to those very events of recent date with which Giolitti's opponents seek to refute his work; the advent of "Fascism," which feels the vital necessity of expanding among the rank and file, and the present situation of Socialism, which, born and

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nurtured under the democratic policy of Giolitti, after its protracted error of denying the National State, to-day feels that it is only within this State and under its protection that it can continue to exist.

O. MALAGODI.

October, 1922

CHAPTER I

FAMILY AND EDUCATION

My family and its origin—A mediæval democracy—My mother's family—Early education in the mountains—Education at Turin.

MY memories of my early days and of my education as a boy are without any special incident or exceptional particulars. I was born on October 22, 1842, at Mondovi, where my father, Giovenale, occupied the position of Chancellor of the local Sessions, and where he died, barely a year after my birth, from an attack of pneumonia caught on a mountaineering expedition. My family came from the Val di Macra, a valley of the Eastern Alps which runs from West to East to the Po.

My paternal grandfather, whom I never knew, was a notary at San Damiano di Macra, and acted as secretary and general factotum for nearly all the communes of the valley. The records of my family go back as far as my great-great-grandfather, who, it is known, came from Acceglio, the highest village in the valley, standing at an altitude of some 4,000 feet. His native place was the hamlet of Lausetti. My family, in fact, was a family of Alpine peasants, who must have lived for centuries in the valley, which has always had a strongly democratic character. Indeed, the valley of Macra from the village of San Damiano upwards was until 1427 a small independent republic, governed according to its own special constitution, traces of which still remain. The heads of the families used to meet every year at Acceglio and nomi-

nated two consuls and two judges whose office lasted twelve months. To give an idea of the simplicity of its laws, it will suffice to look at the one referring to public education, which was all comprised in the following Latin sentence, *Quod quisquis possit tenere scholas et quisquis adire scholas sine ulla molestia.*

This democratic instinct is maintained in spite of the altered conditions and institutions. In the year 1427, the tiny mountain republic made a pact with the Marquises of Saluzzo, accepting their suzerainty in a purely formal manner. In fact, the peasants reserved to themselves the right to nominate their judges, and stipulated that neither feudalism nor the religious inquisition were ever to be introduced into the valley, a remarkable sign of independence in those times. When the marquisate of Saluzzo was united with the House of Savoy, the latter pledged itself to respect all the concessions hitherto granted. And when the House of Savoy, unmindful of its promise, began to persecute the Protestants, small groups of whom were to be found in the valley, the entire population rose, and about the year 1550 a regular war broke out. During the first year the mountaineers had the advantage, but the year after they were beaten, and the House of Savoy, in order to reward the officers who had conducted the little war, distributed titles whose names were derived from the local villages. Thus the families of La Marmora, Stroppa, Palieres and Acceglio came into being. The mountain folk, beaten but not discouraged, protested and made appeal to the Chamber of the Nobility (*Camera dei Conti*) maintaining that the House of Savoy had no right to grant titles of nobility in the valley, inasmuch as its dominion was subject to the stipulation that feudalism was never to be introduced there. The Chamber, which was attached to the House of Savoy, disallowed the appeal, but the villagers in a meeting at Acceglio, passed a vote that the first of the new feudal lords to set foot in the countryside was to be

murdered. But no one risked going there, and all the new titles remained without any effective application of the feudal rights implied in them. Thus the valley preserved and maintained its democratic character.

My mother, whose Christian name was Henrietta, came of an old family, the Plochiù, who were known for their liberal ideas. Her father, who had embraced these new ideas, was at one time procurator-general at Turin under the French government. He retired in 1814, with the advent of the restoration, and a few years later, in the rising of 1821, was at the head of the revolutionary movement in the province of Pinerolo. When the insurrection was crushed, he was obliged to seek refuge abroad, but he was afterwards allowed to re-enter the kingdom on the explicit condition that he lived in the country. He chose as his residence Cavour where he had taken a wife, who had brought him as part of her dowry a house: the same old house in the middle of the town where I live in winter. Besides my mother, he had two more daughters and four sons. One of the latter, the doctor Giuseppe Plochiù, was the first deputy for Cavour, where he was elected to the first Piedmontese legislature in 1848. Two other sons of his were magistrates, and a third, Alexander, was made general on the battle-field of San Martino, where he fought as colonel at the head of the 6th regiment, which took the heights of San Martino at the decisive moment of the battle. All my four maternal uncles died without leaving children.

After the untimely death of my father, my mother left Mondovi and returned to the house of her mother and brothers at Turin. Thus I passed the first years of my life among these four bachelors, and being the only nephew, I was naturally the pet of all. My memories of that early period of my life are few, though one of my liveliest recollections refers to the events of 1848-49. My uncles chivalrously kept up the Liberal traditions of the family handed down to them

by their father and consequently were firm believers in the policy of Carlo Alberto. I remember being taken to see the king set out for the war, wearing a big cockade on my child's clothes.

As I appeared to be delicate of constitution and my health was a source of apprehension to my mother, who in her untimely widowhood gave herself up entirely to bringing me up, my uncle the doctor advised that I should be taken to the mountains. So my mother left Turin, where lived her mother, sisters and brothers of whom she was very fond, and went to live alone with me for three years, summer and winter, at San Damiano, the native place of my father, a little village of the Macra valley eight miles above Dronero. My uncle had added as medical advice that I was to be allowed to play as I liked in the water and in the snow, and that I was never to be given any medicine. I have followed this régime all my life and at my present age of nearly eighty I preserve a real aversion to medicines. Even when I was suffering from a grave nervous illness this dislike of medicine did not leave me, and when the doctors ordered me drugs, I would argue with them, wanting to know if it was really necessary to take them, with the result that I have scarcely ever taken any medicine at all.

In that mountain village, at that time incomparably more isolated than such places are to-day, I began to receive my first classical education. I had already learnt to read and write and had all but completed my elementary education under the care of my mother. At San Damiano, I began my *gymnasium* education at the hands of a priest who enjoyed an ecclesiastical benefice on the sole condition that he undertook the first three years of *gymnasium* instruction for the boys of the village. I remember him still. His name was Don Bernardo Aymar and he was a remarkable and highly intelligent man, an improviser of poetry, well known and most popular throughout the valley. I remained at his

school, together with five or six other boys of the place, from seven to ten years of age, and made some progress in learning Latin. But the best part of the time I passed up there in the mountains I spent in play and in gaining health. When I was ten and returned to Turin, my three years of mountain schooling were counted only as one, and I was admitted to the second class of the *gymnasium* of St. Francis of Paola, which was afterwards known as the Gioberti *Gymnasium*.

I did not distinguish myself particularly in that school, save possibly for the fact that I was not an exemplary scholar. At study I was good, but not among the best and most diligent boys. Of all studies history attracted me most, and in this subject I often took the prize. But the study of dead languages, conducted in those times on a grammatical and abstract system all consisting of rules and exceptions to rules, disgusted me. Mathematics too had little attraction for me. My preferences were for more concrete subjects. Reading pleased me, and during my years at the Lyceum (*Liceo*) I got through a number of books, especially the works of our Italian poets from the XIVth century to modern times. I read little among foreign authors and not many novels. My preferences were for those by Walter Scott and Balzac, from their being linked to historical tradition and concerned with reality. Novels of intrigue or passion have never interested me. I read and studied a good deal of philosophy, especially in the works of the philosophers then in vogue, such as Rosmini and Gioberti. But I was cured suddenly of this passion for philosophy for good and all by reading Gioberti's *Theory of the Supernatural*.

When I went to the university, I took up legal studies. I carried out my studies for the first two years according to the old system, under which the legal curriculum was divided into five years. Then when the new system was introduced, I compressed three years' work into one, passing ten examinations and taking my degree in the course of a

few weeks, since it seemed to me that the University methods were too slow and that one lost time. Malvano also took his degree with me, as did Senator Berletti. The former afterwards became general secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. During my University years I was interested in the study and history of Roman law and civil law. Much of the interest which can attach to such studies depends on the professors, and at that time the University of Turin had no outstanding men. There was, or rather there ought to have been, one prominent man in Mancini, but in all my University career, not only did I never hear him, but I never even saw him.

During these years, that is to say, between 1857 and 1860, I knew none of the politicians then in view. I never even met Cavour. In 1859 I was eighteen, I was the only son of a widowed mother and I could not leave her. I kept to my studies, I went for long excursions in the mountains, I joined shooting parties and I took up fencing. My mother, who was a woman of very energetic character—so much so that my uncle the general used to say she could well have commanded a regiment—kept me always on the move. In fencing, which I practised with passion, my master was Achille Parise, father of the famous fencer Masaniello, and afterwards I studied with Gandolfi and Sprani. I continued to keep up my fencing even later on when I was working at Florence. Here I had as masters Enrichetti, Borelli, Sampieri, and Bellincioni. I became an expert and famous fencer. Sometimes I had the good luck to defeat even professional masters of the art in public exhibitions, and I believe that this youthful exercise has served me later in the art of parliamentary fencing. In connection with this subject, I remember a curious incident. When I was a member of Crispi's cabinet as minister of the Treasury, I had on one occasion to reply in Crispi's absence to a question on foreign policy presented by Alfieri, who had been making some ill-judged remarks.

I replied with much verve and irony, and when I had finished, Farini, president of the Senate, said to me: "You must have studied and practised fencing much and to good purpose in your youth: I can see that from the way you answered."

I have said that I never met Cavour. He was, however, a great friend of my maternal uncle Melchiorre, who was a shareholder in his paper the *Risorgimento*. And it was through this uncle of mine, who had much influence in the province, that Cavour had the famous Gallenga elected as deputy for the constituency of Cavour-Vigone. Gallenga was the Italian correspondent of *The Times*, and Cavour, aware of the great influence of that paper on English political life at the time, had set his heart upon having him in the Chamber. The famous incident between Gallenga and Mazzini followed that election. Gallenga had, as a matter of fact, revealed how Mazzini had plotted the death of Carlo Alberto, which was to have been brought about by means of a dagger adorned with lapis lazuli, to be wielded by a certain Mariotti. Mazzini, annoyed, made a lightning-like reply to the accusation, disclosing in his turn that Mariotti was none other than Gallenga himself, who on account of this scandal was obliged to resign his seat in the Chamber.

CHAPTER II

ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER

I enter the Ministry of Justice—My first employment—Death of my mother and my marriage—My work in reorganising the collection of taxes—The work of Sella and Lanza—I enter the Pay Office of the Ministry of Finance as General Secretary—I am nominated State Councillor—My candidature and election as deputy.

WHEN I was little more than eighteen years old, I had completed my studies and had taken my degree, but I felt no inclination for the bar, which would have been the career naturally open to me. I had a little practice in the office of the barrister Marini, then one of the most famous lawyers in Turin, attached to the government office for free legal advice to poor persons. I remained there only a short time, however, for in the beginning of February, 1862, I was installed in the ministry of Justice as probationer or voluntary worker. Miglietti gave me a post in his own office, and passing an examination, I became an assessor to the magistracy. Shortly afterwards, Miglietti was succeeded by Raffaele Conforti. It was the year 1862, and all the new Neapolitan magistracy had to be nominated after the annexation. Conforti, who was a Neapolitan, requested that for the execution of this delicate and difficult task there should be assigned to him an employee who was not only not a Neapolitan, but who knew no Neapolitans. My name was put before him, and while in that post there passed through my hands all the secret reports and the most private information. Conforti was succeeded by Pisanelli, Vacca, Cortese

and De Falco, all Neapolitans. Then came Borgatti, who made me his private secretary.

It was under Eula, then General Secretary of the ministry of Justice, that I worked. Thirty years afterwards, Eula, who had become President of the Court of Cassation of Rome, accepted the portfolio of the ministry of Justice in my first cabinet, after having refused the offer of the same ministry from other premiers.

In the five years I passed in the ministry of Justice and in the minister's cabinet, in addition to ordinary work I was specially employed in getting together facts and material for the commission nominated by Miglietti, which was preparing the compilation of the Civil Code. The library was at my disposal, containing works by all the principal Italian and foreign authors, and this work and study were of great assistance in giving me a juridical culture, which has always been of great advantage to me. The Government had at this time gone to Florence, and I had followed it, being invariably attached to the Secretary-General's office directed by Borgatti, in a room next to whose I worked. Borgatti was a man of high worth, but of a very modest nature. In 1866 when the war broke out, and La Marmora was obliged to leave for the front, Ricasoli, on assuming the premiership, informed Borgatti that he had need of a minister of Justice and gave him the task of finding one for him. The fact of the vacancy was widely known, and several aspirants came to seek out Borgatti and to recommend themselves to him. Borgatti conscientiously prepared a list of three names and presented it to Ricasoli, who replied to him: "What? Don't you see that you alone can be the minister?" Later, therefore, when one of the aspirants returned, Borgatti could only tell him that he was not to be included in the cabinet, and I remember from my adjoining room hearing one of these gentlemen burst into tears at the sad news. Such was even then the passion to decorate oneself with the name of minister.

Meanwhile my mother, who had come with me to Florence, had fallen ill, and was anxious to return to her brothers and sisters in Turin, so I, having some time before passed the examination for the magistracy, and being in a position to be nominated deputy King's procurator, asked to be sent there. My application was accepted, and I went as deputy King's procurator to the Law Courts. I was 24 years old and had the misfortune of looking even younger, so much so that my youthful appearance gave occasion to the first published caricature of me, printed in *Fischietto*, which pictured me dressed as a magistrate in gown and hat, in the arms of a nurse. There was at that time a very noisy tribunal at Turin, and I was sent to face the most litigious barristers in the most sensational cases, such as press trials.

My mother's health continued to get worse, and in August, 1867, she died. Four of my uncles also died between that year and 1894; Dr. Plochiù in 1869, the General in 1888, Luigi the magistrate in the same year, and Melchiorre in 1894.

In February, 1869, Senator Pallieri, president of the central commission on direct taxes, asked me if I felt disposed to return to Florence as member and chief secretary of that commission. As after my mother's death, there was no particular reason to keep me in Turin, where I had gone only for her sake, I accepted willingly, and before leaving for Florence on March 31st, 1869, I married. My wife Rosa came of the Sobrero family. Her father had been deputy procurator-general of the Turin Court of Cassation, but had been dead many years. He was brother to Ascanio Sobrero, the celebrated chemist who invented nitroglycerine. Another brother was a general in the engineers, and was the designer and constructor of the fortress of Alessandria. I first met the lady who was afterwards to become my wife, on January 8th, 1869, and we were married on March 31st of the same year.

Thus I returned to Florence, where I was at once engaged in new work of great importance for the organisation of the State, work which demanded from me an entirely new mental effort. Towards the end of that year my position changed again, and I came into contact with a man of great worth, to whom I owe much in my bureaucratic education, Quintino Sella. He, having during a ministerial crisis taken over the portfolio of Finance, to which he intended to devote all his time and work, asked Senator Pallieri if there was anyone with a special knowledge of legal matters in the commission over which he presided. Pallieri mentioned my name, and sent me to Sella, who charged me at once with some work which I finished immediately and brought back the next day. He then gave me another piece of work which I completed with equal rapidity. A few days afterwards Sella again sent for me and offered me the post of chief of a department in the Finance ministry. I accepted, and worked with him as private secretary during 1870 and 1871. The capital having been transferred to Rome, Sella went there, but the ministry remained in Florence pending the construction of its office, which was finished only in 1876. In the beginning of 1872, Sella conceived the project of reorganising the general management of taxes and customs, which were in a great state of disorder, and he entrusted the work to the deputy Giuseppe Giacomelli of Udine, who had already been employed as member of a financial commission in the same ministry. Giacomelli, whom I already knew, declared himself willing to accept the post, on condition that I should go with him. With the minister's consent I accepted. Sella attached great importance to this reorganisation, especially in view of the application of the new law for payment of taxes. We were still in the constructive period of the new United Italy, and seven different systems for collecting taxes, inherited from the old states, were in use, and except in the case of the provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, where the Austrian system

was similar to the new system, everything had to be changed. In some regions the collection was made directly, in others by means of concessionaires. In Tuscany the collection of State taxes was made through the communes, which had kept back thirty millions due to the State. Great confusion ensued, with disastrous effects on the financial balance, which had to face a great mass of delayed payments. It was therefore necessary to carry out a double work; namely, to recover these unpaid taxes which came to the figure—stupendous for those times—of 200,000,000 lire, and to put in force at the same time the new system of collection, which was efficacious and uniform for the whole country. This work had to be done in face of the opposition and hostility of interested parties, who did not wish to hear anything about the payment of the old taxes, and who put obstacles in the way of the new system which would no longer permit the old-time abuses. At Messina and elsewhere tax collectors were murdered. The very communes that ought to have made provision for concessions for tax gathering refused, and it was necessary to put the concessions up to auction through the prefects. The affair had also its comic side, since in some provinces the regulations for the collection of taxes gave power to the authorities to suspend payment on the part of the tax-collectors of sums due by untraceable taxpayers, and consequently a great number of these, including the most important ones, were made to figure as untraceable. I remember there appeared among them the names of high officials, while even some of the tax collectors themselves were marked as being unable to be traced. Indeed the municipality of Catania itself was classified as untraceable. The organisation of the new system, taking all these difficulties into consideration, was a work of the most onerous character. In order to complete it I was given four assistants, two inspectors and two first-class departmental chiefs, whilst I, who was in charge of the whole work, was as a matter of

fact in a lower bureaucratic grade than my fellow-workers. Foreseeing the inconveniences that might result from this curious situation, I made the condition that the necessary powers should be accorded me, and then called my collaborators together and delivered them a brief discourse, warning them that they would have to work seriously, and that whoever failed in doing his duty would be at once dismissed. The consequence was that their collaboration became most praiseworthy and soon we were all good friends. In the beginning of the year when I took up this work, the Premier and Minister of the Interior, Lanza, to whom I was obliged often to turn, inasmuch as the appointment of the tax collectors was done through the prefectures, said to me that if at the end of the year only five hundred of the five thousand tax collectors' offices that were required remained unfilled, the government would be satisfied. On the last day of the year I was able to inform him that only one remained unfilled, and that for the reason that the tax collector had died that very day.

My long collaboration with Quintino Sella, as well as being of great importance to my bureaucratic education, placed before me an example of really superior political activity and capacity. Sella was without doubt a man of the first order, who rendered to Italy, by means of his hard and untiring work, great services, such as perhaps have not yet been duly acknowledged. Intelligent and highly cultured, he had notably the gift of an amazing quickness in seizing hold of whatever question was put before him. He was a tremendous worker, rising at the early hour of five o'clock. On visiting him in the morning, I used to perceive that he had already been at work for some hours. By profession he was a mining engineer, and his work in this field has had a really classical importance for Italy. Afterwards he took up other subjects, especially finance, in which he had already had experience as minister in 1862 and 1864.

His chief claim to consideration in the constitution of the new Italian State was his rigidity and exactness in administering the finances during the first few difficult years.

He always showed himself a man of strong character, but particularly so when it came to defending the State's revenue. In connection with this fact I can remember a curious incident. The commission for equalising taxes on real estate was sitting under the presidency of Menabrea, and the commission, anxious to execute its task quickly, prolonged its sittings until late in the night. The work was carried on at tables lighted by paraffin lamps, and the commissioners complained of the smell of them, and asked that they should be replaced by vegetable oil lamps. Sella, who had become aware that the oil was being pilfered, would not hear of it. Then there presented themselves before him, in a serio-comic manner, the two commissioners Depretis and Valerio, in an endeavour to move him. Valerio exclaimed: "Look here, in order to avoid the smell of your paraffin I am bringing a couple of candles in my pocket." "Bravo!" Sella answered him, "you will save me the cost even of the paraffin." And he refused the little concession. Another meritorious action of Sella was his effective insistence that the government should remove to Rome. There was no consensus of opinion in the ministry; some of the most important men of the Right party, especially those of neo-Guelph origin, were hesitating. One of these was Cesare Correnti, against whom Sella became enraged, speaking of him as "that blessed canon." His energy overcame all hesitation, and it was well so, because if that moment for removing the capital had not been taken, who knows what other difficulties might not have arisen both at home and abroad? Sella's name is linked with that of Lanza, who was premier in the ministry in which Sella controlled the finances. The two men resembled each other considerably in the simplicity and austerity of their

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lives, in their great honesty and in the character of their intelligences. Lanza was less lively and less rich in thought and culture than Sella, but he remains for me the perfect type of the man of good sense, firm and extremely correct. The modesty of his family life has become proverbial, and in this modesty he was greatly assisted by his wife, who looked after the management of their little country property while her husband occupied the first post in the government. When Lanza died, the King wished to offer the widow a pension and the decoration of the Annunziata which Lanza already held; but she refused, saying, "If the two of us have lived on what we had up to now, surely one can, now that I am alone."

Soon after I was nominated divisional chief, there was a ministerial crisis (July, 1873). Sella fell and was succeeded by Minghetti, who took over the finance ministry as well as the premiership. Giacomelli, who had accepted the general-directorship of direct taxes only out of deference to Sella, resigned. In the meantime Desambrois of Oulx, who had been in 1848 one of the signatories of the Constitution, and later president of the Senate, and who held the position of president of the State Council, without my ever having known him, sent for me and asked if I were willing to accept the post of *referendario** to the State Council left vacant by Angelo Fava, the writer, who had retired. I accepted, but in the meantime Minghetti, after the resignation of Giacomelli, had offered the post left vacant by the latter to Enrico Pacini, who first of all refused, being unwilling to leave Florence, but in the end accepted, making it, however, a condition that I should act as inspector-general with him. To this Minghetti replied that he had already sent up for signature his nomination and mine.

I remained with Minghetti for the whole duration of his ministry, which lasted from July 10th, 1873, to March 18th,

* A minor legal office, having no exact equivalent in Great Britain.

1876, and was the last Right ministry. I thus had occasion to appreciate the man who, for many reasons, merited all the esteem he enjoyed, an esteem the memory of which still remains. His principal qualities were an exceptional facility in grasping any problem at once, and an extraordinary faculty for assimilating facts. I remember, by the way, that when he was in the Chamber, I had to remain in one of the galleries in order to be ready to furnish him with any information, documents or details which he might need in the course of the parliamentary debate, which was then very lively. We arranged a signal code between us: he would lift up a piece of red paper and I would come down from the gallery, meet him in his private room and furnish him with the necessary technical details for his reply, and with these data, communicated to him rapidly, he was at once able to make a fluent and effective speech. He was a gentleman in everything, in manners and in culture, and it was this quality in him which made up a large part of the fascination he exercised over all.

He had certain expedients of his own which were quite peculiar to himself. For example, a project was on foot for the equalisation of the land tax, and a commission of twenty-five senators and deputies, presided over by Menabrea, had, after considerable work, put forward a scheme which contained no fewer than 160 clauses. Minghetti sent for me and said, "I cannot possibly present so voluminous a bill. You have a look at it and see if you can't abbreviate it and simplify it." When some weeks later, I told him that I had completed the work, he fixed a day and an hour for me to bring it him. I kept the appointment and found Caneva, head of the census at Milan, in the minister's anteroom, and with him Baravelli, inspector-general of finance. Thus we all three perceived that the same task had been entrusted to each of us without our knowledge. When we were received by Minghetti, Caneva announced with the certainty of one

having brought off a *tour de force*, that he had succeeded in reducing the draft from its original hundred and sixty clauses to only sixty. Baravelli then showed his work, which had the advantage over that of his colleague, inasmuch as the clauses had been cut down to forty-five. "And your draft?" Minghetti asked me. I gave it him. I had reduced the clauses to thirteen only. Minghetti accepted my draft as a ground-work for the bill, and charged me with the task of compiling the report for the Chamber, which I did within six weeks.

When, in what was called the parliamentary revolution of 1876, the Left came into power and Minghetti fell, Depretis, forming the first Left ministry, took the portfolio of finance, a sign that the most responsible men of the Left perceived the preponderating importance of the financial problem which had exercised the Right.

The ministry of finance, whose office was now ready for occupation, was transferred from Florence to Rome, and since Pacini was unwilling to leave Florence, it happened that I, coming to Rome in September, 1876, was given charge of the finances by Depretis. In this position I remained for about a year. Depretis had with him as general secretary (a ministerial post which corresponded more or less to the later equivalent of under-secretary of State for the various ministries, save that it did not include the right, afterwards conceded, to reply to questions in the Chamber or Senate in the name of the government) the deputy Sesmit Doda, who had been forced on him by the extremist elements of the party. Sesmit Doda was a capable man, but apt to be somewhat extravagant—"a furious man," Depretis called him. He had no bureaucratic experience and the permanent officials in his office were not very competent. He would often send me fantastic orders contrary to the law, which I was obliged to reject, explaining at the same time why it was impossible to accept his procedure. Sesmit Doda took

this badly, going so far as to be suspicious of me, and one day when we were both in the presence of Depretis he hinted that "plots were going on in the ministry." I understood the allusion, and answered that if I had wished to do any plotting I could have found a very simple way, for which indeed he would have been grateful to me. Depretis, who was by nature something of a mocker and foresaw some amusement, encouraged me, "Well then, what is it, what is it?" I replied, "If I had wished to plot against the ministry, it would be sufficient to carry out the orders given me." Depretis burst out laughing and Sesmit Doda took up his hat in a fury and went off. I then observed to Depretis that in such an atmosphere of misunderstanding, opposition and suspicion originating with the general secretary, I could not remain, and I offered him my resignation, agreeing afterwards, at his request, to stay at my post temporarily.

A few days later I had an offer from the President of the *Corte dei Conti*,* Senator Duchoquel, to go there as secretary-general: a post that was in the nomination of the office itself. Depretis agreed, on condition that whenever he should have need of me he would send for me, which as a matter of fact he did many times, and in particular. I remember, in connection with the schemes for the railway conventions.

I remained five years at the *Corte dei Conti*, with an interval of six months in 1879, when I was assigned by Depretis to the Regio Commissario dell' Opera Pia di San Paolo in Turin, the administration of which had been dissolved. I found out that many millions were tied up in shares of banking corporations heavily interested in building speculations. Foreseeing that these speculations would end badly, as in fact they did a few years later on, I sold all these shares and invested the money realised in railway bonds guaranteed by the State. More than this, I had a clause inserted in the

*A government office which registers decrees and settles financial details between ministries.—Tr.

new articles of incorporation of the body prohibiting in the future the purchase of speculative shares. It was my opinion that this important Opera Pia ought chiefly to consider the safety of its investments.

I had only just terminated this mission when in September, 1879, I had the terrible misfortune to lose my first-born son, Lorenzo, a most intelligent boy of seven. My family were at Chiomonte in the valley of Susa for their holidays, and I had gone to Cavour for a couple of days. My son, playing with some other boys on the first floor of a rustic house that was just opposite my dwelling, did not see a trap-door open in the flooring, and fell through it, striking his head on the ground, and was killed on the spot. My wife arrived quickly on the scene, only to find he was already dead. She telegraphed me that the child was ill, and when I arrived at the station that evening she had the strength and courage to meet me and give me the news herself, while seeking to comfort me. I should like to say here that during all her life my wife was to me not only an affectionate friend, but a great moral help. She was dowered with the liveliest intelligence and took a keen interest in my political work, and in discussions with friends and intimates her remarks were always quick and to the point. At the same time she maintained an absolute reserve and did not seek in any way to mix herself in my political actions. She preferred me not to be occupied with political responsibilities, and liked me to have repose in private life, but every time that some definite responsibility manifested itself, she was the first to encourage me to face it and to fulfil my whole duty as a politician.

At the *Corte dei Conti* I was particularly engaged in examining the decrees which came in from the various ministries, and referring them to the premier. At meetings for the adjudication of accounts and in disputed matters it was I who as secretary took the responsible decisions. This lengthy work, which implied an examination of all the decrees, was

a most useful administrative education, and gave me a knowledge of the mechanism of the State, a knowledge that was of the greatest utility to me when it was my turn to work that mechanism myself.

In July, 1882, Depretis offered me the post of State councillor, which I accepted willingly. The first time I attended a meeting of the Council several councillors were missing, and I asked the president to give me some work. On the morrow I received a package, and each day afterwards a fresh dossier, until I had some eighty matters to go into. I set myself to work day and night, and a week later when I took back the finished documents to the president of my section, he exclaimed, "That was three months' work." Senator Ghivizzani, the president of the Council, sent for me and praised me, adding, however, "But for Heaven's sake don't mention it, else it will become known that it is possible to polish off three months' arrears in a week."

It was shortly after this that I entered political life. Already, some years before, in 1877, I had been offered the constituency of Pinerolo and had refused, not being anxious to forsake an administrative career. I was now eligible, as State councillor, and the electoral campaign with the new scrutiny of lists being open, I was offered the candidature of the constituency of Cuneo, which included the latter, Dronero and Borgo San Dalmazzo. The three outgoing deputies, Antonio Riberi, Spirito Riberi and Ranco, withdrew their candidature, the last two being sent to the Senate, while Antonio Riberi wrote a letter to the electors in which he declared that he was not presenting himself for election again, and supported my candidature. He was an old friend of mine, the son of a bizarre personage, a man of the mountains of the old type, a mule-driver who wanted his son to follow in his footsteps. The old man possessed a brother, a distinguished well-to-do surgeon and army doctor, who was anxious that the nephew should study at his expense, and

had promised to leave him his fortune. In spite of this, the son had to follow his father's occupation and was unable to take up his studies until after the death of his parent. Riberi had acted on his own initiative, so that the news of my candidature came to me from reading a printed copy of the letter he addressed to his old electors. I had also the support of the two other retiring deputies, but not caring much whether I was elected or not, I refused to make the usual electioneering tour. The mayor of Cuneo insisted that I should pay at least one visit to my constituency. I replied that out of courtesy I would go to see him. Arriving at Cuneo at eleven at night, I paid my visit at ten the next morning and departed again at eleven, leaving my address with three persons only: the King's procurator, a friend of mine, the mayor of Cuneo and the mayor of Dronero, my cousin. There were three lists: I appeared in all three and came out at the top of the poll. One curious thing was that at Peveragno there was a unanimity of votes in my favour. I did not understand how it had come about, but an uncle of mine, who remembered all the family stories, gave me the explanation. At San Damiano my grandfather, who was a most popular person, kept open house for all, and people passing through received hospitality from him. The father of the mayor of Peveragno had spent one night there with his wife, who was about to have a child. She had been seized with the pangs of childbirth in the house and had given birth to her baby, remaining on as a guest for more than a month, in fact until her health was quite recovered. The mayor remembered that he had been born in my family's house, and wished to show his gratitude for former hospitality by urging his fellow-townsmen to give me all their votes.

CHAPTER III

FROM DEPUTY TO MINISTER

The passing of government from Right to Left—Work of the Right: its merits and defects—What the victories of the Left stood for—Personality of Depretis—"Trasformismo"—Divisions of the Left: "Pentarchy" and "Dissidenti"—Struggle against Magliani's finance and my first parliamentary speech—How Crispi formed his first ministry—My entry into Crispi's Ministry—Political difficulties and my first social policy—Why I resigned—Ministry of Di Rudini, his troubles and fall—Personalities of the time: Crispi, Zanardelli, Nicotera, Magliani and Di Rudini.

WHEN I entered the Chamber in 1882, Depretis was in power. He had already begun his particular political action, known as "transformism." In order to have a clear idea of the whole situation and of the men operating in it and representing its various phases, one must go back a little and see what had been the work of the men of the Right and the nature of the policy followed by them for sixteen years, as well as the reasons for its decadence.

The men who had formed and dominated the old Right were without doubt remarkable characters and men of proved value, true patriots whose conduct had been dictated by the highest civic sentiments and the loftiest motives. They were serious and competent persons, capable of doing their duty by the public in all the different branches of social activity. Inasmuch as the gravest problem after the unification of Italy, with Rome as capital, was indubitably the financial one, these politicians of the Right were principally occupied in putting the new State on a solid and honest financial basis, such as alone could secure its future. But a work of this

nature at once encountered difficulties and obstacles of every kind such as I have already hinted at.

In order to make the budget balance, which was the goal of their aspirations, they put on taxes and increased them to the extreme taxable limit of the country. Moreover, they collected these taxes energetically, and at the same time did all they could to keep expenses down. They made the mistake, however, of not paying sufficient attention to the poorer and more backward provinces, and especially the South of Italy. There were in fact few Southerners among them, for they were mostly Piedmontese and Lombards, with one or two Emilians like Minghetti, and a Tuscan or two such as Ricasoli and Peruzzi. Even such Southerners as were with them were not in a condition to make their countrymen's voices heard, since they were exiles who had lived a long time in Piedmont, as for example Scialoja, Mancini and De Sanctis; or else, like Spavanta, they had passed long years in Bourbon prisons, so that they had lost contact with immediate realities. They were all, moreover, idealists, whose concepts were based on a general European culture, having nothing to do with the moral and material miseries of the peoples they represented. I have remarked that the Right, justifiably alarmed about the budget, had placed taxes on everything possible, and taken good care to see they were collected, and the imposition and rigorous collection of taxes is not, it is well known, the easiest way to conciliate public favour.

One of the facts which helped to weaken the Right in this connection was the millers' tax, which was especially hated in the country and even caused riots. This tax had been passed into law by Cambrai Digny, and was applied later very energetically by Sella and Minghetti. Another factor in the fall of the Right had been the transfer of the capital from Florence to Rome. Florence, suffering from the change, demanded compensation, and the government, while recognising the justice of the city's arguments, was

reluctant to concede the indemnity asked for, because it was anxious not to compromise the budget which, after much time and effort, promised to show no deficit. The Tuscans, with Peruzzi at their head, then made an agreement with Nicotera to overthrow the government. No sooner was this agreement come to than Nicotera and the others began a series of violent attacks in the Chamber. I remember that when the law, of a strictly fiscal character, proposed by the government for the nullification of unregistered contracts was rejected by one vote, Minghetti sent for me and took me with him for a consultation with Ricasoli, who lived outside Porta San Pancrazio, and was no longer actively engaged in politics, but at the same time acted as a kind of adviser to the Right. In conclusion, one may say that the Right fell partly on account of its own virtues, partly on account of certain inherent defects. It had worked a long time to equalise the budget and avert the danger of financial failure, but the success of its work was one of the reasons of its fall, since there then arose the idea that it was possible to initiate a new political economy, that is, a policy of spending money on those regions which were in the greatest need of assistance, an idea which was within certain limits justifiable. As generally happens in such cases, the tendency of the newcomers was to go beyond this limit, but the more prudent among them showed themselves anxious to exercise restraint. So Depretis, when in March, 1876, he formed his first Left ministry, took for himself the portfolio of finance, with the special purpose of watching over the financial situation.

In the formation of the triumphant Left ministry, the Southerners came to the front under the leadership of Nicotera, one of the principals in the great battle. Then came the secessionist Tuscans, who had broken away from their old party, then the Garibaldians, the Zanardellians and, in general, all the elements of democratic tendencies, including the Radicals, who were at that time extremists. This Left move-

ment, besides being based on personal motives and the rivalry of leaders, had also deeply-rooted political origins. While the Right represented an abstract culture and was possessed of a higher efficiency than the Left, the merit of the latter and its strength was due to the fact that it reflected more faithfully the state of mind of the masses, who were beginning to revolt against the dominion of the upper classes, even the most worthy of them; while the middle classes showed the desire to take a larger part in public affairs, adopting the doctrines of and following the men who had acted as their pioneers. Moreover, it is easy to understand that a party which had governed for sixteen years, in the midst of great difficulties of every kind, had become worn out and weakened. It became hard to find new recruits of worth; young men of talent being attracted, as always happens, towards the opposition parties. Finally, there were internal dissensions between the Conservatives of the old school, such as Cantelli and Cambrai Digny, and men of more democratic spirit, more tolerant of new ideas, such as Sella and Lanza. I remember in connection with this a very significant episode. When the Lanza-Sella ministry fell, in July, 1873, owing to intrigues of the Conservatives themselves, Constantine Perazzi, deputy for Novara and Sella's general secretary, advised the latter to go over to the Left, basing his suggestion on the fact that Sella had desired the transfer of the government to Rome in agreement with the Left, that he stood for ideas more advanced than those held by the Right, and that the ministry to which he belonged had been beaten by the most conservative wing of the Right. Had Sella given heed to this opinion, he would probably have become the leader of the Left, which would partially have modified the later course of events. But it is within my knowledge that the most authoritative men of the Right did everything in their power to dissuade him from accepting this counsel and were successful in their efforts.

When I entered Parliament, the Left had already begun to lose authority. Its popularity during the opposition period which had later brought it to power had been due to its habit of always opposing new taxation and demanding fresh outlay of public money. These two propositions are irreconcilable. They may serve as arguments, but they fail in practice. They are useful for an opposition anxious to attack the government, but it is impossible to govern with them. I have already said that the most prudent elements of the Left felt the necessity of not endangering the financial restoration, to which the rival political party was also pledged, though they were willing to agree to certain new expenses for the more needy regions. These and other facts of a political character, and especially the incompatibility between Depretis's practical and positive temperament, and sentimental and fantastic idealogues, had brought him, during the course of his four ministries, interrupted only by the two brief Cairoli cabinets, to seek the support of the Right and the Centre. Thus *transformismo* was born. The word had a bad reputation which reacted on the man, who was accused of scepticism and cynicism, but there were not wanting profound political reasons for this "transformism," and Depretis did not merit these adverse judgments. He was a man who had in a high degree one of the principal gifts of a politician, good sense. He did not perhaps possess other exceptional qualities. He well understood the administrative service, was capable of examining questions thoroughly, and was a man of firm and decided character. He was a great worker, and was always to be found surrounded by piles of papers. When they were matters on which he had no wish to come to a decision, he would put them aside, making a great pile of them, which continued to grow higher and higher; and with that fine ironic smile of his, he would indicate them as affairs which required a lengthy and careful study. Depretis was not all a sceptic or a cynic; he hated useless oratory, but was pro-

foundly interested in affairs of State and dedicated to them all his activity and energy. He fought his adversaries openly, but was good-natured, without a shadow of spite towards anyone. When I began to vote against him, he asked me one day why I had passed over to the Opposition. I replied, giving him my reasons, and then added that I could not persuade myself of the necessity of the government's basing its support on certain questionable elements, to which he said, "Are you sure there are not people of the type to which you refer even among your friends of the Opposition?" "Probably there are," I said, "but we of the Opposition are only in agreement when it comes to saying no, not for governing the country." As to the accusation that he was a crafty man, is it absolutely necessary for a statesman to be ingenuous?

Shortly after I had entered the Chamber, this dissolution of the Left as a united government party developed further with the retirement, in May, 1883, of Zanardelli and Baccarini from the ministry, and the constitution of the famous "Pentarchy," which had as its leaders Cairoli, Crispi, Nicotera, Baccarini and Zanardelli, and which united in an opposition group a good part of the men of the Left. Hostile to the ministry too, though not forming part of the Pentarchy, was the group of the so-called "Dissidenti" or "dissidents," which attacked the ministry especially on the ground of Magliani's finance, but which held itself aloof from the Pentarchy for various reasons, more particularly because it feared the so-called foreign policy of "clean hands" with which Cairoli, the recognised leader of the Pentarchy, had brought us to the grave defeat of Tunis. To this group, in which I inscribed myself when I passed over to the Opposition, belonged nearly all the men who afterwards became premiers, that is, Di Rudinì, Sonnino, Pelloux and myself, as well as Berti, Villa, Chimirri, Lacava, etc. There were forty-five of us: we were represented in nearly all the

commissions, and thus constituted an important parliamentary force.

My first two years in this legislature, which lasted about three years and a half, from November 22, 1882, to April 27, 1886, were for me a period of study and novitiate. I took part in many commissions, especially in that on the budget, in which I was able to make use of the experience I had gained in my bureaucratic career. My political activity really only began in the third year, with my opposition to the financial methods of Magliani, who held the Ministry of the Treasury as well as that of Finance*. This man's name has become famous for typically representing an insincerely optimistic type of finance, almost a kind of financial prestidigitation. Magliani came from the Bourbon bureaucracy. He was highly intelligent, ready and able, a facile and persuasive speaker, but inconsistent at bottom and, moreover, weak; incapable of answering with that monosyllable which ought to be the motto of every minister of the Treasury, with that *no* for every request damaging to the country's finance. Depretis, on his part, did not restrain him, urged on as he was by his passion for remaining in power at any cost, a passion that was the personal factor in that *trasformismo*, the political genesis of which I have already explained. This optimistic financial policy of Magliani was all the more dangerous on account of the ability with which it dissimulated the deficit with the object of justifying increased expenditure.

In order to obtain this result, recourse was had to various tricks and expedients. The formula of "ultra-extraordinary expenses" was invented. The system of "transformations of capital" was thought out, according to which, a government expense which brought something into actual existence

* The Finance Ministry deals with Customs, Government Monopolies, *octroi* dues, etc. The Treasury controls the monetary circulation with the assistance of the *Zecca* (Mint). It is the aim of the Mussolini government to unify the two.

was not to be considered as an expense, but was converted into capital. Once the financial system had taken this path, necessities for tricks and expedients soon multiplied themselves. The people interested went so far as listing on the credit side of the budget not only the so-called "conversions of capital" but even began to calculate any expense made in connection with any object or office as an increase in value of the same! The speech which I made in the Chamber in 1888 against this system of finance made considerable stir, partly owing to the fact that a newcomer should have put his finger on a grave danger spot in the budget, and partly because I made a great effort to simplify the question and make it quite clear to all. From what followed it would appear that I succeeded, for after my speech there came to me the deputy Medoro Savini, the novelist, one of the simplest and most ingenuous men I have ever met. He said, "Warmest congratulations; even I have understood." The government, which was well aware of the effect of my speech, was anxious that some one should reply immediately before waiting for the official answer from the competent minister. To this end Toscanelli was charged with making a reply. Such matters in these times were carried out with a great deal of good nature, and Toscanelli came to inform me about the matter, and even to ask me some arguments for his reply to me, since he knew nothing about financial matters, I gave him some points willingly enough, dropping one or two hints where he could take me up, and in the end he made a very creditable speech. After having delivered it, he came and asked me how it was that the points I had given him were better and more efficacious than those with which the Finance Ministry itself had furnished him. "That's natural enough," I said, "the ministry and I have different interests. The ministry naturally wanted to keep the best arguments for the Minister's speech. He has to speak after you; but it was my interest to make it clear that Magliani didn't know

any more about finance than you, and I think I have done this."

Thus we came to the elections of 1886, which took place on June 10th with the usual system of scrutiny of list. Depretis wanted to have them in the autumn, but as this period would have been very dangerous for the Opposition, the latter started creating so many difficulties in the Budget Commission, as well as in the Chamber itself, with even signs of obstruction, that he was obliged to hold the elections at once, although the moment was not exactly propitious for the government. I remember that Depretis at that time sent for me and said, "Why do you want to oblige me to call the elections at once?" I replied, "So as not to give you time to prepare to fight us." During the course of those elections a curious episode occurred, which goes to show how certain questions which have had their place for centuries in Italian politics were already settled in Piedmont. I went to a banquet at San Damiano at which, besides all the mayors of the valley, there were also present several parish priests, notwithstanding that at that time the Roman Curia had energetically insisted upon the principle of "*Non expedit*." Indeed the oldest parish priest wanted to make a speech which might have been summed up in these words: "Go on and vote, all of you, because the motto '*neither elected nor electors*'*—well, it's all nonsense." The government naturally combated our list as far as it could, and put into the field one candidate who, knowing that my position was unassailable, tried to persuade the authorities to substitute his name for that of one of my two list companions, who were Roux and Turbiglio. In order to parry this measure, I declared to the electors of the Maora Valley, of the constituency of Dronero, that they were to vote for all the names on the list, because if they voted only for me they would be expressing personal sympathy for me, but at the

*Words from the Vatican's pronouncement on the subject.—Tr.

same time such action would appear like a condemnation of my policy, which was the same as that of my colleagues. The entire list was so heavily voted for in the fifteen communes of that valley, that the ministerial candidate had only two votes in the commune of Stroppo. I remember that some time afterwards the mayor of that commune, on meeting me, said he was sorry that all the votes had not been given to me, and then added that it wouldn't happen a second time. "We have found out," he said, "who gave those two votes, and those electors have had such a time of it that they have decided to emigrate to France." I replied that this was really too much.

The tactics adopted by the Opposition of forcing the government to hold the elections in May, and of allowing no time for ministerial preparation, were justified by the result. With the new Chamber in being, the position of the government was seen at once to be very much weakened, and we immediately started our campaign against the financial methods of Magliani, which in consequence of numerous errors had been getting steadily worse. During a debate in the beginning of 1887 the ministry had a majority of not more than fifteen votes. The moment had come to make a decisive attack, and our group of "dissidents" opened negotiations with the Pentarchy. Di Rudinì, Lacava and myself were charged with the conduct of these negotiations, which centred round one point, that the Pentarchy should make Crispi its leader instead of Cairoli, whom we mistrusted on account of the ingenuousness of his foreign policy. On condition of this change, the "dissidents" promised to join the others. We went to Crispi, that is, I and Lacava did, because between Crispi and Di Rudinì there was some personal ill-feeling which was never removed. The Pentarchy accepted our proposal, and Crispi was charged to speak in the name of the whole Opposition, with the consequence that at voting time the government had the barest majority. On the even-

ing of the vote, by invitation of Codronchi, a meeting of several deputies of the Right was held, and they too decided to pass over to the Opposition. Thus the ministry's fate was sealed, and it became known that in a conversation which Depretis had with the King the day after, the latter hinted at the possibility of entrusting Crispi with the formation of a new cabinet. But Depretis replied that he believed he had Crispi with him. In fact, he began negotiations to this end, and Crispi allowed himself to be persuaded. Instead of attempting the formation of a ministry himself, as the logical development of the action of the united Opposition groups indicated, he agreed to enter Depretis's ministry (April 4, 1887) taking the Ministry of the Interior, while Magliani, against whom the Opposition's battle had been particularly waged, remained at the Treasury and the Ministry of Finance. By this act of his, Crispi effectively abandoned the Left and took part in the *transforming* process of Depretis, which later on, with the assistance of various of his ministries, resolved itself into the Centre government.

Crispi's conduct had the result of upsetting the situation and dividing the Opposition again. A few months later, in July, Depretis died, and Crispi was charged with forming the new cabinet. This he did with various elements, keeping with him Magliani, who, notwithstanding the evident ruin of his financial policy, which had caused an enormous deficit, appeared irremovable. We recommenced the struggle, however, which next year led to the definite defeat of the ministry. The opportunity was afforded by the project for increasing the salt and property taxes, a project which was in itself insufficient and not accompanied as it should have been by economies. Nine commissioners were appointed to examine the scheme, of whom I was one, and we at once agreed to reject it. I was then charged with making the report, and I undertook to have it ready by eleven o'clock the following morning. I worked all night, and took it to the parliamentary

printers at eight o'clock in the morning. At eleven, I presented the proofs to my colleagues, who approved it, so that by two o'clock it was distributed in printed form in the Chamber, which I think is a record for efficacious and rapid opposition. As Christmas was approaching, the bill was not discussed, but during the holidays Crispi manœuvred a partial crisis, and Magliani resigned. As he was Minister of Finance and controlled, during the vacancy, the direction of the Treasury, Crispi replaced him with two new Ministers, nominating Grimaldi for the Finance Ministry and calling to the Treasury Senator Perazzi, who had already been secretary-general with Sella, and who took Sonnino with him as under-secretary. During this first ministry of his, Crispi charged me, together with Lacava and Larocca his secretary-general, to compile the bill for the reform of the provincial and communal laws, a bill which was passed and is still in force.

Grimaldi and Perazzi at the Finance Ministry and Treasury respectively made a financial statement to the Chamber which fully confirmed our criticism and demonstrated that the budget situation was not as Magliani had described. This exposition affected the responsibility of many people, and the reform gave rise to a very tempestuous discussion on the part of those who had supported Magliani's system of finance. I was among the few who defended the statement, but on the whole the Chamber showed itself hostile, and this led to a new crisis. Crispi changed the two ministers, calling me to the Treasury and Sesmit Doda to the Finance ministry, substituting at the same time Sarocchi by Finali at the ministry of Public Works, and creating also the ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, to which he called Lacava.

I remained with Crispi in that ministry from March 9th, 1889, to the beginning of November of the following year, and I was able to form an opinion of him during our work together, carried on in perfect agreement, which future events have not caused me to modify. He was undoubtedly a

fervent patriot with a great love for Italy, which he wished to lead to a high destiny. He was a man of great energy, broadminded and quick, with clear ideas on his general programme, but these were not supported by an equal capacity for looking after details and carrying them out. The disaster of Adowa, in my opinion, was in fact a consequence of this carelessness. He had traced out a wide and audacious programme of expansion, which, however, was disproportionate to the country's potentialities. He was incapable of seeing to the execution of his plan, and did not provide adequate safeguarding measures, adventuring on it with insufficient means, this being the principal reason for the defeat. He possessed a keen sense of justice such as a man at the head of a government should have. I remember that when I was at the Treasury under his premiership and had to proceed against a friend of his, not only did he put no obstacles in my way but he made no recommendations. His limited aptitude for a well-considered examination of things led him sometimes to the fantastic. I remember in connection with this a very strange episode. One summer when I was in the country at Cavour, he telegraphed to me to come to Rome at once. On my arrival, and on presenting myself to him, he said to me at once that a *coup de main* against Spezia was to be expected from France. "What," I exclaimed, "are we at war with France? Have we declared war on France?" "No," he replied, "it is France who is preparing to attack us suddenly with a *coup de main* that is imminent." I answered that I absolutely could not believe it, and I gave him good reasons for my scepticism, saying among other things, that it was incomprehensible that France, who then possessed a fleet three times the superior of ours, should take the risk of bringing upon herself the hatred that would follow such an enormous violation of justice in order to carry out a *coup* of very doubtful convenience. But he remained firm in his conviction, just as if he had no doubt

about the matter, and asked me to give him my assistance, which I did out of loyalty towards him as head of the government, and in so far as I could as Minister of the Treasury. Crispi had notified England, who sent to Genoa an admiral who was charged to speak publicly of the community of interests between England and Italy in the Mediterranean, which he did. When later I was Premier and Minister of the Interior, I discovered that Crispi had had this amazing information from an agent he employed at the Vatican and that he had accepted the news as true without taking the trouble to sift it.

It was also during this time, that is, during my membership of his ministry, that Crispi gave the first hints of his schemes for colonial expansion in Abyssinia. When during the summer of 1890 the Chamber was closed, he asked me for a sum of 600,000 lire for a scientific expedition in Abyssinia. I was obliged to refuse, in the first place because the reserve fund was reduced to very small proportions, and also because the request implied not merely making supplementary estimates, but initiating a fresh expense which ought to have been sanctioned by Parliament in a special law. Shortly after, Crispi proposed to send to Massaua 6,000 men and asked for them at the War Ministry, and on the objection of the minister Bertolé-Viale that an advance of six millions would be required, Crispi told him to ask me for them. Bertolé-Viale replied, "It is you who ought to ask for the money as Premier and Foreign Minister, since you consider this expedition necessary, not I who have never thought of it." Crispi replied that, after the refusal I had given him, he did not intend to ask me for anything more. Bertolé-Viale spoke to me about it afterwards, but I did not consent, since, while speaking about the matter, Bertolé-Viale gave me to understand that it was not he who wanted the expedition.

With regard to what was called by Cavallotti "the moral question," my impression was at the time when such ques-

tions were being discussed, that Crispi personally was honest and disinterested. I think that the idea that he ever thought of taking advantage of his position from a desire of wealth can be excluded. He was honest, but was so disturbed by the weight and responsibility of family troubles, and later also of persons whom he allowed around him, that he did not give any importance to this kind of disorder, so wrapped up was he in thoughts of his political work. The personal relations between us were always good, and I must say that during my participation in his ministry I had nothing but praise for his conduct towards me and for the sincere and cordial assistance he gave to my financial policy. We got on very well together, and he often sent for me to hear my opinion. A certain estrangement began when I resigned. He took it badly, especially because I set out the motives for my resignation in a too sincere form, declaring that I did not care to present myself in the Chamber with a different programme from that with which we had presented ourselves to the electors. Seeing, however, that I did not create difficulties for him and did not oppose him, his first animosity was placated, and during Di Rudini's ministry, which followed his after January, 1891, I had no occasion to suppose that there was any hostility on his part against me. Indeed, speaking with his friends and supporters in the battle to be waged against Di Rudini, he said openly that my moment had come, and that I ought to take it.

Among the other politicians who were prominent at the time was Zanardelli, a man of the greatest honesty and straightforwardness, besides being especially competent in his particular branch of the law. He had considerable culture, although it was a trifle out of date; a culture that belonged to the Louis Philippe period, and had been absorbed by him in his youth as a student. From this fact there was derived his somewhat doctrinaire mentality, which is principally shown in the juridical part of his principal work, the penal

code. He had great eloquence as a speaker, and his speeches were composed with much care, then learned by heart and delivered perfectly. His political convictions were passionately democratic, inclining, however, towards the special bourgeois democracy of his time, and heightened with a sincere loyalty for the constitutional monarchy. Like many others, indeed like almost all the men brought up in that tradition and culture, he could not understand and was hostile to socialism. He enjoyed many friendships and a widespread sympathy, while he, on his side, was somewhat violent in his likes and dislikes, which, it must be recognised, were rather changeable. There was always someone who, according to one of his pet expressions, was "the worst of the lot," but the object of his aversion changed from time to time, so that we used to ask jokingly, "Who is *the worst of the lot* at present?" Devotedly fond of politics, of parliamentary battles and polemics, he was the personification of the soul of the Left in his implacable hostility to the Right.

Another man who was at that time much in the public eye was Nicotera, who was possessed of notable talent. He had a natural genius, much energy and courage, yet at the same time he was violent and impulsive, of limited culture, knew little about law-making and was ignorant of the bureaucratic machinery of the State. To me, he has always been an example of the fact that natural gifts are not enough to make the politician if they are not disciplined. Even energy is not enough, if one does not know how to use it to good effect and with a sense of proportion.

When I accepted the portfolio of the Treasury in Crispi's ministry, I was fully in agreement with the democratic principles of the Left. Indeed, I sought to extend them from the purely democratic field in which Crispi, Zanardelli, Depritis and others had left them to the economic field, in so far as I could do so within the limits of my particular functions. Thus the first thing I did as minister of the

Treasury was to make an alteration in the general financial law of the State which should permit workmen's co-operative societies, which had just then begun to arise, to have concessions for public works contracts. I entered the ministry in February, and the law was passed and promulgated in April. At the same time, however, I departed from that tendency of the Left which had prevailed in Depretis's last cabinets owing to the influence of Magliani, in that I made the extinguishing of the deficit in the budget my principal point. It must be put on record that while Minghetti had succeeded, after many years of sacrifice and effort, in cutting the deficit down by fifty per cent., Magliani's financial system left a deficit of three hundred millions on a budget statement of about a milliard and a half. The financial situation was all the graver for the long economic crisis which was troubling the country, and left little hope of our being able to reduce or sensibly diminish the deficit with fresh taxes. There was also the fact of the international financial situation, which made the question of our payments abroad difficult, and these at the time amounted to nearly 350,000,000 lire a year. In consequence of the grave Argentine crisis, and the ensuing disaster of the famous English bank of Baring, which was heavily interested in that country, the exchange had taken a turn for the bad which amounted to some sixteen per cent., and this helped to render still more difficult our payments abroad. For the eighteen months that I remained at the Treasury, the deficit was remedied by the issue of railway bonds at three per cent, an investment created in the time of Magliani, and with the sale of one hundred and twenty millions of stock of the *Cassa Pensioni* (Pensions Fund), which had been badly inaugurated and did not work, so that there remained to its account at the disposition of the Treasury those hundred and twenty millions already given as a first assignment. Another difficulty of our finance at the time was created by France's system, which, in obedience to the

word of its government, irritated by the policy of Crispi, put every kind of obstacle in the way of placing our shares which were required for our foreign payments. In this difficult moment, Herr Siemens came to Rome as emissary of the *Deutsche Bank* for the constitution of the *Credito Fondiario* (Real Estate Credit). I took the opportunity of treating with him for the placing abroad of those hundred and twenty millions of scrip, and we were able to come to an agreement which was favourable for us. The only condition he made was that the existence of the agreement should not be made known for some time in order that the hostile French financiers should not create obstacles to the operation. I remember that the agreement was concluded in the evening, and that Siemens had to leave the day after the signing took place, and that the same evening the telegraph announced a fall of sixty centimes of our Consolidated on the Paris Bourse. Siemens, however, signed all the same, though lamenting that he had concluded a piece of bad business. It must be put on record that at that time and for some time afterwards our finance was well and cordially supported by the German bank. The conditions of our budget then were such that, especially for foreign payments, we were obliged to have recourse to foreign credits because we had in Italy a fixed exchange. But the field for these credits was very restricted. France refused them to us absolutely in order to combat Crispi's hostile policy, and there was not much to be counted on from England, because the English financiers were doing little business in Europe. They preferred colonial undertakings and speculations in which they gained much more, even if they were exposed to catastrophes like that which overwhelmed the Baring bank.

While I proceeded in the best manner possible to meet these immediate needs, I sought to keep down expenses, and Crispi offered no opposition to my work of economy till the elections of 1890, and indeed supported it, agreeing

that the government should present itself at the elections with a programme of economies. I prepared this programme during the first days of September as an electioneering party cry, and I had asked at the cabinet meeting for a reduction of expenses that amounted to twenty millions for the army and twelve millions for the navy, while no other extra expense was to be allowed on any other section of the budget. Since the youngest minister acted as secretary of the cabinet meetings, I took advantage of this to have these points included in the minutes, adding that without these concessions I would not lay the budget before the Chamber. After a long discussion, the minister for War, Bertolé-Viale, as well as the chief minister of the Admiralty, Brin, gave their assent, but Finali, minister for Public Works, insisted upon having an increase of twelve millions for his budget. I refused, because in my opinion these twelve millions were not necessary, and also because the War minister, before agreeing to my request for a reduction in his expenses, had obtained from me a promise that I would not accede to the demands of any other minister. As Finali continued to insist, I declared to the cabinet and repeated personally to Crispi that if Finali did not abandon his demands and did not modify the budget for Public Works in the direction indicated by me, I would resign. Crispi tried to keep the question suspended for as long as he could, but as Finali would not give away, and Crispi perhaps did not expect that I would stick to my point, my resignation became inevitable. Three or four days before the opening of the Chamber, I made Crispi a final declaration, warning him that if by mid-day on the following day, I had not Finali's consent, I should hand him my resignation and have the same published contemporaneously. As at mid-day I had received no reply, ten minutes later I wrote my letter of resignation and communicated it to the press. A quarter of an hour later, my under-secretary Lazzaro Gagliardo, an old Garibaldian, wounded at Volturno and

in the Tyrol, whom I always remember as a very fine gentleman and a person of the greatest good sense, resigned also.

I did not wish, however, to create other difficulties for the ministry, and I continued to vote in its favour until its fall which happened suddenly on January 31, 1891, during a sitting at which I was not present.

This was the sitting of the famous "holy memories" (*sante memorie*). In one of his impulsive moments, Crispi said that the foreign policy of the Right was vile. A pandemonium followed; Di Rudinì and the other men of his party jumped to their feet and apostrophised him; and the ministry, at the vote taken immediately afterwards, was defeated and resigned. This fall had been prepared by Crispi himself without his knowing it, for his continual withdrawal from the Left had unconsciously favoured an attempt at revival on the part of the Right, which was embodied in the ministry formed by Di Rudinì after the crisis.

When he formed his first ministry, the Marquis Di Rudinì was considered as the leader of the Right, having arrived at that situation owing to the disappearance of other notable men of the party as well as for the prestige of the past. As a matter of fact, he had entered political life very young, and through a dramatic episode in 1866, when, in consequence of the discontent caused by the war, a regular insurrection had been attempted in Palermo. It was a purely Bourbon insurrection prepared by the lowest element of Palermo. The people had besieged Di Rudinì, then mayor of the city, for three days in the municipal palace. The young mayor had defended himself with great courage and energy, giving time to the troops of the regular army to disembark, repress the revolt and restore order to the perturbed city. This episode had given him a large popularity among the men of his party, who thought they had found at last in this youth a real man of action who could be their leader in the future.

They sought to prepare his career; he was nominated prefect of Naples, and was then called to the ministry of the Interior in Minghetti's last ministry before he had reached the age of thirty years. As often happens when expectations are too lively, a certain sense of disappointment followed, even in the ranks of his own party. I remember in connection with this a phrase of De Sanctis that was rather malicious, and made the circuit of the political world, "He came to the Chamber as the miraculous boy; the boy remained, but the miracle disappeared." My impressions of him are that he was a perfect gentleman, a man of tact and fineness, dowered with a culture that was rich but not surpassing the average. He had not nor did he ever acquire a wide experience, and he did not know how to dominate assemblies. The greatest defect of his character as a politician was his indecision.

This trait in his nature showed itself sometimes even in the formation of his cabinet. As I have hinted, the way in which the crisis arose suggested an inclination to return to the Right, but when it came to choosing his collaborators, Di Rudinì ended by following the example of Depretis backwards, trying, that is, to form a ministry which, moving from the Right, should absorb men of the Left. He took with him as minister of the Interior, Nicotera, the man who had led the parliamentary revolt of 1876, as well as men wholeheartedly with the Right.

Before offering the ministry of the Interior to Nicotera, Di Rudinì had offered it to me, but I could not accept it, basing my refusal upon the fact that the new ministry had been formed on a political base different from that which supported the ministry in which I had taken part up to a few months before.

The difficulties inherent in a situation such as that which had caused the formation of the ministry were not long in manifesting themselves, and they were aggravated by a dis-

agreement that could not be disguised between its two principal men, Di Rudinì and Nicotera. The latter, who perhaps cherished wider ambitions, took advantage of his position to make an insidious attack on his chief, who was lacking in the energy and decision necessary to get rid of him. One day Di Rudinì called me to him and confided in me, saying that he could not get on with Nicotera at the ministry of the Interior, and ended by again offering me the post. I replied, repeating what I had already said on the occasion of his first offer, that is, that I could not enter the ministry if its colour was not changed in the sense that it should base itself more on the Left. He asked me how in my opinion such a change could be effected, and I suggested that he should call Bonacci to the ministry of Justice together with me. He accepted the suggestion, and even charged me with making the formal offer to Bonacci. I carried out this mandate, but then I heard nothing more about it, because Di Rudinì could not decide to bring about the crisis, although he several times spoke to me again of his disagreements with Nicotera. Shortly after, during the closing of the Chamber for the Easter holidays of 1892, the Finance Minister, Colombo, having resigned, Di Rudinì telegraphed me at Cavour, where I was staying, begging me to come to Rome. I came, and he offered to make a new ministry in agreement with me, with entirely new men, only he and Nicotera remaining. I answered him that this did not seem opportune, and that I could not go into the same ministry with Nicotera. "But I put up with him," said Di Rudinì. I replied, "I can sympathise with you over this, but I cannot imitate you." He then offered the Treasury to Genela, who did not accept, and not succeeding in securing another name likely to reinforce the ministerial body, the cabinet appeared before the Chamber incomplete. In the parliamentary debate which followed in the first days of May, I spoke against the government, observing that the ministry could not go on because it

had not even succeeded in reconstructing itself, and the ministry having fallen on the vote provoked by my discourse, I was marked out as the person to attempt the solution of the crisis and had the charge of forming the new ministry.

CHAPTER IV

MY FIRST MINISTRY

BANKING SCANDALS AND THE WORKERS' GROUPS

Return to party government—Fundamental points of my programme—Liberal policy and social policy—Support of the Triple Alliance and friendly relations with France—Elections and the victory of the Left—Inquiry into the affair of the Banca Romana and its precedents—Danger to the national credit—The reform of the note-issuing banks—Beginnings of the Socialist movement—Sicilian "Fasci" (groups) and economic action of the workers—De Felice, Barbato, Verro—Conservative reaction—Committee of Seven and its inadequate work—Accusations levelled against me and my resignation.

THE fall of Di Rudinì's ministry, which sprang from a crisis provoked by the Conservatives on the occasion of an unhappy expression of Crispi, and which, notwithstanding the participation of Nicotera and the unsuccessful attempt of Di Rudinì to gain support from the Left, had been on the whole a Right ministry, represented the defeat of the first attempt at a conservative policy.

I came to the conclusion when I received the command to form the new cabinet, that it ought to be essentially a Left ministry, without dissimulations or half measures, and I called around me as collaborators Bonacci, Brin, Martini, Genala, Lacava, Finocchiaro-Aprile, Di Saint Bon, an expert in naval affairs, and, for the War Office, Pelloux, who then represented in the military world a very Liberal element. I also conceived the idea of calling one of the most representative Liberals, Zanardelli, to be President of the Chamber,

He, in fact, was nominated speaker after the general election of November 23, 1892.

My political programme had several outstanding features which distinguished it from those of my immediate predecessors. It differed not only from that of Di Rudinì but also from that of Crispi who, with his grandiose ideas of expansion, did not take sufficient account of the still difficult conditions of the country's finance and economics, and showed a disposition to react with violence against the discontent in the country, which was especially noticeable among the labouring classes. One point of my policy was the rehabilitation of the country's finance, so badly shaken by Magliani's system and the spendthrift mania of the Left in its early days, as well as the necessity of adapting our financial policy to the conditions of the country, which was passing through a long economic crisis from which it would not recover for several years. Another point which was also intimately connected with the restoration of our finances was our foreign policy. I accepted entirely the Triple Alliance, which had been concluded some years before by Depretis, but I had no intention of following Crispi's direction, which seemed to imply that this alliance had been arrived at for the purpose of maintaining a foreign policy which France considered hostile and provocative. This attitude of Crispi had had serious results for us in the financial field, rendering the Bank and Bourse hostility with which France replied to the political hostility of Crispi more acute, and obliging us to make a heavier military outlay, as appeared in the following years when Crispi returned to power. The Triple Alliance, in my opinion, was even at this time to be considered in the nature of a defensive alliance, which, while it guaranteed us our security, allowed us at the same time to enter into cordial relations with other powers on a footing of perfect equality. I therefore made it my plan to smooth off the angles of discord in our relations with France, at the same time keeping

strictly to our agreements with the Central Powers. Our relations with France had been seriously damaged during Crispi's ministry, and it was my intention to restore good neighbourly relations with France. In this I succeeded, and I was able to secure the presence of France in official form at the Columbus festival at Genoa in August, 1892, where a French cruiser with an admiral was sent to pay homage to the King, who was present with all the ministers of the cabinet.

The third important point in my programme was concerned with internal politics. Here I believed the moment had arrived for moving towards a more decisive and practical experiment on democratic lines. The advent of the democracy to power, with the so-called parliamentary revolution of 1876 and the triumph of the Left, had been more than anything else doctrinaire in character, more particularly, and in a not entirely beneficial manner, in relationship to the financial policy of the State. The democratic inclinations of the Left had found vent principally in urging a popular policy of excessive expenditure which, if it appeared justified by the conditions and needs of the less favoured and more backward regions, at the same time menaced the financial stability of the State. If the democratic conviction of the Left had remained theoretically firm, in parliamentary practice it had undergone inevitable changes, owing to the *trasformismo* of Depretis and on account of the new dilatory tendencies towards which Crispi had become inclined. There was one point in which my ideas were clearly distinguished from those of the other representatives of the democracy of that time. The democratic Left was always an expression of the bourgeoisie, that is of the small bourgeoisie, in comparison with the well-to-do people represented by the old Right, who were made up principally of Lombards. Its doctrinaire inspirations were also drawn from the school of the bourgeois democracy. I have already said that at that time the more advanced democrats, such as Zanardelli and Cavallotti, were

adverse to socialism and its doctrines, while for Crispi socialism was the enemy of the country. In the general mass of opinion, it was confounded with anarchy and revolution, and the few Socialists already in the Chamber, such as Costa, Prampolini, Badaloni and Agnani, if personally they were treated as the worthy persons they undoubtedly were, politically formed exceptions to the general rule. I thought, however, that the moment had arrived to take into consideration the interests and the aspirations of the mass of workers, which, throughout almost the entire country, suffered under the pressure of economic conditions, often iniquitous, of wages and life. So much so that the population had begun, in the great industrial cities, and here and there in the country, to agitate and make itself felt. These were the ideas which, even if not expressly set forth, informed the spirit of the declared policy with which the new government presented itself to the Chamber.

It appeared at once that the Chamber, as it had been formed at the last elections held under Crispi, would not furnish a solid base for the working out of these problems. When I appeared I was, in fact, particularly attacked by the Right, whose principal spokesman was Ruggero Bonghi, representing the Opposition. In order to close the discussion, I provoked a vote of confidence, and had a majority of nine, 26 or 27 members of the Centre, headed by Sonnino, abstaining. This vote convinced me that it was impossible to go on with such a Chamber, and the same evening I had an audience with the King in order to put the situation before him, a situation which was summed up in the dilemma—either dissolution of the Chamber or resignation of the ministry. The reasons for which I did not hesitate to propose the dissolution of the Chamber and which I put before His Majesty were the following: that as the electoral system had been changed by the law presented by Di Rudini, which re-established the old one member constituency, the Chamber

no longer faithfully reflected the political situation of the country, and, moreover, the Chamber having thrown out the two ministries of Crispi and Di Rudinì, and given me a vote on the strength of which I could not assume the responsibility of government, there resulted a condition of things which made it seem impossible to me to create a majority. The King listened to these arguments, and told me to return at twelve o'clock the next day for his reply.

In the relations which I had during my ministry with King Humbert, he appeared to me to be a very simple man, very courteous and extremely correct from the constitutional point of view. After this first ministry of mine, I did not have occasion to see him for some time, but in that short time I did not find in him any kind of disapproval of a Liberal and democratic policy. He accepted his mission with a high sense of responsibility, manifesting a wide interest in matters of State and especially in foreign policy and military matters.

On this occasion he showed that he understood with strict constitutional sense the high duty he had to fulfil. As soon as I left the King, I called a cabinet council for eleven o'clock on the morrow. When we met, Genala asked to be allowed to speak. Setting forth the impossibility of going on with things as they were, he solemnly declared that it seemed to him opportune to propose the convocation of the electoral committees. I remember that he used the phrase, "What is wanted is a decisive stroke." Then I spoke and declared to the ministers that I had convoked them for the purpose of informing them that the dissolution of the Chamber and the calling of the elections had already been proposed by me to His Majesty, and that at mid-day I had to return to the royal palace to hear the answer. And in fact when I was received by the King shortly afterwards, he told me at once that, having examined the parliamentary situation, and taken into consideration the change of the electoral law, he had come to the conclusion that it was advisable to appeal to the

country. He added that as to the time or the form of the declaration, he left the decision entirely to me. I returned with this reply to the ministers, who were gathered together awaiting my return, and I invited them all to reassemble at two o'clock for the opening of the Chamber. There was great curiosity and excitement, when I got up to speak. I began by saying, "I have the honour of informing you that in consequence of the vote last night the ministry has offered its resignation to His Majesty." A burst of applause came from the benches of the Right. I let them applaud for a while; then I added, "His Majesty, however, has not accepted the ministry's resignation." Another loud burst of applause then broke from the benches of the Left, and Zanardelli, rising up, cried out "Long live the King!" And for the rest of my ministry this rigid division of Right and Left, such as had not existed for a long time, was maintained in the Chamber, as was evidenced on each occasion that a vote was taken.

I concluded by asking for a provisory credit for six months. A long debate followed, in which the principal speaker against the ministry was Bonghi, and the sitting ended with a secret scrutiny vote, which gave me 78 votes majority.

I dissolved the Chamber in the autumn, to be precise on the 10th of October, because preparations were being made to hold the Columbus festival at Genoa in August, at which representatives from all parts of the world were expected, and which, as I have said, had a special political significance from the presence of French representatives, which indicated a slackening of the tension between the two countries.

The elections took place on the 13th and resulted in a notable victory for the Left, which gained several seats from the Right. The Republicans of the extreme Left were also hit by the fall of Cavallotti and Imbriani, who created a disturbance on account of it, attributing the responsibility to

me, just as if it were my duty to support elements that were not perfectly within the orbit of the constitution.

The year which followed, 1893, was a difficult one, owing to increasing financial depression, which was shown by the fall of the exchange when the State's finances, for some time in far from good condition, fell severely in the matter of foreign payments which exceeded 300,000,000 lire in gold. The banking revelations had also an adverse effect, especially those concerning the Banca Romana with all the consequent scandal and polemics they awoke in the political world; and finally there was the evil effect resulting from the proletarian agitation, which culminated in the movement of the *Fasci dei Lavoratori* (Labour Groups), organised in Sicily. To add to all these difficulties came the death of several of my cabinet colleagues. Eula, who held the portfolio of Justice, died, and for him I substituted Senator Santamaria Nicolini; Ellena, who was at the Finance Ministry, died and was replaced by Grimaldi. I also lost Saint Bon whose post was taken by Racchia, and finally on the death of Genala, I personally replaced him, taking for the time being the ministry of Public Works.

In order to face the financial difficulties which made our payments abroad especially onerous, I contrived two provisions. The interests on our public debt abroad had to be paid in foreign money or in gold. With the exchange fifteen per cent. against us, there arose on the part of banks and private persons the idea of sending the coupons abroad for payment, speculating to take advantage of that fifteen per cent. at the expense of the State. To put a limit to this speculation which was growing and extending, I established the system of the affidavit, according to which, payment of the interest coupons abroad could only be made after a declaration of ownership under oath at the Italian consular offices. I arranged also that from thence onwards the customs dues should be paid in gold. This resolution to insist on

payment in gold at the customs gave rise to controversies with some foreign powers, who ended, however, by recognising that the payment of custom duties in depreciated money constituted a real diminution of the protection afforded by the treaties. These two schemes proved perfectly efficacious, and were maintained even when our money returned to par after a long period of years; and this was all the more fortunate when we consider the disastrous condition of the exchanges after the European war.

Now we come to the scandal of the Banca Romana, and we shall see how the event really happened.

We must remember that up to that time the inspection of the banks with powers to issue notes was not in the hands of the Treasury—as it has since become through my efforts—but was carried out by the ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. At the time of Crispi's last ministry when I was at the ministry of Finance, rumours and accusations concerning the administration of the Banca Romana had arisen, and the minister for Agriculture at the time, Miceli, in consequence of these rumours, had ordered in June, 1889, a general inspection of the note-issuing establishments. Senator Alvisé was charged with the task in the case of the Banca Romana, and he asked for the assistance of an official from the Treasury, whom he had in the person of Commendatore Gustavo Biagini.

Since the matter was not at all in my department, I only learned the results of that inspection at the cabinet council and from the report of the minister of Agriculture. It appeared later that a report compiled by Biagini made accusations against the administration of the bank, partly in connection with its portfolio, which was charged with many *carta di comodo* (favour loans) renewed from time to time, and partly in connection with a shortage of nine millions covered by clandestine note issues. In consequence, however, of explanations given personally by Tanlongo to the

minister, and after fresh inspections and reports carried out by Commendatore Monzilli, then director of the Bank, Miceli was convinced that Biagini, for lack of banking experience, had fallen into errors, the more so since Biagini himself, after a second inspection ordered by the minister had verified and reported that the balance was restored. The report which he laid before the cabinet council on the result of the commission's work was in general favourable to the Banca Romana, and the action of the minister of Agriculture towards the bank was limited to certain provisions of procedure and general order. As appears from the official documents and the report of the Committee of Seven, the declarations made by Miceli to the parliamentary commission appointed to examine and report on the law of November 30, 1889, for the reorganisation of the banks authorised to issue notes were of the same complexion. He made a summary of the reports received, in which no mention was made of the circumstances revealed by Biagini; in fact flattering hints were included regarding the improvements introduced into the bank. There was never any suspicion as to the good faith of Miceli, and only the facts which came to light through the inquiry which I ordered revealed the way in which his confidence had been betrayed. One of these ways was the audacious covering up of the deficit by means of a provisory loan of ten millions obtained from the National Bank. At any rate, it was neither the right nor the duty of the ministers who were colleagues of Miceli to go into the question on their own account; and we all therefore accepted the conclusions of the competent minister and the matter was dropped. I, as minister of the Treasury, had no right to exercise any kind of inspection over the note-issuing banks, though this power was later taken away from the ministry for Agriculture and handed over to the Treasury by the law which I caused to pass in 1893. Contrary to the presumptions of my adversaries, I knew nothing of the special report of Biagini, which

was embodied so far as I, as member of the cabinet, knew, in the general report made by Miceli.

The question of the Banca Romana was brought before the Chamber about the end of 1892 or the beginning of 1893 by the deputy Colajanni, on the strength, it would seem, of the Alvisè-Biagini report, a copy of which he had received after the death of Alvisè. Grave rumours began to circulate at once as to the condition of the bank, and hints were passed round as to the existence of deficits and an excess of paper money. In connection with this it must be remembered that at that time the note-issuing banks themselves printed the notes which they issued, without any control on the part of the government, and the Banca Romana, whose notes were made in England, was in a position to order any number of them. It was in fact discovered that in addition to an excess of sixty millions in circulation, another forty millions had been ordered which constituted a duplicate series. It was a piece of good fortune that some high official of the bank aware of the arrival of these notes, and afraid of the responsibility which might fall on him, protested to the directors of the bank and insisted on their being burnt. All this, however, came to light when Finali's report of the inquiry ordered by me was published.

The attacks of Colajanni against the Banca Romana made a great impression in parliament and on public opinion, and a parliamentary inquiry was proposed. In the meanwhile, however, I sought to gather information on the matter, and noticing that certain deputies, whom I believed to be compromised with the bank, associated themselves with excessive energy in the demand for such an inquiry, I refused, instituting instead a government commission. Under a decree dated December 30th, 1892, I nominated the commission, with Finali as president, a man who was in himself a guarantee of sincerity, competence and undeniable severity. The commission was composed of persons whose judgment was

not prejudiced by preceding inquiries or by any offices they held, and were chosen from among the most competent men, both in character and ability, that the public administration could boast. The inquiry was to be extended to all the note-issuing establishments, of which there were then six, namely Banca Nazionale, Banca Romana, Banca di Napoli, Banca di Sicilia, Banca Nazionale Toscana and Banca Toscana di Credito. Six officials were chosen, and to each was assigned the inspection and examination of one bank. Commendatore Martuscelli, general secretary of the *Corte dei Conti*, was given the inspection of the Banca Romana. The decree with which I created the commission was very simple, but calculated to provide for a thorough examination of all the various parts of banking business: the manufacture, issue and withdrawal of notes, circulation and quantity of reserve notes, gold reserve, nature and extent of monies out on loan or otherwise hypothecated. I was present at the first sitting of the commission in order to declare that I placed at its service all the officials of the State and all the elements at the government's disposal, and to beg the commission to proceed in such a way that the inspection of the books of the note-issuing banks should take place contemporaneously to avoid any deficits being covered by transfer of funds.

During the next few days, having gone away from Rome in order to visit a sick relative of mine at Cavour, I received a telegram from my colleague, the minister of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, which informed me of Senator Finali's desire that a circular notice should be sent to the prefects in order that they might help in the necessary inquiries. I replied immediately authorising Senator Finali to compose such a note in the terms which he thought best met the case, and I further authorised my under-secretary Rosano to sign it for me in case of urgency.

A few days after I had ordered the inquiry presided over by Finali, there began to pass from mouth to mouth in Rome

rumours of grave irregularities which, it was feared, were about to be discovered at the Banca Romana. These rumours had their origin in conversations of employees of the bank and were also reported to the ministry by the police. The first inquiries of Commendatore Martuscelli seemed to confirm the existence of these irregularities, and it was suspected that some of the responsible parties might seek safety abroad. I therefore gave orders that the directors of the bank should without distinction be watched, and that Tanlongo, Commendatore Cesare Lazzaroni and Baron Michele Lazzaroni (who seemed to be the most deeply involved) should be warned not to leave Rome under pain of arrest. Among the controllers of the bank was the Duca di Ceri who was not to blame in the matter, and could only be considered responsible for negligence in his office. Seeing that he was being watched, he came with a friend to ask me what this police supervision meant.

"Just this," I replied, "that if anything wrong is discovered, you will be immediately arrested." Then, knowing him to be a perfectly upright man, I reassured him, though the supervision was not removed.

The commission's work was carried out with exceptional rapidity taking into consideration the extent and complexity of the inquiries. On the 11th of January, Martuscelli was able to deliver his first report, and Finali told me that he would bring it to me the same evening, informing me that grave facts had come to light. I then warned Bonacci, minister of Justice, to be present at Palazzo Braschi to meet Finali. Bonacci came to my office about nine o'clock in the evening, accompanied by Senator Bartoli, procurator-general of the Court of Appeal of Rome, whom he said he had brought with him to consider the question whether Tanlongo, having been nominated senator, but although nominated, the King had not yet signed the decree confirming him senator, could be made subject to the ordinary jurisdiction of the courts,

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or whether he would have to go before the Senate. Senator Bartoli, entering my room—I remember these particulars, for afterwards a regular romance was built upon this meeting—said that as he felt a little unwell, he had thought it advisable to bring with him the instructing judge and the substitute king's procurator, whom he had left in another room at my office. I had no objection, but I never saw these officials at all. Finali, arriving with Martuscelli, handed me the report and, after reading it, I gave it to Bonacci with a letter so that it bore official trace of its source. Bonacci in turn passed the report to the procurator-general who received it and declared that he would retire with the officials he had brought with him to deliberate on what steps should be taken. Then, as it was already late, I left the ministry. The following morning, the memorial service for Victor Emanuel was being held (19th March) and it was while I was taking part in the ceremony that my under-secretary, Rosano, informed me that the judicial authorities had in the morning issued warrants for the arrest of Tanlongo and Cesare Lazzaroni, at the same time ordering the police to search their houses.

Unfortunately, the report of the commission confirmed the worst suspicions, particularising the accusations both with regard to the excess and irregularities in the circulation and the deficits as well as with regard to the deplorable state of the portfolio where an enormous number of bills of exchange remained unpaid. The inquiry had been conducted with such diligence and precision, that in all the subsequent inquiries, including those ordered by the judicial authorities for the criminal charge against Tanlongo and his accomplices, not a single irregularity was discovered which the inquiry had not already revealed. I think that rarely has an inquiry ordered on so vast and complex a scale succeeded in getting to the bottom of an affair so quickly and so thoroughly.

When it came to my knowledge that there was a clandestine

circulation of about sixty millions, and that with an order sent to London it had been possible to forward to Rome, just as if it were a barrel of beer, forty millions of further notes unknown to anyone, two grave fears possessed me. The first was that a disastrous panic might spread throughout Italy in connection with all our bank notes, with the consequent danger of an incalculable revolution in the country's economic life. My second fear was that there might be a clandestine circulation even greater than that ascertained, and that other consignments of notes from London in addition to that already discovered might have been delivered. For the first of these dangers there was no other remedy beyond that which I adopted a few days later (having my measure afterwards approved by parliament), which was to declare that since the notes were legal notes, the State guaranteed them. Before making such a declaration, it was urgent for me to possess the certainty, as far as possible, that the evil was not even worse than would appear from the inquiry carried out by Martuscelli. I was worried too by the danger that some clandestine manufacture of notes might have been hidden away. I therefore charged the under-secretary of State and the general director of police to inform themselves immediately of all that had come to light in connection with the Banca Romana, both as a result of their researches or from any other sources of information whatever. In this way there came into my hands copies of some documents sequestered in Lazzaroni's house and lists of documents seized in Tanlongo's house as well as at the offices of the bank. All these lists and copies referred exclusively to documents handed over to the judicial authorities. But, as we shall see later, all these dispositions and orders of mine, which formed part of my duties as minister, gave rise afterwards to a campaign of persecution and defamation against me.

The results of the inquiries held in connection with other note-issuing banks were much less grave and did not yield

the criminal evidence that arose from the inquiry into the Banca Romana. In the case of the Banca di Napoli, it appeared that the bank was without capital and had a debit of twenty millions. There was nothing wrong with its circulation, but its portfolio was burdened with an amazing mass of valueless bills. The method which had been followed at the Banca di Napoli of indulging in generosities at the bank's expense consisted in discounting bills by people who had no money, which bills were then put among the bad debts.

In face of the discovery of this serious condition of affairs, which threw so much discredit on our money, I thought that the first duty of the government was to make a complete change and proceed to a total reorganisation of the note-issuing banks, with provisions that would give the highest possible guarantee of credit to the bank notes. My colleagues being in agreement on this point, I presented a bill to parliament as soon as was possible. This bill contained the following principal points: (1) Suppression of the Banca Romana, the Banca Nazionale Toscana, and the Banca Toscana di Credito, because the existence of six banks with six different kinds of legal notes created great complications and increased the difficulties of vigilance on the part of the government. Only the Banca Nazionale, transformed into the Banca d'Italia, and the banks of Naples and Sicily were allowed to remain, these two latter having old traditions. (2) In future no issue of notes could be made without the control of the State, so that from then every note carried the State's mark stamped on it by the government note-making office, thus rendering any clandestine issue impossible. (3) Deputies or senators were absolutely prohibited from taking part in the administration or direction of note-issuing banks, which had been permitted up to that time. This prohibition, endangering many interests, drew upon me active resentment and hatred that found outlet in the later campaign.

The law, moreover, included very severe regulations for re-establishing the credit of the Banca di Napoli, which was much shaken, and also for the liquidation of the Banca Nazionale. So severe were these regulations that when the conditions tended to become more normal, they had to be modified. So grave was the danger run by the national credit, and so evident the necessity of immediate and radical remedies that the law was passed almost without discussion, notwithstanding the interests it affected. The one beneficial result of this grave scandal was that it gave me an opportunity to create, for the operations of the note-issuing banks and the monetary circulation, a secure and efficacious system which is still in force, and owing to which the serious and criminal scandals which came to light in this case have never been repeated.

The report of the commission of inquiry and the rumours that were going about as to the results of the inquiries and the preliminary proceedings of the trials of Tanlongo, Lazzaroni and their accomplices, as well as suggestions of the responsibility and guilt of certain politicians had in the meanwhile created a great agitation in public opinion, in the press and in parliament. Thus there was put forward at one sitting of the Chamber a proposal to nominate a committee that should be charged with ascertaining the political responsibilities and with reporting on them. I had been opposed to a political inquiry antecedent to an administrative one, because I had reason to fear that a premature political inquiry might afford loopholes of escape, and because it was urgent for me to ascertain what were the real conditions of the banking institutions and to provide remedies; but I had no longer any reason to oppose the responsibilities of political men being examined and ascertained. Now that the administrative inquiry was finished, the Chamber entrusted its president Zanardelli, with the task of nominating this commission, which later took the name of the Committee of the Seven. It was created on March 21st and was composed of Mordini

as president and relator, Alessandro Paternostro and Cesare Fani as secretaries, Giovanni Bovio, Antonio Pellegrini, Eduardo Sineo and Suardi Gianforti.

A second important event of this year was the proletarian agitation, which manifested itself particularly in the formation of the Sicilian workers groups (*Fasci dei Lavoratori*), and their struggles for the betterment of their conditions and wages.

A certain movement among the lower classes, especially among the workmen of the cities, had already been on foot in Italy for some years. In its first phase, and with the favour of the democratic elements, it had asserted itself through the creation of Workmen's Mutual Aid Societies, unconnected for the most part with politics. In the country there had been a formation of labour co-operative societies, to which, as minister of the Treasury in Crispi's cabinet, I had already arranged that certain public works could be entrusted. The socialist doctrines, from which had sprung the great organised movements and struggles abroad, especially in Germany and in France, began also to filter into Italy. Already in 1874, the constitution at Milan of the first Chamber of Labour had assumed a political character, a fact which had so much alarmed the Lombard conservatives and the government, that it was dissolved and all its chiefs and workman members brought to trial. It is to be noted that even the Milanese democrats showed no sympathy for the movement, and indeed opposed it. Then there were Andrea Costa's agitations and propaganda in Romagna. For some years he was the only Socialist deputy in the Chamber, and his socialism was of a revolutionary character and tinged with republicanism. In general, in these earliest agitations, socialism was often mixed with anarchism, the chiefs of which movement were Gori and Cipriani, and it had affiliations, especially in Romagna, with Garibaldianism. It was a very confused movement, with tendencies towards plotting and insurrec-

tion that attracted disordered and rebellious spirits, but did not make much headway among the workers. A clarification in the socialist sense, and according to Marx's ideas of progressive education and organisation of the workers took place later after 1885, through the propaganda conducted by Prampolini and Agnini in the provinces of Reggio and Modena, by Badaloni in the Polesine, by Bereini at Parma, by Enrico Ferri in the Mantuan district and by Bissolati in that of Cremona. At Milan, with the publication of *Critica Sociale* by Turati, about 1890 I think, there was formed a centre of culture and of rigid Marxist doctrine, which exercised a notable influence on the University youth of Northern Italy, and soon found collaborators in Bologna, Genoa and Turin. Many of these, like Treves, Zerboglio and Canepa afterwards played a notable part in the socialist political movement. In August, 1892, a congress was held at Genoa in which the two tendencies, the anarchic-revolutionary and the organising socialist, found themselves face to face. The conference ended with a rupture. The Socialists, who looked to Turati and Prampolini as their leaders, with the support of the majority of the intellectuals and part of the workmen's organisation, such as the Milan Chamber of Labour, formed the Italian Socialist Party, which through varying fortunes has kept itself together, while the revolutionary party dwindled in number and importance.

In Sicily, the workmen's movement had had its origin at Catania at the hands of De Felice Giuffrida. This man did not possess much culture, and in character was chiefly a popular orator. He had begun by conducting a violent struggle against the conservative municipality, levelling accusations against its chiefs, and these men, for revenge, and in order to liberate themselves of him, had involved him in a trial and had succeeded in getting him condemned. The facts were as follows. De Felice ought to have given evidence against a friend of his, but he got out of it by presenting a

doctor's certificate of illness. His enemies accused him of intentional legal falsehood in having taken advantage of the certificate, although he was not ill, and the tribunal condemned him to 13 months' imprisonment. The sentence, which appeared unjust, awakened a lively reaction in public opinion. De Felice became very popular with the masses, and was made deputy in the elections of 1892, and notwithstanding the efforts of his adversaries, was elected by a large majority. In order to escape serving his sentence, he had taken refuge in Malta, and after his election I had him informed that he could safely return. His re-entry was truly triumphant. To give an idea of the popularity he had gained, I remember that during the election there were erected many little altars, while candles were burned before his portrait like those put before the images of the saints. Later I came to know De Felice as a deputy, and my impression of him has always been that he was a man of good faith, an honest fellow who lived modestly, rather a dreamer, but fundamentally good. I remember a curious episode of his life which he told me himself, and which shows up all his character. There was cholera in a large commune of the province of Catania, and its spread had been especially attributed to the infection of an aqueduct, which belonged to a rich baron. The municipality had requested the baron to interrupt the flow of the aqueduct, but the latter refused, denying the infection, and threatening to demand millions of damages if the interruption took place. Then De Felice, together with some friends, took himself into the country to a place where the aqueduct passed, and broke it open in order to assume the responsibility personally and not involve the municipality in a costly law suit. "Now let the baron come and ask me for the damages." He was hated by Crispi, whom he had always attacked.

The peasants' agitation which led to the constitution of the Workers' groups broke out in the spring of 1893 on a dis-

pute about wages, and extended all over Sicily. It possessed some energetic leaders risen from the bourgeoisie such as Garibando Bosco, who was a private employee, Doctor Barbato, Bernardine Verro and many others. I perceived at once that the movement was an economic one, fully justified by the disastrous conditions in which the peasants and the miners found themselves, as was then fully demonstrated by inquiries conducted by important papers like the *Tribuna* and the *Corriere della Sera*. The revelations as to the miserable conditions of the Sicilian workers and the atrocious abuse made of child labour in the mines produced a lively impression on public opinion.

I remember also that many years before, Sonnino, together with Franchetti, had carried out an inquiry and compiled a statement on the conditions of Sicily, pointing out the wretched conditions offered to the working classes and the abuses of the proprietors, and coming to the pessimistic conclusion that ordinary remedies would never be efficacious and that the state of things could be only altered by a revolution. Notwithstanding these theoretical conclusions of his, however, Sonnino took part in Crispi's ministry, which reacted violently against the first attempt of these working classes to obtain better conditions of work and life. Without allowing myself to be too much alarmed, I had given the prefects instructions corresponding to the reality of the situation. I ordered them to maintain public order and prevent in any way the use of violence, but they were to allow the peasants and miners to obtain better conditions, and were even to try and persuade the proprietors to come to a peaceful settlement.

The situation certainly presented in some places great difficulties and some danger of local disorders, but in my opinion, and according to the reports I received from the authorities, all the rumours that were going round of revolutionary danger and threats to the national unity were without foundation. The movement in conclusion was much

less grave than others which followed it, but it was the first, and the wealthy classes, not yet accustomed to this kind of struggle, mistook economic agitation for social revolution. I had up to then been convinced that the mass of the workers could not be expected to go on living with wages not only insufficient to live decently but not even large enough to feed them properly. A blind repression of their legitimate agitation which tended to better their lot would not in my opinion, have resolved the question, but only postponed it, exacerbating it and tending to produce the danger of revolution. Therefore my policy was to allow these economic struggles to resolve themselves through an amelioration of the conditions of the workers, reducing the government's action to the maintenance of order and to persuading both sides to come to an agreement. And I was right in believing that, apart from the proprietors directly interested and the reactionary conservatives, public opinion was also of this way of thinking. In parliament, too, the events in Sicily were considered in this light, and had not created much alarm there. In fact the speeches in which the Socialist deputies Prampolini and Badaloni, set forth the situation were listened to with much attention and a certain benevolence.

Only the police, accustomed to old ideas and antiquated methods, showed themselves apprehensive, and asked me to provide them with a decree for the dissolution of the Workers' groups (*Fasci*). Commendatore Ramognini, at that time director of police, made this proposal to me, which I refused, afterwards making him prefect. Later, Ramognini, under Crispi's government, fearing to be considered responsible in part for the groups not having been dissolved, went to Crispi to remind him that he had made the proposal, and that therefore no responsibility attached to him. In fact the responsibility was entirely mine, and I meant it to be mine, inasmuch as it represented not a weakness, but a new

idea of government. I remember also that there came to me a committee of large agricultural proprietors of the provinces of Palermo, Trapani and Caltanissetta to ask for energetic measures, and especially for the dissolution of the *Fasci*. They appeared to recognise that the conditions of the workers ought to be improved, but they insisted that they were not able or did not wish to grant better conditions as long as the Workers' groups were in existence, so as not to seem to have yielded to their intimidations. But I had serious doubts as to these good intentions, and in fact when I returned to power in 1901, I wished to find out what concessions had been made after the dissolution of the groups ordered by Crispi, and was obliged to recognise that in many places the scale of wages, instead of having improved, had got worse. I remember also that after the dissolution, a congress of large owners gathered at Caltagirone, which congress had the courage to propose, by way of reform, the abolition of elementary instruction, so that the peasants and miners, not being able to read, would not be able to absorb new ideas.

The point of view and the conduct of the government changed later when, for other reasons, I resigned. Then the conservative elements, which had begun to gather round Crispi raised loud protests because a policy of repression had not been followed, and Crispi and his followers, in order to distract public attention from the moral and political questions raised by the scandal of the Banca Romana, had every inducement to magnify the danger in order to figure as the saviours of the public peace and established institutions.

During the interval before the delivery of the Committee of Seven's report on the political responsibilities involved in the Banca Romana, the parliamentary situation indicated nervous tension. The fight against the ministry was directed particularly by the Right, whose principal orator was Bonghi, but also by the adhesion—which represented a strange alliance—of elements of the extreme Left, such as Cavallotti and

Impriani, who in those times were always against Crispi. In this curious policy of hostility against any government, without any distinction for its tendencies, the Socialists also joined. They had not then understood my policy in regard to the labouring classes, and they were bitter against me, as they would have been against anyone else. The advent of Crispi's government, with his policy towards the Sicilian workers, and afterwards the reactionary policy of the various governments of Di Rudinì and Pelloux, which caused the Socialists to suffer both as a party and in their persons, brought them later to observe the differences there may be between government and government, especially from the point of view of the interest of the working classes.

The report of the Committee of Seven was laid before the Chamber on the 23rd November, 1893. Since the conclusion contained accusations against me for the nomination of Tanlongo as senator, and appreciations and interpretations of other acts and words of mine which I could not accept, I declared that I would resign at once, not wishing, if the case arose, to defend myself from the ministerial benches, but as a simple deputy.

The truth must be told about the work of this Committee and the conclusion it came to, and the truth is that the Committee of Seven did not show itself either capable or willing to conduct thoroughly the mission which had been entrusted to it; that is to sift the political responsibilities connected with the scandal of the Banca Romana. Neither was it frank or impartial in the judgments which it thought itself in a position to express. For the first part, it is sufficient to observe that while the commission nominated by me had in less than two months completed a most exhaustive inquiry on the entire situation of the note-issuing banks, the Committee of Seven with more than six months' work did not succeed in adding a single new fact to the grave ones already discovered. Nor is this all; the reluctance to probe the matter

to the bottom was also proved by a very significant episode. Achille Fazzari had received on the 16th of May of that year from Tanlongo's son, papers of such gravity as to induce him to take them to the deputy Mordini, president of the Committee. He wished to urge him to call a meeting of the principal political men of all parties in order to avoid a scandal, which, besides clouding many years of patriotic service on the part of some highly placed politicians would have been a serious evil for the country. Mordini gave himself twenty-four hours to reflect, but the next day when Fazzari saw him again, he appeared very worried, and ended by declaring that he did not feel in a position to do what he had been advised to do. Fazzari, as he afterwards stated himself, though without authorisation, but without provoking any *dénunti*, arrived at the point of telling him that he would assume the responsibility of leaving the documents with him. But Mordini did not want them, replying that they were safe in the hands of a patriot like himself. Fazzari, seeing that they were refused, gave them back the same day to the person from whom he had had them. This episode was admitted to be true by Mordini himself in the Chamber of Deputies, when in December, 1894, the discussion on the presentation made by me of documents relating to the Banca Romana took place. There was general talk, and the papers spoke of the existence of other important documents which Tanlongo and other accused parties had succeeded in abstracting from the searches. Some were used later by the defence in the Tanlongo trial; others, containing letters of numerous politicians, were later published in a volume of 193 pages by Tanlongo's son, but it never appeared that the Committee of Seven had ever tried to get hold of them.

With regard to the conclusions of the Committee, I do not intend to disinter what was then buried, and I shall limit myself to matters which affected me personally. The accusations against me were four; that I had known from the Alviş-

Biagini inquiry the true conditions of the Banca Romana when I was minister of the Treasury in Crispi's cabinet and that I had dissimulated them, that I had contracted a loan of 60,000 lire with the Banca Romana, that I had taken from the same bank another 40,000 lire for the elections, and that finally in consideration of these loans I had nominated Tanlongo senator.

Now as to the first accusation, I have already said and demonstrated that the right of inspection of the note-issuing banks did not at that time belong to the Treasury, and that from the results of the Alvisè-Biagini inquiry I had not known anything else than that which the competent minister Miceli had placed before the cabinet council, minimising, in fact almost denying, the report which those two had made, deceived as he was in good faith.

As to the second accusation, this is how the matter stood. When in August, 1892, the celebration of the discovery of America was being held at Genoa, an occasion which had given rise to an opportunity for better relations between Italy and France, I thought it advisable to initiate a campaign in the foreign press, calling attention to this beneficent change of opinion. As the funds placed at the disposition of the government for secret expenses can only be spent at the rate of a twelfth part each month, and the sum available was not sufficient, I summoned Commendatore Cantoni, director-general of the Treasury, and told him that I wanted an advance of sixty thousand lire, which would be repaid within six months. As the Treasury does not make advances, the sum had to be borrowed from a bank, and Cantoni applied to the Banca Romana, giving a proper receipt. The loan had not been asked for by me, but by the director-general of the Treasury, to whom I had given no indication whatever as to whom he should apply. The sum was paid back in six months with interest, and I obtained a proper receipt for the repayment, which I was able to show to the Committee of

Seven, which, in any case, recognised the regularity of the operation. If the Banca Romana had only undertaken operations such as this one, it would be still alive and in a flourishing condition.

The rumour spread about that I had had 40,000 lire from the Banca Romana for the elections was an absolute invention without any evidence or documents. The report was first spread by one of the accused parties who mentioned it to several people, but afterwards disavowed it. It was later repeated by another of the defendants. There was an attempt—executed with much ability—to create indirect suggestions. The Committee of Seven concluded with a verdict of “not proven,” making fantastic suppositions with regard to a letter of mine found at Tanlongo’s house, which letter referred to something quite different. After the death of Ellena, my colleague at the Finance ministry, many electors had offered the candidature to his brother Colonel Ellena. He had asked my opinion as to the advisability of accepting and I advised him to find out first if he would not be opposed by those who had greater influence in the constituency, among whom was Tanlongo. He had assurances from these people and was elected with scrutiny of list. A month later, the Chamber having been dissolved, he came forward for the one-member constituency of Frosinone, and having learned that he was opposed by the bank’s agents, I probably wrote in connection with this to Tanlongo, regretting it. I say probably, because, as I declared to the Committee, I had no clear memory of the matter. In any case, against this presumption that I had taken 40,000 lire from the Banca Romana for the election there stood another well-proved fact. When I abandoned the ministry, in addition to leaving available the monthly sums from untouched funds, amounting to 500,000 lire, I left in deposit another 123,000 lire of which I had been able freely to dispose. If therefore I required 40,000 lire in November, 1892, for a public service, I

would have borrowed them like the first 60,000 and have returned them.

Finally, in connection with the nomination of Tanlongo as a senator, for which the accusations were particularly insistent, and which was deplored by the Committee of Seven, it was very easy after the revelations of the banking scandals to affirm that the nomination ought not to have been made, but to give a fair judgment on the matter, it was necessary to go back to the moment in which it took place. A very long list of candidates for the senatorial dignity had been presented to the cabinet council, and the nomination of Tanlongo, like that of all the others was unanimously approved, the more so as he, governor of the Banca Romana, president of the Chamber of Commerce and of the provincial tax commission and a wealthy man, was one of the most important personages in Rome. The opinion of him in Rome was such that Guido Baccelli, thoroughly acquainted with men and matters in the city, had not hesitated, even after the accusation made by Colajanni, to declare at a sitting of the Chamber of the 20th December, 1892, that he considered him a hardworking man, philanthropic and full of honour. That the work of the Committee of Seven did not probe to the bottom, but was incomplete and partial, hesitating before much graver responsibilities, was demonstrated by the fact that public opinion did not show itself satisfied with it, and the moral campaign over the scandal of the Banca Romana and the complicity of the politicians continued for a long time after.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORY OF THE "PLICO SEGRETO"

Zanardelli entrusted with the formation of a cabinet and his failure—Crispi begins a reactionary and dictatorial regime—Menaces against me because I had crossed over to the Opposition—Scandalous acquittals in the Banca Romana trial—How the accusation of withdrawal of documents arose and to what ends—Pressure on the magistracy and judicial irregularities—Why and how I presented the packet (*Il plico*)—Report of the Commission of Five and unfavourable vote for the Government—Prorogation of the Chamber and warrant order to appear—Attempted violation of State prerogatives annulled by the Court of Cassation—Elections—How the "moral question" was buried.

AS I have already said, after the report of the Committee of Seven, presented to the Chamber in November, 1893, I offered my resignation, not wishing to defend my work from the ministerial benches, should the Banca Romana case come on, but rather as a simple deputy. I supposed that there would be a full debate on the report of the Committee of Seven, which had come to some conclusions but still left a good deal to the imagination. This, however, did not happen, and it was one of the strangest facts of the whole affair that a document which on its first appearance had raised such a storm and excited so much passion was forgotten after the crisis.

When the crisis arose, the King first of all summoned Zanardelli, whose suitability was indicated by the most reliable members of parliament and charged him with forming the new ministry. He accepted. Here I must mention that some months before, foreseeing that the bank scandals, with

the unrest which they had caused in the political and parliamentary world, added to the workers' movement and financial difficulties, would sooner or later provoke a crisis, I had concluded that, taking the composition of the Chamber, where the Left had a notable majority, into consideration, Zanardelli was the man best calculated to resolve the situation. I had already spoken to him about it, so that he might be prepared, and since I knew that between him and the King there was a certain coldness, I had sought to bring them together, begging His Majesty to speak to him on a certain occasion during the summer, at the inauguration of a monument on the battlefield of San Martino. Zanardelli, in whose constituency the ceremony took place, naturally took part in it. The King called him to him, and they remained for a long time in conversation beside the monument.

After being commissioned to form the ministry, Zanardelli proposed in his conversation with the King three names for the Foreign Office, those of General Dal Verme, General Morselli and General Barattieri. The King replied that there was nothing to be said against the first two, but that he would have to think about the third. Zanardelli was obstinate about Barattieri's name, which the King would not accept, having received information from abroad that the presence of Barattieri, who was an irredentist, in the ministry would create international difficulties. Zanardelli finally declined the task of forming a ministry. Then the King turned to Crispi, who succeeded in forming a cabinet, calling Blanc to the Foreign Office, Sonnino to the Treasury with the *interim* of the Finance ministry, Mocenni to the War Office, Morin to the Admiralty, Saracco to the ministry of Public Works, Baccelli to the ministry of Instruction and Boselli to that of Agriculture. They were all men of the Centre and possessed of technical knowledge, but none of them were strong party men, and this gave Crispi a chance to adopt an attitude at once reactionary and dictatorial.

Crispi in fact came forward with high-sounding promises as if he was about to save the national unity. He put into the forefront of his programme the question of the Sicilian Workers' groups, exaggerating this danger so that he could cause this question to overshadow all other matters and especially the so-called "moral question," raised by the findings of the Committee of Seven. He called a class of recruits to arms at once; he sent fifty thousand men to Sicily, and there proclaimed martial law, dissolved the Workers' Groups (*Fasci*) and set up military tribunals, which condemned De Felice, Barbato, Verro, Bosco, and the other leaders of the agitation to monstrous punishments. At first I made no sign of opposition to the ministry, but when I saw how matters were going, I approached the Opposition, and attended their meetings, at which there were present, among others, Cavallotti and Carmine representing respectively the extreme Left and the Right. I remember in connection with this an interesting episode which explains much of what happened after. The deputy Macola, who was a journalist in Crispi's train, came to me to tell me that it would be to my interest not to throw in my lot with the Opposition. I replied that I declined to alter my course of action, which was dictated solely by political and not personal motives.

Meanwhile, the trial of Tanlongo and other people accused in the affair of the Banca Romana, which had been dragging along for several months, came on, and, greatly to the public indignation, ended with the complete acquittal of all the accused, against whom the inquiry promoted by me had drawn up a damning and serious indictment. It is characteristic of the way in which the affair was conducted that neither I nor my under-secretary of State, Rosano—although the first accusations against me for the alleged withdrawal of documents were made in the course of that trial—were called upon to explain matters or to bring forward the documents which had by now been published. Nor did the culpable

indulgence extended towards the accused stop here, because nothing exact was ever known of the manner in which the liquidation of the bank was concluded, the balance sheets, figures and report never having been published. It was only known that some of the biggest debtors had been enabled to liquidate their position with sums that were quite ridiculous. Worse still, while the responsible and guilty ones were acquitted, material evidence was taken from the proceedings in their trials for the persecution and incrimination of innocent people, people who had indeed discovered and exposed the scandalous situation of the bank.

During the trial, in fact, Tanlongo's lawyers, taking advantage of unfounded statements made by their client himself, had built up his defence on the presumption that he had for many years been obliged to spend large sums—especially on instructions from the minister Magliani—for the defence of the *Rendita* (Consolidated Stock) in the financial markets. As they could adduce no proofs of these assertions, they maintained that the documents proving the fact existed, but had never been found, and for that reason it was to be supposed that they had been abstracted during the searches made by the police. In pursuance of this idea, four police officials who had taken part in those searches were tried. One of these was the *quæstor* of Rome, Commendatore Felzani, and the others were the inspectors Bo, Rinaldi and Pezzi. Some time after, when these events had been forgotten, Tommaso Villa, who had been one of the defenders not of Tanlongo but of the cashier Lazzaroni, confessed openly to me that all these stories of Magliani's financial instructions, in which a sum of 18 millions was supposed to be concerned, had been invented purposely as an expedient for the defence. And there was another proof that these supposed abstracted documents were imaginary, a proof involuntarily furnished by the principal defendant Tanlongo who, in July, 1893, in writing to me from prison to exculpate himself of having personally made use

of the bank's monies and declaring that he had spent them at the request of ministers, added: "My assertions are proved by documents, beginning with the commission received from the minister in 1881, as may be seen from a letter which your Excellency can read, and by an infinite number of invitations directed to me by all the ministers." Now at the trial, the document authorising the expenditure of 18 millions, with the supposed initials of Magliani, was not put forward, and it was stated, in contradiction to Tanlongo's letter, that it had been abstracted. If I had been called as a witness at the trial, I should have been able to give authentic proof that in July, 1893, after the police searches, the document signed by Magliani did not exist and thus one of the statements which helped to bring about the acquittal of the guilty persons and prepare the way for the trial of the police for supposed abstractions of documents would have fallen to the ground. It must be noticed also that to suppose that a man of the standing of Magliani could, by means of simple initialling, pass to the Treasury a credit of 18 millions is somewhat strange; but it is even stranger to suppose that I, who had vigorously combated Magliani during the period of his financial regime, would allow myself to be induced to permit a crime, such as that of the abstraction of documents, to be committed in order to defend his memory.

That the staging of the trial against these officials for a presumed abstraction of documents which did not exist, while real abstractions had taken place by the defendants themselves before their arrest, was a move directed against me, is demonstrated by the methods of the defence and by various publications. These officials had been meanwhile suspended, and the judicial authorities were insisting that they should confess, that is declare something false, and it was pointed out to them that if the abstraction had been carried out by them in execution of an order of mine, their responsibility would end, and they would be freed from all

proceedings. In order to accomplish such an enormity and deceive the judges, a regular preparation had been made, as later the minister Calenda dei Tavani unwittingly confessed in the Chamber, replying to a question with a phrase that has become famous, that "he had had to prepare the situation." How this preparation had been carried out was evident. In fact, when during my ministry the preparations for the trial of the Banca Romana were proceeding, not a single judge had been changed. Procurator-general, King's procurator, instructing judges concerned in the case were the same as those I had found when I took office, and they were all officials created by preceding ministries. The same may be said of all the police officials, from the quæstor to the agents instructed to make the arrests and searches. In order to make the trial for the supposed abstraction of documents appear as a demonstration against me, recourse was had to every kind of intimidation. The procurator-general, Commendatore Venturini, a sincere patriot, held in universal esteem as a judge, was transferred from Rome, and another magistrate whom I did not know was called to his place. He was the only one of all the procurators-general of Italy who had any reason for rancour against me, having been previously transferred from his post to another one where he had not wished to go. Together with the King's procurator, the instructing judges had also been changed, and at the same time an inquiry into the magistracy was ordered and entrusted to three persons. The moving spirit of this inquiry, the *relatore*, was not a magistrate, but a high official of the Treasury, who had no security of office, depending entirely on the government. The obvious attempt to put pressure on the magistracy in this inquiry was too scandalous, and failed. The advisory commission for the creation of judges, composed of judges irremovable from office and the tribunal of Rome, unanimously rejected its findings, and declared that they were unwilling to punish in any way the censured

members of the magistracy because they did not deserve it, having merely done their duty. The attempt failed, but the very fact of the inquiry having taken place proved that the government was ready to have recourse to illegal means to put pressure on the judges.

The effects of these measures and of the so-called "preparation of the situation" were meanwhile evident to all. Though the penal code absolutely forbids the results of the preliminary or "instructing" phase of a trial being made known, it seems that in this case it was conducted before the eyes of all, for every evening the newspapers reported what had happened in the chambers of the examining or "instructing" judge, and advice and exhortation were poured upon him, always in the sense most hostile to me. The accused officials had asked, through their defending counsel, that the documents of the preceding trial should be added to their own, so that it would be manifest if any document were missing, but the request was refused by the judge in chambers, notwithstanding its obvious justice. This was an enormity, but it was also an evident consequence of the decision by which no profane eyes were to be allowed to penetrate into the sanctum of the documents of the Banca Romana. The defendants also put forward sworn declarations by witnesses which disproved, by the establishment of alibis, the false accusation of their activity in abstracting documents during the searches, but more than ten months passed without any of these witnesses being called by the instructing judge (judge in chambers). Recourse was had, in fact, to every expedient against those excellent officials; every kind of pressure was put on them, and they were kept in suspense as to their fate with the idea of obtaining from them the desired evidence against me. But they resisted and continued to declare that they had done nothing. They defended themselves energetically, denying in the most precise and absolute manner that they had ever had any

order from me to withdraw documents, or that they had brought any such documents to the ministry of the Interior.

While the preliminaries for the trial for the abstraction of documents were being carried out in this manner by the instructing judge and the newspapers, I had come to Rome with my son. The ex-quæstor Felzani came to my house, and told me that the chief argument that was being used in the accusations against him and the other police officials was that papers of a political character must have come to the ministry and that they could only have got there by means of abstractions by police officials. I answered, "You can call me as witness; papers have arrived at the ministry, but they were certainly not brought either by you or by any of these officials, as you know better than I do." Then he asked me if I would have any objection to giving him a written declaration to this effect.

It is my habit to make no difficulty about putting things into writing and, moreover, it was my duty to oppose my testimony against the false accusations that were hanging over innocent men. I therefore gave him the following letter, dated 25th October, 1894.

"I am informed by you that in the trial for the supposed abstraction of documents belonging to the Banca Romana it has been adduced as a point by the prosecution that documents relative to the Banca Romana were brought to the ministry of the Interior. I authorise you to say that it is perfectly true that documents did arrive at the ministry of the Interior which threw an unfavourable light on some politicians, but those documents came from a source other than that of the police. They were brought to the ministry a long time after the searches had been completed, and were papers which could not have any influence on the Banca Romana trial."

I gave Felzani this letter in order that he might take it to the judge as an argument for the defence of himself and

his companions. Placed as it was before the judge in the course of the proceedings in chambers, it ought to have remained secret, and have been available only for the judge for the particulars of the case, which he could also have established by examining me, my under-secretary of State, and all those who could have given information as to the origin of the documents. But owing to causes which I do not understand, but with the necessary complicity of the judge, two or three days afterwards that letter was published by the newspapers, which took advantage of the opportunity to initiate a furious campaign against me, as if I had launched accusations against all the Italian political world, and they challenged me to publish the documents I had. While it was a matter of newspaper insinuation, I stood firm and published nothing. But a few days after the sittings of the Chamber commenced, Colajanni presented an interpellation on the question. I understood then that I could keep silence no longer, since the letter, having become—irregularly or not—public property, the dignity of parliament was now at stake. Wishing to proceed in so delicate a matter with every caution, I thought it my duty not to act only on my own judgment, and I therefore begged many of the most authoritative politicians of the Chamber to give me their views. To this end, I interrogated the deputies Cavallotti, Carmine, Coppino, Colombo, Damiani, Di Rudinì, Fortis, Marcora, Zanardelli and Roux, men who, apart from their personal authority, represented all sides of the Chamber. Their verdict was unanimous that nothing should remain unpublished. I offered to consign the documents to them so that they could examine them, but they declared they did not feel themselves authorised to do this. When I interrogated these men personally as well as several others of the Chamber, to hear what they thought was the most convenient form for carrying their decision into effect, they all without exception advised me to hand the documents to the Speaker of the

Chamber. During the same sitting, in which Colajanni was to present his motion, which he withdrew after the announcement of my decision, I made a short declaration, and finished by taking the documents to the Speaker. The latter refused to receive them, and I then left them on the table. Amid the tumult he declared that he would not accept them, and that they would be deposited in the strong room of the Chamber.

A violent debate followed: on one side Imbriani, Cavallotti and Colajanni insisted that the packet of documents should be opened during the sitting, and put forward motions to that effect. On the other hand, Crispi maintained that the documents should be returned to me and that the responsibility of publishing them, which would otherwise have fallen on the Chamber, should be mine. Crispi's particular friends, such as Di Nicolo and Casale, lent their support to this thesis, and Bonghi was particularly violent in opposing their acceptance, not because he was compromised—he had nothing to do with it—but for the strong political hostility which a portion of the Right had shown me, a sentiment in which, however, Di Rudinì, Luzzati, and the more temperate elements of the party did not join. Finally, Coppino put forward a compromise between the immediate reading of the documents and their restitution to me. This was that there should be elected a committee of five persons to examine the documents and then report on them to the Chamber. Cavallotti also agreed to this proposal, withdrawing his motion for immediate reading, as did Di Rudinì likewise. The House took a vote on the matter. The motion for restitution, put forward by Bonghi and supported by Toracca, had 26 votes in favour and 239 against, while 27 members abstained. The second motion, put forward by Di Nicolo, that the documents should be sent on to the judge presiding over the trial met the same fate, while the proposal for the nomination of a committee of five members to examine the packet was at

once carried. An attempt was then made to put off the nomination of the committee till the following day, but Cavallotti and others opposed this, and finally the committee was voted for in the persons of Carmine, Cavallotti, Chinaglia, Cubrario and Damiani.

The documents consigned by me were accompanied by a letter in which I briefly set forth my reasons for thinking it advisable, following the publication of my letter to Felzani, from a sense of duty and of respect for the truth, to hand the papers in my possession to the Chamber in order to put an end to suspicion and scandal. The publication had been made without my consent or even my knowledge.

The documents, as I afterwards informed the commission, were contained in six envelopes on which I had briefly indicated their contents. The first contained copies of a score of documents relative to the Banca Romana case, sequestered from Lazzaroni, copies which I, as minister of the Interior and Premier, had necessarily had brought to me, so that I might be in full possession of all the facts relative to the very serious situation that menaced the national credit. This envelope contained ten lists of documents in the bank trial, which amounted to twenty-seven pages of handwriting. The second envelope contained four letters which Bernardo Tanlongo had sent me personally in a closed envelope, taking advantage of the concession granted to prisoners by the regulations. Two of these referred to calculations of the losses of the Banca Romana on the exchange and for discounted bills. As to the other two, I informed the committee in a note of the manner in which they had come into my hands. It was in this way: Tanlongo had sent someone to ask me if I wanted information concerning the connection of politicians with his bank, and since such information was also of importance in determining the situation, I had replied that I would accept it. He then forwarded me the information in two closed letters, and I pointed out to the committee

that reliance was to be placed on those letters, inasmuch as they were confirmed by other documents. They appeared to me to be chiefly dictated by his proposal to stir up scandals should the trial take place. I also remember, in connection with this, that the accusations made in these letters against my colleagues Grimaldi and Lacava were later denied by Tanlongo himself on his interrogation before the Committee of Seven, as well as at the public trial, when he declared them to be false and invented by himself in order to help the case. Those two letters, at any rate, made up an elaborate report on the causes of the bank crisis, the responsibility of politicians and journalists, the various laws touching the note-issuing banks, and a number of other questions.

The third envelope contained the letter addressed to me on May 13, 1893, by the director-general of the Banca Nazionale, Commendatore Grillo, and a copy of a secret official telegram sent me by a Milan government official when I was premier. The fourth envelope contained notes handed to me during the inspection of the banks, and there was also a note concerning the worthless bills held by the Banca Romana from 1889 onwards, handed me on February 25, 1893, by Commendatore Martuscelli. In this there were also three papers which were described by the committee as (1) a bill of Chiara Pietro accepted in favour of Antonio Crispi, (2) acceptance of Pietro and Nicolo Chiara, (3) unsigned debit note to Chiara Pietro and Nicolo. The fifth envelope contained forty-three sheets, comprising copies of letters and documents relative to discussions that took place between August and October, 1892, unknown to the government, for the amalgamation of the Banca Romana with the Banca Nazionale, which proved that the Banca Nazionale did not know the condition of the Banca Romana. Finally, the sixth envelope contained eight letters from Crispi and a hundred and two letters from Donna Lina Crispi addressed to persons attached to the Crispi household. These last letters were

put apart by me and sealed with an indication on the envelope that they were of a private character, and that I had thought it my duty to withdraw them from circulation, that I had deposited them to relieve myself of all responsibility, but that I did not think that they should be published, an opinion in which the committee joined without discussion.

The committee, referring in its report to this summary examination of the documents, stated that various questions had arisen; such as whether, in the findings and decisions which they would have to put before the Chamber for eventual publication, the names of persons belonging to the Senate and the names of deceased politicians ought to be excluded; whether the committee ought to express any opinion in connection with the documents contained in the packet and declared examinable, and whether interrogations were to be made. The committee answered all these questions in the negative, considering its powers limited to an examination of the documents, and holding that it did not possess the character of a parliamentary commission of inquiry such as the Committee of Seven. It concluded its report with a proposal for the publication of a selection of those documents which it had examined, with the above-mentioned exclusions. And this finding, with some modifications, was accepted by the Chamber.

The report and the selected documents were in fact published and distributed two days later, the 15th of December. Imbriani and Cavallotti proposed that a debate should be held on the report at once. The Speaker, Bianchieri, opposed this, declaring that the discussion was not in the list of motions for the day, and reminding the Chamber that the regulations prescribe that a proposal which is not listed in the orders of the day cannot be discussed if the debate is not decided upon by secret scrutiny with a majority of three-quarters of the voters. Cavallotti insisted on an immediate discussion and was supported by Di Rudinì. Bonghi opposed it vigor-

ously, while Crispi attacked the report. On the proposal being put to the vote, the necessary three-quarters majority in favour of an immediate debate was not obtained, but there was a majority of nine votes in favour of an immediate debate, which meant the defeat of the ministry.

Crispi then decided to prorogue the sitting.

I remember that at three in the afternoon of that day there came to my house a journalist, correspondent for American papers, to inform me that he knew that the closing of the Chamber had been decided upon in order that my arrest, among other things, could be effected, as I should no longer, owing to the prorogation, be protected by parliamentary prerogative. I had already promised one of my daughters, who was then living at Berlin, to come and pass the holidays with her, and since the Chamber was closed, and there was nothing to keep me in Rome, I left the same evening for Berlin. On the way, and during the whole of the journey in Italy, I perceived that I was being followed and kept under surveillance by agents of the police who were constantly being changed. I remember that during the portion of the journey from Bologna to the frontier, one of them introduced himself to me as the friend of a political colleague of mine, a man with whom I was on very good terms. I asked this detective at Verona which was the best hotel in Trent, where, as a matter of fact, I went, followed by him. At Berlin, I stayed in my daughter's house in the suburb of Charlottenburg, where she lived with her husband, my son-in-law being engaged there in the firm of Siemens, a large manufactory of electrical material. I remained about a month in Berlin, living in strict retirement, so much so that when some French journalists came to interview me, presumably so as to attack Crispi, I refused to receive them. I passed my time in studying the country, and I had the impression of a very hard-working, tranquil and disciplined people.

At the end of January, I received an order from Rome to appear before the court. In fact, during my absence, proceedings had been started against me on every possible charge arising from the presentation of the packet. The proceedings in question were partly public in character, and partly depended on the initiative of private individuals. I returned immediately to Rome, and presented myself before the court where the trial had been started. Without going into detail, I challenged the jurisdiction of the court, partly because the accusations made against me were for supposed misdemeanours committed during the exercise of my duties as minister, and partly because the presentation of the packet had taken place in the Chamber, and could not therefore be made the subject of proceedings without the consent of the Chamber itself. I remember that the judges told me that the question of jurisdiction had already been examined and decided upon by them, and that they could not alter their decision. I replied that I was sure that the reasons adduced by me would end in convincing them of the lack of jurisdiction of the judicial authority in the case. One of the judges, in order to entrap me, and perhaps with the idea of causing delay, said to me, "Do you mean to say that you reserve the right to appeal to the Court of Cassation?" I replied again that I was convinced that they would be persuaded, and that probably I should have no occasion to have recourse to the higher court.

The reasons which I set forth in a brief memorial to the instructing judge went beyond the question of my personal affairs, and touched the highest constitutional prerogatives, the menace against which undoubtedly constituted the most serious matter in that period of violence and disrespect for the law. I therefore observed that however lively my desire as a private citizen might be to obtain the most rapid judgment, in order to dissipate by the evidence of fact the cloud of accusations which only the violence of political passions had provoked, my duty as a member of parliament and ex-minister

of the King, obliged me in matters of parliamentary procedure not to acquiesce passively in any diminution of the parliamentary prerogative, which exists by virtue both of the Constitution and of the indispensable guarantees of independence possessed by the representatives of the people. With regard to the accusation of withholding documents, I observed that the Constitution prescribes that the Chamber of Deputies has the right to accuse the King's ministers and bring them before the Senate, sitting as a high court of Justice.

By the unanimous agreement of all lawyers and according to all European constitutions, this law refers to acts and deeds committed by a person in his capacity as minister, whether he be in power at the time or not. This law has been recognised on all sides, even by writers most opposed to anything in the nature of privilege in all that concerns public justice, as indispensable, in that it is not considered a privilege but an intrinsic necessity of the institutions themselves. As to the other accusations, referring to the presentation of the packet, I recalled Section XXX of the Press Law, which was based on a clause of the Constitution. This section makes it plain that the publication of speeches in the Senate, or in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as the reports or any other matter printed by order of the two Chambers, cannot give rise to judicial proceedings. It is evident, in fact, that such proceedings, arising as they do from the exercise of the legislative power, are necessarily withdrawn from the knowledge and censorship of another power such as the judiciary; otherwise, any free parliamentary action would be rendered impossible.

Thus in my particular case, as I had been requested to give an account to the Chamber of matters executed by me as minister, the papers which had given rise to public trials and private suits had been presented to the Chamber by me in the exercise of my functions as deputy and under the guarantee of Clause 51 of the Constitution. I had consigned

the documents in a closed packet to the Speaker, and it was the Chamber itself which, voting against the proposal that they should be given back to me, had decided that the packet should be opened, and that the papers contained in it should be examined by a special parliamentary committee and selections from them published. It was a case then not of personal acts of mine but of the essential jurisdiction of the Chamber. These were acts which could in no way come under the control or the censorship of the judicial authority. The incompetence of the latter was also indirectly confirmed by the fact that it could not have obtained the documents on which the accusation and all judicial processes would have been founded. It was therefore evident, in fact incontrovertible, that as the Chamber had formally reserved to itself the examination of and the decision on the entire material and all the questions and responsibilities inherent therein, therefore any verdict which the judicial authority might pronounce on those documents, their authenticity, the legitimacy of their source or on the use made of them, would have prejudiced the judgment which the Chamber had reserved to itself, as the only competent authority to judge the work of ministers in and out of power. Anything else would have meant an invasion of the legislative power by the judiciary power, and an inadmissible control of political actions that had taken place in the Chamber of Deputies. Then, from the practical point of view, the trial on the question of the presentation of documents to the Chamber would have had to take place with the aid of documents which the Chamber had already decided not to publish in full. It had indeed voted that some of them should be kept secret, so that the judicial authorities would have had to argue on the strength of documents which they had not seen; the defence would have had to proceed in the dark, while the judges would have had to give their decision without having before their eyes the material alleged to contain the accusations.

But the court, not hesitating to strike blindly at the most jealously guarded legislative and other constitutional prerogatives without which no responsible government is possible, decided against my plea of no jurisdiction. I then appealed to the Court of Cassation, presided over by Senator Canonico, and I entrusted my defence to the advocate Cavaglia of Turin, to Sacchi and Galimberti and to the advocate Leonida Busi of Bologna. The Court of Cassation annulled at one sitting all the rulings pronounced by the lower court, declaring the incompetence of the judicial authority to pass a verdict either on the work of a minister or on actions that took place during parliamentary proceedings.

I remember that when I asked the advocate Busi what his fee was for the work done in the case, he answered, "I am sufficiently repaid by having proved that there is still justice in Italy." And two years later, Senator Canonico told me that during the trial, Crispi had gone personally to visit him at his house in order to hurry on the verdict of the Court of Cassation.

Meanwhile the Chamber was still prorogued, and the prorogation lasted for more than four months, a thing without precedent. Crispi's plan and that of the people who surrounded him was to try and obtain a verdict of guilty against me before holding the elections, so as to have a clear field and be able to offer themselves to the electors with the prestige of such a success as in their opinion would bury the "moral question," in spite of the political attitude towards the Socialists, and the beginning of the Abyssinian affair. But after the verdict of the Court of Cassation, which upset this plan, the elections had to be held. The Chamber was dissolved on May 8th, and the elections proclaimed for May 26th and June 2nd, 1895. The government tried in every way during their electoral campaign to put up a candidate against me, but three of them who belonged to my part of the country, when asked whether they would accept the candidature,

replied that not only would they not stand against me, but that they intended to give me their votes. A new prefect had been sent to Cuneo at that time, especially to look after the elections. Fifteen days after he assumed office, he went to Dronero, the chief town of my constituency. At the station he found the mayor, the entire communal council and several of the most notable citizens. The mayor in the name of all present turned to the prefect and delivered a speech which ran more or less like this: "If you have come as prefect to visit our local institutions, we, who are most deferential to authority, will accompany you everywhere, but if you speak of the elections, we shall leave you alone, and you will not find in all Dronero a man who will speak to you or take any notice of you." The prefect protested that he had no intention of mixing himself up in the elections, and he was then fêted and conducted to the hospitals and other local institutions. The result of the voting was that I had a very large majority, losing only three votes, two being given to Crispi and one to Barbato. It became known that Crispi's two votes had been given by two rich men of the constituency, a father and son, who had been alarmed by the proposal of the graduated income tax which I had suggested. The indignation at the violent and unscrupulous campaign carried on by the government against me was so strong throughout the constituency that even those few who had voted in the preceding elections for the Socialists now voted for me. The government also attempted to put pressure on some of my friends. Crispi had declared to Cefali that he would not oppose him in his constituency on condition that he pledged himself not to go back on the "moral question," but Cefali had replied, "But the moral question is the sole reason for which I am standing again."

The ministry, however, had a majority, especially in central and southern Italy, where public opinion was particularly attracted by the idea of the African undertaking and the

national advantages it seemed to promise. The feeling was very different in northern Italy, where there was a very strong sentiment among the lower classes and the democratic party both against the war and on the subject of the "moral question." Among the Conservatives, opinion was divided; there were some who were completely satisfied with Crispi, whose internal policy pleased them; but others, and they were in the majority, were very perplexed in regard to the African affair, on account of its repercussion on the already difficult economic and financial conditions of the country. Neither were they inclined to be particularly indulgent on the "moral question," partly so as to uphold their dignity before their adversaries the democrats, who at Milan had given particular importance to the "moral question" in modern Italian politics.

The Chamber was opened after the elections on June 10th for a few days, and the government had a majority. At the re-opening in November, the documents in connection with the trials instituted against me were again put forward. The commission charged with examining them, composed for the most part of Crispi's friends, refused to hear me, demanding that an authorisation to proceed against me should be given at once. The *relatore* was Cambrai-Digny. When the proposal of the commission was being discussed, I made a speech—listened to with great equanimity and attention by the Chamber—in the course of which I gave a complete explanation of the circumstances. I maintained that, given the absolutely political character of the accusation made against me, only my colleagues could be my judges. I then asked that the Chamber should finally enter into the rights and wrongs of the case, since the judicial authority having by means of the Court of Cassation, its highest tribunal, already acknowledged its lack of jurisdiction, the Chamber alone, as accusing body, and the Senate sitting as High Court and judge, were able to decide the matter. The decision

of the commission to recommend an immediate authorisation to proceed, which amounted to referring the question to the ordinary courts, which had already proved themselves incompetent, was absurd.

Since in my speech I called attention to the fact of the interferences of the minister of Justice in the proceedings against me, the minister caught the Speaker's eye, and began his discourse, saying, "Naturally, I had to prepare the situation." This expression, which involuntarily confirmed my accusation, raised an indescribable confusion. Calenda dei Tavani, the minister of Justice, was violently attacked by the extreme Left, and the Speaker was obliged to suspend the sitting, while the ministers, among whom Crispi was not present, left their benches. When the sitting was renewed, all the ministers came back, except the minister of Justice, and this fact provoked a fresh uproar. The Deputy Torraca, an old adversary of mine, then began to speak. He put forward a motion which proposed that the question should be ignored so as not to disturb the country which had great need of peace in order to face its other problems, among which was that of the Abyssinian war. My friends, among whom Guicciardini was noteworthy, opposed the motion, maintaining that it was necessary to thrash the thing out in order to find out who was guilty. This motion was supported by the ministry, and had a majority of votes. I did not vote, as I had promised not to do so in the course of my speech, in which I had put myself entirely at the disposition of my colleagues. Thus the question was definitely buried without my being able to prove by a regular verdict that the accusations made against me were simply calumnies, and that I had been the victim of a treacherous persecution.

The episode of the Banca Romana, which kept the country and the legislature agitated for nearly two years, was for me a matter of the first importance. It showed up the weaknesses in the systems of our note-issuing banks and the grave abuses

resulting from them. It menaced the credit of the country in its most intimate sources, that is in the essential value of our currency. However, from the evil itself the remedy arose. In this sense I directed my political work, as soon as the facts came to light, so that the same remedy might be permanently efficacious. It must be remembered in connection with this, that Crispi, when replying to the interrogations of the Committee of Seven, fully admitted that he knew, when Premier, of the Biagini report and the disastrous condition of the Banca Romana. He had considered that it was necessary to clear up the situation as quickly as possible, but without scandal, since the national credit was at stake. This was weak not only at home, but abroad, so that every act likely to prejudice it further would prove fatal to the national economy. He therefore limited himself to examining the situation of the bank personally. But it does not appear that Crispi, aware as he was of the facts, did anything practical to remedy so serious a state of affairs.

As to what was called the "moral question," that is, the complicity of politicians in the sad affair of the banks, matters proceeded in a manner that was not at all satisfactory. There was the scandalous acquittal of the accused at the trial of the Banca Romana, and the evasion of the parliamentary commissions created to ascertain the responsibility of the politicians; while in defiance of truth and the law, a long persecution based on political hate was conducted, on the pretext of the withdrawal of documents that could have been proved absolutely non-existent, had the witnesses for the defence been called, while it was sought to strike at the man who by reason of his office had revealed the shameful and dangerous state of things.

For my own part, in the matter of the politicians' responsibility, I put myself entirely into the hands of the Chamber, which was competent to decide on the procedure to be taken, and I gave my consent to the proposed inquiry. If later I

was obliged to intervene directly with the presentation of the documents and notes in my possession, it was circumstances which forced me to take this step. In the first place, I could not permit innocent officials to be made the victims of false accusations, when the intention was to strike at me personally. Moreover, it was my bounden duty to let the truth of the matter be known. This I did in the most circumspect manner, giving one of the officials falsely accused, Felzani, a written declaration which was simply intended to call the attention of the instructing judge to the necessity of hearing my testimony. It was the unwarranted publication of that letter, withdrawn as it was from the secret inquiry in Chambers, which, creating an uproar in parliament and in the country, obliged me to reveal the documents in my possession. By handing them to the Chamber, I meant definitely to free myself of them, so much so that, when asked what I would have done if according to the proposal of some they had been returned to me, I declared that I should have burnt them. The Chamber, through the commission nominated by it for the selection and publication of the documents, framed regulations to restrict the use of the same for obvious reasons, such as the determination to publish nothing referring to deceased persons; and in narrating to-day these events in which I took the principal part, I have maintained the reserve imposed on me, limiting myself to setting forth the facts of greatest public interest which concerned me personally and in which I was directly implicated.

CHAPTER VI

FROM ADOWA TO THE EVENTS OF 1898

The Abyssinian war and its ineffectual conduct—Dissensions between Crispi and Sonnino—Defeat of Adowa and Crispi's fall—Hurried conclusion of the war by Di Rudini—Hesitations between Liberalism and Reaction—Events of 1898—Liberal phase of Pelloux's government—Movement towards Reaction and exceptional measures—Obstruction—*Coup de main* to change the regulations of the Chamber—Triumph of the Extreme Left at the elections and fall of Pelloux—The policy I framed to solve the national crisis.

DURING the last months of Crispi's government, between December, 1895, and March, 1898, the administration and public opinion were entirely occupied by the Abyssinian affair. The story of these months has no place in these memoirs except for certain indirect connections, and I shall limit myself to recalling a few points only in order to justify my policy in the general conditions which arose from them.

The events which took us to the Red Sea are known. On the eve of the Congress of Berlin, England had asked us to come to an agreement with her, offering us Tunis. The refusal of Cairoli, in pursuance of the so-called "clean hands" policy, led England to come to an agreement with France over Tunis, with the consequence that at the Congress we found ourselves isolated and received no advantages. A second occasion presented itself to us to enter upon colonial expansion, when England, in 1882, preparing to occupy Egypt, asked us to participate in the enterprise. We refused again, Magliani insisting on this refusal from the fear that

by accepting the invitation we should irritate France, while he deluded himself that he would be able to win France's financial good-will. So we ended by going to Massaua, as a consolation prize, in agreement with the other powers, none of whom protested, except indeed Turkey who made a merely formal protest. Mancini, then at the Foreign Office, magnified the affair, pronouncing the famous phrase that the keys of the Mediterranean were in the Red Sea; but we have never found them there.

Crispi, who had sought to persuade the government to accept the British proposal for Egypt, allowed himself later to be attracted by the mirage of conquest in the direction of Abyssinia. I have already recalled the tendency to precipitate action he exhibited during the period when I was in his ministry as head of the Treasury. I recollect another episode too, when one day at the Cabinet Council, Crispi said, "There is a rumour that King John has been killed in a battle with the Dervishes, and it seems to me a good opportunity to occupy Asmara." I told him I was not against the occupation, but that it did not seem to me one ought to act on a simple rumour without waiting for its confirmation. Crispi agreed; the confirmation came, and Asmara was occupied. The precipitancy of Crispi, which was revealed by this episode, was a sign of his temperament which I considered might sometimes involve us in danger.

When Crispi assumed power again in December, 1893, these tendencies of his found fresh opportunities and encouragement. Public opinion was disturbed by the banking scandals, and the governing classes were frightened by the Socialist agitations which were now beginning. The colonial undertaking afforded a means of diverting public attention, but enterprises approached in such circumstances become neither more nor less than adventures and generally have a disastrous end. Rarely, I think has a colonial war been begun under less favourable conditions or under worse auspices.

A very large part of public opinion, including that of the middle classes, was opposed to it, while throughout Northern Italy even the majority of the upper classes did not wish to hear of it. In the ministry itself, opinions were divided; a proof of this is a letter afterwards reproduced in the diplomatic documents, in which Sonnino, in the beginning of 1895, reluctantly consented to the despatch of two battalions, and was of the opinion that the sending of other troops, as things were, would have been a real folly. Other documents show the opposition of the minister responsible for the State's finances to entering upon an undertaking whose cost exceeded what we could afford and could not be estimated. Even in Crispi's mind, there was evidence of these doubts in public opinion and in the world of finance. He then telegraphed that any further expansion in Abyssinia was being opposed in Northern Italy, even among the supporters of the cabinet, and that his colleague at the Treasury was worried over the uncertainty as to the expenses likely to be incurred, and would not permit the Eretrian budget to exceed nine millions. He ended by stating that it was desired that embarrassment should not be caused in the Chamber by the question, nor the work of the House for the restoration of our finances disturbed. This hesitation and these doubts, however, were overcome by the encouragement derived from the news of victories sent by Barattieri, with which it was sought to excite public opinion. Thus the thing went on for several months without a decision being come to to wage war seriously, with all necessary means. To show on what lines the affair was conducted, there exists a telegram from Crispi, dated a few months before the disaster, in which he asked Barattieri what economy would be effected by the shipping home of two battalions, and concluded by advising him to prosecute the war as Napoleon did, with the money of the vanquished, and to resolve the problem—that is, the problem of the necessity of the war and the absence of means with which to

conduct it—by the use of the resources of the Eretrian colony and the occupied territories. It was only at the last moment, that is, when Menelik was advancing with all the forces of Abyssinia, that the gravity of the situation was understood. Then it was sought to avert the danger with all the means possible by sending the necessary reinforcements, and superseding Barattieri by Baldissera. It was too late, however, and the government did not even know how to conceal the dispatch of Baldissera to replace the other general. Barattieri, having had notice of his recall, attacked, and the defeat of Adowa took place the same day on which the King passed in review at Naples the troops ready to embark.

The impression produced by the disaster was most serious throughout all Italy, and caused a clamorous sensation in public opinion, with which unfortunately the resentment against the policy of reaction and violence adopted by the government against the lower classes and parties was mixed. Crispi came before the Chamber with his resignation in his hands. The announcement was received with an uproar. Di Rudinì asked to be allowed to speak, but the president of the Chamber hurriedly closed the sitting. General Ricotti was charged with the formation of the new cabinet, but made it a condition for accepting the task that he should come to an agreement with Di Rudinì, to whom he assigned the post of Speaker. I remember that I was called by Di Rudinì to Brin's house, in the Odescalchi Palace, to give my opinion and to state what attitude my friends intended to take up. I answered that I should frankly support the ministry, which my friend Gianturco entered as minister of Public Instruction. Caetani was called to the Foreign Office; though he was a Conservative, he had maintained an attitude of vigorous opposition to Crispi both on the Abyssinian question and for his reactionary policy.

Di Rudinì, having assumed power, occupied himself chiefly in solving the Abyssinian problem. The situation was keep-

ing the whole country in a state of ferment, both on account of the danger of complications as well as for the anxiety over the fate of the officers and soldiers who had been made prisoners in the ill-fated battle. He started a policy of gradual withdrawal, in sympathy with the opinion which had shown itself very strongly in the country, and went so far as to advocate the total and definite abandonment of Africa. To me this appeared to be going too far and not to be in keeping with the national dignity. I thought too that the abandonment of Cassala, which was the best part of the colony, was a mistake. Successful cotton-growing experiments had been begun here, but the government was practically compelled to cede the territory back to England. If there was an excuse to be found for these hurried and excessive resolutions in the state of public opinion, it must still be said that Rudini was wrong in abandoning himself to the impulsive current of the moment, for this also represented a reaction against the violent home policy of the fallen ministry.

This period of Rudini's government was a regular kaleidoscope, with continual changes of ministers. The first cabinet lasted from March 10th to July 11th, and was in great part changed by the resignations of Caetani, replaced by Visconti-Venosta, of Colombo followed by Luzzatti, of Ricotti, whose place was taken by Pelloux, of Perazzi, who gave place to Prinetti, and of Carmini, who was succeeded by Sineo. These changes did not represent a new policy or any alteration of the government's course of action; they were purely and simply personal changes made to satisfy parliamentary exigencies and keep the government on its feet. This second ministry went on for a year and a half, until December, 1897, when there occurred the notable fact of the entry of Zanardelli into the cabinet, a collaboration which was meant to give the government a more Liberal flavour. Other notable personal changes followed, and Pelloux gave way to San Marzano, Gianturco to Gallo, Prinetti to Pavoncelli, and Guicciardini to Cocco-

Ortu. This ministry, which represented a decisive movement towards the Left, especially marked by the entry of Zanardelli, lasted until June 12th, 1898. A third ministry was formed by Di Rudinì on a similar principle, but only lasted 29 days. This was truly the time of the so-called ministerial patchings-up (*rimpasti*), a method in which I have never believed, and to which I have never had recourse. Experience, in fact, shows that when one of these patched up ministries is formed, the effect is that of weakening it still more and of making it drift without any capacity for action.

During this period of continuous change of ministers together with the consequent movement, now to the Right and now to the Left, I found that Cavallotti and myself were quite in agreement in our opposition to the ministry whenever it proposed too reactionary measures. Cavallotti and myself tried in every way to persuade Zanardelli from joining the ministry, since we were both of us sure that he could have formed a cabinet himself with elements taken from the Left. In fact, we went together to his house on the very day on which he accepted Di Rudinì's offer. After a long conversation, Cavallotti and I left the house. "I think we have succeeded in persuading him," he said. "I think we have arrived too late," I replied. And as a matter of fact, Zanardelli's entry into the ministry was officially announced the following day.

Under these circumstances, I had a good opportunity of getting to know Cavallotti very well. He was a man of lively talent, impetuous in character, but sincerely devoted to the country's interests. When I was Premier, he was in the ranks of the Opposition, but later on we came to an agreement in the matter of fighting Crispi's reactionary policy, as we did also over Di Rudinì, when he became too conservative in his policy and proclaimed a state of siege. I never had any cause of complaint against Cavallotti, even when he was my opponent. He attacked me violently, and sometimes exceeded the limits of moderation, but he was always

animated by political passion, and his conduct was always fair and loyal. Had he lived, he would have arrived at power. I remember that on the day when he fought the duel that caused his death, I was in the Chamber, and Giampietro, his great friend, who had been his second many times, came and spoke to me in a great state of alarm, because he knew the danger to which Cavallotti with his impetuosity was exposing himself in the presence of an adversary with plenty of *sang froid*. While we were speaking of the matter, the news of his death arrived.

The disturbances of 1898 were originally occasioned by the misery which harassed the country, after a long and critical period which had affected the economic system of the whole world, followed by an unforeseen heavy increase in the price of bread, due to the bad harvest. Moreover, the government had not even taken the precaution of temporarily removing the *octroi* tax on corn. In my opinion, it was an error to suppose that we were in the midst of a great subversive political movement; it was rather an explosion of discontent. But there still existed among the governing classes a state of mind that denoted a great fear of any popular agitation and its consequences, and the government, reflecting this feeling, allowed itself to order measures of repression that were excessive. In this way a state of siege was proclaimed, or at least proposed, to the local authorities in provinces and places where there was no danger whatever. King Humbert was at Turin with certain ministers and numerous senators and deputies for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Constitution. It was just at that moment that the order to proclaim a state of siege arrived, an order provoked undoubtedly by false information or at least exaggerated reports. Among other things it had been communicated to Rome that the workmen of the Leumann factory, situated on the outskirts of the city, were marching on Turin. Now this factory employed women

almost exclusively, and these, being on strike, were found tranquilly seated in fields near the factory. With the King at Turin was Zanardelli, minister of Justice. General Besozzi, who was in command of the Army Corps stationed there, observed that there was no reason whatever for proclaiming a state of siege, so the order was withdrawn. Another general who declared that a state of siege was unnecessary was Pelloux, who held the command of the Army Corps of Bari. The excessive precautions which the government took in the face of these events had their effect on the parliamentary situation and on the ministry itself, from which the following elements of the Left retired: Zanardelli, Cocco-Ortu, Gallo, Sineo and Visconti-Venosta. Di Rudinì wished to attempt yet another reconstruction, and among other invitations extended one to Pelloux, offering him the Foreign Office. Pelloux came to see me to have my opinion on the matter, and I dissuaded him from accepting. It seemed to me that after the fall of Di Rudinì, it would be well to offer the task of forming the government to him, since he had shown himself to be the most liberal of the generals in declining to proclaim a state of siege at Bari, while his capacity as a general offered special guarantees for the maintenance of order, which was then disturbed. He accepted my opinion and declined the offer. Di Rudinì put together a ministry as best he could, but being no longer able to count on the support of the Left, and having thus lost his majority, was obliged after nineteen days to retire definitely.

After the fall of Di Rudinì, the King summoned Visconti-Venosta, who found after a few attempts that he was unable to form a ministry capable of holding together, and so declined the task. Another senator, Finali, was called. He came to me and told me that he thought it his duty to examine the possibilities of the situation, though he had little hope of success, and in fact after two days he gave the matter up. Then the King sent for Pelloux. The latter wished to see

me again, and in the course of our conversation he said that in order to compose a ministry in the parliamentary situation which existed at the time he needed the support both of Zanardelli and of Crispi's friends. I undertook to make investigations with regard to the Left elements, and I went at once to Zanardelli together with his intimate friend Picardi. Zanardelli agreed with us that, considering the excited condition of public feeling, the scheme which showed the best possibility of success was to give the task of forming the ministry to Pelloux, who, on account of his political beliefs, offered the best guarantee for the Liberal party. I went also to see Guido Baccelli, Crispi's friend, who agreed to the decision. Thus, Pelloux was able to form his first ministry, based entirely on the Left, taking with him Fortis, Lacava, Finocchiaro-Aprile, etc. His under-secretary for the Interior was a friend of mine, Marsengo-Bastia.

Having arrived at power, General Pelloux cast aside the bills limiting the freedom of the press and the right of meeting presented by his predecessors. He hinted that the government proposed to govern by means of the ordinary laws rigidly applied, and made the principal item in its programme a reform of taxation on democratic lines. He maintained in fact a Liberal policy for about seven months, at the same time trying to revise the sentences passed on politicians, both Radical and Socialist, by the military tribunals. Among these men were Turati, Romussi and others. I remember that in a special case in which Romussi was concerned, I intervened personally, and obtained the revocation of an absurd sentence, according to which the life of Silvio Pellico, written by Romussi during his detention, was to be considered as a prison work and the property therein be handed over to the State.

Pelloux had during the whole of this period the unlimited and disinterested support of the Liberal party. He then suddenly changed his course, and on February 4, 1899, giving

way to hints from the more intransigent section of the Conservatives, and also perhaps impressed by the fact that, notwithstanding the repression of 1898, the workmen's and Socialist movement was spreading throughout Northern Italy, he laid before the Chamber the so-called "exceptional law," which aimed at limiting the statutory rights of assembly, of association and of the freedom of the press. In the face of such an act on the part of the ministry, the Liberal party was momentarily divided. One section, believing that the government had definitely gone over to reaction, abandoned it, refusing its vote on the second reading of the bill. Others, myself among them, still wished to lead back the ministry to the programme with which it had come into being. It was repugnant for me and for those of my friends who thought as I did to believe that Pelloux, having assumed power under the Liberal banner, now wanted to introduce a policy of reaction. We thought, moreover, that the ministerial bill could be made acceptable by some amendments. As for the part of the bill relative to the right of assembly, it only referred to meetings which were held in the open; the dissolution of societies and associations was to depend upon the judicial authority, and there were guarantees for the modification of the most serious parts of the bill, which concerned the freedom of the press. Zanardelli and I then examined the question as to whether we ought to pass over at once to the Opposition, or if it would be better to wait for the debate, and we ended by agreeing that we could accept the debate in committee. Our decision was strengthened by the fact that Pelloux, by means of Lacava, had given us assurances, promising us that the committee for the examination of the bill should be nominated in full agreement with the Liberal party, so that the laws proposed could be modified in such a way as to imply no limitation or derogation of statutory rights, while Zanardelli and I were disposed to accept the part that aimed at securing the continuity of the

public services. But every attempt to draw the government back from its new political course soon appeared vain; the promises given proved unreliable. In fact, as soon as he had obtained the vote on the first reading, Pelloux openly showed his firm intention of not modifying in any way the reactionary character of his measure. When it came to the composition of the committee which was to report on the bill to the Chamber, Pelloux, failing to carry out the promises which Lacava had made in his name, proposed a series of names chosen from among those who had shown themselves favourable to a restriction of statutory rights, and especially of the right of assembly. At the same time, by that fatal law, so well known to Crispi, according to which every reactionary movement in the country brings with it an attempt at a diversion abroad, he initiated in China a fresh undertaking which the majority of the Chamber disapproved. The affair was not rendered acceptable by any palpable interest of the country and was to take place in a part of the world where there was no future possibility of colonisation. It was an enterprise without fixed scope, without knowledge of the place it was wished to occupy, and without any calculation of the difficulties or the expense that would be involved. And the adventure indeed had no other result than the wasting of several millions and national humiliation. Badly initiated, the enterprise was abandoned in so undignified a manner that when later on, a discussion of the Foreign Office budget was taking place, I felt it my duty to recommend the minister for the sake of his country not to publish the documents, a recommendation which he accepted.

When that unfortunate affair came up for debate, Pelloux, foreseeing a certain defeat, resigned at once without waiting for the Chamber's vote, and formed a new ministry, whose principal base was the more Conservative element of the House. Finocchiaro-Aprile was replaced by Bonasi, Carcano by Carmine, Fortis by Salandra, Vaccelli by Boselli and Nasi by

San Giuliano. These changes had the effect of transforming the ministry from a Left government to a Right, from Liberal to Conservative. As an inevitable consequence, and in order to secure the support of the more uncompromising Conservatives, Pelloux had to modify his bills in an even more reactionary sense, coming to the point of suppressing, against the very vote of the parliamentary commission, the right of meeting guaranteed by the Constitution and of removing all possibility of intervention of the judicial authorities in the matter of the dissolution of associations. At the same time, as a logical consequence of his new policy, Pelloux also abandoned those taxation reforms of his which were to favour the working classes and on the strength of which he had come into power.

Owing to the attitude assumed by the government, parliamentary life was harassed by an endless struggle. The extreme Left, which believed that the anti-constitutional measures of Pelloux were contrary to the interest of the classes they represented, answered the challenge by having recourse to an arm which up to then had never been used in the Italian parliament, the arm of "obstruction," or blocking all measures. Neither I nor Zanardelli, nor the other members of the constitutional Opposition, participated in the obstructionist struggle, and we showed this by voting against all the motions which were put forward for the purpose of blocking the House's work. Indeed, one day I had occasion to state in a speech that we found ourselves between two fires; the government, which was putting forward laws against constitutional rights, and the violence of the extremists, which rendered the working of parliament impossible. It would not have been difficult, as a matter of fact, to overcome this obstruction, if the ministry had had the authority to direct the parliament's labours and if it had been supported by a secure majority. These conditions were lacking, however, and the ministry did not even succeed in keeping its majority

in the Chamber, so that several times, although the constitutional Opposition had never abandoned their benches, the legal number of deputies present was not available.

The most effective aid to obstruction was given by the uncertainty of the ministry itself in its intentions. In fact, it abandoned its first bill; then it abandoned a second one after having sent it up into committee; it did not accept the bill as modified by the committee, and it allowed the Chamber to debate the matter for fifteen days without knowing precisely what was the exact bill the ministry wished to pass. The government's uncertainty came to such a point that on June 15th, 1899, the minister of Justice upheld a clause relative to the right of meeting which was acceptable to the Liberal party, and on the following day the Premier put forward another section substantially different and amounting to a complete abolition of that constitutional right.

After all these errors, Pelloux, finding himself impotent to master the situation, could not think of anything better to do than to produce an act declared by himself to be illegal. By a simple order, contrary to the explicit disposition of the fundamental Constitution of the State, without taking a vote in the Chamber or in the Senate, he modified the existing press laws and the rights of assembly and association: a thing that had never been attempted since 1848. I must put it on record here to the honour of parliament that such an open violation of the Constitution met with outspoken disapproval, not only from the constitutional Opposition, but from the most important leaders of the ministerial majority itself. The decree was later declared unconstitutional by the *Corte dei Conti* and annulled by the Court of Cassation.

But by now Pelloux's government was obliged to plunge to the bottom of the perilous precipice towards which it had unconsciously moved. In order to fight obstruction and render it impossible in the future, the government, in agreement with the Speaker, proposed to modify the regulations

of the Chamber. But even these modifications had to be discussed and voted upon, and so here, as was the case with the "exceptional" measures, the obstacle of obstruction remained. To get over this, the government had recourse to a stratagem, with the connivance of the Speaker, who was then the Conservative member, Colombo. The bill for the new regulations had been prepared. It was published at once, but was not put down among the orders of the day. Colombo at the beginning of the sitting, declared suddenly: "The deputies have already seen the new regulations. I now put the measure to the vote: those in favour will lift up their hands." Naturally, the measure was approved in this manner without any debate taking place on it. The extreme Left rose in a state of tumult, and we too declared that we could not recognise the new regulations, since they were not properly passed. In order to lend greater importance to this refusal, Zanardelli was charged by the Opposition with making a solemn declaration of non-recognition; after which we left the House in a body.

The government, by committing this illegal act, had only succeeded in uniting all the Oppositions in a compact block so that obstruction could not be conquered. There were some attempts at conciliation, but without result. I remember one day I met Colombo in a room of the Chamber, and in a conversation which followed, he agreed to a conciliatory proposal of mine, saying he would give his definite answer later. The day after he brought me his reply, which was in the negative, and ran, "Sonnino is against it." Sonnino had at that time acquired the position of leader of the majority, and in his famous pamphlet, entitled *Back to the Constitution*, he supported the Conservative thesis to its ultimate consequence, which was to return to the so-called constitutional form of government, in opposition to parliamentary government; that is with the responsibility of ministers to the Crown instead of to parliament. This struggle by Pelloux to have

the anti-constitutional laws approved represented the last effort of the Conservatives to dominate the destinies of the country. The effort was doomed to failure, because it was at variance with the ever-increasing democratic tendencies of the time. Later on, Sonnino, after my second ministry, frankly declared that Italy could only be governed by my method, and in all his later work abided loyally by the regulations of parliamentary government.

The cabinet, beaten on the question of obstruction, could only do one thing, which was to appeal to the country. This was also necessary in order to tranquillize public opinion and find a means of escape from the situation through the verdict of the masses. The elections were held on the 1st and 3rd of June, and resulted in the triumph of the extreme Left, which returned to the Chamber very much reinforced.

In a letter to my electors, I pointed out that from the way in which the elections were being conducted, it was evident that the ministry considered those who invoked the integrity of the Constitution as its enemies. I added that as violence was never enduring, we could consider the Pelloux ministry as destined to disappear before the country's new choice. It would leave melancholy remembrances behind it, and would render the duties of the friends of constitutional government in the new legislature graver and more difficult. This prophecy of mine, which irritated Pelloux very much, was fully carried out. On the convocation of the Chamber, there was a fight for the election of the Speaker; the government putting forward the name of Gallo and the Opposition that of Zanardelli. Gallo was elected with a majority of a few votes, and when I went to give him my personal congratulations (although I had not voted for him) and asked him if he was now going over to the reactionaries, he replied: "I think it would be perfectly useless." It was he who later advised Pelloux to resign.

With this episode Pelloux closed his political career, having

committed the error of letting himself be drawn into an ultra-Conservative policy, after taking up the reins of government under Liberal auspices and with the support of the Left. Personally, he was a most estimable man, a courteous and most honest gentleman, a man of ready and wide talent, but lacking in political experience. Our relations were always very friendly, but later he became alienated from me, owing to an episode which took place in the Senate. He maintained that the militarisation of the railwaymen as applied by me was not legal. Then I reminded him that he was a general on active service, and as such was obliged to publish the government's orders, unless he wished the railwaymen to print orders countermanding his own. At this he appeared upset, and from then onwards our relations grew more chilly.

With Pelloux's fall a very difficult period in our national life ended. The period initiated by Crispi's ministry, followed by my first ministry, and continued through the various cabinets of Di Rudinì and Pelloux, represented on the whole a continuous attempt to resolve the great moral and material crisis of the country along Conservative and reactionary lines. The reaction was most explicit and direct in Crispi's policy, while with Di Rudinì and Pelloux matters proceeded differently. The former, who arrived at power with the object of correcting the ultra-Conservative policy of Crispi, allowed himself to be dragged towards reaction. Pelloux, summoned by the Liberal party to oppose Di Rudinì's latest reactionary period, ended by adopting the extremest form of reaction in the attempt to change the liberal laws of the State. Di Rudinì and Pelloux seemed to be driven into the reactionary and Conservative current somewhat against their will by the force of facts and events, and it would be unjust not to recognise the difficulties with which they repeatedly found themselves face to face. The economic trouble that weighed on the country, with its consequent spread of discontent and agitation among the middle classes and small bourgeoisie

who were particularly hit by it; the emergence of a new political doctrine such as socialism which attracted the crowd both in city and country undoubtedly created economic and political problems difficult to solve and troublesome for the governing classes and parliament. The principal question which the government had to settle in these conditions was that of seeing if it were possible to resolve these problems under the prevailing conditions, or if exceptional measures and restrictions would have to be adopted.

For my part, I never thought for a single moment that the proper solution could be obtained otherwise than with the maintenance of liberal principles. I felt that any reactionary measure intended to stifle discontent or prevent the growth of the new popular aspirations would only have the effect of making things worse and menacing the Constitution. I applied this criterion during my first ministry, and I stood by it firmly in the struggle against Crispi's policy, as well as that of Di Rudinì and Pelloux when, faithless to their pledges to the Liberal party, they passed over to reaction. I also insisted on these principles constantly in letters addressed to my electors to account for the political mandate they had given me. I did the same in speeches delivered from 1897 to 1899 in various parts of my constituency, especially at Busoa and Coraglio. I do not think it out of place, leaving aside the minor questions of the moment, to recapitulate briefly here the general part of the political concepts proclaimed by me at that time in the struggle between Conservatism and Liberalism, the more so as they stand for the fundamental principle of my political conduct. Therefore, in my speeches, after having pointed out that the country had no longer any faith in the government and in the constitutional party, and that only by energy and a radical change of policy, would it be possible to regain the people's faith, I asked—"What should the new policy be?"

I observed that two political systems were face to face

Still more did it gather strength from the general discontent diffused throughout the country. Was it possible to suppose that a country so little satisfied with its government would consent to consign its liberties, attained with so many sacrifices, into this government's hands? And what was to be offered to the country in return for this lost liberty? When the narrow cliques who were urging the government towards reaction had attained their aim, which was not to divide power with the people's representatives but to exercise it solely in their own interest, who could suppose that just at that moment an affection for the popular classes would awaken in them, and that they would then begin to sacrifice their own interests to those of the country? So I came to the conclusion that reaction would be fatal to our institutions, since it would place them at the service of an exiguous minority and provoke against them the liveliest and most irresistible forces of modern society, which are the interests of the popular classes and the sentiment of the most cultured.

Putting aside then the advisability or even the possibility of a reactionary programme, I pointed out that the only remaining way of dissipating the peril of the situation was to carry out the Liberal programme, which proposed to remove, as far as it was possible, the causes of discontent by means of a thorough and radical change in government and legislative methods. But a programme of this kind, in which one of the principal items was a reform of taxation in favour of the poorer classes could only be carried out by a government possessing a solid majority in the country, and therefore not obliged to give way before illegitimate interests. There was one essential point in the political machine where the method of government had immediately to be changed. In the years from 1895 to 1899, under the reactionary methods first of Crispien and then of Rudin and Pelloux, the government's strength had come to be confounded with violence. That government was considered strong which, at the first

sign of agitation, proclaimed the state of siege, suspending ordinary justice, setting up military tribunals, and trampling on all constitutional guarantees. But this was not strength at all, rather was it a weakness and one of the worst kind, a weakness which had lost all ability to perceive the truth. The first duty of a government is and always will be to maintain order at any cost, but a true exhibition of strength is seen when order is maintained by means of the rigid and constant application of the law; when a government can resist illegitimate pressure and has a fixed programme of its own which it carries out firmly, without using or submitting to any violence. And to possess this kind of strength, which is based particularly upon authority, it is necessary that the government allow full liberty to all classes (especially those which are most numerous) to know and make effective their aspirations, and to defend, within the limits of the law, their rightful interests. When the national institutions gather within their orbit the largest share of national interests, they acquire that solidity which methods of reaction and violence, instead of insuring, gravely compromise.

Such were the conditions of government constantly proclaimed by me during a difficult period when they seemed rarely present in the conscience of the governing classes. But with the final failure of Pelloux's reactionary attempt, owing also to the countless signs of ruin which perseverance along this road of reaction would bring, these conditions began to revive and shed their beneficent effect over all the national life.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETURN TO LIBERALISM

Return to Constitutionalism—Saracco's transition Ministry—Zanardelli's Ministry—The Liberal experiment—My work at the Ministry of the Interior—Struggle between Capital and Labour—Leagues and agrarian strikes—Double struggle against extremists in the Chamber and reactionaries in the Senate—Why I resigned from Zanardelli's Ministry.

PELLOUX'S fall, which was not so much the result of a parliamentary vote, as a consequence of the solemn manifestation which the country had made against the policy of reaction at the elections, finally opened the way for a return to Liberal traditions; but after so long a conflict of interests and passions, a period of transition seemed necessary, during which these feelings might evaporate and a gradual return be made to normal conditions of political life. So the Crown was not badly advised in calling to power a senator instead of one of the party leaders of the Chamber who had been mixed up in the struggle.

The choice fell upon Senator Saracco who was accepted by all groups of the Liberal party in the belief that with him it would be possible to return to constitutional conditions. As I have mentioned, the Liberal constitutional opposition, after having assisted impartially in the campaign of obstruction, had had finally to rebel against the attempt, carried out with the connivance of the Speaker, to modify the regulations, thus violating the statutory parliamentary rules. It had declared the proceeding illegal and annulled it. It was therefore necessary, in order to renew the debate in the

Chamber, to re-establish respect for the law. Provision was made for this by the nomination of a commission composed of six members from one side of the House and six from the other. The commission was charged with formulating a new set of regulations acceptable to all. This was done, and the thorny question was finally settled pacifically. This was precisely the transaction which I had proposed to the Speaker Colombo before the general election, and which the latter told me had been rejected by Pelloux on Sonnino's advice.

Saracco took with him Visconti-Venosta as his Foreign minister. Gianturco went to the ministry of Justice; Carcano to that of Agriculture; Rudinì to the Treasury; Branca to Public Works, and Gallo to the ministry of Public Instruction. On the whole, the ministry was Liberal in tendency, and contained some temperate members of the Right, such as Chimirri. It lasted from June 24, 1900, to February 15 of the following year. Its brief life was clouded by a horrible crime, the assassination of King Humbert, which took place at Monza in July, 1900. I heard the news at Valdieri, where I was taking the baths, and where there was also staying at the time Alfazio, the prefect of Milan. The sad event had no influence in modifying the Liberal policy of the government, nor did it inspire any idea of reaction. In fact, it was regarded by many as showing the effect on a disordered brain of the policy of reaction followed in the preceding years. The regicide struck in King Humbert a sovereign who had a high and lively sense of his duty, and who had dedicated himself with a calm spirit to matters of State, a man who was a constant example of goodness and courtesy. Undoubtedly the King who, when I knew him first as minister of the Treasury and then as Premier, had always shown himself liberal in spirit and obsequious to the Constitution, came under the influence of the Conservatives during the period of reaction, and followed their counsels. It must,

however, be remembered that the impression of fear and anxiety resulting from the popular agitation and the socialist movement and propaganda were then common among all the governing classes. I have still a lively recollection of my first and last encounters with the King. The first time I met him was on the occasion of his coming to the throne, when the *Corte dei Conti* went in a body to offer him its homage. I was then secretary-general of the Court, and was thirty-seven years old, but I looked much less, and the King congratulated me on my youth, to which compliment I replied, "Thus I hope to serve Your Majesty for many years." Later, after I had been minister of the Treasury, he nominated me member of the Council of the Order of St. Maurice, where except for Villa, the youngest Councillor was 80 years old. The last time I saw the King, after the failure of the policy of reaction, was at Savigliano, on the occasion of the inauguration of a monument to General Arimondi, who had died in Africa; on that occasion he was very cordial with me, keeping me in conversation with him a long time. I remember that his last words on that occasion were, "Yes, remember I am a friend of yours."

The Saracco ministry did little in any field, partly owing to its brief duration. It fell, through having dissolved the Genoa Chamber of Labour, by which action it drew upon itself the opposition of the Liberal party and the Extreme Left. Then, alarmed by this opposition, it allowed the Chamber of Labour to be recreated, and this alienated the Conservatives. In my opinion, the matter was very serious, as I thought that the Liberal experiment ought to be carried out fully, without hesitation or reservation. As I observed in a speech made during the big debate which followed that event, the most important questions of justice and internal policy were affected, especially with regard to the relations between the working classes and the government in the conflict between capital and labour. I believed that the social

peace depended to a great extent on a proper solution of such problems. Although the violent methods of reaction had been condemned by the facts and now to a large extent abandoned, there still persisted in the government and in many of its representatives in the provinces a tendency to consider all workmen's associations as dangerous. This tendency was the result of a defective knowledge of the new economic and political movements which had been growing in our own country as in all modern civilised states, and showed that people did not yet realise the fact that the workmen's organisations marched at an equal pace with the general progress of civilisation. To put obstacles in the way of this movement would have had no other effect than to render the working classes enemies of the State. They would have seen themselves constantly regarded with diffident rather than benevolent eyes by the government, whose task should be to look after the interests of all classes impartially. A government which never intervened when wages were very low, and in fact ought not to have intervened, had no reason for intervening, as it did sometimes, when the wages rate had reached a figure which seemed excessive to the employers. This was not a legitimate function of the government.

The principal reason for the opposition to the Chambers of Labour * was just this: that their activities tended to increase wages. But even though keeping down wages may have been to the advantage of the employers, the State could have no interest in it. We may say this without considering the fact that it is an error and a prejudice to believe that low wages help the progress of industry. Low wages mean bad nourishment, and the badly nourished man is weak physically and intellectually, while the countries where high wages prevail are at the head of industrial progress. It was the custom then to praise the excessive frugality of our peasants as a virtue: but even this praise is somewhat questionable,

* Trades Union offices—Tr.

for he who does not consume does not produce. At any rate, in my opinion, when the government intervened to keep down wages, as it used to do then, it committed an injustice as well as an economic and political error; an injustice because it was failing in its duty of absolute impartiality between citizens, taking sides in the struggle of one class against another; an economic error, because it upset the working of the law of demand and supply which is the sole legitimate regulator of the measure of wages as of the price of any other merchandise. Finally, it was a political error because it made those classes which constitute the great majority of the country enemies of the State. The only equitable and useful rôle of the State in these struggles between capital and labour is to exercise a pacifying and even sometimes a conciliatory action. In case of strikes, its duty is to intervene only in one case; that is, to safeguard the right to work, a right not less sacred than that of the strike. Now it seemed to me that the government was not observing these Liberal concepts in opposing the action of the Chambers of Labour. These institutions were in themselves in no way illegal. They represented the interests of the working classes, and had the legitimate purpose of aiming at the advancement of those classes, either through a reasonable limitation of the hours of work, or through increased wages, or in technical instruction calculated to increase the value of the workmen's labour. It was my opinion that, properly utilised, these institutions might prove convenient intermediaries between capital and labour, and since there were already in existence the Chambers of Commerce, regulated by law, I did not see any reason why the State could not, indeed why it should not, discipline by law the Chambers of Labour, thus putting capitalists and workers on the same level in the eyes of the law, and each of the two parties having its legitimate representatives recognised by the State. For a long time there had been an attempt to impede the workmen's organisations

from fear of their action and influence. For my part, I thought organised forces much less to be feared than unorganised ones, because government action may be exercised efficaciously and usefully on the former, while against disorganised disturbance force is the only argument. For anyone who knew the conditions of our country and the general tendency of the civilised world, it was evident that to place obstacles in the way of the workers' organisations was a hopeless task. The only effect of an unconsidered resistance on the part of the State would be to give a political colour to those organisations whose natural complexion was merely economic and philanthropic. In the special case of the Genoa Chamber of Labour, the Conservatives indeed proclaimed it a scandal that its activities had assumed a political character. This was a piece of ingenuousness, because anyone who knew the labour movement as it was developing in those years, especially in Northern Italy, was well aware that the workmen understood the intimate and indissoluble connection that exists between economic and political questions. And it had been the work of reactionary governments rather than the propaganda of their own organisers that had made them understand this, for these governments had shown themselves constantly allied with the interests of the capitalist class against that of the workers, both in struggles between capital and labour and in the matter of fiscal legislation.

I believed, in fact, that after the failure of reaction we were at the commencement of a new historical period, which anyone who was not blind would perceive. New popular currents were entering into our political life, new problems were facing us every day, new forces were arising which the government had to take into account. The uprising of the working classes continued to gather speed, and it was an unconquerable movement both because it was common to all civilised countries and because it was based on the principle of equality between men. No one could any longer delude himself

with the idea that it was possible to prevent the working classes from attaining their share of influence, both economic and political. It was the duty of the friends of the country's institutions to persuade those classes, and persuade them not with words but with facts, that they had much more to hope from the existing regime than from dreams of the future. They were to be convinced that every legitimate interest of theirs would find effective protection in the already existing social and political order. It was only by means of such an attitude and such conduct on the part of the constitutional parties towards the working classes that it was possible to bring it about that the advent of these classes, instead of being a disturbing factor, should have the effect of introducing a fresh conservative force into existing institutions and of increasing the prosperity of the nation.

Saracco's ministry had had the merit of closing the reactionary epoch and of breaking away from the dangerous path along which preceding governments had strayed for several years. It now, however, appeared to have arrived at a standstill, and episodes such as that of the dissolution of the Chamber of Labour at Genoa showed that the reactionary spirit was not quite conquered, nor had the danger entirely passed that we might be driven along that road again. On the other hand, in my opinion, the moment had come resolutely to pursue a different course. The commotion which the episode at Genoa produced in the Chamber, as well as the ensuing debate and its result, fully confirmed the justice of my views, and demonstrated that the concepts proclaimed by me had now entered into the public conscience. As soon as parliament met, numerous interpellations and questions were presented, and Sonnino and his friends, who had supported with such determination Pelloux's policy, also put forward a motion. But since the latter, though plainly directed against the government, was not explicit in its terms, and since, in accordance with the principles before referred to,

I was anxious that the voting should take place definitely on the point of non-approval of the dissolution of the Chamber of Labour, I got my friend, the deputy Nicolo Fulci, to put forward an amendment. The Speaker, Villa, who was closely attached to Sonnino, insisted on giving precedence to the motion, on which we let him know that if he failed in his duty of presidential impartiality, we were prepared to move a vote of censure against him. He then gave way, and after I had made a speech, the amendment was put to the vote, leaving the government in a minority of about two hundred. A curious comedy followed: Sonnino, understanding that after the vote the Opposition would be against his action, and would also vote against the ministry, leaving it isolated with a bare thirty votes, asked to be allowed to withdraw his motion. The extreme Left, in agreement with the constitutional Opposition, and in order to prevent ambiguous interpretations of the vote, opposed the withdrawal, it being a rule that motions cannot be withdrawn when ten deputies are opposed to such a course. All the Liberal parties then declared that they also would oppose the motion, while the Ministerialists did the same, so Sonnino and his friends, in order to avoid a clamorous failure, declared that they too intended to vote against their own motion, justifying their conduct by the argument that there was no longer any need for the motion, since the government had already been beaten. The vote, however, was taken, amid great demonstrations of hilarity every time that one of the signatories of the motion voted against it. This parliamentary manœuvre, notwithstanding its somewhat comic result, was of great importance, inasmuch as it cleared the air and afforded a precise and absolute index to the situation. The call of the Liberals to the government became in this manner inevitable, and since the person most in evidence among the Liberal party was Zanardelli, he was unanimously proposed.

Saracco, who attributed his fall to me, was angry about it.

As a matter of fact, our relations had been somewhat cool since the time of my first ministry. Saracco made a speech in the Senate lasting two hours, in which he attacked the government's financial policy, criticising all the measures taken. I answered him at once, point by point, refuting his arguments, except on one or two matters where I was able to declare myself in agreement with him. I took occasion, however, to show him that these particular provisions were his own work, dating from the time when he was at the ministry of Public Works. This reply of mine did not please him at all, and from that time our relations were somewhat strained. He was a man of very considerable talent, above all a critic, and a most able critic, yet, like all essentially critical spirits, he produced but little himself.

As soon as Zanardelli had been entrusted with forming the ministry, he sent for me, offering me at once the ministry of the Interior, and asking me to help him in forming the cabinet. I remember that Zanardelli was living at the time in a small apartment belonging to some relation of his, which was inconvenient for the necessary visits and consultations. I asked his friend Picardi to place his house at Zanardelli's disposal, which he did. There was no little hostility against the ministry in course of formation, and after three days' work, Zanardelli was rather discouraged, since he had not been able to find ministers for the Foreign Office, the Treasury and Public Works. He was on the point of declining the task. I then remarked to him that, having already given up the formation of one cabinet, he would be ruined politically if this should happen a second time. I told him that he ought to present himself to the Chamber with nine men of goodwill, and then call for a vote that would clear up the situation. The cabinet was finally formed with Prinetti at the Foreign Office, Giusso at the ministry of Public Works and Di Broglio at the Treasury. It lasted a fair time, from February 15, 1901, to October 29, 1905.

When we came before the House, we had really no majority at all. The more Conservative part of the Chamber did not regard us favourably and Sonnino's followers thought that we had taken the place that really belonged to them. The first sign of the modification of this situation came with the nullification of the election of a member for Naples, which was reversed on account of irregularities. The vote for the nullification assumed a political character, so that the balloting was carried out by secret scrutiny, and resulted in a majority of forty votes for the government. Soon after, a divorce bill was presented as a result of Zanardelli's long-standing private convictions, which at once caused the resignation of Giusso, who was succeeded by Balenzano. Then Wollemborg, the Finance minister, put forward several bills for the modification of the taxation system, but as the cabinet did not approve them, he too resigned, and was succeeded by Carcano. Picardi also left the Cabinet for reasons of health, and his post was taken by Guido Baccelli.

The most obvious difficulty for the new ministry, after so long a period of reaction and shiftless policy, lay in the conduct of internal affairs. All of us as a party, and I especially, had fought the policy intended to restrict general liberty. We had maintained that the country should be governed by Liberal methods, and we had to face the problem of applying the principles we had fought for. The difficulties in which the government, and I especially as minister of the Interior, found ourselves were of a twofold origin. On the one hand, the Conservatives, not only in the Chamber but also in the Senate, stuck to their positions and ideas with great obstinacy, and sought to strengthen their case by taking advantage of the slightest parliamentary movement which seemed to confirm their pessimistic vaticinations. On the other hand, the more advanced parties were not content with the wide concessions obtained, and accused the government of being anti-progressive, or at least of not marching

with sufficient ardour along the road leading to liberty. For example, though we had fully recognised the right of assembly, the Socialists and the other extremists reproved us when the government intervened to prevent meetings called by strikers with the confessed intention of using violence to prevent willing workers from returning to their tasks. We were then passing through a difficult period for the Liberal system, which was enjoying a wide development. On the one hand, it clashed with the interests of the richer classes, while on the other, the workers had permitted their hopes to wander much beyond the limits of what was possible and practical. They failed to recognise the limitations of their rights and had recourse to intimidation and acts that were quite illegal. Our position was that we were accused on one side of interpreting the conception of public liberties too widely, while on the other we were considered as being lukewarm friends of Liberal principles. I had thus to make speeches in the Chamber against Mazza, Mirabelli and Turati, pointing out to them that when one passes from a restrictive system such as had been in force up till then in Italy, to a system allowing the widest enjoyment of public liberties, it was necessary to proceed with great caution. Although we were sometimes reproved for a lukewarm advocacy of Liberal principles, the real fact was that our love of them was illumined and sincere. Therefore we prepared ourselves to face a certain hostility with the idea of preventing an abuse of liberties which might compromise their existence. We believed we were rendering a great service to the country in accustoming it to the pacific and tranquil use of these liberties, and forbidding the violence which would endanger them. The spirit of reaction had certainly not yet vanished, and it would have been simply playing into its hands, and paving the way for further restrictive measures had we allowed liberty to degenerate into licence, and thus furnished the reactionaries with formidable arguments for their thesis.

If we were to avoid the danger of having to go back on our tracks, it was necessary to take proper account of the state of political education at which the various regions of our country had arrived, and to realise that this education requires a prolonged enjoyment of public liberties. The progress made in this field was evident, and I was in a position to hope that it would continue so rapidly that whoever should take up the post of minister of the Interior would be able to restrict himself to a few recommendations for the execution of the law, without the necessity of taking great precautions day by day, and without being obliged, as happened to me, to assume responsibilities that were far from pleasant. In the meantime, I had reason to believe that much prudence was necessary in order to attain this end without shock, violence or retrograde steps. This was all the more the case now that to the purely political questions which had taken the first place in public attention had succeeded economic and social problems, which, touching as they did immediate and daily interests, excited the masses much more than political questions. There was also the consequent danger that the masses might make extravagant demands. The more intelligent Socialists often ended by recognising the validity of my arguments in these discussions. I remember that Turati admitted that we were the most interested in maintaining order, with the idea of preserving the essential principle of liberty. The Republicans, who were more specifically political, often showed themselves discontented with my methods, and once the Republican deputy, Del Balzo, declared in a speech that his party had more fear of our Liberal policy than that of a reactionary government. I took the opportunity to answer him, with equal frankness, that one of the principal aims I had before me with my Liberal internal policy was precisely that of showing that the Republican party had no reason for existence in Italy.

On account of the composition of the Senate, and because

the great majority of its elements reflected the ideas and sentiments of an earlier generation, I had there to take the opposite position, and defend the government at every moment from the criticisms of the Conservatives, who accused it of giving way to the mob and of not defending constitutional rights with sufficient energy. The truth was that certain groups of Conservatives too easily confounded such public rights with the particular interests of their own class, and were anxious to twist the interpretation of the law and the government's policy into a defence of those interests. I remember particularly a long discussion I carried on with Senators Arrivabene, Vitelleschi, Cadenazzi, Guarneri, Faina and others, who on account of their social position and mental outlook, clearly represented the spirit manifested by the great landed proprietors against the movement of the Peasants' Leagues. The application of a liberal and impartial policy in the conflict between the interests of the various classes, coming after a long period of repression, had inevitably given a great impulse to popular agitation. Here was a natural outlet for instincts, passions and interests that had for a long time been unable to find expression. This agitation sometimes exceeded the limits imposed by the law and the rights of others, while the Socialist propagandists sought to make political capital of economic demands. In a few months, in forty provinces, more than one hundred and fifty agrarian strikes had taken place, involving more than two hundred thousand peasants. The Conservatives insisted on seeing a plan and a regular political organisation in the extent and gravity of the movement. Against these suppositions several facts could be opposed. In the first place, the majority of these strikes not only had not given rise to any disorders, but had been settled with increases of a few centimes in wages and the diminution of a half hour here and there in the working day. The statistics and figures which I collected and set forth in the course of the debate showed that the

wages of the agricultural labourers, especially piece workers and daily labourers, in the regions where the strikes had broken out were very much lower than those in other regions where no agitation had developed. In many cases, notwithstanding the considerable increase in the cost of living, wages showed reductions in comparison with the conditions of more than twenty years before. This appeared from Jaccini's report, and the standard of wages was there deplored as being absolutely insufficient for the elementary needs of life. It was also ascertained that in places where agitation was gravest, and particularly in the province of Mantua, where there were more than twenty thousand peasants organised in leagues, wherever the peasants had direct relations with the employers it was always easier to come to an agreement. This was for the reason that the landlord generally showed himself much more reasonable, while difficulties and conflicts grew worse where the peasants worked under a lessee, since the latter, in his character of temporary speculator, did not hesitate to try and increase his profits by cutting down wages. Even a Conservative of true intelligence and economic knowledge such as Senator Boccardo recognised that to cut down wages beyond a certain point was not even a good speculation for the employer of peasant labour, as if workmen have not sufficient for their needs, they cannot render useful work. The speculating lessees of the province of Mantua and other provinces where wages were very low, were, however, not economists anxious to realise these truths.

Nor were those Conservatives of the Senate economists or wise politicians when they insisted that the government should grant them, at any cost and by any means, two particular requests. These were that the Peasants' Leagues should be dissolved, and that in case of need the army should be used to get in the harvests, if the workers persisted in their strike. I pointed out, first of all, in my speeches in the Senate that the use of force had given the worst possible

results, and that the State ought to exercise its power within the limits of the law, without offending the liberties guaranteed by the Constitution equally to all citizens. The organisation of the resistance leagues was legitimate. The law could find no point of accusation against them in their programme or in their pacific struggle for economic improvements. Their demands were also within the limits of equity, because the rates of wages asked for were so moderate that in many parts of Italy it would have been impossible to find workers to accept such pay, and if in these conditions the government intervened against the leagues, this would only have the effect of inducing masses of workers to consider the government as their enemy, since the latter would have shown that it had violated the law for the benefit of one side against another. The government had only two duties: to maintain order at any cost, and to guarantee absolutely the right to work. These duties it had fully carried out, and regarding the request which Senator Faina made me as to whether the government would use the army as a substitute for the strikers if the latter refused to get in the harvests, I declared at once that I was not disposed to adopt that line, for three reasons; because I believed such an act illegal; because I considered it bad policy; and finally because it was not a question of a public service being endangered, since no one could maintain that the reaping of corn for private owners was a public service. It is always, it is true, a matter of general interest that crops shall not be lost, in the same way as it is a matter of general interest that business proceeds well, that industries work regularly and that commerce proves profitable: since all these things contribute to form the national wealth. But it is, however, always a private interest that is at stake, so much so that if a proprietor declared himself unwilling to reap his corn or to gather his grapes, nobody could force him to. Such a policy would be inadvisable, because by adopting the system of using soldiers as labourers,

the government would be taking sides unfairly in the struggle between capital and labour, and the mass of workers would receive the impression that the army, which represents the entire nation, was their enemy. Moreover, the carrying out of such a plan would be impossible, because even if it were practicable to find in the army the reapers necessary for getting in the harvest of two or three communes, it would be impossible for the army to furnish the necessary hands when the agrarian conflicts had extended into many provinces. Moreover, to encourage the farmers to think that as a last resort they could rely upon the army to help them, would have had the effect of making them still more hostile to fair and reasonable concessions, with the consequence of rendering the solution of the question more difficult.

These arguments, the validity of which now began to be generally recognised in the political world, still found many opponents among the Conservative elements which formed a large part of the Senate. This refusal to recognise the necessities of the time was shown in the attitude taken by the Conservatives on the vote for the budget of the ministry of the Interior. When the voting took place, I was in the Chamber, where I was approached by my colleague Di Broglio, who had just returned from the Senate. He said, "I have some good news for you: your budget has passed the Senate with a majority of three votes." I replied, "It is two more than is necessary." This was not simply a jest, because, in reality, the difficulties I had encountered in getting the Senate to accept my policy served to show extreme elements in the Chamber that there are limits which cannot be passed with impunity.

Apart from the Liberal policy, adopted and loyally carried out without restrictions or any show of concession to the reactionaries or of weakness towards the extremists, Zanardelli's ministry could not do much in the legislative or administrative field, possibly on account of the now declining health of its

leader. Some reforms, however, were carried through. The law for reducing the tax on flour was approved, as were also the laws regulating workmen's compensation and the labour of women and children. The Chamber of Labour was instituted, and, thanks to a law put forward by the *Proviviri** of agriculture, provision was made for the treatment of poor people affected by malaria or pellagra, while justice was done to some fair demands of the railwaymen. But the most important questions remained unsolved: for example, that of the railway budget, inasmuch as the railway conventions ended on June 30, 1905, and a long discussion was required in order to decide if it were better to renew the conventions or to hand the system over to the State. Seeing that nothing was being done in this matter, notwithstanding my urgent requests, I took the opportunity of resigning which presented itself on June 21, 1903. There had been a very excited debate in the Chamber on the subject of an inquiry into the state of the fleet, to which the ministry had shown itself hostile. The voting gave the government a bare majority, which was obtained by the support of deputies of the Opposition Right, who were at the same time opposed to the inquiry. Nevertheless, this majority let it be understood that the vote given by it did not imply a vote of confidence in the ministry. I realised that after this vote the ministry had no longer the necessary authority to cope with the difficult problems of administration that had to be resolved, so I informed Zanardelli that I thought it better that the government should resign. Since my advice was not followed, I handed in my resignation. My conduct was constitutionally correct. When I returned to my place in the Chamber as a simple deputy, I did not wish to let my action appear to betray any hostility to my old colleagues, and therefore I always voted in favour of the government.

A little later, it became known that the Czar wished to

* Arbitrators—Tr.

come to Italy in order to pay a visit to the King, but the Socialists started an agitation, and proposed to offer the Russian sovereign a hostile reception. Special police agents were sent from St. Petersburg to Italy, but as these complained that the safety of the Czar did not seem sufficiently assured, the visit was postponed.

Meanwhile Zanardelli's health became gradually worse, and in the month of October he resigned, retiring to his villa on the Lake of Iseo, where he died a little later.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTRY OF 1903

Formation of the Ministry: new men — Invitation to Turati, and the Socialists' refusal—Campaign of calumnies and tragic end of Rosano—Beginning of social, economic and financial reforms—Renewal of commercial treaties—Why the railways were nationalised—Railwaymen's strike and militarisation—Extensive work of legislation and reform—Epidemic of strikes: their reason and economic effects—General strike: how it was faced and its failure—Elections and success of Conservatives—International Institute of Agriculture—Loubet's visit to Rome—My visit to Bulow at Homburg—Illness causes me to resign.

AFTER the resignation of Zanardelli and the usual consultations, I was sent for by the King, who offered me the task of constructing a new ministry, telling me that the recommendations of nearly all the most reliable politicians were in my favour.

Notwithstanding the almost general unanimity of this recommendation, I encountered several difficulties in bringing the work entrusted to me to a successful conclusion. I had first of all to put this problem before myself: up to three months before, I had been a member of Zanardelli's cabinet, in which I had some very dear friends, but in that ministry there had also been included some men who did not seem to me quite suited for dealing with the great and urgent problems which the new cabinet would be called upon to face.

Foremost among these problems were the taking over of the railways by the State and the renewal of commercial treaties. As it did not seem advisable to me to make my

choice among those men who had been my colleagues up to a short time before, I decided to include none of the members of the previous ministry. This decision, dictated though it was by the wish to avoid an appearance of passing judgment on my old colleagues, aroused considerable ill-feeling, and multiplied the difficulties, hostilities and troubles around me: which difficulties, alas! culminated in one of the saddest episodes known to Italian political life.

I appointed to the ministry of Finance an old friend of mine, Rosano, who had been under-secretary for the Interior in my first cabinet. He was a man whom I had reason to appreciate very highly on account of his keen intelligence, great honesty and moral punctiliousness. As soon as he was nominated, there began a series of personal attacks against him on the part of several Radical and Socialist newspapers, and beneath these personal attacks lay the intention of combating the ministry in course of formation. As a pretext for these attacks, the following story was used. At the time of Crispi's persecution of the Socialist movement, a certain Bergamaschi, a Russian subject living in Italy, had been accused of being a revolutionary, and it was intended to imprison him. He asked Rosano to defend him and the latter had prepared a long memorial of the case written on stamped paper and bearing his signature. This document was still lying in the archives of the ministry of the Interior. The defence put forward by Rosano for his client convinced the government in Bergamaschi's favour, and the threatened measures against him were not carried out. Rosano in due course sent his client a note intimating that his fee was 4,000 lire. This absolutely extraneous fact served as a pretext for a campaign in which Rosano was accused of taking fees not for his services as a lawyer but as a deputy. My friend, an extremely sensitive man, was so upset by this brutal accusation, which was violently reiterated by a section of the press, that in a moment of desperation he committed suicide.

Before doing so, he wrote me the following letter: "Dear Giolitti, Up to now, I have had, you will admit, a fair amount of courage, but I cannot go on any longer. I confess myself a beaten man, and yet I am innocent. I know nothing of the letter or the telegram. The story of the pardon is false. I am a broken man, and I die with your name in my heart, which is overflowing with gratitude and affection for you. I kiss your wife's hands. Remember me to all your family. I embrace you for the last time with fraternal affection.

"Greet all my colleagues for me.

"Your

PIETRO ROSANO."

This sad letter, found on a table in the room at Rosano's house in Naples, where he killed himself, was sent to me by Colosimo. The painful event made a great impression, not only on those who had known Rosano and appreciated his talent and uprightness, but also on the general public. Universal indignation was aroused against the outrageous methods of political warfare then followed by a section of the people, methods which were justly condemned by a large part of the press as being equivalent to murder.

I had appointed Tittoni to the Foreign Office, but this nomination too gave rise to violent criticism, on the ground that it was absurd that the charge of foreign affairs should be entrusted to a man who up to that time had had no experience of diplomacy. The fact was that the diplomatic ranks could not at that time boast of anyone who, besides possessing the necessary experience, was endowed with the qualities necessary to carry out the duties of a minister and at the same time to face the debates in the Chamber as the government's representative; work to which Tittoni was accustomed. Furious attacks were, therefore, also made on Tittoni, against which he was eminently able to defend himself when he appeared in the Chamber. That it was not a misguided policy to put the management of our foreign policy in the hands of a

man fresh to diplomacy, but who had already shown his intelligence and capacity in the political field, Tittoni himself proved. Both as minister and ambassador, he was most highly esteemed. Experience, moreover, has shown that, exceptions apart, it is easier for a capable parliamentarian to become a good diplomat than for a good diplomat to acquire the qualities and experience necessary to make an able parliamentarian.

I decided also to take Luzzatti into the ministry, in consideration of his great knowledge of finance and his remarkable capacity in everything that concerned commercial relations.

The other important question which the government was called upon to solve was that of taking over the railways. The conventions ran out on June 30, 1905, so I made it my business to look for a man with the requisite experience, and sent to the ministry of Public Works the deputy Francesco Tedesco, a man who had begun his career in the ministry in question and had also been secretary to the commission created to inquire into the conditions of the railwaymen. Orlando took charge of the ministry of Public Instruction; he also had never before been a minister. In fact, with the exception of myself and Luzzati, I succeeded in forming the entire cabinet of men who were all ministers for the first time. Ronchetti went to the ministry of Justice; Angelo Majorano took the Finance ministry; Pedotti the War Office; Stelluti Scala the Posts and Telegraphs, while Admiral Mirabelle assumed the direction of the Admiralty. It has always been my plan to try new men in the government. I did so in my first ministry, and in all the others that followed, for I have always believed in giving opportunities to men who have had practical departmental experience. Men who dedicate themselves to a political career with preconceived ideas and doctrines, derived from their studies and capacity for polemic and critical discussion, are generally lacking in experience in

treating concrete questions. They have a limited knowledge of how to apply their ideas and doctrines to political realities in a reasonable and beneficent manner. The accusation is often brought against politicians who pass from criticism to action when they assume the responsibility of government that they change their ideas, but in reality what happens is not that they change them, but that they limit them, adapting them to reality and the possibilities of the situation in which they find themselves. This education of politicians in the practical side of government has, moreover, a beneficial effect on the debates themselves. I have always observed that the more practical men a political assembly contains the better is it fitted to treat the country's affairs.

This same plan of calling men and parties to reality and practical work decided me to invite Turati to enter the ministry. I thought that since it was my intention and the government's programme to continue the Liberal policy of which the Socialist party had always approved, without deviation, it was logical that this party should participate in the ministry that I was forming. I therefore invited Turati to come to Rome and confer with me. He replied that for him to come to Rome at a time of ministerial crisis would provoke gossip, and that he thought it better for me to speak with Bissolati, who was then in Rome and in agreement with his ideas. Bissolati in fact came to see me and we had a long conversation, in the course of which I explained my ideas to him and told him the reasons why I thought the Socialist party would do well to collaborate in a ministry which, while maintaining its Liberal attitude, had also initiated in the economic field a policy favourable to the masses. Bissolati, while appearing to appreciate my arguments in themselves, objected that participation of the Socialists in the government seemed to him premature, especially as it would not be understood by the masses. In spite of my insistence, he maintained his objections, so I had to give up

the idea of making the Socialists adapt themselves to the established order of things and take a practical part in the government.

I do not think that the impression and opinion of Turati and Bissolati as to the unsuitability of the masses for participation in the work of government was correct, because my experience is that good sense reigns among the masses to a greater extent than is generally believed. It was true, however, that then as later a large part of the Socialist agitators, propagandists and organisers, many of them of bourgeois origin and moreover doctrinaires, insisted in their journals and meetings on revolutionary formulæ and the extreme dogmas of Socialism. They put every kind of obstacle in the way of those who saw an opportunity of directing the forces of the parties and the masses they led towards more moderate and positive counsels. I had proof of this on another occasion, when the most violent agitators, not only of the Socialist party, but also among the Republicans and Radicals proposed to initiate a period of violence on the opening of the Chamber. I was especially worried about this, because such conduct on the part of elements of the extreme Left would only have the effect of helping the reactionaries, and confirm their accusation as to the danger of Liberalism. I therefore summoned some of the most important men of these parties, such as Turati, Marcora and Romussi, in order to lay this danger before them, inviting them to arrange for the substitution of violent methods by a serious programme of action, even were it clearly directed against my ministry. I received from them the most ample assurance on this point, but, nevertheless, the spirit of violence which was diffused in these parties, or rather among some of their leaders manifested itself later and led to the general strike. This was a complete failure, and indeed provoked a general reaction that fully justified my warnings.

When I presented myself before parliament, I reaffirmed

my proposal to carry on the policy of allowing the fullest liberties possible within the limits of the law, a policy which had given the best results for three years, leading to an extensive social pacification and at the same time bringing notable advantages to the workers in the fields and factories. At the same time, liberty, even though it is indispensable to the progress of a civilised people, is not an end in itself. I insisted particularly, now that the consent of the great majority of Italians to the Liberal regime was assured, on the necessity of initiating a period of social, economic and financial reforms. The poorer classes looked for an improvement in their conditions of life as their right in the face of the increasing economic prosperity of the country. I have already mentioned that the two problems which were most urgent at the time were those of the railways and the commercial treaties. To these was to be added the reduction of the public debt and the improvement of the agricultural and other workers' conditions in the provinces of Southern Italy. This latter point was not so much a political necessity as a real national duty, after the many promises of successive governments and their failure to maintain them. The reduction of the public debt was not considered by me and my party as a simple budget question. The surplus of about sixty millions which would result to the budget was expected to give us a means of facing a serious reform in taxation, which every government had declared to be necessary for the improvement of the conditions of the poorer classes. This was to be brought about by reducing certain taxes on articles of general consumption, as well as by introducing a reasonable sliding scale into taxation in favour of small owners. These views obtained a wide support in parliament and the country, and were partially brought into legal form, notwithstanding the formal opposition of the Socialists and other elements of the extreme Left, who pretended to represent those masses in whose interests the proposals were made at that time. The laws

met with cordial collaboration on the part of the Liberal party, who really knew how to represent the general and superior interests of the country.

In the more practical part of our programme, the first question we had to face was that of the commercial treaties, which, as I have said, lapsed in a couple of months, on December 31, 1903. We found that not the least preparation had been made to renew them. I remember, indeed, that when I spoke of the matter for the first time with the Austrian ambassador, the latter told me that as far back as May he had put, on behalf of his government, the scheme of a treaty before the Foreign Office. He said that it was not till the end of September that he had any acknowledgment of it, and no comment was attached to this. The position was the same with all the other countries. In view of such a state of things, there was nothing to do but conclude in the greatest haste provisional agreements, in order to prepare the negotiations and conclusion of the permanent treaties for the next year. The definite negotiations were proceeded with later: and they were conducted in a truly admirable fashion by the Finance minister, Luzzatti, who in this case was able to display to the utmost his wide knowledge and experience. We proposed to favour in this new commercial arrangement the widest interests of agriculture according to principles fully discussed and approved by parliament. At the same time, it was our intention to continue to give to the young Italian industries such reasonable protection as would assure their consolidation and advance. These proposals of ours, thanks to the ability of our negotiators, were fully carried out, and secured to the people numerous economic advantages, which taking into consideration the wave of Protectionist ideas then flooding Western Europe, were more advantageous than the government had expected. In less than a year we succeeded in arranging definite treaties with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland and Brazil,

and in bringing to the point of conclusion treaties with Russia and other countries commercially important for us.

With regard to the railway question, although I had not yet definitely pronounced myself in favour of nationalisation, I had come to the conclusion from the beginning that, whatever the definite decision might be, it was the government's duty thoroughly to examine the State railway system and to prepare a plan for its adoption if the necessity should arise. For it was evident that without minute and careful preparation and readiness to adopt the alternative of nationalisation, the State would find itself in a disadvantageous position in treating with the private companies and would have to take the resulting consequences. So I looked about for the man capable of assuming the responsibility of a national railway service. Indeed, I said several times at cabinet meetings that I would never accept the responsibility of establishing a State railway service unless such a man were forthcoming. Among the candidates taken into consideration, the one who seemed to me best adapted for the post was Commendatore Riccardo Bianchi, at the time general manager of the Sicilian railway. Bianchi's work came well up to my expectations, for under his wise guidance the Italian railways, handed over by the companies to the State in very bad condition, were in a relatively short time brought up to the level of the best systems obtaining in other countries. I must also put it on record to Bianchi's credit that though, in order to obtain his services, we were willing to offer him a very high salary, when he was questioned on the matter by Tedesco, he said he required no remuneration higher than that which he already had. His former position certainly implied less work and less responsibility than the general management of the State railways.

Many severe criticisms have been made of late against the State railway system, perhaps owing to the deplorable conditions, technical, financial and moral, into which the

service has fallen since the war. But it is not fair to attribute to the beginning and continued running of the State railways the financial and moral consequences derived from the war. We must also remember that they worked admirably during the war. Neither is it possible to give a fair opinion on the decision to make the change without taking account of the special conditions under which it was made. The weighty problem of the State management of the railways was examined by the government with the aid of a well-selected parliamentary commission, without any preconceived ideas, taking into account all the material and moral elements of which the question was composed. There were two points to be particularly considered: the technical conditions of the railways and the moral state of the personnel. On the technical side, the railways were in a deplorable condition. The companies running them had carried out that practice which is called *lascia podere* (leaving a place), or letting the service get into a state of abandonment, using up the lines and railway material to the last degree, and refusing to spend any money on upkeep. Such conduct was based on the uncertainty of the companies regarding the renewal of the railway conventions and the conditions under which this might take place. The result of this policy of delay was that even the most modest estimates gave the sum of not less than a milliard of lire as being the minimum required to put the railways into a state fit to deal with the increasing development of the country's commercial life. This enormous sum would have had to be spent by the State, and no one can fail to recognise the complications and difficulties that would have resulted from the coincidence of this heavy capital outlay with the private running of the railways.

No less grave were the difficulties and complications which resulted from the state of mind of the employees, now hopelessly at variance with the companies. The greater part of the responsibility of this estrangement rested with the com-

panies themselves, for they had not treated their dependents justly, as the government and parliament had already perceived. It must be remembered that the companies, notwithstanding the numerous requests of the staffs, had always refused to draw up general and precise rules for promotions, and the question had given rise to such menacing conflicts that preceding governments had been obliged to nominate a commission of inquiry on the conditions prevailing between the companies and their employees. This commission, presided over, as I have said, by a man of great moderation and justice, Gagliardo, was obliged to acknowledge that in reality the treatment of the employees by the companies did not correspond to the most elementary ideas of justice. The commission proposed a series of regulations calculated to correct the more evident and striking injustices, but nothing was really done, and the conflicts between the staffs and companies continued to grow in bitterness, so much so that I myself, when I was minister of the Interior in Zanardelli's cabinet, proposed summoning the representatives of the employees to Rome in order to hear their views. A commission of railwaymen was received by me and Zanardelli, and after a long discussion we both had a clear impression that many of their complaints were fully justified, and that for considerations of equity some provisions were necessary. The companies opposed any concessions, putting forward the plea, as usual, that their conventions were expiring and that they could not accept fresh liability until they knew if the conventions were going to be renewed and under what conditions. As a result of this resistance, the trouble grew worse, and finally the railwaymen, allowing themselves to be dragged along by the extremists, who seized the opportunity of making propaganda of the companies' obstinacy, threatened a general strike. Though the government could not fail to recognise the justice of the railwaymen's complaint, at the same time it could not permit the consequences of a conflict

of one particular class of citizens to result in general harm to the country, such as must inevitably result from a strike. To avoid this, I thought out a measure which proved most efficacious. Considering that a very high percentage of the railwaymen was still under military obligations, I proposed the militarisation of the employees. By subjecting all those who were in the army lists to military discipline, the strike was rendered impracticable, and the train service assured. I mentioned this idea of mine to the Premier alone, since it was evident that for the thing to be done without causing trouble, it was necessary to proceed with the greatest secrecy, so that the order should come unexpectedly. Having come to an agreement with Zanardelli, I wrote the despatches in which the mobilisation order was communicated to the prefects, and had them ciphered by a person I could trust absolutely, it being necessary that the calling-up order should be given to all the railwaymen simultaneously. The affair was carried out perfectly, and even my own under-secretary and the department knew nothing about it until they saw the mobilisation order pasted up on the walls. This is a proof that a secret is best kept when only two persons are in it, otherwise it is not possible to establish the responsibility if it is divulged. Notwithstanding the novelty of the measure, there was no resistance, nor did any conflicts arise. Everything proceeded calmly, but a provision like this one was of an exceptional character and not to be abused. Thus, though the idea was always kept in reserve, it was not applied again, not even when the railwaymen struck in 1904. On this occasion it was only a strike in sympathy with a general strike, which I thought advisable, for reasons I shall mention later on, to allow to proceed.

In order to solve the railway problem, it was necessary to take into account the technical and moral problems of the moment. These all united in rendering very difficult and perhaps impossible the renewal of the conventions with the

private companies. The government would have involved itself in a really overwhelming responsibility had it neglected to consider the railway problem from this point of view, and in connection with the whole of the national economy. Our principal idea in adopting the idea of nationalisation was to put the service on a footing which corresponded to the country's needs.

The year's parliamentary and legislative work between the formation of the ministry and the dissolution of the Chamber was very fruitful. The programme which my cabinet had adopted had been criticised by many as being too vast and containing too many pledges and promises. It was admitted, however, that in less than a year all the pledges and promises had been carried out and maintained. Indeed, the work of legislation had, to a certain extent, benefited by an ampler development than had been indicated in the programme. In about six months of parliamentary work, in addition to passing all the budgets and a number of laws of secondary importance, measures were introduced for the economic transformation of Basilicata, the industrial revival of Naples, and the transformation of the loans granted to Southern Italy in a way which would render possible the construction of the Apulian aqueduct. A radical modification of the laws concerning hospitals and similar institutions, calculated to provide for an effective trusteeship over the funds of these bodies, was introduced. Public health legislation was brought up to date, and the campaign against malaria and pellagra was actively pursued. The duty of the landlords to provide healthy habitations for agricultural labourers was for the first time established. Provision for primary schools and elementary school teachers was made with a generosity hitherto unknown, the State coming to their assistance with eight million lire a year. To the co-operative societies, both industrial and agricultural, was extended the right to apply for public contracts. At an expense of many millions, the

postal and telegraphic services, the administrations in the ministries of Finance, Public Works, and Foreign Affairs, the magistracy, the lower ranks in the army, and the staffs of the government libraries and prisons had their conditions improved. Provision was also made in connection with the workmen's sickness and old age fund. A similar reform was effected for municipal employees, while a pension fund was created for workmen in the tobacco factories as well as for the veterans of the War of Independence. A programme of public works, to be extended over four years, was drawn up, and the beneficent principle of the conditional sentence was introduced into our penal legislation. Our prison system was revised, and the prisoners were allowed to work in the open. The juvenile reformatories were transformed from places of punishment into educational establishments. In addition to many small matters, such as the reorganisation of Rome's municipal finances and provisions in favour of the orange and lemon trade, steps were taken to render trade frauds more difficult, especially in connection with commercial treaties.

This important and fruitful legislation was, however, continually disturbed by agitations in the country and rhetorical violence in parliament, provoked by the extremists who compromised not only the Socialists but also certain Radical elements.

The commonest form taken by this agitation was the strike, which not only was not illegal in itself but had a certain economic justification. The period of political reaction, which had lasted about seven or eight years, had, in addition to the repressive effect it had exercised on the working classes, also disturbed the play of economic forces in the matter of offers of work and wages. This disturbance was necessarily all to the disadvantage of the masses; and it was therefore natural that the workers, regaining the full exercise of their rights under Liberalism, should take advantage of the situa-

tion to raise the scale of wages. The weapon, legitimate enough, to which they had recourse, was the strike. Since, both in the industrial and in the agricultural world, there was a great difference in the rate of pay between one industry and another, there resulted a kind of rotation strike. The workmen struck from province to province, from commune to commune, from trade to trade, and finally from firm to firm, in order to obtain the concessions already won by their companions in other businesses, trades and provinces. I remember a time when there were more than eight hundred strikes all going on at once. Although these agitations and struggles were deplorable on account of the general loss they caused, they represented a state of things inherent in the economic system, and would have ended or at least diminished in frequency when a change in the wage system was introduced. Unfortunately, owing to the work of a small but dangerous minority, there was grafted on to this legitimate economic phenomenon a series of political agitations that were quite unjustified. The extremists of the Socialist party, together with some anarchists and revolutionaries, were always trying to provoke the strikers to acts of violence, thus necessitating the intervention of the police, inasmuch as the government felt itself obliged to recognise both the right to strike and the right to work. I was convinced that it was the government's duty to allow free play for economic forces in this struggle over wages, since these forces alone can determine the rate of pay compatible with the country's conditions. I could not use the police in favour of the masters against the strikers, nor could I permit that the latter should put obstacles in the way of those who wished to work. In either case, the abuse would have had the effect of creating insupportable artificial conditions, which would have led inevitably to fresh conflicts. So, while I did not listen to the reactionaries who kept asking me for exceptional measures, on the other hand I used the forces of the State to protect those

workers who did not wish to join the strikers. The extremists rose up against the intervention of the State. They urged that the police ought to be entirely absent in conflicts between capital and labour, a request which amounted to a demand that the strikers should have a free hand to be as violent as they liked whenever the occasion arose, and naturally criminal elements would have been mixed up with such manifestations.

The absurdity of these pretensions, which confounded a regime of liberty with anarchy pure and simple, was evident to all. This did not prevent the Socialist deputies, every time that the intervention of the police was necessary, or when the strikers' violence led to some deplorable incident, from forgetting all the work done by the government in favour of the masses, and raising continual protests in parliament against the use of the police for the protection of individual rights. What was still more curious was that several Radical deputies joined in the protests of the Socialists, that is to say, these protests came from men of a party which, a little time before, had had to assume all the responsibilities of power. The truth is that neither Socialists nor Radicals were sincere in their attitude. The Socialist deputies, in pursuance of their formal opposition, even voted against the bills put forward in favour of the people, and allowed themselves to be dragged on by revolutionary agitators, for fear that the latter might take their place in the favour of the mob. As for the Radicals, more than one of whom was a personal friend of mine and afterwards became a minister, they acted in accordance with electioneering tactics in assuming this attitude. They perceived that their position was threatened by the Socialists and they sought to attain their favour.

Although these economic conflicts were in themselves neither illegitimate nor dangerous, they kept the masses in a perpetual state of disquiet, owing to the way in which the extremists sought to take advantage of them. On the one hand, the government could not give way before the intima-

tion of the agitators and revolutionaries and neglect its duty of maintaining order and the rights of one class against another; and on the other, the agitators, not succeeding in their efforts at intimidation, and fearing to lose their hold on the masses, were driven to exaggerate their threats. The middle classes, who had attained the greatest material and moral benefits both in the workshops and in the fields under the Liberal regime, were not yet, however, sufficiently educated in the standards of that regime to understand fully the limits which one person's rights impose on those of another. Nor would they resist with a due knowledge of their own interests the new tyrannies threatening from lower social strata. Not even the leisured classes were sufficiently educated up to the new liberties. They did not understand that, in a regime of liberty, it is useless and wrong to expect the government to do everything, and that vigorous action on the part of all the citizens for the safeguarding of their legitimate rights is absolutely necessary. In these conditions of moral uncertainty, it was evident that sooner or later some decisive act would precipitate things; and such an act was to be awaited calmly and firmly in the certainty that it would eventually prove to be a lesson for both the parties concerned. Thus I was not in the least disturbed when the extremists decided to find a pretext for calling a general strike. The menace of it had been hanging over the country for several months, and creating a sense of dread which in my opinion was not justified. The pretext was found in a trifling conflict between striking miners and the police in Sardinia. The strikers had attacked the police who were protecting the mines; the gendarmes had fired and one of the strikers had been killed. As a protest for this quite minor incident, the general strike was proclaimed. This time the strike was really general, even the railwaymen joining in. So much so indeed that when the heir to the throne was born just at that time at Racconigi, it being my duty to go there in my character as

Notary to the Crown, I was obliged to take a special train, made up of an engine and one carriage, and had to make a long détour, in order to avoid stations like Alessandria, and other pronouncedly Socialist centres where the railwaymen would have been likely to stop us. In spite of all this, I was firm in my conviction that the movement was ephemeral in character, and lacking in solidity, I telegraphed to that effect to the prefects pointing out that inasmuch as the agitation did not depend on any great economic or national question it could have but a brief duration and that therefore they should take it calmly and without undue anxiety. I repeated my conviction in the despatches in which I informed the King day by day of the course of events. Violent episodes took place here and there, especially at Genoa, but they were of minor importance, though in that city I handed over the task of maintaining order to General Del Magno. I also sent a couple of warships there and two cavalry regiments. The cabinet decided on the calling up of two classes to the colours and the militarisation of the railwaymen in case the situation should get worse, and I prepared the necessary decrees, keeping them, however, in reserve. My line of conduct was that the State should be prepared for any eventuality, but ought not to make a premature show of its force, which should be used only when the absolute necessity for it arose. This as a matter of fact did not happen.

In fact, my optimistic forecasts were entirely borne out by the facts, as the strike only lasted a few days. It failed because the men grew tired of it. The strikers gradually perceived the absence of any adequate reason for their sacrifices and the disturbance created to the country's life and began a few at a time to return to work. The middle classes, who had been terribly alarmed in the beginning, as unfortunately happens whenever they are menaced in any way, looked this scarecrow of the general strike in the face and realised that it had not produced all the horrors which had

been prophesied about it. The revolutionary elements themselves ended by coming to understand that this instrument, which seemed so terrible in discussion and anticipation, proved in practice almost innocuous, and calculated to become more embarrassing and damaging for the users of it than for those against whom it was supposed to be employed. The impression of failure was general. Even those who had been most alarmed and had called for extraordinary measures to meet the strike, persuaded themselves afterwards when all was over that one of the principal reasons for its failure was the fact that it had been faced with so much calm. The sincere and logical application of a Liberal policy thus acquired fresh merit from the appearance of the scarecrow and myth of the general strike, the menace of which had for so long troubled the country's spirit.

The Socialist deputies and others of the extreme Left who had joined with them in order to bring about the strike hastened to proclaim its cessation officially when they saw that it was coming to an end by itself. They held a meeting at which they decided to ask for the immediate convocation of parliament. Since the Chamber had nearly completed its natural term of five years, and would soon have had to be dissolved, I replied that I thought it better to ask the electors rather than the deputies to express their opinion on the government's work, and also that the elections would give the population a chance of formulating a judgment on those parties and men who had provoked the recent useless and harmful interruption in the country's normal life.

In order to avoid any false impression, I clearly reaffirmed, in my speech at the dissolution of the Chamber, the liberal intentions of the government, and declared that the ministry had no intention of altering in any way the programme it had followed since February, 1901; namely, to allow the amplest liberty for all within the limits of the law. Faith in liberal institutions could not, in my opinion, be shaken by the violent

behaviour of an exiguous minority disapproved of by the whole country. The disturbances, indeed, had shown that liberty was especially feared by the revolutionary elements, who under a liberal regime lose all their *raison d'être* and prestige. By having recourse to the general strike, these revolutionaries had demonstrated by their actions that in order to arrive at the power which they desired they were obliged to suppress all liberties, including that of the press, owing to their incapacity to back up their absurd demands with reason and logic. The government's programme found its most violent opponents in the two extreme camps of the Right and Left, but we had unlimited faith in the good sense of the Italian people, whom history has taught that its two most dangerous enemies are demagogy and reaction.

The elections were fought on the question of the responsibility of the parties and the men who had provoked the disturbance of the general strike, and as a logical result the judgment of the masses was particularly directed against those who for electioneering calculations that afterwards proved mistaken had allowed themselves to be dragged along by the Socialists and the Revolutionaries. In the same way that Pelloux's policy damaged the reactionaries in the 1901 election, so the excesses of the revolutionaries and the disturbers of the country's normal course had to be discounted by the Socialists and other extremists. The Chamber created by the elections of 1904 appeared at first sight to be of a more conservative character than the parliament that had just been dissolved. This was not a cause for regret or anxiety to me, for I have always been equally opposed to revolution and reaction, and have always appreciated the forces both of progress and of conservatism when they move within the legitimate limits of the law. In the present case, this affirmation of a principle that was conservative yet in no way reactionary, had the special merit of serving as a lesson to the Socialists and the revolutionaries, letting them see that the

Italian people did not mean to allow just limits to be passed either by one side or the other.

On the reopening of parliament, the King's speech expressed the fullest faith in the liberal regime practised within the strict limits of the law. This affirmation corresponded entirely with the country's verdict, which had shown itself to be equally opposed to the champions of reaction and of revolution. The speech from the Throne also expressed the intention of inviting the Chamber to undertake a wise programme of social legislation, aiming at a progressive uplifting of the lives of the working classes and the furnishing of new legal methods, such as arbitration and *probituri* (arbiters), for arriving at a pacific solution of conflicts between capital and labour. Conflicts between these two forces could thus be decided without having recourse to the weapons of the strike or the lock-out, for in such circumstances the damage is common to all, while the victory goes to the party that has most force, though it may not have justice, on its side.

I thought it opportune to make a change in the presidency of the Chamber. The Speaker's post had been occupied for several years with great dignity, tact and impartiality by Bianchieri, a man to whom I was attached by sentiments of common esteem and friendship and from whom it pained me to have to separate. The reasons for my decision, which were of an essentially political character, I communicated quite frankly to Bianchieri himself in a letter. They were twofold: on the one hand, with the coming into being of a Chamber in which the conservative spirit predominated, it seemed to be opportune, to preserve the equilibrium and as a guarantee on the part of the Liberal parties, that the Speaker should be a man of distinctly advanced tendencies. On the other hand, considering the general situation created by the elections, I became convinced of the advisability of taking advantage of it in order to accentuate as much as possible the separation of the Radicals from the Republicans and the

Socialists. The nomination of Marcora as Speaker of the Chamber—given the previous record of the man and the authority he enjoyed among the advanced but constitutional elements—was justified by these facts. Bianchieri, who had of his own accord hinted to me some months earlier of the advisability of the nomination, answered my letter with a frankness equal to my own, assuring me that the composition of the Chamber, in his opinion, indicated the choice of a person with a less marked political personality and with a conciliatory spirit.

Bianchieri's arguments, however, did not persuade me to renounce what I believed was good policy in preparing for the gradual entry, within constitutional limits, of the Radical party, whose programme, positive and measured as it was, need not be confused with that of the extremists, whether Republicans or Socialists. Marcora's election to the Presidency of the Chamber answered my expectations perfectly, for he carried out his difficult task for long years to the general satisfaction of everyone. His nomination was also the first decisive step which put the Radical party on the path that led to its assuming the responsibility of government.

I remember also the creation of a new International Institute which took place at this time in Rome, owing to the noble and generous initiative of His Majesty. On January 24, 1905, the King sent me the following letter which I reproduce here:—

Dear Premier,

A citizen of the United States of America, Mr. David Lubin, has been putting before me, with that warmth which comes from sure conviction, an idea which seems to me good and advisable and to which I therefore call the attention of my government.

The agricultural classes, though they are the most numerous, cannot of themselves, since they live apart and in scattered communities, make their agricultural labours correspond to the

highest technical requirements of the day, nor can they safeguard properly their interests in the market, which, so far as concerns the products of the soil, tends to become more and more an international matter.

Therefore, the establishment of an International Institute whose object would be to study the conditions of agriculture in different countries would appear to be a matter of the highest importance. The duty of such an Institution would be to notify periodically the extent and quality of the harvests, so that commerce would be assisted and prices fixed with greater equity. The Institute would also furnish data as to the conditions of agricultural labour in various parts of the world, so that emigrants could find in the bulletins of the Institute a safe and useful guide. Further aims of the suggested International Institute would be to arrange combined efforts on the part of various nations against the attacks of the different diseases which affect plants and animals.

Rome should be the headquarters of the Institute, and representatives of the various nations should be present here in order to make the necessary proposals to their respective governments.

I am sure that the lofty aim of the idea will overcome attendant difficulties.

*Your affectionate cousin,**

VICTOR EMANUEL.

The sovereign's initiative, respectfully seconded by the government, obtained at once the support of the Italian people. The consensus of opinion of all civilised nations left the success of the idea no longer in doubt. The Institute was founded, and has since proved of the greatest utility.

The year 1904 registered an event of the highest inter-

*The holders of the Italian Order of the Annunziata address each other so—Tr.

national importance: the visit of the President of the French Republic, Loubet, to Rome.

The King, after his accession to the throne, had paid a series of visits to the heads of the chief European states. He had been to St. Petersburg, London, Berlin, and Paris. These visits were returned. The King of England, Edward VII, and the German Emperor had been to Rome during Zanardelli's ministry. I was then at the ministry of the Interior, and had no particular occasion to approach the two monarchs, apart from the general receptions at which all the ministers appeared. I remember, however, that King Edward insisted particularly with our sovereign that he should increase the cordiality of his relations with the King of Spain, who had recently contracted an alliance with the English Royal family. The Italian government had to remind him of the difficulties of such a course, inasmuch as a visit of the King of Spain to Rome was hedged about with certain difficulties depending on the Vatican's policy. I had already had somewhat friendly relations with the German Emperor during my first ministry, on the occasion of his visit to King Humbert. I had then accompanied him to Naples, where he remained three days as a guest in the Royal Palace. He also visited Spezia, whose arsenal he wished to see. He was much interested in everything concerning the navy, as was afterwards proved by the great development he gave to the fleet of his own country. When, in 1903, he returned the visit to Victor Emanuel III he recognised me, in the course of a State reception at which I was present, and approaching me said he was pleased to observe that I had not got any older in ten years, "While," he added, "I have aged considerably." The impression one received from the Emperor William II, with his frank and cordial manner, was undoubtedly a pleasant one. In the course of conversation, into which he entered with much simplicity and warmth, one received the impression of a quick and lively

intelligence that interested itself in the most varied subjects. The personal cordiality of his manner never diminished the dignity of his position. One felt that he was convinced of a mission which seemed, however, somewhat difficult to understand, a mission whose precise objects did not quite stand out, or were concealed by him. As was natural, on the occasion of his sojourn in Italy he spoke much of Italian affairs, and appeared to be highly interested in them, but I noticed that his conversations tended principally towards gathering information and that he never expressed a personal opinion on our affairs.

The coming of Loubet to Rome, though that too was in the nature of a return visit, had a much greater political importance, and this for several reasons, both particular and general. My fundamental conception of our foreign policy was that Italy, while loyally respecting her alliance with the Central Powers, should maintain an essentially pacific policy as well as one calculated to secure the peace of Europe. The Triple Alliance, understood in this fashion, which was in full conformity both with the spirit and the letter of the treaty, not only was no impediment to the maintenance of cordial relations with the other powers, and especially with England and France, but even assisted such relations. Personally, I had always desired to improve the relations between ourselves and France. Under Crispi's governments, these had been, if not actually endangered, at any rate rendered somewhat frigid owing to the non-conciliatory and not essentially pacific interpretation which Crispi had given to the treaty. From the time of my first ministry, I had worked at improving the relations between the two countries, and, as I have said, had succeeded in obtaining a public manifestation of friendliness through the official participation of the French fleet in the Columbus celebrations during the summer of 1892. The coming of Loubet to Rome had also a high political significance, inasmuch as it was the first official visit of a

head of the French government to the capital of Italy. Finally, the visit served to confirm and conclude the special agreements already made between the two countries when Pelloux was in power, on the two questions of Morocco and Libya: treaties according to which Italy disclaimed all interest in Morocco, and France recognised Italy's superior rights in the question of Libya. President Loubet, in order to add greater importance to his visit, had brought with him Delcassé, at that time Foreign minister, and in the course of the conversations which took place between the two of them, myself, Tittoni and Luzzatti, I had a good opportunity of forming an adequate opinion of the two French statesmen. Loubet seemed to me a very well balanced man, full of good sense, and animated with a sincere and cordial friendship towards Italy. In Delcassé I noticed particularly his *finesse* and ability, as well as the insistence with which he attempted to loosen or weaken our bonds with Germany, without however, putting forward anything at all in the nature of a definite proposal. Ours were but general conversations, whose utility in greatly improving the relations between the two countries—obscured by a long period of superficial hostility—could not fail to be recognised.

Another diplomatic event of that year was the visit which I paid towards the end of September to Prince Bülow at Homburg. I had learnt from an unimpeachable source that the then German ambassador at Rome, Count de Monts, was sending to his government reports that were not favourable to Italy, and were of a character such as to throw suspicion on Italy in the matter of loyalty to the Triple Alliance. I therefore deemed it wise to establish direct contact with Prince Bülow, then Chancellor, whom I had known during my ministry of 1892-93, when he was German ambassador at the Quirinal. I did not wish, however, that the visit should have too official a character, so I arranged through some common friends that it should take place in the simplest

manner possible and without the news of it being made public. In fact nothing was known of it until after my return.

I arrived at Homburg on the morning of September 27th, and at 11 o'clock I had a conversation with Bülow, which lasted for more than an hour and a half, and of which I made two notes which I still preserve. He began to speak with great fervour and pleasure of the progress made by Italy in recent years in every field, especially the economic one. He congratulated me on the internal policy I had followed, telling me that he had particularly appreciated the way in which I had faced the general strike. Then, passing to the subject of foreign policy, he told me that there were people in Germany who had the impression that we had made too close an approach to France on the occasion of the President Loubet's visit to Rome. I pointed out that the welcome given to Loubet was merely his due as our guest, but that in any case I considered it a common interest that the atmosphere of hostility which had lasted too long between Italy and France should be removed. I further made it plain that we had obtained the result of preventing the French government from appearing to be henceforward in any way a supporter of the Pope in the political field, thus destroying the last hopes of the upholders of the Temporal Power. Bülow was cordially in agreement with me in all this. We then discussed the Pope, and agreed that it was well that the Vatican's influence should no longer be at the disposal of France against Austria. We then passed on to talk of our relations with Austria. Bülow praised our attitude, and gave me a formal assurance that Austria had no expansionist aims in the Balkans. He declared that it was necessary to maintain the *status quo* in Turkey, and that if her autonomy could not be preserved, the proper solution would be to constitute independent states in Albania and Macedonia. I pointed out to him that Italy could never agree to another power, and especially Austria,

occupying Albania in any point, since such an occupation would amount to closing the Adriatic. He agreed entirely, adding that this desire of ours was in accord with the policies of Austria and Germany.

I then called his attention to the difficulties which the Austrian government created for us owing to its sometimes unfair treatment of the Italians in Istria and the Trentino. I pointed out that if the Austrian government showed broader views towards its Italian subjects, granting them, for instance, the Italian university at Trieste, the agitation and Nationalist conflicts would be much diminished. Bülow agreed, and declared that Germany would do her best to induce her ally to extend a more generous treatment towards her Italian subjects. He then said that Germany had every interest in maintaining the *status quo* with regard to Austria, that the doctrines of the Pan-Germans were fantasies without a solid basis, and that Germany had no interest in absorbing into her organism any part of Austria. He cited Bismarck's opinion in connection with this. Turning then to speak of the Russo-Japanese war, he expressed his opinion that Russia would not be in a position to dictate peace until she had obtained a military success.

I stopped two days at Homburg, during which time I had other long conversations with Prince von Bülow, especially during the course of walks we took together in the charming woods which surround the beautiful town. My object, which was to have frank explanations and to get on more familiar terms, was fully attained. I have had and still have the conviction that Prince von Bülow was a sincere and faithful friend of Italy, though at the same time, as was natural, he put his own country's interests first. During our conversations he openly showed that he attached great importance to Italy's friendship, and considered her participation in the Triple Alliance as a guarantee for the stability and peace of Europe. My personal impression of him was

always that he was a most intelligent man with a profound knowledge of the problems of European politics. I believe too that by inclination he tended to keep peace in Europe and not to hurry on war.

Towards the end of January, 1905, I was struck down with very severe influenza, which kept me in bed with high fever for several days. I entered on my convalescence in such a state of depression as to render it almost impossible for me to attend to matters of State. I tried for more than a month to overcome this weakness, but seeing that I could not get along, and that a period of absolute repose was necessary for me, I decided to retire, and handed in my resignation to the King in the following letter:—

Your Majesty :

When a month ago I was attacked by influenza and afterwards by bad nervous depression, I thought that in such a condition I could not dedicate myself with the requisite activity to affairs of government, and I expressed the wish to offer my resignation to Your Majesty. The doctors then dissuaded me from taking this step, assuring me that I would recover my strength in a brief period of time, and would be again able to take up my work with the necessary activity.

I gave way in the face of this advice, holding it to be my duty not to abandon the position entrusted to me by Your Majesty without absolute necessity, especially as I was supported by the confidence of parliament.

During this period of illness, I made my appearance twice at sittings of the Chamber, on occasions when it seemed to me to be my duty to assume direct and personal responsibility for certain important bills, but I was obliged to recognise that my strength did not allow me to take part in any manner in the parliamentary debates.

There are now serious problems facing the country and the duties of a Premier are too onerous for them to be faced by any-

one in my state of health. All my goodwill is of no use before physical impossibility.

I am therefore constrained, from a feeling of responsibility as well as my sincere and profound devotion for Your Majesty, to offer Your Majesty my resignation from the position of Premier and minister of the Interior.

With the deepest respect, I have the honour of declaring myself Your Majesty's faithful subject,

GIOVANNI GIOLITTI.

Rome. March 4, 1905.

other customs concessions which Spain had made to Italy. Numerous deputies of the wine-producing provinces, especially those from Apulia, rebelled against this concession, although the customs duties for the importation of Spanish wines were very high, and afforded a reasonable protection. Inasmuch as I had defended and backed up the ministry on this question, I was with the minority, and absolutely out of discussion as a possible Premier. Sonnino was indicated, and so formed his first ministry.

It was a pity that Fortis, who died young, was not able to dedicate his fertile and powerful talents to the service of his country for a greater length of time. The quality in which he especially excelled was his excellent faculty for assimilating facts, a quality which many times compensated for and took the place of a capacity for persistent work, for he was never a worker. As an example of the way in which he managed to get out of awkward situations, I remember a curious incident. During his period as minister of Agriculture in Pelloux's first cabinet, a discussion was going on with regard to a bill against the adulteration of wine. The introducer of the measure had spoken as well as several other deputies both for and against. Then Fortis got up and delivered a splendid speech in defence of the bill, which gave the listener the impression that the speaker had a profound and minute knowledge of the subject. At the end of the sitting, I approached him to call his attention to a clause in the bill which absolutely could not be allowed to pass, and he, after having heard me, replied in his good-humoured way, "To tell you the truth, I haven't even read the bill." The introducer's speech and the discussion of the deputies for and against the measure had been sufficient to give him a clear and precise idea of the arguments, and to furnish him with material for his defence of the measure. He perhaps abandoned himself too much to his oratorical gifts, but he had the finest political intuition and good judgment. His proper

place in a government would have been that of minister without portfolio, a position, that is, where natural talents are valuable and no special technical knowledge or assiduity are required. Personally, he enjoyed general esteem both for his cordial good humour and his unfailing loyalty. Everyone felt that he could put his trust in him. As a young man at the university he had made a considerable stir as a Republican. Then he came to the Chamber as a Radical, and entered a ministry for the first time in 1887, as Crispi's under-secretary. He always remained Crispi's friend, and was at the same time a very good friend of mine, and when the conflict between Crispi and myself broke out, he did his best to act as peacemaker.

The ministry which Sonnino constituted on February 8th contained several most weighty politicians, and united Conservative elements like Guicciardini, Salandra, Carmine and Luzzatti with Radical names such as Sacchi and Pantano. Indeed, this was the first open and direct participation of the Radical representatives in the government. Notwithstanding this, the ministry had a short life, lasting one hundred days exactly, that is until the following May. What was more characteristic of it than its short life was the cause of its fall and the manner in which this took place. The ministry had arranged the convention for the taking over of the Southern railways. The agreement had been made by Carmine, minister of Public Works. The convention implied an annual government credit of thirty millions and a half for sixty years. The parliamentary commission nominated to examine the project had pronounced in favour of it by a large majority, only two members of the commission asking for some modifications of secondary importance. In this state of things, Sonnino came one day to the Chamber and asked that the commission should make its final report within eight days. The proposal did not create a good impression, inasmuch as it looked like forcing the matter, which, taking the favour-

able attitude of the Chamber into consideration, seemed unnecessary. I said that in a convention of such importance, it seemed to me unwise to fix so short a period for the commission's report. Sonnino persisted in his demand, and then Rubini proposed adjourning the matter for three days in order to give the House time to reflect. In the conversations that followed the sitting, I told my friends that I was persuaded that Sonnino would not withdraw his suggestion, and that the Chamber would give him an unfavourable vote, and that, not wishing to be present at a slaughter of the innocents, I proposed to leave the same evening for Cavour. My forecast proved correct, and in two days I received a telegram from His Majesty calling me to Rome. When the telegram arrived, I had not yet read the news in the papers, but I guessed at once that the ministry had provoked the vote and had fallen.

When I arrived in Rome, I was charged by the King with the task of forming a new ministry, which took office May 27, 1906. This ministry was most unfortunate in losing some of the most important men composing it, men who were among the most eminent personalities of Italian political life.

I called Tittoni to the Foreign Office, and Gallo to the ministry of Justice. The latter died in 1909, and was replaced by Orlando. Another appointment was that of Massimini to the Finance ministry. He was afterwards struck down by an attack of paralysis, and replaced by Lacava. Later Massimini wrote me an affectionate letter of good-bye, just before his suicide. I called to the Treasury Angelo Majorano, a young man of great talent who seemed destined to have a fine political career, but unfortunately, in May, 1907, he was attacked by nervous exhaustion which resisted all attempts at cure, and eventually brought him to the grave. He was replaced by Carcano. The ministry of Public Works was assumed by my friend Gianturco, a man of the highest worth. In two months, he made himself master of the whole

of the complicated mechanism of his ministry. He too was a man who with health would have had an assured future; but, as fate would have it, he was prematurely removed from public life by cancer, which compelled him to retire in November, 1907, and killed him soon afterwards. General Vigano went to the War Office, and was succeeded in December, 1907, by Senator Casana, who was the first civilian war minister in Italy. Other appointments were Fusinato to the ministry of Public Instruction, Schanzer to the Post Office, and Cocco-Ortu to the ministry of Agriculture, while Mirabello remained at the Admiralty.

The ministry came before the Chamber with a very brief and concrete programme. The tendencies of my former cabinet had become apparent to all: the struggle for democracy and Liberalism, fought for with varying fortune from 1892 till then, had been crowned with so complete a victory as not to leave room for any serious discussion. The fact that men who had fought on the other side, like Sonnino and his followers, had now accepted without reserve the new democratic and Liberal tendency of the national policy was the best sign that this fundamental problem had been finally resolved, and that no one could now seriously think of the opportunity or possibility of taking retrograde steps. But political problems as they are solved invariably reveal others behind them. The victory of the democratic and Liberal doctrine, owing to the very fact that it called wider classes to participation in the government, created fresh interests and placed in the forefront the material and moral elevation of those classes, without which their share in the State's life would be a pretence and not have led to that pacification of class interests which was the object of the whole policy. Assuming the responsibility of government, I was obliged to call the attention of parliament and the public to the fact that Italy had recently been harassed by disorders which had had the most deplorable consequences, especially

in the Southern provinces and in Sardinia. Those who had studied the primary causes of these disturbances had been obliged to recognise that these had their origin in bad economic conditions due to different causes in different places, and it would not be possible to provide any remedy until the exact reasons and the extent of the trouble had been first ascertained. A careful and thorough examination was necessary for this purpose, and I proposed to entrust the work to two parliamentary commissions of inquiry. To one was given the task of examining the conditions of the agricultural workers in the Southern provinces and in Sicily, especially in connection with agrarian contracts, and the other was to study the conditions of the Sardinian workers, especially the miners, among whom, as a matter of fact, the most serious outbreaks had occurred. To put the representatives of the nation in direct contact with the suffering classes seemed to me the most efficacious way of giving an impulse to serious social legislation, and demonstrated in the most evident manner the solidarity which ought to unite all classes in a civilised country.

The amelioration of the condition of the workers was in my opinion the dominating problem of the moment, following on the conquest of public liberties by means of which these very classes were enabled to make known their needs and aspirations. After a period of bitter struggle, the future of our civilisation and the prosperity and greatness of our country depended directly, I believed, on the gradual and pacific improvement of the moral and material conditions of the masses. However, the possibility of such improvement was evidently connected with the prosperity of agriculture, industry and commerce, that is, with the general increase in the national wealth, because only when capital and labour abound can wages be high and working conditions good. What in the preceding years had been essentially a political problem, became now an economic one, capable of being

resolved by the solution of numerous and varied technical questions towards which the government's constant action and legislative reform should be directed. From the material point of view, it was necessary to improve communications, increasing the road mileage, which was very insufficient in the South and in the islands, as well as organising the merchant service, in order to facilitate commercial exchanges at home and our exports and imports. At the same time, in order to give the fullest effect to the rise in wages it was necessary to try in every way to bring down the cost of living. This could be done little by little, and in so far as the country's finances permitted it, by reducing the taxes on foodstuffs, and transforming the local taxes in such a way that they did not bear on the less wealthy classes. From the moral point of view, I considered it necessary to diffuse popular education much more widely as well as higher technical instruction, which appeared then to be inadequate to our continued industrial progress. Social legislation too was to be improved in theory and practice by the passing of various laws on labour contracts, for safeguarding night workers and workers in dangerous trades, and for regulating Sunday labour.

One of the first steps towards giving Italy's finance a more democratic tendency was the conversion of the *Rendita* (Consolidated Loan) from 5 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Apart from the intrinsic significance of such a reform, the conversion offered the government a margin for lightening the taxes on foodstuffs.

The question of the conversion of the *Rendita* had been in the foreground since the stock had risen and gone above its par value. The useful experiment of the issue of a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock begun by Zanardelli, when Di Broglio was at the Treasury, and the success of the conversion of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ National Stock into a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. International Stock, as well as other minor conversions and the issue of railway bonds bearing $3\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. had all shown that the Italian market was well prepared to accept the more important conversion.

On June 30th, 1906, the situation of the two stocks to be converted, that is, the 5 per cent., to which was to be added about 200,000,000 lire of 4 per cent. net, showed a total of eight milliards and some 100,000,000 lire. Rather more than half of this was represented by inscribed stock and for the other part by bearer stock. Among the inscribed stock, about 900,000,000 were inscribed in the names of the Deposits and Loans Office and other State administrations, whence the operations and the risks of the conversion were concerned with about six milliards and a half which were in the kingdom and from 650,000,000 to 700,000,000 placed abroad, of which about 400,000,000 were in France. The conversion could be carried out in one or other of the following ways: either by carrying the interest at once to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or accomplishing it in two periods of time, allowing a transition period of some years, during which the interest would be $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., as was done in the conversion of the English Consolidated Fund. This second method seemed if not absolutely necessary, at least convenient, taking into consideration the vastness of the other operation and the possible repercussions both at home and abroad which a radical total conversion might bring about. Moreover, minor experiments such as the conversion of the City of Rome Loan had shown that the immediate curtailing of a $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest created large demands for reimbursement.

Already, in my preceding ministry, I had begun to study the possibility of a conversion. My successor, Fortis, had carried on the work. He had taken steps in Paris and Berlin, and had secured the interest of the firm of Rothschild. He had drafted a preliminary scheme, but his cabinet fell before the necessary consensus of views was obtained. Sonnino, who succeeded Fortis, carried on the negotiations, especially through his Treasury minister, Luzzatti; the Commendatore Bonaldo Stringher had, at the desire of the cabinet, an interview with Baron Edmond de Rothschild at Mentone. He

laid the projects of the Italian government before the great financier and the plans for carrying them out with the co-operation of his firm. Rothschild expressed his sympathy, but said that the Italian conversion would have to wait until the already stipulated Russian loan had been floated. It became known later that another reason why the Rothschilds had temporised was that the firm had not considered the two earlier ministries sufficiently stable, and believed it necessary for the success of the conversion that the Italian government should be in a position to pledge itself to make no further issues for a certain period of time.

In any case, useful preliminary work had been done, and when I came to power, I at once sounded Rothschild's firm to see if they were disposed to discuss the conversion. Rothschild replied that he considered my government sufficiently stable for the discussions to be begun at once. I had the assistance of Luzzatti in these negotiations, although he no longer formed part of the cabinet; but he had a mastery of the details. For the direct negotiations, I sent Commendatore Stringher to Paris on June 11, as representative of the Italian government, and on June 14 he opened negotiations with the firm which, being associated with the biggest Berlin and London bankers, represented the world of high international finance.

The discussions were difficult, owing to the diverse points of view of the interested parties. On the one hand, the Italian government was interested in not protracting for too long the period of the intermediate experiment of the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. interest, while the French bank stuck to its decision not to guarantee the operation if this intermediate period were not settled at at least eight years. Taking all the elements of the problem into consideration, and seeing that the guarantee offered would prove too costly to the Italian Treasury, it seemed to us that our wisest plan was to have confidence in the staying power of the country, and leave the Treasury with greater liberty of action, declining the guarantee and

directing the negotiations along another path. Thus on June 26th, Commendatore Stringher signed a contract with Rothschild and English and German banks, which was ratified two days later by the Italian government. By means of this we were guaranteed the moral and material support of the big European banks in effecting the conversion of our *Rendita* outside Italy and in eliminating the dangers of violent oscillations in the exchange without our having to submit to conditions that were neither financially nor politically desirable. A consortium was formed of French, German and English groups, which pledged itself to place at the disposal of the Italian Treasury the sum of 400,000,000 lire, divided into 250,000,000 of francs on Paris, 2,400,000 pounds sterling on London and 80,000,000 marks on Berlin. This sum was to meet demands for repayment of the convertible stock outside Italy as well as for the purchase of such stock as might be rendered necessary for safeguarding prices. In return for this co-operation, the international consortium was allowed 1 per cent. on the sum engaged, so that its benefit would be greater in proportion to the fewness of repayments and acquisitions of stock on the market. The big operation was carefully safeguarded with prudent measures so that it should be successful even if unforeseen events should temporarily disturb the international money market by bringing down government stocks all along the line. In the same way, an Italian consortium was formed for the conversion of the great mass of stock that was held in Italy, to which the note-issuing banks lent their support, as well as the Savings Banks and co-operative societies.

Commendatore Stringher signed the contract at Paris on June 26; on June 28 the government ratified it, and on June 30 the bill for the conversion was laid before the Chamber. This measure was approved with a rapidity that has never, I think, been surpassed. The bill was laid before the House at 3 p.m. The Chamber, after a secret scrutiny,

decided to examine it at once. The introducer, Luzzatti, brought it in half an hour afterwards, and the measure passed at 5 o'clock. At 5.30 it was laid before the Senate, which passed it at 6. By 8 it had been signed by the King, and it was published the same evening in the Official Gazette. This rapidity was necessary to prevent any Stock Exchange manœuvres.

The result of the operation was exceptionally fortunate. Requests for repayment were few. In all, the monies reimbursed by the foreign consortium and outside the consortium amounted to little more than 3,000,000 lire. In Italy, the repayments amounted to 1,661,000 lire, of which about a million belonged to foreigners. The total repayments came to little more than four millions and a half. The purchases on the markets to keep up quotations during the conversion totalled about sixteen millions and a half abroad and thirty-two millions in Italy. The action of the consortium centred round a total capital of not more than 53,500,000 lire, with respect to a complex value of eight milliards and one hundred millions of *Rendita*. It was a maximum result with a minimum effort. It must also be added that in view of the fortunate outcome of the affair, both the foreign consortium and the Italian one kept the redeemed stock for itself. The expenses of the conversion were also small. Putting together all the commissions and participations, the cost of exchanging new certificates for old, and all the other incidental expenses, they reached the sum of little more than nine and a half millions, or twelve centimes for every hundred lire of capital converted. Conversion in other countries for similar amounts had even recently cost ten times the amount. I remember that shortly after the operation, a Spanish ex-minister of Finance came to me in order to learn what the operation had cost and how it had been carried out. When I told him the figure, he showed himself so incredulous that I was obliged to give him a copy of the report just printed in order to per-

suade him that the sum was correct. In addition to the permanent advantage to the finances of the State, the magnificent success of the operation helped the country's credit indirectly, so much so that, notwithstanding the reduction of the interest, our national stock continued to maintain itself at about par, while our paper money stood at a premium with gold.

A notable improvement had been produced in these years in the general conditions of the national economy, and the budget, faithfully reflecting the trade and commerce of the country, was in a most flourishing condition, the credits sensibly exceeding the debits, owing to a constant and rapid increase in the tax returns.

In order to measure the importance of this general increase, it will suffice to make a comparison between certain sections of the budget for the years 1907-08 and 1900-01. In these seven years, there had been an increase in revenue of 214,000,000 lire, although several important items, such as 88,000,000 lire of taxes on personal estate, and 28,000,000 lire from the railways did not figure in the budget, while the flour tax had been abolished, the tax on paraffin cut down by half, and the customs tariffs much reduced, owing to commercial treaties.

This rapid increase in revenue had been effected through the gains from State monopolies, which amounted to 83,000,000 lire, taxes on business deals, which totalled 47,000,000 lire, a tax on personal property, which came to 33,000,000 lire, and receipts from posts and telegraphs, which reached 32,000,000 lire.

The increase in revenue permitted an increased expenditure. The amount allotted to public education was raised from 49 to 85 millions, an increase of 36 millions, 15 millions of which were assigned to elementary education. The agricultural budget was raised from 13 to 27 millions, public works from 79 to 117 millions, and posts and telegraphs advanced their expenditure from 69 to 123 millions.

But the largest increase took place in the sum that was assigned for raising the wages of employees, so that they could better face the raised cost of living. The total of such increase in salaries amounted to 103,000,000 lire, without taking into consideration the concessions made to the railway-men, which did not figure in the budget.

The economic progress reflected thus in the budget had its counterpart in all other manifestations of the economic activity of the country. The imports of coal rose from 4,947,180 tons in 1900 to 8,300,000 in 1907. The deposits in savings banks from 1900 to 1908 rose from 1,507,000,000 lire to 2,109,000,000 lire, indicating an increase of 602,000,000 lire. The deposits on current account and on deposit in the ordinary banks showed an increase of 430,000,000 lire. The amount in the Post Office savings bank rose from 682,000,000 lire to 1,487,000,000 lire. The reserves of our three note-issuing banks increased from 575,000,000 lire to 1,450,000,000 lire of which 1,177,000,000 lire were in gold.

Another important indication of the increased economic prosperity of the country was given by the fact that in the budget of 1900-01 the Treasury paid abroad, free of taxes, 76,000,000 lire of interest on the public debt, corresponding to a capital value in shares of 1,900,000 lire, whilst in the budget of 1907-08 the payments abroad for interest on the public debt were reduced to 27,000,000 lire, corresponding to a capital value of 720,000,000 lire.

Yet another impressive feature was to be found in the increase in wages annually received in Italy by the working classes. No statistics of wages existed, but anyone considering the vast difference between wages paid in 1900 and those paid in 1908 and multiplying such a difference by number of working days and the number of labourers in all industries would arrive at a figure which nobody would have thought possible in so brief a space of time.

An event of great international importance which took place in October, 1907, was the visit which the Czar of Russia paid our sovereign at Racconigi. This was the first official visit of a Czar to the kingdom of Italy.

When Victor Emanuel came to the throne, he had begun his round of official visits to the heads of the various foreign nations by a journey to the court of the Czar, an event which had attracted much attention internationally as a sign of the tendency already shown by Italy to wish to enter into cordial relations with all the European powers, while at the same time remaining perfectly loyal to the Triple Alliance. The Imperial court of Russia had been very gratified by the visit of our King, and since Zanardelli's time had manifested the desire to return it formally. But on that first occasion, the anti-Czarist agitations of the Socialist party and the threat to make the occasion of the Czar's visit an opportunity for hostile demonstrations against the internal policy of the Russian government had made the Russian police so anxious that the visit was postponed. I remember that when I left Zanardelli's ministry, at the farewell ceremony with the King, the latter said to me jokingly, "But you, you know, can make people change their minds." And he went on to tell me that the Russian ambassador in Rome, Mr. Nelidoff, who was known as a Conservative and reactionary and had therefore always disapproved my Liberal policy, had exhibited fears lest my no longer being at the ministry of the Interior might place difficulties in the way of the Czar's visit.

On this occasion too, when the probable arrival of the Czar in Italy became a matter of public knowledge, the Socialists became somewhat agitated and threatened demonstrations of protest against the reactionary policy which Russia had displayed in crushing the revolutionary troubles, following on the unfortunate war with Japan. It was agreed that the visit ought not to have an ostentatiously public character, and the castle of Racconigi, where the King usually passed

the autumn season, was chosen as the spot for the meeting. His Majesty, in addition to myself and the Foreign minister, invited Nathan, then mayor of Rome, to offer the Czar the greetings of the capital. Nathan, who had a fine political sense, and understood that the international importance of the visit ought to stand above all other considerations, at once accepted the invitation, and this attitude of a man representing democratic tendencies helped greatly to silence the outcries of the agitators. Naturally, exceptional precautions were taken to place the Czar's security and that of his suite quite beyond doubt. Some of the measures taken, and the most efficacious ones, were not apparent. Others, including a great display of troops, corresponded to the custom obtaining in Russia for all journeys and visits of the Czar; which custom it was a matter of courtesy for us to follow. In fact the visit took place without the smallest incident happening. This, apart from the measures taken, was certainly due in large part to the good sense and innate courtesy of the Italian people, who recognised the importance of the occasion and felt, as always, its duties as host.

The Czar was accompanied by his Foreign minister, Isvolsky, and between him and Tittoni and myself some important negotiations were concluded at Racconigi, with which the two Chancelleries occupied themselves several months later on. For our part, we pledged ourselves to give our support and collaboration to the idea of obtaining the opening of the Dardanelles, or at least their neutralisation. We made our undertaking in this connection dependent on the assent of the other great powers, and our adhesion to this idea was also based on the consideration that while the opening of the straits was more particularly a matter of great interest for Russia, it did not on this account cease to be any the less an interest of ours. In return, Russia undertook to recognise Italy's predominant rights over Tripoli whenever the case should arise. Another question that was treated at length

was the community of Russian and Italian interests in the various Near East problems. Agreement was come to on the following points: (1) That Italy and Russia should first of all engage themselves to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; (2) that whatever eventuality might happen in the Balkans the two powers would support the application and development of the principle of nationality; (3) that if Austria-Hungary should propose to Italy or Russia a new agreement for determining Eastern questions, either of the two powers that received the invitation would only accept it if the participation of the other were included.

During my stay at Racconigi, I had occasion to approach the Czar in the course of long conversations, and I received the impression of a man of good and gentle character and of uncommon culture and intelligence. He showed himself very well informed about our affairs, and demonstrated a sincere interest in them. At the same time, I had the impression that he was not a man dowered with a clear will and firm energy. His entourage evidently exercised a decisive influence over him, and to give an idea of what this entourage was like, I will put on record a little personal incident. When the Czar was about to leave, I found myself on the way to the station in the same carriage with the minister of the Imperial Household, Friedrish, who complimented me on the manner in which the precautions for the protection of the Czar had been organised. And finally, with the intention of paying me a supreme compliment, he came out with this phrase: "*C'est dommage que vous ne soyez pas militaire.*"

Another event of great importance, both for its immediate international effect and future possibilities, was the Young Turk revolution. As is known, it led the Austrian-Hungarian government to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This was a most serious violation of the Treaty of Berlin, which stirred up the Serbo-Austrian question and the still vaster Austro-Russian question, besides making such a commotion

in Europe as almost to lead one to fear the outbreak of war. Europe then only saved itself from war by submitting to the will of Austria-Hungary, which was openly supported by Germany. The Viennese government, in the course of the negotiations then proceeding with Italy, made, however, a concession which revealed itself later as of much importance. The Austrians gave up the occupation of the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, withdrawing their garrison therefrom. The consequences of this act were seen in the Balkan war, since it allowed the co-operation of the Bulgarian and Serbian armies against the Turks without arousing the danger of an Austro-Hungarian intervention, which would have anticipated the European war by several years.

During the exchange of views that took place at this time between our Foreign minister, Tittoni, and the Austrian Foreign minister, Aerenthal, we succeeded in obtaining the formal promise of the establishment of an Italian university at Trieste: according to a programme justified even in the bosom of the alliance itself, inasmuch as there was no reason why the Austrian government should permit any different treatment towards Italian citizens. But when in the beginning of 1909, the scheme was about to be put into execution, the plan that had been worked out by the Italian government did not appear in the least in accord with our wishes and the assurances given. Instead of a university at Trieste, there was a proposal to institute an Italian faculty of law at the University of Vienna. Tittoni, who on the strength of Aerenthal's assurances had in turn confirmed these both to the Chamber and the Senate, became indignant at this lack of good faith, and made an energetic protest at Vienna. He declared through our ambassador at Vienna, the Duke of Avarna, that it was preferable that no concession at all should be made, and he asked that no decision should be come to, inasmuch as the creation of the Italian faculty of law at Vienna, which would oblige the Trieste students to live in an

essentially German atmosphere, seemed indeed a measure against rather than in favour of Trieste's Italian feelings. Aerenthal answered that he could do nothing, but at the same time made his private excuses, stating that this solution of the question had been desired by the Archduke Ferdinand, who had always been an especial enemy of Italy.

Tittoni then wrote to me suggesting that he should resign from the Foreign Office as a protest against the disloyal conduct of Austria. Although I fully shared his feelings, I could not approve of such a measure. I was at Cavour at the time, and an exchange of telegrams between me and Tittoni took place. Tittoni insisted on his idea of wishing to resign, partly to satisfy Italian public opinion, and partly to offer a hint to Austria and Germany of the difficulties which Italy would experience in maintaining herself within the alliance if she was to be subjected to such treatment by one of her allies. I answered that, although I had considered the question from every point of view, I was unable to persuade myself that his resignation would help either at home or abroad. I told him that I did not think the question could possibly produce a serious agitation in the country, since the people who had really believed in the creation of an Italian university at Trieste were very few. And I admitted that I myself had never really believed in its possibility. Consequently, to take the non-establishment of the university as an offence serious enough to cause the resignation of the Foreign minister and at the same time to continue in the old policy of adhesion to the Triple Alliance seemed to me indecorous and perhaps even impossible. Resignation as a sign of impotent rage would certainly not advance our prestige abroad, while at home it would lead people to believe that the government also considered Austria's act as an offence to Italy, with the result that grave disorders might have occurred. I added further that since he knew the impossibility of changing our foreign policy, it was evident

that the event should not be forced so much into the foreground, especially as the forthcoming elections might well tend to complicate the situation. I ended by observing that it was inadmissible that the behaviour of an Austrian minister should cause a cabinet crisis in Italy. Such an event could only find its logical outcome in the determination of our country radically to change its policy, declaring the Triple Alliance ended. And in such a case, I should have been the first to offer my resignation, as I had no intention of dragging the country into war at that moment. If one excluded the possibility of a substantial change in our foreign policy, a resignation based on such an episode would produce a very bad impression abroad, putting us on the level of Serbia in our relations with Austria. Two ways only were open to Italy: to ignore the want of respect shown, or to react from it in full knowledge of what the final consequences of such reaction might be. I was unwilling to accept the responsibility of this second solution, whatever the military result of it might be. It would have been a disaster for Italy.

My arguments ended by persuading Tittoni, and he did not insist on resigning. Austria's conduct and her failure to keep her promises produced great irritation at Trieste, and had the opposite effect to that wished for by the Viennese government, inasmuch as nationalist agitations recommenced. And since, at that time, the municipal elections were taking place at Trieste, and the Austrian government was openly supporting the Slav element, by means of Ernest Nathan I assisted the Italians with money in the struggle, which resulted in a great victory for them.

Another fact of international importance, which was also connected with the Balkans, took place during this ministry of mine. This was the agreement between some Russian and Serbian financial groups for a railway from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, which was to compete with another railway of Austrian and German origin, planned to run to Salonica.

In the month of March, 1908, in consequence of agreements come to with the Serbian government, the Ottoman Railway Co., which links Salonica with Constantinople, supported by the Imperial Ottoman Bank, had presented a demand to the minister of Public Works of the Ottoman Empire for the concession of a line from the Danube to the Adriatic. This request followed the concession granted by the Sublime Porte to another group of important interests which was planning a line intended to join Uvacz with Mitrovitz, with the idea of making the communications between the Austrian monarchy and the German Empire and the Ægean shorter and more direct.

Given the economic and political importance of a line destined to link up the Danube with the Adriatic by means of a railway across Serbia and the vilayet of Kossov and Albania, we saw the necessity of Italy not remaining outside the undertaking for which the French group of the Ottoman Bank had demanded a concession. It was necessary that Italy should have a regular part in the scheme, and we devoted all our energies to this end.

After this determination had been come to, Tittoni invited the director of the Banca d'Italia to consider as quickly as possible in the country's interests the possibility of getting together among ourselves the capital required for a proper participation in the scheme, and we did everything we could to bring this about. We had also to consider the advisability of initiating negotiations—backed up with proper diplomatic support—for coming to some arrangement with the French group of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, in order to secure the entrance of Italy into the project.

The intervention of the Banca d'Italia proving acceptable to the French government and the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the negotiations were pushed on rapidly in Paris. These resulted not only in an understanding between the two banking institutions, but also in an agreement of international

character, dated June 3, according to which there were to take part, besides the French, representatives of a Serbian group and a Russian group for the constitution of an undertaking of Turkish nationality that was to have the following aims: The construction and working of a railway from the Serbian western frontier to San Giovanni di Medua on the Adriatic, or at a more northerly point in Turkish territory; and also the construction and working of a port at the end of the railway line on the Adriatic.

In accordance with the agreements come to in Paris and Rome, the Italian group was to be formed and constituted under the auspices of the Banca d'Italia, which was to assume the management of the affair and represent it with the necessary powers with the idea of giving a national character to the group and conserving its unity of policy and action.

According to the conventions subscribed at Paris on June 5, 1908, the whole project was to be divided into two branches with two companies, differently formed though of the same elements. One was to be for the line of railway; the other for the port. According to the calculations of the experts of the Imperial Ottoman Bank the total expense of the construction would not exceed sixty millions, though with the port included, the sum of sixty-five millions would be reached.

As regards the railway line, the participation of the groups was to be arranged on the following basis: the French group 45 per cent.; the Italian group 35 per cent.; the Russian group 15 per cent. and the Serbian group 5 per cent.

The administrative council of the railway was to be composed of twelve members, five of whom were to represent the French group, four the Italian, two the Russian, and one the Serbian.

As for the port, the distribution of the ratios of interest was not established, but it had been agreed that Italy should have an interest of not less than 50 per cent., both in capital participation and in representatives on the administrative

council. The Banca d'Italia, by means of a secret agreement, afterwards arranged that the Italian share should amount to 55 per cent.

By private deed between the Imperial Ottoman Bank and the Banca d'Italia, it was further agreed that the president of the railway company should be a Frenchman, while the president of the port company should be an Italian, and the vice-presidents were to be half Italian and half French.

The construction of the railway line was assigned to the French group, which was obliged to offer *aequa parte* in the construction to the Italian group. The building of the port was reserved to the Italian group which reciprocally was obliged to offer *aequa parte* to the French group.

The Ottoman Company *Jonction-Salonique-Constantinople* which had sought the concession of the new railway took upon itself the obligation of demanding that the port should be constructed on the Adriatic. It continued the negotiations with the Ottoman Government under the auspices of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, with the assistance of the groups that, under the protocol of June 5th, 1908, had promoted the undertaking, that is to say, through the diplomatic action of each of the four governments interested. The Imperial Ottoman Bank also pledged itself to consult the associated groups on all questions of an important nature concerning both railway and port in connection with the negotiations at Constantinople, until the determination of the essential conditions of the concession.

First among these essential conditions, without which the Danube-Adriatic Company would not have been formed and the undertaking would not have proceeded, was that of guarantees for the capital to be employed in the project. The amount, the nature and the formula for the necessary guarantees were to be arranged in agreement with the Imperial Ottoman Bank. It was proposed that the financial basis of such guarantees should be established on information

received from competent authorities of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, but it became evident that the validity and security of the guarantees depended upon Turkey's goodwill as well as on the consensus of the Great Powers.

The directors of the Imperial Ottoman Bank undertook that the Italian delegate at the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt should be kept informed of all important questions relative to the negotiations being conducted at Constantinople in order to ensure the success of the concession. Thus our group was in a position to follow all the negotiations and measure their consequences.

According to the exchange of ideas that took place at Paris, the capital required for the construction of the railway and port was to be got together by means of an issue of shares and bonds with a proportion of one-fourth or even less for shares and the rest for duly guaranteed bonds.

In the beginning of 1909, the government had to examine the question of the general elections which were due to be held that year, since the Chamber had been a long-lived one and its normal existence ended on the 13th December. It was necessary to decide which month of those that separated us from the natural death of the Chamber was the best suited for calling the elections. Two considerations presented themselves at once. The first was that the electoral struggle had already begun in certain provinces owing to the nearness of the then parliament's end, and that if such a struggle were unduly protracted, it would cause damage to the country's normal life. The second consideration was that the state of parliamentary work allowed no hope that the debates on the budgets could be concluded in the two Chambers before the Easter holidays. Dissolution of the Chamber, therefore, would have meant the passing of provisional credits for the budgets: a thing which I believe should always be avoided. If, on the other hand, the elections were to be called during the month of March, the new Chamber might be ready before

the Easter holidays, and would have ample time to debate fully on the budget. Moreover, these debates would have greater importance, because they would be the expression of the will of a freshly elected House and would therefore reflect more directly the will and inclinations of the country.

The ministry, on the strength of these considerations, proposed the dissolution of the Chamber, and the elections were called for the 7th March.

The legislature which thus ended its existence had fully carried out the programme with which it had started, and in almost all branches of law-making had effected reforms of very considerable importance.

The railways had been taken over by the State in execution of the government's programme, announced before the last elections. Thirteen thousand two hundred kilometres of line had passed into the hands of the State. The beneficent effects of this proceeding were felt almost at once, for provision had to be made to cope with an increase of traffic that exceeded all expectations.

In the financial field, apart from the conversion of the *Rendita*, other important provisions were: reduction by half of the tax on paraffin, reduction of the postal tariff, the taking over by the State of the telephone lines formerly worked by private enterprise, and the laws concerning note-issuing banks and the reduction of the stamps on bills of exchange.

Public works, which so powerfully assist the development of the national wealth, showed a great advance. The law of July 12th, 1906, provided for the construction of the complementary railways in Sicily. Then there were the laws that made provision for railways and other public works in Basilicata and Calabria. There was the law of July 14th, 1907, authorising the new port enterprises, and the law of July 12th, 1908, which ordered the construction of new railways for an estimated expense of 600,000,000 lire.

The organic reforms of the public services formed a large

part of the parliament's work. Among other laws may be mentioned those governing the guarantees, the magistracy, the legal position of civil employees, the spread of elementary education, university professorships, the services of the Fine Arts department, the conservation of art treasures, and the various measures that regulated the military marine service, the new recruiting bill and the law that set aside funds for extraordinary military expenses for the defence of the State.

With regard to the reorganisation of the army, an inquiry had been ordered by the government and entrusted to an important commission which had examined the question and made a series of proposals which had been partly converted into law.

Still more intense had been the work of this legislature in the field of social reform. By a series of important enactments, the workers' Sunday rest was assured. Old age and sickness insurance was improved and extended. Night work for bakers was abolished, while improvements in the question of women's and children's labour were introduced.

Moreover, during the life of the legislature in question, a number of measures were passed, calculated to provide for the special necessities of certain parts of the realm. Among these may be mentioned the law of July 16th for the southern provinces, Sicily and Sardinia, and laws concerning the Sicilian sulphur industry and the orange and lemon trade.

The sum of all these measures corresponded to a policy of peace, liberty, work and social justice, which, in my opinion, required to be continued with ever increasing firmness and energy if the country was to advance rapidly towards that ideal which was and is in the minds of all who love Italy.

The programme with which the government now went to the country was and, in fact, could not be other than a continuation of the programme already laid down. I believed that we ought to continue along the lines of economic construction that should take a due regard of social justice

Only along these lines could Italy hope to complete the cycle of material and moral progress to which the admirable qualities of an intelligent and laborious race call her. Therefore, in the declaration in which I had proposed to the King the calling of the elections, I had pointed out the necessity of furthering technical instruction in all classes, since the progress of our industries and applied artistic culture depended largely on this. For Italy's strength lay and lies in the fine and delicate work of her operatives, which properly applied, would gain for her the first place in the finer departments of industry. Another point to which I called attention was a wise use of the water power with which Italy is so richly dowered, almost as though in direct compensation for her lack of coal. I had already prepared a bill on this subject for the Senate, which would have to be discussed by the new legislature. Italy, now that she had got over her struggles for public liberties and overcome the financial difficulties which had for so long been stumbling blocks in the way of her development, was moving rapidly towards the level of civilisation of richer and more fortunate countries. She was cancelling the last traces of that inferiority from which she had suffered, not from any intrinsic deficiencies of her people but as an evil legacy of her unhappy past. The rapid progress accomplished during the last years showed that we were on the right path, and that it would have been an error of the gravest kind to abandon this policy of ours for any policy of adventure or too hasty reforms in the vital parts of our social organism. That these were also the beliefs of the people the result of the elections showed once again, for it amounted to a vote of confidence in the programme that had been worked out in the course of past years.

The new parliament was called upon at once to face a problem of great importance, namely, that of the maritime service which was being run in a manner that was no longer adequate to the needs of the country and its capacity for

expansion. Our maritime services were then to a very large extent in the hands of the *Navigazione Generale* (General Navigation Co.) which preferred to keep navigation free and refused to take any part in agreements for a new scheme of maritime conventions with the option of taking over the running. The refusal of the *Navigazione Generale*, which had almost a monopoly, created grave difficulties for us, and I determined to reply to this kind of boycott by organising another company which should be sufficiently strong to give a vigorous impulse to the development of the mercantile marine. In order to attain this object, it was necessary to have at the head of the new organisation a person of exceptional competence who enjoyed ample credit. From the beginning, I had turned my attention to the *Società Adriatica*, which had given up running its railway lines and enjoyed plenty of credit in the financial world. I wanted to persuade this society to transform itself into a big shipping company. The Company's director, Borgnini, a very capable man, though getting on in years, did not care to embark on an enterprise that was new to him, and nothing came of the suggestion. Then the government turned to Senator Piaggio, well known as a great authority on shipping matters, and a man who could command a great deal of financial support. Piaggio accepted the government's proposal, and after some lengthy discussions with the competent minister, Schanzer, agreed to the conclusion of a convention which was at once put before the Chamber for its approval. This plan, which, even after its abandonment, was recognised as being the most technically perfect of all the projects put forward either before or after, stirred up a violent opposition, which was reflected in the Chamber. This opposition sought to excite the hostility of the South Italian and especially the Sicilian deputations on the plea that the interests of these parts of the country were being neglected in the plan, while in reality, provision was also being made for the constitution of a branch at Palermo.

As there was also an accusation against the government that it had made too generous concessions to the *concessionnaire* company, Senator Piaggio, in a letter addressed to me, declared that he renounced his rights in the contract already concluded, and recommended that it should be put up to public auction. This offer, which removed all doubts as to the absolute correctness of the contracting parties, was accepted, and it was decided to put the concession up to auction. I had, however, by now come to the conclusion that hostility to the project was so strong that it would be difficult to arrive at any conclusion, and considering it unreasonable that the government's conduct should be criticised in an essentially technical matter in which the Opposition was derived from special interests, I decided to shift the question on to an essentially political plane. Thus, at the opening of the Chamber, adopting a plan I have repeatedly followed, I laid a bill before the House, which on one hand reduced the sugar tax with the idea of increasing the consumption of this popular article of food, and on the other, contained a project for a progressive tax on freehold and leasehold property. The measure aroused the opposition of all Italian Conservatives, who, if they had made their retreat on the political field, still defended their economic position with great vigour. The debate in committee had an unfavourable result for this measure, and the commission that was elected to examine the bill proved hostile by a large majority. Then—it was December, 1909—the government presided over by me offered its resignation.

Since the Opposition in the Chamber had come from the Conservative benches, Sonnino was indicated as the man to form the new ministry. He assumed power December 11th, making Guicciardini his Foreign minister, assigning Senator Scialoja to the ministry of Justice, while Salandra went to the Treasury, Daneo to the ministry of Public Instruction, Rubini to Public Works and Luzzatti to the ministry of Agriculture.

The new cabinet reflected its origin. It was the most Conservative ministry that could be put together in the Italian parliament.

Sonnino's cabinet had at once to face in turn the problem of the maritime conventions. It proposed a reduced kind of convention with the evident object of avoiding the opposition which my first plan had aroused. But this device was only partly successful. The opposition, though it was somewhat disarmed, still showed itself to be very strong. I arrived in Rome before the parliamentary debate had opened, and after an examination of the situation, I came to the conclusion that it would be possible to overcome the persistent opposition by means of some modifications in the measure. Therefore, by means of Bertolini, I begged Sonnino to postpone the debate until after Easter, so that time would be gained to think out a method to vanquish the opposition at least in part. Sonnino did not accept my suggestion, believing it necessary to face the debate at once, but the opposition showed itself to be so lively and energetic that he did not even insist on pressing the matter to a vote, and resigned on March 31st.

Thus, for a second time, Sonnino had taken up the leadership of a government without succeeding in overcoming the initial difficulties which inexorably confront anyone who assumes the supreme responsibility of political life, and this notwithstanding the great respect and esteem which he enjoyed in the political world on account of his character, talent, culture and experience. This ill success of his serves to show how various and complex are the qualities required for the exercise of power, and how the lack of one only of these qualities may make all the rest of no avail. Sonnino, who gave himself to politics in his youth, and entered parliament when he was still very young, had a preparation both doctrinal and cultural in the various branches of State administration which men more fortunate than he have never even

distantly approached. But if he was acquainted with the problems of political life, he never knew them well enough nor did he appreciate that co-operation, voluntary or reluctant, direct or indirect, is indispensable in the solution of problems in democratic and representative régimes. Always isolated and aloof, even in the midst of his friends, he found himself little at his ease in assemblies that wish to be dominated, though by means of a wise persuasiveness which takes account of all their humours and knows how to turn them to its own ends. He was also lacking in the feeling that political problems, though they remain what they are in themselves, are essentially changeable in relation to the conditions and circumstances in which they have to be faced. He showed his best qualities when he was engaged on tasks of a strictly technical character, in which the substance necessarily prevails over the form; especially, for instance, at the Treasury, when at a difficult moment of our finances this very rigidity and inflexibility of his, which in other circumstances might have seemed unreasonable, was of material service in connection with the State budget.

CHAPTER X

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND GOVERNMENT MONOPOLIES

Luzzatti's Ministry and the cause of its fall—Necessity for a wider Suffrage—My programme and the invitation to the Socialists—Manceuvres against monopolies and universal suffrage—Diplomatic opposition to monopolies—The Libyan war—Why I put the economic progress of the masses before their political progress—Participation of the masses in political life and political and economic strengthening of the State—How my scheme of reform was engineered—Masked struggle against it—Results of the first experiment.

THE parliamentary indications for the formation of the new ministry were largely favourable to Luzzatti. During past years he had won a considerable reputation for his extensive culture and exceptional competence in economic and financial matters, and although he originally belonged to the old Right, his agile and pliable talent had followed the movement of the times. He was therefore quite capable of leading a ministry of a distinctly Left character in which San Giuliano was at the Foreign Office, Fani at the ministry of Justice and Facta at the Finance ministry.

Luzzatti's cabinet lasted about a year, from March, 1910, to March, 1911. His first act was to settle the mercantile marine question which had dragged on for so long, owing to the opposition offered to my scheme and then to Sonnino's. These diverse oppositions were not exactly overcome, but were avoided by means of a very modest scheme and the constitution of a small company which did not threaten too much competition to the old ship-owners. Luzzatti's vacillation showed itself in the political field, and particularly in

connection with the plan for extending the suffrage which was included in his programme. It was on the whole a modest little reform, which nevertheless alarmed some Conservative elements. They did not oppose the measure directly, but kedas that the extension of the franchise should be accompanied by the obligation to vote. This request of the Conservatives to introduce into our electoral system a regulation which has only been tried in one or two small states was a curious sign of the political conditions of those people who prided themselves on maintaining their position as the ruling class. The demand for making the vote obligatory was a real confession of weakness, and it was therefore small wonder that the Socialists, the Radicals and the other opponents of Conservatism resolutely opposed the obligatory vote in the Electoral Reform Bill of the new government. This difference of opinion generated a certain parliamentary agitation, which gained strength from the fact that the leader of the government, in the course of conversations with the representatives of his party, could not make up his mind to declare his intentions openly, so that both the supporters and the opponents of the obligatory vote believed that the government would accept their point of view. A parliamentary commission was nominated to examine the proposed measure, and as it reflected the uncertainties of the government, the matter dragged on for a long time. Finally, during a debate on the subject I put forward the proposition that since the Chamber was examining the question of electoral reform which had been discussed so often, it would be advisable to contemplate a reform of an ampler and more radical character. I pointed out that since the last electoral reform of twenty years ago a great but pacific social revolution had taken place in Italy, and that this revolution had effected notable progress in the economic, intellectual and moral conditions of the masses, a progress which undoubtedly gave them a right to a more direct participation in the country's political life.

It was in my opinion no longer the question whether power should be given to the local authorities to create fresh electors. The problem which presented itself to the Chamber and the country needed to be resolved in a much broader manner. The capacity to use the letters of the alphabet to the extent of filling in a candidate's name on a voting card could no longer remain the standard as to whether a man was capable of judgment on the great questions that interest the masses. Other methods and other ways of judging had to be found.

I pointed out that in matters of electoral law, half measures were not desirable, and when parliament had to face so grave a problem, it should be settled thoroughly. An uncertain and partial solution of the electoral problem would not have satisfied the middle classes, but would leave the field open for fresh and continuous agitation. I observed, moreover, that the question was not merely that of a simple extension of the suffrage, but that there were numerous collateral problems attached to it requiring a settlement. Since the discussion had been provoked by the action of certain deputies against the commission charged with examining and reporting on the question of the reform, which commission had been accused of delay and tergiversation, I concluded by calling attention to the fact that a vote causing the commission's resignation would only entail fresh delays. I declared that I should vote for any motion which, without putting any blame on the commission, would conduce to a more thorough and rapid examination of the question.

My speech, which was well received even by the Socialist benches, was not intended as an opposition attack. Its object was solely to find a ready way out for the question of electoral reform, which had hitherto remained without settlement and which certain members of the House were anxious to leave unsolved. Even the vote which followed did not touch the heart of the matter, still less did it inculcate the ministry, and in leaving the Chamber, I had no idea that a

crisis was in the air. That same evening, however, the cabinet decided to resign, not so much as a result of the parliamentary vote as because of its effect among those groups which were under the impression that the ministry was secretly favouring their plans by keeping electoral reform within strict limits, while lessening its effect by making the vote obligatory.

Luzzatti, who for a year was premier and minister of the Interior, gave fresh proof of his capacity and technical competency. If from the political point of view his leadership was not entirely satisfactory, this was due to his natural geniality, owing to which he did not always offer the requisite resistance to the demands and pressure to which any government is inevitably subjected. If Sonnino, as leader of the government, made the mistake of not taking sufficient count of men and their passions and interests—a factor not to be neglected but to be turned to account—Luzzatti erred in the other direction, concerning himself too much about the men around him, their hostilities and possible intrigues. Certainly the reasonable and opportune management of men, naturally a perpetual problem, offers the greatest complications and difficulties in parliamentary and democratic régimes owing to their very nature. My experience, however, has persuaded me that even in public affairs the quality which proves most useful and involves the fewest complications is, as in private life, *complete frankness*. One of the dangers to be especially avoided is that of making too many promises when one is not sure of being able to keep them. For my part, I have always refrained from making promises, confining myself, when any request has been made me, to saying that I would examine it. As those who have received or imagine they have received promises from a government, generally try and exact their execution from the government's successor, I have always, on every occasion that I have left power, informed my successor that if anyone should come forward

asking for the fulfilment of a promise made by me, he was authorised to deny the existence of such a pledge at once in my name. There are many who assert that under a democratic régime, it is difficult not to make promises, but they should remember that it is even more difficult to keep them. As for those who think that making a promise does not mean that it must be kept, although imagining themselves very astute, they are really most ingenuous. For the man who makes rash promises without intending to keep them does not realise that he is doing bad business for himself, since he gains friends retail and loses them wholesale.

A notable occurrence during Luzzatti's ministry was the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of Rome as the capital of Italy. This event was celebrated with much solemnity by means of the great Exhibitions at Rome and Turin. The merit of the arrangements for the ceremonies and the exhibitions belonged entirely to Luzzatti's ministry. He was able to preside while still premier at the inauguration of the Rome exhibition, at which I was present as a simple deputy, having had only the day before the command from the King to form a new ministry.

It is perhaps not out of place in connection with these inauguration ceremonies to recall what had been done for the capital by the ministries presided over by me. Already, in 1890, when I was at the Treasury, I had proposed, with Crispi, a measure which placed the obligations for hospitals and medical assistance for the poor, which ordinarily would have had to be met by the municipality, to the charge of the State. In 1904, I got through the bill which sanctioned the purchase of the Villa Borghese and presented it to the city of Rome, with the proviso that the latter should unite the Villa to the Pincio. Between 1907 and 1908, the law for building areas was passed, also the bill for the construction of a main road from Rome to Ostia, in order to gratify a long-felt desire to join the capital to its nearest seaport. Other

measures for the improvement of the capital were the creation of the archaeological promenade and the work on the baths of Diocletian, all calculated to increase the interest of the city as an archaeological centre, and all these laws and provisions, which also contained important and financial clauses for the assistance of the city's budget, did undoubtedly help in the development of the city during the last twenty years, while increasing its dignity as the capital of Italy. As a recognition of my work for Rome, Nathan, the mayor, presented me in the name of the Municipal Council with a miniature copy in silver of the she-wolf of Rome.

Assuming again the responsibility of government and the premiership, I retained the greater part of the ministers who had formed part of Luzzatti's cabinet, since, in addition to being my personal friends, they competently and thoroughly represented the Liberal majority of the Chamber.

My programme contained three fundamental points. The first was an electoral reform that came as near as was possible to the ideal of universal suffrage, taking into consideration the special conditions of Italian life at the time, and more particularly the conditions of the working classes. Naturally too, certain limitations and reserves were necessary. The second point was the institution of a life assurance monopoly, the profits from which should go to the provident fund for workmen's pensions. These two points were, however, the only two put forth in the programme and discussed on the formation of the ministry. The third point, the Libyan question, which I had been turning over in my mind for some time, was kept quite secret, since it was more than advisable to withhold any public pronouncement, or indeed even the least hint on the subject.

On the subject of electoral reform and the proposal for a life assurance monopoly, I entered at once into full negotiations with the men whom I had called around me for the work

of government, and I found them all cordially in agreement with me. It seemed to me, however, that taking into consideration the character of the new ministry, which comprised men of the most liberal views, including representatives of the Radicals, and having regard to my programme, which was so favourable to the working classes, an occasion was offered for the participation in the government of men of that party which was supposed to represent the people most directly, namely the Socialist party. I therefore appealed to Bissolati, with whom I had a long conversation in the house of Camillo Peano. Bissolati, speaking not only for himself but also in the name of his colleagues, declared his entire approbation of my programme, but repeated to me what he had said several years before when I had sought the Socialists' collaboration in the inauguration of the policy of full liberty against that of reaction. This was that he did not believe the Socialist party was yet ready to take part in the government. It seemed indeed that individuals of the party might become ripe for assuming power, but not the party itself. Bissolati added moreover that he believed he could better assist the government in the realisation of its projects by remaining outside it. By not accepting power, it would be possible for him to obtain in a great measure the active or at least passive support of his party for the government, while his acceptance of a portfolio would provoke dissensions and possibly schisms. I then asked Bissolati, supposing he were called on by the King to give his opinion on the political situation and on the government's programme, whether he would accept the invitation. He answered in the affirmative, and, as a matter of fact, on the following day he was received in audience by His Majesty. It was the first time that a Socialist deputy had crossed the threshold of the Quirinal to have his opinion asked by the King, and the event naturally raised a storm of comments. Moreover, it was the extremists of the Right and Left who united in deploring the act; the

reactionary Conservatives and the revolutionary Socialists. Bissolati loyally kept his promise to support the government in the bitter struggle it had to carry on in order to convert the essential points of its programme into law. When the Libyan affair matured, and the vast majority of the Socialists voted against the government, Bissolati separated from his party and became a fervent apostle of the enterprise, the political reasons of which he perfectly understood. He found himself in the opposite camp to me in the matter of judging Italy's situation in relation to the European conflagration, but even then, notwithstanding the violence of the dissensions and conflicts that broke out, he always conducted himself towards me with the most cordial and gentlemanly correctness. My impression of Bissolati was and is that he was a man of fine and logical talent, simple and direct in character, whose chief fault as a politician was perhaps that at certain moments he had an excessive idealistic enthusiasm. This is a good thing in itself, but it must be bridled and corrected by a calmer vision of things. He was also dowered with considerable intellectual equilibrium, as he demonstrated later on, showing that he could consider the nation's interests and at the same time not be faithless to his Socialist convictions. And since he was an energetic man and courageous too, he would, had he not died prematurely, have played an important part in after-war politics.

Since a direct collaboration of the Socialists could not be secured even this time, I invited Nitti to accept the portfolio of the ministry of Agriculture. He had the technical capacity to enable him to elaborate and defend the bill for the assurance monopoly, and from his experience and his vivacity in debate, he seemed to me particularly indicated for the post. At first, Nitti showed himself hesitating and reluctant, and I remember that he found himself in a difficulty owing to his having written and spoken against the practice of government monopolies. When I told him that this was an absolutely

essential point in my programme, he ended by accepting, agreeing, however, to consider the life assurance monopoly as a particular case, which might be sustained even by one against monopolies in general.

The government's programme was put before the Chamber at once with the greatest clearness and precision, and was favourably received by the great majority of the House. But opposition, both on the part of those interested in life assurance, and on the part of Conservatives dissatisfied with electoral reform, though not open in either case, soon showed itself both in the press and in parliament. Thus in a few weeks, I found myself in the same situation in which I was in 1901 and 1902. Then, for having advocated the most complete liberty in the struggle between capital and labour, I had been described as the enemy of the former, the demolisher of the right to property, a minister who was preparing to destroy existing institutions. In 1901, the ministry had had the support of the Socialists in its policy of liberty, and the renewal of this support for the programme put forward by me called forth the reproof of some who saw in it a fresh betrayal of the Liberal party. Evidently the men who made these accusations, instead of being real Liberals, were Conservatives coated with a thin varnish of Liberalism. They did not realise that parties which are deaf to new ideas and remain wrapped up in themselves are destined to disappear. They did not remember that one of the greatest forces of our dynasty, which stands for tradition itself, has always been to accept the assistance of all men willing to work loyally for the good of the nation, from whatever party they may have come, or whatever their political past may have been. It was particularly strange that, on this occasion as previously, when the government approached men of the popular and extreme parties in order to obtain their collaboration, those that manifested the most lively horror for such methods of government were exactly the men who called

themselves followers of Count Cavour, forgetting that he allied his party with the most advanced section of the Chamber, and came to agreements with men of extreme parties, sending them to govern the country at the most difficult moments. Against these attacks and criticisms, I limited myself to observing that for the man who is anxious to go ahead only one sort of company is impossible, that of the man who wants to go backwards or stand still, which in practice comes to the same thing. Since I perceived that the accusations of ten years before were being repeated against my policy, I advised my adversaries, in order to spare themselves intellectual fatigue, to read over the speeches of the Opposition of those times, and use them in future debates.

The electoral law required a long period of preparation on the part of the government. This was necessary, not only to show by means of statistics taken from other countries the political benefits that would proceed from it, but also to see that in practical application it should not encounter technical difficulties and enterprises. The parliamentary commission had to give the subject an ample and accurate examination, and the presentation of the bill before the Chamber was necessarily postponed. There were no difficulties of this kind in the matter of the life assurance monopoly, the bill for which was drafted quickly and placed before parliament.

The idea of creating this monopoly was not, as its opponents then said, a hastily improvised political move. It was an old idea of mine, which had first come to me after a consideration of the numerous cases of failure of assurance companies, which were unable to carry out their obligations after having taken the premiums. Life assurance is only a form of saving, with this special characteristic, that the obligations towards the assured person do not mature until after a long period of years, running from twenty to forty; hence certainty is required that when the day comes for the assurance company to fulfil its obligations, it will be in a position

to do so. Without this certainty, which must be absolute, assurance is an abuse of the public's good faith. Now the experience of many years had shown that besides well-managed companies, there were others which, owing to bad investments or risky or illegal speculation, came to a bad end, defrauding the policy-holders of their rightful money. This was the worst of frauds, since the people who had taken out policies had invested the fate of their old age, or, in the case of death, the lot of their families, together with their savings. Nor were the assurance companies that failed only secondary ones. Not only in Italy, but also in England and the United States, where life assurance business had developed enormously there had been cases of failure of big companies that had amounted to real social disasters and had brought about the ruin of thousands of families. Nor is it correct to say that it is possible to distinguish between solid and well-managed companies and risky and badly managed ones. Good management is not a quality inherent in these institutions, but in the men who run them, and in any corporation, incapable or unscrupulous directors may succeed capable and honest ones. The result of this state of things, at least as far as our country was concerned, was that the diffidence aroused by the failures and the lack of absolute security prevented this excellent provident system from having that wide diffusion which was in every way desirable. My idea was that these difficulties could be overcome and the saving instinct encouraged, if an assurance institute were created that should offer the highest guarantees and security. Now the body which can offer such guarantees most surely is the State, which according to my plan was to guarantee the operations of the institute. In order to avoid any suspicions that the new body had any fiscal character, or that the money of the assured people might be subject to any taxes or reductions, I arranged that the profits should be applied to the old age and workmen's sickness compensation fund.

Another consideration favourable for the State Assurance Corporation was connected with the general conditions of public economy. Statistics showed that the insurance companies had in their hands gigantic capital, and since in Italy three-fifths of the insurance business was done by foreign companies, it resulted that a large part of the capital so acquired went abroad, thus constituting a regular organisation for the export of the nation's savings. To create a monopoly would mean putting an end to this inconvenience, and would concentrate a financial force of the first order in the hands of the State.

I set forth these ideas on the occasion of the laying of the bill before parliament. The project received the approval of the great majority of the Chamber, from Liberals to Socialists, but, as I have said, its opponents were persistent. Among them there were certainly some whose objections were doctrinaire in character. They invoked the principles of economic Liberalism, which is not always in agreement with political Liberalism, for the latter has to take account of much more varied and complex elements. Other speakers gave vent to their instinctive antipathy against monopolies of any kind, although the excellent results of our tobacco monopoly had shown the State's capacity to run undertakings of the kind. Nor were there wanting those who fought my measure from personal interests which they feared were menaced. The most violent campaign was conducted by the press, especially the Conservative section of it, which was perhaps inspired by other reasons than those of merely protecting the interests of the insurance companies. These Conservative organs fought the assurance monopoly not so much for itself as to be able to strike in this manner at the government, which had placed in the forefront of its programme the question of electoral reform with a suffrage that was almost universal. Only the hope of deferring if not absolutely wrecking the electoral reform project could explain the liveliness of these

attacks against the assurance monopoly, the means that were had recourse to and the absurdity of the arguments and inventions brought forward.

It was sought to cause a regular uprising of all the bourgeois interests, capitalist, industrial and commercial. It was stated that the monopoly law was nothing less than an attack on private property, and the beginning of a system tending towards collectivism, by means of monopolising the most important part of industry. The speciousness of this argument lay in its attempt to cause a confusion of ideas between industrial activity and life assurance, which had nothing to do with the former, being a pure and simple speculation in a special form of saving. Industry's aim is the production of wealth, while assurance speculation has no other object than that of securing the passage of a certain percentage of the wealth of the assured into the pockets of the assurers, and this speculation had been practised in such a reckless manner that in some cases failure had been the result, while in others the profits gained had been really scandalous. Replying to the opponents of the bill, I was able to cite examples of profits made in a single year. The year before, as a matter of fact, I showed that one company, whose shareholders had paid 822 lire per share, had received a dividend of 336 lire, which amounts to 40 per cent., while the directors had also divided among themselves 240,000 lire. Another company had distributed on shares of 250 lire, 307 lire of dividend, amounting to 122 per cent. on the paid up capital. Since life assurance operations deal for the most part in small sums and on behalf of people who are not well-to-do, I replied to those who were crying out that a right was being violated—that the right that was supposed to be in jeopardy might be defined as the right to practise usury on the savings of the poor. In any case, all this had nothing to do with industry, and it was strange that certain groups of business men allowed themselves to be

dragged into an agitation which had no relation to their real interests.

Another form of argument was used to throw doubt on the capacity of the State to act as insurer and employ the capital which the monopoly would bring it, but this doubt was already discounted by the proved ability of the State to administer the Savings Bank. The postal savings department alone had gathered in 1,800,000,000 lire, and while it had rendered inestimable services to the State, it had never suffered any loss. It was further proposed that a State institute should be created, without any monopoly, allowing it merely to work in competition with the private companies. The reply to this was simple enough. The savings banks, which are in competition with the Post Office Savings Banks, are not speculative companies but thoroughly Italian institutions, which set aside their profits, partly to swell the reserve for the greater security of the depositors, and partly to devote them to charitable objects.

The parliamentary battle, together with that conducted in the press and at the various meetings called by people interested in the matter, continued for several weeks, and absorbed the entire activity of the Chamber. Even the Socialists took part in it, and in favour of the government. Bonomi made an excellent technical speech in favour of the measure, as did Bissolati, while on the other hand Sonnino, Salandra and others of the Right spoke against the bill. The opponents were replied to by Nitti from the technical point of view; and he, while agreeing with me as to certain modifications of details which did not in any way violate the principle of the measure, defended the bill admirably. I also assisted the passage of the measure in a speech which roused a storm of disapproval from the Conservative benches. The voting then took place, and the Chamber approved the bill on general lines with a large majority. It then became necessary to discuss it clause by clause. We were at the end of June,

and I proposed that the debate be postponed until the next session in the autumn. I did this because I had seen that the adversaries of the project, though appearing to relinquish their hostility to the general principle of the bill, were proposing to renew the opposition in the committee stages. A great number of amendments were down for hearing, and in the matter of a monopoly one amendment alone which attacks the vital principle of the bill may eventually cause its ruin. Moreover, there was no reason for undue haste, and I preferred that the debate should be renewed after the Chamber had had its holidays, in order to avoid some dangerous amendment passing in a Chamber that was tired and anxious to get away for its holidays.

In addition to the parliamentary battle, the government had also to carry on a diplomatic and international fight.

I have already stated that three-fifths of the life assurance business in Italy was done by foreign companies, especially those of Austrian, Hungarian, English, American, German and French origin. What troubled these companies—some of which were very strong—was not so much the possible loss of the Italian market as the fact that other governments might be induced to imitate the Italian example. The irritation and anxiety on their part must have been considerable, because there followed a fairly general diplomatic protest. This protest was based upon the assumption that Italy was about to violate international customs and agreements by preventing foreigners from practising their trades and businesses in Italy. We replied, rebutting absolutely such accusations, which could only have been justified if Italy had prohibited life assurance business to foreigners, while allowing it to her own citizens. This was not the case. If Italy cared to create a State monopoly for life assurance, she was fully entitled to do so, and the treatment she extended to foreigners was just the same as that she gave to her own citizens. This argument of ours was finally recognised to

be just after a certain amount of discussion. I remember that Austria made an obstinate resistance, while really she had the least right of all to protest, since she had concluded a commercial treaty with us in which the right to create government monopolies was expressly reserved on both sides. Austria's unjustifiable opposition was not in any way modified or rendered easier by the attitude of her ambassador, Count Meroy, a man who prided himself on his brusque manners. I remember that when he came to see me in order to protest against the institution of the insurance monopoly, he met a man prominent in the insurance world in my ante-chamber. On seeing him the Count exclaimed, "Do you receive that pig?" . . . To which I replied, "That pig has come here for the same reason for which you yourself have come, Excellency." Meroy then made a fierce attack on the bill, using the strongest words that came to him, but as I continued to answer him, "I am not of your opinion," he ended by laughing and leaving the matter alone. Austria, however, still tried to insist in an indirect manner, and sent some French bankers to Rome who were charged with attempting a kind of financial intimidation. I received them, and as one of them at a certain point of the conversation cried out, "We shall be against Italy's finance. We'll bring your Consolidated Fund down," I answered that far from being alarmed by the prospect I should be grateful to them. As they seemed surprised at this remark of mine, I observed that Italy was at the time buying back her national stock placed abroad, and I should have to thank them for the opportunity of getting it at a cheaper price.

The debate on the monopoly law was recommenced after the holidays and the measure was safely passed in 1912. In the meantime, the Libyan war had broken out, and this naturally occupied public attention to a large extent, so that the opposition to the law considerably diminished. My opponents had by now understood that an attempt to block

or kill the measure with amendments would prove useless. The government in its turn made some concessions, chief among which was the authorisation of the companies that were already established in the country to carry on their business for ten years, with the reservation, however, that insurance operations should be limited to sums exceeding 20,000 lire. It was a concession that interested both sides, as it permitted the companies to liquidate their past business and give time for the new institute to put itself in order.

The monopoly, after the first initiatory period, has worked excellently, giving the lie to all pessimistic forecasts and rendering excellent services to the State during the war. The experiment is up to now an excellent augury for a still greater development in the future, since it has now been proved that the Italian citizen has the fullest confidence in the State. Just as there were bitter adversaries of the system of monopolies, so there were those who supported the idea over-enthusiastically, and would have had the monopoly extended to other forms of insurance, such as insurance against fire, hail, accidents and so on. I was opposed from the beginning to extensions of the practice. I chose the life branch of insurance for the great simplicity and security of the elements composing it, since it is not easy nor likely that a person can be made to appear dead if he is really alive. But I think that the State would involve itself in grave difficulties and would expose itself to the risk of abuses of every kind, if it were to take up forms of insurance likely to lead to disputes, forms which are better left to private enterprise.

Before the Chamber was convoked again, war with Turkey had broken out. But before treating of this and of the causes leading up to it, and of its political and diplomatic preparation, I think it will be well, with a brief infraction of the chronological order followed in these memoirs, to examine the question of electoral reform and the conversion into law

of the bill which I had presented when I assumed the responsibility of government.

When I placed electoral reform at the head of my programme with an extension of the suffrage that almost amounted to universal suffrage, there were not wanting people who reminded me that on other occasions I had declared myself contrary to such an extension of the fundamental political right. This was actually true, but, on the other hand, it was absurd to insist on declarations made by me at another time as a proof that I had been opposed to a popular suffrage on principle. All my past political conduct, which had been inspired with the idea of elevating the masses and widening the influence of their interests in public life, completely gave the lie to the accusation. The truth was that by making the elevation of the lower classes the chief point in my programme, I had had to consider their material conditions. By re-entrusting them with the full exercise of their statutory liberties, which had been placed in jeopardy during almost ten years of political reaction, I was putting them in a position to fight for their economic betterment. This first policy of mine had been fully justified by experience, and ten years of a régime of liberty had everywhere increased, and in many parts of Italy more than doubled, the operatives' and agricultural labourers' wages, while contributing to their general advancement. The associations of all kinds that had been formed among the working classes and the wider interest they were taking in the nation's life had undoubtedly had a great educative effect, giving them an understanding of political life which they had hitherto not had. In the face of such altered conditions, it was no longer admissible that in a state born from revolution and constituted by plebiscites, the largest of all classes should be excluded from political life fifty years after the State's Constitution. This class gave its sons for the country's defence, and in the form of indirect taxation, joined in the amplest measure in supporting the State's expenses.

The question of the elevation of the lowest class to the dignity of full citizenship, in which duties were bound up with rights, was further imposed, apart from superior considerations of justice, by reason of convenience in the very interest of the governing class. Its elevation to a higher grade of civilisation was for us a most urgent problem, and this from many points of view. The security of our social structure required it, since exclusion of the workers from the bureaucratic and political life of the country has always had the effect of exposing them to the suggestions of the revolutionary parties and their subversive ideas. This is so because the revolutionaries have always one formidable argument ready. They point out that, owing to this exclusion, only one means of defence lies open to the masses against the impositions of the governing classes, and this is the use of violence. When the masses know that they are unable to modify laws that menace their interests by means of their votes and with lawful methods, it is obvious that they will easily let themselves be persuaded that the only way to change such a state of things is by revolution. On the other hand, when the masses take their share in the country's political life, not only are they in a position to appreciate the difficulties which the State has to overcome in order to better their conditions, but they can realise the limits which the country's circumstances and the necessities of the moment place on the fulfilment of their demands and desires. Thus they come to be interested in the maintenance of the State. It is very easy to oppose to these concepts the example of quite different manifestations that have taken place since the war, and the excessive and unreasonable demands made by the workers, egged on by agitators, in the over-excited atmosphere which the struggle left in its train. But exceptional episodes do not make the rule, and the rapidity with which workers' agitations and excessive demands have disappeared is, in fact, a proof of the essential correctness of my way of thinking.

The general conditions of civilisation at that moment showed that only the nations in whose progress the masses took an active part—nations such as England, Germany, France and the United States—were economically powerful. Other big States, such as Russia, in which the lower classes were on a lower grade of civilisation, were economically speaking very weak. Nor is this difficult to understand, when one thinks of the mass force of intelligence, will and working capacity lying latent in the great industrial centres in the towns and among those scattered over the country. What a contribution to the progress of a country these masses could give, if after being educated and instructed, they were able to occupy each one of them a place in society corresponding to their natural abilities, their intelligence and their moral force.

The social security and the economic wealth of the country had always appeared to me to be closely connected with the well-being and the material and moral elevation of the lower classes. If the governing class opposed the forward movement of the masses, it would be sure sooner or later to be overthrown. If, on the contrary, in recognition of duty, it were to assume the protection and charge of the proletariat's interests, and to safeguard this class with wise and well thought out laws, it would be able to boast of having substituted for class war the collaboration of the masses. When in the course of the debates in the Chamber, I was reproached with having gone half way to meet the extremists, with having offered as a present to the Socialists more than they had dared to ask for or even hoped to obtain, I rebutted the accusation and even declared myself proud of it, not for any personal vanity but for the good name of the Liberal party and government which, instead of resisting just demands, had spontaneously satisfied them, thus showing itself superior to all particular interests and therefore truly worthy to regulate the destinies of the nation.

When I put forward my bill for a reform of the electoral system, it was thirty years since the previous franchise measure had been brought in through the work of Zanardelli. The law of 1882 represented a notable advance on previous legislation. It had abolished the privileges appertaining to possessors of a certain income and had, theoretically, at any rate, instituted the principle of universal suffrage, giving every citizen who had passed the first course of elementary education the right to vote. When this reform was passed, it was supposed that illiteracy would soon be overcome, and that the law would automatically bring the vote within the reach of the vast majority of citizens. The results, however, did not support the hopes that were entertained. This may have been partly due to the inadequacy of our educational system, and also perhaps to the simplicity of the life of our agricultural labourers. On the other hand, everyone knows that our peasants, though they often can only make their mark instead of signing their names, are first class business men and managers of their own affairs. Moreover, there are citizens whom city life has perforce taught to read and write, who yet at the same time make anything but an admirable use of these acquirements. It must also be remembered that the system by which the right to vote is based on a school certificate created disparity of treatment between districts and provinces, according to the greater or less diffusion and accessibility of the schools.

My predecessor, Luzzatti, had already put forward a bill for widening the suffrage, which in my opinion was inadequate. It still maintained the illiteracy test as the basis of the right to vote, while rendering it easier for the supposed illiterates to prove that they were not so. It amounted to adding to the educated electors others who were in a kind of transition stage between being able to read and write and not being able to do so. The underlying idea of this extension of the vote seemed, both to me and to the commission

examining the scheme, to be based on a misconception. It seemed very unlikely that middle-aged men, far from sure of their capacity, would present themselves before the authorities for the requisite examination. Again, by putting such a premium on the mere capacity to read and write, the measure tended to aggravate the disproportion and inconvenience of the prevailing system by not taking account of any other kind of individual or social capacity. But, as I have already hinted, the strongest objection to Luzzatti's project lay in this: that instead of embracing the entire question, it proposed only a partial solution. Since necessities of various kinds rendered electoral reform imperative, the legislators ought to have felt it their duty to satisfy these necessities and exigencies as much as possible, in order to avoid the danger of having to return to the problem within a brief space of time.

It became advisable to look for other tests, as I did not wish by adopting universal suffrage pure and simple to appear to make no distinction between these classes, the literate and the illiterate. To make no distinction between those who complied with the law on compulsory education and those who did not seemed to be damaging to the cause of public education, at a time when, with the progress of industry and technical knowledge in agriculture itself, the problem of primary education stood out as a question of the first order and a real necessity for the economic and civil advancement of the country. I ended by resolving the complex problem by denouncing the over-simplicity of the single test and by adopting various principles, corresponding to the diversity of the conditions to which they were to be applied. Thus I put forward my scheme, which contained, in reference to the widening of the suffrage, the following points:—

First. The right to vote for all who had reached the age of twenty-one and could read and write was maintained;

Second. The electoral right was conceded to all those who fulfilled their military obligations;

Third. Those who were lacking in the necessary educational qualifications, nevertheless gained the right to vote on reaching the age of thirty years.

The first point was in line with the already existing law. The second point, apart from the presumption that a man who has done his military service has already received a certain amount of education, had in it an element of justice, since it is evident that it is impossible to deny the right to participate in the political life of his country to a man who is asked to submit to military service for the security of all, and is disposed to lay down his life if required. As to the third point, apart from the just differentiation between the political rights of a man who has fulfilled the obligations towards the law on education and one who has not, it appeared to me that there existed reasons of a general character which permitted one to concede the vote to illiterates at the age of thirty, though denying it them until they had reached that age. Indeed, persons lacking in the most elementary forms of culture, who have not even made the effort to learn its rudiments, are undoubtedly more subject to the suggestion of extreme ideas, be they revolutionary or reactionary. Nine years of experience in the world, especially if gained in the years between twenty-one and thirty, are a good school which can be considered as a substitute for elementary education. This is especially so among the lower classes where people have to assume responsibility at an early age and set themselves to earn their bread. The man of the people, who generally by the age of thirty has already a wife and family, becomes reflective and settled down, and does not easily allow himself to be carried away by the propaganda of exaggerated notions. And, moreover, the number of illiterates who were enfranchised at the age of thirty was not so large as was generally presumed. According to the calculations of the authorities charged by me to examine the matter, they amounted to about 800,000, while the total number of

the electors was more than doubled, increasing from three millions and a half to about eight millions. A notable diminution in the percentage of voters was also to be expected, and experience proved this to be true. This was because the new voters only gradually availed themselves of their enfranchisement, and also owing to the fact that a large number of the working classes among the new electors had been drafted away through emigration.

The introduction of illiterates to the voters' lists necessarily implied considerable technical modifications, inasmuch as the use of the vote had to be reconciled with a possible incapacity on the part of the elector to write the candidate's name. With this went the necessity of preserving the secrecy of the ballot. These difficulties were well overcome by the adoption of a special system of envelopes and controls worked out by Bertolini, who acted as sponsor for the bill in the Chamber.

When the bill was laid before the House, I backed it up with complete statistics and documentary evidence regarding the electoral laws of foreign countries. From this report it was seen that universal suffrage had already been adopted in Europe not only by the most liberal and highly civilised States but even by nations of a conservative character, as well as by others who could not claim the very highest type of civilisation: that is, by France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. Hungary was just at that time preparing a bill for universal suffrage. As to the number of the electors, of one hundred persons in Italy who had reached the required age, only thirty-two were electors, while in all the other countries of Europe, even among those who had not adopted universal suffrage, the proportion ran from sixty to ninety per cent.

Thus we were, in this matter of the extension of the suffrage, at the bottom of the list.

In speaking of the battle waged against the government

life assurance monopoly, I have already noted that the bitterness with which the Opposition combatted the measure depended on the fact that it was thus indirectly seeking to strike at the government which had put forward the suffrage bill.

The opposition to the suffrage bill was faced with notable difficulties. The politicians and deputies who took part in it had to realise the fact that they were laying themselves open to electoral reprisals on the part of those who felt that an attempt had been made to prevent them enjoying their full political rights. As I saw it, this fear was a tacit if dissimulated recognition of the fact that the country was ripe for the measure. Later, when the time came to debate the bill, there were only two deputies, Gaetano Mosca and Vincenzo Riccio, who openly opposed the measure—with arguments I could not accept, but which were, nevertheless, logical and fair from the Conservative point of view. A singular phenomenon came about: while the Conservative press showed itself absolutely hostile to the proposed law, which was the most democratic measure ever put forward by any government for fifty years, many politicians of the Conservative party declared their readiness to accept the project. There was not the least reason to doubt the sincerity of men like Sonnino, who though an adversary of the Government, declared himself in favour of an extension of the franchise; yet at the same time, there is reason to believe that this particular attitude of his was adopted by few others. It was evident that it was the aim of those parties who were opposed to the bill to attempt to wreck it by indirect and devious ways. One of the most interesting manœuvres consisted in not only not opposing the projected reform but in seeking to discount it by declaring it to be inadequate. It is now no longer a great mystery, after so much parliamentary experience that one of the most efficacious ways of combatting a project consists in attempting to widen its scope. I remember that

a motion was put forward to enlarge the franchise even beyond the limits of my measure by removing the age limit of thirty years I had fixed for illiterates. Other amendments wanted to extend the vote to women at once; others suggested *Scrutin de liste*, or the application of a system of proportional representation. These were all attempts to double the government's difficulties and render the passing of the bill a harder matter. On the other hand, there were those who suggested that the measure should be passed, but urged that it should not be put into force at once, wanting the elections to be held on the existing voting lists.

Other objectors stated that the measure amounted to universal suffrage deformed by those limitations I had introduced. I admit that in the matter of law-making extreme simplicity is the ideal, but this simplicity is not always attainable, since laws must take account of a country's defects and shortcomings—in our own case, illiteracy—and adapt themselves to them. A tailor who has to cut a suit for a hunchback is obliged to make a hunchback suit.

I will not go so far as to say that all the motions put forward tending to complicate matters were deliberately set down from a desire to obstruct the proposed measure, but it is significant that all the motions and counter-proposals to the government's plan were always welcomed and approved of by those organs of public opinion whose interest and intention it was to wreck the project or at least to mutilate it. When in May, 1912, the commission presided over by the Deputy Bertolini published its report and the bill came up for debate, the opposition to it had sensibly diminished, as had been the case with the government monopolies bill. And there was good reason for this. The Libyan war had intervened, and it appeared no longer possible to deny full political rights to those classes which were being asked to give their lives and those of their sons for the safety and highest interests of the country.

The debate proceeded tranquilly, and the measure passed into law in the course of a few weeks. In replying to various speakers, and examining some of their proposals which the government could not accept, I was obliged to touch on several matters which are worth mentioning here.

First of all, there was the question of woman's franchise, a matter which was worth careful study and examination, inasmuch as it concerned one half of the entire population. With regard to the women's question, however, there were other important matters to be settled before considering women's political capacity. It was necessary, first of all, to modify the laws which restrained her independence and capacity in the purely civil field. Moreover, before the question of the political vote could be approached, the question of the administrative franchise for women had to be decided, which once granted might serve as a kind of apprenticeship for her due understanding of political rights and duties: indeed I created a commission to study the matter, on which some prominent persons served, Senators Finali, Bodio, Brusa, Villari, and the deputies Boselli, Bertoli Nitti, Finocchiaro Aprile, Luigi Rossi and others. The commission examined the question thoroughly, and its findings were communicated to me in a letter addressed to me by its president, Senator Finali. He informed me that the commission had at its final sitting passed a motion in which it expressed, by a majority, the opinion of its members that the moment had not come to extend even the municipal vote to women. The commission, however, was unanimously of opinion that it was time to amend the Civil Code in those parts where women's rights and especially married women's rights were concerned.

Notwithstanding this authoritative though contrary verdict, I did not think that the question of giving the municipal vote to women could be thus negatively settled. I thought indeed that the matter ought to be re-examined, though at

the same time I believed that any concession of the political vote to women would be premature.

The debates on the subject were carried on principally on academic and sympathetic lines, but there had been no weighty and convincing arguments in favour of enfranchising some six million more electors, while the Civil Code still kept women in an inferior legal position. The country would not either have understood or approved the passing of a reform on these lines. As to the opportunity of granting the vote only to those women who enjoyed a superior financial intellectual and moral status, such a thesis was not acceptable, however important the arguments used to support it, since all such arguments were annulled by the fact that it was manifestly undesirable to extend privileges either to individuals or to certain classes.

In addition to proposals to lower the age limit for deputies, suggestions were also made to render voting obligatory. But to make voting obligatory, at the same time as some eight million citizens were being enfranchised seemed an illiberal act, and one difficult to carry into effect. Citizens ought to feel that it is their duty to take part in their country's political life. Any citizen who does not feel this moral obligation, is best considered as a negligible quantity, and if he fails to record his vote, the community does not really suffer.

During the course of the debate, the system of proportional representation was mentioned for the first time. It was supported by the deputy Cornaggia of the Clerical party, and Sonnino also spoke in favour of it. Caetani put forward a regular scheme for its adoption which was full of absurd technical errors, and promised to bring about the most amazing electoral surprises. For example, according to Caetani's scheme, I might have become the representative of a group of anarchists, or my election as deputy for Cuneo might have been annulled had someone taken it into his head to put my name down beforehand in an electoral list at, say, Girgenti.

Still, apart from these technical mistakes in the project, I was averse to the P. R. system chiefly because I did not think it suitable for the country's general interests, since only the parties in a minority were in a position to benefit by it. This fact had already been proved by the results obtained in such countries as had adopted the system. It also seemed to me that the plan would make it difficult to create homogenous and compact majorities capable of forming and supporting a stable government.

The electoral reform became law during the first half of 1912, but the prolongation of the Libyan war rendered the postponement of the elections necessary for several months. The results of the first election with the new suffrage—which took place in October, 1913—disproved the prophecies of parliamentary revolution of which the opponents of the measure had talked so much. The number of Socialist deputies certainly increased to a notable extent, so much so that the new Chamber contained fifty Socialists. The Clerical party also showed some gains, but on the whole, the Liberal parties maintained their positions to an even greater extent than an efficacious use of power rendered necessary.

When after the war, six years from the time of the first experiment of electoral reform, over one hundred and fifty Socialist deputies and a hundred members of the Popular party were sent to the Chamber, and thus radically changed the parliamentary situation, making it difficult for a Liberal government to maintain itself, there were not wanting those who sought to cast the responsibility of the altered situation on the suffrage reform of 1912. But, as a matter of fact, it was the war itself which produced a new and wide extension of the suffrage. The four and a half million fresh electors created by my reform had doubled owing to later provisions, while it is absurd not to take account of the moral effect brought about by the war on the entire political situation. But apart from this, after a war which brought five millions

of Italians (mostly of the popular classes) to arms, and which resulted in half a million dead and a million and a half of wounded, the most hidebound Conservative will admit it impossible to ask such sacrifices of a people and at the same time attempt deny them the right of participating in their country's public life. I believe it was well that the Italian people had been invested with the right of taking its share in the sovereignty of the State before it was called upon to make the terrible sacrifices of the war.

CHAPTER XI

THE LIBYAN WAR : ITS ORIGIN AND PREPARATION

Origin of the Libyan War—Agreements with France, England and Russia—Memorandum added to the Treaty of the Triple Alliance—Reasons which determined me to undertake the enterprise—Selection of the time—Anti-Italian policy of the Porte: threats and agitations—Our warnings to the Turkish Government—Diplomatic preparations—Cordial attitude of England, France and Russia—Difficult situation of our Allies: Aerenthal's attitude—Attempted conciliatory intervention of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein—Kiderlen Wachter advises us not to take action—International press campaign against Italy—Military preparations—Why we did not try to attack the Turkish Fleet—"Derna" episode—Our ultimatum—Evasive reply of the Turks and declaration of war.

THE solution of the Libyan problem, a problem which had been before Italy for several years, was the third part of my programme. The agreements between France and England, France and Germany and France and Spain had, in settling the two questions of Egypt and Morocco, solved the general problem of Mediterranean Africa. These agreements recognised the interests and predominating rights of Italy in Tripoli and Cyrenaica.

As I have already observed, this part of my programme had to be kept secret, that being an essential element for the solution of the problem. Before war was declared, some critics looked upon this secrecy as an act of renunciation, whilst others, when we entered into action, judged the enterprise to be improvised and precipitate, and merely projected as a means of weakening the Conservative opposition to the electoral reform and monopoly laws. There is no doubt that certain intrigues hatched against those laws were upset

when Italy entered upon the Libyan enterprise, and it is well known that when a country is engaged in war, the conflicts of interests and of opinions at home tend to diminish greatly. The case here was a simple consequence, a thing very different from a design, or an international manœuvre which would have been contrary to my policy which has always been averse to inviting or encouraging diplomatic incidents abroad in order to extinguish domestic political conflicts. Also, it would have been absurd to think of purposely creating diversions abroad, whilst the dissensions at home were of slight importance, and public opinion was really interested in the solution of the Libyan question.

From the time I entered parliament, I had shown that I was taking the importance of the Mediterranean-African problem into consideration and the necessity of Italy's inclusion in its solution; this I evidenced by supporting a group, which differed from the rest of the Left, which had blamed its leader Cairoli for the affair of Tunis, and also by my disapprobation of the government which had not accepted England's invitation to take part in her action in Egypt. After concluding the agreements with France and England, which recognised our primary interest in Libya as a compensation for our disinterestedness in Morocco and in Egypt, I had never lost sight of the question from its diplomatic point of view. At the time of the Czar's visit to Racconigi, I had obtained the recognition by Russia of our rights over that zone. At the same time, Article IX of the Triple Alliance spoke of our eventual occupation of Tripoli as a right of legitimate compensation. To this was added a later memorandum dated May, 1902, relative to the renewal of the Alliance, to which had been united, at our request, a simple declaration of disinterestedness on the part of Germany and Austria-Hungary about the question of Libya, without any mention of compensation on their part.

During my previous government, I had occupied myself

with the fact that Italy would eventually have to face the enterprise in Libya, and, in order to pave the way locally for this by taking advantage of the conflicts, dissensions and political ill-humour between the local chiefs and the Turkish authorities, I had already set certain agents of mine to work in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Amongst these was Mohamed Ali Elui Bey, an Egyptian who had on other occasions rendered services to Italy. This man put himself into communication with the chief of the Senussi. Other persons, also were employed, but it would not be wise to name them, because, if they are still living, they might be exposed to vengeance. The task of these was to enter into familiar relations with the Senussite students of the Islamic University at Cairo. It was not necessary to have recourse to military measures to solve the Libyan problem during the reign of Abdul Hamid, from whom we could obtain concessions of an economic and legal character such as would have ensured Italian interests against any other aims at expansion. Things changed very much with the advent of the Young Turks. They excited the political and fanatical feelings of the populations everywhere, turning them especially against those powers which they believed might give trouble in various zones of their empire. Naturally enough, the power suspected in Libya was Italy. For some years past, the Banca di Roma had established considerable interests in Cyrenaica and Tripoli which it was the duty of the Italian government to safeguard. Now, if Turkey had had a clear idea of the situation, she would have thought well before putting difficulties, embarrassments and threats of rivalry in the way of those interests, because, by doing so, Italy would be compelled to step in sooner or later. When we called the attention of the Porte to these things and to the necessity of not obstructing but rather of favouring Italian interests in Libya, we received an evasive reply, as well as offers which were patently absurd. Thus, on one occasion, whilst denying us anything in Tripoli,

the Turkish government offered us concessions in no less a place than Mesopotamia. Possibly, it was not an absurdity, but a refinement of cunning; rather too cunning, however, to have any result. By means of such offers the Porte aimed at creating dissensions and disputes amongst the powers which had diverse interests in the various parts of the Ottoman Empire. For undoubtedly in Mesopotamia we should have been in opposition to German and British interests, whilst Germany's and England's in Libya would have clashed with ours.

Such were the general lines of the Libyan problem when I took over the government again in 1911. The situation had become worse, and a peaceful solution, which perhaps might have been accepted previously, had become very difficult, if not absolutely impossible. From the first, I spoke only about the situation with that colleague of mine most directly interested in the affair and who was competent to carry out the initial diplomatic preparation. I mean San Giuliano. He fully agreed with my views, and was afterwards my able collaborator from the preparation of the enterprise to its final solution. I shall always remember his friendship and patriotic disinterestedness. A man of great natural talent, subtle and well balanced, he had an excellent preparation for foreign politics, having filled the post of ambassador both in London and Paris. He had a rather rare capacity of looking at all sides of a question before coming to a decision and, by assimilating the opinions of others, could do justice to criticisms opposed to his views. Once he understood a question thoroughly, he could give a clear and simple explanation of it. He was particularly happy in drawing up diplomatic documents, which have to be so worded that they express all one has or wants to say without wresting a word from its proper meaning. Often, after a conversation with me, during which we examined the various aspects of a question and came to a decision about it, he would retire into a room

adjoining my study, and in a few minutes would draw up the diplomatic note, which after a final revision by both of us, would be sent off. Even when we were far away from each other, he always kept me in touch with everything and never came to a decision without consulting me. The only point on which I did not agree with him was a certain tendency of his to come to hasty decisions, but a warning word would make him recognise the advisability of proceeding more carefully and of giving more thought to the question. At one point in his career, he had completely retired from general politics and from questions unconnected with foreign politics, in which he intended to specialise, and he therefore asked me to nominate him as senator, because the Chamber, with its political struggles and its electoral exigencies, prevented him from giving full rein to his inclinations.

When war with Turkey was declared, many wondered why the government had come to this decision, which, to those who were ignorant of what had taken place seemed to be a hasty one. People talked about secret considerations which had overcome my hesitation.

Nothing was further from the truth. The reasons which persuaded me to act were of a general political character. Once the question of Morocco was solved with the establishment of French dominion in Tunis and that of Egypt with diplomatic recognition of the English rule which had been established there for a long time, the condition of things in Libya under the Ottoman rule could not be allowed to continue. In fact, whilst Western Africa from Tunis to Morocco and Egypt were under the protection of European administration, Libya was very much behind the times. Slave markets were still held in Bengasi, and men and women, taken by violence in Central Africa, were sold in those markets, infamies which it was impossible to tolerate at the very gates of Europe.

In our negotiations with France about the Egyptian and

the Moroccan questions, we had rights recognised by the other powers attributed to us, and the moment had to come, and from my point of view had come, when we would find ourselves faced by this alternative: either to assert our rights or to renounce them.

The existing state of things could not last and, given the attitude of the Young Turks, if we had not gone to Libya, some other power would have done so either for political or economic reasons. On the other hand, Italy had been so greatly affected by the French occupation of Tunis that she could not have looked with equanimity on an event of a similar kind in Libya, and thus we might have run the risk of a conflict with a European power, which would have been infinitely more serious than one with Turkey. To put a mortgage on Libya, to prevent others from going there without going there ourselves, would not have been a serious thing, but it would have created difficulties in all European questions and particularly in Balkan affairs. Another complication arose from the Turcophil policy to which our Allies, and especially Germany, were pledged, and which from our point of view was incompatible with the treatment given to Italian interests by the government of Constantinople, so that San Giuliano, in his communications with the governments of Berlin and Vienna, upheld the thesis, paradoxical as it may appear, that the only way to re-establish friendship between Turkey and ourselves and to render a harmonious policy of the Triple Alliance possible in the Balkans, was for us to occupy Tripoli.

For these reasons, as soon as the ministry was formed, San Giuliano and I agreed that the occupation of Libya was the question to be kept in sight. As a Sicilian, San Giuliano had a special interest in Libya, and wanted to hasten the settlement of the question. He held that it was better for us to act before the serious question then pending between France and Germany on the subject of Morocco, was settled.

He mentioned that if we acted whilst the public opinion of Europe was preoccupied with the danger of Morocco, our action would attract less attention, and would pass almost unnoticed. Tittoni, who was in Paris, expressed the same opinion, but his reasons were different. He thought that the Libyan enterprise would not find any opposition in France so long as the Moroccan trouble lasted, but he feared that when that question was settled, the French Government, although animated by the best possible goodwill to maintain the pledges entered into with us regarding Libya, would find itself under the pressure of the powerful French Colonial party, which would not care to see Italy established near to the French colonies in Northern Africa. I had quite a different opinion about the advisability of acting at once. I thought that Italy ought not to move until the Moroccan question, which was still open between France and Germany, and was passing through its most dangerous and difficult period, was solved. In fact, the question was of so much importance that it might be the spark leading to a European conflagration. At that time, the French ambassador in Rome, Barrière, hinted at the danger of a war, on account of Morocco, breaking out between Germany (whose intentions seemed none too clear) and his own country, which did not intend to submit any more to the humiliations inflicted on Delcassé. Now, since the threat of a European war was hanging over us, we had to refrain from any action which might complicate the situation, especially with regard to the relations between France and Germany. It was not for us to assume the grave responsibility of adding to the general conflagration. Moreover, if the European war had broken out, it was to our obvious interest to be entirely free, and not to find ourselves engaged in an enterprise which would have complicated our own situation. Furthermore, by waiting for the end of the Moroccan dispute, the Libyan question would have been the only one in the diplomatic field; in which

case it would have been easy to obtain the consent of all. But if we acted whilst another question, which was of such vital interest to some of the great powers, was open, we would have had to bargain for the consent of the various parties, with the result that matters would have been greatly complicated.

Moreover, we had to take into account questions of a military character, as well as diplomatic and political ones. We knew that the Libyan ports were not fortified, or else had old fortifications which could not resist the attacks of a modern fleet, and that the Turkish garrisons at Tripoli, Derna, Bengasi, Torbruck, Misurata, etc., were too small to oppose the landing of our troops. The Ottoman fleet, consisting of a few old ships, would not obstruct our operations. But it was known, however, that the Young Turkish government was working to improve the efficiency of the army and had also given, or was about to give, large orders for dreadnoughts and destroyers to English shipbuilders. Apart from these considerations, nothing could have prevented the Ottoman government, when it became aware of our intentions, from reinforcing the troops in Libya and strengthening the resistance against landing on the coast with mines and torpedoes. Besides it was necessary to bear in mind the condition of the sea at various seasons, especially as the mediocre means at the disposal of the ports of Tripoli and Cyrenaica rendered the landing of troops difficult. The unexpected landing of large bodies of men, required for a military expedition, in order to procure the advantage of a surprise, was not possible between December and May on account of the condition of the sea. The enterprise therefore had to be undertaken in the autumn or put off until the following year—which owing to the reasons given above would be a dangerous matter.

Another consideration favoured the despatch of an expedition towards the end of autumn; and that was our desire

to isolate our action in Libya as much as possible and, above all, to avoid its having any effect on the Balkans, which experience eventually showed was much less probable in the winter season, when the snow in that mountainous country renders military movements and even raids of armed bands very difficult.

As soon as the Moroccan question between France and Germany was settled peacefully, I judged the time had arrived to take action.

In the meantime, the conduct of the Turkish government had aggravated rather than mitigated the situation. In Tripoli, especially the Vall, egged on and backed up by the local Union and Progress Committee, treated the Italians with greater contempt every day, and searched for pretexts to put obstacles in the way of their activity. Things had arrived at such a pitch that the Banca di Roma, which had extended its commercial interests in Tripoli, seeing itself in serious danger, had opened negotiations to cede all its interests to a group of Austro-German bankers. In fact, for nearly two years the Porte had been deaf to all our claims and protests. It let us clearly see its determination to uproot all Italian influence in Libya and, at the same time, to bring into the field other interests, especially German, for the purpose of damaging the political rights recognised to us by the other powers. One of the points of view of modern colonisation is the decisive importance of the commercial element in determining the validity of political as well as traditional interests.

With the policy of putting obstacles in the way of our economic supremacy in Libya by means of concessions offered to other powers, thus taking from us the alternative of a peaceful penetration, the Ottoman government not only rendered the Italian military occupation inevitable, but hastened it by giving us the best of all reasons for acting. As an example of those plots against Italian interests, when

the Constantinople government asked for tenders for the enlarging and the improvement of the port of Tripoli, it let it be understood that it was disposed to do everything possible to prevent an Italian firm from getting the contract. Since July, we as well as our Allies tried to make the Turkish government understand that by continuing their policy, it would render our radical decision inevitable, and that to improve the relations between the two countries, it was necessary to adopt some measures, amongst them being the removal of the then Vall, the principal opponent of our interests, who was too compromised by his anti-Italian policy, for us to hope for any sincere and loyal change on his part.

The then head of the Austro-Hungarian government, as well as the German Chancellor Kiderlen Wächter recognised the justice of our complaints and the legitimacy of our demands. But, from certain hints on their part, it was evident they thought the Young Turks, whose prestige was founded on the adoption of a nationalist attitude, were not in a position to make any real concessions without seriously weakening that prestige, with the possible consequence also of a fall of their régime. Another serious diplomatic fact showed that even outside of the Libyan question the Turkish government had no desire to meet our claims. In fact, it believed that any liberty could be taken with us. As the Porte had need of money, it was negotiating a surcharge of four and a half per cent. on the custom house tariffs with Germany and Austria, and we were informed that once the consent of the other powers to this increase was obtained, the new tariffs would be applied to Italian goods without any previous negotiation. As the consent of the other powers was obtained on the basis of compensations and concessions, it was evident also in this case that the Turkish government not only proposed to avoid any discussion with Italy of compensation and concessions, but believed that it could openly display a contempt for us which would have done great

damage to our prestige in the East, a prestige which, according to the reports of our consuls in Tripoli, was already badly shaken as a consequence of the bullying to which our fellow-countrymen had been submitted.

The conclusion of the Moroccan question had a remarkable and inevitable effect on Italian public opinion. This was voiced by the press, which occupied itself at length with Mediterranean Africa. Even cautious and moderate newspapers did not hide their opinion that the conclusion of the Franco-German agreement for Morocco, which, without any obstacles and reserves, finally gave France what had been recognised as hers in the Convention concluded with Italy, rendered it imperative now to define clearly, once for all, the interests and rights which had been accorded us. The settlement might even have been a peaceful one, if there had been a clear conception of the situation in Constantinople, and if it had been understood that the only way to avoid a conflict was to meet Italy loyally. Instead of that, letters and telegrams arrived from Tripoli bringing news of new vexatious incidents, of little importance in themselves, but which, when taken together, pointed to serious economic damage. News from Constantinople also confirmed the despatches of our Embassy, and even the foreign press correspondents painted the Porte as acting towards us with contempt and defiance.

The general consideration of our interests in Mediterranean Africa, added to the news which showed that our prestige and national dignity were in danger, finished by bringing about a campaign in a great part of our press, which, backed up by the approbation of public opinion, asked for the solution of the Libyan question without delay. The effect of the language of our press in Tripoli as well as in Constantinople was curious and contradictory. That portion of public opinion in Turkey which was totally dominated by the Young Turks began to foment agitations. Meetings of the Union

and Progress Committee were held to protest against making any concessions in Libya to Italy. The government was incited to send troops and arms to Tripoli and to Bengasi. Threats were made to institute a general boycott of Italian goods throughout the Empire, and hints were even made that, in case of a war, all Italians would be expelled from Ottoman territory. The situation was more complicated in Tripoli. Our consular reports had already called our attention to the fact that the Turkish régime was not very popular amongst the Arabs, who were kept in a continual state of irritation by it. They did not lack influential chiefs. Amongst them was the mayor of Tripoli, Hassen Pasha, the descendant of the ancient royal family of the country. He did not show himself averse to acting in concert with us. Our consuls, however, suffered from no excessive delusions about his support. They presumed that, if war broke out, the appeal to Mohammedan fanaticism and nationalism would not be a vain one. In fact, for some time past, the local Union and Progress Committees had begun a campaign of such a nature, by convoking the Arab chiefs and the population to the mosques to make demonstrations of protest against Italy. This propaganda, though feeble in the beginning, gradually increased in intensity.

The conduct of the Turkish government was very varied, and changed with the development of events. At first, there was an attempt to ride the high horse. The Turkish Chargé d'Affaires went to the *Consulta* (Foreign Office) on August 4th and, in the absence of San Giuliano, spoke in a very arrogant manner to the under-secretary, Di Scalea. He complained that the hostility towards Turkey displayed by public opinion and even by parliament was not moderated by explicit official statements on the part of the Italian government, and that want of energetic action might disturb the relations between the two countries. The under-secretary gave him to understand that he could not receive communications couched in

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such a tone, nor could he take the least notice of the visit. He observed that Turkey, through the numerous hostile acts which she had allowed her functionaries, and particularly the Vali of Tripoli, to carry out, had only herself to blame for the roused temper of public opinion. San Giuliano informed De Martino, who was in charge of the Embassy at Constantinople, about the affair, and also instructed him to let the Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs clearly understand that, if the conduct of the Turkish authorities towards our interests in Tripoli were not changed, the consequences might be much more serious than articles in newspapers and speeches of deputies. It was a plain and loyal demonstration on our part, but it had no effect, and I bring it forward as a proof against the accusation made against us that we carried out a sudden and unjustified aggression. Our military attaché kept us informed of the slowness and inadequacy of the Turkish military preparations for the defence of Libya. This was due to the fact that Turkey *au fond* did not believe in our capacity to act nor in our military power, and so calculated that our military expedition would require a long and obvious preparation which would give her all the time necessary to prepare her defence. Not even the warnings of foreign ambassadors had any effect. Only at the last moment, when our fleet was already before Tripoli and was entering into action, did she, asking Germany and the other powers to intervene as peacemakers, promise to make concessions of every kind and declare herself ready to offer reparation for the past. It was too late. Promises made under such conditions and circumstances were the best evidence of the little faith we could have in such a government.

On the other hand, during this preparatory period, running from June to September, I thought it best to carry on a work of diplomatic preparation with the powers in any way interested in the question. This work was intensified when

the occupation of Libya was irrevocably decided upon by us, and was on the point of being put into execution.

Even in this, however, it was necessary to proceed with great prudence, in order not to give alarm and not to cause complications. The solving of the Libyan problem could not be put off without damaging our interests and our prestige and without alarming Europe about the Ottoman question, which all feared might provoke a European conflagration. If our intentions became too apparent, there was then the danger that some power might take it upon itself to give us advice, and so bring about a general discussion which might compromise everything, by giving Turkey time to make preparations for war in the territory which we had to occupy. However, the diplomatic preparation which also was necessary to create a sentiment of benevolence towards our enterprise, or at least to avoid too strong and too open an hostility to our enterprise, had consisted in keeping the powers constantly advised about the difficult situation in which Turkey's conduct put Italy and in letting them understand, without, however, saying anything definite about our intentions, that we would be compelled to act sooner or later.

In order to carry out this plan, we sent the necessary instructions to our ambassadors in the great capitals. Our ambassador in London, Marchese Imperiali, found it an easy task with the British government, though the attitude of the press was not equally favourable. In speaking with the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, our ambassador laid stress on the really exemplary forbearance of which the Italian government, in its desire to avoid complications, had given proofs, without, however, succeeding in persuading the Young Turks to change their conduct, at one time secretly and later openly hostile. This hostility had gone on increasing more and more, so that our government did not find itself any longer in a position to resist public opinion, which was calling for the safeguarding of the national interests and

dignity. This communication took place on July 26th. Sir Edward Grey received it with great cordiality. He stated that he had already had hints which had made him aware of the difficulties of our situation, and that an examination of the question had persuaded him that our complaints were well founded. If therefore Italy, in order to guard her rights, and failing every possible attempt to bring about a solution, found herself compelled to take action, England not only would do nothing against this course of action but would give her sympathetic support which would be of course only of a moral nature. Sir Edward said he would also reserve to himself the right to let Constantinople understand, at the opportune moment, that Turkey, as a result of her incorrect conduct towards Italy, could not expect better treatment from that nation. However, he offered it as his opinion in a friendly and personal manner that it was indispensable that any eventual action on our part should be justified by a flagrant violation of our rights or by the evident demonstration of Turkey's intention to put us in an inferior position in Tripoli with respect to other nations. He insisted on this point especially with the idea of avoiding any appearance that our action was determined by any desire on our part to obtain an economic position based on particular interests granted us by Turkey. That would render it difficult for him to uphold in parliament the sympathy and the moral support he intended to give us, as England had always maintained intact, even in her agreement with France about Morocco, the policy of the open door in economic matters. This cordial and friendly attitude of England, due to the old relations between the two countries and to their agreement about the Mediterranean Africa question, and also to the fact that the British government with its colonial experience knew that no other solution was possible, was fully confirmed at the last moment. In fact, on September 26th, just as our action was pending, the Turkish ambassador,

by order of his government, went to the Foreign Office to get England to step in and advise us to be moderate. Grey told him that as the question was exclusively Italian-Turkish, the British government did not intend to intervene in any way, even if Italy went to the length of occupying Tripoli. The attitude of the English press was more uncertain. Some of the newspapers recognised that our complaints were well founded, but they showed reluctance to encourage coercive measures for fear of the effect which they might have in the already precarious internal situation of Turkey. They also foretold a bitter resistance with measures of reprisals against Italian interests in other parts of the Empire. Some of the Liberal and Radical newspapers were distinctly hostile, and even used violent language. I knew they were newspapers that were under German influence because they upheld the scheme, then supported by some English political groups, of an understanding with Germany.

France's attitude was very cordial towards us. After all, our rights in Libya appeared legitimate and our action justified, inasmuch as the general situation of Mediterranean Africa, and the special situation in which Italy found herself, were largely a direct consequence of the French policy with regard to Morocco and of the agreements in existence for a long time between France and Italy. The French government understood and admitted without reserve that the definite solution of the Moroccan question through the agreement with Germany clearly opened the problem of the solution of the Libyan question. Our ambassador, Tittoni, who as minister of Foreign Affairs had already played a large part in the negotiations relative to our rights in Libya, had recently obtained the most explicit and categorical statements from the Ministers Pichon and Cruppi with regard to France's loyalty to the 1902 agreements. On September 12th, he had a new conversation with the minister of Foreign Affairs, De Selves, who said that we could count on the French

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government's being with us unconditionally in our action in Tripoli. He added also that the government would never give its consent to the eventual floating of a new Turkish loan in France which was being discussed at the time until the Tripoli question was completely settled. Delcassé also told Tittoni that all wishes and sympathies were for Italy. This friendly attitude of the French government was also mirrored by the press, which apart from the incident of the *Manouba* and of the *Carthage*, followed our movement with much interest and sympathy.

When the Russian government was informed, towards the end of August, of our eventual action in Tripoli, it communicated to us through the minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Neratow, that it recognised our right on the basis of the compact of Racconigi. Iswolsky had drawn up this compact with myself and Tittoni in 1907. He was now in Paris as ambassador, and, when he spoke of the affair with Tittoni and heard his explanations, he stated that we could act as we thought best, adding: "Be careful, however, not to find yourself suddenly faced with the break up of Turkey and the necessity of a European intervention in the Balkans."

A part of the Russian press was preoccupied with the same idea. It saw that the Young Turk régime, in its three years of existence, had had to register only lack of success and disaster in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Crete, in Albania and everywhere, and it concluded that the occupation of Tripoli would be the final touch which would cause Turkish public opinion to break its bounds and force the government to throw itself into some dangerous enterprise in the Balkans or in Persia to reconquer its lost prestige.

Besides this cordiality towards us and the loyal carrying out of the pledges they had entered into, there was perhaps in the conduct of these powers some anger with regard to the Turkish government, which had thrown itself into the arms of Germany.

The consideration of the particular position in which our allies, Austria and especially Germany, were placed by their alliance with Italy and their interests and friendship with Turkey had convinced me and San Giuliano of the expediency of delay in giving any information about our intentions and eventual action. This reason we afterwards disclosed frankly, and Aerenthal recognised it as legitimate and just, when, towards the end of September, we held that the moment had arrived to inform our allies. We had wanted at one and the same time to spare them serious embarrassment and to assure ourselves against interference, which, however well intentioned and friendly, would have complicated our situation. When Aerenthal was informed by our ambassador, D'Avarna, and acquainted with the reasons for our action, he showed that he understood them very well. He expressed satisfaction with our intention of wishing to localise the question in the Mediterranean and to abstain as much as possible from actions which might make their effects felt in the Balkans. He insisted, however, on the fact that such effects could hardly be avoided, considering the internal condition of Turkey and the disposition of the Young Turks. As a friend and ally of Italy, he believed it to be his duty to call our government's attention to that and to ask it to consider the grave responsibility it might incur. Moreover, he asked for time to reflect before sending his report to the Emperor, reserving to himself the right of communicating the decision of his government to us. It was too late; Austria was faced by a *fait accompli*. In giving his reply on September 29th, Count Aerenthal declared that his government had to express its regret that the Italian government had abandoned diplomatic methods so soon. However, the Austro-Hungarian government considered that Italy, her ally and friend, had the right to provide as she thought best for the safeguarding of her own interests, and for that reason it would not raise any difficulties about any action in Tripoli.

He also called our attention to the possible effect of our action in the Balkans, and pointed out that the treaty of the Triple Alliance was based on the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Turkish Empire. He expressed the hope that Italy would take every possible measure to localise her action in the Mediterranean and prevent disturbances in the Balkans. In making our communications to Austria and to Germany, we had linked up the question of Tripoli with the renewal, now at hand, of the Triple Alliance, in order to make Vienna and Berlin understand that a hostile and cold attitude towards us would seriously endanger the Alliance.

More complicated and delicate than that of Austria was the situation of Germany, who after working assiduously and successfully during recent years to draw Turkey within the orbit of the Triple Alliance, saw a conflict ready to break out between Turkey and one of her old allies. The Turco-German friendship had been the work of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, a German diplomat of great value, and the German Government wanted to find through him a peaceful solution of the question. In fact, we found ourselves more in communication with Baron Marschall von Bieberstein in Constantinople than with the Chancellor in Berlin.

On September 26, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein arrived at Constantinople from Berlin, where he had certainly received instructions and advice, and in the course of conversations which he had with Commendatore de Martino, then at the head of our embassy, did his best to indicate the way towards a peaceful settlement. As soon as he had arrived from Berlin, the Grand Vizier sent for him to invoke Germany's good offices, at the same time seeking to throw the responsibility of the question upon Germany, since according to him, the Tripoli question was the result of Germany's action in Morocco. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, according to what he told De Martino, energetically denied this, and threw the responsibility on the Young Turks, who had always

refused to follow his advice not to annoy Italy in the Tripoli region. In any case, the Grand Vizier insisted upon Germany using her influence, and declared himself ready to make all the concessions asked for by Italy in order to avoid the fall of the Young Turks. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein said he would refer the matter to Berlin. What Berlin's reply was we did not learn, but in a further conversation which Baron Marschall von Bieberstein had with De Martino, it appeared clear that the former had promised the Grand Vizier to make an attempt to arrange a settlement of the question on the economic ground. He maintained that our occupation of Tripoli would have as a result the immediate breaking out of a revolution in Turkey, which would cause the fall of the Young Turks and consequent disorders directed against the European colonies. This, he urged, would render the sending of warships by Italy and other powers necessary, with the final result of opening up the whole Eastern question. Our representative, on the strength of information he had received, declared these fears exaggerated, as in fact later events proved. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein said he was convinced that the Balkan States would not take action, and here he proved wrong. He insisted very much on his views, and sought to give us assurances on the economic concessions. Then when De Martino answered him that Italy's store of goodwill was now exhausted, that the question had taken another form, and it was now a matter of the equilibrium of the Mediterranean. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein ended by saying that we were assuming a very grave responsibility. On the day before hostilities commenced, the German Foreign minister, Kiderlen Wächter, sent for our ambassador, Pansa, and sought to induce him to persuade the Italian government not to declare war upon Turkey, putting before him the dangers of disturbances in the Balkans and all the perilous possibilities that might result from a break up of the Ottoman Empire.

All these attempts to arrest our action at the last moment confirmed me in my intention to allow no time to elapse between our final determination to act and such action itself. Germany's position, I repeat, was a very delicate one, on account of the understandings (of a general nature though they were) which she had with the Young Turks, and there was nothing to be surprised at in her trying to win favour by an attempt on her part to resolve the Libyan question in a friendly manner. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein made his attempt at mediation on September 27th, the day following the presentation of our ultimatum. Three days later, came Turkey's unsatisfactory reply and our declaration of war, and after the *fait accompli*, the German government always behaved with loyalty towards us. On the other hand, a large part of the German press as well as the Austrian entered upon a campaign of defamation against Italy, a campaign which lasted practically throughout the war, and I had reasons to believe that that campaign represented the work of certain interests that would have liked to see Italy's place in the Triple Alliance taken by Turkey. Such views, however, were in no way shared by the Berlin government, which insisted on a renewal of the alliance even before the old treaty had expired.

The summer season, which took the ambassadors of the powers away from Rome, helped considerably in keeping our preparations a secret, since it rendered less likely indiscretions and personal contacts which make it not always possible to keep one's intentions to oneself. I came to an arrangement with San Giuliano that he was to remain at Fiuggi or Vallombrosa on the pretext of taking his vacation while I stayed at Cavour or Bardonnechia so as to give the idea that nothing unusual was to be looked for. I remember that those newspapers most in favour of the Libyan enterprise reproved me caustically for absenting myself from the capital and not keeping in close contact with the Foreign

minister and other members of the cabinet. These remarks pleased me very much, since they showed that my stratagem was working well and would have the effect of dissipating the Turkish government's suspicions. The latter was, in fact, taken quite by surprise by our ultimatum.

Our military preparation was also conducted secretly and rapidly. The possibility of Italy's having to undertake an overseas action had been considered in our military dispositions, and all the particulars for the quick formation of an expeditionary force had been carefully prepared some time before.

It therefore became necessary to calculate the effectives required for a given operation, and to put the machinery already prepared into motion. In the month of August I had even sent for our Chief of Headquarters Staff, Major-General Pollio, and I had instructed him to examine the question of an occupation of Libya and told him to decide on the number of troops that would be required to effect it. The Turkish garrison troops in the principal points of Tripoli and Cyrenaica did not amount to more than three or four thousand, but it was necessary to take account of the Arab population, which was of a warlike character, and special attention had to be given to the nomad tribes of the interior, accustomed to the hard life of the desert, always in arms and susceptible to the fanatical appeals which the Turks would be sure to bring to bear on them. In Cyrenaica, moreover, there was a regular military organisation under the Senussi of Kufra and Jarubub, and if the Senussi were not always on the best terms with the Turks, this was no reason for counting on them as friends, since it was not to be considered unlikely that—as events proved—they would turn against us. It was my intention that our action should be made with forces so preponderant as to leave no doubt about the result even from the beginning, so that both the local population and the Turks would resign themselves more

easily to the inevitable. Therefore, when General Pollio brought me the report he had made on the matter, in which he had come to the conclusion that a force of 20,000 men would be sufficient for the object aimed at, I told him to double the expeditionary force, thus bringing it up to 40,000 men. As a matter of fact, our expedition at one time during the war reached a total of 80,000 men or more.

The first expeditionary force consisted of an army corps and two divisions, while supplementary troops were largely provided for. In forming this African army consideration was taken of the advisability of not disturbing a possible general mobilisation of the army. The units composing the expeditionary force—regiments, batteries, etc.—belonged to the peace cadres and were duly reinforced. The troops were made up of soldiers of the 1890 class who had finished all their military instruction, and there were with them also the men of the 1888 class who were specially called up. There formed part of the force soldiers of the 1889 class who, having finished their term of service, had asked to be taken on as volunteers.

Our forces were divided into two parts: the first, destined to go into action immediately, comprised an infantry division, two squadrons of cavalry, nine field batteries, two regiments of *bersaglieri*, three mountain batteries, two companies of garrison artillery and accompanying auxiliary troops and services. This army comprised in all 22,500 men, 6,000 horses, 72 pieces of artillery, and 800 wagons and vehicles. The second part of the expeditionary force was a reduced facsimile of the first. It had 13,200 men and 30 pieces of artillery. The total strength of the expeditionary force was about 36,000 men. The infantry regiments and the *bersaglieri* had mountain machine guns, while the army had air forces at its disposal, including four aeroplanes. I think that this was the first occasion that such engines were used in war.

The first portion of the force made up, when embarked, a

fleet of thirty-two ships, twenty-three of which took on their troops at Naples and nine at Palermo. There were in addition subsidiary vessels, two hospital ships, two transports for the wounded as well as smaller units. The second portion of the force was carried in twelve steamers, and part of the troops was embarked at Catania. An abundant provision of stores was carried, as well as munitions and material for the engineers, including landing bridges and rafts, indispensable in a country which, apart from Tripoli itself, had practically no harbours. A special corps of sappers was formed in order to provide for the supply of water in that very dry country, so that our soldiers should not suffer on account of any shortage.

When the expeditionary force got under way, after a rapid concentration at Taranto and Syracuse, we set our whole fleet in motion to guard the troopships. In this connection, it may be useful to reply to a criticism made against our naval policy at this time by certain warlike but rash people. We had been informed by our consular authorities that, at the outbreak of the war, the Turkish fleet was at Beirut in Syria, whence, however, it steamed away immediately. There were those who desired that our ships should be sent to look for it in order to sink it. This would not have been a difficult matter inasmuch as the Turkish fleet, consisting of two old battleships, two cruisers and some torpedo boats was inferior to our own. Yet I considered that the idea was both risky and useless. On entering into war, we had clearly declared to the powers interested in the Ottoman Empire that we only intended to occupy Libya, that apart from this, we had no intention of damaging Turkey, and that we meant to renounce any action likely to lead to complications. Had we opened the campaign by seeking out the Turkish fleet in the *Ægean* which was far away from our declared objective, we should have laid ourselves open to the accusation of failing from the very first to stick to our declarations, if not indeed

to our solemn undertakings. This would certainly have aroused feeling against us, and have given some power the pretext of introducing complications into the situation, which complications we were particularly anxious to avoid. In the second place, the undertaking might have proved a risky one, not on account of the Turkish fleet itself, but for some possible indirect incident arising out of the operations. I remember we were advised by cable from Beirut that the Turkish fleet on leaving the harbour had steamed towards the south-west, which led one to suppose it was heading for Cyrenaica. Later we learnt that it had changed direction and was making for the Dardanelles. To track this fleet on its voyage from Beirut to the Dardanelles among the islands of the Ægean Sea would not, according to the experts, have been an easy matter. Moreover, it was possible that while our naval units were engaged in this hunt, the enemy, who possessed some recently purchased swift destroyers, some of which it was believed were hiding at Prevesa, might have tried for a coup against our expeditionary force and have perhaps succeeded in sinking one of our transports. Such a disaster, had it happened, would have had a very bad effect on the Italian public, whose nerves were being subjected to the test of war for the first time since the Abyssinian disaster sixteen years before. Moreover an incident of this nature, had it been allowed to take place, would have seemed all the more grave and inexcusable, inasmuch as our naval forces were so very much superior to those of the enemy. We had been obliged also for inevitable reasons to disturb the peace of Europe, and many eyes were watching us with a not too benevolent expression. In such conditions it was necessary for us to avoid any incident which might give ground for accusations of irresponsibility or incompetence to be levelled against us. Energetic actions, such as that in which we were engaged, even if they offend on account of the interests they disturb end by making themselves re-

spected when they are brought to a successful conclusion. We had an example of this in the conduct of the foreign press, which after having accused and abused us for some days eventually changed its tone quite rapidly when it perceived that we were pursuing our path without deviation and that we should before long arrive at the point we were making for.

Meanwhile in the first half of September the situation in Tripoli was getting gradually worse, owing to the growing suspicion of some imminent action on our part. At Tripoli, the agitators of the Union and Progress Committee carried out a two-fold work. On the one hand, they did everything in their power to foment the population and draw the tribal and village chiefs into their net of influence. To this end they held frequent meetings, and though the better elements of the country, who had already commercial relations with Italians, showed themselves more moderate, there undoubtedly arose a current of opinion hostile to us among the lower classes. In the second place, these agitators maintained continuous communication with the Turkish government and the Central Committee at Constantinople, to which they forwarded reports of the meetings, setting out that the populace was firm in its wish and intention to remain in the Ottoman Empire and was ready for any sacrifice to attain this end. Arms and munitions were asked for, and request was made that Tripoli should be fortified. Statistics were also prepared of the Arab population in the Hinterland, according to which it was calculated that there were some 100,000 men capable of bearing arms and taking part in a vigorous defensive movement against any attack. The Turkish government and the committee replied giving every kind of encouragement to these preparations and promising to send at least 100,000 rifles and cannon, while assurances were given that the fortification of the city of Tripoli should be undertaken at once.

We had thus two particular points to consider: to protect the numerous Italian colony residing at Tripoli, as well as to safeguard the other Europeans dwelling there, and at the same time to prevent the threatened consignment of arms and ammunition. The moment had not arrived to create demonstrations that might precipitate matters; nevertheless I ordered a certain number of warships to prepare to leave Syracuse and hold themselves in readiness to steam for Tripoli at a moment's notice. It was obvious that the Porte would never do all that Tripoli was asking for, but it was equally certain that some of the latter's requests would be favourably answered. Towards the end of September our military attaché at Constantinople informed us that the steamer *Derna* was being loaded with some 10,000 rifles and ammunition, besides cannon, provisions and uniforms. This steamer in fact did sail for Tripoli and we gave orders to intercept it, which we had every right to do since its arrival coincided with our ultimatum, but unfortunately the vessel succeeded in escaping the vigilance of our fleet.

The diplomatic situation also counselled us to hurry matters on. It was evident that the Moroccan question would be settled pacifically and, in fact, the preliminary agreements were signed between France and Germany on September 23rd. On the other hand, some unbenevolent action on the part of one of the powers which had so far recognised the justice of our case was always to be feared. We learnt that Aerenthal, in speaking with some foreign diplomats, had expressed himself as being displeased on account of what was happening in Italy with regard to the Tripoli question, since, in his opinion, the moment for raising the matter was inopportune. I therefore made up my mind to act. I had first of all to speak with the King and obtain his consent to the calling up of certain classes for immediate action. I was at Cavour at the time, while His Majesty was staying at Racconigi. In order to avoid the talk which would arise should the fact

of my visiting the King become known to the papers, I asked that an automobile should be sent to me at Cavour from the royal household. I laid the situation before the King, and had his consent to our action and all the ensuing necessary orders and decrees.

I met His Majesty on September 17th; on the following day, when I had returned to Cavour, I telegraphed to San Giuliano, to Spingardi and to Leonardi Cattolica to hurry on the preparations, insisting at the same time that the greatest secrecy and caution should be used in ordering our preparations. General Pollio, Chief of the General Staff, held that it was absolutely necessary to call up the 1888 class which had been discharged, in order to give the requisite elasticity to the expeditionary force, and also so as not to leave the regiments that would remain behind in Italy too weakened. I made provision for the issue of the decree calling up these soldiers. Later, I authorised the immediate sending of ships to Tripoli for the security of our colony there and to prevent a repetition of the *Derna* episode, since it was to be expected that since our intention was by now patent Turkey would make efforts to send troops and arms.

On the 24th I arrived at Rome, and on the 26th, after a cabinet council, our ultimatum was despatched to Turkey. This document was couched in such a way as not to leave any possibility of evasion open, and so as to avoid lengthy discussion, which were to be avoided at any cost. This idea governed the composition of every word of the document. Our ultimatum set forth that for a long period of years the Italian government had never ceased impressing on the Turkish government the necessity of the latter putting an end to the state of disorder and abandonment into which Tripoli and Cyrenaica had sunk, instead of their being brought up to the level of the other countries on the Northern littoral of Africa. This desirable transformation, which was required in the general interests of civilisation, constituted for

Italy a matter of vital interest owing to the short distance which separated those countries from her own coasts. Yet notwithstanding that the Italian government had always given cordial support to the Turkish government in various political questions of late years, and the moderation and patience it had shown, not only had the Ottoman government taken no notice of these views, but, what was worse, had always shown systematic and unjustified hostility to any Italian economic enterprise in those regions. Turkey, by means of a last minute action, had proposed to Italy to come to an agreement, declaring herself ready to make any economic concession compatible with the treaties in force and with Turkey's dignity and superior interests. The Italian government, however, did not see its way to begin discussions which past experience had proved to be vain and which, far from constituting a guarantee for the future, would only multiply the occasions of irritation and conflict. The document went on to observe that the information we had received from our consular agents in those countries demonstrated that the unsatisfactory situation of Italian subjects there had been purposely brought about by government officials and others responsible to the Turkish state. This agitation was an imminent peril not only for Italian citizens, but for those of other nations as well, and many of these, justly alarmed at the state of things, had begun to embark with the idea of abandoning the country. The arrival at Tripoli of Ottoman military transports, as to the consequence of which the Italian government had not failed to call the attention of the Turkish government, could only aggravate the situation, and made it necessary for Italy to make provision for the dangers that might result. The ultimatum went on to say that the Italian government, seeing itself now obliged to safeguard the country's dignity and interests, had decided to occupy Tripoli and Cyrenaica by military force, since there was no choice of action left. The

ultimatum declared that we would await the orders of the Ottoman government that our occupation should not be met with resistance on the part of its representatives in that territory. Final agreements might then be come to between the two governments, with a view to regularising the situation that would arise from the military occupation. The document concluded by asking for a reply within twenty-four hours, in default of which the Italian government would proceed to take the necessary steps to effect the occupation.

Turkey's answer to our ultimatum was, as we had expected, evasive and dilatory. It threw the responsibility of the bad state of Tripoli and Cyrenaica on the preceding régime, and maintained, contrary to the truth, that the Turkish government had always shown itself willing to meet the views of the Italian government, while the local authorities had protected, so the reply ran, Italian interests. Offers of concessions were renewed, we were asked what guarantees we deemed necessary, while it was promised that in the meantime the military situation should not be modified.

The answer of the Ottoman government arrived on the 29th of September, and the same day we instructed our chargé d'affaires to present the declaration of war.

CHAPTER XII

THE WAR IN LIBYA, IN THE ÆGEAN, AND IN THE RED SEA

Rapid development of military operations at the beginning, followed by guerilla warfare—International complications—Austria's protests regarding the Adriatic—Proposed mediation of the Powers; mutual distrust and intrigues—Annexation of Libya proclaimed—Sazonoff's attempt to conclude peace; various phases and failure of the same—"Manouba" and "Carthage" incidents—Naval operations in the Ægean: protests and bickering on the part of Austria—Long drawn-out discussion regarding the interpretation of Art. VII of the Triple Alliance caused by the occupation of the Islands—Attack on and closing of the Dardanelles—England takes steps prejudicial to our interests; Italy vindicates her rights as belligerent—Austrian military party seeks pretext for taking action—Expulsion of Italians from the Turkish Empire—Operations in Tripoli and Cyrenaica resumed—The little war in the Red Sea.

OUR plans for the occupation of the territories in question were realised at the outset of the campaign with all the desired rapidity and precision.

On October 1st our fleet blockaded Tripoli; on the 4th commenced the bombardment and destruction of the fortifications, followed closely by a gallant landing of naval forces under Admiral Cagni and the occupation of the city which was abandoned by the Turkish troops, who retired to the outskirts of the surrounding oasis. Admiral Borea Ricci, appointed governor of the city, issued a proclamation, and the Arabs for the greater part gave assurances of friendship and allegiance and surrendered their arms.

On October 10th the first contingent of our expeditionary force, after being reviewed by the King, left Naples and landed the following day without mishap. The arrival of

this force resulted in enlarging the occupied area and in our gaining possession of the Bumeliana wells, which were wrested from the enemy after a sharp fight. Heavy fighting again took place on the 22nd, when an attack by the Turks was combined with a plot of the Arabs in the city and in the oasis, who assaulted certain of our trenches from the rear, provoking severe reprisals on our part. Fighting continued almost daily, until on the 6th of November, General Caneva, thanks to a well-prepared manœuvre, succeeded in dislodging the Turkish-Arabic forces from Ainzara, whence the enemy had been continually threatening and molesting the city.

Both from a political and military point of view things took the course we had foreseen. In this respect, the reports of our consuls, among whom I must mention Galli, a man who displayed excellent judgment and knowledge of the native population, had never misled us. At no time was there any love lost between the Turks and Arabs, but it would have been a risk to depend on a general defection of the latter, which had it happened would have seriously jeopardised the situation of the small Turkish forces and possibly forced them to surrender. There was an equal measure of success and disappointment in our undertakings; the city and coast Arabs, who were in contact with us, submitted in great part to the new order of things; but those of the interior, whether owing to the influence of fanatical propaganda or to the fear of immediate reprisals to which they were exposed, generally sided with the Turks, who thus had at their disposal a sufficiently numerous and warlike fighting nucleus that nevertheless lacked material and organisation. The situation that resulted from this is characteristic of nearly all colonial wars: in other words, the enemy could not contemplate an attack on the principal positions occupied by us, and we, in order to overcome him, would have had to carry out a guerilla warfare of a laborious and dangerous nature in a country lacking in resources.

Contemporaneously with those in Tripoli, other operations were undertaken against the principal points on this long stretch of coast. On the 4th of October, our fleet, according to my instructions, occupied Tobruk, as I was anxious to obtain possession of this important bay from the outset and to forestall any possible reasons and pretexts for an Egyptian occupation, which the war might easily have supplied. Another eventuality which we wished to avoid was that Tobruk with its accessible bay might serve as a means of access for contraband of war and the landing of troops in Cyrenaica. Derna was bombarded and occupied on the 13th and Homs on the 18th of the same month. On the 20th, the landing at Bengasi was carried out with great dash and good luck. Here, as at Derna, the native population was submissive.

These military operations constituted the history of the war for the general public, but apart from these, we had to deal with a series of diplomatic incidents and complications which were a source of continual anxiety. Of these only the more sensational ones have reached the ears of the public, the others being incompletely reported.

The war in which we had become involved was, in fact, a war *sui generis*. Metaphorically speaking, the enemy territory was surrounded by a dense circle of conflicting interests and expectations, which served as a rampart for its protection. There were, to begin with, the general interests of rival European powers; those of Russia conflicting with those of Austria, and those of Britain with Germany; there were the ambitions and claims of the various Balkan States to be taken into consideration, to say nothing of economical and political pretences and pretexts of every sort. I remember that our operations in the Red Sea gave rise to meetings of protest even among the Mahometans of India, it being alleged that they impeded the pilgrimages to the sacred shrines of Islam. The accusation was unfounded, and the protests

were doubtless instigated by Turkey, who was endeavouring to create difficulties for us in every part of the world. Added to these special considerations was the more general one of the peace of Europe. All these elements had to be taken into account by us, both out of respect for friendly powers and also for the sake of our own well-being. While endeavouring to give every possible satisfaction in individual cases, we strictly maintained our freedom of action. It is only fair to add that every time these fundamental questions were raised by us in the course of discussion, we obtained immediate and unreserved recognition of our rights.

In notifying the powers of our declaration of war on Turkey, we had given assurances of respecting in every possible way their special interests and of avoiding all undertakings which might react on the general constitution of the Ottoman Empire. Thus we refused to assist risings and disturbances in Albania and requested the King of Montenegro to abstain from any acts which might disturb the situation in the Balkans, which he promised to do. Above all, we made a point of avoiding incidents in the Adriatic, knowing that the militarist element in Vienna would try to profit thereby. Having, however, learnt that on the Turkish coast of the Adriatic, especially at Prevesa, there were several very fast destroyers which were preparing to attack the vessels of our expeditionary force and to carry out raids on our unprotected cities, we informed the powers of the absolute necessity of our undertaking certain naval operations in European waters. These were entrusted to the Duke of the Abruzzi, who successfully frustrated various attempted raids of enemy ships. Captain Biscaretti, serving under the Duke, while patrolling along the Turkish and Albanian coast, visited certain Austrian ships which had aroused his suspicion, and was obliged to return the fire directed against him from a point near San Giovanni di Medua. This at once drew an energetic protest from Austria. Aerenthal on October 1st declared to our

ambassador D'Avarna that such operations were a flagrant breach of our promise to localise the war in the Mediterranean, and that he could not consent to a continuation of the operations in the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, adding that if they did not cease, serious consequences might arise and he would be obliged to adopt a different tone. In reply we assured him of our intention of maintaining our promises, which also coincided with our own interests, but that there were unforeseen military exigencies to be faced, as in the case of the operations in question, which were intended to liberate our waters from the menace arising from the Turkish naval base at Prevesa. As we did not, however, wish to play into the hands of Austria, who might have decided to occupy Durazzo, I sent stringent orders to the Duke of the Abruzzi to limit his operations to patrolling the sea and to refrain from landings and land bombardments.

On October 3rd, Aerenthal informed us that the Turkish government was disposed to negotiate, even now after the outbreak of hostilities. We seized this opportunity for proposing, as a first step, the neutralisation for the present of the Adriatic and possibly, if England would consent, of the Red Sea, reserving as regards the rest of the ocean and the enemy territory, full liberty of action to which we were entitled and which was necessary to overcome the resistance of Turkey and shorten the war.

The Turkish government had in the meantime through its various embassies appealed to all the great powers to intervene on behalf of peace. The first government to communicate us in this regard was again the Austrian, which through its ambassador gave us to understand that a solution might be arrived at if the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan was maintained. San Giuliano, after consulting me, replied that, in our opinion, the Turkish note was one of the usual artifices of the Porte, not to be taken seriously, and that we could not content ourselves with half measures, our object

being to resolve the Libyan question once and for all, in order to remove this continual source of friction between us and Turkey. Should the sovereignty of the Sultan be maintained, even if only nominally, our end would be defeated; and in addition, public opinion in Italy would not have consented to a solution of the question which did not establish our sovereignty in these regions. The French minister of Foreign Affairs, De Selves, after first suggesting a possible mediation on the part of the French government, informed our ambassador, Tittoni, that a collective step of the powers was contemplated, but that it would only take place in the form and at the time that Italy might deem expedient. De Selves renewed his assurances that France was only seeking to please Italy in the Libyan question. He added that he would endeavour to work in harmony with Germany to bring about a collective step of the powers, with the object of assuring an annexation pure and simple, thus also furnishing the Turkish government with the excuse that they had only yielded to the joint wish of Europe. De Selves thus gave us the opportunity of suggesting to Berlin and Vienna through our ambassadors that we could not suppose that our allies would show a less friendly disposition than France and be more obdurate in admitting the strength of our case. A few days later, in reply to a request from Berlin, San Giuliano submitted to the German government a rough outline of the conditions which Italy would accept as a basis for peace negotiations. These conditions, while strictly adhering to our intention of not admitting any discussion on the question of sovereignty, made generous concessions to Turkey in respect of old and still unsolved differences. They included the assumption on our part of that portion of the Turkish debt attributable to Libya, a proposal to regulate the religious question in regard to the Caliphate of the Sultan in such a manner as not to impair our prestige with the Arabs or to make it appear as a disguised form of political sovereignty,

which, however, nominal, might give rise to future conflicts between Italy and Turkey and be the cause of Turkish intrigues in the two provinces which were to be definitely separated from the Turkish Empire. Finally it was proposed to preface the peace treaty by a decree of annexation on our part, so that Turkey would not be obliged to make concessions, but simply to regularise the *fait accompli*. It is interesting to note that the conditions of the treaty signed by Italy and Turkey about a year later were almost identical with those we at first proposed.

Diplomatic negotiations between the various capitals continued without interruption. On October 25th, Aerenthal informed us that he had obtained a reply from London and St. Petersburg favourable to his proposal of an exchange of views between the powers with the view of arriving at a solution of the Libyan question, although neither of the two governments was hopeful as yet of definite results. This somewhat ambiguous communication was explained in a conversation between the German under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Zimmermann, and our *chargé d'affaires*, in which the former announced that Aerenthal's proposal had been favourably received by the other cabinets, but that all were of the opinion that a collective step would for the present be useless, if not harmful, unless we were prepared to admit the Sultan as overlord in Libya or at least to content ourselves with the absolute sovereignty of Tripoli alone. In this conversation Zimmermann also expressed serious doubts as regards the attitude of England, in whom for the moment all the hopes of Turkey were concentrated, adding that from various indications and hints from different quarters he was under the impression that Great Britain, in order to recover her lost ascendancy in Constantinople, would be quite capable of imposing, as a *sine qua non* of peace, the condition of our accepting the Sultan as overlord. According to Zimmermann, England had many interests in Egypt and India, where

she counted on the Mahometan population as her principal support, and in the event of her taking such a step, Italy would have no choice but to give way; and he added that Germany, however much she might regret the fact, would be unable to help us in such an eventuality. Our ambassador in London was at once instructed to ascertain the truth of these insinuations, and in a conversation with Sir Edward Grey made it clear that we should never accept as the basis of peace any other condition than that of our full sovereignty, and that any nation wishing to force us to accept another solution would inevitably forfeit the friendship of the Italian people. Grey's reply was a definite declaration to the effect that his unvarying answer to the solicitations of the Turkish Embassy had been that any attempt at mediation which did not include the condition of our undisputed sovereignty as basis would be of no avail. Thus Zimmermann's insinuation was clearly disproved; it nevertheless was a proof, not so much of an attempted intrigue against us, as of the mistrust prevailing between Great Britain and Germany in regard to Turkish affairs. Germany, finding herself unable to side with the Turks against us, was afraid that she would lose the ascendancy which she had won in Constantinople, thanks to the Baron Marschall von Bieberstein policy, and that England would profit by her embarrassing situation.

From a conversation which Tittoni had in Paris with Iswolsky, it transpired that Germany's distrust of England had its counterpart in Russia's distrust of Austria, and that St. Petersburg was of the opinion that Aerenthal's vague and ambiguous proposal regarding mediation in Constantinople was calculated to compromise any power which in giving it a more precise form, might appear to favour Italy unduly. Furthermore, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who had been working in Constantinople towards a peace based on the recognition of the Sultan's nominal sovereignty, had, on being obliged to abandon his scheme in view of our intention

of annexation, advised his government that it would not be desirable for Germany to take the initiative in negotiations aiming at the recognition of Italian sovereignty, for fear that others might turn such a step to their advantage and damage German prestige in Turkey. A fresh conversation between our ambassador in Berlin and Zimmermann revealed the fact that German suspicions had been diverted from England to Russia, who, it was feared, might profit by the situation to resolve the question of the Straits in her own favour.

I have set forth in detail this interplay of diplomacy in order to explain the motives which induced me to an act, which both then and later was judged by many to be premature. I refer to the declaration of the annexation of Libya. A single month of war had shown that a vast network of political interests surrounded our operations. Although I had every confidence that France, England and Russia would loyally keep their promises concerning Libya, and that both Germany and Austria would fulfil their duties as our allies, there was always the fear that complications might arise among the various powers having interests at stake in the Ottoman Empire. This would induce them to bring pressure to bear on us to conclude the war, and to insist on our accepting, for the sake of the general peace, the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan, without which, according to Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's advices to his government, the war was likely to be of long duration. The maintenance of the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan in Tripoli and Cyrenaica, apart from the effect on public opinion in Italy, was likely to produce serious results. In the first place, such a solution would have greatly diminished our prestige among the Arabs, who would have continued to look on the Sultan as their sovereign as well as the head of their religion, which position already ensured him great influence among them. To have imposed a double sovereignty on a population in such a state of civilisation as

that of Libya would have resulted in a confusion calculated to impede any form of government. Secondly, the situation was identical to the one which Austria-Hungary had resolved by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, for had the sovereignty of the Sultan been maintained in any form, it would have been impossible to prevent the Arabs from electing their representative to the parliament at Constantinople. What, one might ask, would have been the effect on the minds of the people if such legislative representation had been preserved? Finally there was the question of the Capitulations, which, if Libya had continued to form part of the Turkish Empire, would have been a cause of future friction and difficulties with the other powers.

Had Italy therefore accepted such a solution, or any other not complete and definite, she would have found herself in a difficult position, having gained no advantage by the considerable sacrifices of the war. One of the dangers still to be avoided was that of listening to the advice of friends and interested parties. The only way to eliminate this danger was to bring the powers face to face with the *fait accompli*. This was the aim and purpose of the royal decree of November 4th, proclaiming Italy's absolute sovereignty over Libya. It had the effect I had foreseen. There was considerable grumbling, especially on the part of Vienna, but no protest. The decree was submitted to parliament when it assembled in February. The Senate gave it unanimous approval, and in the Chamber it was likewise approved by all except the Socialists, who criticised it on the ground of its rendering the conclusion of peace more difficult. This objection was comprehensible as coming from those who had not been in favour of the enterprise and consequently cared little for its happy conclusion. For the rest, those who at such times do not form part of the government and do not see what is going on behind the scenes, cannot penetrate the reasons for certain acts decided upon, nor can the government which

takes the decision explain them to the public. It is evident that I could not state publicly that I had proclaimed the annexation of Libya for fear of an intervention of the allied and friendly powers.

The proof that our proclamation was a timely measure was furnished by the ulterior attempts of European diplomacy to end the war. These tentative efforts, in contrast with the preceding ones, being based on the accepted *fait accompli*, no one could henceforth suppose that Italy would cancel her decree announcing the annexation of Libya.

The initiative in the new peace negotiations, which lasted for several months, was this time taken by the Russian minister for Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, in a spirit of great friendliness towards us. On January 2nd the Russian embassy in Rome submitted to San Giuliano a suggestion which Sazonoff had already outlined to the representatives of the great powers in St. Petersburg. This proposal was as follows: the great powers, believing that it was to the interest of Europe to terminate the conflict between Italy and Turkey as speedily as possible, would take a collective step at Constantinople to persuade Turkey that the loss of Libya was inevitable and induce her to accept an armistice, during which Turkey would withdraw her troops from Libya. Italy on the other hand would study ways and means of offering Turkey certain pecuniary compensation for the loss sustained; and would not demand from Turkey immediate recognition of her sovereign rights over Libya, trusting to the course of events to regularise the situation; but, as a guarantee of Italy's rights, the powers would bind themselves to recognise her sovereignty over the two occupied provinces. France was to act as spokesman for the other powers at Constantinople. Sir Edward Grey, when sounded by our ambassador in this connection, was inclined to hesitate, the attitudes of the other powers not seeming to him very encouraging. He regarded Turkey's attitude as negative, and too great insistence on the part of

the other powers would, he feared, be construed as a form of pressure not in keeping with the obligations of neutrality. According to information received from Tittoni, the opinion in France was that such a step was not yet justified by the situation.

Nevertheless, Sazonoff continued his efforts, seeking, above all, to come to an agreement with England. Sir Edward Grey, still reluctant to take a step which he considered not neutral, first proposed that advances should be made simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople, but then, recognising the fact that this might give a false impression and encourage the Turkish government in its resistance, it was decided first to enquire from Italy what conditions she was inclined to accord and then to advise Constantinople to accept them.

The first part of this negotiation was undertaken on March 9th in Rome by the various ambassadors, each acting on his own account. Our written reply, enumerating and explaining the conditions on which we were disposed to make peace, was handed to the ambassadors on March 15th. These conditions coincided with those finally incorporated in the peace treaty, being a proof of how accurately the Italian government had from the beginning judged the solution of the question. They firmly maintained the principal points and showed a conciliatory spirit on all those of secondary importance. Another month elapsed before the powers came to an agreement regarding the step to be taken at Constantinople on the basis of our reply. It took place eventually on April 16th. Turkey's reply, deferred until April 24th, was entirely negative. She declared that in deference to the powers, she willingly accepted their mediation, but must make it clear, in order to avoid all misunderstandings, that it would be impossible for her to enter into negotiations except on the basis of the recognition of the Sultan's sovereignty and of Italy's renouncing her annexation of the two provinces and withdrawing her troops.

Thus Sazonoff's effort, which he had pursued with great energy and which had won the adhesion of all the powers, completely failed. It is worth while pointing out, however, that only two months later Turkey entered into direct negotiations with us, after she had been given very clearly to understand that our full and entire sovereignty over the two provinces was a *sine qua non*.

After our occupations of the cities and important points on the coast and the ousting by General Caneva of the Turkish-Arabic forces from Ainzara and the oasis surrounding Tripoli, no decisive military operations took place either there or in Cyrenaica. The enemy was quite incapable of attacking us at the points we had captured and fortified and all their attempts to do so ended in defeat. On the other hand, it was difficult to pursue the enemy into the desert, where our troops were exposed to lack of water and supplies, to say nothing of the dangers of the desert itself, where the enemy's light forces successfully eluded all our manœuvres. Public opinion, knowing little of these conditions and not realising that the campaign had degenerated into guerilla warfare, showed signs of impatience. Though personally I did not share this impatience, it was nevertheless desirable that military operations should progress with more speed, so as to impress on the Turks and Arabs the futility of further resistance and to avoid the danger of international complications.

In this connection there was a very unpleasant incident in the middle of January. One of our war vessels, the *Agordat*, engaged on patrol duty in the western Mediterranean for the prevention of contraband trade in arms and munitions, had stopped a French mail steamer, the *Carthage*, on January 15th, and three days later another vessel, the *Manouba*, having on board a mission of the Turkish Red Crescent bound for the enemy camp in Libya, was obliged to make for Sardinia. This was, after all, a trifling incident, a matter for court legislation, and I told the first secretary of the French embassy,

M. Legrand, in the absence of M. Barrère, the ambassador, that in my opinion the incident in question was one for the international tribunal at the Hague to settle, this tribunal being *par excellence* qualified to prevent such minor questions from assuming dangerous dimensions. M. Legrand asked me whether he might telegraph to his government my intention of submitting this question to the Hague, and I answered affirmatively, requesting him to inform his government without delay.

This was done, and at one p.m. a communiqué of the Havas agency appeared in Rome announcing the proposal of the Italian government. At three o'clock the same day, M. Poincaré, then French Prime Minister, addressing the Chamber of Deputies, referred to the incident in sharp and almost threatening terms, making no mention of our proposal. I am not aware whether by chance he had not been apprised of our intention, but the result of his speech, which to some extent voiced the irritation in France, was to provoke a not unnatural reaction in the Italian press, disturbing for a time the cordial relations between the two countries, which had greatly benefited by the friendly attitude of public opinion in France and of the French government in regard to our enterprise in Libya. I may recall that even Clemenceau criticised the attitude of Poincaré on this occasion by the following pun: *il pouvait être moins carré*. Eventually matters were smoothed out, and Poincaré endeavoured to dissipate the impression made by his speech by assuming a very friendly attitude in the later diplomatic negotiations connected with our Libyan enterprise. The matter was finally submitted to the Hague tribunal, Signor Fusinato being our advocate, and terminated with a conciliatory verdict.

Incidents of this nature, however, proved that, apart from the war, we had to keep the general situation in mind. In my communications with General Caneva, I made it very clear that I had no intention of giving him orders or directing

military operations from my study, leaving him full responsibility and liberty of action in that respect, and assuring him that I would confine myself to drawing his attention to the general aspect of the war. Caneva, after having sent Lieutenant-Colonel Giardino to Rome to explain the reasons for the slow progress of military operations, arrived himself early in February. Our interviews gave me a most favourable impression of his capacity, intelligence and general foresight, but he appeared to lack initiative and not to realise sufficiently the reasons of foreign policy which demanded more rapid action, so as to avoid complications which might arise at any moment in a war which brought so many other interests into play. General Caneva, on the contrary, fixed his attention almost exclusively on the local military situation.

In our conversations, he explained to me with great clearness the military situation and the difficulty of decisive action, convincing me that much of the criticism directed against his operations was unfounded, but I pointed out to him the urgency for political reasons of terminating the war as speedily as possible. It was decided to increase the expeditionary force, especially in regard to flying columns, with a view to rapid action, and these columns played an important rôle in the second phase of the campaign. It was my desire to achieve the maximum of results compatible with a prudent conduct of the campaign, as I had always in mind the possibility of the powers intervening to bring about peace, and realised that when such negotiations are entered upon it is inevitably on the basis of results obtained.

In the period from March to June, the campaign entered upon a new phase, naval operations in the *Ægean* Sea supplementing military operations on land. Various reasons had obliged us to take this step, the most important being that officers, as well as war material of every description, were being conveyed across the *Ægean* from Turkey and these reinforcements reached the Arabs, especially in Cyre-

naica. In this way Enver Bey had joined the enemy forces and assumed command of the operations against us. During the winter months unfavourable weather conditions and the difficulties of landing had assisted our naval patrols, but with the coming of spring, this contraband of war campaign was resumed with new vigour, and we learnt of elaborate preparations for its further development. Our minister of Marine, Leonardi Cattolica, pointed out the difficulties of the present situation, declaring that our patrol measures at sea would be much more successful if, instead of being employed along the entire length of the extensive Libyan coast, they could be directed against the eastern ports of the Ægean. This, however, would have necessitated our obtaining a base in the Ægean Islands to supply our cruisers, thus avoiding the long distance to our naval base at Tobruk.

At the same time, an agent living in Constantinople, well informed as to Turkish naval affairs, offered his services in the event of our carrying out a *coup de main* against the Turkish fleet, which was anchored and insufficiently guarded at Nagara. If at the beginning of the war, for reasons already explained, it was advisable to abstain from attacking the Turkish fleet, the changed situation now necessitated a different course of action. The attitude of Turkey, apparently indifferent to the continuation of guerilla warfare in Libya, and the failure of the powers to persuade her to accept the *fait accompli*, necessarily impelled us to adopt new methods, which we had hitherto avoided in consideration of the other powers. It was now essential to strike at the points where Turkey was most vulnerable in order to convince her that by prolonging a conflict, of which the issue was already decided, she was exposing herself to new and serious dangers.

It was, however, to be expected that carrying the war from Libya into the Ægean would increase our diplomatic difficulties. Early in February, the Duke of Avarna, our ambassador in Vienna, advised us that Aerenthal had intimated

in conversation with a member of the diplomatic corps that Austria would not tolerate any military operations in European Turkey, which, according to his arbitrary interpretation, he held to be contrary to the provisions of Clause VII of our treaty of alliance. On the other hand, the Russian Foreign minister, Sazonoff, practically encouraged us in our design, and told our ambassador, Melegari, that he would be glad if we struck a vital blow at Turkey and gave the Young Turks a good lesson which would help to curb their insufferable insolence. Also the German ambassador in Rome, conversing with De Martino, expressed his personal conviction that we should attack the Dardanelles, and when Austria's opposition to such action was put forward, he replied that from what he had heard through his chief, Kiderlen-Wächter he gathered that Aerenthal was not seriously opposed to such an undertaking.

Meanwhile Aerenthal died, and as it had not been possible to thresh the matter out with him, it was to be feared that his successor, Berchtold, would be unwilling to appear in the eyes of the public and especially of the military party in Austria, as less unyielding than Aerenthal, who had enjoyed a far greater authority. Neither from England nor France did we receive any expression of opinion, but a report of a speech by Poincaré represented that we had explicitly renounced any military operations outside Libya. This impression we lost no time in dispelling, as it would have encouraged Turkey in her resistance. We also learnt that Turkey, through her ambassadors, was trying to get ahead of us, threatening, in case we attacked the Dardanelles, not only to expel all Italians from her territory, but also to close the Straits to international commerce. This was in keeping with Turkey's habitual system of sheltering behind foreign interests.

The question was being thus debated in theory among diplomats, when an episode occurred which put it to a practical test. One of our cruiser squadrons on February 24th

appeared before Beirut, where two old Turkish warships had sought refuge. The latter, refusing to surrender at our summons, and even opening fire on our vessels, were promptly sunk by our guns, which, however, did no damage to the city or to the port. Austria immediately sent a protest, based on erroneous reports, charging us with having bombarded an open city. The Austrian ambassador in Rome, Merey, on behalf of his government, drew San Giuliano's attention to the fact that Italy would incur serious responsibilities if she again bombarded a city in which a numerous Austrian colony resided. The French ambassador, Barrère, also lodged a friendly protest. In our reply we emphasised the importance of our avoiding at that moment any sort of pronouncement which limited our operations, thereby encouraging Turkey to hold out.

The most serious diplomatic event of this period was the attempt by Great Britain to establish a limitation of our operations by means of a collective step of the powers. Of this intention we got word simultaneously from Vienna and St. Petersburg. On February 29th the British ambassador in Vienna had handed Count Berchtold the following memorandum: "It is certain that international commerce would be seriously damaged if the Turkish government decided, as a measure of defence, to close the Dardanelles with mines. Sir Edward Grey would be glad to learn whether the Austrian government thinks it advisable for the powers to enquire from the Italian government whether the latter will give assurances that no operations will be undertaken in the Dardanelles or neighbouring waters." Berchtold's reply to this memorandum, which was couched in terms very friendly to Italy, was to the effect that he had reason to believe that the Italian government would not consent to make such a declaration and that he could not associate himself with a diplomatic step of this nature, unless he was first assured that we should raise no objection. At the same time he

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charged his ambassador, Merely, to add his conviction that we were not contemplating any operations in the Dardanelles or the neighbouring waters for fear of after-effects in the Balkans. A franker and more decided attitude was that of Sazonoff, who, despite the insistence of the British ambassador, categorically refused to participate in the proposed step as being incompatible with the duties of neutrality. To our ambassador he even described the British proposal as being incorrect. After this England made no further efforts in this direction.

Notwithstanding these diplomatic manœuvres, we decided to strike a blow at the Turkish fleet, and the execution of the plan was entrusted to Admiral Thaon de Revel. A squadron had already been concentrated at Bomba, but the operation had to be abandoned for the time being, because our Admiralty considered it impossible in view of the precautions taken by the Turkish fleet. The latter, having got wind of our plans, had barred the entrance to the Dardanelles and withdrawn itself to the Sea of Marmara, where it would have been impossible to reach it.

In any case, we were firmly resolved to maintain our liberty of action and our rights as belligerents, though deeming it advisable to keep the allied and friendly powers informed of our projects, so as to prevent any one of them, and especially Austria, from using any action of ours as a pretext for some private move, which might even indirectly work out to our disadvantage. As we were aware that the Austrian military party was urging *coups de main* in Albania, and that these might even be undertaken in agreement with Turkey, we were anxious to avoid furnishing an occasion for such enterprises. Accordingly we informed Berchtold that the Turkish contraband traffic obliged us to patrol the Mediterranean entrance to the Ægean and that in order to do so we should temporarily have to occupy some of the islands, mentioning among others Stampalia and Lemnos. We also informed

Berlin of this intention. The German government made no objection and undertook to persuade Berchtold not to raise any obstacle against such operations as we might carry out in the Ægean and against the Dardanelles. France also made no difficulties; Poincaré openly advised us to occupy some of the islands in order to impress Turkey and hasten the conclusion of peace. But Austria, who did not conceal her annoyance at Germany's intervention on our behalf, would not give way. This resulted in a long diplomatic conversation, during which San Giuliano very skilfully combated Berchtold's arguments. The discussion turned especially on two points. Berchtold, following Aerenthal's interpretation, maintained that Clause VII of the Triple Alliance treaty, dealing with the reciprocal interests of Italy and Austria in the Balkans, forbade any occupation of Turkey's European possessions even though such were merely temporary and for military reasons, as also any military operation, as, for instance, bombardment of their coasts. He also alleged that the Ægean Islands must be considered as part of the Turkish possessions in Europe.

San Giuliano in reply absolutely refused to accept Aerenthal's and Berchtold's arbitrary and unfounded interpretation of Clause VII, as this article referred to permanent modifications of the *status quo* and not to temporary occupations, rendered necessary for military reasons. He also refused to accept Berchtold's assumption that the islands in the lower Ægean Sea should be considered as forming part of Turkish possessions in Europe, seeing that both geographically and from the point of view of Turkish administration they were reckoned among the *vilayets* of Asia. The tone of these diplomatic conversations became at times somewhat sharp, and a point was reached where we informed Austria that we did not intend to be deterred from our purpose by imaginary dangers and arbitrary interpretations and that if she opposed our liberty of action, it would be impossible for us to maintain the alliance.

On April 12th we informed Berchtold that for military and political reasons we could no longer defer our operations in the Ægean; to which he replied that he would not oppose our occupation of Rhodes, Stampalia, etc., provided we undertook to return them after the termination of the war. This assurance we willingly gave, on condition that it should be kept secret. We did so the more readily as we wished to forestall the possibility of Austria, under the pretext of her own construction of Clause VII, claiming compensation for our occupation of the islands or even taking it in Albania or the Sanjak, which we knew to be one of the projects of the Austrian military party. Our declaration that the occupation in question was only a temporary one made it impossible for Austria to claim compensation, as this too would have had to be merely temporary in nature. It is not improbable that Berchtold, or whoever stood behind him, realised this, for after having requested us to give a written declaration of our intention to restore the islands to Turkey, he at the last moment dispensed with this formality, probably in order to reserve for himself greater freedom of action.

A few days later the new phase of our campaign commenced.

One of our squadrons, commanded by Admiral Viale, having left Taranto between the 15th and 16th of April, concentrated at Stampalia, which had been already selected as our supply base; there it was joined by a secret foreign agent in our service who was to serve as pilot for operations in the Dardanelles. The principal object was to escort a group of torpedo boats to the Dardanelles, where they would make an attack on the Turkish fleet. The squadron arrived at the entrance of the Straits, as arranged, on the night of the 17th, but owing to very unfavourable sea conditions and the vigilance of the Turkish searchlights, the surprise was rendered impossible. In the morning a group of our battleships advanced with the intention of drawing out the enemy fleet, while another group lay hidden behind Imbros,

ready to cut off the enemy's retreat. The Turkish ships, however, did not appear, but the forts on both shores opened fire on our ships, which replied, keeping up a bombardment for two hours, after which they withdrew to fulfil other duties.

The object of our cruisers on this occasion was by no means to attack the Dardanelles, but to follow up a possible attack of our torpedo boats against the Turkish fleet and to carry out a demonstration to prove to Turkey that her belief that our liberty of action was impeded was an illusion. The brief artillery duel with the forts could not be considered as an attack and had been provoked by the forts themselves; but Turkey, whose only hope lay in stirring up international complications, seized this pretext to close the Dardanelles to commercial shipping, hoping thereby to irritate the other powers against Italy as being responsible for the damage done to their commerce.

The Turkish decision was indefensible; her right to close the Straits, sanctioned by the Treaty of London in 1841 and confirmed in 1856 and 1871, being explicitly limited to vessels of war. Legally neither a complete blockade of the Dardanelles by an enemy fleet nor their closing by the Turkish government was justified.

Sazonoff, who throughout this episode behaved with great sincerity, sent an energetic protest to the Porte, demanding the immediate re-opening of the Straits and threatening, in case of refusal, to exact reparation. From a practical point of view, the closing of the Straits was obviously unjustified, as our main squadron had already withdrawn towards Taranto and Tobruk. However, commercial interests in the Ottoman dominions made themselves felt in favour of Turkey. Sir Edward Grey, replying to a commercial deputation, declared that he would telegraph to Rome and Constantinople to obtain free passage for commercial shipping from the *Ægean* to the Black Sea and vice versa. Such a move on his part would have been another interference with our rights as belligerents.

We accordingly informed the British government that we could not admit any such infringement of our rights, which were perfectly compatible with those commercial interests that Great Britain wished to protect, inasmuch as Turkey was only entitled to close the Straits after they had been attacked. The best way to resolve the question, we added, *would be to take steps in Constantinople, seconding the action already pursued by Russia.*

Count Berchtold renewed the usual complaints, describing the attack on the Dardanelles as an act of provocation, which he little expected and which was in contrast with our friendly agreements. He could not, he declared, permit a renewal of such acts, and should they take place, the consequences might be very serious. Finally the Russian point of view prevailed, and Turkey, after offering some resistance, had to resign herself to re-opening the Straits and abandoning this attempt at striking at us by damaging the general interests of Europe.

Notwithstanding these diplomatic complications, we went forward resolutely with our established programme. On April 23rd one of our naval divisions, commanded by Admiral Presbitero, occupied the island of Stampalia, establishing a naval base and capturing the Turkish garrison. On May 12th the division commanded by Admiral Corsi seized Scrapanto, Cos, and eight other islands; the following day we occupied the remaining islands in the Dodecanese. The most important of these operations was that against Rhodes, where there was a strong Turkish garrison. Viale and Ameglio disembarked there on May 3rd and 4th, the Turks retiring without offering resistance into the interior of the island, which, after a small engagement at Psitos, surrendered.

The occupation of the islands aroused no protests, except from Austria, Berchtold renewing his complaints because our occupation had not been restricted to those islands especially designated by him. His contention was that the

Italian occupation of the islands gave Austria the right to claim compensation, which right, without waiving it altogether, he did not desire to press for the time being, as long as it was understood that the occupation in question marked the limit of such undertakings on the part of Italy. San Giuliano, who throughout this controversy, displayed great firmness and patience, replied that whatever power violated the duties of neutrality in favour of Turkey and sought to prevent us using all the means in our power to bring Turkey to her knees would be considered by the Italian nation as a friend and ally of Turkey and as hostile to Italy. To refrain from military and political operations owing to the opposition of Austria could not be continued for long without the true cause becoming apparent, and it might well be that the Italian government would be obliged sooner or later to declare the reason. San Giuliano concluded his argument by pointing out the contradiction between Austria's pretext that she could not recognise our sovereignty over Libya because Turkey was still able to resist, and her desire to prevent us from using all the means at our disposal to overcome this resistance.

Personally I never knew Count Berchtold, but San Giuliano, who met him later at Pisa, was not favourably impressed by him, judging him to be lacking in views of his own and quite under the thumb of the political and military *camarilla* in Vienna, which was merely waiting for a pretext to realise its projects in Albania and the Sanjak. It cannot be denied that his diplomatic methods, his continual complaints and half-threats to us, which never materialised, as well as his monotonous insistence on arbitrary and unfounded interpretations of our duties as allies and his unwillingness to reply to San Giuliano's arguments, gave the impression of a man who had neither freedom nor capacity for action and who, instead of judging a situation for himself, simply carried out the rôle which had been assigned to him.

The strange and ambiguous position of Count Berchtold

was revealed in a curious fashion during the last episode of this diplomatic controversy. The time came when our Admiralty considered it advisable for us to occupy Chios and two or three other islands of lesser importance in order to facilitate our naval control. As Berchtold was of the opinion that our treaty obligations made it incumbent on us to give notice and consult with him regarding any project of occupation and had reproached us for not doing so on preceding occasions, we instructed our ambassador in Vienna to notify him and discuss the question. Thereupon, Berchtold, shifting his ground, declared that such previous notification had the effect of making him a party to our undertaking and refused to be thus compromised. We might take what measures we wished, and if they were contrary to our treaty obligations, he would consider himself no longer bound by the latter nor by the secret Balkan Convention of 1909. Now as the occupation of Chios, though convenient, was not indispensable, I arranged with San Giuliano to counter Berchtold's move and abandon the idea of occupying the island; at the same time informing him that we considered that by our abandoning our scheme our mutual treaty obligations remained intact. We also sent a notice to the same effect to Germany.

Turkey's reply to our occupation of the islands was the long threatened expulsion of all Italian subjects from her territory. This was a very serious reprisal on her part, as there were at least twenty thousand Italian subjects at Constantinople and fifty thousand in other parts of the Turkish Empire. The effect of this measure on the course of the war was however quite negligible; indeed, had it been strictly applied, the mass of fugitives arriving at our ports, their want and sufferings, would merely have resulted in further irritating public opinion and would have spurred the Italian government on to attack Turkey at her most vital points. The German embassy, which was charged with the protection of

our citizens, showed little enthusiasm for this task, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein being incensed with Italy for having, as he considered, seriously damaged the work he had been building up in Turkey for the last twenty years. As a matter of fact, the decree of expulsion was very mildly applied, partly for the reason that many Italian subjects were employed in European undertakings which could not spare them.

Our last important naval operation in the *Ægean* was an incursion of our torpedo-boat flotilla into the Dardanelles, with Admiral Millo in command. As we had received word that the Turks were contemplating an attack on one of our isolated ships, instructions were given to our torpedo-boats to increase their vigilance, while moving further northwards. Thus it came about that one of our flotillas entered the Dardanelles and made a twenty kilometre dash, almost reaching Chanak. Despite discovery by the enemy and a cross fire from his batteries, the flotilla continued undismayed till it reached the anchorage of the Turkish fleet. Having found that the latter was securely defended by wire netting, rendering all attacks vain, the flotilla retired in perfect order, sustaining no losses, and not even pursued by the enemy, despite the fact that no large units were escorting the torpedo-boats. The flotilla had taken as pilot a foreigner well acquainted with the Straits. At a certain point of the operations this pilot, becoming frightened, wished to turn back; but Admiral Millo, pointing a revolver at his head, forced him to continue.

These complicated naval and diplomatic operations did not, however, make us lose sight of the war in Libya. Several months of suspended hostilities had enabled us reorganise and reinforce our expeditionary forces, equipping them with the necessary means for a series of rapid operations in more distant localities, with the object of breaking up various nuclei of Turkish-Arabic forces and of assuring our domination by making it clear to the native population, which furnished the Turks with recruits, that further resistance was useless.

These operations began with an attack on Misurata, one of the enemy's strongholds and chief centres of war contraband for Tripoli. On June 16th an expeditionary force under General Camerana, escorted by Admiral Borea Ricci's squadron, effected a landing and seized the most important positions after a sharp fight. On July 8th, Misurata itself, which lies several miles inland, was occupied after another engagement with the enemy. On July 21st, Colonel Fara began his march on Garian, which was the enemy's principal *point d'appui* in the interior; on August 5th, General Garioni, with two divisions which had just been landed, occupied Zuara, on the west of Tripoli, continuing the occupation as far as the Tunisian frontier, one of his objects being to put a stop to the contraband trade in arms and munitions carried on across this frontier. On August 31st, General Caneva left Tripoli, being deprived of the supreme command of the expeditionary forces, which were now formed into two independent groups, one in Tripoli and the other in Cyrenaica, under Generals Ragni and Bricola respectively. This decision was taken in view of the fact that unity of command was no longer necessary, and might even have impeded certain police operations rendered necessary by the new phase of the campaign, which required freedom of action and quick initiative. Several operations of this nature were undertaken on the west of Derna by General Reisoli towards the middle of August, resulting in an attack on a large scale by the enemy, who was defeated, leaving over a thousand dead on the field. A few days later another severe engagement took place near Zanzur, to the south of Tripoli.

These operations in Libya, carried on during the peace negotiations, which had already been semi-officially inaugurated at Ouchy, were, with other measures, intended to bring home to Turkey that, whatever might be the issue of these negotiations, we were resolved to go through with our enterprise in Libya at all costs until our rule over that country

was established and recognised. Another object of these operations was to break down local resistance, which might otherwise have continued even after Turkey had concluded peace.

Besides the operations in Libya and the Ægean, another little war was carried on in the Red Sea by a small naval squadron, aided by an Arab, Sheik Said Idriss, with whom we had formed a kind of alliance.

These operations in the Red Sea, calling for very special manipulation behind the scenes, were controlled by the ministry of the Interior under my personal direction. For various reasons it appeared desirable from the outset to extend our operations to these waters. We had to protect our colonies against a possible attack on the part of Turkey, though our cruisers and gunboats stationed at Massaua would have sufficed to ward off this danger. A more serious peril connected with the war in Cyrenaica was that the Turks might send officers and war material across the Red Sea and the Sudan to the Senussi, who had their headquarters in the oases of Kufra and Jarabub. Owing to the extent of the coastline, all the vigilance of our warships would not have sufficed to prevent this danger, while to carry out a blockade of the ports on the Arabian coast would have required greater forces than those at our disposal.

It was my opinion that the best way to stop the Turks from attempting such an undertaking was to keep them busy in Arabia. This was facilitated by the fact that Said Idriss, chief of the population between Mecca and Yemen, was already in a state of rebellion against the Turkish authorities for religious reasons, and also on account of the western tone and ideas adopted by the Young Turks which seemed pure heresy to the strictly orthodox Islamism practised in the land which gave birth to the Prophet and was the cradle of Mahometanism. I might point out in this connection that Idriss in his correspondence with us designated us as

"instruments of the will of Allah" and the Turks as "miscreant dogs" who had introduced new divinities into the Faith, such as Progress, Civilisation, etc.

In establishing connections with Said Idriss we were greatly aided by the Khedive of Egypt, who at this time was very much opposed to the Young Turks, fearing their ambitions and pretensions; in fact, throughout the campaign the Khedive showed himself to be a firm friend of Italy, in recognition, as he said, of the kindness which King Humbert and I had shown his father when he sought refuge in Italy after he had lost his throne and been exiled from Egypt owing to the Arab revolt and the British occupation in 1882. Despite the Turkish patrol of the coast, the Khedive's agents, specially sent to Massaua, succeeded in putting us in touch with Said Idriss, who gladly accepted our offer to assist him in his guerilla war against the Turks.

The command of our naval forces in the Red Sea was entrusted to Captain Cerina Ferroni, who showed great energy and capacity in conducting these operations, in which he was aided by Lt. Rubiolo, whose close knowledge of these regions proved of great assistance. Besides helping Idriss with money, we provided him with ten thousand rifles and three field batteries with their personnel, to enable him to attack the Turks in their fortifications, while our ships blockaded Hodeida to prevent supplies and munitions from reaching the Turks, also helping to bombard the coast forts. It being the aim of Idriss to seize the holy sites of Islam and turn out the Turkish garrison, which would have been a severe blow to the Sultan's authority as Caliph, the Turks, in their fear of this danger, made every attempt both to appease and frighten him—to do everything, in fact, which might deter him from his purpose. Thus at one time they projected a rear-attack by means of the Iman Yaia, who controlled the Yemen. We, on the other hand, sought to stir up the half-savage populations inhabiting the region between

the Yemen and Idriss' dominions to induce them to attack the Iman and forestall his assault on our ally.

To give an idea of the profound state of ignorance of these people, the following anecdote may serve. Among our officers who were negotiating with these tribes there was one who had a gold tooth, which so impressed the natives, who evidently took it to be a naturally grown tooth, that they came from all parts of the country merely to admire it.

This minor campaign in the Red Sea attained all its objects and also reacted on the situation in Cyrenaica, owing to the fact that our ally Said Idriss was related to the chief of the Senussi, whose authority was supreme throughout Cyrenaica. Even better were the moral and political effects of this campaign on the Turkish government and the Committee of Union and Progress. The latter had for some time been alarmed by the separatist tendencies of Arabia, Syria and the Yemen, and now feared that this campaign, together with the inability of the Turkish government to protect the Arabs in Libya, might lead to a general insurrection of the twelve million Arabs comprised in the Turkish Empire.

This campaign, despite its limited scope, also stirred up the usual diplomatic difficulties; the British government having through the Viceroy of India received protests from the Mahometans in India, Afghanistan and even China, despite the fact that we had taken every precaution not to interfere with the pilgrimages and studiously avoided all attack against the landing places used by the pilgrims bound for Mecca and Medina.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NEGOTIATIONS AT LAUSANNE AND CAUX

New steps towards peace and unacceptable proposals—Our relations with the Turkish Government—Volpi's conversations with Turkish personages—Preliminary proposal for negotiations and subsequent complications—Nomination of Prince Said Halem as Turkish delegate; of Bertolini, Fusinato and Volpi for Italy—Personality of Said Halem—Note sent to Constantinople but no reply received—Our delegate's scheme of compromise unacceptable—I cause fresh requests to be made, so that I can give way on them later—Crisis in Constantinople, and withdrawal of Said Halem—A Christian at the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs—Strange attitude of the German Ambassador at Constantinople—I refuse a proposal made by the Grand Vizier through Germany—New delegates; Nabi and Feredin Bey—Five Turkish proposals refused—Turin convention and my peace scheme—Mass of Turkish proposals of every description—Dilatory mission of Reschid Pasha—My threat to widen the area of the war, and notification of same to the Powers.

AFTER the failure of the collective steps taken by the powers through their ambassadors in Rome and Constantinople to find out on what conditions we were disposed to treat for peace, and to communicate those conditions in order that the Porte should take them into consideration, nothing further was done diplomatically to advance the making of peace. In the meantime we, especially when our operations in the *Ægean* caused some international uncasiness, declared openly that if the powers were afraid of complications, and desired to guard against them, they should try and persuade Turkey to abandon useless resistance, as we were ready to negotiate generously when the principle of our sovereignty over Libya was safeguarded. Conflicting and opposed interests, however, as well as mutual mistrust,

rendered a diplomatic understanding of this description difficult. Only after direct approaches had been made between ourselves and the Ottoman government were some diplomatic steps taken at Constantinople, always however with much diffidence and reserve, in view of the growing preoccupation there with the situation in the Balkans, which was daily becoming worse.

Thus after many preliminary efforts we arrived at approximate proposals. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who left Constantinople in June to take over the embassy in London, said in a conversation with our ambassador, Pansa, in Berlin that the Porte was now convinced that Tripoli was irretrievably lost to them. However, to recognise this openly by cession would be to suffer still more serious loss, either of prestige in the Mussulman world, or by the probable detachment of the Yemen. He added that the area occupied by us was still too small to make it possible to consider the delegation of the Sultan's authority to any local body with which we might later make an agreement. When our occupation was more extensive, Turkey would perhaps negotiate, on condition, however, that we would consent to reserve part of the territory of the interior for such Arabs as might prefer to retire there in perfect independence. This condition they regarded as a debt of honour.

A rather important move was made by Austria at Constantinople in the second half of June, with very kindly intentions towards us. Perhaps this was to compensate for the rather unfriendly attitude they showed in connection with our action in the *Ægean*. By order of Berchtold, the Austrian ambassador, Pallavicini, asked for an interview with the Foreign minister, Assim Bey, to urge the advisability of Turkey's putting an end to the war. He also called their attention to the danger of a prolonged occupation of the Islands, regarding the restitution of which, by Italy, Turkey had up to then been perfectly confident, possibly on account

of some diplomatic indiscretion. The first plan indicated in the Turkish-Austrian conversations was that Turkey should cede Cyrenaica to the Khedive of Egypt, and Tripoli to the Bey of Tunis, who would in turn cede them to Italy, with some clauses safeguarding the spiritual authority of the Sultan. This very unpractical suggestion was soon dropped. Assim Bey then advanced a new proposal. Turkey was to declare the two provinces independent under the control of an Arab Bey. The Italian and Turkish troops were to be withdrawn and a national army formed. Finally, Italy was to conclude an agreement with the local government which would assure her a position similar to that of France in Tunis. The Austrian ambassador himself told Assim Bey that these conditions could not be accepted. Another proposal, which came through the French ambassador, was made by the new Turkish minister for Foreign Affairs, Noraghourdian Effendi. He realised that an endeavour should be made to calm the Arabs, since up to that time the only idea had been to excite them. He proposed that Turkey should be allowed to send a mission to Tripoli to study the situation and realise the necessity for peace, and to learn from the natives on what conditions they would be prepared to lay down their arms. Another proposal was that we should content ourselves with Tripoli, which would be ceded to us with full sovereignty, provided we renounced Cyrenaica. They were all vague and unacceptable proposals, but had at least the effect of making it clear that a desire for peace was beginning to be felt in the Ottoman mind, as opposed to counsels of absolute intransigence.

In spite of the state of war, some indirect and quite unofficial relations had always been maintained between ourselves and members of the Turkish government, or other important persons. Commendatore Volpi contributed considerably to the maintenance of these relations, as he had a

large number of acquaintances and connections in Turkish circles. Commendatore Nogara too had remained as representative of the "Commerciale d'Oriente" at Constantinople, where he enjoyed great consideration and goodwill from important people. Commendatore Nogara, taking advantage of his special position never failed when an occasion offered to discuss the situation and the prospects of peace, with some of these personages. Amongst others, in the beginning of April he had a long and important conversation with the ex-minister of Justice, B. Halagian, an important member of the Committee of Union and Progress, which in turn had a decided influence on the government. He, whilst admitting that Turkey needed peace, put forward serious objections to arriving at a settlement. He observed that the Turkish government had succeeded in organising military resistance which would keep our army occupied for an indefinite period. In order to organise this opposition, Turkey had had to appeal to religious sentiments and depend upon the Islamic movement. They must now take into account the state of mind thus created, which forbade even indirect acceptance of the Italian claims. According to Halagian, the danger of disturbance in the Balkans was of more interest to the other powers than to Turkey. Thus the risks run by Turkey in continuing the war were less than in making peace, since by the latter course Turkey would have to abandon the Arabs who were fighting for her. This would inevitably cause a reaction, with the probable result that an Arab Caliphate would be proclaimed. This danger was sufficient to prevent Turkey from negotiating for peace on the basis which Italy desired. He admitted that to prolong this state of affairs was highly dangerous. The more intelligent Turks therefore wished to find an honourable way out, which could only be either by withdrawal of the decree of annexation by Italy, with continuance of the religious and political sovereignty of the Sultan over Libya; or military events of such a serious

nature for Turkey, either in Libya or elsewhere, as to justify the laying down of arms by the Turkish government in face of public opinion in the country. He concluded by declaring that the most eminent Turkish politicians desired to be forced by circumstances to make peace, but that diplomatic events alone would not be sufficient to bring this about. It is to be remembered that our naval action in the *Ægean* commenced shortly after this.

During May, when events in the *Ægean* were causing anxiety to the Turks, Commendatore Volpi came to me and said he must go to Constantinople, which he could do in his capacity of Serbian Consul, and asked if I thought it would be advisable to endeavour to discover the Turkish intentions. I told him that it would be very useful, as I was very anxious to know the condition of the government, and the true opinions of the most influential Turkish ministers.

Commendatore Volpi left for the Turkish capital on the 6th June, arriving on the 10th. A few days later an Italian born naturalised Turk came to see me (if I remember rightly it was Engineer Dinari) on behalf of Talaat Bey to find out whether the Turkish ministers could discuss matters unofficially with Commendatore Volpi. I replied that though he had no mandate from the government, they could initiate useful conversations. Volpi at once had an interview with the War minister, Mahmoud Chefchet Pasha, a very trustworthy and honest man; also with the Foreign minister, Assim Bey, a cultured and intelligent diplomat, with an important member of the Committee, Hussein Djaid Bey, and with Halagian Effendi, deputy for Constantinople and vice-president of the Chamber. The general impression which he obtained from these conversations was that the members both of the government and of the committee were especially anxious about our action in the *Ægean* and the occupation of the Islands, and convinced of the necessity of finding a solution. The War minister told him that if Turkey

could find an honourable way of ending the war, he would be disposed personally to enforce it, even at the expense of his popularity, but that he was unable to find any such solution. Assim Bey, the minister for Foreign Affairs, said he was convinced of the gravity of the moment for Turkey, and the danger of losing the Islands, apart from Italy's action. He showed himself to be the possessor of a ready and clear understanding of the situation, setting aside all thought of an international conference, which seemed to him impossible, and which, even if it took place, would have the usual result of causing fresh complications. He concluded by undertaking to work out a formula, which might be the prelude to the end of the war, and would be based on the previous declaration of independence or autonomy of the two provinces of Libya. A project was then drawn up at a meeting of the committee, at which the most important ministers assisted. The next day the vice-president of the Chamber, Halagian Effendi, communicated this to Volpi. Turkey admitted that the two African provinces were lost to her, but added that Italy had not yet effectively occupied them. In these circumstances Turkey was ready to recede from her present attitude of irreconcilability, but Italy too must go back on her decisions considerably. The government and committee were considering the possibility of declaring the two provinces autonomous, providing for the creation of one or two States to be governed by special international agreements, in which all economic, agricultural and industrial activity would be reserved to Italy. The military forces would be local, with perhaps a command of mixed Italian and Turkish officers, thus forming a sort of effective dual government. The Italian troops would be allowed to hold the positions occupied. In another conversation the minister for Foreign Affairs confirmed these notes, adding that for his part he thought it would be possible even to obtain the full and absolute sovereignty of Italy in Tripoli, its port and immediate hinterland.

Thus the Italian government would have been able to show that the decree of sovereignty was being applied, and would also obtain an excellent naval base. This proposal was also authorised by Talaat Bey for the Committee, and by the president of the Chamber for the parliament. Before Volpi left for Italy on the 16th of June, he was informed that in any case it had been decided to nominate a Turkish commission, composed of influential members of the Committee and persons having the confidence of the government, to get into touch with me or other authorised Italians in a private way, in order to find a means of ending the war and coming to an agreement.

According to the instructions he had received, Commendatore Volpi maintained the greatest reserve with regard to these proposals, confining himself to putting forward the Italian point of view and arguments. He carried out his mission with the utmost tact, not compromising himself in the slightest degree and maintaining our fundamental points intact. The mere fact that, in spite of this, he was received by and had long interviews with some of the most important men in the government, and that they made proposals which, if not acceptable, were at least far removed from the irreconcilable attitude adopted up to that time, was a notable achievement, as it showed that the desire for peace was beginning to be felt by our enemies. The proposal to nominate representatives for unofficial conversations, in order to find a solution of the problem, pointed to the same thing. Anyone understanding the Eastern mentality did not expect them at once to give up the belief that they might still, by means of ambiguous phrases and procrastination, save what was irretrievably lost. I attached special importance to the fact that the Turkish government recognised the advisability of negotiating directly with us, without intervention or mediation, which would only have served to complicate an already extremely difficult problem.

The responsibility for keeping in touch and continuing

the conversations with the Porte in order to reach an official agreement was continued by Commendatore Nogara after the departure of Volpi from Constantinople. In the first place the Turks proposed that the conference should take place at Vienna. I objected to this, pointing out that the Austrian government would not fail to find a means of knowing everything that was happening at Vienna, whereas it was our mutual intention to keep the negotiations secret until an agreement on the main points had been reached. I proposed Switzerland. Thereupon the Turks mentioned Lucerne, but consented to Lausanne, which seemed advisable as it was quieter. Fresh difficulties arose however between the 16th of June and the end of that month. The Committee having accepted the principle of direct understanding, had already decided on the nomination of the commission and had chosen the men. The Grand Vizier and the minister for Foreign Affairs had given their unconditional approval, outlining as a basis for the understanding the proclamation of autonomy in a form which should protect both Italian and Mussulman prestige. Even men outside the government, such as Hilmi Pasha and Kiamil Pasha, had expressed consent to this solution. Suddenly, however, the most irreconcilable Mussulman element intervened, Talaat Bey expressing their views in the Council of ministers. He declared that the Committee would lose the support of the whole religious party if they entered into direct negotiations with Italy. It seems that they had drawn up a scheme by which the Commission of negotiators should not seem to act directly for the Committee or the government, and in a general way, that the Mussulman element should not appear to be involved. These uncertainties were the result of the Albanian complications and the approaching crisis in the cabinet, which in fact resigned a few weeks later. They also gave rise to fresh proposals, amongst others a suggestion to cede us only the coast, and to bargain for the interior in exchange for our East

African colonies. We held fast, however, to the principle of not discussing the matter until the Commission had been nominated, and retaining always the basis of our decree of sovereignty. Finally, on the 2nd of July the nomination was made, and Said Halem Pasha, president of the Council of State and ex-president of the Committee of Union and Progress, an Arab by birth, was made head of the mission. We had contradictory information as to his character and position. It was said that he was very much respected, as being superior to party spirit, and had been nominated so that the conversations with Italy could be carried on in the event of the fall of the government. Other rumours stated that he was a man of no importance and had been sent by the government so as to gain time without compromising them in any way. Probably the Turkish government meant to use him in either capacity, according to circumstances.

For our part, we nominated our representatives officially: Bertolini, who had great political authority and was a thoughtful and strong man; Fusinato, for his knowledge and experience of international law; Commendatore Volpi, who had shown that he understood the Turks, and had the merit of having started the conversations.

The delegates for both sides arrived at Lausanne between the 10th and 11th July, living very quietly at the Hotel Gibbon. The first meeting took place on the 12th. Said Halem, feeling the importance of his official position as president of the Council of State, insisted upon our delegates being officially presented. This was done by our minister at Berne, Cucchi Boassi, who on my instructions went to Lausanne on purpose. Fusinato gave me a characteristic account of that first meeting in a letter which I give below:

"His Highness Said Halem Pasha," he wrote me on the 15th July, "is a man of 55. He has short hair almost entirely white, and a moustache of a darker shade, which should be

an indication that he has worked more with his head than with his mouth . . . quite a sympathetic face, reminding one of Orlando, on a smaller scale. Manners and dealings very courteous and perfect, a well-bred gentleman. He speaks French very well and smokes excellent cigarettes which are made specially for him by the Ottoman State manufactory. As you know, he is an important personage. He has the title of Highness on account of his relationship to the Khedive of Egypt. He is a senator, president of the Council of State, and as such a member of the Council of ministers by right. He was of the old régime, but quickly and readily passed over to the new, and enjoys the trust of the Young Turks. It is even said confidentially that his substitution in place of the person first arranged, was made in consideration of the present Ottoman crisis. It was advisable to choose a man who, being in a sense outside and above all parties, might be recognised and accepted even if the cabinet changed. For my part I think he was chosen rather because he was coming here to the lake in any case, where he has rented a beautiful villa at Evian, facing Lausanne. Amongst other things, our friend the enemy is very rich.

"In any case, all this matters very little. Undoubtedly he is here as direct representative of the Turkish government. We have got into touch under excellent conditions and terms. Whatever may be the development of the conversations, the important point is that contact should not again be lost.

"But if His Highness undoubtedly represents the Ottoman government, unfortunately up to the present he has represented their ideas far too little. I will explain myself better. I am absolutely convinced that he came here *without any official instructions*. He has talked with Carasso, the member for Constantinople; he knows in the main the opinion of the ministers at whose Council he takes part, *but he has no real instructions* . . .

"We got into touch thus. The appointment being made

through Nogara, we went up without being announced. On our arrival we shook hands, then sat down, and His Highness opened the conversation with these precise words:—*Il fait chaud aujourd'hui* . . . from which I at once understood that we had to deal with a man of profound observation. I might have replied that at Constantinople it was warmer still, but preferred to keep quiet and agree. After a few more phrases of equal value, we reached Africa. And this is the good part. When both sides had made a few very friendly and trusting remarks suitable to the occasion, the Pasha said that 'Carasso had told him that the main lines of an agreement had been reached on the basis of autonomy.' In substance, autonomy of the two provinces declared and agreed to by the two parties, under the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan, with the coasts being ceded to Italy. Thus Italy (he repeated it ten times) would secure all the political advantages which she desires to obtain from her enterprise, and matters would be arranged in the best way and with the least loss of time. All our efforts to persuade Said Pasha that no agreement existed or could exist between our two governments; to make him detail his ideas; to make him understand the Italian point of view; to persuade him to have a practical and concrete discussion—all these efforts of ours have up to the present been practically in vain. That man had in his mind but one preoccupation and one word—autonomy. It is all that he had retained of Carasso's talk. At the end of every speech we made, he repeated with desolating monotony 'autonomy.' To our strongest arguments, when he did not know what to reply, he always had one phrase to settle it—But what becomes of the autonomy with these proposals of yours?

"On the other hand, if we did not succeed in understanding what Said wanted, he declared confidentially to Nogara that he could not understand what we wanted . . . Not that he was stupid; indeed I judged him to be a man of

judgment, in proof of which he succeeded in talking for three days always saying the same thing and never compromising himself. To be precise, he has attached himself to the fixed idea of *autonomy*, and he will not move from there; and we began to think with anxiety that matters might drag on without end. It was then that we had the idea of making Nogara wire to Carasso for real and precise instructions. The resulting situation, by which without Said's knowledge, we are in direct relations with the Committee from which Said himself receives his instructions, is not without its humorous side, and could only arise in dealing with the Turks. At the same time, we have invented a sort of—shall we say trick—by having an account of the proceedings taken with the obligation to submit it to our respective governments. This at least insures our point of view being transmitted to Constantinople correctly and will, it is to be hoped, provoke more precise instructions . . .

“ In fact, here is a summary of my impressions :
(1) The Turks really desire peace, and Said interprets them correctly in this. (2) What genuinely holds them back in the matter of concessions is: (a) the impression which would be made in the Mussulman world by the abandonment of the Arabs; (b) the difficulty of making parliament swallow too big a pill. (3) It will be uphill work to come to any practical conclusion with Said, in spite of everything. It is for this reason that, also through Nogara-Carasso, we suggested strengthening Said by the addition of some more versatile person. (4) This idea of autonomy may show a great advance towards the making of peace on the part of the Turks. Substantially, it is the renunciation of Turkish sovereignty; it is not yet an acknowledgment of our sovereignty but it is an abandonment of theirs. It is also an acknowledgment of ours where it already exists, on the coast. The difficulties in which the Turks find themselves, and which I have indicated, are real, and stronger than the good
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will of the Turkish government. We must see if on our part we can do anything to help that government to overcome them. Without something of this sort, I do not believe it will be possible to reach an agreement."

This letter from Fusinato gives a perfect picture of the commencement of the diplomatic conversations at Lausanne, and shows our and the Ottoman points of view. The account of the proceedings to which Fusinato refers, which was the first diplomatic document relating to those negotiations, was intended to set forth the respective points of view of the two parties. On our part, it explained that Italy did not ask for recognition of our sovereignty by Turkey, but that she would not accept any formula denying it. On the Turkish side it set forth the impossibility of absolutely cutting off the two African provinces from the Empire, its duty to the Mussulman world forbidding the abandonment of the Arab population which had fought for Turkey. Passing to possible solutions, the Turks advanced the proposal for autonomy under the supreme sovereignty of the Sultan, whilst recognising the Italian occupation of the coast. According to the Turks, Italy would thus enjoy the fruits of her enterprise. We replied that this point of view could only be made to agree with the Italian one in the following manner: That Turkey should concede autonomy to the two provinces by an act of her own and in respect of her sovereignty; whilst Italy, also by her own act, would decide in the most generous terms the administrative principles to be applied to those territories. Then the two governments would declare hostilities at an end, either together or by separate acts issued simultaneously. Shortly afterwards, agreements for the resumption of political, judicial and economic relations would be made.

As days passed without any instructions coming from Constantinople, where the government was in a state of crisis, and Said Pasha was making no move to meet the Italian

views, our delegates made some suggestions as to possible concessions which would facilitate a solution for the Turks, as expressed in Fusinato's letter given above. Bertolini put forward a solution which lent itself to a double interpretation. It provided for the making of an agreement concerning the interior of the country to last for thirty years, together with minor concessions, such as the establishment of a religious representative of the Sultan in Libya, to be paid by the proceeds of the *vacufs*, or religious property, and the setting aside of a fifth of the customs towards the Ottoman debt and so forth. Another proposal made by our delegates was to leave the situation in the Fezzan unsettled, undertaking on our part not to occupy it for a long period. This would give the Arabs who intended to remain faithful to the Sultan time to find a refuge. San Giuliano too was not averse to this proposal, by means of which, according to him, the Fezzan would be like colonial hinterlands such as that of Somaliland, the political status of which remained undefined for a long time. I gave my consent to the appointment of a religious representative and the contribution to the Ottoman debt, which was imposed upon us by considerations of an international nature, but refused the other proposals. I pointed out to Bertolini that his proposal for a thirty years' agreement would not only be contrary to the principle of sovereignty, but might be dangerous in the future and give rise to complications if Turkey ceded its rights to others. As to the proposal concerning the Fezzan, I had the greatest objection to granting a form of treatment to that district which was not entirely in accordance with the decree of sovereignty. It would make a very bad impression in the country, and probably lead to difficulties of an international character. I remained firm in my opinion that, as we had assumed the responsibility of the undertaking in Libya, it was our duty to face all the difficulties without avoiding any of them, so as not to leave an inheritance of possible trouble to our

successors. Since under these circumstances we were making no progress, Turkey having nothing more to ask, and we no more to offer, I thought it advisable to change our tactics, and create difficulties for Turkey which we could later remove. So I wrote to our delegates that in my opinion it was no longer advisable to talk of possible concessions. Rather was it desirable to place on the table all the points on which we could ask for something to enable us to make concessions afterwards. I pointed out that we could demand that our ally Idriss should have the same treatment accorded to him in the Assiz as was granted the Iman Yaia in the Yemen. Also we could draw attention to the Islands which we could hold by right of conquest, or return only against serious guarantees in favour of the inhabitants. Another request I suggested putting forward was one for an indemnity to Italians exiled during the war. In this way we could have kept the discussion alive, and avoided cutting off direct negotiations, in which I had great faith, since it was to Turkish interests to avoid the intervention of the powers, which might have cost her dear. Also it would be possible at the decisive moment to make various secondary concessions in order to gain the main point, and in the end this is what actually did occur. In a fresh conversation which took place on the 19th of July, our delegates told Said Halem that, pending the settlement of the crisis in his government, and the arrival of new and more precise instructions from Constantinople, it seemed advisable to talk over minor questions, which would also have to be settled at the moment of making peace. At first Said Pasha was reluctant, saying that, on the contrary, the minor points would cause no difficulty when the main questions had been decided. He ended however by agreeing to the new discussion, and the question of the Islands was placed on the table. Our delegates attributed their occupation by us to the obstinacy of the Turks, and indicated the various solutions of the position to which Italy could

agree. We would either take them definitely under Italian sovereignty and set up a sort of autonomy, or give them back under stringent guarantees as to the treatment of the inhabitants.

Said Pasha listened to this statement with ill-humour, and made a curious reply: "I can understand the historic or political reasons which led to your Libyan enterprisc; but these do not extend to the Ægean Islands. In any case, if you really want to keep those Islands, do so; but do not ask for our consent, which we will never give. If on the other hand, you mean to give them back, nothing is to be gained by this discussion. The question of the Islands does not exist for me. You occupied them temporarily as an act of war. When the war ends, you will leave them, and they will return to our sovereignty. By raising the question of the Islands, you increase the difficulties, and are not giving a proof of goodwill."

The conversation as to the Islands was also reported and sent to Constantinople and Rome. The irritation which Said Pasha showed over this question proved, in the opinion of our delegates, that our aim had been accomplished.

A few days later Said Pasha informed our delegates that, as a new cabinet had been formed at Constantinople without Tewfik Pasha, with whom he was very intimate, he considered that his mandate had ceased to be effective. He added that with the fall of the government he was no longer president of the Council of State. The new ministers were for the most part men of the old régime, not compromised in the war, conciliatory by nature and accustomed to the sacrifices of Turkey. Hilmi Pasha was an old friend of Italy, and Kiamil who had been kept informed of the conversations, was disposed towards peace. The retention of Noradroughian, the Armenian Christian, in the position of Foreign minister, also seemed particularly significant. In connection with this, the Germany under-secretary of State for Foreign

Affairs, Zimmermann, told our ambassador that he thought Kiamil had wished to have this Christian minister at the Foreign Office in order to make him the scapegoat for the concessions repugnant to Ottoman public opinion which it would be necessary to make in the interests of peace.

As the silence of Constantinople continued, on the 28th of July Said Pasha took leave of the Italian delegation, and our representatives too decided to leave on the same day, holding themselves ready to return as soon as Turkey showed its intention of renewing the interrupted conversations.

The conversations at Lausanne being thus suspended, we thought it advisable that Commendatore Nogara, who had already rendered such important services in starting them, should return to Constantinople and find out, through his numerous acquaintances, how the situation really stood.

He arrived on the 30th July, and at once had a long interview with the minister for Foreign Affairs, Noraghourdian, who undertook to place before the Council of Ministers the nomination of new delegates. On the evening of the same day he advised Nogara that the Council had decided to continue the conversations, and to nominate new delegates, giving them the necessary instructions. The minister added that the new government was strong enough to impose peace on the recalcitrant Mussulmen, but it was necessary to calm them, and to this end he considered that we should abstain from further acts of war. He also added that the Chamber, whose consent could not be expected on account of its nationalist character, would be dissolved, as indeed happened. He declared that he would give instructions to the new delegates to forward the cause of peace, but that he must know how far Italy was prepared to go. He concluded by saying that peace could only be brought about by the consideration of the question from the Italian point of view by the Turks, and from the Turkish point of view by the Italians. Wishing

as far as possible to aid the work of the Turkish government, I gave orders to suspend operations of a warlike nature in the *Ægean* for the present, but to intensify the campaign in Libya, and particularly in Cyrenaica, in order to disillusion the Turks of the belief they still held that, as our occupation of those countries was not very extensive, Italy would be willing to renounce Cyrenaica. A few days later, we were informed that the two new delegates nominated by the Turkish government were Naby Bey, ex-minister plenipotentiary at Sofia, and Faredin Bey, consul-general at Budapest, who had already seen diplomatic service in Rome. We had excellent reports of both, as men of sterling honesty and common sense, and as being animated by good feeling towards Italy. We had every occasion to congratulate ourselves on their conduct, which was always from the first straight and loyal. Faredin Bey was a great admirer of the West, but detested Europeanised Orientals.

A small complication, which might indicate more serious things, was revealed in a conversation which Nogiya had with the new German ambassador at Constantinople, Waggenheim, who had only succeeded Baron Marschall von Bieberstein a few weeks. Whilst showing the utmost cordiality and declaring his wish to place himself at our disposal, Waggenheim suggested that it would be convenient if the conversations were held in Switzerland instead of Constantinople, where, according to him, there would be more probability of reaching a rapid conclusion. He then admitted that the position of the Turks was shaken in Tripoli, but remained strong in Cyrenaica. He added that Italy should content herself with a régime similar to that of the British in Egypt, insisting on this point a good deal, and saying that it was the opinion of the Ottoman government itself. Now we knew that when Baron Marschall von Bieberstein left Constantinople, he promised the Turks to do his utmost to save Cyrenaica for them; it was therefore evident that he had passed on this

project to his successor. The matter was sufficiently serious, because these speeches that Waggenheim was making, probably not to us alone, would have the effect of creating illusions in the minds of the Turks and encouraging them to resistance, in the belief that they represented the German government's point of view. I therefore telegraphed to Nogara to advise Waggenheim that full sovereignty over the whole of Libya was a *sine qua non* for Italy, failing which we would refuse to treat. I also telegraphed to the Berlin government calling their attention to the utterances of their ambassador, which were very damaging to us, and showed him to be animated by sentiments of hostility to Italy. I took this occasion to re-affirm that the integral application of the decree of sovereignty was an unalterable condition of our terms. We received satisfactory assurance from Berlin on the subject, and Waggenheim was told to refrain from declarations contrary to Italian interests. In spite of these admonitions, we found that the ambassador persisted in maintaining these opinions, even upholding and defending them in conversations with Commendatore Nogara. This compelled us to make fresh protests and appeals, the more so as we knew him to be in constant communication with the head of the Turkish government. The German under-secretary of State, Zimmermann, informed us that the Grand Vizier, in a conversation with Waggenheim, had said that there were only two possible formulas of peace, viz., the cession of Tripoli to Italy, keeping Cyrenaica for Turkey; or the cession to Italy of the parts actually occupied by her, leaving the rest of the country to the natives, allowing Italy to settle matters with them. The minister for Foreign Affairs, Noraghourdian, in fresh conversations with Commendatore Nogara, and in the name of Kiamil Pasha, also broached a proposal for an armistice and the despatch of a delegation to Libya to persuade the Arabs to make terms with Italy. In the meantime the representative of the Committee, the deputy Carasso, insisted on autonomy.

These proposals were then made by the Grand Vizier to Waggenheim in a new conversation, and transmitted to Berlin. Zimmermann, in talking to our ambassador, showed that he thought the suggestion that we should hold the coast and leave the rest of the country to the natives worthy of consideration, believing that it would not be difficult for us to come to an agreement with them. I told San Giuliano, who communicated this proposal to me, that I considered it most dangerous, as any distinction thus made in Libya, besides being contrary to our decree of sovereignty, might also involve us in grave difficulties with Britain and France, and even the Arabs themselves, who would thus be placed in perpetual warfare, and might also, according to international law, invoke the assistance of foreign powers. Since San Giuliano, in a long letter, persisted in maintaining that the existence of a hinterland whose political position was not yet decided, would not be the cause of serious inconvenience, I replied that, in my opinion, our insistence on the point of sovereignty should be immoveable, and that I would never sign a peace made on the conditions proposed by the Grand Vizier. It is worthy of note that these ideas of the Turkish government, which the German ambassador at Constantinople still upheld in spite of the reproofs of his government, were confirmed through another German source, namely, through Helfferich, who later took a considerable part in the German financial administration during the world war.

These discussions and indiscretions had at least the advantage of giving us an approximate insight into the instructions which would be given to the new Turkish delegates to be sent to the fresh conference in Switzerland, which had been transferred from Lausanne to Caux. The chief point of these instructions was not to give way on the point of the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan over the territory which was not yet occupied by our troops. For this reason, when

the Turkish delegates arrived at the place of conference on the 12th August, I gave instructions that our offensive in Libya should be intensified, especially in Cyrenaica. I also informed the minister for War that in his calculations he must bear in mind that there could be no real peace for three months. To our delegates I gave instructions that they were to refrain from giving any hope of concessions, and were even to make fresh difficulties and raise new claims. For instance, I suggested that the question of the Islands should be settled by means of a plebiscite of the inhabitants.

On the morning of the 13th of August the new conversations with the Turkish delegates were commenced, ruling out those at Lausanne.

Naby Bey declared that he was charged by his government to present to us five written proposals, which were to form the basis of the discussion. The first and the second took for granted our renouncing part of the new African possessions. Our delegates discarded them immediately, as they were in open contradiction to our law of sovereignty. The third proposal tended to establish in Libya a régime similar to that of France in Tunis. The Turkish delegates explained that by this the Ottoman government intended to leave us complete and absolute control of the two provinces, and only asked that we should consent to a formula which would serve to dupe (the word was used by Naby himself) Turkish public opinion and Mussulman susceptibilities. When our delegates replied that this solution too was contrary to our decree of sovereignty and could not be accepted, the Turkish delegates showed a regret which seemed sincere. Naby Bey and Faredin Bey did not refrain from making a long and clear explanation of the mass of difficulties in which the Turkish government found itself. On the one hand were the pretensions of the army, on the other those of the Committee and the Arabs. All these had to be overcome in order to persuade them to accept a solution which, whilst

leaving the substance to Italy, would at least save appearances. As to the other two proposals, the Turkish delegates said they would present them as soon as they arrived.

They reached Caux on the 27th of August. One proposed conceding autonomy, giving to Italy full sovereignty of two ports, as yet uninhabited, whose sites should be decided later. The Turkish representatives tried to persuade us that this virtually meant the abandonment of Libya to Italian administration. The other suggested the granting of autonomy to Cyrenaica and absolute cession of Tripoli to Italy, which in turn was to compensate Turkey by giving it Massaua and Eritrea. Naturally these too were at once refused.

In the meantime, as the Turkish government was pressing to know our reply to the first three proposals presented through its delegates, our representatives authorised them to telegraph to their government in precise terms, themselves dictating the reply. It was "That the three proposals made by the Ottoman government were refused by the Italian government as they were incompatible with Italian sovereignty." On the request of the Turkish delegates, our representatives consented to give them, for transmission to their government, a summary of the chief points considered necessary for peace by the Italians. This formed the first draft of the peace treaty eventually accepted by Turkey. Our representatives then repeated solemnly to the Turkish delegates that rather than renounce in the slightest degree the law which proclaimed sovereignty, Italy would fight indefinitely, carrying the war even into Arabia, Asia Minor and Albania. Also that the Islands would never be evacuated by us until the Turkish troops and officers had been withdrawn from Libya.

Up to this point our delegates had carried on the conversations on the basis of instructions received. These might be summed up as follows: absolute decision on the capital point of sovereignty, and a spirit of conciliation on the rest, leaving the Turks to advance their proposals and putting

forward some ourselves, so that points on which we could afterwards make concessions might be found. I transmitted other instructions and personal notes as the Turkish proposals were presented and discussed, leaving the necessary liberty to our negotiators to discuss them. They used this liberty with the greatest discretion and with good results. However, letters from Bertolini and Fusinato displayed some anxiety lest the conversations should reach a deadlock, and have to be abandoned. This I wished to avoid by any means, as I was persuaded that sooner or later, if the discussions were continued, we should arrive at some conclusion. I therefore thought it advisable to have an exchange of ideas with our delegates, in order to definitely fix our programme. This meeting took place on August 25th at the Hotel Bologne at Turin. Having minutely examined the course of the conversations and their results, I proposed the following scheme. The Turkish government was to declare the independence of the Libyan population, and nominate a religious representative of the Caliph, by a separate act. Italy in turn, without stating it in the treaty, undertook to make all possible concessions to the Arabs. The Turks, also without inclusion in the treaty, were to make the necessary concessions to the people of the Ægean Islands. After this we would pass to the full draft of the peace treaty. This formula would have avoided many and serious difficulties of the Turkish government, as it in no way obliged them to recognise, even indirectly, our sovereignty. On our part, we should not have had any international obligations either to the Arabs nor to the inhabitants of the Ægean Islands. This project was presented in a new conversation which took place between our delegates and those of Turkey on the 27th of August, on their return to Caux. They did not seem greatly to appreciate the idea of a religious representative. They remarked that the nomination of a Mufti and other religious authorities was a necessary corollary of the Mussulman faith,

which requires representatives of the Caliph even in foreign lands, such as India, Bulgaria, Russia, and wherever there is a Moslem population. Therefore this concession was entirely superfluous, and did not eliminate the difficulties of the Turkish government in inducing the country to accept the treaty of peace. They proposed on the other hand to nominate a Bey who would be—they expressly said—a figure-head, and who, if he was inconvenient to us, we could remove after a year or two. Turkey would then protest to us and the powers, but naturally without result. They also observed that as Turkey did not recognise Italian sovereignty, it would not be able to nominate a consular officer. Why then, if we objected to the existence of a Bey, did we not allow the Turkish government to create a representative of the Sultan in a vague form, which, without indicating an investiture of political power, would make it possible for Mussulman public opinion to interpret it in that way. Italy, in her separate act, would confine herself to considering him as a purely religious and administrative representative?

Thus, though slowly, these conversations began to lead to a way out of the difficulty. It is superfluous to enter into all the new proposals made to us, now through Commendatore Nogara, now through an ex-French ambassador, M. Revoil, who held an important position in the business world in Turkey, and who had an exchange of views with Marchese Garroni at Carlsbad, and again through the Turkish ambassador at Paris, in conversation with our ambassador, Tittoni. These proposals were of every description. We were asked what would be our attitude if Turkey requested the good offices of Britain. We were told that an important personage had proposed the arbitration of the President of the United States, with an assurance that the President was ready to offer his services. In fact, a proposal for American mediation had been made to me too, but was not followed up after my declaration that our proclamation of sovereignty

was irrevocable. It was proposed to send a member of the Turkish government to treat direct with me at Rome. We were also asked if Italy would be willing to cede to Turkey, as indemnity for the loss of Libya, two of the best ships of her fleet. The importance of this last proposal can be appreciated when one remembers that the first signs of the Balkan war were already in the air, and that by this cession on our part, Turkey would at one stroke have gained the superiority over the Grecian fleet. It was proposed that we should come to a *modus vivendi*, putting off a definite solution to a European conference, Turkey undertaking not to oppose recognition of our sovereignty, in exchange for our support in other economic and political problems.

The last of these proposals, which were one by one presented by the Turkish delegates, or broached by some member of the government to Commendatore Nogara, arrived at the absurdity of suggesting the continuance of the sovereignty of the Sultan in Libya, at the same time making no objection to Italian sovereignty. Thus the country would have had a double sovereignty, each of which would have pretended to ignore the other! To all these proposals, some of which were ingenuous or fantastic, others clever and insidious, I replied in the negative, giving the reasons for my denial, insisting on our solution, and stating that the matter must be decided by the Turkish and Italian delegates at Caux. I attached no importance to this criss-cross of plans and proposals. It is, however, interesting to note that for Turkey it was no longer a question of substance but of form. For her it was not a question of Cyrenaica and Tripoli, which had been irremediably lost from the beginning, but political internal prestige in face of the Mussulman world, and particularly the Arabs. Other special and partisan interests were interwoven with these general political ones; interests of the government, the Committee of Union and Progress, of the army, each wishing that the responsibility for the situa-

tion and its consequences should fall on the others. The government then in power, consisting of elements of the old régime, wished to hasten a solution, so that it might appear that they had been obliged to act on the *status quo*, and thus make the responsibility for the loss of the African provinces fall on the Young Turks, who had preceded them. The tactics of the Committee were to involve the government in this responsibility, by refraining to support them until the Libyan question was settled. Others, in the expectation of the outbreak of a Balkan war, of which there were already many indications, and in the conviction that this war would easily be won by Turkey, thought it useless to make peace with Italy, and better to leave the question of Libya to be decided by a European conference, which would have to settle the consequences and results of the war, together with other matters. Add to this the financial intrigues which are never wanting on an occasion of this sort, and the bright ideas of some diplomats like the one who, as the president of the Turkish Senate informed us, advised the Turkish government to spin things out, as the weakening of Italy would be useful to the general political situation. This gives an idea of the net of complications in which our action had to develop, complications which confirmed me in my resolution to follow a straight and clear line.

One of the Turks most conscious of the necessity of putting an end to the untenable position, which was becoming ever more dangerous, was the Christian minister for Foreign Affairs, Noraghourdian Bey, an able and intelligent man. He too feared to shoulder the responsibility which might later expose him to reprisals. In any case, he upheld the advisability of accepting our proposals as a basis for negotiations. At the same time the difficulties were, if not eliminated, at least reduced through a compromise signed between the Liberal party headed by Kiamil, and the Committee of Union and Progress. This compromise recognised that peace was

a national necessity, and the two parties undertook not to make the conditions an electioneering platform or to oppose the government. There was also some idea of sending pacifist missions through Tunis into Tripoli. Then again difficulties arose in Libya and among the Arabs. The military commander in Tripoli, informed of the negotiations, telegraphed to Constantinople that in spite of the conclusion of peace, he would continue the war on his own account. At the same time the Arab committee at Constantinople threatened to consider the cession of Libya as a sufficient reason for the proclamation of the fall of the Caliphate.

Thus fresh uncertainties and waverings occurred, and we were informed that the Turkish Council of Ministers had decided to send Reschid Pasha, formerly ambassador at Rome, and at that time minister for Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, to come and confer with me in Rome. His mission was to be kept absolutely secret. According to our information, Reschid Pasha was to ask Italy, in view of the rapidly maturing Balkan crisis, for important political undertakings, in recompense for the conclusion of peace on our conditions. Probably Reschid's mission was simply an expedient for delay, or covered a hope of obtaining further concessions. In any case, I informed the Turkish government that I was willing to receive him here in Rome, but warned them that his coming would be absolutely useless if it was intended to try and obtain any modification of our law of sovereignty, which not only the government, but parliament and the Italian people were firmly resolved to maintain at any cost. In spite of this warning, Reschid left Constantinople. He stopped at Vienna, where he was to await final instructions, and from there advised me that he would prefer to meet me in some city near the frontier, from whence he was to go on to Lausanne to join the other two Turkish delegates. I replied to this request that the Italian Premier would never make a journey to meet the Turkish

minister for Agriculture; also that it would be useless in view of the desire for secrecy, as I was well known all over Italy; but as I was going to stay at Cavour for a week, I should not object to the meeting taking place at Turin instead of at Rome.

When Reschid arrived at Ouchy, near Lausanne, on the 29th of September, where our delegates and the Turks had moved a few days previously, he replied that he was not willing to meet me in Turin or any other Italian city, as the Council of Ministers had only authorised him to meet the Italian Premier outside the frontier. This declaration was in contradiction to the communications made on the subject by the Turkish representatives to our delegates, according to the instructions received from their Foreign ministry. Reschid replied that the instructions of the minister for Foreign Affairs were insufficient for him unless accompanied by an explicit resolution of the Council of Ministers, which he promised to request. This was quite in accordance with the idea that Reschid's behaviour merely indicated the Turkish government's effort to gain time, and was openly alluded to in the discussions with our delegates, his vague and general replies confirming their suspicions. Turkey was menaced by a Balkan war, which broke out actually later, or by a European conference. It was clear that while waiting to see the course of events, it was to her interests to keep Italy in play. As Reschid was an old friend of Fusinato, who had been on very good terms with him when he was ambassador at Rome, the latter tried to get something further out of him in a strictly private talk. He ended by deciding that Reschid had no other mission than to implore me in the name of the highest interests of the Ottoman Empire to lend Turkey our diplomatic assistance in the Balkans. They were in fact taking advantage of the special position in which Italy was placed on account of the war, and trying to draw her into obligations which might have been in opposition to the general trend

of European diplomacy. This, besides being contrary to our previous diplomatic engagements, would have placed us in a very dangerous position. In the meantime, on the 1st of September I telegraphed to our delegates advising them to make the Turkish representatives understand quickly and clearly that if a conflict broke out in the Balkans, I would immediately break off all negotiations, as it would be preferable for Italy that the Balkan settlement should come whilst we were in full possession of the Ægean Islands. Further, that it was not in accordance with our dignity to prolong negotiations with a government which showed that its only aim was to cause delay.

I also charged San Giuliano to inform the powers of the state of affairs, and to let them know that, as we were now certain that the Turkish government did not mean to do anything but equivocate, we had decided to break off relations and resume the war more energetically, not only in Libya, but against the most vital parts of the Ottoman Empire. This warning to the powers was the more justified since, although advised by us of the course of the negotiations, and asked to help them on by some advice to the Porte, in the general interests of European peace, they had for one reason or another so far abstained from doing so.

The next day, 2nd of September, our representatives communicated to me that they had been able to prove definitely that Reschid, who believed himself to be entirely dependent on Kiamil, and took no heed of any instructions from the ministry for Foreign Affairs, had neither the necessary powers nor the intention of coming to a decision. Also that having now understood the futility of any attempt to obtain concessions on the question of our sovereignty, he had foregone the idea of meeting me, fearing amongst other things, as he himself confessed, that he might compromise his own political future if he appeared to have had any decisive part in the conclusion of peace. Though he remained at Ouchy, he

confined himself to acting as adviser to the delegates of his government, without assuming the rôle of third delegate, much less that of head of the delegation, as he should have done, according to the information with which his coming and his mission had been announced.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE

Eight days' ultimatum to Turkey—Turkish government asserts that it accepts our proposal—Fresh Turkish excuses—Italian fleet sent to the Ægean Sea—Order to attack Smyrna and Dedeagatch—Peace signed at last—Various criticisms of the war and its diplomatic and military conduct—Peace at any price people: Humanitarians and Nationalists—Post-humous criticism: did the Libyan war hasten on the European war?

THE attitude and behaviour of Reschid Pasha, and the fact that Constantinople no longer took any notice of communications and requests for instructions from the Turkish representatives, convinced me of the necessity of bringing more energetic pressure to bear on the Ottoman government. I was fully aware of the embarrassments and difficulties in which that government found itself, between the question of peace with us and the menace of a Balkan war, which was already imminent. It was also evident that the various authorities of the kingdom were trying to evade their responsibilities, both collectively and individually, at our expense, not even hesitating to adopt expedients that were redolent of bad faith. It therefore became necessary to make them realise that our patience and forbearance were not unlimited, and that we were not inclined to play their game indefinitely.

In the course of conversations which took place between our representatives and those of Turkey, a basis of agreement was arrived at in the first half of September. The Turkish representatives personally always acted with the utmost

loyalty, fully understanding the situation, and doing their best to find a solution. After twenty-five days of discussion, the Turkish delegates, on the 6th of the month, communicated a new proposal to our government. After conferring with me, the Italian delegates replied, on the 10th of the same month, that the Italian government was ready to discuss matters on the new basis, provided it was modified in certain respects which did not take account of our pretensions. Thus a secret scheme of agreement was reached, the signing of which was to precede the signing of the peace treaty, a copy of which was sent to the Turkish government. Three weeks passed before the Turkish delegates succeeded in obtaining a reply of any sort from their government. As I thought that this state of things might serve as a basis for some future action on our part, I therefore decided that our delegates should inform the Turkish representatives that if the secret agreement were not signed within eight days, that is, before the 10th October, we should suspend the negotiations, considering ourselves entirely free to take whatever action we liked. I suggested that this declaration should be made by means of a brief note, laying stress upon our patience and the shiftiness of the Turks since the arrival of Reschid. At the same time I telegraphed from Cavour, where I was still staying, to San Giuliano, telling him to communicate to the powers that on account of the increased dilatoriness of the Turks since the arrival of Reschid, it was probable that the negotiations would be broken off; also, that we proposed in this case to resume military action without any regard for the 'Turks, and with renewed energy. This action would take place in the Ægean, and I resolved to come to a decision on my return to Rome in two days' time, after studying all the particulars, and taking into account the international agreements then under discussion, since I did not wish it to seem that we were in any way provoking a European war. This communication made a great impression on the Turkish

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delegates, who at once sent a long and urgent telegram to Constantinople. Reschid also confessed that, although he had been sent by the Foreign minister to Turin, he had no formal mandate from his government. He added that the Foreign minister was decidedly in favour of peace, that he was backed by the Grand Vizier and Kiamil Pasha, but that he was stubbornly opposed by the Sheik of Islam on religious grounds. The Turkish delegates also wanted to continue the discussion on the secret agreement, at the same time raising fresh objections and asking for new concessions. I advised our delegates to make it clear to the Turks that we had reached the limit of our concessions, that we would on no account exceed them, and that Turkey must now reply with a plain yes or no. They were further to say that if a European conference became necessary, we should find the possession of the Islands very useful; and that if war broke out between Turkey and the Balkan countries, we should, since we were already in a state of war, be at liberty to wage it very thoroughly. I also advised them that our navy had from that time orders to prevent the transport of any Turkish troops by sea and to sequester the ships used for such transport.

This energetic move produced the effect I had foreseen. Through our agents we were advised from Constantinople that a cabinet courier had immediately left with fresh instructions to the Turkish delegates, and that at the same time the Turkish representatives at Ouchy had asked telegraphically for full powers. We also learned that after our notice the German ambassador had received instructions from his government to advise the Turkish government to cease dallying, and that the French ambassador at Constantinople had informed his government that the Porte had authorised Reschid to give way on the question of sovereignty. On the 4th the Turkish delegates told our representatives that the secret agreement had been approved by the Turkish Council of Ministers without substantial modifications.

The secret scheme of agreement ran practically as follows: In the first place the Sultan was to issue a *firman* spontaneously, granting full autonomy to Libya, and nominating his representative, already chosen in the person of Chemseddin Bey, a good and reasonable man of whom we had the best reports. The Sultan's act was to be followed by one on the part of Italy, who was to grant an amnesty, on the basis of her law of sovereignty, to all the fighting Arabs, recognise the Sultan's representative in religious matters, and accord full religious liberty. The third act was to consist of an *iradè* by which the Sultan was to grant an amnesty and radical reforms for the Islands of the Ægean which we had occupied. Finally, there would follow a reciprocal act which re-established peace and the *status quo ante bellum* between Italy and Turkey. The withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Libya was to precede our withdrawal from the Ægean Islands. Not wishing to abandon our ally Idriss, I demanded that he should receive a full amnesty, and be placed in the enjoyment of a situation similar to that of Iman Yaia in Yemen; while Turkey on her part asked that we should pay to the Ottoman Debt the amount which she annually derived from Libya.

In spite, however, of the information and assurances that we received from various quarters, it soon appeared that the Turkish expedients to gain time were not yet at an end. On the 8th, we were informed from Constantinople that when the Council of Ministers assembled to discuss the peace with Italy, a great demonstration had taken place around the Sublime Porte, and the people had demanded the continuation of the war and the resignation of the cabinet which had made peace. Military action was feared, and martial law had been proclaimed. The minister for Foreign Affairs had been threatened with death, and was very frightened and depressed. On the 10th, Commendatore Nogara wired confirming the fact that the government had really decided to conclude peace, but that for constitutional reasons and

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insurmountable internal difficulties, they were bound to upset the procedure already approved of in the secret agreement.

We learned on the 11th, in brief form, after the expiration of our ultimatum, what this reversal of the agreement coming from Constantinople amounted to, and the next day we had all the particulars through a long communication which the Turkish delegates received from their government. The scheme of the secret agreement was entirely upset. According to this latest proposal of the Turks, the signature of the peace treaty was to take effect immediately, but the issue of the *firman* by which the Sultan was to accord full autonomy to Libya, and the withdrawal of the Turkish troops were to be delayed until after the peace treaty had been approved by the Ottoman parliament. It was further demanded that Italy should renounce her rights of suzerainty over the inhabitants of Libya when they were in Turkish territory. This would cause us to lose all prestige with the Arabs. Lastly, they asked us to abandon the clause in the agreement which compelled the Ottoman government to prevent arms being sent to the Arabs who persisted in fighting against us. I at once telegraphed to our representatives to reject these proposals without the slightest discussion, as they were all absolutely unacceptable. At the same time, I pointed out, amongst other things, that the failure to publish the *firman* granting autonomy to the Arabs rendered it impossible for the powers to recognise our sovereignty. Further, that a peace treaty contracted on such a basis would practically amount to this: that we should be giving money to Turkey and allowing her to move her troops freely by sea, while we should receive in return nothing but a promise on her part to withdraw her troops from Libya, while they, secretly instigated, might even refuse to obey. At the same time, after informing the King of my action, I had orders sent to the squadron of Admiral Amero d'Aste to be ready for energetic

action, while Admiral Viale, who was at Taranto with his squadron, was told to be ready to leave for Turkish waters. We also advised the powers that the renewed tergiversation of the Turks now rendered military action indispensable, though we had hitherto refrained from this even after the expiration of our *ultimatum*, at the same time the outbreak of war in the Balkans rendered any further extension of time unnecessary. It was our intention, if war was recommenced, to attack the fortifications of Smyrna, and to cut the railway connections at Dedeagatch in European Turkey. This would have caused grave embarrassment to Turkey in the mobilisation which she was carrying out in face of the threatened attacks from Bulgaria and Greece, as all communications between Constantinople and Salonica would have been interrupted.

Our delegates at Ouchy had immediately protested on receipt of the new communication from the Turkish delegates, and declared that the new proposals were unacceptable. However, being convinced that Turkey would give way at the last moment, they asked for permission to grant another short respite to Turkey for signing the treaty. I consented to grant a last time limit up to midnight of the 15th, without undertaking to prevent any action which our fleet might take. This time the despatches of the Turkish representatives to their government had the effect of persuading them that the utmost limit in their policy of dilatoriness had been reached. A Council of Ministers, convoked on the morning of the 14th, re-examined, under pressure of our *ultimatum*, the constitutional question which had been raised as one of the previous time-gaining expedients. It was discovered that a clause of the Turkish constitution gave the government power, in case of national danger, to make peace by simple decree without waiting for the approval of parliament. On the evening of the same day, the Turkish delegates announced to our representatives that they had received instructions to sign

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our copy of the preliminary agreement, but even at that last moment they advanced requests for modifications, some reasonable, others insidious. It was proposed to eliminate from the *firman* the preamble in which the Sultan admitted that he could no longer defend Libya. I replied that I would consent to modify any phraseology which might offend Turkish military *amour propre*, but I insisted on retaining the purport of the clause, and above all the exhortation to the Arabs to accept peace. Failing their acceptance I let it be understood that I should also cut out the clause relative to the announcement of the nomination of the Sultan's representative. They requested that in our decree of amnesty to the Arabs the reference to our law of sovereignty of 5th February should be struck out. The insidiousness of this proposal, acceptance of which would have been shameful to us, does not need explanation. The inclusion of the question of Idriss in the treaty was objected to, as it seemed humiliating for Turkey to have to make promises to another power regarding the treatment of a rebel. I consented to have the question of Idriss settled by a spontaneous amnesty to be granted by the Sultan. It was further asked that we should pay the annual amount to be obtained from the Libyan taxes for the Ottoman Debt in a lump sum to be handed over immediately. To this too I consented, as I preferred to settle this matter out of hand rather than let it appear that we were subjecting ourselves to an annual tribute. Then a rather important request of a political nature was advanced, namely, that we would undertake to support Turkey in her Balkan policy. This request, made in such a form, and in face of the critical situation then existing, was unacceptable, as it might have placed us in an embarrassing position with other powers. I replied, confining myself to giving an assurance of our goodwill towards the problem of the integrity of the Turkish Empire in Europe and Asia. Thus the discussion with regard to the substance of the treaty came to

an end, the Turkish delegates having instructions from their government to try and obtain these concessions if possible, but to sign in the end in any case.

I must also record that at the last moment some of the powers finally thought it advisable to use their influence for peace. The German ambassador, Waggenheim, and the Austrian representative, Pallavicini, received instructions, on the initiative of Germany, and after an exchange of views between Berlin and Vienna, to take a firm tone with the Porte. The American ambassador acted in the same manner, but independently. England did not interfere, partly on account of Sir Edward Grey's personal scruples as to the duties of neutrality, on which subject he felt very strongly, and also on account of possible repercussions of discontent in the vast Mahommedan world under British rule in India and elsewhere.

Even after this we were not free from insidious attempts at tergiversation, since we found that the credentials sent from Constantinople to the Turkish delegates were not valid, either through carelessness or bad faith, as they only bore the signature of the Foreign minister. We were able to overcome this without further loss of time, having the genuine document conceding plenary powers deposited at the German embassy in Constantinople, where it was accepted, the document verified, and official advice sent to us. Thus, at 6 p.m. on the evening of the 15th October, before the expiration of the last extension of time granted by us, the preliminary agreement of peace was finally and legally signed. The same evening, at the request of the Ottoman delegates, we gave orders for the suspension of hostilities in Libya, whilst on their part the Turks telegraphed to Constantinople to restore the normal customs treatment to Italian goods.

The Sultan's *firman* containing the proclamation of Libyan autonomy, and the *iradès* as to the Islands and Idriss were signed by the Sultan on the 16th, and promulgated the follow-

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ing day. On the same day, the King of Italy signed the decree of amnesty to the Arabs and the proclamation of religious liberty for Libya. At 3.45 p.m. on the 18th, the peace treaty was at last signed at Ouchy. On the same day I advised the King that I had decided to institute a ministry for the Colonies, and telegraphed to Bertolini asking him to accept the position, which he did. Then followed recognition by the powers of our sovereignty in Libya. The first to make such a declaration was Russia, on the 16th of October; on the 17th and 18th Austria and Germany followed, while on the 19th England recognised our sovereignty, as did France a few days later. On the 20th our delegates reached Rome, bringing with them the original of the treaty, and on the 22nd General Tassoni sent Captain Camera from Zuara to the Turkish camp at Garbia to carry out the disarmament of the Turkish troops, which was effected without any difficulty. Towards the end of November the treaty was ratified by parliament.

The political and diplomatic, as well as the military, conduct of this singular war was carried out under exceptional conditions. The conclusion of peace also gave rise to criticisms of every sort, to which I replied in a speech in the beginning of March, 1914, though my answer was necessarily affected by existing international conditions. Now, when many of the reasons for diplomatic reserve have ceased to exist, those criticisms can be examined in the light of more general and detailed information.

As always happens in such cases, the criticisms were contradictory. On the one hand we were accused of having brought about the war precipitately, while there were those who maintained that we had gone too far in prosecuting it. Other critics declared that we had not chosen the moment well; whilst some again accused us of being uncertain and timid, and of not having been energetic enough. Certain of our critics reproved us for having formally declared war

on Turkey, holding that we should simply have occupied the territory in question, as in an ordinary colonial occupation. To which the reply is, in the first place, that Libya was an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, and to occupy the territory of a great power without first declaring war would be a violation of international law. In the second place, had we not made a formal declaration of war, we should not have had the right to prevent contraband trade, for the exercise of which right a state of war is necessary. The same critics reproved us for not having chosen the right moment, maintaining that before taking action we should have at least waited to see if any other power betrayed an intention to interfere. We were also accused of not having made adequate diplomatic preparation, and many insisted on the unseasonableness of our declaration of sovereignty in Libya, which, according to them had the result of prolonging the war and rendering its solution more difficult. To the greater part of these criticisms I have already replied in my account of the diplomatic developments, which were for the most part unknown up to this time, or only partly known. In the light of these revelations, even those criticisms which seemed best founded before the facts were known, fall to the ground. It must be clear to anyone at this day that had we delayed our declaration of sovereignty in Libya the government would have been spared many difficulties especially if it had been content to accept concessions of a secondary character. However, any government doing this would have passed on to its successors much more serious difficulties than those which I considered it my duty to face in order to obtain a definite settlement of the question. There was also a final criticism for which there was some justification in the difficulties attending the establishment of our authority in the whole of the conquered territory. Bissolati voiced this criticism, though he had been a convinced partisan of the enterprise. Bissolati held that we should have limited our occupation

to the coast, waiting for the population from the interior to come to us spontaneously. From my point of view, if we had done this, the new colony would have been practically useless to us, and we should have been in a state of constant war with the interior, the inhabitants of which would not have understood our conduct. Moreover, that territory had been recognised as ours by the powers, and declared as such by our proclamation, and if the population of the interior, left to themselves, had commenced raiding either in Tunis or Egypt, as it was reasonable to expect they would, the governments of those territories would have had the right to say: either take steps to see that the frontier is respected, or we shall exercise the right of taking such steps ourselves.

Still more lively and clamorous was another category of critics, having the ear of the public, who blamed us for having done too little. There were also the humanitarians, who would have had us seize this occasion for a general crusade for the liberation of all Christian peoples and oppressed nations still remaining under the Ottoman yoke. There were the Nationalists, too, according to whom we should have made a great war demonstrating the whole power of Italy, which from the very beginning should have been directed at striking Turkey in its most vital spot.

The reply to these criticisms too is contained in the diplomatic revelations I have made, which show with what difficulties we were surrounded and with what prudence we had to act in order to counteract the universal hostility which our enterprise encountered from the very start from the world of high finance. This hostility was reflected in the greater part of the European press and public opinion, and ended by drawing into the affair those governments which, though they caused difficulties from time to time, never raised any real and concrete obstacles. For that matter, to attack Turkey in a vital part was a fine phrase which had no basis in reality. When we thought it convenient to move

the field of war from Libya to the Ægean, everywhere we turned we found British, German, Russian, French, and even American, but never Turkish interests. It might be said that Turkey was armed with the debts of every kind which she owed to all the great powers and their citizens. This state of affairs compelled consideration from us. However, I must add that this enforced respect coincided with our own interests, as evidently it was not to our advantage that the Eastern question should be opened whilst we were engaged in Libya, nor that any action of ours should give a pretext to anyone, more especially Austria, to make an advance in the Balkans. The diplomatic history of the war, which I have given, shows how we always had to keep an eye on Austria to see that she did not take advantage of the position to settle the problem of Albania at our expense. Our critics would also have had us push on the operations in the Libyan interior more rapidly and energetically. Such action would have demanded a heavy price in human lives. Now, if in a national war for the defence of one's native land no regard should be had to the number of casualties, I believe that in a colonial war one's duty requires one, on the other hand, to avoid a useless loss of life.

I thought, and still maintain, that the success of an enterprise must be measured not by the theatrical grandeur of the means adopted, but by the serious use of the force adapted for its accomplishment. We merely proposed to conquer Libya, and to that end we took diplomatic and military measures. In my opinion, our greatest merit was that we succeeded in the ends we had in view from the very beginning, without having recourse to daring coups which would have implied corresponding risks, and without provoking other questions and conflicts. Unfortunately few are immune from the peculiar sort of excitement which always accompanies any war. As an example of this, I remember a strange proposal which was made to me by our Chief of Staff, General

Pollio, who was a very thoughtful and intelligent man. He transmitted to me a document in which, after having examined the various aspects of the case and the difficulties involved in its solution, he proposed that a decision should be sought by making a great military expedition in Asia Minor, disembarking at Smyrna. To attack Asia Minor meant to engage ourselves where Turkey had its greatest force, and apart from the military difficulties of the situation, which would have called for at least one hundred thousand men, there was the question of international politics to be considered. General Pollio got over this difficulty by saying that if our action was met by hostility on the part of the great powers, Italy could abandon the enterprise and re-embark her troops without humiliation, yielding to force of circumstances!

Generally speaking, the peace was well received, both in parliament and by the press and the country at large. There was, however, no lack of criticism, especially on the part of those who, when the Balkan war broke out, wanted us to place ourselves at the head of Turkey's new enemies, and take advantage of the situation. The outbreak of the Balkan war was for me, on the other hand, a fresh and powerful reason for obtaining a separate and prior settlement, so that at the end of that war we should be amongst the judges, and not among those who were to be judged.

Finally, there is a posthumous criticism which would attribute to the Libyan war the first responsibility for the catastrophe which occurred in the following years. These critics almost go so far as to claim that it was the first link in the chain of events leading to the World War. There is no reason why the supporters of this theory should not revert to still earlier incidents, such as the protracted Moroccan question and that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which of themselves threatened to cause a European war, and kept public opinion and the various governments preoccupied for several

years. Our war, on the other hand, was rightly considered from the very start as a detached episode. And in fact, the germs of the Balkan war were already active in the situation which had arisen in that region, and the fear that such a war must break out had been the general anxiety for some time. It was believed, though, that Turkey would easily conquer the little Balkan States, and that then there would be a European conference to settle the matter. The Turkish defeat led to a new and more radical settlement in those countries, as it largely corresponded to the racial differences of the people living in them. This settlement has for the most part survived the European war, and this shows that it gave no real reason or legitimate or inevitable motive for the World War. Other causes were at work to provoke that catastrophe, amongst which were chiefly the provocations and ambitions of Vienna.

CHAPTER XV

CONSEQUENCES OF THE BALKAN WAR AND REPEATED ATTEMPTS AT AGGRESSION ON THE PART OF AUSTRIA

Renewal of the Triple Alliance and reasons therefor—Serious aspect of the Albanian question—Aggressions by Serbo-Montenegrins and Greeks—Scutari and the Corfu Canal—Grave situation between Austria and Russia ; mutual threats—Austria's proposal to Italy regarding joint aggression of Montenegro—My refusal based on conviction that such aggression would lead to European war—My correspondence with San Giuliano—Emperor William exerts pressure—Ambassadors' conference—Dodecanese question and England's unrelenting attitude—French compromise in favour of Greece—I maintain Italy's point of view, which is accepted—Austria's second attempt at aggression, this time against Serbia—My refusal of Italian intervention based on absence of *casus fœderis*—Agreements in regard to Asia Minor—Pacifism of Emperor William.

ON December 5, 1912, about two months after the end of the Libyan war and the conclusion of peace with Turkey, we renewed the Triple Alliance, several months before the date of its expiration. Both Germany and Austria had suggested this anticipated renewal while the Libyan war was still in progress, their proposal reaching us just after the incidents which had arisen between France and Italy in connection with the *Manouba* and the *Carthage*, which had greatly impressed public opinion in Italy and done much to lessen the cordial feelings toward France aroused by the friendly attitude of the French government at the beginning of the Libyan war. It will therefore be easily understood that our allies readily seized this opportunity of making their proposals to renew the treaty.

This offer coming as it did at a time when Italy was engaged

in war, could, at all events, be construed as a very friendly act, being tantamount to a notification to all the world that Germany and Austria, despite their particular interests in Turkey, were on the side of Italy. Its significance, viewed from this point, was indisputable. Accordingly I expressed to both governments my high sense of appreciation of their friendly offer, adding that in view of the declared annexation of Libya the recognition of this fact would be a *sine qua non* for the renewal of the treaty. Germany and Austria replied to the effect that as they had declared for neutrality at the beginning of the war, they could not, without going back on their obligations, sign a treaty which recognised as already in our possession the bone of contention between us and Turkey, which had been, in fact, the cause of the war. I, for my part, could not but acknowledge the justice of these contentions, and it was agreed that the alliance should be renewed as soon as Germany and Austria could, in conformity with international law, recognise our sovereignty over Libya. This was done as soon as the war was over, the treaty of alliance undergoing no sort of modification although I should have wished to comprise in it the agreements concluded with Austria since the last renewal. One of these expressly referred to Albania, and the other, signed in 1909, and kept secret, was connected with the general interests of the two powers in the Balkans and their mutual obligations. My view that all agreements existing between the allies should be embodied in one treaty was not, however, shared by Germany or Austria; both alleging that for political reasons, internal as well as foreign, they wished to be in a position to declare that the treaty had in no way been altered, thus avoiding any suspicion that the introduction of new clauses had changed the purely defensive character of the pact. I did not, therefore, insist on this point.

The renewal of the Triple Alliance about eighteen months before the outbreak of the European war, which at the time

aroused no objections either at home or abroad except among those who had always been opposed to the treaty, gave rise later to criticism in view of subsequent events. Among other things, it was said that this renewed alliance with the Central Empires was a mistake, as there was already a threatening of war.

Those who employ such arguments confuse the position of the statesman, who has to act on a given situation and who lays no claim to being a prophet, with that of the critic and historian, who is in the happier position of being able to judge after the event. Similarly it is easy to find in retrospect signs of impending events among incidents of slight importance, which in the light of after occurrences gain a new significance. To the unbiassed critic, however, it must be apparent that despite the undeniably aggressive temper of the Austrian military party, there had not been up to that time any real danger of war and that there was even good ground for looking forward to a period of peace. Many of the perilous questions which in preceding years had been a cause of anxiety to Europe, had now been settled; among others, those of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Morocco. Furthermore, the situation in the Balkans, which for a long time had threatened the peace of Europe, especially in the Near East, had, thanks to the victory of the Balkan States over Turkey, found a solution which for the greater part corresponded to the rights of nationalities and practically resulted in the expulsion of Turkey from Europe. Doubtless this arrangement ran counter to Austrian ambitions; hence the incidents which it is now sought to turn into infallible indications of coming events. It must, moreover, be added that Germany, without whose approval Austria would certainly not have assumed the responsibility of making war, had always adopted the rôle of peacemaker.

On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the relations existing between Italy and Austria, both on account

of the unredeemed territory and of our conflicting interests in the Balkans and in Albania, were of such a nature that the two countries found themselves forced to be either friends or open enemies. Therefore a refusal to renew the alliance would have appeared as an intention on our part of assuming an openly hostile attitude towards Austria, in which case the military party in that country, which had always been opposed to us, would not have missed the chance of giving vent to its traditional animosity. For the same reasons, which made me anticipate and forestall any move of Austria's threatening to draw us into some adventure which might have led to war, I had to be careful to avoid strained relations arising between the two countries. In this connection I might note that since I had assumed the responsibility of directing Italian politics, I had made every effort to divest the Triple Alliance, at least as regards Italy, of every aggressive aspect, however remote. With this object in view, I had striven to improve our relations with France, and establish contact with Russia, always preserving our traditional friendship with England. At no time had there been any concealment of this conciliatory and pacifist policy, and the fact that it had never given rise to objections on the part of Germany and Austria was the best proof that our interpretation of the Triple Alliance as an essentially defensive pact in the interests of peace, was the right one.

As already mentioned, the last phase of our peace negotiations with Turkey coincided with the outbreak of the Balkan war. For some time past our diplomatic representatives had informed us that there were preparations in the Balkans for striking a decisive blow, and some months previously Venizelos had offered to join in our war against Turkey, proposing to invade Macedonia with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand. As it was not to our interests at the time, however, to bring the Turkish question to a head, we not only refused the offer, but even advised Venizelos to be prudent

and keep the peace. The powers most interested in the Balkans had, as a result of the jealousies and rivalry prevailing among the various States which Turkey had always very skilfully turned to her own profit, refused up to the last moment to believe in the possibility of a Balkan League against Turkey. Their illusions were quickly dispelled when the League was organised, and succeeded, contrary to general expectations, in overthrowing the military power of Turkey; though eventually in the second phase of the Balkan war their former judgment was confirmed by the internal dissensions among the victors.

European diplomacy, which previous to this war had confined itself to warnings and reservations, ended by accepting the results of this campaign and only imposed its decisions in one particular case, that of Albania. The Albanians, who had loyally fought on the side of the Turks, found themselves after the defeat separated by a considerable distance from the centre of the Ottoman Empire, so that the constitution of an autonomous Albanian State became imperative. With regard to this there was a general consensus of opinion among the great powers, resulting, as regards Italy, in a *rapprochement* with Austria for the defence of common interests. However, difficulties arose in respect of the establishment of the Albanian frontiers, these being disputed on the north and east by Serbia, who aimed at obtaining possession of Jakowa and a port on the Adriatic, by Montenegro, who desired Scutari, and, on the south, by Greece, where she was seeking to enlarge the frontiers of the Epirus. The ambitions of Serbia and Montenegro were seconded by Russia in conformity with her Pan-Slav policy, while Greece was supported by Great Britain and France. During the continuation of the state of war with Albania, as forming part of the Turkish Empire, Greece invaded the south and Serbia and Montenegro the north, the former attempting to reach the coast and Montenegro making efforts to seize Scutari. Italy and

Austria, however, had agreed to defend Albania, which, if too greatly mutilated, would have been unable to constitute a vital State, Austria being principally concerned in preventing Serbia and Montenegro from reaching the coast, and we in preventing the shores of the Corfu canal from falling into the hands of Greece, which in the opinion of our naval authorities would have been very prejudicial to our strategic situation in the Ionian Sea. In this policy Italy and Austria had the support of Germany, who, however, showed friendly dispositions towards Greece, partly for dynastic reasons—a sister of the Kaiser having married the heir to the Greek throne, later King Constantine—and partly because she hoped to detach Greece from the Triple Entente and to draw her within her own sphere of influence. According to information we received, it appeared that Constantine was personally favouring this change in Greece's policy and that Germany was counting on this change. The European war subsequently showed that our information was well founded.

From this complicated state of affairs arose a situation fraught with a danger which at times seemed insuperable. Happily, notwithstanding conflicting policies and interests among both groups of the great powers, counsels of moderation and a spirit of goodwill prevailed in warding off worse evils, it being finally decided to submit the most intricate and delicate of the problems to a Conference of Ambassadors, which met in London early in 1913. This conference was marked by a very conciliatory spirit. Austria, to satisfy Russia, withdrew her opposition to Serbia's occupation of Jakowa, whilst Russia agreed that Scutari, which was besieged and bombarded by the Montenegrins, should remain Albanian.

Montenegro, however, not only refused to give way to the unanimous decision of the powers, but even assumed a provocative attitude with regard to Austria, so much so, that

she appeared to be seeking to precipitate a conflict in order to extricate herself from her untenable position. By adopting this attitude she was playing into the hands of the military party and of certain other factors in Austria which had unwillingly accepted the new situation in the Balkans which was due, first, to the victory of the small States over Turkey, and, secondly, to the defeat of Bulgaria at the hands of Roumania, Serbia and Greece. The results obtained threatened to upset Austria's traditional programme of expansion towards the East and penetration to the Ægean Sea by way of Salonica. After the death of Aerenthal and the appointment of Berchtold, who lacked both prestige and authority, the military party greatly gained in influence with the Austro-Hungarian ministry of Foreign Affairs, and doubtless to its influence may be ascribed Austria's two serious attempts at aggression, the first against Montenegro, and the second against Serbia, in both of which she sought to implicate Italy.

Apart from my brief declaration after the outbreak of war, but while Italy was still neutral (November, 1914), nothing has transpired of these diplomatic episodes, which, if not frustrated, would have ended in war a year earlier. The time has now come when it seems both opportune and interesting to reveal the entire story; the more so, as all the documents have remained in my hands, owing to the fact that I was not in Rome at the time when these events occurred. Nor, I may remark, was it mere coincidence that they occurred during my absence from the capital.

Count Meroy, at that time Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Rome, was a strange character who often employed methods and language which might be described, to say the least, as "undiplomatic." This tendency, which may have been in accordance with instructions received from Vienna, he indulged to such an extent during the war, that both San Giuliano and I, who had to treat with him, were sorely tempted

to show him the door. As, however, it was hardly the moment for provoking diplomatic scandals, I systematically and clearly showed that I did not take his arrogance seriously. Thus I remember that on one occasion he asked for an urgent interview with me, the object of which was to make a protest because in Corso Vittorio Emanuele a shop had been opened under the sign of *Trento e Trieste*. In reply to this I observed that if he had continued his walk along the same street he would have found another shop entitled *Alla Citta di Vienna*. For these reasons Merey avoided having dealings with me and complained that I made fun of him. It was therefore not surprising that he took advantage of my absence from Rome to carry out certain instructions from his government.

What actually happened is as follows. The Marquis Imperiali, our ambassador in London, had informed us that the German ambassador, in compliance with orders from Berlin, had presented a memorandum to Sir Edward Grey concerning the necessity of prompt and energetic joint action in order to force Serbia and Montenegro to submit to the decisions taken by the powers in regard to the Albanian frontiers. This memorandum, after reviewing the situation, suggested somewhat hesitatingly that it might be advisable to give a mandate to one or two powers whereby they might enforce these decisions on Serbia and Montenegro. Sir Edward Grey replied that he, too, had sent warnings but that he did not think, in view of Russia's disapproval, that a collective step could be undertaken, adding that he was not certain up to what point Italy would be willing to acquiesce in such a mandate or with what favour she would see it entrusted to Austria.

In view of the possibility of such a mandate being given to Austria, San Giuliano at once instructed our ambassador at Berlin, Bollati, to notify von Jagow that Italy would firmly oppose such a measure, even at the risk of having to vote with the Triple Entente against her allies, as under the present

circumstances it would practically result in Austria conquering part of the Balkan territory. This step met with my full approval. The same day Mery proposed to San Giuliano that Italy should join Austria in a naval demonstration against Montenegro. San Giuliano, in communicating this suggestion, observed that although any form of territorial occupation by Austria must be avoided at all costs, it might for obvious reasons be necessary to participate in the proposed naval demonstration. As it was my belief, however, that a naval demonstration against a mountainous country would necessarily entail a landing of troops, I replied to San Giuliano in the following terms:

"I am absolutely opposed to our taking part in a naval demonstration, which, unless followed up by a landing of troops, is a mere farce, or, if military operations are undertaken, is the first step to a European war. The new attitude adopted by Austria means that the military party has gained the upper hand, her proposal being nothing less than an attempt to restrict our liberty of action and to bind us to her service. To send warships to Scutari is more than a mere demonstration, as merchant ships would suffice to transport the inhabitants. For these reasons it is my opinion that we must refuse."

San Giuliano, who was very anxious to counterbalance Austrian influence in Albania, telegraphed to me again the same day drawing my attention to the damage our influence might suffer if Austria, by taking action alone, should gain the gratitude of the Albanians, adding that Germany, though not desiring this naval demonstration, was anxious that Italy should participate in case it took place. My telegram in reply was as follows:

"In deciding on our attitude with regard to Austria, it must be borne in mind that Mery is doing everything possible to precipitate war. If this military demonstration is seriously carried out, it will oblige Russia to attack Austria, and if we

take part in the demonstration we shall inevitably be forced into war. This is Merey's aim. If Austria is not certain of our participation, she will avoid war at all costs. Germany wants peace and therefore disapproves of the naval demonstration; at the same time, if this demonstration takes place, she wants us to join in it so as to ensure that we shall also have to participate in any ensuing war. Austria's humanitarianism is very suspicious; all the more so as Montenegro, being at war with Turkey, is entitled, according to international law, to attack Turkish fortresses. The danger of Austria reaping the gratitude of the Albanians because of having been the only one to take action, I regard as negligible, for the good reason that gratitude between nations does not exist—at any rate, it can only be a secondary consideration compared with the practical certainty that our action would precipitate a European war, whereas Austria, if left to herself, may possibly hold her hand."

This exchange of messages continued during the following days. San Giuliano, though convinced that my arguments were well founded, was nevertheless alarmed at the idea of Austria creating a dangerous precedent and harming our interests by taking sole action. However, the quick succession of events justified my theory. In the first place, the London Conference of Ambassadors fully set at rest Austria's alleged apprehensions by adopting Sir Edward Grey's proposal that the powers through their representatives at Cettigne and Belgrade should jointly declare that the right of delimiting Albania's frontiers was reserved by the great powers, and that until this delimitation took place no action of Serbia's or Montenegro's in Albania should be admitted to have established rights. It was added that in the event of the fall of Scutari, its ultimate fate would be settled by the powers and not by the fact of Montenegrin occupation. I then pointed out that in view of this unanimous decision of the powers, any military action on the part of Austria would be

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unjustifiable aggression and would inevitably provoke Russia's armed intervention. A few days later a despatch from our ambassador in St. Petersburg, the Marquis Carlotti, informed us that the first effect of an Austrian naval demonstration against Montenegro would be the fall of Sazonoff, owing to the failure of his conciliatory policy, and his substitution by someone who, to satisfy public opinion, would be obliged to assume a very energetic attitude towards Austria, thus further increasing the danger of war.

The German minister of Foreign Affairs, von Jagow, also informed our ambassador that he had already on several occasions intervened to prevent Austria from taking a rash step and that he had done this not merely in the general interests of peace, but also out of consideration for the delicate and difficult situation in which Italy would have been placed had certain contingencies arisen. Now, however, it would be impossible to exert further pressure on Austria as matters stood, for if she were to give way, it would greatly prejudice not only her own prestige, but the international situation of the Triple Alliance, which would be irreparably compromised. In his opinion a firm attitude on the part of the Triple Alliance at this moment might result in a positive success, and would lastingly re-establish its influence in Europe by imposing its will on its opponents. He had accordingly given London to understand that he considered it advisable that the European powers should give a mandate to the powers most interested in the question to enforce the decisions which had been taken. He also added that he had enquired through the German ambassador in Rome whether the Italian government was inclined to take part in possible operations in the Adriatic; for although fully appreciating our difficulties, he was convinced that it was to our interests to do so and that Italy's co-operation might facilitate a solution and lessen the danger of serious complications. According to von Jagow, these views were shared by the Emperor William, who had ex-

pressed the hope that, thanks to Italy's assistance, the situation would result in a triumph for the Triple Alliance.

My reply to these arguments was that we could only accept the proposal if the mandate for a naval demonstration were given to us and Austria by all the powers, but that I still preferred joint action by the powers, or, failing that, the participation of one of the Entente powers, Great Britain for example. On March 23rd, Sazonoff in conversation with our ambassador declared that it was an established principle that the powers should act in community in Balkan affairs, and that consequently it would not be admissible that one of them should take isolated action in regard to the Montenegrin incidents, remarking that Russia was not alone in her determination to safeguard this principle. He added that he had notified Austria that any isolated action of hers against Montenegro would be taken very seriously by Russia and that Berchtold had replied that he would be constrained to take such action if Montenegro did not give Austria just satisfaction. In reply to the enquiry whether he thought the situation justified alarm, Sazonoff said that negotiations were going forward between Russia and Austria with a view to gaining the assent of the former to the assignment of Scutari to Albania and of Jakowa to Serbia. Fortunately, the same day the Ambassadors' Conference took a unanimous decision to this effect, at the same time calling on Montenegro to raise the siege of Scutari.

Montenegro, however, absolutely refused to obey this injunction and even declined to listen to Belgrade's counsels of moderation. Notwithstanding this, I did not consider it any reason for changing our decision and I telegraphed to San Giuliano "that the folly and even the crimes of a little State destined to disappear were far less serious than the danger of provoking a European war through our anxiety to bring it to reason as quickly as possible." San Giuliano, who was now quite in agreement with me, was meanwhile work-

ing in Paris and London towards obtaining the joint action of the powers in preference to a mandate to Austria and Italy.

The danger, however, had not quite passed. After a brief interlude of comparative tranquillity between March 24th and April 5th, during which there was an exchange of views among the powers and several suggestions concerning the form of the joint action to be taken, Vienna quite unexpectedly again brought up the necessity for Austro-Italian action of a more radical nature, in case the joint action of the powers failed to bring Montenegro to reason. San Giuliano's letter informing me of this new and dangerous tentative is dated April 5th and runs as follows:

"Merey on behalf of Berchtold has officially informed me that, in view of the possibility of an international naval demonstration not achieving its end, Berchtold thinks that the moment has come for Italy and Austria to agree regarding joint action on their part, thereby giving practical force to the principles established by existing agreements. This action should apply equally to all Albania, and not, as suggested by some newspapers, be restricted to the south for Italy and to the north for Austria.

"It is now necessary for us to give Austria a precise answer.

"It seems to me that we could reply that it is necessary above all to exhaust every possible means for realising the end in view, these means being either conciliatory (such as financial and possibly territorial compensation to Montenegro, etc.) or international action.

"I should add that only after it has been clearly shown that all these methods have been tried in vain, can a European mandate for Italy and Austria be asked for, and this mandate should not be limited to eventual measures for Scutari, but should apply to any Balkan State which flouts Europe's wishes regarding the frontiers of Albania in the north as well as in the south.

"I told Merey I would write to you at once and ask for a reply. In answering him, we must bear in mind the possibility of joint action between Italy and Austria becoming necessary in regard to the straits of Corfu, in which we are specially interested.

"Yours, etc.,

"SAN GIULIANO."

To this letter I immediately replied with the following:

"Your letter of to-day reached me at 6.40 p.m. as I was about to leave.

"Pending later and more detailed replies, it is my opinion:

"1. That we must on no account take action either alone or with Austria without a mandate from all the European powers;

"2. That we must seek by all possible means to avoid such a mandate being given and to see to it that European co-operation is continued, or at least make sure of the participation of Great Britain;

"3. That neither Scutari nor the straits of Corfu are worth a European war, and that we must refuse to be drawn into such a conflict unless it is either very greatly to our interest or there is a clear *casus foederis*;

"4. That Austria will try to compromise us in order to be assured of our intervention, but that we must avoid this by every possible means;

"5. That all considerations based on the importance of ensuring us the gratitude of Albania are without any value whatsoever. Albania is still an embryo State and no account can be taken of those who are in authority, for they are persons in whom little trust can be placed and who will be guided by their own interests in every case and by no other sentiments.

"To sum up the matter; in my opinion our only object should be the following: to avoid a European war; and should

this occur, to be in no way responsible for it or implicated therein. All the rest is of no importance to us, and would never induce me to draw the chestnuts out of the fire for others.

“Yours, etc.,

“GIOLITTI.”

“P.S.—As regards going to any expense now for the Albanians, you can arrange matters with Tedesco, remembering however that it is money thrown away—by which I do not mean to deny that it is sometimes advisable to throw away things.”

On April 7th Merey returned to insist on a precise reply, but the following day Serbia withdrew from the operations against Scutari, with which she had assisted Montenegro, and the menace to the peace of Europe which the fall of Scutari would have meant—a menace which had lasted since March 19th—disappeared for the moment. Austria, who also feared the eventual absorption of Montenegro by Serbia, seeing her plan of aggression fail, thought it to her interest to assist the Montenegrin dynasty with a view to keeping the two Slav States separated. Accordingly she proposed that we should assist in giving financial aid to Montenegro. San Giuliano, in communicating this proposal to me, spoke of Merey's dejection, owing to Serbia's obeying the injunctions of the powers at the eleventh hour and thus depriving Austria of the chance of attacking her and settling her once and for all.

On April 11th I sent him the following despatch giving my assent to the Austrian proposal:

“The ultimate fall of the Montenegrin dynasty is, in my opinion, inevitable; it is, however, just as well that it should not take place now and defer the conclusion of peace. Italy can participate in financial assistance in the same proportions

as Austria, but not more, as parliament would not justify our assuming a larger share. I do not share Merey's grief.

"Yours, etc.

"GIOLITTI."

The military party in Vienna, in spite of this defeat, kept on firmly in pursuit of its ends, for it was only a few months later—to be precise, in the middle of August, 1913—when the Conference of Ambassadors met again in London to discuss important matters, that for the second time we received a proposal to join in an attack on Serbia.

Two questions of great importance to us were at that time under discussion: those islands of the Dodecanese and the Greco-Albanian frontiers with which the question of the Corfu Canal was connected. I have already mentioned that as regards this we upheld the indubitable rights of the Albanians to possess Coritza and all the territory lying between it and Cape Stilos, these rights also coinciding with our own vital interests, which were to prevent Greece from taking possession of the Albanian coast facing Corfu and thereby obtaining a strong naval base in the Corfu Canal which might be used against us in case of war in the Adriatic. In this respect Austria's interests were the same as ours, whereas Greece not only found firm champions of her cause in the Entente powers, England, France and Russia, but also, as already stated, had the sympathies of Germany, both for dynastic reasons and on account of the latter's secret plan for making Greece one of her satellites.

Even more complicated was the question of the Islands. According to the Treaty of Lausanne, we were bound to restore them to Turkey as soon as she had fulfilled all the terms imposed upon her by it. This, however, had not been done, especially as regards Cyrenaica, perhaps owing to insurmountable obstacles caused by the Balkan war. Apart

from these obligations towards Turkey, we had others towards Austria-Hungary, based on Art. VII of the Triple Alliance treaty and other special agreements, which forbade either of the two contracting parties to take possession of Turkish territory—Libya being always excepted—without the other side receiving compensation. To these must be added verbal engagements which we had assumed towards Berchtold when we occupied the islands during the Libyan war. On the other hand, England, who feared that if the Ægean Islands remained in our hands they might, in case of war, serve as naval base for the fleet of the Triple Alliance in the eastern Mediterranean, made it clearly understood that, even at the cost of a war, she would not permit any of the Ægean Islands to remain in the possession of a great power. In this England had the support of France. The Triple Entente, and especially England and France, after the result of the Balkan war, wished that the islands of the Dodecanese should pass to Greece, basing their arguments on the fact that the greater part of the population was Greek.

As soon as the London conference began to examine these problems on August 2nd we were informed that Sir Edward Grey had expressed his intention of uniting the question of the southern Albanian frontiers to that of the islands—also wishing to discuss the fate of the other Ægean Islands besides those we had occupied. Sir Edward's idea was that Coritza and Cape Stilos should be assigned to Albania; an international commission being charged with settling the disposition of the intermediate territory on ethnical principles, and that all the islands should be given to Greece, except Imbros and Tenedos (which on account of their position would remain in possession of Turkey) and Tasso and Samothrace, whose fate should be decided later when a general settling of territorial questions took place. In regard to the islands we had occupied, it was proposed that Italy should restore them, without taking into account Turkey's non-

fulfilment of the conditions of the Treaty of Lausanne, at the same time that Coritza and Stilos were handed over to Albania. It was only under these conditions, Sir Edward Grey told the German ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, that England and France could consent to the delimitation of Albania's frontiers desired by Austria and Italy.

In view of the fact that this meant that the islands we had occupied were to be handed over to Greece in defiance of the obligation we had assumed under the Treaty of Lausanne to restore them to Turkey, I could not accept the proposal. Our infraction of the Treaty of Lausanne would have justified Turkey in not living up to her obligations. I gave assurances that we had no intention of annexing any of the islands, which even as naval bases would have been valueless without going to great expense; at the same time they constituted a pledge in our hand, and it was necessary they should so remain until Turkey had fulfilled all her treaty obligations. San Giuliano in a memorandum to me discussed the whole question, and expressed his anxiety lest a too prolonged occupation on our part should result in a situation which, considering the special point of view of the English, might end in a diplomatic defeat or grave complications for us, without any intention on the part of England to hurt or offend us. In this connection he recalled certain declarations made by Sir Edward Grey to our ambassador the Marquis Imperiali, and suggested that by giving the islands to Greece, we could assist Germany in her efforts to draw Greece into the Triple Alliance.

For me, however, our obligations under the Treaty of Lausanne outweighed all other considerations. My reply to San Giuliano was therefore as follows:

"I believe it is to our interest to stand firmly by the Treaty of Lausanne, which obliges us to restore the islands to Turkey and consequently precludes our being parties to an agreement that aims at assigning them to other powers. In view of the new war between the Balkan allies, and the necessity

of finding compensation for Turkey to induce her to give up Adrianople, our insistence on this point becomes a useful service on behalf of European peace."

That we were right in insisting on this point was proved by a telegram from the Turkish government to its various ambassadors, declaring that as Italy was merely in temporary occupation of the islands of the Dodecanese, she could make no engagements on their behalf without first having Turkey's consent, otherwise she would run the risk of Turkey's denouncing the Treaty of Lausanne and claiming her rights in Cyrenaica.

At the Conference of Ambassadors this question gave rise to a discussion which lasted several days owing to its inherent difficulties. Added to these was the fact that the French minister for Foreign Affairs, Pichon, sincerely believing that we should accept the proposed settlement, had given the Greek government assurances in regard to the Dodecanese which it was difficult to take back. The tone of the discussion, however, continued to be very friendly towards us, the justice of our reasons having been cordially recognised. It was finally decided to accept a declaration by us in the following terms: "The Italian government is of the opinion that the question of the Dodecanese, which originated with the Italo-Turkish war, has been settled by the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne. In view of this the Italian government renews its assurance of restoring these islands to Turkey as soon as she has fully satisfied the obligations assumed by her under Art. II of the Treaty."

The text of the agreement itself contained a declaration proposed by Cambon, according to which, as soon as the Treaty of Lausanne had been fully carried out by both contracting parties, the five powers would, when the time came for definitely settling all doubtful questions, decide as to the final fate of the islands of the Dodecanese. This formula excluded Italy, as if, owing to her occupation of the islands,

she could no longer be considered an impartial judge of the question. This exclusion would, however, be unreasonable after we had restored the islands and would be prejudicial to our prestige. Accordingly, at our request and after friendly explanations between Tittoni, our ambassador in Paris, and Pichon, a modification of the text was introduced which attributed the task of the final decision to all six powers without any sort of reservation.

It was during this session of the Conference of Ambassadors, which gave such ample satisfaction to Austria and Italy in regard to Albania, that the second and even more precise proposal of aggression was made by Austria, Serbia being this time the designated victim. There seems no doubt that this proposal must be taken in direct connection with the results of the second Balkan war, which broke out on June 30th between Bulgaria, on one hand, and Serbia, Roumania and Greece, on the other, and quickly terminated with the total defeat of Bulgaria.

I do not know and have no means of ascertaining whether there is any truth in the rumours that Bulgaria's attack on the Serbian army, which was the origin of this war, had been secretly instigated by Vienna, though there is no doubt that the outcome of this conflict, the strengthening of Serbia and the definite assignment of Salonica to Greece, constituted another reverse for the Austrian military party and new obstacles to its ambitions. On August 9th, during my absence from Rome, I received the following telegram from San Giuliano:

"Austria has informed us and Germany of her intention of taking action against Serbia. She describes this action as defensive and hopes to apply the *casus foederis* of the Triple Alliance, which, to my mind, cannot be evoked under the circumstances.

"I am endeavouring, jointly with Germany, to make

efforts to prevent Austria from taking such action; it may, however, become necessary to declare openly that it does not appear to us as defensive and for this reason we cannot consider it a *casus foederis*.

"Please wire to me at Rome whether you approve.

"SAN GIULIANO."

To this telegram I replied as follows:

"If Austria attacks Serbia, it is evident that there can be no question of *casus foederis*. This act she undertakes on her own initiative. There is no question of defence, as no one is attacking her. It is necessary to make this clear to Austria in the most formal terms, and it is to be hoped that Germany will dissuade her from embarking on such a dangerous adventure."

Here the matter ended. Thus on two occasions the military party in Vienna, which was gaining more and more influence over the government, had plotted to attack Serbia, endeavouring to implicate Italy on the first occasion and also Germany on the second, in each case light-heartedly risking the danger of a European war. Twice the attempt failed; but the third time, when the pretext was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the attempt unhappily succeeded, either because there was no longer any resistance or because the approval of Germany had been obtained, and this provoked as I had foreseen, one of the greatest catastrophes in history. The above history of events, for the greater part unknown will at any rate account for the policy I adopted or advised when the European war broke out, as well as for the motive and principle which inspired it.

Before closing this chapter dealing with the record of some events which to-day would appear fortunate, were it not for the fact that the impression produced by them has been

port on the Adriatic, to which Austria would never consent. These difficulties, he hoped, would be eliminated by giving Serbia a port on the *Ægean*, and in this manner the danger of European complications would vanish. Finally he expressed the desire that the Triple Alliance should be renewed; which renewal did, in fact, take place during those days. Among leading men in the government, such as Kiderlen Wächter and Bethmann-Hollweg, San Giuliano also found at that time a generally prevailing confidence that the peace of Europe would be maintained and means found for conciliating the diverging and opposed interests of the Great Powers.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EUROPEAN WAR: ITALY'S NEUTRALITY AND HER ENTRY INTO WAR

The crisis and the Salandra Cabinet—Outbreak of war finds me in London—I maintain non-existence of *casus fœderis* and counsel neutrality—Letters from San Giuliano and Salandra—I give public expression to my opinion regarding long duration, difficulties and sacrifices of war—Strife of neutralists and interventionists—Allegations regarding insufficient military preparation refuted—Story regarding my relations with von Bulow and my "absolute neutrality"—Government's action to obtain concessions from Austria has my support—My letter to a German—Anxiety regarding Government's attitude early in May—My arrival in Rome for re-opening of Parliament: hostile demonstrations—Three hundred deputies approve my views—Conversations with Carcano, Salandra and Marcora—I am not informed regarding Pact of London—Other threats and accusations against me—Salandra Cabinet is reinstated after its resignation—My attitude during the war to avoid dissension—My return to Parliament after Caporetto.

IT was clearly the duty of the government which had passed through the law on the reform of the voting system and the extension of the franchise to be the first to put the new measure into execution. Under ordinary circumstances the application of this law should have followed closely on its approval, especially where it was a case of passing from a theoretically large, but actually restricted, franchise to practically universal suffrage; it must also be remembered that the Chamber, elected on the old restricted franchise could no longer be considered as fairly representing the country; but the prolongation of the Balkan war, with the resulting complications, delayed the dissolution of parliament and new elections which only took place in the autumn of 1913.

The results of these elections dispelled the fears of the Conservatives, who, though not venturing to combat the reform openly, had secretly opposed it. The Socialists, though they returned with their numbers considerably increased, still remained potentially a small minority, while the Catholic party gained in influence, especially in the country districts. But on the whole the new Chamber preserved the main features of its predecessor, the Liberal elements maintaining their absolute majority; nearly all the leading men in the various parties were re-elected.

Every new Chamber is restless and feels the necessity (sometimes a laudable one) of provoking a crisis. In this case the impetus was given by the Radicals, who, despite an increase in numbers, manifested a certain hostility towards their own members in the cabinet, which ended in the party leaders deciding to pass over to the Opposition. This cession of the Radicals from the majority made it impossible for the Coalition of the Left to maintain the government, with the logical conclusion that the leader of the Right had to assume control. This party, which for many years had followed Sonnino as leader with great devotion and discipline, had dissolved itself after the Libyan war, declaring that the reasons which had caused its fusion no longer existed and that the various groups composing it would resume their freedom of action.

As a result of these conditions, the proper person to assume the government was Salandra, who was recommended to the King both by myself and by the majority of the persons consulted. Salandra approached me with the request that I would aid him to constitute his cabinet, and, especially, that I would persuade San Giuliano to remain as minister of Foreign Affairs. I finally succeeded in overcoming the latter's reluctance and persuaded him to continue the direction of Italy's foreign policy, so important during those years.

The new government was from the outset faced with various

difficulties, among them being a semi-anarchical agitation in Central Italy and a partial strike of the railwaymen. These difficulties were handled and resolved with considerable firmness by Salandra, who managed to avoid reactionary measures and to reconcile his own Conservative tendencies with the liberal principles which had become part of the life of the country.

When as a result of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife at Serajevo, the Austro-Serbian question arose, I refused up to the last to believe that, serious as this question was, it could lead to a European war. Remembering Austria's two attempts to attack Serbia, which I had succeeded in frustrating the year before, I felt certain that the military party in Austria was obstinately set on its old aim. At the same time I trusted that the reasons for peace, which were so strong and universal, would prevail against this criminal infatuation. The war against Serbia was desired by the Austrian militarists as a means of settling internal discord, in the belief that it could thus be localised. I could not help believing, however, that the other powers, who could have no illusions as to what Russia would do in the face of such provocation, and who must have realised the enormous disaster which a European war would mean, would find means for averting this catastrophe.

In July, after visiting Vichy and Paris, I proceeded to London. It was there that at the end of July I followed the diplomatic conflict in the daily papers, always hoping that war would be avoided. But when I read Germany's intimation to Russia to disarm within twelve hours and to France to do likewise within twenty-four hours, I understood that war had been decided and left at once for Italy. Passing through Paris on August 1st, I interrupted my journey and called at once at the Italian embassy. Tittoni being away on a holiday in the North Sea, I found the embassy in charge of

the first secretary, Prince Ruspoli, to whom I expressed my opinion that Italy was not obliged by the Triple Alliance to enter the war, as Austria was attacking Serbia and the treaty only obliged us to intervene on the side of our allies in case the latter were attacked. I pointed out that the present case was simply a repetition of what had been attempted in 1913, when I had informed Austria that if she attacked Serbia we should not be obliged to intervene and should even protest, and added that it was my opinion that Italy should without delay declare her neutrality.

Prince Ruspoli on his own initiative thought well to communicate my views at once to San Giuliano. On my return to Italy, having stopped at Bardonecchia where my family was sojourning, I received letters from San Giuliano and Salandra, both dated August 3rd.

San Giuliano wrote as follows: "Ruspoli has telegraphed me your opinion on the policy we should adopt, which is, in fact, the same I proposed at once to Salandra and to His Majesty and which has been approved. Once more you and I have had the same idea without having been able to communicate previously. Salandra has been looking for you in order to know your opinion and he will now be very happy to learn that it coincides with the attitude he has adopted. I sincerely trust you are in good health.

"Yours, etc.,

"SAN GIULIANO."

To this letter I replied as follows on August 5th:

"Dearest Friend,

"I have been in Vichy, Paris and London, and I must confess that I did not think it possible that a European war could be provoked so lightheartedly. I was only convinced on July 31st and the day after I hurried back to Italy.

"The manner in which Austria has precipitated the conflict is nothing less than brutal, and proves either a total lack of conscience on her part, or a direct intention of bringing on a European war. I may be mistaken, but my impression is that she will pay the penalty more than anyone else.

"Happily matters were so ordered as fully to justify our neutrality. I make no concealment of the danger that we may also suffer thereby, but the government now has no other alternative. A conflict between Italy and England is out of the question, and the way in which the war was brought about would have made it very difficult for our country to enter into it with enthusiasm. I may add that the ends Austria has in view are evidently not in keeping with our interests.

"In my opinion, now more than ever, we should keep on good terms with England and should do our utmost to limit the duration and consequences of the conflict.

"I also think we should keep ourselves in readiness from a military point of view.

"In wishing you good luck, I wish the same to Italy. Please give my greetings to Salandra.

"Yours, etc.,

"GIOLITTI."

Salandra's letter, which I reproduce in full, is as follows:

"Rome, *August 3rd.*"

"Dear Giolitti,

"During these last days when we were suddenly faced with the grave decisions regarding Italy's neutrality in the European conflict, which, despite our efforts, it was impossible to avoid, I should in the interests of the State, have liked to have your opinion. But the Prefect of Cuneo, from whom I enquired your whereabouts, informed me that you were in London and about to return, adding that he did not know your address.

"Meanwhile events were hurrying on, and I now learn almost simultaneously of your passing through Paris and of your arrival in Bardonecchia.

"I have also heard that the views you expressed in Paris are in harmony with our interpretation of the Triple Alliance treaty, which interpretation I hold to be not only legally correct, but also in keeping with the generally prevailing sentiment of the country. Your corroboration of my view has great importance for me.

"On the other hand, I am fully aware of the serious arguments in favour of a different interpretation, nor do I doubt that events which no one can foresee will raise other problems and necessitate further resolutions, which will be of capital importance, not only for foreign policy, but also for the internal and economic situation of our country.

"I should therefore be very glad to avail myself of your long experience of government and to discuss with you the questions which we shall most likely have to face in the future, as well as more urgent and immediate problems. I would gladly suggest a meeting with you even outside Rome, if it were not impossible for me just now to leave the capital even for a day.

"Therefore I can only beg you to keep me informed of your address in the immediate future, so that I may, if possible, get in touch with you.

"Yours, etc.,

"A. SALANDRA."

On August 6th I sent the following reply to this letter:

"Dear Salandra,

"I shall remain in Bardonecchia to-morrow; on the 8th I go to Turin and on the 9th to Cuneo for the meeting of the Provincial Council, after which I return to Bardonecchia, where I expect to remain till the end of the month.

"I am, however, entirely at your disposal. As it is not possible for you to leave Rome, I will willingly go there myself whenever you wish it.

"I wrote San Giuliano yesterday my reasons for approving the decision taken by the government.

"Call on me for anything I can do to help you.

"Yours, etc.,

"GIOLITTI."

At the meeting of the Provincial Council referred to in my letter to Salandra, at which I presided, I made the following declaration:

"We have met in a moment of great anxiety for all Europe and also for our country.

"The Provincial Council, as an administrative body, cannot express an opinion on questions of politics. But I am certain I am interpreting the sentiments, not only of all my colleagues, but of the entire province, when I declare that in face of the dangers which may menace Italy we can have but one idea—to stand by the government, which, without distinction of parties, we will support firmly and loyally in the policy it has adopted for the safeguarding of our rights and for assuring Italy her place in the world.

"We look forward confidently to the future, strong in the unity of the nation and with absolute trust in our beloved sovereign."

The next day I received the following telegram from Salandra:

"In the name of the government and of myself I thank you for the noble words with which you opened the meeting of the Provincial Council; they will be an incitement to all Italians to stand together with firmness and calm during these anxious times—SALANDRA."

To conclude this account of the opinion prevailing among leading public men and expressed by them either in public or in private, I may mention that I have since learnt on the very best authority that at the outbreak of the European war Baron Sonnino was of the opinion that we should follow our allies, and this opinion he openly expressed to his friends on arriving in Rome, having been summoned by Salandra, who, although neutrality had already been decided upon, desired to have his view on the situation. Many others, especially among the nationalists, who later were the most fervent partisans of war against the Central Empires and accused of treason any who differed from them, at the same time affirmed and maintained that we should take sides with our allies in the conflict and blamed the government for its decision to remain neutral.

In September, having had to undergo a slight operation in Turin, as a result of which I had an attack of lung fever, I was obliged to spend about three weeks in hospital and several others convalescing at my home in Cavour. During all this time I took part in no discussions nor received any special information, and only expressed to friends who came to see me my satisfaction that Italy had remained neutral.

In October I went to Rome for the opening of the Chamber. Having learnt through a reliable source that in the very countries which had benefited and possibly even been saved by our neutrality in the first shock of war there were many who accused us of breaking faith in not entering the war on the side of our allies, I took the opportunity of a parliamentary debate for relating in detail the story of Austria's attempted attack on Serbia and of Italy's attitude, which fully justified our policy at the outbreak of war. This proved that we had on a former occasion given a clear interpretation of our treaty obligations as allies, without either Germany or Austria having raised the slightest objection.

It is curious that despite the fact that my revelations were all to Italy's advantage, there were deputies and newspapers supporting the government who attempted to deny my statements. These, however, are amply proved by the letters and telegrams which were exchanged between San Giuliano and me, owing to my absence from Rome when the events referred to took place, and of which some were reproduced in the preceding chapter. I failed to understand, and never have yet understood, why certain supporters of Salandra's government took exception to my declarations, as they merely tended to justify the government's policy, and why they attempted to depreciate what in the eyes of all Europe was the proof that we were perfectly justified in remaining neutral at the outbreak of war.

Throughout this period and up to the Christmas vacation I had no further relations either with Salandra or any other members of the government. Both in political circles and in the press the discussion of our neutrality became more and more heated, but the point at issue now was whether or not we should enter the war on the side of the Entente powers and against our former allies. In the discussions which took place in the lobbies of the Chamber I openly expressed and explained my point of view. That of the interventionists was as follows: the war was going to be of short duration and if it ended without our participating, we should lose a splendid opportunity for realising national unity, whereas our entry would turn the balance and finish the war in three or four months.

That the government also reckoned that the war would not last long is proved by various facts, above all by the Pact of London, whereby Italy pledged herself to enter the war. In this convention it was merely stipulated that England should give Italy facilities for a loan of fifty million pounds sterling, a sum less than what every month of the war cost us, nor was any provision made for freightage or supplies of coal, iron,

corn and other things which we lacked and which were indispensable for a war of any duration. Also in regard to financial measures at home, the arrangements made were only for a few months. A final proof that the government thought any further delay might be dangerous is the announcement in the Green Book, distributed to members of parliament when Italy went into the war, that Austria was about to withdraw from the conflict and make a separate peace with Russia. It was my conviction, on the other hand, that the war would be very long, and I made no concealment of these views whenever I had occasion to discuss the subject with my colleagues in the Chamber. To those who spoke of a three-months' war, I replied that it would take at least three years, as it was a question of defeating the two empires, which in a military sense, were the strongest in the world, and which had been preparing themselves for the last forty years, being able with their combined populations of a hundred and twenty millions to mobilise twenty million men; whereas the newly formed British army would only attain its full efficiency in 1917, as the British government itself admitted. As for the Italian front, its difficulties both on the Carso and in the Trentino were formidable.

I also pointed out that in view of the very grave reasons which Austria had for avoiding war with Italy and the small part which the "irredentist" Italians played in an empire of fifty-two millions, there was every reason to suppose that well-conducted negotiations would lead to a favourable result. Furthermore, I believed that the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on account of the rivalry between Austria and Hungary and the undermining influence of oppressed nationalities—such as Slavs, Poles, Slovenes, Rumanians, Croats and Italians—struggling to get free, was destined by fate to break up; in which case the Italian portion would be peaceably united to Italy. It also seemed unlikely, remembering the Russo-Japanese war and the revolution in Russia which succeeded

it, that Russia would be able to stand a war of several years' duration.

As for the intervention of the United States, which really hastened the final victory it was neither imagined nor imaginable at that time.

What, however, was easy to foresee was the huge sacrifice of human life which the war would entail (as was obvious from the new and powerful means of attack and defence invented by science, which were already in use on the French and Russian fronts) and also that so huge a conflict would spell total ruin to the countries involved unless they managed to obtain a complete victory. It was further evident that a long war would entail great sacrifices, which would weigh especially heavily on a country such as ours, where capital was scarce and taxation maintained at a high pressure. Already it seemed to me that the war was becoming a struggle for world hegemony between the two chief belligerents, while it was to Italy's interest that the balance of European power be maintained, to which she could only contribute by keeping all her forces intact.

One of the chief arguments of the apostles of war was the violation of Belgian neutrality. It should, however, be remembered that Italy, like America, had not guaranteed this neutrality, and that America only intervened when the interests of her people required her to do so. In a letter published in the press in 1915, I maintained the view that it is not permissible to draw one's country into war for merely sentimental reasons, but only when its honour and its most vital interests are at stake.

Such were my practical reasons for opposing Italy's entry into the war, as will be recalled by friends and opponents. As regards the duration of the war and the sacrifices it would entail in human life and national prosperity, my prophecies were fully borne out by events.

In December, 1914, while the Chamber was still sitting,

Prince von Bülow arrived in Rome as special envoy of Germany, and malicious and extravagant tales were spread regarding my relations with him. The real facts of the matter were as follows. Meeting him one day by chance in the Piazza del Tritone, we stopped for a moment, and he told me that he was thinking of coming to see me; to which I replied that I would call on him. During this visit we spoke in a general way of the situation in Europe, each avoiding discussion of delicate questions. I was firmly resolved not to discuss any of the problems which the government alone was qualified to deal with, and Prince von Bülow, who had known me for many years, was certainly aware of my intention.

I remember saying to him, by way of compliment, that if he had been at the head of the German government, the war would probably have been avoided, as he would not have risked having both Great Britain and Russia as enemies. He merely smiled by way of answer. Two days later he returned my call, and as I was out, left his card. I did not see him again, nor did I come into any further contact with him, either directly or indirectly. Our next meeting was in 1922, when I met him in the Pincio.

Early in the autumn a campaign against me was started in the ministerial press. Among other things, it was alleged that the government had been forced to declare for neutrality owing to the unprepared state of the army and navy, for which my various governments were responsible, and that I had done nothing to replenish the military stores exhausted by the war in Libya.

The former of these accusations, which, despite its absurdity, was repeated in the Chamber, was easily disproved by Signor Tedesco, former minister of Finance, in a speech he made on December 4th, in which he cited figures that admitted of no discussion and stopped the mouths of my accusers. Among the latter was Signor Colajanni, one of those deputies who

had most persistently opposed all military expenditure and who had now become interventionist. Signor Tedesco in fact proved that during the six years mostly occupied by my government, that is, from July, 1907, to June, 1913, expenditure on the army and navy had almost been doubled, being increased from 474 to 821 millions, while during the previous six years, that is from 1901 to 1907, the increase had only been 45 millions; the largest increase of all (173 millions) had been during the last two years. As for the navy, it was shown that from 1909 to 1913 eleven thousand million lire had been spent for renewing the fleet and that during the last months of my ministry a plan had been established by me in collaboration with the minister of Finance, the minister of Naval Affairs and the Chief of Staff, General Pollio, providing for exceptional credit of 500 million and ordinary credits of 70 million lire, to be added to the budget within the next four years. Some of the more important provisions had been announced by the Treasury in the financial estimate of December 20, 1913. It should also be remarked that my budget estimate of November, 1913, provided for 275,000 men, being an increase of 70,000 over the naval forces as established by the 1909-10 budget.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that it was during my tenure of office that the forts along the formerly unprotected Austrian frontier were constructed at great expense.

As regards the second accusation, namely, the failure to replenish military stores after the Libyan war, I at once wrote to Spingardi, who had been minister of War at the time and had already given assurances in this matter to parliament. Although Spingardi did not wish to engage in discussion at the time, he later—shortly before his death—asked to be heard by the committee of enquiry instituted by the government to ascertain the responsibilities for the Caporetto disaster. His detailed report of what was done after the Libyan war entirely refuted the unjust attacks referred to,

the commission delivering itself as follows on the condition of the army before the war:

"It cannot be denied that the standard of military preparation was in keeping with that of other Entente powers who were not harbouring ideas of aggression, and that the cost it entailed was a heavy item of national expenditure, amounting in 1914, for the army alone, to 450 million lire out of a total budget of 2,522 million. There is therefore no foundation for those reports which (perhaps partly with a view to stimulating the work of reconstruction) declared with such insistency that we were unprepared for war."

To quote figures, it may be mentioned that from 1907 to 1913, when the responsibility of government was mainly in my hands, the value of military stores had increased from 837 to 1,263 million lire—that is, had almost been doubled. During the first months of the Libyan war orders were given for replenishing stores and a special credit of 162 millions was set aside for this purpose. As regards the navy, it need only be stated that at the outbreak of the Italo-Turkish war coal supplies amounted to 124 thousand tons, and that this amount was tripled by the end of the war.

These accusations having been disposed of, another attack from the same quarter was launched. This time it was a rumour that I intended to overthrow the ministry and to form another under my own premiership with a programme of absolute neutrality. Of this report I was informed by letters from friends (the latter including Peano, Malagodi and Colosimo). My reply to these letters was a declaration to the effect "that to oppose the ministry would be a reprehensible action, that the country would condemn such an attitude, and that it was desirable that the government should have full authority in such difficult times," adding that I was convinced that unless the European situation underwent a radical change, the government would not bring the country into a war which would entail such heavy sacrifices in human lives

and national prosperity and which was not desired by the vast majority of the nation.

To put a stop to the campaign against me, I asked Peano to publish a letter I had written him in the *Tribuna*, which of its own accord had already protested against these accusations. The letter published is as follows:

“ Cavour, *January 24, 1915.*

“ Dear Friend,

“ It is very strange with what ease legends are created, partly in good faith and partly in bad. There are now two taking shape: one concerns my alleged relations with Prince von Bülow, the other the opinion attributed to me that neutrality must be maintained at all costs.

“ I have known Prince von Bülow for many years and have a high appreciation of his talent and character; I have always found him to be a friend of Italy, although of course he thinks first of all of the interests of his own country, as is his duty.

“ When he was living in Rome as a private citizen, he used often to come to see me. Now that he has come to Rome as ambassador of his country, we have met casually in the Piazza Tritone, on which occasion he told me he was coming to see me. I replied that as I was at leisure I would come to see him, which I did the next day. Our conversation turned in a general way on the great events of the day, but I was careful to avoid discussing what Italy's attitude should be. To do so would have been a breach of duty on my part, nor did Prince von Bülow, who has a scrupulous regard for the proprieties, raise this question.

“ A few days later he returned my call. As I was out, he left his card and I have not seen him since, for I have left Rome.

“ Another fable is that of my being in favour of neutrality at all costs.

"It is certainly true that, unlike the nationalists, I do not look on war as desirable, but as a misfortune, which should only be incurred when the honour and the vital interests of the country are at stake.

"I do not think it justifiable to precipitate the country into war out of a sentimental regard for other countries. A man can risk his own life for reasons of sentiment, but not that of his country. If it became necessary, I should not hesitate to risk war, as I have already proved.

"Given the actual conditions in Europe, it is my belief that much may be obtained without going to war, but only those who are in the government are fully qualified to judge of this matter.

"As for the rumours of conspiracy and crisis, I refuse to give them any credit. I have supported and continue to support the government and pay no attention to the insolence of those who profess to be its friends and are, in fact, its worst enemies.

"Yours, etc.,

"GIOLITTI."

Despite the fact that the ideas expressed in this letter were in complete accord with the policy adopted by the government since December 9th, when the first note (afterwards published in the Green Book) was sent to Austria, and which was continued for some months longer, the campaign of insinuation and defamation against me was continued. For this reason, replying to a letter from Signor Peano on April 3rd, I wrote as follows: "There is no spectacle more painful than that offered by several of our politicians, who are trying to revive the old feuds which were the plague of Italy, siding with other nations instead of thinking of the true interests of our country. I expect to remain here at Cavour for a long while in order to avoid the sickening bickering and backbiting, which, now that parliament is out of session permeates our political life."

This resolution I carried out, and during all this period refrained from any sort of relations with the outside world. I was, however, able to see for myself that throughout Piedmont the anti-war feeling increased to an extraordinary extent, and that all the political men of this region were openly and firmly opposed to our entering the war.

In March, when the Chamber re-opened, I returned to Rome, where I found considerable agitation in political circles, partly due to the insufficient aid given by the government on the occasion of the recent earthquake. Many members openly displayed their distrust of the government and their fear that it would allow the country to be drawn into war, while not a few of my political friends were in favour of provoking a crisis. I was not, however, of their opinion, for I knew that negotiations between the government and Austria were under way and thought that they should in no way be impeded, being confident that the government would not fail to obtain the greatest concessions possible from Austria and avoid the risk of war. Having convinced my friends, I also endeavoured to persuade those who were clamouring for war—and who assured me in private conversations in the Chamber that the war would not last long—of the enormous difficulties and sacrifices which such action would entail. I remember telling them that I was convinced the war was only just beginning and that there was no hurry.

It was the government's intention to ask for a vote of confidence, with full liberty of action in regard to the negotiations with Austria, which were now no longer a secret. A few days before this vote and the Easter vacation, Salandra came to call on me as he was anxious to confer with me. He confirmed the report that the government was negotiating with Austria, without, however, entering into details. I told him that I hoped parliament would give him the means for bringing pressure on Austria so as to obtain the maximum of con-

cessions. This conversation further persuaded me of the necessity of letting the government have a free hand and that there was no cause to be alarmed at the military measures which were being taken, as these were above all calculated to convince Austria of the necessity of making serious concessions. In other words, my talk with Salandra satisfied me that the government did not intend to enter the war, but rather to persuade Austria by every means possible that she could no longer defer satisfying Italy's just demands, in accordance with Art. VII of the treaty of the Triple Alliance and the special conventions regarding the Balkans; nor did I make any concealment of this opinion to my friends.

There is therefore no ground for the attempted contrast between my policy of neutrality and so-called concessions, and that of the government, as is also proved by the Green Book, which shows how our government negotiated for a long while with Austria in order to obtain concessions, being aided therein by Germany, and how up to the end our claims were moderate (*i.e.* so framed as to be acceptable). Even the incorporation of Trieste in the Kingdom of Italy was not insisted upon, despite the justice of this claim. The failure of these negotiations must certainly be ascribed to Austria, which rejected the moderate and just claims of the Italian government until, apparently, it was too late.

After my interview with Salandra I spoke to all my friends who were still hesitating to vote for the government; for a ministerial crisis at that moment meant for me one of two alternatives: either we should have a pro-war government, which I could not approve, or one which was too obviously set on neutrality, in which case Austria would not make the concessions necessary to avoid war. My friends were persuaded by my arguments and the government obtained the vote of confidence which it needed in order to have its hands free.

During the month of April letters from friends and even

from mere political acquaintances, informed me to my increasing alarm that Italy was in danger of being surprised into war, mentioning rumours and general indications, but without saying anything precise. For the most part these reports could be taken as mere alarms, due to the growing polemics in the press between interventionists and neutralists, between whom public opinion was divided. The only report which seemed to me very significant was that the King intended to be present at the ceremony at Quarto, where D'Annunzio—whose interventionist ideas were well known—was to speak; this report, however, was not verified.

On April 29th I received a letter from a friend of Prince von Bülow's, Count Czapski, whose acquaintance I had made at Homburg some years ago on the occasion of my meeting with the Prince. The letter, dated from Milan, stated that the writer had come straight from Germany and that he felt it to be his duty to request the great favour of an interview with me, in the hope of rendering service to both our countries. My reply to this letter was as follows:

“Cavour, *April* 29, 1915.

“Dear Count Czapski,*

“You will not doubt the great pleasure I should have in conferring with you, but in view of the present situation, I have decided to refrain from all action which might be construed as mixing myself up in questions of foreign policy. With the best intentions, I might by so doing give rise to an impression which is contrary to my wishes.

“I can, however, say this, that Austria, by systematically persecuting her Italian subjects, has created a most hostile feeling in Italy, and I have no doubt that you are aware of this.

“As regard the negotiations now in progress, it seems as if the best intentions of the German government encounter an insuperable obstacle in the unwillingness of Austria,

*In the original text: “Onorevole Signor Conte”—Tr.

whose proposals are not calculated to make a peaceable settlement possible.

"Austria will now be too late, because she is incapable of understanding the point of view and the sentiments of Italians.

"I know that the Italian government's demands are reasonable and constitute a minimum for rendering a peaceful solution possible. The only method which may still be employed to preserve peace is to persuade Austria to cede what she is in any way bound to lose and which at present constitutes for her merely a source of weakness, for she can never count on the devotion of her Italian subjects.

"I am exceedingly sorry not to be able to confer with you; but, on the one hand, I could only tell you what I have written here, and, on the other hand, any interference of mine, however indirect, might result in unfortunate misunderstandings.

"I remain,

"Yours, etc.,

"GIOVANNI GIOLITTI."

Such were the so-called indirect relations I had with Austrian and German representatives during the period of Italy's neutrality.

In the beginning of May I received other letters from friends in Rome informing me that there were now certain indications of the government's having decided for war. But up to the last I was in no way informed of the government having given pledges or even negotiated in this sense, and when I left Turin for Rome it was merely to attend the opening of the Chamber and to see for myself what was taking place. On leaving Turin the first attempt at intimidation occurred, having evidently been prearranged: a group of young men began to hoot me and were turned away by

my friends. In Rome there were repetitions on a larger scale. At the station I was warned that a crowd of nationalists was waiting to make a hostile demonstration against me, and I was advised to leave by a private exit. This I refused to do, declaring that I would go out by the usual way and that if there were to be a demonstration, it was just as well I should see it. A group of demonstrators was, in fact, waiting for me and accompanied me and my friends to my house, hooting and shouting "Abbasso!" Having reached my door, I turned and said to them: "Just for once shout *Viva l'Italia!*"

In the course of the day and the next morning I received more than three hundred cards and letters from members of parliament declaring themselves in agreement with the view I had always openly maintained, namely, that we should not enter the war; there were also many letters and cards from senators. This demonstration of sympathy showed what were the views of the majority of parliament. These deputies and senators were later accused of factious behaviour and of having attempted to take upon themselves the prerogatives of the Crown, with which, according to the Constitution, rests the decision for war or peace. In this connection, I may recall that when Germany declared war on France, Asquith, after having called a cabinet meeting, sent for the French ambassador and made a declaration more or less as follows: "The British government has decided to intervene in the war on the side of France; but while I think it my duty to inform you without delay of this decision, I must remind you that it only becomes effective after the approval of parliament."

Our Constitution has this resemblance to that of Great Britain; that with both nations the decision to make war rests with the Crown, but such decision is of no effect until parliament has voted the necessary credits, which is its prerogative to do. On the morning of the 7th I received a card from Carcano, then minister of the Treasury, telling me that

he wished to speak with me during the day. I fixed an appointment with him for 4.30 the next day, because in the afternoon I was going to Frascati, where my wife was, and where I intended to stay until the following afternoon. Carcano kept the appointment and we had a long conversation, during which he broadly expounded to me the reasons for which the government deemed it necessary to enter the war. I, however, opposed his arguments at some length, showing him all the dangers which Italy would encounter thereby, Carcano showed some emotion at my words and tears came into his eyes, but he concluded that now the decision of the government to enter the war was definite. He, however, said nothing more, nor even mentioned a treaty which had already been signed, and I understood his silence on this point only some years afterwards, when, the Pact of London having been published by the Bolsheviks, I saw that there was in it the formal engagement to keep it secret. Before his silence was explained by this reason, there had even arisen a doubt in my mind that he had known of its existence, because there had been such intimacy between us from the time when he had been my Under-Secretary in 1893, that without an obligation of secrecy I should not have understood why he had not spoken of it to me more openly and confided in me, knowing that he could reckon fully on my silence.

I then received an invitation to visit His Majesty the King, whom I saw on the morning of the next day and to whom I explained all my reasons for opposing war; but in that conversation also, the obligation of secrecy, agreed to in the treaty, prevented my being informed. Later, towards mid-day, Bertolini who had already informed me of the offers made by Austria with the guarantee of Germany (widely discussed in Italian circles by the Germany deputy, Tozberger, and more or less satisfying Italy's demands, as proved by the publication of the Green Book) came to tell me that Salandra wished to see me. I replied that there was no

difficulty. As Salandra, on the last occasion of our meeting, had come to my house, I proposed this time to go to his, and called on him at four o'clock the same day. Salandra told me that he knew of my conversation with the King; I repeated to him my reasons for believing that Italy would commit an error in entering the war under present conditions. (I need only repeat that at that time no one imagined that the United States would ever intervene.)

Salandra replied that the government had already decided for war; that it was impossible for him to turn back, and that if he was prevented by parliament from declaring war he would have to resign. He had been informed of the number of deputies who adhered to my point of view and thence deduced the possibility of an adverse vote. Had it not been for Salandra's reticence regarding the existence of the Pact of London, our conversation would have taken another turn. It is evident that the obligation of secrecy prevented him from informing me fully how matters stood. Afterwards I learnt that the government had another very special reason for maintaining absolute secrecy. The second article of the pact, in fact, runs thus:

"Italy on her part engages to wage war with all the means at her disposition in agreement with France, Great Britain and Russia, *against the States which are at war with them.*"

The war, according to the last article, should commence before May 26th. By virtue of this agreement, Italy was to declare war simultaneously against Austria and Germany, whereas the ministry of that period had merely alluded to war with Austria for the liberation of the unredeemed territory. Neither parliament nor the country knew, any more than I did, that we were to fight Germany, nor was war actually declared on that country while the Salandra ministry remained in office. This failure to comply fully with the terms of the pact accounts for the diffidence of the allied countries towards Italy, which ceased only when, more than

a year afterwards, the Boselli ministry declared war against Germany. All this explains why no one spoke to me in May, 1915, of the Pact of London.

But to return to the chronology of events. Salandra, evidently appreciating the difficulties of the situation, on the morrow, May 11th, presented his resignation. I was again sent for by the King for the usual consultations during a ministerial crisis. Ignoring the formal engagements which Italy had assumed towards the powers of the Entente, I expressed the opinion that a man who was considered averse to Italy entering the war could not accept the responsibility of the government and I suggested the names of Marcora or Carcano, both being known as men who, in case of necessity, would declare for war. Marcora, after having conferred with the King, wrote that he desired to see me, which he did on the 14th, telling me that he also was convinced of the necessity for entering the war at once. Carcano I did not see again.

The next day the King declined Salandra's resignation and I, considering my task at an end, departed for Cavour on the 17th. Throughout my stay in Rome, in the interval between the resignation and reconfirmation of the Salandra ministry, demonstrations and meetings took place in the city, directed against me in particular and against the parliament, without the police intervening, however unruly these manifestations became. I remember that at a meeting held at the Costanzi Theatre, close to my house, D'Annunzio incited the mob to kill me, and the crowd, rushing from the theatre, made for my house. The police allowed them to pass, but a squadron of cavalry and a platoon of "carabinieri" stopped them and prevented them from reaching me. The following evening, in view of fresh menace, there was a great display of police forces blocking all the streets which led to the Piazza Esquilino.

In those days I received a great number of anonymous

letters from all parts of the country, enough to fill the waste-paper basket twice over. The most curious and characteristic fact about these anonymous letters, coming as they did from places so remote as Venice, Sardinia, Tuscany and Sicily, was that they all formulated the same accusation, namely, that I had taken twenty millions from Austria and Germany in order to try and prevent the war. Some of the anonymous writers, finding, perhaps, the figures too modest, had doubled them. This strange reiteration of the same fantastic and scurrilous accusation was a comfort to me in those troubled days, because I understood that it was not the spontaneous and reasoned expression of the opinion of my fellow citizens, but a campaign organised by the interested advocates of the policy of war at any price.

I retired to Cavour, and as after a declaration of war every citizen, whatever his opinions, is in duty bound to do his utmost to ensure victory, from that day I refrained from all utterances which might cause annoyance or disturb peace at home, this being the first essential in a country at war. For this same reason I ignored all insults, even the most absurd calumnies published by newspapers which sowed discord in the name of patriotism. It was evident that various persons were seeking to exploit the situation for purposes of internal politics, and several of them, posing as super-patriots, and accusing others, were in reality working for disintegration. On July 5, 1915, I had occasion to speak of the war at the Provincial Council of Cuneo, and expressed myself thus: "The sentiments of the representative of a province such as ours, a province whose history has for centuries been an uninterrupted series of contests for independence from the foreigner, and of devotion to the kingdom of Savoy, cannot be doubted. When the King calls the country to arms, the province of Cuneo, without distinction of party and without any reserve, is unanimous in its devotion to its sovereign, its unconditional support of the government

and its unlimited faith in the army and fleet. The undertaking to which Italy is bound is arduous and requires grave sacrifices; but no sacrifice will appear too grave if we remember always that from the issue of this war, from the conditions of the peace which will terminate it, from the political situation in which we shall find ourselves when peace is concluded, will depend the future of Italy for a long period of its history."

I ended with an appeal for concord. Such an appeal, made also from other quarters, remained unheard by many who claimed a monopoly of patriotism in order the better to exploit it. I believed it necessary to avoid even an appearance of discord, and abstained for some time from attending parliament. In the conditions which had been created for me it was the only service which I could render to my country.

The news of the unfortunate days of Caporetto was brought to me at Cavour by a lieutenant of Alpini, Palazzoli, who was sent to me by Bissolati to request me to do anything I could to maintain public morale. I replied that I could not by myself take the initiative, but since parliament would certainly be convened I should not fail to be present and do what I believed most useful. I received almost immediately afterwards a letter from the president of the Council, Orlando, and one from the president of the House, Marcora, who asked me to speak at the opening of the Chamber.

Having arrived in Rome, the president of the Chamber summoned a meeting of the former presidents of the Council, that is, Salandra, Boselli, Luzzatti, and myself. I remember that I was the first to shake hands with Salandra, to show that in that moment there should be no divisions between individuals. In that reunion, Orlando, who was also present, having assumed the presidency a few days before Caporetto, pointed out that only one of us should have the responsibility of speaking to the House, and I understood that he wished to avoid my speaking for fear of any ambiguous demonstra-

tions. To this I could not consent, not wishing it to appear that I had been drawn almost reluctantly to attend parliament, and declared that I should speak, but very briefly, undertaking on behalf of my friends that there should be no demonstration which might be misinterpreted. It having been agreed that each of us should speak, I made a very brief declaration at the sitting of November 11th, 1917. This, and my speeches at the annual openings of the Provincial Council of Cuneo—several of which concerned the future and created a vivid impression—were my only public acts during the war.

In my correspondence with friends and others, including some of those who were my opponents in May, 1915, I always maintained the necessity of holding out and of loyalty towards our new allies until the end, notwithstanding my grave preoccupations as to the length of the conflict, its difficulties and the enormous sacrifices which it would entail. The fall of Russia, which I had already foreshadowed in conversations and letters during the period of our neutrality, and the presentiments of which had been one of my chief reasons for recommending prudence, did not surprise me. Fortunately it coincided with the American intervention, which I considered decisive, above all because, while it assured to us financial means and the necessary munitions, it rendered absolutely impossible any further provisioning of the enemy, with consequent moral effect. I had from the beginning considered the war as one of those supreme historical conflicts which jeopardise the fortunes and decide for centuries to come the destinies of nations, for which reason neither side can submit until all their means of resistance are exhausted. Thus in this war of exhaustion the American intervention, which completely cut off the enemy's sources of supply and assured our own, heralded the final decision of the conflict.

As to internal affairs, while I was filled with admiration for the spirit of sacrifice and the valour of our soldiers, as well as the resistance and firmness of the country, I could

not help but note the deplorable greed and avarice of many who had made contracts with the State, and the ostentation and luxury of the war profiteers, which made a sinister impression on the soldiers who came from the trenches for their brief leaves with their families.

Caporetto was a great misfortune, but it served to awaken in the whole country a consciousness of the gravity of the situation and of the necessity for facing it in a spirit of austere discipline. An improvement set in, not only in public morale but also in the army, with the substitution in the supreme command of General Diaz for Cadorna, who had launched the unworthy accusation of cowardice against our soldiers after their two and a half years of exemplary abnegation and cruel sacrifices. The effect of the changed method of treating the soldiers was seen in the glorious battle of the Piave, one of the most important battles of the European war and the prelude of the great victory of Vittorio Veneto, which signified the definite overthrow of the Austrian army and the destruction of the empire of the Hapsburgs. And when this end came, no one rejoiced more than I, who had clearly foreseen the frightful consequences which the war would have had for Italy had it not terminated in a complete and definite victory.

I took no part in the conclusion of peace and was not asked to take any. In my opinion, the conditions granted to Italy in the diplomatic negotiations certainly did not correspond to the greatness of the victory and it appeared to me particularly unjust to refuse to the city of Fiume the right to rejoin her mother country. It is, however, necessary to recognise that the responsibility of that devolves on that government which, in the treaty by which we had entered the war, had inserted a clause in which it was expressly stated that Fiume should belong to Croatia. This renunciation, unjustifiable because made in a moment in which the future allies would have denied nothing to Italy, was the first source of the difficulties encountered during the negotiations at

Paris. President Wilson could have found no argument as strong for denying Fiume to Italy as that of the explicit undertaking of the Italian government to consign it to the Croats. Another grave error was also committed when, on entering the war, Wilson declared that the United States would not recognise the stipulations of secret treaties. The Italian minister for Foreign Affairs should have at once replied to that declaration by the American President, informing him of our treaty with the other allies, thus avoiding the stigma of secrecy and inviting discussions which would lead more easily to a favourable conclusion while the war lasted, instead of having to face harder trials when the war was over. It must be remembered that in the diplomatic duel which then followed between Wilson, Italy and the Allies, Wilson at once complained, not without asperity, of the secrecy maintained towards him in regard to the agreements between the Allies and Italy.

With the advent of peace, apart from international difficulties attendant on the solution of the problems of our boundaries, I foresaw also grave internal difficulties. For this reason I considered that the authority of the government and parliament should be strengthened as soon as possible by elections, so as to ensure a true representation of the sentiments and wishes of the country. This was all the more essential as owing to the necessities of war, the Chamber elected in October, 1913, had exceeded its constitutional term and no longer possessed any authority, being in effect merely a House of future candidates. I also thought it advisable that the new Chamber should be elected before the enthusiasm for victory had too much diminished and discontent become aroused by the announcement of the difficulties which Italy must face after the conclusion of peace. Accordingly, in April, 1919, I wrote twice to my friend Facta, then minister of Justice in the Orlando cabinet, giving the reasons for my conclusion that the parliamentary elections should

be held at the earliest possible date. Orlando fully agreed with me, recognising the justice of my observations; but having his hands full with international negotiations, he did not decide soon enough to appeal to the country. The conference thus closed without the aspirations of Italy being satisfied. Orlando fell and Signor Nitti succeeded him. As regards the work performed by the Orlando ministry, which commenced with the most unfortunate event of the war and finished with complete victory, I shall always recognise the great merit of the premier in sustaining public morale after Caporetto with such unbreakable fervour. As to the manner in which he afterwards conducted the negotiations in Paris, I can express no opinion, as I lack the necessary data for forming a judgment.

CHAPTER XVII

GOVERNMENT AFTER THE WAR

Nitti Cabinet: its uncertainty and fall—My programme on assuming office —Necessity of resolving international questions and the Fiume problem —Radical projects submitted to Parliament for foreign and financial policy —Ancona episode—My reasons for evacuating Vallona—My meeting with Lloyd George at Lausanne and with Millerand at Aix-les-Bains—Government's plan for solving the Yugoslav question—Former projects abandoned in order to claim natural frontiers—Rapid conclusion of the Rapallo Treaty — Vain attempts to persuade D'Annunzio — Measures for re-establishing normal conditions at Fiume.

AT the outset, Signor Nitti's government promised well, for it showed a certain firmness in facing the popular agitation, which was due to the increased cost of living and which the revolutionary Socialists were attempting to exploit politically. This attitude, which overcame, at least momentarily, the distrust with which the new government had been received, resulted in ample support both in the Chamber and in the Senate. This state of affairs, however, did not last, and it was not long before the government, especially after the 1919 elections, began to capitulate more and more to the extremists, wishing to make it appear that henceforth Italy's fate was irrevocably committed into their hands.

As regards foreign policy, the government failed to find a solution for the Yugoslav question and to obtain cordial support from our Allies. Hasty and changeable in its proposals, it met with rebuff after rebuff. Its internal policy was confined to exhortations to maintain order and to reduce

expenses. Political history, however, furnishes no example of sermons having produced notable results, the rôle of the statesman being not to preach, but to act. The government, however, was successful in floating the last national loan, the middle classes responding generously to the appeal in the belief that this loan would suffice to re-establish the nation's finances. Unfortunately these hopes were disappointed, as the sum raised, amounting to seven milliards of lire, was swallowed up by deficits, notably by the absurd regulation of the price of bread, which cost the Treasury six milliards every year. In the fear of a crisis, Nitti weakly submitted to the Casalini motion, which provided that the price of bread should not be modified until all forms of luxury had been taxed, and then only with the consent of the Chamber, ignoring the fact that inasmuch as the official price of bread had been established by a government decree for reasons of war, the responsibility for abolishing it rested solely with the government. Then, despairing of obtaining parliamentary consent on account of the opposition of the Socialists, who threatened obstruction and tumults, and alarmed at the constant drain on the treasury due to the absurd price of bread, Nitti attempted to abolish it by decree (*decreto legge*), but was forced to recall this measure when his third ministry had already collapsed.

The only law which the Nitti government put through was the change in the electoral system (the substitution of the "proportional" for the one member constituency). It is only right to admit that this reform aroused at the time almost unanimous approbation and that many held it to be a real step forward, while others, perhaps the majority, though feeling certain that they would lose their old constituency, accepted the new order of things in the hope of bettering their fortune. To friends who wrote to me in high praise of this reform and wanted me to come to Rome to vote in its favour, I replied expressing grave doubts as to its merits

and did not conceal my opinion that a Chamber which had outlived its maximum constitutional term of five years and thus no longer represented the will of the electorate had no right to change with such precipitation one of the fundamental laws of the State.

After the fall of the third Nitti cabinet, I took over the government, all the politicians consulted by the Crown having recommended me as successor.

In the speech I delivered at Dronero on the occasion of the October elections of 1919, I fully outlined what I conceived to be the essential task of post-war government in regard to finance as well as international and internal policy. Discussing financial policy, I emphasised the enormous increase in the national debt, then amounting to about ninety-four milliards of lire, which sum has since grown even larger owing to the failure to balance the budget. In regard to the latter I pointed out in my speech that there was that year a budget deficit of at least four milliards, which the continuation of the bread policy and the depreciation of our money soon brought up to over fifteen milliards.

Concerning foreign policy, I above all insisted on the necessity for assuring peace, which, as far as Italy was concerned, was still very doubtful owing to the unsolved problem of our eastern frontiers. Another point I emphasised was the strange contradiction in our political institutions, thanks to which the executive power is not able to spend a penny and cannot make any change in administrative arrangements, nor abolish or create a magistrate's court or a simple State office, without the previous approval of parliament; but can, on the other hand, by means of international treaties, assume the most terrible responsibilities in the name of the country, leading inevitably to war, and this not only without the consent of parliament, but even without informing it or the nation. The remedy I proposed for this was to give parliament the

same powers in respect to foreign policy which it had in matters of finance and internal policy, and to ordain that no international convention could be signed, no commitment made, without the approval of parliament. I also pointed out the necessity for increasing the authority of parliament, against which the reactionary parties had been carrying on a campaign of defamation, to which must be added the fact that four years of autocratic government had restricted the action of the Italian legislature to a degree without parallel in the other allied States. All discussion of the budget, all control of State expenditure, had been suppressed in our case, and parliament was kept in ignorance of all financial engagements as well as of all military or diplomatic conventions; its legislative function had been nullified and replaced—also in matters not pertaining to war—by innumerable decrees (*decreti luogotenenziali*). These were prepared without discussion in the privacy of an office, often by incompetent persons who were ignorant of the true conditions of the country and were so contradictory at times that they merely served to aggravate the ills they were supposed to remedy and resulted in the wasting of milliards.

In order to re-establish the authority of parliament, it was not sufficient, I declared, to increase its powers: parliament must show by its actions that it intended to exercise its powers. Peace must put an end to this period, so prejudicial to parliamentary prestige and the welfare of the country, and inaugurate a new era of exceptional activity. After these unfortunate experiments in uncontrolled government, the representatives of the nation should be doubly conscious of the authority with which they had been invested. In my opinion their first step should be to make a strict enquiry to ascertain the responsibility relative to the war, to examine the manner in which full powers had been exercised, and how the great contracts for supplies had been drawn up and executed both in the country and outside it, and to inform the nation clearly

how the immense sums had been spent, those millions of which so far no account had been given.

The readjustment of the budget, I pointed out, would require, apart from new methods of economy, huge revenues, which could be obtained either by placing the burden of taxation on articles of consumption, or by taxing accumulated wealth more heavily. There could be no doubt what my views on the subject were, as I had already proposed three times, while I was premier, a progressive tax on income and inheritance. But in view of the fact that in taxing these sources of wealth, the bearer shares (*titoli al portatore*), which constitute a great source of income, escape almost entirely, and that it is of no use taxing only one form of income when the other remains immune, I proposed that all shares and bonds should be inscribed. Finally, in regard to economy, I declared that Italy could find her salvation only in hard work, together with the intelligent utilisation of all her material and moral resources in agriculture, industry and commerce. My conclusion was that if Italy allowed herself to be lulled to sleep by the vain rhetoric which had already been the cause of so much harm, and did not awaken to the truth of her condition; if she did not re-act with energy against the spirit of imperialism and adopt a severe policy of work and sacrifice, the inevitable end would be national bankruptcy, general discredit and economical and political ruin. But if, on the contrary, the nation would face realities with courage, tackle its difficulties with energy and in peace-time show the same splendid qualities of endurance and sacrifice which it had displayed during the war, and which had assured its victory, the present obstacles would be overcome and a new era of progress be opened.

Seven months later it was unfortunately clear that the situation had only changed for the worse. The Chamber expended its energies in vain declamations without the government being able to induce it to accomplish its real task. The

irony of this situation was that though the war was over, the government had to resort to legislating by decree as soon as ever the Chamber was no longer in session. The deficit in the budget was steadily increasing in alarming proportions, and we were living on our debts, doing nothing to recover the sums which had been wrenched from the State during the war. My views on the situation were published in the *Tribuna* at the time in the form of an interview, conceived as follows:

“ In view of the serious situation of the country, it is my conviction that what is needed is a really constructive programme. This would necessarily have to be very comprehensive, as many social reforms are needed, especially in regard to the agricultural population. Among the necessary measures there are, however, some which are particularly urgent, for there are two chief dangers which threaten the State—the discredit of parliament and the disastrous condition of our finances.

“ In the eyes of the public, the prestige of parliament has suffered severely, the reason being that it has suspended all legislative activity and abdicated its powers, which, for a long while now have been exercised by the government in the form of decree laws. These unconstitutional methods, which render all serious legislation impossible, must cease. Not only should parliament recover full legislative powers, including effective control of public expenditure and organisation of public services, but it should also be invested in regard to foreign policy with the same powers as it has in internal and financial affairs. This could be achieved by modifying Art. V of the constitution and creating permanent commissions of control for foreign policy in both Chambers.

“ It is also necessary that the executive should be deprived of the power of proroguing parliament, since such unlimited power makes parliament dependent on the government.

“ As regards the State finances and their imminent danger,

we need only point out that during the present financial year there will be a deficit of at least 18 milliards, which can only be met by further indebtedness and issues of paper currency. The last great State loan subscribed for produced 7 milliards, which hardly sufficed to cover the deficit for five months.

"Whereas from 1860 to 1914, that is in fifty-four years, the debts contracted by Italy hardly totalled 14 milliards, now, after the war, within a single year they amount to 18 milliards. This would not have happened if parliamentary control had not been suspended.

"We are thus rapidly moving towards bankruptcy unless an energetic halt is called and State revenues increased to such an extent as to exclude a further increase of paper money, for to increase the paper currency would entail a further depreciation of our money and a consequent increase in the cost of living.

"There are two means for assuring the State the needed revenues: a revision of contracts entered into by the State during and after the war, so as to recoup ourselves of all payments in excess of an equable amount, and the strict application of a tax on capital.

"This tax would furnish notable results if it could be applied to all forms of revenue, for the contribution of landed property, as determined by decree law, will be very limited. At present, a large proportion of income escapes taxation. The only remedy for this is to enact immediately that all forms of shares, bonds, etc., must be inscribed.

"The total value of bearer shares amounts to 70 milliards, which are largely exempt from taxation and will likewise escape the tax on capital and inheritance.

"These 70 milliards are in great part included in large fortunes, which ought to pay twenty, thirty, forty and even fifty per cent., and even more when these fortunes are the results of war profits. This will show what large contribu-

tions the State treasury might obtain, provided always that fraud be prevented by the inscribing of shares.

"These measures are not only necessary to finance, but also to public morality, so as to assure the public that the burden of taxation is justly distributed and that large fortunes are not exempt. It should also be remembered that the greater part of these 70 untaxed milliards come from the North of Italy and only a very small proportion from the South.

"A just repartition of fiscal burdens is a *sine quâ non* for their acceptance by the country.

"I feel confident that the men entrusted with the government of the country in such a critical moment will feel it to be their duty to strengthen the prestige of parliament, by re-instating it in its powers, and to avoid by radical means national bankruptcy, which would entail the ruin of all classes of society."

These public declarations made it clear what line of action I should adopt in taking over the government.

I encountered no difficulty in forming the new ministry, which included men from all the constitutional parties, and we drew up a definite programme of government, the principal object in view being to save the credit of the country. The ministry of Foreign Affairs was entrusted to Count Sforza, a young diplomat who had already given good proof of his qualifications as under-secretary in the same ministry during the preceding government. The other appointments were as follows: Treasury, Signor Meda; Finance, Signor Tedesco; War, Signor Bonomi; Colonies, Signor Luigi Rossi; Public Instruction, Senator Benedetto Croce; Postmaster General, Signor Pasqualino Vassallo; Reconquered Territories, Signor Raineri; Public Works, Signor Peano; Ministry of Marine, Senator Secchi. The Ministry of Food and Supplies, which was to be wound up, was entrusted to Signor Soleri. At the first meeting of the cabinet I furnished my colleagues with a series

of draft laws which were to be immediately submitted to parliament for discussion.

On June 24th the ministry went before parliament. In presenting my programme, I recapitulated my former declarations, and stated that as regarded foreign policy our aim was to make the conclusion of peace definitive by establishing friendly relations with all nations, and I added that as a sure guarantee for peace, parliament ought to be invested with the same powers as regards foreign policy as it exercised in internal and financial affairs. To achieve this, I presented a draft law, which, by modifying Art. V of the Constitution, provided that international treaties and conventions, of whatever scope and object, should not be valid without the consent of parliament, and that no declaration of war could be made without such authorisation. As a further means to this end, I proposed the creation in both Chambers of permanent commissions, to whom all documents concerning the questions of the day—notably that of the Adriatic—should be at once submitted.

In regard to domestic policy, I advocated a return to constitutional methods, for which the first step must be to abolish legislation by decree, only making an exception as regards the revocation or modification of decrees not yet converted into laws, the suppression of institutions and of offices no longer needed, and the passing of measures essential for the reconquered provinces until these should be legally incorporated in the kingdom. I also outlined minor measures for instituting deliberative and consultative bodies among workmen's organisations, increased co-operation, administrative autonomy based on the referendum, and State examinations, which I held to be the only efficacious means for ascertaining the aptitude of pupils and judging the qualifications of teachers.

To ensure economy, I emphasised the necessity for preventing further increase in the cost of living and exorbitant

speculation, though I believed the principal reason for the prevailing high prices to be the depreciation of money, due to the excessive amount of paper in circulation, and the lack of balance between exports and imports, for which it was necessary to find a remedy. The remedies I suggested were: to increase the cultivation of commodities for which we were most dependent on other countries, such as corn, asking parliament for special powers to enforce corn-growing wherever possible; to reduce the need for importing coal by more extended utilisation of water power; and to organise rational exploitation of our mineral wealth. I further urged that excessive war profits should be entirely appropriated by the State, seeing that it is an offence to morality that war should be a source of profit to individuals, that there should be a parliamentary enquiry regarding war expenditure and the revision of war contracts, that the tax on inheritance should be progressively increased, and that shares should be inscribed, pointing out that they represented a practically untaxed capital of at least seventy milliard lire.

The draft laws referring to all these points were submitted by me at this first meeting, my chief desire being to reinvest parliament with its rightful powers, which I realised could only be done if it proved its capacity for resuming its essential functions with all possible energy; in other words, if it resumed its legislative task and made it plain to all, at home and abroad, that it was firmly decided to re-establish financial equilibrium.

When I took over the government I had to face a situation which in every respect was very serious. Foreign affairs, a problem which had to be tackled so that the government might afterwards turn its attention to internal and financial questions, were complicated by a war in Albania, costing us daily the lives of a hundred soldiers who died from malaria; moreover Vallona was threatened and besieged, as the retreat from the interior—in itself a laudable decision—had been

carried out in too great haste and consequently attended by disorder. In addition, Fiume was occupied by D'Annunzio and was in a state which threatened constantly to degenerate into open war, and the negotiations with Yugoslavia regarding our eastern frontiers were at a standstill owing to that country's refusal to consider any of the proposals advanced by our government.

As regards the internal situation, the effervescence of the extremists had reached its climax, and the State services themselves were so demoralised that it was impossible to transfer police forces by rail without the trains being at once held up by the railwaymen. No attempt had been made to deal seriously with this state of affairs.

Finally, as regards the financial situation, I found a deficit of 14 milliards, of which six, as already pointed out, were due to the fixed price of bread, which threatened to bring on total bankruptcy before long.

All these problems, each of which was serious enough in itself, called for a solution. The first I took in hand was necessarily that of Albania. The disastrous sanitary conditions in that country were known throughout the army, largely owing to the number of soldiers invalided home on account of malaria. It therefore happened that a report that a Bersaglieri regiment stationed at Ancona was to be sent to strengthen the garrison at Vallona provoked a mutiny which was largely fomented by subversive elements with the view of starting a general movement of rebellion. There could be no mistake about the gravity of the situation, for it was impossible to transport by railway sufficient troops and police to cope with the insurrection, and we had necessarily to fall back on lorry transport.

That this situation had been largely brought about by the inertia and pusillanimity of the preceding government, which had done nothing to suppress the movement at its beginning, was proved by the fact that it was not necessary to resort to

force in order to restore a measure of discipline among the railwaymen. By appealing to their sense of duty and also by a strict application of penalties, it was not long before a normal state of affairs was re-established on our railways and no further difficulties were raised regarding the transport of police forces.

With respect to Albania, I immediately decided on radical measures, which obtained the approval of my colleagues. It was my opinion that the question of Albania and Vallona, as far as Italy was concerned, had taken on an entirely new aspect since the fall of the Hapsburg dynasty. As long as their military empire lasted, extending its domination over so great a part of the Adriatic coast, it was of prime importance for us to prevent Austria penetrating into Albania and increasing our difficulties in the Adriatic by possessing herself of the entry to this sea. Hence the special conventions we concluded with Austria to avoid conflicts.

After the Balkan war and the almost total downfall of Turkish rule in Europe, our policy, in which Austria on the whole had concurred, had been to assure the autonomy of Albania, preventing Serbia from invading it from the north and Greece from the south. Under the changed conditions resulting from the European war, it was to our interests that Albania should preserve her independence and that no other power should establish itself on her coast and in her ports, for we were certain that Albania by herself would never possess a fleet formidable enough to threaten our coasts and our commerce by sea.

Regarding Vallona, my arguments were as follows. In case of war, if we were the stronger, we should have no need of Vallona; if the weaker, we should be unable to protect it and to supply it by sea, and should consequently be forced to abandon it, this quite apart from the changed situation for future belligerents due to the development of submarines and aircraft. In any case, the only real concern we had in regard

to Vallona was that it should not serve as a naval base for our enemies, and this object was achieved by our occupation of the little island of Sasseno, situated at the mouth of the bay. To make Vallona a naval base of our own would have necessitated our occupying an extensive hinterland, in view of the great range of modern artillery, and this would have meant not only great expense, but also, in case of war, the immobilising of large forces for the protection of Vallona and the consequent weakening of our main front.

For these reasons I decided to renounce the mandate for Albania conferred on us by the Paris conference, as it would entail great sacrifices without any gain for Italy, and to confine our action to protecting Albania diplomatically against the encroachments of other States. At the same time I decided to evacuate Vallona, after having first obtained recognition of our possession of Sasseno. Baron Alliotti was sent to Albania and given full powers to negotiate these questions. These negotiations, as was to be foreseen, were easily concluded and Vallona was evacuated. The solution of this problem might well be compared with the extraction of a troublesome tooth. Though it has been bothering the patient, he has none the less hesitated to take a decision; but once out, he is relieved and thankful.

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A much more difficult question was that of our eastern frontiers with the new Yugoslav State, and this had been rendered even more thorny by the fact that negotiations undertaken by the preceding ministry had produced no result. On the other hand, this failure to conclude the matter was not to our disadvantage (as the frontier demanded and refused was not a natural one) except in so far as it rather seriously compromised further negotiations on this question. For this reason I refrained during several months from entering into relations with the government in Belgrade. My object was to make it very clear that any ulterior negotiations relating

to this problem must in no wise be considered as a renewal or continuation of former ones, but as *ex-novo* conversations; and when certain parties tried to persuade me to expedite the solution of this question, I did not give way, although personally convinced that it was fraught with danger.

I remember in this connection that at the beginning of August the British Foreign Office showed some anxiety for the renewal of our negotiations with Yugoslavia, fearing that the Serbs, encouraged by events in Albania, which they would naturally interpret in their favour, might adopt the same methods as the Albanians. As a proof that these misgivings were well-grounded, our attention was called to the concentration of Serbian troops, estimated at thirty-six divisions, which were ready to march on us. We were given to understand that there was fear of a conflict breaking out which would have the most serious consequences both for Serbia and Italy. On the other hand we had reason to think that Trumbitch, was exerting his influence in London to bring about a renewal of negotiations between us and Yugoslavia under what appeared to be specially favourable auspices for his government. Moreover, he was particularly anxious to reach a conclusion before the retirement of President Wilson, whose protection had been so advantageous to Yugoslavia. Our interests, however, were just the opposite. Neither at that time nor later did I think it advisable to invoke the Treaty of London, for the good reason that it jeopardised the fate of Fiume.

Before resuming these negotiations, I thought it well to put myself directly into touch with Lloyd George first and then with Millerand. The former having already expressed his wish to meet me, it was arranged that I should visit him in Lucerne during his vacation. This meeting, which took place in the first half of August, lasted three days. The main object of the conversations was to find the quickest and best means for the pacification of Europe. Among the

most urgent problems was, as I maintained, the solution of the frontier question between Italy and Yugoslavia, my contention in this being the same I had held before our parliament, namely, the need of establishing peaceable relations between the two countries on a sure basis.

I indicated to Lloyd George the points on which Italy could not possibly give way, without, however, discussing with him all the questions which merely concerned our relations with Yugoslavia. Lloyd George for his part also abstained from discussing the merits of our claims and confined himself to cordial assurances that he would do his best to persuade Yugoslavia to enter into negotiations with the same goodwill for obtaining a lasting peace. I learnt afterwards that while limiting himself to the rôle of general mediator for the solution of this problem, he had rendered very friendly services to Italy. My firm intention, in short, was that negotiations regarding the essential points in discussion should be confined to ourselves and Yugoslavia, being convinced then as now that the interests of both nations required the establishment of friendly relations on a sound and lasting basis, both as regards politics and commerce. For this reason it was highly desirable that negotiations should be restricted to the two parties interested without the intervention, however well-intentioned, of a third party, which often merely tends to complicate matters by bringing other interests into play.

In regard to the general situation, Lloyd George, who was above all anxious to establish lasting peace for everyone, pointed out that the first guarantee for such a peace must be contained in the treaties signed and in their method of application. According to him, the victors ought to show a spirit of moderation and the vanquished a sincere desire to fulfil their obligations.

Apart from the question of the treaty, there were many other problems waiting solution, most of them closely con-

nected with events in Russia. In this connection, Lloyd George remarked that till peace was established between Russia and other countries, the international situation would remain threatening and fraught with danger. Any attack on the part of the Russian Soviet autocracy against neighbouring States would make peace with Russia impossible, for the Allies would be obliged to oppose such attacks with all the means at their disposal and in the measure that their other obligations made possible. Any attempt to impose on another country a form of government, whatever this form might be, would constitute a violation of its independence. It was therefore a matter for satisfaction for both of us that this eventuality did not enter into the conditions then being discussed for concluding peace between Russia and Poland. We agreed that experience had proved that any outside intervention in Russia's internal struggle only tended to prolong bloodshed and put off peace.

My impression of Lloyd George during these conversations was that of a great and active mentality, extraordinarily quick at seizing all the aspects of a question and animated with the sincere and dominating desire of arriving at a true pacification of Europe. In this desire for a true peace, which also responded to the needs of our two countries, we found ourselves in constant agreement.

In September I had a meeting with Millerand, the French premier, both of us believing that a personal interview was desirable. As I was then stopping in Bardonecchia, Millerand very courteously arranged to meet me at Aix-les-Bains, not far from the frontier, where I remained for two days. Our conversations also turned on general European questions, but were more specially devoted to the relations of Italy with Yugoslavia and Greece and also with economic questions concerning France and Italy. During these conversations, which were throughout marked with great cordiality, I pointed out, as I had done to Lloyd George, what

Italy's attitude was in the question of the Yugoslav frontier and what were the points on which she must insist. This question was thoroughly gone into; the inadequate frontiers proposed by President Wilson and the so-called 'Nitti Line,' likewise unacceptable, being examined on the map. My contention was that for strategic reasons Italy must insist on the Monte Nevoso line, as Marshal Foch in a conversation with General Badoglio had also recognised. I added that we did not insist on taking Dalmatia, whose population was for the most part Slav, except as regards Zara, which must be Italian; for other centres of Italian populations guarantees would have to be provided.

Millerand, without entering into details, promised to do his best to bring about a solution which would satisfy Italy's just claims, and these promises were kept both during his premiership and afterwards when he became President of the Republic. In reply to his enquiries regarding our intentions in Albania, I informed him that Italy had already renounced all territorial rights as well as any form of mandate or protectorate over that country, but that we should continue to champion Albania's claim to independence within the confines assigned to her by the London conference and that her territory must be kept free from violation either by Serbs or Greeks. Berthelot, secretary-general of the French ministry of Foreign Affairs, having asked me whether the agreement between Tittoni and Venizelos (made during the former's tenure of office under the Nitti government) was not an obstacle to Albanian independence and integrity, since it confirmed the cession of the Dodecanese, I replied that on assuming office I had renounced this treaty, which consequently was no longer in existence, whatever Athens might think. To which Berthelot exclaimed: "*Pokis sera désespéré quand il le saura!*"

Among other questions we discussed were those of peace between Russia and Poland, the relations of the Allies with

Russia, the application of treaties, peace with Turkey, etc. In all these discussions, even where opinions differed, I remarked in Millerand a great sense of responsibility and moderation. Although he deplored the dangerous spirit which, according to him, still prevailed in the German nation, and the fact that it still seemed convinced that it had been attacked and forced into a defensive war, he showed himself disposed to apply the treaty with moderation. Discussing Russia, I expressed the opinion that rather than preventing, we should encourage our Socialists to visit Russia, as that would shatter their illusions regarding the Paradise of the Soviet—as in fact turned out to be the case later. To which Millerand replied that he did not wish to have a representative of the Soviet in France, as such an emissary would not fail to carry on subversive propaganda and corruption.

In the questions of Austro-Hungarian tonnage due to us, as well as those of coal, phosphates, emigration and the general commercial relations between our respective countries, satisfactory understandings were arrived at, difficult points being reserved for further examination.

My impression of Millerand was most favourable, both as regards his personal qualities of uprightness and frankness and his friendly disposition towards Italy.

Some time after this, Belgrade by way of London gave us to understand that the Yugoslav government would be glad to resume negotiations. Lloyd George, however, speaking to our ambassador, expressed some doubt about the practical results of such negotiations, given the complicated situation in the Yugoslav State. At the same time, he considered that the almost certain victory of the Republicans in the impending Presidential election in the United States was a card in our favour, seeing that the disappearance of the man who had done so much to uphold their claims would necessarily have a depressing moral effect in Yugoslavia. He added that if he were in my place, he would, in the case of the negotiations

falling through, not hesitate to occupy those places which we intended to keep and to evacuate the rest.

In agreement with Sforza I readily acceded to Belgrade's request, and it was arranged that the plenipotentiaries were to meet at Santa Margherita. Meanwhile, together with Sforza and Bonomi, minister of War, I examined the whole question in detail and resolved on the following points:

1. A safe land frontier which should not, as in preceding projects, be a mere correction of the Wilson line, and which must include Monte Nevoso, closely following the northern chain of mountains (similar to the line established by the Pact of London) and excluding only those territories which were not indispensable to our defence.

2. Independence of the State of Fiume (*Corpus separatum*) without intervention or control of the League of Nations; this State to border on Italian territory, either by adopting the Pact of London frontier, or by joining some of the intermediate territory to the State of Fiume.

3. Annexation by Italy of the islands of Cherso and Lussino.

4. Cession to Yugoslavia of the other islands and of Dalmatia as stipulated in the Pact of London (not, however, including Zara) as well as guarantees for the safeguarding of Italian liberties and the right of Dalmatians to become Italian citizens, at the same time maintaining their rights of domicile and property.

In the event of the negotiations falling through, it was decided to take decisive measures for annexing the above-mentioned territories as well as the islands and Dalmatia (in the case of the latter by maintaining our military occupation in virtue of the armistice), at the same time declaring our readiness to negotiate in regard to these territories, provided the independence of Fiume received international recognition.

This programme had the unanimous approval of the cabinet, to which it was submitted; all our colleagues being agreed that,

apart from Zara, there was no reason to insist on the cession of Dalmatia in view of the fact that the great majority of its population was non-Italian.

No exchange of views, direct or indirect, preceded the arrival of the Yugoslav delegates at Santa Margherita. This delegation consisted of Vesnitch, Trumbitch and Stoianovitch. The Italian representatives were, besides myself, Sforza and Bonomi, who preceded me, as it was my intention only to intervene directly in the negotiations after the initial conversations had shown that it was possible to reach a solution. And, in fact, as soon as my colleagues telegraphed to me that a good beginning had been made and that the Yugoslav delegates seemed sincerely anxious to reach a solution, I lost no time in joining them at Santa Margherita. Negotiations proceeded quickly, as I made a point of avoiding digressions, with the object of coming at once to the main questions.

The second day after my arrival, negotiations, which had begun at 9 a.m. and been continued all day, were finally concluded, and the treaty, which I was anxious should be drawn up without delay, was signed by us at 2 a.m. The discussion, though often animated, was always very friendly in tone. The main factor in hastening this conclusion was the conviction of both parties that it was to the interest of our respective countries to establish close commercial relations, as Yugoslavia could find in Italy a large market for her abundant agricultural products, whereas we could supply her with industrial products, and especially with railway and agricultural machinery. When we separated, Vesnitch remarked to me: "You will be very glad to hear that even here we have received admonitions from Millerand to arrive at a solution."

The text of the treaty was made out in Italian and then translated into Serbian. However I insisted that the Italian version should be the official one, seeing that the Serbian

delegates understood Italian very well, whereas not one of us understood Serbian.

The Treaty of Rapallo having been signed, approved by parliament and by the great majority of public opinion, the next thing was to put it into practice. For this it was first of all necessary that Fiume should become an independent State; this meant that it must be evacuated by those in authority, who were Italian and not Fiuman.

In public speeches I had on various occasions voiced my regret that the Paris conference had refused to recognise Fiume as Italian. In the Rapallo negotiations my object had been to safeguard at least its independence and to prevent its being assigned to Croatia according to the terms of the Pact of London, and in this I had succeeded. My sentiments on the subject were therefore quite clear, and I may add that I could appreciate the action of D'Annunzio and his followers in occupying Fiume when its fate hung in the balance. But there was a deplorable side to this undertaking, inasmuch as it undermined discipline in the army and resulted in soldiers breaking their oath of allegiance.

In this connection, it may be well to recall that the most glorious leader in our history, Garibaldi, when in the ardour of his great task of national reconstruction he deemed it his duty to act contrary to the policy which his government was obliged to adopt owing to its political and international obligations, never appealed to the army and would never countenance the undermining of its morale. But D'Annunzio and his followers, once Fiume was occupied, were no longer willing to confine themselves to the task which they had undertaken with the approval of a large part of public opinion, which, incensed by the way in which the Fiume question had been treated at the Peace conference had decided that Fiume must not fall into the hands of Croats and lose even

such right as it had preserved under the Austro-Hungarian régime. The masters of Fiume had announced more or less openly all manner of fantastic projects, both abroad and at home, meanwhile resorting to numerous illegal actions, amounting to downright piracy, in order to provide themselves with arms and provisions. Thus Fiume had become a storm-centre in the life of Italy, if only on account of the large quantities of arms and munitions which it contained. These amounted to eighteen shiploads, which we transported to Pola during the first weeks after the government's occupation of the city, to say nothing of hidden stores which were discovered some time afterwards.

Both on account of my treaty obligations with Yugoslavia and in order to avoid new difficulties, it was my obvious duty to establish order in Fiume. The chief danger we had to fear was that D'Annunzio and his followers might precipitate matters by an open attack on the Yugoslavs, which would have meant new complications and bitter humiliation for Italy. Nothing can be more humiliating and prejudicial to a country's dignity than its avowed inability to keep its word and respect the rights of nations.

For some time I hoped that these reasons would also persuade D'Annunzio and that a solution would be found without my having to resort to force. The results of the Rapallo treaty, assuring Italy a frontier which even the General Staff considered amply secure, led me to hope that D'Annunzio would listen to the advice of his friends and would do nothing to disturb peace and order, so necessary to the country both for its prestige abroad and the work of moral and economic reconstruction at home. In fact, D'Annunzio's best friends, among them Admiral Millo, then governor of Zara, did their utmost. Millo, at D'Annunzio's request, met him at sea and talked to him at great length, trying to persuade him not to undertake any action in Dalmatia; but even he failed to elicit precise assurances or to find out clearly what D'Annunzio's

intentions were. Several of the latter's followers left Fiume at this time, declaring that, thanks to the Treaty of Rapallo, the fate of the city was assured. The government was also requested to do everything in its power to satisfy the economic needs of Fiume, as outlined by D'Annunzio, and I gave every assurance to this effect.

But all this was of no avail and only resulted in new claims and the raising of further questions, tending to delay and complicate matters. The question of Porto Baros was especially a point at issue. I had been obliged to recognise that this port was outside the *Corpus separatum* of Fiume and that it in fact belonged to the Croats, who used it for their lumber trade. This matter I had clearly explained to the parliamentary commission for Foreign Affairs. As a matter of fact, this was merely a quibble and the problem had to be judged from a higher point of view.

Fiume was of great value to the inland countries, especially Croatia and Hungary, as their nearest and most natural commercial port; vice versa, all the life of the port itself depended on the hinterland and the use of the railway system belonging to the inland States. It was therefore a case of mutual interests, which could be satisfied by taking a broad and generous view of the problem. All the life of Fiume is concentrated in its port; it was therefore essential that its citizens should avoid all dissension with their inland neighbours on secondary questions and rather seek to bring their mutual commercial interests into harmony, for fear that the latter should seek some other port of commerce.

When I realised that it was useless to try to persuade D'Annunzio and his followers of the necessity for living up to the Treaty of Rapallo as regards Fiume, I was, much to my regret, forced to take action. Accordingly I charged General Caviglia, in command of the troops in the Giulia region, to make D'Annunzio understand, once and for all, that the treaty must be carried out and Fiume evacuated.

To have put this off any longer would have meant lowering Italy in the esteem of the world.

This decision caused some excitement among the combatant and nationalist groups in the Chamber and the Senate, and a commission was organised to go to Fiume and persuade D'Annunzio not to resist the execution of the treaty. The commission first approached me, offering its services to avoid possible painful incidents. Although I appreciated the spirit of this offer, I was obliged to point out that I could not give it any mandate, as the government had already commissioned General Caviglia, whose authority and liberty of action within the terms of his mandate must in no wise be diminished. To avoid any misunderstanding in the matter, I telegraphed to General Caviglia that the deputies and senators who were setting out for Fiume were doing so on their own account and had no authority to act for the government. This message was communicated to the commission.

As to the results of this undertaking, they were absolutely null, for D'Annunzio refused to be persuaded, hoping, as it appeared later, that the army and navy would refuse to take action against him, or, at any rate, that many would desert and join him; he likewise counted on public opinion being in his favour. His hopes were doomed to be disappointed, for both the army and navy strictly did their duty, notwithstanding their regret at having to take measures against their compatriots and comrades. As for public opinion, even that portion of it which had so far supported D'Annunzio refused to back him up in this last attempt; which can be taken as a proof of the general conviction that in opposing himself to the wishes of his country, as expressed through the government and parliament, and refusing to recognise treaty obligations, D'Annunzio was running counter to the interests and dignity of the Italian people.

CHAPTER XVIII

POST-WAR PREMIERSHIP. INTERNAL POLITICS

Restoring State finances—Necessity for taxing wealth—Inscription of shares and of State creditors—Bread law and obstruction of the Socialists—Seizure of the factories and policy pursued by the Government—Police measures and political measures—Plans for factory control—Industrial crisis—Why I held the elections and their results—Dissolution of the Government majority and Cabinet crisis.

THE government over which I presided during the difficult and troubled post-war period, besides having to resolve questions of foreign policy, such as those of Albania, Fiume and the Yugoslav frontiers, had also to face many problems of internal policy, the solution of which were no less urgent for the welfare of the country. These questions were both financial and social and, as such, closely related; for which reason it was necessary to handle them simultaneously, as it would not have been possible to solve one without the other.

The most serious and urgent question for me was that of the State finances, the deficit being not less than fourteen milliards. Unless some means were found for reducing this enormous deficit, speedy bankruptcy was inevitable, and could only be avoided by continuously inflating the paper currency, already excessive when compared with what it was before the war, with the unavoidable result of depreciating money and bringing about a general economic crisis. This had been the case with the defeated nations

if the freedom of the cereal market were established forthwith. The cost of imported wheat, which constitutes about fifty per cent. of our total requirements, was in great measure due to the high cost of transport, but as in all parts of the world a huge amount of tonnage was building at that time, there was a reasonable prospect that with a quick decrease in freights, a corresponding decrease in the cost of cereals would be arrived at, as in fact has been the case. In order meanwhile to meet the deficit, which in my estimation could not be continued, I provided for special taxes in my programme, the most important being that on wine; for it seemed to me only just that whoever wanted to indulge in the luxury of wine, whether he be rich or poor, should contribute towards diminishing the cost of what is the basis of all our food.

The discussion of the law in question lasted a long while. A double compromise had been accepted regarding the price of bread. In the first place, there was the price which had been imposed on the preceding government by a motion brought forward by the Socialists and voted by the Chamber, which I had inherited. This measure I thought it as well to conserve, because the fact that it had been discussed and voted by the Chamber would serve as a protection against any opposition which might be raised by the lower classes. The other obstacle consisted in the undertakings which the Socialist party, in conformity with their excessively demagogic after-war policy, had given to the masses. These compromises and undertakings had not the slightest justification. The desire to maintain pre-war prices for bread when, because of the depreciation of money, salaries had been everywhere practically quadrupled, was tantamount to saying that bread should cost only fifteen centesimi the kilogram—in other words, that it should be two-thirds gratis. It is true that, in ancient times, free distributions of corn and flour had been made to city populations; but to attempt such a thing in a country of forty millions would not only be absurd,

but economically impossible. These distributions of corn in the city-republics of former times were made possible by the tributes of subject peoples; but the Italian State, in order to distribute free bread, would have to levy internal contributions the burden of which would fall on all alike. This would simply result in a vicious circle, with the added disadvantage of inevitable waste of money in trying to organise a system for which the State is not adapted.

These reasons were well understood by the more level-headed leaders among the Socialists; but they could effect little in face of the policy of obstruction decided upon by the party, in accordance with which every Socialist deputy was obliged to bring in a resolution and support it with a long speech. Such obstruction may constitute a justifiable weapon when it is backed up by sound reasons and sincere convictions; but when it is merely a pretext and artifice, it cannot maintain itself. As a matter of fact, the Socialist obstruction turned out to be a long business, on account of the many speakers enrolled to attack the bread law, but it lacked energy. All that was required to overcome it was much patience on the part of the government and of the parties in favour of the legislation in question. By voting this law the deficit was reduced by six milliards, while the new taxes on war profits, luxury and wealth, as well as the reduction of expenses, brought down the total deficit to four and a half milliards, which the normal State economies sufficed to cover for a while. If the work of restoring the State finances had been continued with the same energy, we should now be much better off than we are; unfortunately the chief interests of the country were outweighed by narrower considerations.

Several weeks after the closing of parliament, which between May and August had worked efficiently towards realising a programme of reconstruction and justice, thus practically forcing the Socialists to collaborate in spite of themselves, the so-called occupation of factories took place (September,

1920) which created a deep impression abroad as well as at home and was generally looked on as the beginning of a widespread and consciously organised revolutionary movement. As a matter of fact, this occupation and all the attendant circumstances were but the aftermath of the revolutionary but disorganised situation which had arisen under the preceding government. That this occupation of factories was really the first step towards a revolution, or at least was intended as such by the instigators, was proved by the discovery of about a hundred tons of "cheddite" and nitroglycerine in factories and elsewhere throughout the country, to say nothing of thousands of rifles, revolvers, hand grenades and other weapons. Presuming that a considerable amount of arms and explosives had been carried away by the workers when they voluntarily evacuated the factories, we can form some idea of the extent of the preparation from what was abandoned. At the time of the occupation, a meeting of Socialist organisations in Milan even openly discussed the question whether the movement should not be pushed forward to the point of actual revolution. Fortunately good sense prevailed, especially among those organisations which most truly represent the labouring classes, and the country was spared a period of bloodshed.

The methods by which this occupation of factories had been realised brought the government face to face with a series of problems, immediate and otherwise, ranging from police measures to social policy generally. The workers, who had effected the occupation of factories in all parts of Italy, but more especially in the industrial zones of Piedmont, Lombardy and Liguria, numbered at least six hundred thousand. The occupation itself, which had been provoked by an untimely threat of a lock-out on the part of certain factory owners who had failed to realise the dangers of the situation, was based on the workers' conception that they could manage and run the factories without intervention on

the part of capitalists and directors. The Communist leaders, *on the other hand*, hoped that this movement would result in the real social revolution as realised in Russia. They were, however, opposed in this by the more moderate among the Socialist workers who after recent visits to Russia had been able to form a true idea of the conditions in that country and of the infinite harm done not only to the victims, but also to those who had got the upper hand.

Personally I was convinced from the outset that this experiment could not fail to prove to the workers that it was impossible to realise their ends without the necessary capital, technical training and commercial organisation, especially as regards the purchase of raw material and the sale of products. So as far as I was concerned, this episode represented in another form, a repetition of the famous experiment attempted by the general strike in 1904, which after having caused such alarm proved its own futility. Accordingly I thought that the government could not do better than adopt the same policy which it had done on that occasion, that is, to let the experiment continue up to a certain point, so that the workers might convince themselves of the impracticability of their conceptions and also in order to prevent the ring-leaders from throwing on others the blame of their failure.

The police measures adopted were in keeping with this conception of the political situation. At the time, I was blamed for not having employed the police to make the law respected and to prevent violation of private property; in other words, for not having prevented the occupation of the factories by the workmen and for not having used every means for ejecting them after the occupation had taken place. But even admitting that I could have had the factories occupied by the police before the workers could seize them—which considering the extent of the movement would have been very difficult—I should then have found myself in the awkward position of having almost the entire police forces, Guardie

grant the continued demands for increase of salaries in the immediate future but even to maintain the existing scale of remuneration, were not averse to letting the workers judge for themselves what the real conditions of industry were.

The Commission was constituted, but, as was to be foreseen, could not agree on a common plan of action. The result was a double project, the workers aiming at enlarging their power of control, and the owners at restricting it.

As I had undertaken to submit this difficult problem to parliament, I worked out a project of legislation which was at once submitted to the Chamber, with the double project of the Commission appended as well as a third project, brought forward by the Popular party, which provided for workers sharing in the benefits of industrial enterprises without, however, exercising any control. As regards this third project I pointed out that if the principle of the worker sharing in the benefits of an enterprise was accepted, it would not be possible to refuse him the possibility of ascertaining for himself what was the share he was entitled to, as he became in certain respects a shareholder in the enterprise.

This project was, however, not brought up for discussion, even by the Socialists, the reason being the grave industrial crisis, which, after having involved industrial countries like England and the United States, was beginning to make itself felt in Italy during the second half of 1920, since when it has always been on the increase. This crisis, which can only be overcome when the industrial situation throughout the world has been re-established, could not be ignored by the workers' organisations, which were now, above all concerned with the problems of unemployment, the reduction of working hours and the consequent decrease of salaries.

In my opinion, the principle of workers sharing in the control and in the profits of industrial enterprises has nothing revolutionary in it and only signifies an extension of already existing relations between syndicated workers and employers

as regards contracts and salaries. However, the innovation or extension of such reforms is only possible when economic conditions are flourishing, and not in times of industrial crisis.

After the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo, which realised the union of the Italian nation within its natural frontiers, it was the duty of the government to summon the citizens of the new provinces to share in the political life of the country and to elect representatives for parliament.

There were two methods of accomplishing this: either to call partial elections for the new provinces so that they might be represented in the parliament elected in 1919, or to hold a general election, so that the entire nation might determine the policy of the country at this turning-point in its history when national unity had been accomplished. This second method seemed more in keeping with the dignity of the country and in conformity with precedent. In 1866, after the annexation of Venetia, partial elections were held at the end of November, but only three months later the Chamber, although it had only been in existence for sixteen months, was dissolved and general elections held, as a result of which the new provinces were put to the inconvenience of two elections within three months. Four years later when Rome was incorporated in the Italian State, there were again general elections.

Apart from these historical and moral considerations, there were more important political reasons for this step. The elections of 1919 had been held under very unfavourable auspices, due to the unrest and discontent occasioned by internal conditions and the diplomatic set-back which Italy had received at the Peace Conference.

In the autumn of 1919, Italy was still involved in war in Albania and her situation in the Adriatic appeared so shaken and precarious that serious international complications were to be feared, which might have ended in settling the question

of our eastern frontiers in a manner radically opposed to our most vital interests. At Fiume, a situation had arisen which threatened new conflicts. The country itself was still on a war footing, living in a state of armistice rather than peace. As a result of these conditions, a régime of monopolies and State interference prevailed on such a large scale that commercial freedom practically did not exist. Finally the deficit of fourteen milliards in the budget summoned up the spectre of bankruptcy, which would have meant complete depreciation of our money, enormous increase in the cost of living, and the breaking down of our financial and industrial system. These disasters threatened every class of society, but above all the working classes.

The Chamber elected under these conditions was, in fact, a living expression of the moral and material state of the country, not so much on account of the large number of extremists included in it as of the spirit prevailing in the assembly. This was apparent at the opening meeting when, after the Royal Message, the more subversive elements plainly demonstrated their hostile intentions without meeting any energetic resistance from the constitutional elements.

The general conditions of the country had naturally undergone a change during this period of eighteen months. In regard to Albania, there had been a return to better traditions, which aimed at assuring the independence of that country without any form of domination, while, thanks to the Treaty of Rapallo, which gave Italy her natural frontiers and at the same time established cordial relations not only with the Yugoslavs but also with other nations which had formed part of the Hapsburg empire, peace had been finally secured. The Fiume problem had been solved by assuring the independence of the city and the Italian nationality of its citizens, and by putting an end to the irregular régime which had been established there for a year and a half.

At home, peace in the full sense of the word had succeeded

the state of war, and State monopoly had given way to commercial freedom. Lastly, thanks to the abolition of State-imposed bread prices and the taxation of war-profits, accumulated wealth and luxury, the national deficit had been reduced from fourteen to slightly more than four milliards, which meant that with a rigid application of existing taxes and improved measures for rendering them as efficacious as possible, there was a reasonable prospect of wiping out this deficit altogether before very long.

Formerly I had always considered it a matter of principle that every legislature should be allowed to complete its constitutional term, so that it could develop the programme for which its representatives had been elected by the nation. To this principle I had constantly adhered during my work of government. But the reasons already explained induced me to change my policy and to call new elections, so that the country could manifest its political tendencies under these changed conditions. This seemed to me all the more necessary, inasmuch as certain parts of the political programme to which I had pledged myself in assuming office, such as the freedom of schools and the question of State examinations, had given rise to differences of opinion among the constitutional parties on whose support the government had to rely to carry out its programme. That presented by the government at the new elections was in fact only a continuation of the former one, which had already been partly realised, but with greater emphasis laid on administrative and social reform. These reforms aimed at opening new avenues and offering better opportunities to the lower classes. As regards the elections themselves, in view of the fact that the liberal constitutional parties were greatly weakened by being broken up into factions, whereas the Socialists and "Popolari" formed compact and united parties, I counselled the former to form a *bloc* which would include all the forces of the old liberal and democratic parties.

The elections were announced for May 15th. But before this date arrived, I was obliged to abandon my duties owing to the death of my wife, Rosa Sobrero, who died at Torre Pellice in May, after fifty-two years of happy married life. On this occasion I received many touching proofs of the high esteem in which my wife had been held by all who knew her.

The Socialists and a group of deputies led by Signor Nitti were violently opposed to the elections, going even so far as to threaten the Crown. Among various reasons brought forward for putting off the elections was the agitation prevailing in certain provinces. In my opinion, however, this was merely an argument for hastening them; for there is no greater moral argument for putting an end to violence and imposing respect for the law than the solemn manifestation of the nation's will. After the elections, those who had opposed them alleged that the results justified their antagonism, inasmuch as the parliamentary situation was not greatly changed. This argument was, however, entirely erroneous, nor had I for my part ever expected a radical transformation of scene. The proportional system of election would alone suffice to prevent such radical changes and appears to have been expressly invented to prevent the sudden and so-called revolutionary changes made possible under the majority system.

Compared with the 1919 elections, those of 1921 showed a gain, on a total of eight million voters, of over half a million for the constitutional parties over the subversive elements. This proportion is quite considerable in view of the short lapse of time and would under the majority system have sufficed to reduce Socialist, Communist and Republican membership in the Chamber by more than a half, whereas with the proportional system it only deprived the anti-constitutionals of thirty seats. In view of this method of voting, the electoral result should not be merely estimated according to the gain or loss of seats by various parties, but also according

to the general character of the new Chamber. In fact, there can be no doubt that the spirit of this new assembly was very different from that elected in 1919, for, apart from the Socialists and Communists losing twenty-four seats, there was a notable improvement in the quality of the new legislature. Among other things, it inaugurated the entry into political life of the Fascisti party, represented by thirty members, for the most part young and combative. I held the advent of this party to be a real benefit to the country, considering that "Fascismo" had become a living force and that it should therefore be represented politically; I have always believed that all the forces of the nation should be represented in parliament. Taken as a whole, the new Chamber represented a revival of the constitutional elements, which in the preceding assembly especially in its earlier months, had lost cohesion and scattered its forces.

The new Chamber was convened for June 11th for the Royal Message, which gave a general outline of the programme I had announced on assuming office.

A few days later, during a general debate, the government found itself opposed not only by the Socialists and other constant antagonists, who blamed it for the elections and the coalition tactics, but also by the Nationalists and the Right, who attacked the foreign policy of the government and joined issue on the petty question of Port Baros. In the vote of confidence the government obtained a majority of thirty-four, which was however weakened by a declaration of Signor Girardini, on behalf of the Social Democrats, who announced that though voting for the government he wished to make reservations as to the significance of his vote.

It has always been my habit to count votes made with reservations as adverse votes, which sooner or later they inevitably become, for whoever votes in favour of a project but with reservations has already reason or inclination to

vote against it. In the present case, as the government over which I presided was a constitutional coalition, formed especially for carrying out a certain programme, it was evident that the withdrawal of important constitutional groups deprived it of the necessary authority for carrying out its task.

Before this vote took place, I had for some days been in personal contact with representatives of various constitutional groups, who had tried to persuade me to reconstitute my cabinet. I have already expressed my aversion for these cabinet overhauls, which seem to me neither useful in a political sense nor fair towards one's collaborators. With all the ministries I have presided over there has always been the most complete and unreserved solidarity between my colleagues and myself, and I have never admitted the possibility of separating the responsibility of the chief from that of the rest of his cabinet. This procedure would indeed be little to the credit of a Prime Minister, as it would indicate that his colleagues acted against his wishes or knowledge. The various reasons which had guided me in the past also prompted me on this occasion to declare explicitly to all who, expressing their personal confidence in me, begged me to save the situation by making certain changes in my cabinet, that I did not intend doing so, and I made a point of adding that the policy of the minister for Foreign Affairs, whose removal was specially desired, had been pursued in full agreement with me. I should add that even if I had accepted the apparent majority of thirty-four votes as a sufficient inducement to remain in office, I should shortly afterwards have encountered another obstacle which would have brought about a cabinet crisis.

In a draft law submitted to and unanimously approved of by the cabinet I asked for full powers to effect reforms in the bureaucracy, rendered necessary by reason of the condition of the State finances and the enormous number of employees, as well as by the urgency of reorganising many public services.

To accomplish this full powers were an essential means for overcoming the resistance of class interests and of local influences, which are difficult for deputies to resist and combine to form almost insurmountable parliamentary obstacles. I was also certain that the minister who carried through this task to the end would have to retire from office amid the curses of those whose interests had suffered, but as I was convinced that in so doing I should render service to my country, I was prepared to assume this grave responsibility.

Just at this time those in command of the Popular party had decided to withhold the full powers asked for, and opposition had already begun in the commission charged with examining the proposed law. But without the support of the "Popolari" it was impossible to get the law approved, and without full powers it was equally impossible in my opinion to carry through a serious reform. Under these circumstances, even if the cabinet crisis had not resulted immediately after the vote in the Chamber, it would have come a few days later over the bureaucracy question and would have definitely compromised this undertaking for my successors.

Accordingly, the morning after the vote, I convoked the cabinet and pointed out that after the withdrawal of the Right and the reservations made by the Social Democrats, it was clear that the cabinet could no longer count on a safe majority in parliament to enable it to carry through the necessary economic and political reforms. My colleagues unanimously approved of my interpretation of the situation and the decisions resulting therefrom, and after a quarter of an hour the cabinet adjourned.

Immediately afterwards I informed His Majesty that the cabinet had decided to offer its resignation, and at three o'clock that afternoon the cabinet went before the Chamber, where I read the following declaration:

"I have the honour to announce to the Chamber that in consequence of yesterday's vote, the cabinet is of the opinion

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